



21 Days

# Madagascar

## Lemurs, Baobabs and Boats!

This expedition to the world's 4th largest island explores the rich ecology and landscape of this unique country. As you trek and canoe through pristine wilderness and camp out on unforgettable beaches, you'll discover one of the richest ecosystems in the world. With luck, you'll spot a lemur or two and plenty of other wildlife on this memory-rich adventure. Marvel at the diverse landscapes, from lush tropical rainforest to the semi-arid and to the jagged limestone pinnacles. The people here are unlike anywhere else in the world. Descendants of seafarers from the Indian Ocean; they are proudly distinct from the peoples of continental Africa and are unfailingly polite and hospitable. You'll meet with Malagasy people of all backgrounds and In rural areas you'll learn about day to day life in traditional villages. An amazing experience!



# Recommended expedition itinerary

Day  
1-2

## Arrive Antananarivo & head to Tsironomandidy

On arrival you are met at the airport and transferred to our accommodation. We begin our exploration of Madagascar with a drive in to the remote and rugged western mountains and move towards the start of our trek.

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Day  
3-4

## Drive to Belobaka & begin trekking

A morning driving today through the starkly eroded hills of western Madagascar brings us to the start of our trek in to the Bongolava Mountains. At the village of Belobaka, we leave the vehicle and trek in to the mountains and our first camp. At the village of Belobaka we leave the vehicle and trek in to the mountains heading towards our first camp!

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Day  
5

## Trekking Ankavandra & begin canoeing

We trek down to the more arid and remote Menabe region and the Manombolo River. At Ankavandra we meet our canoe guides, transfer our gear to the canoes and begin our river journey. The Manombolo River is a wide river with braiding channels through the sandy riverbed. Canoes are the ideal way to travel through this remote region. We camp on a sandy riverbank.

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Day  
6-8

## Canoeing Manombolo River & Gorge

This is a spectacular and isolated part of Madagascar that is only accessible by boat or by foot. We pass through gorges, and will see some local people on the river as well as seeing our first wildlife - Lemur and plenty of endemic water birds. Our camp is on the sand banks at the edge of the forest.

The Manombolo River carves a deep gorge in to the Limestone Plateau, with towering cliffs and craggy caves lining the river. The vegetation changes and the side canyons reveal pockets of rainforest with Lemurs jumping through the trees. We may enjoy a short trek exploring these canyons before camping on a sandy river bank in the heart of the gorge.

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Day  
9

## Complete canoe, visit Bekopaka

Our final day of canoeing brings us to the end of the gorge and the village of Bekopaka. A comfortable campground is our base for the next couple of evenings. We visit the nearby "Tsingy of Andadoany" and walk through the jagged limestone pinnacles and the World Heritage listed Tsingy of Bemaraha - the largest reserve in Madagascar and home to diverse wildlife including many species of Lemur.

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Day  
10

## Tsingy of Bemaraha

Today we visit another site of the Tsingy limestone karst. There may be an option to take one of the rugged routes traversing the Tsingy. A harness clipped to a steel cable provides protection on the vertiginous and exposed scramble amongst the pinnacles.





Day  
11

## Bekopaka to Kirindy Forest

Today is a rugged 4WD journey through the remote west of Madagascar. We travel south and cross the Tsiribinhia River by local ferry. The drive beyond passes through Madagascar's endemic western dry deciduous forests. Of great biological importance, these forests are home to many endemic species of flora and fauna.

Day  
12-13

## Kirindy Forest to Morondava with fishing village swim

Kirindy Forest is the only place in Madagascar where we may see Fosa (the island's largest cat-like carnivore), striped mongoose and the giant jumping rat, if we are very lucky. Dusk and dawn are the best times to observe wildlife. We depart later today for Morondava, visiting the iconic "Baobabs Alley" en route. The next day we head out on to the mangroves on traditional 'Pirogues', local canoes and explore a local fisherman's village. This is a relaxing day, with opportunities for swimming and relaxing on the beach following which we return to Morondava.

