Scopus Travel • Itinerary

11N~12D The Last Eden: South Madagascar Journey

South Madagascar reveals a land of astonishing contrasts—mist-cloaked jungles, sacred canyons, and coral-fringed shores where time lingers gently. This image depicts a beautiful panorama of a spectacular sunset at 'La Fenetre', in Isalo national park.

PRICING	TOTAL TOUR DAYS	ARRIVAL PORT	DEPARTURE PORT
—	12	Antananarivo	Antananarivo

Countries Covered: **Madagascar**

Tour Overview

11 Nights ~ 12 Days: The Last Eden: South Madagascar Journey

- Follow the red earth road through highland hills and sun-drenched savannahs, where zebu herds wander beneath vast African skies.
- Wander rainforest paths veiled in mist, where golden bamboo lemurs leap through shadowed leaves and rivers sing ancient songs.
- Step into stone and silence at Isalo, where time has carved cathedrals from sandstone and sunset turns cliffs to fire.
- Greet ring-tailed lemurs in sacred groves, where villagers guard the forest as both home and heritage.
- Cross the baobab-studded lands of Zombitse, where rare birds call from twisted trees and light filters like prayer.
- Walk the thorned trails of the spiny forest, where life blooms from drought, and baobabs rise like ancient giants of myth.
- Drift by boat to Anakao, where sea and sky blur into blue eternity, and the Vezo people live in harmony with tide and wind.
- Watch for whales in the channel’s depths—breathing giants tracing old migratory memory through southern seas.

- Choose between an island of birds and coral or a lake of salt and flame, where flamingos wade and banyans root in stone.
- Depart with the forest in your lungs, the ocean in your bones, and a thousand memories carved softly into soul.

Accommodation plan: 1N Antananarivo | 1N Antsirabe | 2N Ranomafana | 2N Isalo | 2N Ifaty | 2N Anakao | 1N Antananarivo

Day Wise Program

Family Tour | Leisure | Adventure | Wildlife | Photography

Day 01 — Arrival in Antananarivo

Accommodation: Antananarivo | Meals Included: Dinner

The journey begins in Madagascar's highland capital, Antananarivo, where ridgelines ripple beneath colonial silhouettes and rice paddies shimmer beneath the dusk. The city breathes a quiet mix of Merina culture, faded French architecture, and the hum of a thousand zebu carts returning home.

A soft landing into Malagasy rhythm—where time is measured not by the hour, but by the color of the sky.

Ariel view Antananarivo, Madagascar

Antananarivo (Tana), Madagascar

Antananarivo cityscape, Tana, capital of Madagascar, french name Tananarive and short name Tana, Poor capital and largest city in Madagascar

Antananarivo Reisfelder Madagaskar

Ziegelei in Antananarivo

A lone farmer walks through lush rice paddy field surrounded by homes and buildings in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Day 02 — Antananarivo – Antsirabe

Accommodation: Antsirabe | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

The road winds south through the Central Highlands, past ochre earth and cascading rice terraces. Small villages ripple with life—brick houses baking in the sun, children chasing tire hoops, and market stalls blooming with lychees, raffia crafts, and horn carvings.

In Antsirabe, colonial-era villas whisper of bygone days. Known as the “city of water,” this thermal town is rimmed with volcanic lakes and craftspeople who shape zebu horn into art, and weave embroidery with stories. Visit family-run workshops crafting miniature bicycles and embroidered textiles, infused with the quiet dignity of highland life.

Madagascar, Highlands, south of Antsirabe, women carry bundles thru rice fields.

Maison Malgache. Antsirabe, Madagascar

Rubber-tyred Michelin Train in Madagascar - Last in the world

The Tritriva lake near Antsirabe, highlands of Madagascar

Landscape with the ploughing farmers at the rice fields and Onive river - Antanifotsy, on the way to Anstirabe

Traditional highland housing, Antsirabe, Madagascar

Day 03 — Antsirabe – Ranomafana National Park

Accommodation: Ranomafano | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Transfer: 240 km | Approx. 6.5 hours

As the road curls deeper into the Betsileo heartland, eucalyptus groves give way to rainforest mist. In Ambalavao, pause to visit a traditional paper workshop, where the ancient art of Antaimoro papermaking is kept alive with natural dyes and dried flowers. Just beyond, the highland markets buzz with zebu traders, their cattle trailing like ancient caravans across dusty fields.

Arrival at Ranomafana brings a sudden hush—the rainforest breathes with moisture and moss. Here, one steps into a living Eden, where golden bamboo lemurs, thought extinct until 1986, peer from the underbrush and endemic frogs trill their ghostly songs as twilight falls.

Optional Night Walk: As evening descends, take a guided torch-lit walk along the forest edge. Spot the elusive mouse lemur—eyes glinting in the dark—and chameleons curled like question marks on fern tips.

