

**World66's guide to Madagascar**

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# **Madagascar**

The island of Madagascar, situated off the east coast of Africa, is often considered to be the worlds eighth continent.

With a diversity of wildlife not found anywhere else on the planet, and a varied climate, each area of the island nation has something different to offer.

From the tropical rain forests of the north east to the spiny deserts of the south, and with mountains in between, Madagascar has something to offer everyone.

The only drawback for tourists is a lack of infrastructure; however this also ensures that crowds of foreigners are not overrunning the country.

Madagascar is made up of six provinces Antsiranana , Mahajanga , Toamasina , Antananarivo , Fianarantsoa and Toliara the capital city of each lending its name to the province.

Antananarivo , or Tana, as it is more commonly known, is the capital city of Madagascar and is situated in the central highland region of the island.

With an international airport and easy access to Toamasina on the east coast, and many locations in the south, Tana is where most tourists begin their visit to Madagascar.

An enjoyable journey is to follow national route number 7 from Tana to Tulear , which takes in the towns of Antsirabe , Ambositra , Fianarantsoa , Ambalavao , Ihosy and Toliara as well as providing access to scenic attractions such as Ranomafana National Park (lemur spotting and hot springs), Isalo National Park, the Fianarantsoa–Manakara Rail Journey , home made paper factories , spiny forests and world class diving at Ifaty .

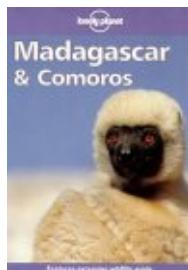
Other popular destinations include the islands of Nosy be in the northwest and St. Marie off the coast of Toamasina in the east, Morondava for its avenue of baobab trees in the west, the magnificent harbour of Antsiranana (Diego Saurez) in the north, and Port Daulphin ( Taolagnaro ) in the south.

For more travel tips, information about the towns and places mentioned in this introduction and further recommendations, please follow the appropriate links.

## **Madagascar – Books**

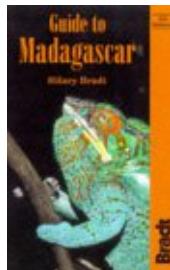
**all**

**Lonely Planet Madagascar and the Comoros**



author: Paul Greenway, Deanna Swaney  
isbn: 0864424965  
subject: travel

### Guide to Madagascar



author: Hilary Bradt  
isbn: 1898323534  
subject: travel

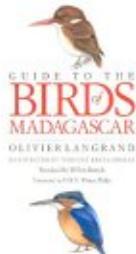
### Madagascar: How to Get There, What to See, Where to Stay

author: Marco Turco  
isbn: 1868125858  
subject: travel

### Ritual, History and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology

author: Maurice Bloch  
isbn: 0485196581  
subject: culture

### Guide to the Birds of Madagascar



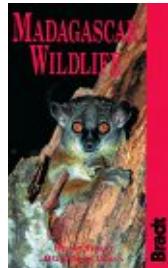
author: Olivier Langrand, H. R. Philip (Translator)  
isbn: 0300043104  
subject: history

### Mammals of Madagascar



author: Nick  
Garbutt  
isbn: 0300077513  
subject: history

## Madagascar Wildlife



author: Hilary Bradt,Derek Schuurman,Nick Garbutt  
isbn: 1564409473  
subject: history

## Madagascar – People

### *Population Graph of Madagascar*

**POPULATION GRAPH** Population:

16,473,477 (July 2002 est.)

15–64 years: 52% (male 3 722 459; female 3 792 178)

65 years and over: 3% (male 231 582; female 247 489) (July 1998 est.)

**Population growth rate:** 2.81% (1998 est.)

**Birth rate:** 41.89 births/1 000 population (1998 est.)

**Death rate:** 13.83 deaths/1 000 population (1998 est.)

**Net migration rate:** 0 migrant(s)/1 000 population (1998 est.)

**Sex ratio:**

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

*under 15 years:* 1.02 male(s)/female

*15–64 years:* 0.98 male(s)/female

*65 years and over:* 0.93 male(s)/female (1998 est.)

**Infant mortality rate:** 90.57 deaths/1 000 live births (1998 est.)

***Life expectancy at birth:***

*total population:* 52.88 years

*male:* 51.7 years

*female:* 54.1 years (1998 est.)