Day  
14

## Fly Toliara, drive to Isalo Massif

We catch the flight to Toliara on the South West coast and begin our journey northwards. In the afternoon we arrive at the dramatic Isalo Massif, a mysterious landscape of imposing rock formations, called "ruiniforme". Here we discover the semi arid landscape known as 'Spiny Desert' and the famously decorated 'Mahafaly Tombs', built elaborately on sacred grounds.

Day  
15

## Isalo

Heading out on foot, we explore the rugged canyons cut deep in to the sandstone, to the "Piscine Naturelle" – a beautiful natural swimming pool. Lush vegetation in the moist canyons is home to many species of Lemur and Chameleon which we hope to spot.

Day  
16-17

## Andringitra

We drive across the Horombe Plateau with its grasslands dotted with termite mounds. We stop in the town of Ambalavao, with its colourful houses and local craftspeople who make Antaimoro paper from the bark of Ahoava tree, before driving on to Andringitra National Park and its rugged granite peaks. A full-day trekking in the Andringitra National Park amongst the massif of unique granite and gneiss formations. There are a number of options from easy to demanding, depending upon the ability of your group.

Day  
18-19

## Ranomafana

Over these two days we head out on foot to explore the evergreen primary forest, home to some of Madagascar's rarest Lemurs, the Golden Bamboo Lemur. We also enter the forest on a night walk to discover the nocturnal wildlife within the reserve such as the Striped Civet and Mouse Lemur.

Day  
20

## Antananarivo

Early in the morning we commence our drive to Antananarivo via Ambositra, the arts and crafts capital of Madagascar. Today will be a long day but arrival in the capital city once again is a satisfying conclusion to our journey and a celebratory meal is well deserved.!

Day  
21

## Head for home

We transfer to the airport and fly back to the UK, taking home many memories of this fabulous destination.

# Further information

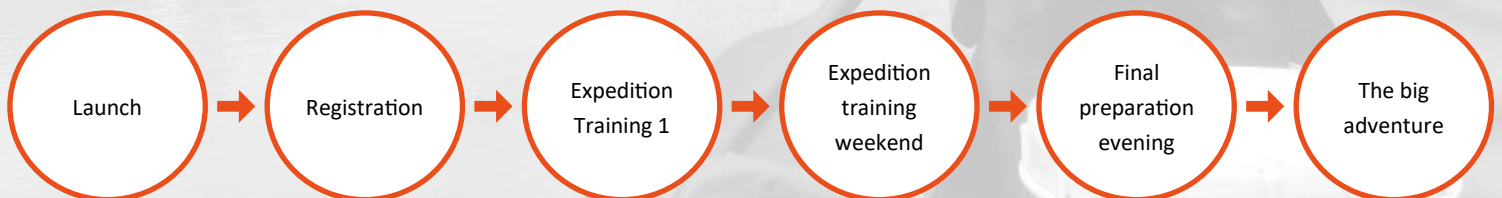
## Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

## What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

## Your expedition timeline



## Physical expedition rating:

● ● ● ● ● 4/5

Fitness is important at this grade, which compares to extended walking in mountainous terrain such as the Lakes or Snowdonia, for up to three to five days in a row. It is likely that significant sections of a trip will involve walking and trekking with some days up to eight hours. Some of the trip could be at altitudes of up to 4,500m, but the itinerary will be designed with appropriate acclimatisation in mind. Be prepared for significant possible variations in temperatures throughout the tour. There is not usually time to 'get fit' on these treks, so a two to four month fitness improvement programme would ensure you get the most out of the trip.

## Culture shock rating:

● ● ● ● ● 5/5

Students should expect extended periods in remote locations where little or no English is spoken (your Trip Leader will always be fluent in the local languages and English). Accommodation is likely to be basic with limited access to hot water or other services. Expect the food to be quite different to home. You should observe local customs so not to cause offence and large parts of the itinerary will be in poor or challenging areas. Tourism in places grade 5 is likely to be less common, so strong traditional cultures are still very much in evidence.



# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey



## 1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

## 3 Arrange an expedition launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



**t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk**