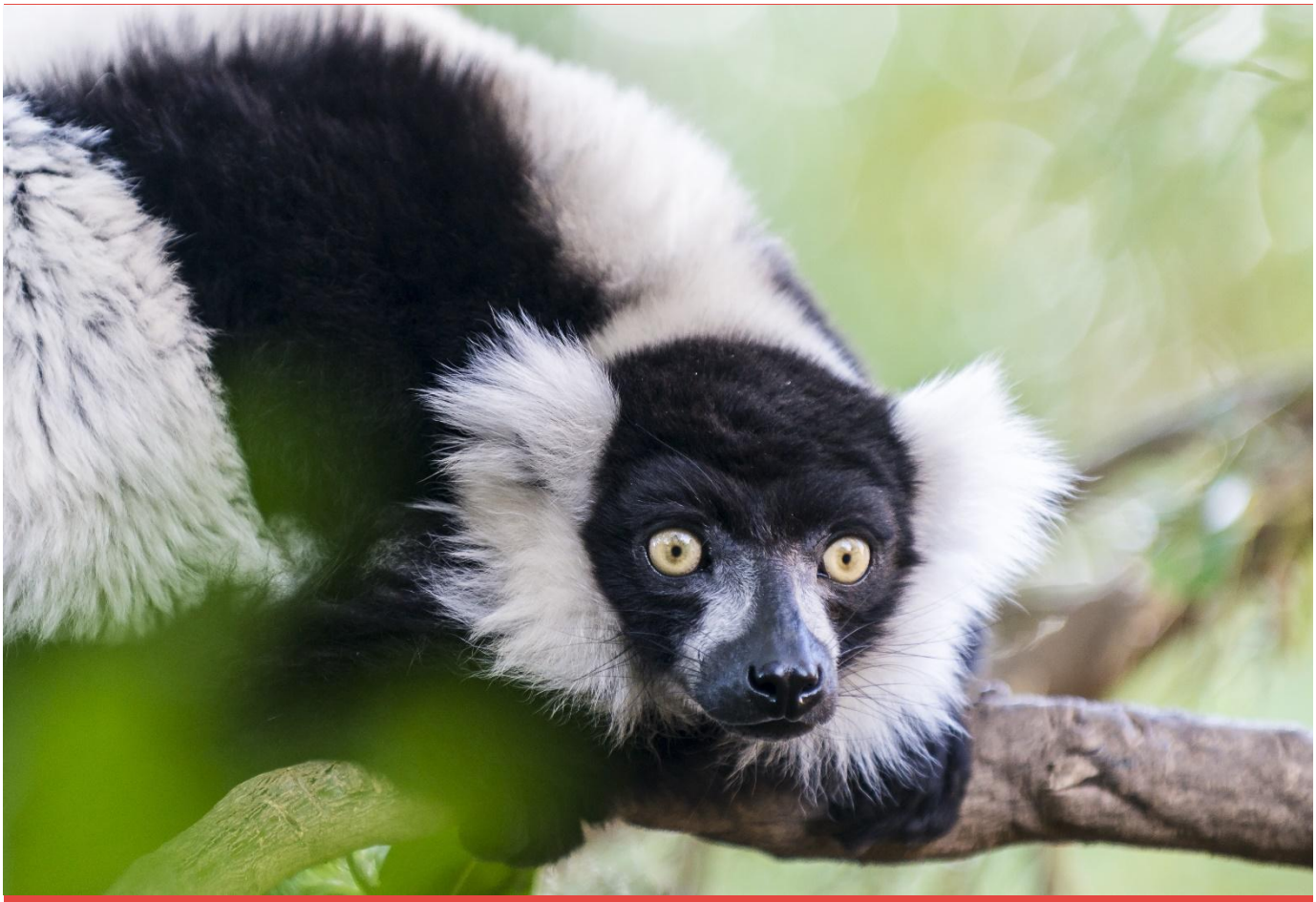


MADAGASCAR UNTAMED

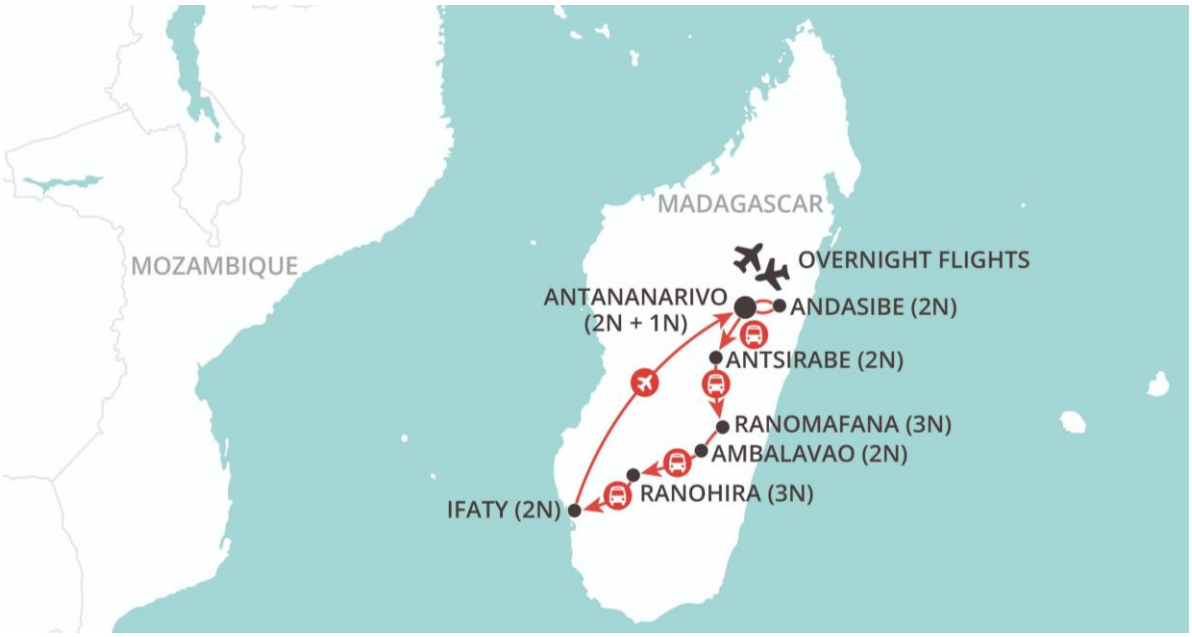
Go Beyond Tour | 21 Days | Physical Level 3

Antananarivo - Antsirabe - Ranomafana - Ambalavao - Ranohira - Ifaty - Andasibe - Antananarivo

An island long isolated, Madagascar is full of unique and spectacular surprises. From lemurs to baobabs, rainforests to thorny forests, deserts to pristine beaches, this is a place unlike anywhere else, rich with wildlife, tribal culture and startlingly beautiful landscapes.

- Explore the 'Garden of Madagascar'
- Spot golden bamboo lemurs
- Wander the streets of Fianarantsoa
- Discover traditional crafts in Ambalavao
- Walk in Isalo National Park
- Relax in seaside Ifaty

TOUR MAP



TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- Madagascar e-visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 3:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility, the ability to walk around National Parks and getting on and off various modes of transport. 'Madagascar Untamed' is rated 3 on the physical level scale. A good level of fitness is required, and you will need to be comfortable walking long distances and for extended durations, particularly in various National Parks visited. The tour visits some remote areas with basic infrastructure, with some long and tiring journeys on poorly maintained roads.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 20 days in duration including international flights or 18 days in duration based on 'Land Only'.

Travellers booked on a 'Land Only' package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Antananarivo and end the tour on Day 19 in Antananarivo. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

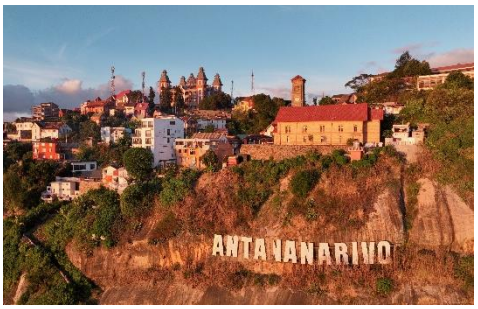
ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly to Antananarivo Meals: D

Fly overnight to Antananarivo, also known as Tana, the capital of the incredible island of Madagascar. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel, a journey of approximately 10 minutes.