**Total fertility rate:** 5.76 children born/woman (1998 est.)

***Nationality:***

*noun:* Malagasy (singular and plural)

*adjective:* Malagasy

**Ethnic groups:** Malayo–Indonesian (Merina and related Betsileo) Cotiers (mixed African Malayo–Indonesian and Arab ancestry) Betsimisaraka Tsimihety Antaisaka Sakalava French Indian Creole Comoran

**Religions:** indigenous beliefs 52% Christian 41% Muslim 7%

**Languages:** French (official) Malagasy (official)

***Literacy:***

*definition:* age 15 and over can read and write

*total population:* 80%

*male:* 88%

*female:* 73% (1990 est.)

## Madagascar – Economy

**Economy—overview:** Madagascar suffers from chronic malnutrition underfunded health and education facilities a roughly 3% annual population growth rate and severe loss of forest cover accompanied by erosion. Agriculture including fishing and forestry is the mainstay of the economy accounting for 33% of GDP and

contributing more than 70% to export earnings. Industry features textile manufacturing and the processing of agricultural products. Growth in output in 1992–97 averaged less than the growth rate of the population. Growth has been held back by antigovernment strikes and demonstrations a decline in world coffee demand and the erratic commitment of the government to economic reform. Formidable obstacles stand in the way of Madagascar's realizing its considerable growth potential; the extent of government reforms outside financial aid and foreign investment will be key determinants.

**GDP:** purchasing power parity—\$10.3 billion (1997 est.)

**GDP—real growth rate:** 3% (1997 est.)

**GDP—per capita:** purchasing power parity—\$730 (1997 est.)

**GDP—composition by sector:**

*agriculture:* 33%

*industry:* 15%

*services:* 52% (1996 est.)

**Inflation rate—consumer price index:** 19.8% (1996)

**Labor force:** NA

**Unemployment rate:** NA%

**Budget:**

*revenues:* \$477 million

*expenditures:* \$706 million including capital expenditures of \$264 million (1996 est.)

**Industries:** meat processing soap breweries tanneries sugar textiles glassware cement automobile assembly plant paper petroleum tourism

**Industrial production growth rate:** 3.8% (1993 est.)

**Electricity—capacity:** 220 000 kW (1995)

**Electricity—production:** 595 million kWh (1995)

**Electricity—consumption per capita:** 43 kWh (1995)

**Agriculture—products:** coffee vanilla sugarcane cloves cocoa rice cassava (tapioca) beans bananas peanuts; livestock products

**Exports:**

*total value:* \$493 million (f.o.b. 1996 est.)

*commodities:* coffee 45% vanilla 20% cloves shellfish sugar petroleum products (1995 est.)

*partners:* France 41% US Japan Italy (1995)

**Imports:**

*total value:* \$612 million (f.o.b. 1996 est.)

*commodities:* intermediate manufactures 30% capital goods 28% petroleum 15% consumer goods 14% food 13% (1995 est.)

*partners:* France 40% Japan Hong Kong Singapore US (1995)

**Debt—external:** \$4.4 billion (1996 est.)

**Economic aid:**

*recipient:* ODA \$454 million (1992–96)

**Currency:** 1 Malagasy franc (FMG) = 100 centimes

**Exchange rates:** Malagasy francs (FMG) per US\$1—5 302.9 (December 1997) 5 090.9 (1997) 4 061.3 (1996) 4 265.6 (1995) 3 067.3 (1994) 1 913.8 (1993)

**Fiscal year:** calendar year

## Madagascar – Internet Cafes

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**Notes:**

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# **Ambohimanga**

## **Ambohimanga – Internet Cafes**

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### **Notes:**

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# **Antananarivo**

Antananarivo, thankfully shortened to Tana by tourists and locals alike, is the bustling capital of Madagascar.

Built on hillsides and ridges and ringed with rice paddies, Tana is an interesting place to spend a few days either at the beginning or end of your holiday. As it is also the location of the country's major international airport, most visitors will find themselves at least passing through the city.

Founded in 1610 after a Malagasy king conquered several villages in the area, it was named Antananarivo (town of 1000) because a garrison of 1000 men were left behind to defend the newly gained territory.

A palace (Rova) was built on the highest hill and in such a prominent position that it could be seen for tens of kilometres in just about any direction. Despite the modern version burning down in suspicious circumstances during the 1990s, the shell of the Rova remains the most dominant and recognised feature of the city today and it is a must see for any newcomers to the Malagasy capital.

Tana is a great city to explore by foot, but be warned that its streets and many stairways are steep and demanding and the continual advances of beggars or street vendors can grow tiresome.

