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## Trey Ratcliff's Madagascar Safari 2019

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**MORONDAVA**



**PERINET SPECIAL RESERVE**

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## Trey Ratcliff's Madagascar Safari 2019

*Johannesburg - Antananarivo - Kirindy Private Reserve - Morondava - Perinet Special Reserve*

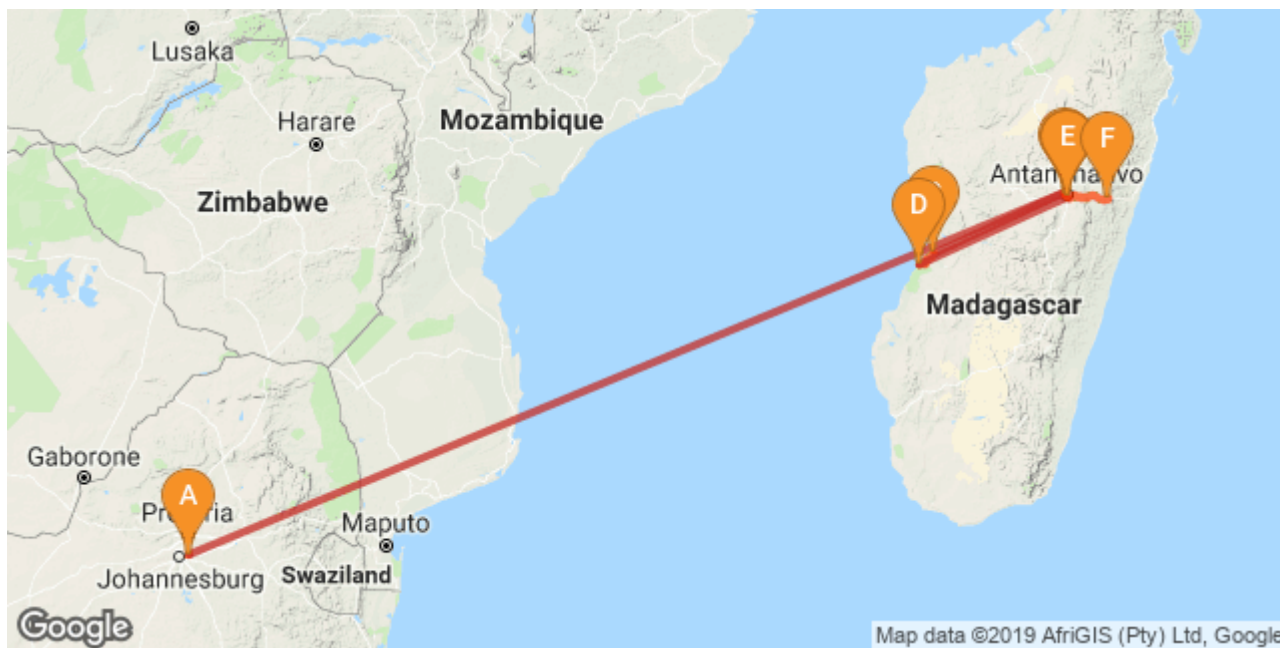
*12 Days / 11 Nights*

*14 Persons*

*Date of Issue: 29 January 2019*

**28 September 2019 - 09 October 2019**

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[Click here to view your Digital Itinerary](#)

## Introduction

An exclusive tour of Soweto, South Africa and Madagascar. Highlights include:

- Tour of Soweto
- Lemurs
- Avenue of Baobabs

Accommodation	Destination	Start	End	Basis	Room Type	Duration
<a href="#">Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace</a>	Johannesburg	28 Sep	30 Sep	B&B	7x Twin Room	<b>2 Nights</b>
Relais des Plateaux	Antananarivo	30 Sep	1 Oct	B&B	7x Twin Room	<b>1 Night</b>
Le Camp Amoureux	Kirindy Private Reserve	1 Oct	3 Oct	FB	7x Twin Room	<b>2 Nights</b>
Palissandre Côte Ouest	Morondava	3 Oct	4 Oct	HB	7x Twin Room	<b>1 Night</b>
Palissandre Hotel & Spa	Antananarivo	4 Oct	5 Oct	HB	7x Twin Room	<b>1 Night</b>
Andasibe Hotel	Perinet Special Reserve	5 Oct	8 Oct	HB	7x Twin Room	<b>3 Nights</b>
Palissandre Hotel & Spa	Antananarivo	8 Oct	9 Oct	HB	7x Twin Room	<b>1 Night</b>