Depending on your time of arrival, enjoy some time at leisure, where you can begin soaking up the unique rhythms of this delightful city.

Destination Information

Antananarivo (Tana) - Antananarivo, often shortened to Tana, is the vibrant capital of Madagascar. Nestled in the island's central highlands, Tana is a city of steep hills, colonial architecture, and bustling markets. As the political, economic, and cultural heart of Madagascar, it blends French influences with rich Malagasy traditions.

Day 3: Tamana Kitchen Meals: B, L, D

Today you will discover the heart of Malagasy culture through its food.



After breakfast, dive into Malagasy culture through its cuisine. With a local chef, explore a lively market and handpick fresh seasonal ingredients. Head to the kitchen to prepare *vary* (rice) and *laoka* (traditional side dishes) using time-honoured techniques.

The afternoon is free for you to relax or explore Antananarivo further at your own pace.

Day 4: Antananarivo to Antsirabe Meals: B, L, D

Today, drive approximately 5 hours through impressive highland landscapes to Madagascar's countryside. Your journey will see you pass territory of the Imerina people and the Ankaratra Mountains to reach landscapes of terraced fields and eucalyptus forests. As you go, you will get a snapshot of rural life – roadside markets, farmers ploughing with zebus and waving children.



This afternoon, explore Antsirabe. Discover the city's colonial architecture and traditional craft workshops.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 1 hour on foot, walking between 2-3km.

Destination Information

Antsirabe – Located in Madagascar's central highlands, Antsirabe, often called the "City of Water," is famous for its colourful "pousse-pousse" (rickshaws), artisan workshops, and scenic surroundings, including volcanic lakes like Lac Tritriva.

Day 5: Discover Antsirabe Meals: B, L, D



Spend the morning in the countryside around Antsirabe, discovering the 'Garden of Madagascar' on foot. It is here that most of the country's fruit and vegetables are cultivated and is well known for its production of artisanal foods, including cheese, honey and fruit preserves.

Walk through villages pausing to learn about traditional activities like brickmaking, pottery and blacksmithing.

Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant owned by a Frenchman who is renowned for creating delicious cheeses with local spices.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 4 to 5 hours on foot, walking up to 10km.

Day 6: Antsirabe – Ranomafana Meals: B, L, D



Leave the volcanic hills and rich soil of Antsirabe behind on a drive that will showcase just a fraction of Madagascar's diversity.

Journey approximately 6 hours and 30 minutes to Ranomafana, passing through changing landscapes and the territories of the Zafimaniry and Betsileo people, learning more about each as you cross.

Descend into the rainforest of Ranomafana where rain becomes more frequent, and the mist rises– on arrival you will have the option of a night walk around the outskirts of Ranomafana National Park before dinner.

Destination Information

Ranomafana – Nestled within the lush rainforests of southeastern Madagascar, Ranomafana which also means "hot water" in Malagasy, is known for its natural thermal springs, along with its misty forests, scenic trails, and vibrant wildlife.

Day 7: Ranomafana Meals: B, L, D



Rise early today and head into the wilds of Ranomafana National Park. The park was created in 1991 to protect the critically endangered golden bamboo lemur. Keep an eye out for red-bellied lemurs, Milne-Edwards' sifaka, chameleons, frogs and plentiful colourful insects too.

This afternoon, you can continue to explore the national park or have a relaxing soak in Ranomafana's thermal baths.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 5 to 7 hours on foot, walking between 6-8km.

Destination Information

Ranomafana National Park – A UNESCO World Heritage Site and biodiversity hotspot, spanning over 400 square kilometres, is home to rare and endangered species, including the golden bamboo lemur. Here, you will also be able to discover a rich variety of birdlife, reptiles, and plants.

Day 8: Valbio Research Centre Meals: B, L, D



Journey approximately 30 minutes to the Valbio Research Centre today.

Set up by primatologist Dr Patricia Wright in 2003, the Valbio Research Centre works to protect and conserve Madagascar's ecosystems through scientific research, sustainable development and local empowerment. On your visit here, take a guided tour of the centre with a researcher or trainee, join a presentation on lemurs or biodiversity and wander the botanical gardens.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 2 hours on foot, walking up to 5km.

