



Madagascar

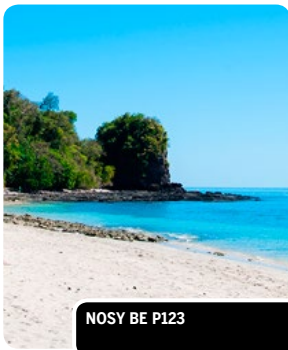


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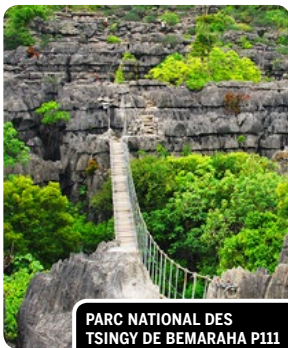
Emilie Filou, Anthony Ham, Helen Ranger

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Madagascar	4
Madagascar Map	6
Madagascar's Top 10	8
Need to Know	14
If You Like	16
Month by Month	19
Itineraries	22
Regions at a Glance	25



NOSY BE P123



PARC NATIONAL DES TSINGY DE BEMARAHA P111

ON THE ROAD

ANTANANARIVO ... 28

Around Antananarivo ... 44	
Lemurs' Park..... 44	
Ivato..... 45	
Ilafy..... 46	
Ambohimanga	46

CENTRAL MADAGASCAR 48

Ambatolampy	50
Antsirabe	50
Ambositra	55
Ialatsara Lemur Forest Camp	57
Parc National de Ranomafana	58
Ranomafana	60
Manakara..... 61	
Sahambavy..... 63	
Fianarantsoa..... 64	
Ambalavao..... 68	
Massif de l'Andringitra ... 69	

SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR 73

The Desert 75	
Parc National de l'Isalo... 75	
Ilakaka	80
Parc National Zombitse-Vohibasia	80
The Great Reef	81
Tuléar (Toliara)..... 82	
Northern Reef..... 86	
Southern Reef..... 90	
The Cape	93
Ampanihy	93
Lavanono..... 94	
Réserve Spéciale de Cap Sainte Marie	94

Faux Cap	94
Ambovombe	94
Réserve Privée de Berenty..... 94	
Parc National d'Andohahela	95
Fort Dauphin (Taolagnaro)	95
Around Fort Dauphin..... 98	

WESTERN MADAGASCAR 100

Boeny Region	101
Majunga (Mahajanga) ... 101	
Around Majunga..... 106	
Katsepy	106
Mahavy-Kinkony Wetland Complex..... 107	
Parc National d'Ankarafantsika..... 108	
Tsiribihina River Region	109
Miandrivazo..... 109	
Tsiribihina River	110
Belo-sur-Tsiribihina	110
Manambolo River..... 111	
Parc National des Tsingy de Bemaraha	111
Réserve Forestière de Kirindy	114
Morondava Region	115
Morondava..... 116	
Belo-sur-Mer..... 119	
Parc National de Kirindy-Mitea..... 121	
NORTHERN MADAGASCAR	122
Nosy Be	123
Hell-Ville (Andoany)..... 129	
Ambatoloaka..... 131	

