



## *Travel Tips*

### **Visas**

Visas can be obtained in advance from the relevant Madagascar Embassy in your country of origin. No visas are required for travelers staying less than 14 days in the country. Visas can also be obtained on arrival at the airport and all major currencies are accepted. A passport valid for at least 6 months with 2 free pages is required. Visa costs are as follows:

14 days or less: administration fee of 10 EUR / 11 USD

30-day visa: 35 Euros / 37 USD

60-day: 40 Euros / 45 USD

### **Flights**

The two principal international airports in Madagascar are Antananarivo (TNR) the capital, and Nosy Be (NOS) the main beach destination. Flights operate several days a week with the following recommended carriers:

#### Antananarivo:

Air France (direct from Paris), Ethiopian Airlines (direct through Addis Ababa), Kenya Airways (direct from Nairobi and occasionally with a stopover in Comoros), SA Airlink (direct from Johannesburg), Turkish Airlines (from Istanbul with a stopover in Mauritius), Air Mauritius (direct).

#### Nosy Be:

Ethiopian Airlines (direct from Addis Ababa on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays), SA Airlink (direct from Johannesburg on Sundays)

### **Money**

Although the official unit of currency in Madagascar is the Ariary, many of the island's people still use their old unit; the FMG (Franc Malagasy). This can be a little confusing as prices are often given in FMG, while notes are denominated in Ariary! 5 FMG is equal to 1 Ariary and the exchange rate is approximately US\$1 = 4000 Ariary or 20,000FMG.



Euro or US dollars are the recommended currencies for changing into Ariary. Please note that Mastercard, Maestro and American Express are very hard to use, so we recommend that you bring a VISA credit/debit card or budget to cover your entire trip with cash. Since many of the properties you will stay in are all inclusive, it is likely you will use cash only for tipping and shopping in the local markets.

### **Health**

Malaria is prevalent in Madagascar so anti-malarial tablets and a good insect repellent are strongly recommended. Please do consult your physician or specialist travel clinic before departure. Yellow Fever certificates are required by those arriving from a yellow fever endemic country (such as Kenya or Tanzania). Please note that medical facilities in the country are basic and you should enquire and make MCC aware of any pre-existing medical conditions. We insist that all clients travelling with MCC have full medical insurance, including emergency evacuation cover.

### **Language**

As a former French colony the French language is widely spoken in the larger towns and cities throughout Madagascar. In rural areas it is common for only Malagasy to be spoken but our MCC staff will always be there to help you translate and explain situations and events in fluent English. A few words of Malagasy are always helpful:

Hello - “Manahoana” (in the highlands) or “Salama” (in the South East)

Thank you – “Misaotra”

Excuse me – “Azafady”

Goodbye – “Veloma”

### **Transport**

Madagascar is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest island in the world and it takes time to get around. Roads are generally in poor condition so transport outside of the main cities is always in 4x4 vehicles. MCC transfers include both a driver and an English-speaking guide. Where possible, we recommend flying with the national carrier, Tsaradia, or using private or scheduled charter flights. Many properties have airstrips, so charters are ideal to cut down on drive times.



### **Security**

As with any developing country petty crime does exist, particularly in the large urban areas, this is generally limited to snatch theft and is opportunistic. We recommend that clients leave valuables in their hotel safe and do not wear easy to remove jewellery in markets or busy places. Incidents of violent crime against tourists are rare and in general Madagascar is a country in which visitors rightly feel very safe.

### **Daily life in Madagascar (GMT +3)**

Madagascar is predominantly a rural country with most of the population involved in farming and livestock. The pace of life is slow and relaxed, the people are friendly and it is a great country to both visit and live in. As in many developing countries things don't always go exactly according to plan, that's part of the charm. The best maintained vehicles still get flat tyres, unexpected rain can flood roads and flights can be delayed. If you relax and enjoy the goings on around you, including any unforeseen problems, you will have a fantastic holiday and see some of the most interesting and beautiful wildlife and culture on the planet.

### **Tipping**

Porters – 5,000Ar / USD \$1.2 per group

Drivers – 20,000 Ariary / USD \$5 per day per group

Guides – 40,000 - 60,000 Ariary / USD \$10 - 15 per person per day





Below are a few items that we recommend guests bring on any visit to Madagascar...

Luggage restrictions: A soft bag is better than a hard suitcase. Total luggage is limited to 20kg on charter flights. However, laundry services are available in all hotels and is usually either free or very inexpensive. Luggage restrictions on Tsaradia national flights are 20kg checked luggage and 5kg hand luggage.

- \* Good pair of walking boots
- \* Walking pole/stick if necessary
- \* Head torch or wind up torch (Bright LED)
- \* All camera equipment, chargers and batteries
- \* Binoculars for birders
- \* Good insect repellent (DEET preferable)
- \* Warm clothes for May – August winter period
- \* A light sweater/fleece for early morning chill (year-round)
- \* Light waterproof jacket
- \* Long sleeve tops and long trousers for forest walks
- \* French Style 2-pin plug adaptor (220v)
- \* Visa debit/credit
- \* Sun hat, sunscreen and sunglasses
- \* Bradt Guide to Madagascar
- \* Swimming gear
- \* All medication you may need including Malarial Medication (consult your physician)
- \* Passport with 6-months validity and two clear pages
- \* Reading materials (these are difficult to obtain in Madagascar)

Donations to schools:

We encourage guests not to give sweets or money to local children. If you feel you wish to help local schoolchildren, please talk to your guide or manager and they will assist you with this.

If you intend to donate any materials for a local school in Madagascar, we recommend: note books, pens, pencils, colouring/drawing equipment, sports equipment, etc.