### Key

HB: Half Board

B&B: Bed and Breakfast

FB: Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

## Excluded

All flights

### Day 1: Saturday, 28 September

#### Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace, Johannesburg

### Johannesburg

Johannesburg is one of Africa's biggest and most vibrant cities. It is the economic capital of Africa and the gateway to Southern Africa. Although not as famous as other South African destinations, there is plenty to do in Johannesburg and nearby Pretoria. The old city is a multi-cultural mixture of traditional medicine shops, Chinese restaurants, taxi

ranks and ultra-modern skyscrapers. There are excellent museums, art galleries and organised tours of historical and political interest. The shopping is Southern Africa's best and the many restaurants cater for all tastes. The nearby township of Soweto is Johannesburg's most popular tourist attraction.

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### **Overnight: Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace** [View iBrochure](#)

Discover untold luxury and regal comfort ... the 5-star Peermont D'oreale Grande hotel at Emperors Palace is conveniently located next to O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg. The hotel features 182 beautifully designed and impeccably appointed rooms and suites that are fitted with plush, state-of-the-art indulgences. The hotel's comfort levels are enhanced by superior levels of service and guest relations, as well as international language and culture proficiencies, while the Club Floor and Lounge offers a full bouquet of personal and concierge services dedicated to the discerning business traveller. A complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport is available. Dine in the newly-styled Aurelia's restaurant, indulge your senses at Octavia's Sensorium Day Spa or sip a cocktail while watching the African sunset at Neptune's Pool Bar at the spectacular pool terrace with its Roman water fountain cascading into clear waters.




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### **Basis**

Bed & Breakfast

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## **Day 2: Sunday, 29 September**

### **Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace, Johannesburg**

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### **Activities**

Soweto Day Tour

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#### *Soweto Day Tour*

A Soweto Day Tours takes in the highlights of this iconic township including Nelson Mandela's former home and the Hector Pieterse museum (he was one of the school children who was shot in the 1976 Soweto Uprising).

You will get close to Soweto Culture, meeting the people, trying local foods and maybe even some Omqombothi (our traditional beer) at a shebeen.

This tour is one of a kind, the smell of pavement cooked meals and the buzz in the streets of people going about their daily chores. Come and experience township life, the humanity, hospitality and warmth of the people, the "Ubuntu" as it is known in South Africa.



## Basis

Bed & Breakfast

## Day 3: Monday, 30 September Relais des Plateaux, Antananarivo

### Antananarivo

Antananarivo, also known as Tana, is Madagascar's capital city. It is perched at 1400 metres above sea level crowning a spectacular mountain range. Founded in 1625, Antananarivo boasts a rich historical heritage that is complemented by scenic landscapes covered in a large network of popular hiking routes. The city serves as a great base from which to explore the magnificent surrounding area, which hosts several nature reserves, including the Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park, with its fantastic limestone karsts. Known for its vibrant nightlife, Antananarivo features local live music at a variety of clubs and bars. Visitors can look forward to exploring the remnants of the French colonial era in the old heart of the city, as well as discovering ancient Malagasy palaces interspersed between the faded grandeur of these colonial relics.

### Day Itinerary

On arrival you are met by our ground handler who will assist you with your private transfer to **Relais des Plateaux** where you spend one night in standard rooms on bed and breakfast basis. Our ground handler will assist you with changing money at the airport and luggage etc.

