
GEEO ITINERARY

Madagascar 6/29/2025

Day 1: Antananarivo Arrive in Antananarivo at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.

Arrive at any time. This tour begins and ends in Antananarivo, and the nearest airport is **Ivato International Airport (TNR)**. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive in Africa at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Antananarivo before and/or after the trip. Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar, is located in the island's Central Highlands. Overlooking the city is the Rova of Antananarivo palace complex, the center of the Merina kingdom from the 17th century. It features wooden houses and royal tombs. The pink baroque Andafiavaratra Palace sits in the nearby Haute Ville neighborhood. In the city center, heart-shaped Lake Anosy is ringed by jacaranda trees. **Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting** Please note that hotel check-in usually opens around **2:00-3:00 p.m.**, so if your flight arrives early in the morning, you may wish to book a pre-trip hotel night so that you can rest when you arrive. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. **Joining Instructions** After you arrive at the airport in Antananarivo and make your way out of the airport, you will see the official taxi stand. A taxi to the hotel in Antananarivo will cost approximately \$28 USD and take around 45 minutes. If you have pre-arranged an arrival transfer, look for the driver holding a G Adventures sign in the arrivals hall inside the airport terminal. The sign will not have your name on it—instead, the driver will ask for your name as confirmation of your transfer. We recommend that you exchange money or withdraw the local currency from an ATM at the airport; please ask your representative for help. Please avoid and ignore any offers of help from porters in the airport, as they will demand compensation for their services and can be misleading at times. Only accept help from the G Adventures representative. **Accommodation:** Belvedere Hotel (or similar) * *For the actual hotel your specific departure will be using, please check your voucher.*

Day 2: Antananarivo/Ifaty Fly to Ifaty, with free time upon arrival for optional activities.

Travel by private vehicle to the airport for your flight to Ifaty. Please note that flight times vary, and there is a possibility that you will need to be up before dawn. Upon arrival, there will be free time for optional activities on the gorgeous beaches of the Mozambican Channel. From diving and snorkeling at the beach, to quad biking, and the well-known Spiny Forest, there are many opportunities for adventure. Opt to head out in a traditional dugout canoe to see the coast from a new perspective.

Accommodation: Bamboo Club (or similar)

Day 3: Ifaty Enjoy a full day of free time in Ifaty.

The next two days are free days for you to enjoy the Ifaty area. There is plenty to see and do in Ifaty, and we want to make sure that you have some time to take it all in. Optional activities include a visit to the Spiny Forest Reserve, a dugout canoe ride, or snorkeling, or you can simply relax on the beach. See our optional activities list further below for ideas on how to spend your free time. Your tour leader has more ideas if you need them. Just ask! **Reniala Spiny Forest Reserve:** Hike Difficulty 2/10 ☐☐ The hike through the Spiny Forest and optional early morning hike are generally easy, suitable for most fitness levels, with minimal elevation changes and relatively smooth terrain. **Accommodation:** Bamboo Club (or similar)

Day 4: Ifaty Second day of free time in Ifaty.

Take advantage of one more free day in Ifaty. Try some more of the many optional activities, or simply relax in the sand for one more awesome beach day. **Reniala Spiny Forest Reserve:** Hike Difficulty 2/10 ☐☐ The hike through the Spiny Forest and optional early morning hike are generally easy, suitable for most fitness levels, with minimal elevation changes and relatively smooth terrain. **Accommodation:** Bamboo Club (or similar)

Day 5: Ifaty/Ranohira Drive through the desert landscape, viewing Mahafaly tombs and giant baobab trees en route to Ranohira. In the afternoon, visit the G Adventures-supported tree planting project that is creating a green corridor to protect the biodiversity of Isalo National Park.