Rain forest landscape Ranomafana Madagascar

Day 04 — Ranomafana National Park – Forests of Mist and Flame

Accommodation: Ranomafano | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

In the waking hours, the rainforest stirs—its canopy alive with a choir of warblers, sunbirds, and lemurs calling from the treetops. Ranomafana National Park, a UNESCO-listed sanctuary, is one of Madagascar's richest biological treasures. Shrouded in cloud and steam, it is home to twelve species of lemur, including the critically endangered greater bamboo lemur and the golden bamboo lemur found nowhere else on Earth.

A guided trek leads through tangled vines and over mossy roots, where orchids dangle and ferns unfurl in ancient spirals. The air is fragrant with wild ginger, and high in the branches, red-fronted brown lemurs leap like spirits through cathedral-light. Along riverbanks, lucky eyes might glimpse a rare Madagascar wagtail or a leaf-tailed gecko merged with bark.

For those drawn to healing waters, the park's name—*Rano mafana*—means "hot water," and thermal springs still bubble near the village, echoing ancient rituals of rest.

Day 05 — Ranomafana – Ambalavao – Ranohira (Isalo)

Accommodation: Isalo National Park | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Transfer: 345 km | Approx. 8 hours (with scenic and cultural stops)

The rainforest yields to granite spires as the journey cuts southward toward the stone-carved horizons of Isalo. En route, Ambalavao offers a cultural interlude at the Anja Community Reserve—a shining example of conservation led by the local Betsileo people. Here, families of ring-tailed lemurs bask on sunlit rocks and leap through fig trees sacred to ancestral spirits. The dry forest is alive with sifakas, orchids, and boa snakes camouflaged among roots.

Continuing the descent into the dry south, the landscape changes: rice terraces fade, replaced by cactus-dotted plateaus and expansive grasslands grazed by herds of zebu cattle, the lifeblood of the Bara people. Their traditions—rooted in cattle-herding, ancestor reverence, and warrior tales—mark this region with deep cultural soul.

By late afternoon, Isalo emerges—Madagascar's answer to the Grand Canyon. Its sandstone cliffs glow amber and rose in the sinking sun, scarred by wind and shaped by rain into otherworldly forms.

Anja Community Reserve, at the base a large cliff with a sheltered forest habitat among vast boulders with rich wildlife. It is home to the highest concentration of maki, or ring-tailed lemurs, in all of Madagascar.

Ring-tailed Lemur (Lemur catta), Anja Community Reserve, Haute Matsiatra Region, Madagascar

Ring-tailed Lemur (Lemur catta), Anja Community Reserve, Haute Matsiatra Region, Madagascar

Ring-tailed Lemur (Lemur catta), Anja Community Reserve, Haute Matsiatra Region, Madagascar

Grasshopper Rainbow Milkweed Locust or Rainbow Bush Locust (Phymateus saxosus), Endemic colorful insect, grasshoppers of the family Pyrgomorphidae. Anja Community Reserve, Madagascar wildlife animal.

Day 06 — Isalo National Park – Canyons of Time

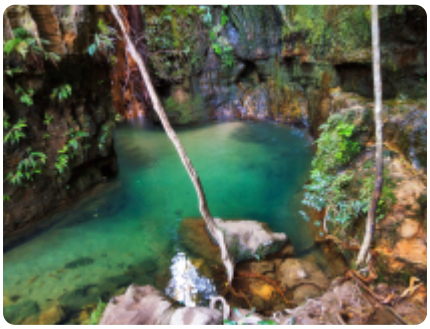
Accommodation: Isalo | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Beneath a sky of endless blue, Isalo National Park opens like a sacred text carved in stone. Its gorges, plateaus, and wind-sculpted buttes hold ancient secrets—tombs of the Bara hidden high in cliff walls, and natural pools nestled deep within narrow canyons.

Today’s trek weaves through the Canyon des Singes and the Piscine Naturelle, where cool emerald water shimmers beneath palm fronds. Along the way, Verreaux’s sifakas dance through the trees, their white coats luminous against red rock. Watch for Madagascar hoopoes, rock thrushes, and the rare Benson’s rock thrush, endemic to these southern highlands.

A place of silence and awe, Isalo offers something beyond sightseeing—it invites stillness. In the golden hour, when the cliffs ignite with light and shadows stretch across the plains, one feels the full weight of time.

Optional Sundown Excursion: Witness sunset from the "Window of Isalo" (*La Fenêtre*), a natural stone arch framing the sky—a place where sky and stone kiss, and dusk becomes divine.



Beautiful river and cascade in a canyon in Isalo national park, Madagascar

Africa, Madagascar, Isalo National Park. A particularly nice sandstone formation glows in the setting sun.