## **Antananarivo – Sights**

A good introduction to the city is to take a taxi to the Rova where the magnificent views overlooking the city, coupled with the majestic ruins of the palace, will provide you with plenty of photo opportunities. Several young men will offer to guide you around the outside of the Rova and describe various points of interest. These men are not official guides, but some of them do have a lot of knowledge to share, and payment for their services is expected.

For those more energetic, a stroll back down the steep, narrow streets to the Avenue of Independence is recommended. As well as allowing you to marvel at the tireless way the Malagasy walk up and down these hills every day, the views and street scenes will give you an idea of how the Malagasy people live, and give you a greater appreciation of what is sometimes a much maligned city.

Most people travel to Madagascar for the wildlife, hoping to spot lemurs and chameleons, and for those who don't wish to go trekking through national parks, the zoo at Tsimbazaza is the ideal place to spend an afternoon.

Set in gardens dominated by giant travellers palms, Tsimbazaza allows you to get up close and personal with several species of lemur. They may not be in the wild, but if you are lucky enough you will still hear their strange voices and cries.

The reptile house has a good selection of chameleons and snakes and a small natural history museum attached to the zoo has some interesting displays of taxidermy, fossils, butterflies and culture. Admission to the museum is included in the price of your zoo entry.

If shopping is your thing then the markets of Tana could be for you. They sell almost anything and cater for both tourists and locals alike. The cost of each item will vary depending on whether you are a local or a tourist, but bargaining is acceptable and can be an interesting experience in itself. From clothes to tacky souvenirs to all the fruit you can eat, you are sure to find something memorable to purchase in the markets.

The once famous Zoma market no longer operates as it once did, but bustling markets can be found at the top of the Avenue of Independence and also past the railway station at the bottom of the Avenue of Independence.

The markets are fun, places to visit, but they can be crowded and care must be taken with any valuables that you may be carrying or wearing.

Lac (lake) Anosy, although sometimes looking a bit worse for wear, is worth a look, especially when the Jacaranda trees that surround it are blooming. A World War 1 monument stands on an island in the middle of the lake. Erected by the French, the monument is accessible by a causeway.

Tana is a great city to explore by foot, but be warned that its streets and many stairways are steep and demanding and continual advances of beggars or street vendors can grow tiresome.

[Ambohimanga \(Blue Hills\)](#) is just out of Tana and makes a great day trip. Follow the link for more information about this popular destination.

## Antananarivo – Shopping

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## Antananarivo – Daytrips

[Ambohimanga \(Blue Hills\)](#) is just out of Tana and makes a great day trip. Follow the link for more information about this popular destination.

For more information about Ivato Airport, follow the link.

## Antananarivo – Eating Out

There are numerous places to eat in Tana. Fruit is readily obtained from the markets and the number of small cafes and restaurants doing business along any of Tana's streets will satisfy your appetite.

Finding places to eat is one of the fun things about visiting any town in Madagascar and Tana is no exception. Some of the restaurants I have enjoyed are listed here, and if you have had experiences (good or bad) in any others, then drop us a line and we can add it to our list.

**all**

### Venus Restaurant

A busy Malagasy restaurant in the Ambodin 'Isotry district. It serves a variety of dishes including your standard steak and chips. I recommend the soup which is served in a massive bowl and contains absolutely everything. It is definitely a meal in itself.

### Planets

This is half way up the hill at the opposite end of the Avenue of Independence from the railway station, past the intersection with the road that passes through the tunnel. Serves decent hamburgers and hotdogs as well as spaghetti. Crepes or omlettes go down well for breakfast and its vast array of mouth watering cakes and sweets are welcome any time of day. Exceptionally clean but very busy.

### Mumma Mias

In the Andohalo region. Serves passable pizza.

### Ceramique in Mahamasine

This is a great little, family run restaurant in Mahamasina, up a narrow side street behind the stadium, almost directly below the Rova. It is difficult to find if you don't know the way, but the second dwelling on the left of the side street sells charcoal and is readily recognisable by it being covered in black soot. The restaurant, well worth eating in, is approx 100m on from the charcoal place

## Antananarivo – Accommodation

**all**

### Raphia Hotel

The Raphia is a quaint little family run hotel. The rooms are small, but clean and some offer good views of the city. The narrow staircase that leads to the rooms on the upper floors is a problem for tall, awkward people like me, while the small toilet under the stairs on the third floor is worth a visit. Shared facilities are cleaned daily by a friendly little maid who just missed out on being a dwarf, and the hotel has hot, running water. The top floor has a communal lounge area with panoramic views over Tana. Cost is from 75,000Fmg per day. Breakfast is available and can be eaten in a nice little courtyard area at outdoor tables shaded by umbrellas. Situated in the upper town along Lalana Ranavalona III.