Destination Information

Valbio Research Centre – Founded to promote a better understanding to the value of conservation in Madagascar and around the world, the Valbio Research Centre works closely with local villages to develop ecologically sustainable economic development programs. The centre also works hard to provide local villagers with the knowledge and tools to improve their quality of life, through various projects that focus on sanitation, diet and education.

Day 9: Ranomafana to Fianarantsoa Meals: B, L, D



After breakfast, drive approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes to Fianarantsoa. A surprisingly Italianate town set magnificently on a hilltop, Fianarantsoa, originally the capital of the Betsileo people, boasts glorious views over lush plantations; it is here that your walking tour begins.

Start at upper town before heading to the countryside for a gentle walk through traditional Betsileo villages, and a special lunch experience. Be warmly welcomed into the home of a local family and sit down to a typical Malagasy meal and a chat with your hosts about their daily lives.

After lunch continue to the Antemoro paper factory where you will see this traditional paper, made of the inner bark of the native havoha tree, being produced and hand-decorated with pressed local flowers.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 5 to 6 hours on foot, walking up to 7km.

Destination Information

Fianarantsoa – Founded by Queen Ranavalona I in the 19th century and originally the administrative and religious capital of the Betsileo people, Fianarantsoa is widely known for its colonial architecture, terraced hillsides, and proximity to lush vineyards and tea plantations. The city serves as a gateway to the country's southern regions and plays a key role in preserving Malagasy culture and language.

Day 10: Around Ambalavao Meals: B, L, D



Today, you will take a short drive to the Anjà Community Reserve. After lunch, explore this community-managed forest, set against dramatic granite rock formations, part of a scheme that helps prevent deforestation and generate income. Be on the lookout for the ring-tailed lemurs!

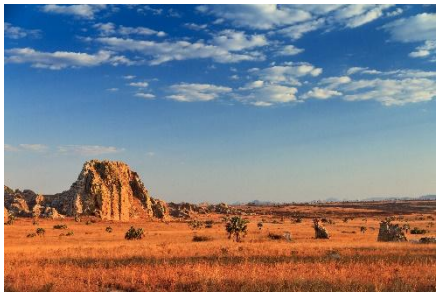
Sightseeing today will be approximately 2 to 3 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Ambalavao – A picturesque town in Madagascar, Ambalavao is known for its traditional architecture, colourful markets, and stunning natural surroundings. Nestled at the foot of the Andringitra Mountains, it serves as a gateway to both the Anja Community Reserve and the dramatic granite landscapes of Andringitra National Park.

Anjà – Set against a dramatic granite rock formation on the road to Isalo, this community-managed forest was created in 1999, and is one of the most successful in the country. It helps to protect the forest, stop deforestation and generate income for the local community.

Day 11: Ambalavao to Isalo National Park Meals: B, L, D



Travel approximately 5 hours and 30 minutes through more of Madagascar's magical landscapes, passing through the Bara region, home to communities who herd zebu cattle.

Your journey into the desert-like scenery of the south will also feature various dramatic rock formations such as the 'Southern Gate' and 'Bishop's Hat' that dot the landscapes.

Go on to pass through Ihosy, the largest city in the desert area before arriving at Ranohira, the gateway to Isalo National Park.

Destination Information

Ranohira – Best known as the gateway to Isalo National Park, Ranohira is surrounded by sandstone massifs, canyons, and desert-like scenery.

Day 12: Isalo National Park Meals: B, L, D



Today is dedicated to Isalo National Park.

Head deep into its landscapes via the Namaza Trail, an easy walking trail that will offer stunning scenery and leads you to natural swimming holes, dramatic canyons and hidden oases.

There is also plenty of wildlife to spot, including the ring-tailed and brown lemurs, hoopoes and souimanga birds as well as geckos and lizards.

Return to your hotel in the mid-afternoon and enjoy some time at leisure before dinner tonight.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 5 to 6 hours on foot, walking up to 6km.

Destination Information

Isalo National Park – Located in southwestern Madagascar, Isalo National Park is renowned for its impressive sandstone formations, deep canyons, natural swimming pools, and sweeping savannahs. The park is home to a plethora of unique flora such as endemic palms and the iconic elephant's foot plant, as well as diverse range of wildlife, including ring-tailed lemurs, sifakas, and rare bird species.