Day 07 — Ranohira – Zombitse – Tulear – Ifaty

Accommodation: Ifaty | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Transfer: 275 km | Approx. 6.5 hours (with stop in Zombitse-Vohibasia)

The road south rolls like a hymn across wide savannahs and baobab-dotted plains. As dawn breaks over Isalo's stone cathedrals, the journey descends through the Sapphire town of Ilakaka, a raw, earth-dug metropolis born overnight from dreams of gemstones. Miners, traders, and wanderers drift through dusty streets—a surreal intersection of wealth and want.

Further along, the Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park offers a final window into Madagascar's transitional dry forest. This lesser-known park hums with birdsong—home to the Appert's greenbul, found nowhere else on Earth. Giant baobabs rise like sentinels from the forest floor, and under their shade, Zombitse sportive lemurs curl in hollows, barely seen by passing eyes.

By afternoon, Tulear appears, sun-baked and windswept by the Mozambique Channel. Turning north along the coastal track, the road slips into sand and salt as you arrive at Ifaty, a fishing village pressed between spiny forest and sea.

Majestic Grandmother Fony baobab, (Adansonia rubrostipa), Oldest part of the tree an estimated 1,600 years old. Tsimanampetsotsa national park. Madagascar wilderness landscape.

Day 08 — Ifaty – Forest of Thorns and Tides

Accommodation: Ifaty | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Here on the southwest coast, the land becomes strange and sacred. The spiny forest of Ifaty—a Didiereaceae-dominated ecosystem found nowhere else on Earth—bristles with octopus trees, bottle-trunk baobabs, and Euphorbia that seem more sculpture than shrub. This is one of the world's most unique xerophytic environments, alive with creatures adapted to heat and hardship.

A sunrise bird watching walk brings rare sightings: long-tailed ground rollers, Subdesert mesites, and vibrant lafresnaye's vangas. The forest stirs with life at dawn, then slips into silence beneath the noon sun.

Later, wander the Vezo fishing villages, where life flows with the tides. Women braid nets on the shore, and outrigger canoes painted in ochre and indigo rock gently in the surf.

Fishing boats on the beach on Madagascar, Ifaty

madagascar magpie robin, ifaty, madagascar

madagascar magpie robin, ifaty, madagascar

grey-headed lovebird, ifaty, madagascar

Day 09 — Ifaty – Tulear – Boat Transfer to Anakao

Accommodation: Anakao | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Transfer: 25 km by road (1 hour) + 35 km by boat (approx. 1.5 hours)

A morning departure returns to Tulear, where the road ends and the sea begins. Boarding a motorized *pirogue* or speedboat, glide across the Mozambique Channel to reach the hidden gem of Anakao, a crescent of wind-polished sand, drifting between dream and tide.

Anakao is not merely a beach—it is a sanctuary. Here the Vezo nomads of the sea live as they have for centuries, guided by stars and surf. The afternoon is free to sink into this rhythm—watch children race crabs across the dunes, see sails disappear into the horizon, or simply walk the coast where time leaves no footprints.

From June to September, these waters become a sanctuary for humpback whales, migrating from Antarctic depths to birth their young in warm channels. Their breaches and tail-slaps ripple through the ocean, and through the heart.

Traditional fishing pirogue with blue sky in Anakao, Madagascar

Sun shines on african Red-knobbed Starfish Protoreaster linckii in shallow sea - Anakao, Madagascar.

Olive bee-eater or Madagascar bee-eater (Merops superciliosus) is a near passerine bee-eater species in the genus Merops. Bird sits on branch against blue sky. Anakao Madagascar wildlife animal

Humpback whale calf emerging from water (Megaptera novaeangliae), Anakao, Madagascar

Humpback whale swimming in the ocean (Megaptera novaeangliae), Anakao, Madagascar

Day 10 — Anakao – Nosy Ve Island

Accommodation: Anakao | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Excursion to Nosy Ve Island
A short sail leads to the sacred isle of Nosy Ve, a wind-swept coral fragment ringed by translucent sea. Revered by the Vezo as a burial site, the island is also home to the rare red-tailed tropicbird, which nests undisturbed in white sand dunes. Time stands still here—one can snorkel in silence among untouched reefs, or walk the bone-white beach where ancestors still whisper in sea wind.

- Mode: Motorized boat from Anakao (about 30–45 min each way)
- Duration: Half-day (including snorkelling, birdwatching, beach walks)
- Terrain: Easy – island is flat and compact
- Best for: Seabird nesting, sacred Vezo cultural heritage, beach/snorkel experience

Optional Night Walk: In the dry brush near Anakao, a guided torch-lit stroll may reveal white-footed sportive lemurs, nocturnal geckos, and the whispery glide of owls hunting under the moon.

Beach landscape at Nosy Ve island, Anakao, Madagascar

Sun shines on african Red-knobbed Starfish Protoreaster linckii in shallow sea - Anakao, Madagascar.