Leave Ifaty and drive through the wide-open and vast desert landscape, passing through several unique frontier-style sapphire mining towns. We'll also spot some beautiful baobab trees and pass by the tombs of the Mahafaly, a local tribe in Madagascar known predominantly for its large tombs. They were built for chiefs and kings and are covered in stones, sculptures, and horns. The more important the deceased, the more horns and statues with which the tomb is adorned. One of the largest tombs has over 700 zebu horns! As this is a sacred site, we will just be passing by, and photography is not permitted. In the afternoon, help address one of Madagascar's biggest environmental concerns during a tree-planting activity. You'll learn about why deforestation is such a big problem in Madagascar, how it threatens to wipe out the country's unique biodiversity, and what we can do to stop it. Get hands-on as you plant indigenous trees alongside the rest of the group as part of a project initiated by Soa Zara, a local organization working to protect the environment around the town of Ranohira through tree planting, conservation education, sanitation projects, and other initiatives. **Approximate travel time:** 7 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** ITC Hotel (or similar)

Day 6: Ranohira Spend the day exploring Isalo National Park on foot.

Spend the day exploring Isalo National Park, starting with a short trek in a small canyon, before taking a break from the sun and stopping at a fresh natural swimming pool. Continue to the cascades, considered to be one of the best waterfalls in Madagascar, with a large natural swimming pool. With a little luck, you may see sifaka, brown, or ring-tailed lemurs. You will be able to choose between a shorter and longer section of the trail depending on your ability, and the group will split up accordingly. **Isalo National Park:** Hike Difficulty 8/10 ☐☐ This hike is challenging, primarily due to its length, exposure to the sun, and a steep 400+ stair climb at the end. This hike is not recommended for those with mobility issues or those who are not well-conditioned for extended periods of physical exertion. Ensure you bring plenty of water, take breaks as needed, and consider opting out of additional hikes if feeling fatigued. **Accommodation:** ITC Hotel (or similar)

Day 7: Ranohira/Ambalavao Enjoy a scenic journey heading north. Stop along the way at Anja Park to observe the wildlife in a reserve managed by the local community with many historical and cultural ties.

Enjoy a scenic journey heading north. Stop along the way at Anja Park, which is known for having some of the most accessible groups of ring-tailed lemurs in the country. Enjoy watching and learning about these fascinating creatures, and observe the wildlife in the reserve managed by the local community. Continue enjoying the wonderful changes of landscape along the way to the pleasant rural town of Ambalavao. Ambalavao is famous for its "Papier Antemoro," a papyrus-type paper impregnated with dried flowers and sold throughout the island. Visit a little paper factory, where the locals will describe the traditional methods used to produce this unique, hand-made paper. You can even buy some paper and use it to write letters to your friends and family back home. If time allows, opt to visit a silk factory in Ambalavao and learn about the local way of making fabric or clothing from silk, and the process of dyeing it with natural dyes. **Anja Reserve:** Hike Difficulty 3/10 ☐☐ This hike is mostly flat with some gentle inclines, making it accessible for those with moderate fitness levels. **Approximate travel time:** 5 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Aux Bougainvillees (or similar)

Day 8: Ambalavao/Ranomafana Travel to Ranomafana, a little village named

after the hot springs in the valley. The nearby national park is one of the most important mammal sites in Madagascar.

Drive to Ranomafana, named after the local hot springs. Opt to take a dip into a pool heated naturally by the hot springs surrounding the Namorona River. The nearby national park is one of the most important mammal sites in Madagascar. Set out on a short (2-hr) or long (4-hr) hike through the forest and get a feel for the incredible wildlife of the area. The terrain in the park is often slippery, but the mid-altitude rainforest has an incredible, unrivaled diversity of flora and fauna. The park was integrated into the UNESCO World Heritage Site Rainforests of the Atsinanana in 2007. Ranomafana National Park: Hike Difficulty 6/10 □□ The hike in Ranomafana is moderately challenging due to slippery conditions and varying terrain. It is advisable to wear proper footwear and proceed with caution on wet paths.

Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Manja Hotel (or similar)

Day 9: Ranomafana/Antsirabe Travel by private vehicle to the colonial town of Antsirabe, passing rice paddies along the way. Along the way, stop in Ambositra, a quaint town known for its woodcrafts.

Leave the rainforest of Ranomafana behind and travel by private vehicle to the colonial town of Antsirabe, passing rice paddies along the way. The drive will take most of the day, but there will be stops along the way, including in Ambositra, a quaint town known for its woodcrafts where you will have some free time to eat lunch and shop at your leisure before continuing the drive to Antsirabe. Antsirabe is known for its thermal springs and baths, as well as its precious and semi-precious stones and handicrafts. **Approximate travel time:** 9 hrs by private vehicle **Accommodation:** Hotel Vatolahy (or similar)

Day 10: Antsirabe Spend the whole day exploring the local life and communities of the Antsirabe highlands. Enjoy a traditional Madagascar lunch. Arrive back to Antsirabe in the early evening for free time.

Travel from Antsirabe to Anjazafotsy this morning. For today's walk, there will be two options: a 9-km (5.6-mile) walk with about 700 m (.4 miles) uphill, or a 7-km (4.3-mile) walk with about 500 m (.3 miles) uphill. The path is relatively easy, and a short part will go through rice fields and along muddy terrain. Along the way, the group will stop to visit villages and observe the daily activities of the local residents. There will also be opportunities to spot wildlife including reptiles, amphibians, and birds. Enjoy a traditional Madagascar lunch. Those who do the shorter walk can opt for a cooking lesson to learn all of the steps needed to prepare the famous Koba dish (a kind of peanut dessert paté). Once finished, the group will taste their creations. If you choose the longer hike, you will meet back up with the rest of the group at the hotel in the evening. Walking Near Antsirabe: Hike Difficulty 5/10 □□ The hike to the community village in Andranomafana involves a moderate level of exertion, with a mix of flat and uneven terrain. The length of the hike may add to the challenge. **Accommodation:** Hotel Vatolahy (or similar)

Day 11: Antsirabe/Andasibe Travel to Andasibe and Perinet National Park, with scenic stops en route.

Travel to Andasibe and Perinet National Park with multiple scenic stops along the route to make the drive more enjoyable. Upon arrival, the group will have the option to go on an easy night walk to observe wildlife including frogs, reptiles, mice, and lemurs. In Andasibe, you will stay in a quiet area that is a great base for exploring the Indri Special Reserve. **Accommodation:** Feon'ny Ala (or similar)

Day 12: Andasibe Spend the day exploring Andasibe-Analamazaotra National Park and the Indri Special Reserve.

Andasibe is located less than a mile outside of Andasibe-Analamazaotra National Park and the Indri Special Reserve. One of the park's primary purposes is to protect the natural habitat of the indri, a large black and white diurnal lemur species that feeds on leaves and fruit. In addition to the indri, the park has

ten other diurnal and nocturnal lemur species, large chameleons, and the rarely-seen blue boa. The flora is just as spectacular, with numerous species of trees, palms, and orchids. Andasibe-Perinet National Park: Hike Difficulty 4/10 ☐☐ The hikes in Andasibe, including the night walks, can be moderately challenging due to slippery conditions, especially if you opt to follow the guide off the main path to get closer to the lemurs. Caution is advised, particularly in wet conditions. **Accommodation:** Feon'ny Ala (or similar)

Day 13: Andasibe/Antananarivo Travel by private vehicle to Antananarivo. Enjoy an optional last night out on the town with the whole group.

Return to Antananarivo today and spend free time in the capital city before an optional last night out on the town with the whole group. There are many places to choose from for your farewell dinner, and your tour leader will have suggestions. **Accommodation:** Belvedere Hotel (or similar)

Day 14: Antananarivo Depart Antananarivo at any time.

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Antananarivo at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Antananarivo, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEE0 program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.

****Itinerary Disclaimer:** While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*