Day 13: Isalo National Park – Meva Workshop Meals: B, L, D

After a leisurely breakfast, follow the 'Crest Trail' through the hotel's grounds for beautiful views of the Isalo massif. Enjoy some free time before attending a meva workshop, where you will learn about endemic plants and the variety of products that can be made from them.

Go on to enjoy a guided tour of the hotel's organic garden, pausing at a viewpoint for sunset with drinks and snacks.



Day 14: Travel to Ifaty Meals: B, L, D

Begin your journey to the coast by travelling approximately 6 hours and 30 minutes to 7 hours through Ilakaka, a former sleepy village turned booming sapphire mining town.

Your journey continues through the spiny forest of southern Madagascar and onto the Mahafaly plateau. Here, among the rocky, flat and dusty terrain, you will see the fascinating Mahafaly tombs. Stop for lunch at the Antsokay Arboretum, before arriving in the small beach town of Ifaty, home to a nomadic fisher-people, the Vezo.



Destination Information

Ilakaka – A bustling mining town, Ilakaka is famous for being at the heart of one of the world's largest sapphire deposits. Once a quiet village, it transformed rapidly in the late 1990s after the discovery of sapphires, attracting thousands of fortune seekers from across Madagascar and beyond. Today, Ilakaka is a lively town with gem markets, trading posts, and a mix of cultures shaped by the sapphire boom.

Mahafaly tombs – Built by the Mahafaly people to honour their ancestors, the Mahafaly tombs are often large stone or wooden structures, richly decorated with aloalo (carved wooden poles), symbolic motifs, and sometimes painted scenes depicting the life of the deceased. They reflect the deep cultural importance of ancestor worship in Malagasy traditions, serving as both spiritual landmarks and works of art. The tombs are not only resting places but also symbols of status, memory, and identity within Mahafaly society.

Day 15: Ifaty Meals: B, L, D

Spend the day as you wish, enjoying the beach or relaxing by the pool.



This evening, an extra special experience awaits. In the nearby Reniala Private Reserve, take a twilight walk through towering baobabs and be on the lookout for wildlife. Then sit down to a candlelight dinner at the foot of these mighty trees.

Destination Information

Reniala Private Reserve – This approximately 150-acre protected area is managed by a local conservation and research association. It offers safe and easy walking routes through a surreal landscape of giant baobabs (some of which are over 1,200 years old and more than 12 metres in circumference), twisted succulents, and thorny trees.

Day 16: Return to Tana Meals: B, L, D

Rise early today and transfer 1 hour to Tuléar Airport.



Fly approximately 5 hours back to Tana today. On arrival, you will navigate through the busy city and out into the countryside. Arrive at the scenic Mandraka Gorge driving along roads that hug the hillsides, passing into wilder landscapes of ferns and misty valleys. Continue to Andasibe, where you'll be plunged straight into thick rainforest.

Later, take a night walk at the Voimma Community Reserve, where you can spot mouse lemurs, leaf-tailed chameleons, tree frogs and much more.

You will spend approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes walking through the Community Reserve.

Destination Information

Andasibe – Andasibe serves as the main gateway to Andasibe National Park. Surrounded by lush rainforest, the town is home to various local markets, and community-led conservation projects.

Voimma Community Reserve – A forest created by local villagers and managed by the local community in order to protect their ancestral land and biodiversity, the reserve offers an authentic ecotourism experience while directly supporting conservation and community development.

Day 17: Explore Andasibe Meals: B, L, D



Rise early and journey to Andasibe National Park.

Spend the morning in the Analamazoatra section of the park, where the evergreen forest is home to the iconic indri-indri, one of the largest of the lemur family, and filled with orchids, birds and reptiles.

This afternoon, you have the option of a walk to Mitsinjo Forest, another community-led reserve, first established in 1999.

Sightseeing today will be approximately 4 hours on foot, walking between 5-6km.

Destination Information

Andasibe National Park – Famous for its population of indri lemurs, the Andasibe National Park protects a rich expanse of lush rainforest teeming with biodiversity. Here, one can encounter a variety of lemur species, colourful chameleons, rare frogs, and hundreds of bird species, alongside an impressive collection of orchids and other endemic plants.

Mitsinjo Forest – Established in 1999, Mitsinjo operates a tree nursery and proudly produces around 40,000 endemic tree seedlings each year.