Red-tailed tropicbird close up(Phaethon rubricauda), Nosy Ve, Madagascar

Red-tailed tropicbird close up(Phaethon rubricauda), Nosy Ve, Madagascar

Day 11 — Anakao – Tulear – Flight to Antananarivo

Accommodation: Antananarivo | Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Boat Transfer to Tulear (1.5 hours) + Domestic Flight (approx. 1.5 hours)

The day opens with a farewell to the south—a boat ride back across sunlit waves to Tulear, where the red roads end. At the modest airport, a plane lifts into the air, and the dry spines of baobabs fade into memory.

By afternoon, the highland capital of Antananarivo returns to view—its ridges terraced in green and brick, its ancient heart pulsing beneath modern rhythms. Time to wander once more through hillside stairways, flower markets, or lakeside promenades where the scent of cloves and charcoal mingles with dusk.

The windy road from which leads to Antananarivo through the central highlands of Madagascar

panorama of Antananarivo or Tananarive, short Tana, Poor capital and largest city in Madagascar, Madagasikara republic.

Tana to Anadacibe, Madagascar

Panorama of Antananarivo, french Tananarive, short name Tana, capital and largest city in Madagascar, Madagasikara republic. Vie from top to Central Antananarivo, including Lake Anosy.

Day 12 — Departure from Antananarivo

From rainforest to reef, canyon to coral, Madagascar reveals itself not as a destination, but a living memory—a place that echoes in birdsong and lemur eyes, in the taste of smoked zebu and the silence between whale songs.

Depart Madagascar with the soul marked by wildness—ring-tailed lemurs leaping through sacred groves, flamingos mirrored on salt lakes, and a nation whose beauty lives in both land and people.

Rural landscape, Madagsacar

Landscape with the ploughing farmers at the rice fields and Onive river - Antanifotsy, on the way to Anstirabe

Popular Queries

Additional information

What are the travel requirements ?

- Passport valid for at least 6 months from the start date of the tour.
- Entry permit as required for various Nationalities.
- Madagascar visa policy.
- Health insurance valid for the duration of the journey, preferably "cash free" policies.

How safe is Madagascar?

- As safe as safe could be.
- With no large carnivores, nor poisonous reptiles, outdoors are very safe.
- The population is very friendly and easy going.
- Public Transportation is erratic and is not recommended for tourists on short holidays.

Are credit cards accepted in Madagascar?

- Not everywhere.
- Many vendors do not accept Master Card, and will insist on payment with VISA only or cash.
- Other popular cards like Amex, Diners, etc are also scarcely accepted.

Should cash be carried in local currency?

- It is advisable to keep at least 100~200 $/EUR in local currency - Malagasy Ariary.
- The exchange rate is approximately 4400MGA = 1US$ / 4700MGA =1EURO [April 2024]
- The best place to get it changed is on arrival at the airport.
- Please request assistance from our team on arrival.
- Arirary will be required to make local purchases, for restaurants, tips etc...

How much cash could be carried into and out of Madagascar?

- Visitors and residents can import up to MGA 400,000 and an unlimited amount of foreign currency. Sums of money greater than EUR 7500 will need to be declared at the customs department.
- Visitors and residents can also export up to MGA 400,000 in local currency and an unlimited amount of foreign cash providing a written declaration is made at the customs department.

What are the other important entry regulations in Madagsacar?

- **Free import**
  • 500 cigarettes or
  • 25 cigars or
  • 500 grammes of tobacco
  • 1 bottle of alcoholic beverages
- **Prohibited**
  • Illegal drugs
  • Weapons, explosives and ammunition
  • Knives and deadly weapons
  • Plant and plant products – unless permission has been obtained
  • Meat and meat products
  • Pets and animal products – unless permission has been obtained
  • Electronic equipment
  • Counterfeit money and goods
  • Pornographic materials
- **Restricted**
  • All passengers planning on re-exporting guns and ammunition will be required to apply for an export permit from their local “Chef de Province”.
  • All perfume is subject to duty regulations and cannot enter the country for free.
  • Fruit and vegetables will need to be declared and an entry permit obtained before being granted entry into the country.
  • Protected plant and plant materials are prohibited from entering the country.
  • All animals entering the country will be forced to undergo a sanitary inspection upon arrival. The creatures will require a veterinarian health certificate from the country of origin specifying the creature’s condition and lack of any contagious diseases. Dogs over three months and cats over six months old will need to be specifically vaccinated against rabies less than one month and over three months respectively prior to their entry into the country.

Are foregin insurance policies accepted in Madagascar?

- Yes they are and it is a mandatory requirement to travel with us.

How much does this package cost?

- The cost of a tour package is a function of various services; viz, class of accommodation, period of travel, meal plan etc.
- Please make a booking and we will send a price offer for your consideration.

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