### Flight Information

Date	Flight	Airline	Departure Airport	Time	Arrival Airport	Time	Class	Ref
30 Sep	Scheduled		OR Tambo International Airport [JNB]		Ivato International Airport [TNR]			

### Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
30 Sep		Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace	OR Tambo International Airport [JNB]		Transfer
30 Sep		Ivato International Airport [TNR]	Relais des Plateaux		Transfer

### Overnight: Relais des Plateaux

Relais des Plateaux is a hotel and restaurant situated ten minutes from the airport in a wooded park. Jacarandas, avocado trees, palm trees and bougainvilleas make for a tranquil and attractive environment. The hotel boasts a large swimming pool and small kiddies playground. The restaurant has a good reputation for delicious traditional specialities as well as exquisite Zebu meat dishes. Accommodation is provided in comfortable rooms with spacious bathrooms, television with satellite channels, mini bar and air conditioning. The hotel also assists with city tours and excursions.



### Basis

Bed & Breakfast

## Day 4: Tuesday, 1 October

### Le Camp Amoureux, Kirindy Private Reserve

#### Kirindy Private Reserve

With the Mozambique Channel to its west and encircled by lush natural landscapes, the Kirindy Private Reserve lies on Madagascar's beautiful western coast. This privately managed reserve provides a sanctuary for a host of endangered ecosystems namely dry deciduous forests, and a collection of wildlife which includes the giant jumping rat, seven endemic lemur species and an array of bird species that inhabit this swathe of unique vegetation. Known for its extreme seasonal changes, this reserve is most popular after the rainy season when verdant landscapes explode into existence. Visitors can look forward to night hikes, spotting the giant umbrella-branched baobab tree, catching a glimpse of a variety of nocturnal mammals, reptiles, and insects filling the spectacular night skies.

#### Day Itinerary

Check out of the hotel after breakfast, and our representative will transfer you to Tana airport in time to check-in for the flight to **Morondava**. On arrival in Morondava, our representative will be waiting to meet and transfer you to Marofandilia which is close to Kirindy. Check into **Camp Amoureux** where you spend the next two nights on fullboard basis. En route stop at Allée des Baobabs to photograph the famous Baobab trees. After dinner, take a walk near Camp Amoureux to see such night-species as the Fork-Marked Lemurs, Mme. Berthe's mouse-lemur which is arguably the smallest mammal in the world, just to name a few.

#### Flight Information

Date	Flight	Airline	Departure Airport	Time	Arrival Airport	Time	Class	Ref
1 Oct	Scheduled		Ivato International		Le Camp			

Airport [TNR]

Amoureux

## Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
1 Oct		Relais des Plateaux	Ivato International Airport [TNR]		Transfer

## Overnight: Le Camp Amoureux

Located close to the famous Avenue of Baobabs, 44kms north of Morondava and close to Kirindy, Le Camp Amoureux is a simple, but well looked after camp. There are seven tented bungalows, each of which has en-suite toilet and shower. The tents are set on a solid wooden platform and are perfectly comfortable for a short stay. The camp also has a restaurant offering local food, with a real favourite being the coconut chicken. It is in the perfect location from which to explore the area and wildlife viewing is generally very good close to camp.



## Basis

Full Board

## Day 5: Wednesday, 2 October

### Le Camp Amoureux, Kirindy Private Reserve

## Day Itinerary

Today you will explore **Kirindy Forest** which holds an astonishing array of the denizens of Madagascar's western deciduous forest like the white Verreaux Sifaka, the red-fronted Brown Lemurs, some geckoes and birds

This forest has wonderful herpetofauna including the massive Oustalet's chameleon, Labord's chameleon, Collared Iguanid and Giant hog-nosed snake. The flora is remarkable where you can find out many tree species which have medicinal properties. If you are extremely lucky you may see a Fossa.