Day 18: Lemur Island Meals: B, L, D



Visit Vakona Private Reserve to meet lemurs who have been rescued from captivity, the illegal pet trade and private zoos. These lemurs roam free across densely vegetated islands with natural food sources, but cannot be returned to the wild.

Drive approximately 4 hours and 30 minutes back to Tana, where you will have time to relax before a farewell meal at a gourmet restaurant that serves modern takes on Malagasy dishes.

Days 19-20: Depart Tana Meals: B



After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight home, arriving the following day.

MADAGASCAR UNTAMED TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders require a visa to enter Madagascar. For Wendy Wu Tours group tours, the cost of the e-Visa is included and we will send you an application pack 6-10 weeks prior to departure.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back in New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN MADAGASCAR:

Malagasy cuisine is a flavourful blend of African, Asian, and French influences, with rice at the heart of many meals. Meals in Madagascar are typically served with a variety of tasty accompaniments, such as zebu (beef), chicken, pork, or fresh seafood, alongside richly seasoned vegetables and stews.

Local specialties include romazava (a fragrant meat and greens stew), ravitoto (pork with cassava leaves), and freshly grilled fish. Street food also plays a pivotal role in Malagasy culture, with snacks like mofo gasy (sweet rice cakes) and samosas with various fillings.

While traditional Malagasy fare is simple and hearty, most hotels and lodges also serve international dishes to suit a range of tastes.

Dining in Madagascar offers guests an authentic glimpse into the island's diverse cultural heritage and its abundant natural produce.

Important Travel Advice: Tap water in Madagascar is not safe for consumption. Please be advised to drink bottled water only.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local four-star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and Madagascar. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. It may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner.

Roads in Madagascar vary across the island, with some paved and well-maintained, whilst others may be unpaved or inadequately maintained and potholed. Please note, such road conditions, and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. For this reason, the travel timings listed in the sections above are approximations only. Facilities such as toilets along such routes are rare.

GROUP SIZE:

Our Madagascar Untamed tour will be no more than 12 travellers in each group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu Tours groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 6 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

DEVELOPMENT IN MADAGASCAR:

Madagascar is a country of remarkable natural wealth and cultural heritage, but it remains one of the least developed nations in the world. Many Malagasy people live in rural communities, relying on farming, fishing, and small-scale trade for their livelihoods. Infrastructure outside major cities is limited, and access to healthcare, education, and modern conveniences can be basic.

Power outages in more urban and rural areas are not uncommon, we recommend bringing a power bank if possible, as electricity is typically unavailable whilst trekking.

Despite these challenges, there is a strong sense of resilience and community among the Malagasy, and visitors will find warmth and hospitality at every turn. Tourism plays an increasingly important role in supporting local economies, with community projects and conservation initiatives helping to create opportunities while protecting Madagascar's unique environment.

CLIMATE:

Madagascar's climate varies significantly across different regions. Expect a mild climate in the Highlands, warmth and dryness in the West and substantial rainfall in the East coast. The North is typically hot and humid, whilst the South is semi-arid. The dry season typically spans between April to October, while the summer months, which are the rainy season, spans from November to March.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Madagascar is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants and restaurant staff, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

When visiting Madagascar, dressing appropriately enhances both comfort and cultural respect. Lightweight, breathable clothing is ideal for the tropical and subtropical climate, while long sleeves and trousers can help protect against mosquitoes and sun exposure. In towns and villages, modest attire is appreciated, especially when visiting local communities or religious sites. Sturdy walking shoes or hiking boots are essential for exploring national parks and uneven terrain. We also recommend bringing with you, a hat, sunglasses, and a light rain jacket, as weather can change quickly in the highlands and rainforest regions.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES:

Madagascar boasts a vibrant cultural heritage, with African, Asian and European influences. The official language in Madagascar is Malagasy. French is also widely spoken, whilst English is mainly spoken in the bigger cities. Please also note, public displays of affection should be avoided. Your National Escort and/or Local Guide will be able to provide further details on local customs where necessary.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at artisan workshops, with product unique to that region, with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government’s travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice. If a visa is required, our Visa Department will be in touch with the paperwork and next steps. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: October 2026