AFRIQUE UNIE · TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Madagascar in 15 days: a day-by-day itinerary

For a first trip, the RN7 is Madagascar's great classic. This fifteen-day itinerary heads in another direction: the rainforest of Andasibe and its indris, the highlands of Antsirabe, the west of the baobabs and the Tsingy de Bemaraha, then the Indian Ocean on Île Sainte-Marie.

Day by day

Day 1 · Antananarivo, the city of a thousand (night : Antananarivo)
Antananarivo, known to everyone as Tana, spreads over a dozen hills in the heart of the highlands. After arriving, head up to the Upper Town to see the Rova, the former Queen's Palace, gutted by fire in 1995 and since restored, which overlooks the city and the surrounding rice fields. Walk back down the steps and lanes lined with brick houses to Lake Anosy and its jacarandas, in bloom around October and November. If you have time, the craft market at La Digue, on the airport road, is ideal for basketwork, embroidery and horn objects.

Days 2-3 · Andasibe and the song of the indri (night : Andasibe)
Allow three to four hours' drive east, through hills, terraced rice fields and red-brick villages, to reach Andasibe. The national park protects a rainforest home to the indri, the largest of the lemurs, whose powerful song rings out in the early morning. Walks must be done with a local guide, who will also spot brown lemurs, sifakas, chameleons and brightly coloured frogs. In the evening, a night walk on the edge of the park reveals mouse lemurs, sleeping chameleons and astonishing insects. On the second day, continue to the Mantadia sector, wilder and less visited. Pack rain gear: even in the dry season, this side of the island is very humid.

Day 4 · Through the highlands to Antsirabe (night : Antsirabe)
Head back towards Tana, then due south on the RN7: the day involves six to seven hours on the road, through fine scenery of rice paddies and eroded hills. Antsirabe, a spa town founded in the late 19th century, still has wide avenues and colonial-era buildings. People get around by pousse-pousse, the hand-pulled carts that are the town's emblem. Visit a workshop making miniatures from recycled materials, a semi-precious stone cutter or a craftsman working zebu horn. If you arrive early, the crater lake of Tritriva, about twenty kilometres away, offers a lovely walk around its dark waters.

Days 5-6 · West to the Avenue of the Baobabs (night : Morondava)
The road west, via Miandrivazo, is one of the longest of the trip: nine to ten hours to drop from the highlands to the hot, dry plains of Menabe. Leave at dawn and bring snacks. The next day, rest in Morondava, a small coastal town where you can watch outrigger canoes return at sunset. In the late afternoon, head to the Avenue of the Baobabs, around twenty minutes away on a dirt track. These giants of the species Adansonia grandidieri, some thirty metres tall and several centuries old, turn red in the setting sun. Do not miss the Baobabs Amoureux, two intertwined trunks, a little further north.

Days 7-9 · The Tsingy de Bemaraha (night : Bekopaka)
The track to Bekopaka takes a full day by 4x4, with a ferry crossing of the Tsiribihina at Belo and a possible stop in Kirindy Forest, where you may glimpse the fossa, the island's top predator. The next day, set off for the UNESCO-listed Grands Tsingy: harnesses, ladders, walkways and suspension bridges let you move above a forest of razor-sharp limestone pinnacles. The circuit lasts several hours and calls for good fitness and a reasonable head for heights. The third day is gentler: combine the Petits Tsingy, near the village, with a pirogue trip down the Manambolo gorges, between cliffs and caves.

Days 10-11 · Back to Morondava and Antananarivo (night : Morondava, then Antananarivo)
Head back south along the track, with one more ferry crossing and another chance to enjoy the baobabs at sunset, as the road passes along the avenue. Spend the night in Morondava. The next day, take the domestic flight to Antananarivo, checking it well in advance: schedules change often and flights are not daily. Otherwise, the drive back takes two long days. Once in Tana, use the afternoon for some shopping at the craft market or treat yourself to a good dinner: the capital has excellent restaurants where you can try romazava, ravitoto and zebu in every form.

Days 12-14 · Île Sainte-Marie (night : Île Sainte-Marie)
A flight of about an hour lands you on Île Sainte-Marie, a long strip of land fringed with palm trees off the east coast. From July to September, humpback whales come here to breed: boat trips, run under a whale-watching code of conduct, often bring you close to them. The rest of the time, hire a bicycle or scooter to follow the coast and its fishing villages. Visit the pirate cemetery near Ambodifotatra, a reminder of the days when the island was a base for buccaneers. Finish with Île aux Nattes, a few minutes south by pirogue, with its empty beaches and a lagoon perfect for swimming.

Day 15 · Back to Antananarivo and home (night : Return flight)
The last day is devoted to the journey home. Enjoy a final morning swim in the lagoon or a bike ride along the coast, then head to the island's small airport for the flight to Antananarivo. Leave a comfortable margin before your international flight: domestic flights can be delayed, and it is wise not to schedule the connection on the same day without a few hours to spare. If your return flight timing is tight, it is better to fly back to Tana the evening before. At the international airport, keep some local cash for last-minute purchases, such as vanilla or wild pepper.

Getting around

In Madagascar, people usually travel with a vehicle and driver, often a 4x4 for the west: roads are slow, sometimes in poor condition, and the Tsingy track is impassable in the rainy season. Domestic flights save a great deal of time, but schedules change often, so build in some slack.

When to go

The dry season, from April to November, is the only suitable time for this route: the Tsingy track and park are generally accessible from April or May until November. July to September combines the whales of Sainte-Marie with pleasant temperatures, and cool nights in the highlands. From December to March, rain and cyclones make the west inaccessible.

Practical information

Madagascar

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/madagascar/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	throughout the country
Currency	Malagasy ariary (MGA)
Languages	Malagasy, French
Plugs	type C, E · dialling code +261 · UTC+3
Emergencies	police 17 · ambulance 17 · fire 18

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

Notebook made from visiterafriqueunie.com/en/itineraries/madagascar-in-15-days/ · information checked in November 2026 against official sources. Entry, health and safety rules change: check them again before you leave (your country's official advice, the embassy of the country you visit).