## Basis

Full Board

## Day 6: Thursday, 3 October

### Palissandre Côte Ouest, Morondava



## Morondava

The seaside town of Morondava is situated on the west coast of Madagascar. The town serves as a gateway to the area's claim to fame and main attraction: the world-renowned 'Avenue of the Baobabs'. These massive, ancient Baobab trees tower over the terrain and create magical otherworldly silhouettes at sunrise and sunset. Other places to explore in the surrounding area include: Kirindy Forest, home to a host of endemic lemurs; and the magnificent Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park to the north, featuring unique, spiny rock formations. Don't miss the opportunity to browse Morondava's local market for a selection of locally made textiles and other sought-after Madagascan handicrafts.

## Day Itinerary

After a final forest walk this morning, you will be transferred back to **Morondava**, once again stopping at Allée des Baobabs for some photo opportunities in the late afternoon light. Check into **Palissandre Cote Ouest** for one night including dinner tonight and breakfast tomorrow morning.

## Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
3 Oct		Le Camp Amoureux	Palissandre Côte Ouest		Transfer

## Overnight: Palissandre Côte Ouest

Located at Nosy Kely on the beach of Morondava, just 30 minutes from the mythical Boababs Alley, Palissandre Côte Ouest offers guest accommodation in 30 bungalows built with local materials, all with private terraces offering ocean views.

Local and international dishes are served at the onsite restaurant, and the bar offers a good range of alcoholic beverages. Other facilities include an outdoor swimming pool and a spa offering massages and holistic treatments.



## Basis

Half Board

## Day 7: Friday, 4 October Palissandre Hotel & Spa, Antananarivo

## Antananarivo

See Above

## Day Itinerary

Check out of the hotel and our representative will transfer you back to **Morondava** Airport for your flight to **Tana** . On arrival in Tana, our representative will meet you and assist you with your private transfer to **Palissandre Hotel & Spa** where you spend one night. After freshening up, make your way to the restaurant and enjoy the views over Tana. Dinner is included at the restaurant..

## Flight Information

Date	Flight	Airline	Departure Airport	Time	Arrival Airport	Time	Class	Ref
4 Oct	Scheduled		Palissandre Côte Ouest		Palissandre Hotel & Spa			

## Overnight: Palissandre Hotel & Spa

Palissandre Hotel & Spa is located in downtown Antananarivo. It features an outdoor pool, a spa and a restaurant with terrace offering panoramic city views. Free WiFi access is available.

The rooms at Palissandre Hotel & Spa contain wooden furniture. Each room is equipped with a TV, telephone, minibar and air conditioning. Featuring a bath or shower, the bathrooms also comes with a hairdryer and bathrobes. You can enjoy city and pool views from the room.

The restaurant serves local and French cuisine. The hotel's bar is equipped with sofas and overlooks the garden. Guests can enjoy drinks, cocktails and snacks. Other facilities at the hotel include a fitness center, a 24-hour front desk, a concierge service and meeting facilities. The property offers free on-site parking.



## Basis

Half Board

## Day 8: Saturday, 5 October Andasibe Hotel, Perinet Special Reserve

### Perinet Special Reserve

Comprising 810 hectares of pristine rainforest and montane forest, the Perinet or Andasibe Special Reserve constitutes the southern section of the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. Among the kaleidoscope of wildlife found in the reserve, it is the best place to see the Indri Indri, the largest of the lemur family, which stands roughly three feet high and has big, teddy-bear-like ears. Endemic to this part of the world, the Indri is critically endangered, with only hundreds left – however, most visitors to Perinet see Indris, and if you don't see them, you will certainly hear

their distinctive calls. Discover the eleven other species of lemur in the park, spot a variety of birds, find hidden rare orchids and try to catch a glimpse of the incredibly unusual satanic leaf-tailed gecko.

### Day Itinerary

Check out of the hotel after breakfast and enjoy a scenic four hour drive to the rainforest park of **Andasibe-Mantadia National Park** with the same private guide and a driver. Traversing the highland-landscapes dominated by the subsistence farming mainly the rice cultivation on small-scale, brickworks and some local adobe hamlets not to mention many roadside food-markets. On arrival check into **Andasibe Hotel** where you spend the next three nights on halfboard meal basis. In the afternoon, you will be taken on an introductory walk into Analamazaotra special reserve aka the Perinet Reserve.

### Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
5 Oct		Palissandre Hotel & Spa	Andasibe Hotel		Transfer

### Overnight: Andasibe Hotel

Surrounded by forest just outside the small town of Andasibe, with the Andasibe National Park nearby, the Andasibe Hotel offers three-star accommodation in 20 spacious bungalows set in small private gardens, each with a terrace, lounge, and private bathroom with hot water. In-room comforts include heating, satellite TV, a minibar, and in-room safe.

The onsite restaurant serves a delightful variety of exotic cuisines and guests can enjoy cocktails at the refreshment bar. Other facilities include massage rooms, a swimming pool, billiards, pétanque, board games, and a playground with a trampoline and swings.



### Basis

Half Board

## Day 9: Sunday, 6 October

### Andasibe Hotel, Perinet Special Reserve

### Day Itinerary

Early breakfast and then time to explore **Andasibe National Park** with your local guide. To see the most wildlife (especially Indris and birds) be in the rainforest as close to daybreak as possible as this is when the animals are most active. The trails are not difficult to manage and most forest guides speak good English. You should also encounter the likes of Grey Bamboo Lemur, Red-fronted Brown Lemur; birds like the lovely Blue Coua; Sunbird-Asity and

Nuthatch Vanga, as well as impressive reptiles like the Malagasy Tree Boa and Parson's Chameleon. Orchids and other epiphytes festoon the trees. Mantadia National Park (*Mantadia* meaning *raw path*), this newly-created 16,000 ha-large game park proves to be more challenging terrain characterized by non-developed and steep paths in places, but you can do as much as you feel comfortable with. The primary rainforest here is spectacular and wildlife includes Diademed Sifaka, black and white ruffed lemurs, lesser bamboo lemurs, red-bellied lemurs. Here attractive rare endemic birds, such as brown Mesite, pitta-like and scaly ground-rollers, red-fronted Coua, or else lesser Vasa parrots or Francis/Madagascar sparrow hawk are found, which has made this park become one of the top 10 spots for keen birdwatchers. At the top of the steep hill, you'll rest under a shed which is used as an observation as well. Quite a fantastic view of the pristine rainforest here, while hearing the sounds of waterfall from the bottom of the cliff or high-pitched calls launched by wild indri indri groups from a mile away. Dinner and overnight **Andasibe Hotel**

### **Basis**

Half Board

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## **Day 10: Monday, 7 October**

### **Andasibe Hotel, Perinet Special Reserve**

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### **Day Itinerary**

Today, we have a day set aside for the visit of the pristine primary rainforest of Mantadia where to see the Diademed Golden Sifaka, Black and White Ruffed Lemurs and with luck the skittish Grey-Bamboo Lemurs. The indigenous flora is out of this world including many creepers, lichens, ferns and orchids. Dinner and overnight at **Andasibe Hotel**

### **Basis**

Half Board

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## **Day 11: Tuesday, 8 October**

### **Palissandre Hotel & Spa, Antananarivo**

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### **Antananarivo**

See Above

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### **Day Itinerary**

After a final rainforest walk and a visit to the Lemur island you will be transferred back to Antananarivo this afternoon. Check into the **Palissandre Hotel & Spa** where you spend your last night eating dinner the hotel.

Night at Palissandre based on Dinner and breakfast

### **Transfers**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Pick Up</b>	<b>Drop Off</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Vehicle</b>
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8 Oct

Andasibe Hotel

Palissandre Hotel &amp; Spa

Transfer

### Overnight: Palissandre Hotel & Spa

Palissandre Hotel & Spa is located in downtown Antananarivo. It features an outdoor pool, a spa and a restaurant with terrace offering panoramic city views. Free WiFi access is available.

The rooms at Palissandre Hotel & Spa contain wooden furniture. Each room is equipped with a TV, telephone, minibar and air conditioning. Featuring a bath or shower, the bathrooms also comes with a hairdryer and bathrobes. You can enjoy city and pool views from the room.