Contents

UNDERSTAND

Nosy Be's West Coast . . .	133	Parc National Andasibe Mantadia	162
Mt Passot & Crater Lakes	135	Parc Mitsinjo	164
Islands Around Nosy Be	135	Réserve de Torotorofotsy	165
Nosy Komba	135	Mahay Mitia Ala	165
Nosy Tanikely	136	Réserve de Maromizaha	165
Nosy Sakatia	136	Vohimana Forest	165
Nosy Mitsio	136	Pangalanes Lakes	165
Nosy Iranja	137	Lac Ampitabe (Akanin'ny Nofy)	166
Ambanja Region	137	Lac Rasobe & Manambato	168
Ambanja	137	Ambila-Lemaitso	168
Ankify	138	Tamatave (Toamasina)	169
Antsiranana Region	138	North of Tamatave	174
Diego Suarez (Antsiranana)	140	Parc Zoologique Ivoloïna	174
Baie des Français	144	Foulpointe (Mahavelona)	175
Ramena	145	Mahambo	175
Les Trois Baies	146	Fenoarivo-Atsinanana (Fénérive Est)	176
La Mer d'Émeraude	147	Soanierana-Ivongo	176
Joffreville (Ambohitra)	147	Manompana	177
Parc National Montagne d'Ambre	148	Île Sainte Marie	177
Réserve Spéciale Ankarana	150	Ambodifotatra	180
Ambilobe	152	South of Ambodifotatra	182
Sava Region	152	Île aux Nattes (Nosy Nato)	184
Vohémar (Iharana)	153	North of Ambodifotatra	185
Sambava	153	Baie d'Antongil & the Masoala Peninsula	186
Parc National de Marojejy	155	Mananara	186
Antalaha	156	Maroantsetra	188
		Réserve de Nosy Mangabe	190
		Parc National de Masoala	191

EASTERN MADAGASCAR

East of Antananarivo	160
Lac Mantasoa	160
Moramanga	160
Andasibe	161

Madagascar Today	194
History	196
Malagasy Life	203
Arts	208
Malagasy Cuisine	210
Environment	213
Parks & Reserves	220
Wildlife	225

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Directory A–Z	250
Transport	257
Health	264
Language	268
Index	280
Map Legend	287

SPECIAL FEATURES

Itineraries	22
Malagasy cuisine	210
Parks & reserves	220
Colour wildlife section	225

Itineraries



2
WEEKS

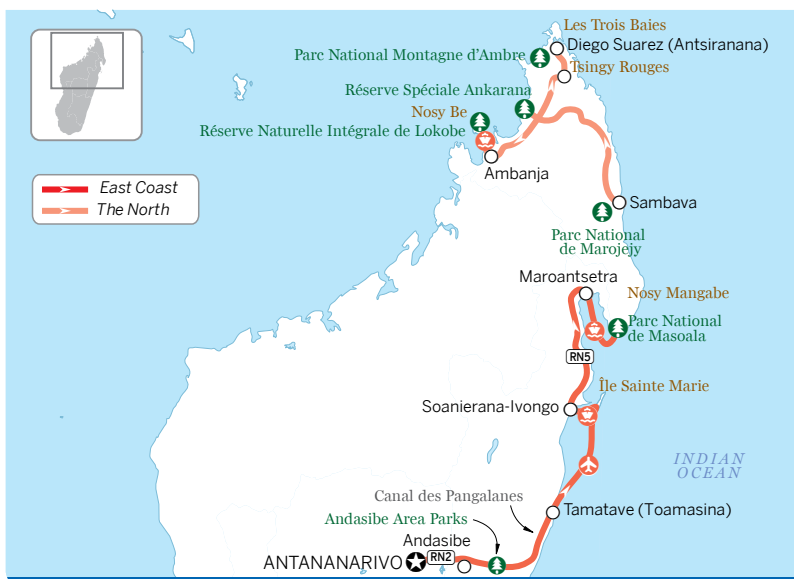
Essential Madagascar

A combination of the classic RN7 with some island R&R in glorious Nosy Be.

On day one, head from Antananarivo down to the highland town of **Antsirabe**, with its wide colonial streets and colourful rickshaws. On day two, wind your way to **Parc National de Ranomafana** through the highland's scenic landscapes, stopping en route at the arts-and-crafts capital, **Ambositra**. Spend day three hiking and searching for lemurs in Ranomafana's rainforest.

On day four, drive to the superb **Parc National de l'Isalo**, stopping in **Réserve d'Anja** on your way to see the oh-so-cute ring-tailed lemurs. Spend the next two days exploring Isalo's stunning desert plains and canyons.

