



Eastern Madagascar

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Véranda (p172)
- ➔ Piment Banane (p172)
- ➔ Mangrove Le Gourmand (p183)
- ➔ Idylle Beach (p181)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hôtel Feon'ny Ala (p162)
- ➔ Chez Sica (p185)
- ➔ Dounia Forest Lodge (p192)
- ➔ Libertalia (p183)
- ➔ Ony Hôtel (p168)

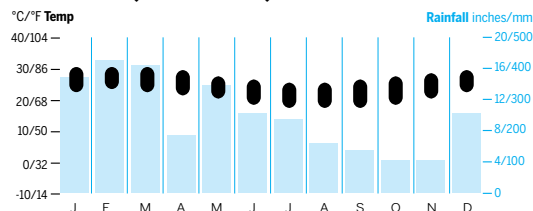
Why Go?

Eastern Madagascar is travel the way it used to be. There is a wildness here of primordial allure, from the misty mountains of Masoala, down the huge coastline with its pounding sea and overhanging palms, to the lush waterways of the Pangalanes Lakes. When you arrive back home, it all has the quality of a dream.

This part of the country is largely cut off from the rest, and from itself, by a degraded transportation network, including some roads out of an engineer's nightmare. Travelling here requires a combination of plane, car, 4WD, dirt bike, scooter, pirogue (dugout canoe), ferry, cargo boat, *taxi-brousse* (bush taxi) and motorboat. This inaccessibility results in isolated communities and, for the traveller, a constant sense of coming upon undiscovered locales, including entire national parks. There's no doubt it can be frustrating at times, but eastern Madagascar produces more travellers' tales than anywhere else. If you value that, come here first.

When to Go

Tamatave (Toamasina)



Jun–Oct Vanilla season. Flights can be full in the northeast.

Jul–Sep Whale watching in the Baie d'Antongil.

Dec–Mar Hold onto your hat, it's cyclone season.

Eastern Madagascar Highlights

- 1 Wake to the call of the *indri* in **Parc National Andasibe Mantadia** (p162)
- 2 Drift along **Lac Ampitabe** (p166) on a solar-powered boat from Vohibola
- 3 Drive the infamous **RN5** (p177) from Soanierana-Ivongo to Maroantsetra
- 4 Watch the elusive aye-aye eat a coconut during a night walk on **Aye-Aye Island** (p187)
- 5 Camp out on the tropical jungle island of **Nosy Mangabe** (p190)
- 6 See breaching humpbacks on a **whale-watching trip** (p180)
- 7 Explore the island of **Île Sainte Marie** (p177) by quad or dirt bike
- 8 Stay in an ecolodge at **Parc National de Masoala** (p191)
- 9 Do absolutely nothing on **Île aux Nattes** (p184)