The restaurant serves local and French cuisine. The hotel's bar is equipped with sofas and overlooks the garden. Guests can enjoy drinks, cocktails and snacks. Other facilities at the hotel include a fitness center, a 24-hour front desk, a concierge service and meeting facilities. The property offers free on-site parking.



### Basis

Half Board

## Day 12: Wednesday, 9 October

### End of Itinerary

### Day Itinerary

After breakfast and farewells, our representative will transfer you back to **Tana** airport in time to check-in for your outbound flight. **Own flight arrangements from Madagascar.**

### Transfers

Date	Company	Pick Up	Drop Off	Time	Vehicle
9 Oct		Palissandre Hotel & Spa	Ivato International Airport [TNR]		Transfer

### Basis

Bed & Breakfast

### Urgent Contact Numbers

Company Name	Telephone	Email Address	Contact Person
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Experiential Travel

+61418325812

neville@experiential.travel Neville Jones

**Service Provider Directory**

<b>Service Provider</b>	<b>Ref. Number</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Address</b>
Andasibe Hotel		+261 34 14 326 27	Perinet II Andasibe, 514, Madagascar
Palissandre Côte Ouest		+261 20 95 520 22	Morondava, Madagascar
Palissandre Hotel & Spa		+261 20 22 605 60	Hotel & Spa Palissandre 13, Rue Andriandahifotsy Faravohitra 101 Antananarivo
Peermont D'oreale Grande Hotel at Emperors Palace		+27 11 928 1770	64 Jones Road Kempton Park Gauteng 1620

## Travel Information



This vast country is undoubtedly one of the most culturally and geographically diverse places on earth. Fondly known by locals as the 'Rainbow Nation', South Africa has 11 official languages and its multicultural inhabitants are influenced by a fascinating mix of cultures. Discover the gourmet restaurants, impressive art scene, vibrant nightlife and beautiful beaches of Cape Town; enjoy a local braai (barbecue) in the Soweto township; browse the bustling Indian markets in Durban; or sample some of the world's finest wines at the myriad wine estates dotting the Cape Winelands. Some historical attractions to explore include the Zululand battlefields of KwaZulu-Natal, the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and Robben Island, just off the coast of Cape Town. Above all else, its remarkably untamed wilderness with its astonishing range of wildlife roaming freely across massive unfenced game reserves such as the world-famous Kruger National Park. With all of this variety on offer, it is little wonder that South Africa has fast become Africa's most popular tourist destination.

### *Banking and Currency*

#### **Currency**

The currency is the Rand, which is divided into 100 cents. There are R200, R100, R50, R20 and R10 notes. Coins come in R5, R2, R1, 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c.

#### **Banking**

Banks are found in most towns, and are generally open from 09h00 to 15h30 on weekdays and 08h30 to 11h00 on Saturdays (Closed Sundays and Public Holidays). Most of them offer foreign exchange services - with cash, bank & credit cards as well as travellers cheques. You can also obtain cash from automatic teller machines (ATMs). Several international banks have branches in the main city centres. Always advise your bank that you are travelling outside of the country as they might block your purchases if they are not informed.

### *Travel, Transport and Getting Around*

Travelling around South Africa is relatively easy by air, road and rail.

Principal air routes are serviced by SAA and British Airways, operated by Comair. There are 2 low-cost carriers on main routes, namely Kulula.com and Mango.

Facilitating travel around South Africa are 10 airports managed by the Airports Company South Africa (Acsa). In addition, there are some 90 regional airports, including the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport in Nelspruit and the Skukuza Airport, offering access to the Kruger National Park.

An extensive tarred road system makes travelling in South Africa by vehicle convenient and easy. You will find gravel roads in rural areas though. Note:

- A valid international driver's licence is required.