On day seven, head to **Tuléar**, making sure to stop at **Arboretum d'Antsokay** on your way. On day eight, fly to Antananarivo (Tana) and then on to **Nosy Be** the next day. Enjoy some beach R&R on day 10. The next day, take a day trip to **Nosy Komba** and **Nosy Tanikely** for unrivalled snorkelling. On day 12, visit **Réserve Naturelle Intégrale de Lokobe**. Fly back to Tana on day 13. Take a day trip to Ambohimanga for your last day, or shop for souvenirs.

2
WEEKS

The North

Northern Madagascar offers rainforest hikes, spectacular rock formations and tantalising white beaches.

Fly to **Sambava** and head out early to **Parc National de Marojejy** the next day, spending a couple of days trekking on this sensational massif. It's a day's drive from Sambava to the beautiful **Réserve Spéciale Ankarana**, a wilderness of caves, pinnacles and dry forests. Spend a day here and continue on to the northern belle of **Diego Suarez**, with a stop at the terracotta-coloured **Tsingy Rouges** on the way.

Take a day to discover Diego's heritage and explore the wild coastline of **Les Trois Baies**. Take another day trip to the mountainous **Parc National Montagne d'Ambre**.

From Diego, it's a half-day drive to **Ambanja** – visit the cocoa and spice plantations before boarding a boat at Ankify for **Nosy Be**. Spend three or four days enjoying its coral reefs and beaches, putting a day aside for the fabulous **Réserve Naturelle Intégrale de Lokobe**. Fly back to Tana from Nosy Be.

2½
WEEKS

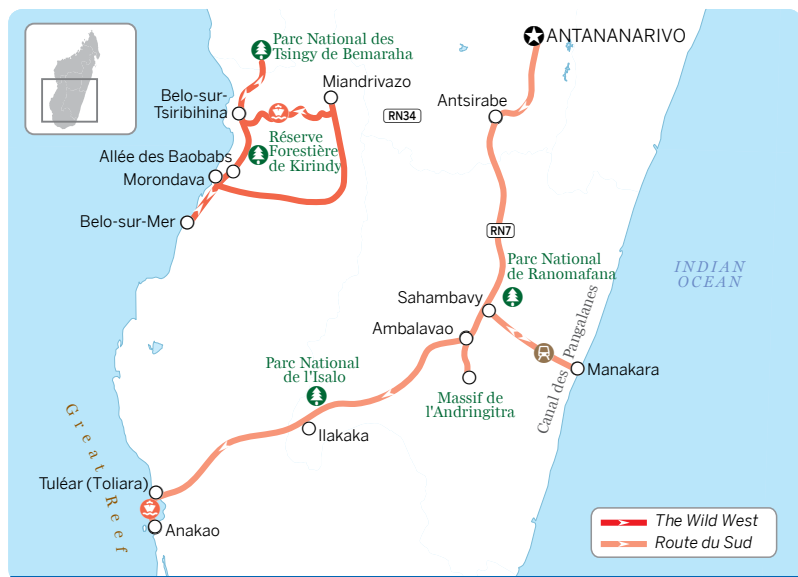
East Coast

Exploring this coast is challenging but by no means impossible, though budget travellers will balk at the cost of heading beyond Île Sainte Marie, since Maroantsetra is hard and expensive to get to.

Head east along the RN2 from Antananarivo to charming **Andasibe**, jumping-off point for the luxuriant, misty rainforests of **Andasibe Area Parks**. Spend a couple of days waking to the cries of the legendary *indri* (Madagascar's largest lemur), hiking and birdwatching before winding down the RN2 to **Tamatave**, gateway to the waterways and lakes of the **Canal des Pangalanes**. Allow three or four days for this aquatic wonderland.

Back in Tamatave, fly to gorgeous **Île Sainte Marie**. Tour the island by quad- or motorbike and take a whale-watching trip (July to September).

If you relish a challenge, take a boat to **Soanierana-Ivongo** and drive the infamous **RN5** (4WD only) to **Maroantsetra** (two days). Spend a night at **Nosy Mangabe** and a couple of nights in the pristine **Parc National de Masoala**. Fly to Tana from Maroantsetra.