- We drive on the left hand side of the road.
- Wearing seat belts is compulsory and cell phones can only be used 'hands free'.
- Speed limits are generally set at 120km on freeways, 100km on secondary roads and 60km in urban areas.
- Toll fees apply on certain national roads.
- Petrol stations are widespread.
- Most global car hire firms have branches in South Africa

Another means of getting around South Africa are luxury inter-city bus services such as Greyhound and Trans-Lux. Metrobus buses are available for in-city transport. Metered taxis must be ordered by telephone. There is a hop-on-hop-off bus in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Our rail system includes the long-haul, inexpensive Shosholoza Meyl Metrorail trains. More luxurious options are the Blue Train, Premier Classe and the steam train Rovos Rail. There is also the new Gautrain rapid transit railway system in Gauteng Province which links Johannesburg, Pretoria, Ekurhuleni and OR Tambo International Airport.

### *Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice*

Standards of hygiene in relation to food health and safety in South Africa, are generally high in hotels, restaurants, pubs and nightspots. Tap water in South Africa is safe to drink and cook with when taken from taps in urban areas. Not all tap water in rural areas is safe for consumption, so take precautions if necessary.

It is safe to eat fresh fruit, vegetables and salads, and put ice in your drinks. South Africa's fish, meat and chicken are of excellent quality, so there is no need to limit yourself when enjoying the local cuisine.

Restaurants are subject to South Africa's food safety control legislation, which is implemented by local government. Regulations include certification and regular inspections by health inspectors to ensure hygienic standards are maintained.

Street food is not as common in South Africa as it is in other countries, although vendors selling traditional snacks and meals can be found in city centres and townships. Food safety in such instances cannot always be guaranteed.

### *Climate and Weather*

South African temperatures, which are measured in centigrade, average at highs of 28°C to average lows of 8°C in the summer months while winter temperatures range from 1°C at night to around 18°C in the day. Average annual rainfall is on the low side at under 500mm a year, making the country somewhat dry. Much of the rain falls in the Western Cape in the winter, differing from the rest of the country, which experiences summer rainfall. On the plus side, the South African climate boasts more than its fair share of sunshine, recording an average of 8.5 hours a day.

### *Clothing and Dress Recommendations*

#### **Summer**

Bring clothes that are cool, light and comfortable because summer temperatures can get well into the 30 - 40 degree Celsius range in some areas. Also bring an umbrella or raincoat during summer as this is when most of the country gets its rain, but don't forget a swimming costume (bathing suit).

#### **Winter**

The winters are generally mild, comparing favourably with European summers. But there are days when temperatures dive, especially in high-lying areas such as the Drakensberg, so be prepared with jerseys and jackets. Cape Town gets its rain during the winter season so it's advisable to bring rain gear along.



## General

Always bring a hat, sunglasses and sunblock as the sun can be strong even in the winter months.

Walking shoes are a good idea all year-round, with warm socks in the winter.

If you are doing business in the country, business attire (suit and tie) is generally called for in the corporate sector, but media for example generally dress more casually.

For game viewing, a couple of neutral-toned items will be useful, but there's no need to go overboard. A good pair of walking shoes is also advisable.

For the evening, if you are dining at an upmarket restaurant or seeing a show, smart-casual attire is recommended.

### *Electricity and Plug Standards*

Current is 220/240 volts at 50 cycles per second. A three-point round-pin adapter plug should be brought for your electrical appliances - such adapters are also available at major airports..



Evolution has occurred more or less in isolation on this remote island – located 400 kilometres off Africa’s east coast – with the result that much of its indigenous wildlife is found nowhere else on earth. Madagascar’s menagerie of weird and wonderful creatures includes the world’s biggest and smallest chameleons and over 70 species of lemur – long-tailed primates endemic to the island. The Madagascan landscape is no less compelling than the resident wildlife, with terrain ranging from lush jungles and palm-fringed beaches to the knife-edged karst tsingys of the Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park’s ‘stone forests’. Madagascar is an otherworldly paradise where visitors are offered a unique glimpse into a fantastical one-of-a-kind world.

### *Banking and Currency*

#### **Currency**

The official currency of Madagascar since 2005 is the Malagasy Ariary (MGA), which has been reintroduced to replace the Malagasy franc. One Ariary (Ar) is divided into 5 iraimbilanja, which turns it to one of the two circulating currencies with a non decimal division in the world.

There are banknotes of 10,000 MGA, 5,000 MGA, 2,000 MGA, 1,000 MGA, 500 MGA, 200 MGA and 100 MGA. There are even coins from 1 up to 50 Ar. The one of 50 Ar is very beautiful and has baobabs carved on it.

#### **Banking**

Banks are normally open from 08h00 to 12h00 and 14h00 to 15h30 weekdays.

Credit cards (the most useful credit card is VISA CARD) are only accepted in large hotels, restaurants and some shops, mainly in Antananarivo. In the other big cities, you can get cash from Automatic Cash Machines (ATM) only

with VISA CARDS. There's now also an ATM at the airport in Antananarivo. Don't rely on ATM machines only; they are often out of order. Keep some cash in Euro for emergencies.

### *Travel, Transport and Getting Around*

Madagascar is a huge place, the roads are bad and travel times long: it takes 24 hours of solid driving from Antananarivo (Tana) to Diego Suarez (Antsiranana), 18 to Tuléar (Toliara), 16 to Morondava and so on. Be realistic about how much ground you want to cover or you'll spend every other day in the confines of a vehicle!

Internal flights can be huge time savers but they are expensive and do no good to your carbon footprint. If you decide to fly, you'll have to choose between booking your flight before setting off, which is more expensive but guarantees availability, or booking once in Madagascar, which is cheaper but less flexible in terms of timing.

Taxi-brousse (bush taxi) is the main public transport: slow, uncomfortable, cheap and omnipresent. Private vehicle and driver is a great but dearer alternative.

Due to the often difficult driving conditions, most rental agencies make hiring a driver compulsory with their vehicles. Driving in Madagascar is on the right-hand side. Police checkpoints are frequent (mind the traffic spikes on the ground) – always slow down and make sure you have your passport and the vehicle's documents handy.

### *Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice*

Madagascar's cuisine is traditionally based on rice, that are served with some kind of dressings, vegetables, meat and spicy seasoning. Malagasy enjoy very spicy food, therefore many dishes are prepared with hot peppers or any other spices. The dishes are usually flavored with garlic, ginger, onion or curry, whereas desserts are flavored with vanilla.

Drinking tap water isn't recommended in Madagascar. For environmental reasons, try to avoid buying bottled water. Fill a reusable water bottle or canteen with filtered water. Most hotels have drinking water available. It's also advisable to avoid ice in drinks and peel fruit and vegetables before eating.

### *Climate and Weather*

Any time of year is fine for a visit except from January to March, when heavy rainfall in many areas can make some roads all but impassable, and when there's a high risk of cyclones in the east and northeast. In general, the best time to travel in most areas is April and October/November. The coolest time to travel anywhere is during the dry season (May to October), but during this time the hauts plateaux (central highlands; which include Antananarivo) can get cold and windy, with freezing showers.

The west and southwest get searingly hot during summer, but the winter months in these regions are pleasant, with blue skies, cooler temperatures and little rain. Most rain in the northeast falls from July to September.

Average maximum temperatures vary from about 30°C in coastal areas (higher in summer) to around 25°C on the hauts plateaux. In Antananarivo and other highland areas, temperatures during winter can drop to 10°C and even lower during the night.

### *Clothing and Dress Recommendations*

To cope with the Madagascan climate, lightweights should be worn during the summer on high central plateaux and throughout the year in the north and south. Cotton and natural fibres work better in this sweaty weather. Warmer clothes are advised for during the evenings and winter in mountainous areas. Rainwear is advisable as a precaution.

### *Electricity and Plug Standards*

In Madagascar, the two-pronged plug and the European standard socket are the most used with a tension of 220 volts (but it may go down to 170 volts in some areas at peak times)