3 WEEKS **Route du Sud**

This classic route will whisk you from Antananarivo down to Tuléar along the famed RN7.

First stop is **Antsirabe**, where you should visit some of the town's famed artisans. Drive to **Sahambavy** and its glorious tea-plantation landscapes. The next day, hop on the scenic FCE train to **Manakara**, where you can tour the Canal des Pangalanes.

Drive to **Parc National de Ranomafana** and hike in the park's rainforest. Time your visit to the highland town of **Ambalavao** to coincide with Madagascar's largest zebu market, then allow three or four days to explore the spectacular **Massif de l'Andringitra** with its granite peaks, phenomenal hikes and wonderful lodges.

Further south is the fantastic **Parc National de l'Isalo**, with jagged sandstone massifs, cool canyons and delightful natural pools. Two days will do it justice.

Stop at the sapphire boom town of **Ilakaka** on your way to the perfect beaches of **Anankao** and the Great Reef. From **Tuléar**, fly back to Antananarivo.

2 WEEKS **The Wild West**

This itinerary requires some planning ahead, but once you've got your boat and your 4WD booked, you'll be off in a flash.

Book a descent of the Tsiribihina River. Trips start from **Miandrivazo**, a day's drive from Antananarivo. From there, it takes 2½ days to drift down to **Belo-sur-Tsiribihina**.

Arrange for a 4WD and driver to meet you at the boat landing in Belo and continue north to **Parc National des Tsingy de Bemaraha**. You'll need at least two days to explore the Grands and Petits Tsingy. It's then a day's drive through scorched landscape down to **Réserve Forestière de Kirindy**, home to the elusive fossa and the giant jumping rat. Make sure to go on a night walk. On your way to Morondava, stop at the iconic **Allée des Baobabs**.

After a day recuperating in the laid-back seaside town of **Morondava**, head down to the fishing village of **Belo-sur-Mer** for a couple of days. You can then drive on to Tuléar (during the dry season only), or go back to Morondava and fly or drive back to Antananarivo.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Emilie Filou

Coordinating Writer, Antananarivo, Central Madagascar Emilie first travelled to Africa aged eight to visit her grandparents, who had taken up a late-career opportunity in Mali. Many trips and a geography degree later, Emilie now works as a freelance journalist focusing on development issues in Africa (read her work at www.emiliefilou.com). For this trip, Emilie loved discovering the central plateaux of Madagascar, especially taking the (very) slow train from Manakara to Fianarantsoa and buying wild silk in the remote village of Soatanana; her highlight was watching dawn break from the top of Pic Boby (Imarivolanitra) in Parc National d'Andringitra. Emilie also wrote the Plan, Understand and Survival Guide sections.

Read more about Emilie at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/emiliefilou>



Anthony Ham

Southern Madagascar, Western Madagascar Anthony (www.anthonham.com) brings to Madagascar sixteen years of travelling through, writing about and photographing in Africa. His passion for the continent began in North and West Africa, and more recently he has travelled extensively through East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean islands, writing about natural history and conservation issues, nomadic and indigenous peoples and countries in conflict,

for newspapers and magazines around the world. When he's not in Africa, Anthony moves between Melbourne and Madrid with his wife and two daughters.

Read more about Anthony at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/anthonyham>



Helen Ranger

Northern Madagascar, Eastern Madagascar In three visits to Madagascar, Helen has researched rainforest essential oils, been woken by the eerie cries of *indris* in the Parc National Andasibe Mantadia, been marooned on a remote beach in the Masoala National Park, marvelled over a bright red giraffe-necked weevil, peered at ornate tombs and travelled by small plane, *taxi-brousse* and *pousse-pousse*. This time Air Madagascar's month-long strike meant travelling by

pot-holed road and seeing much more of the country at ground level – a bone-rattling blessing in disguise. Find Helen at www.helenranger.com and on Twitter @helenranger.

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

8th edition – June 2016

ISBN 978 1 74220 778 0

© Lonely Planet 2016 Photographs © as indicated 2016

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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