### Hilton Hotel

The rooms are typical of Hilton Hotel rooms across the world and the prices similar. Good views of Lac Anosy if your room is on the right side of the building and high enough up.

## Antananarivo – Getting There

Most people visiting Madagascar will arrive and depart from Ivato Airport, just outside the nation's capital, [Antananarivo](#).

If you don't mind having your passport checked several thousand times as you pass through the customs area and retrieve your baggage, then the process of entering the country is relatively smooth. Of course, arranging for a visa to be stamped into your passport before you leave home will make things a lot easier.

There are money changing facilities at the airport and travellers cheques in major currencies (French Francs, US Dollars, the Euro, etc) will be changed readily into Fmg (Malagasy Francs). Beware that the highest Malagasy demonimation is the 25,000 Fmg note and its approx value is only \$10 Australian or \$5 US. So cashing even \$100 worth of travellers cheques will see a large wad of Malagasy money being passed to you across the desk. This can make some people nervous.

Expect to be badgered by a large number of porters who offer to carry your bags, and also numerous taxi drivers who will want to whisk you to your destination.

The official porters are easily identified by their uniform and are mostly honest. For many of these men, this is their only source of income so payment is expected.

Be aware that if you have several bags then it is more than likely that several porters will attempt to carry one bag each. This means payment must be made to each porter individually. Payment for each porter shouldn't exceed 5,000Fmg, and even that is excessive.

Porters tend to be more of a nuisance than a problem, especially when arriving by car at the airport ready for your departure. Do not be surprised if your taxi is swamped by a dozen or more porters all competing for your business. Their enthusiasm cannot be tempered and they will be pulling your bags out of the back of your car before you have had time to open the door. Do not worry, but watch your belongings closely and be firm. If you wish to employ any of the porters, quickly choose one or two of them and hand them your bags.

Taxis into the city should cost somewhere between 40,000 – 75,000Fmg. The best I have managed by myself is 50,000Fmg, and with my wife (a Malagasy person) 40,000Fmg.

Buses do run from near the airport into the city and at a fraction of the cost of a taxi, but they are crowded, slow and confusing to someone uninitiated in the ways of the Malagasy bus service.

The taxis are not expensive and usually get you to your destination, so for the convenience and relative comfort, taxis are the general means of transport for visitors. Taxis from the Hilton Hotel in Tana will charge more to take patrons back to the airport.

## Antananarivo – People

there also are 1,000,000 people there in madagascar.

## Antananarivo – Internet Cafes

**all**

### Planete Cybercaf

Notre cybercaf se trouve dans la capitale  
Antananarivo, plusieurs ordinateurs connects internet, possiblilt  
d'imprimer et de numeriser

price: 6000 FMG/h 1Euro/h 1Dollar/h

email: planete@iris.mg

hours: 8h–19h

address: 30, Rue Emile Ranarivelo

url: [www.behoririka.fr.st](http://www.behoririka.fr.st)

### Cyber Café

tel: 22.328.61

email: cybercaf@dts.mg

address: B.P 5242,101 Tananarive  
Madagascar

url: [www.dts.mg](http://www.dts.mg)

### Cybercafe

in the foyer of the Hilton Hotel

address: Antananarivo  
Madagascar

Price: 60,000 FMG/h (about US25c/minute)

### Planete Cybercafé

un cybercafé qui se trouve dans la capitale de Madagascar  
avec 5 machines liées à un réseau haut débit. Possibilité d'impression de  
scannerisation. Situation rapide : le cybercafé se trouve à Behoririka entre  
le Decorama et le Restaurant  
job centre, incl. internet access

price: 30 000 FMG / H

tel: (261).20.22.555.51

email: [planetecybercafe@ifrance.com](mailto:planetecybercafe@ifrance.com)

hours: 9h à 12 h 14h à 19h Ouvert le Samedi

address: Rue Emile Ranarivelo – Behoririka, Antananarivo  
, 101, Madagascar

url: [www.ifrance.com](http://www.ifrance.com)

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# Antanarivo

See Antananarivo for info.

## **Antananarivo – Internet Cafes**

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## Notes:

# Antsirabe

Antsirabe is a memorable town to visit if only to experience the constant badgering of the pousse-pousse drivers. A pousse-pousse is the Malagasy equivalent to the rickshaw and Antsirabe is infested with them.

From the moment you arrive by taxi-bousse you will be swarmed by pousse-pousse drivers desperate for your business. They will take you anywhere in the town and because competition for your patronage is extreme, it is possible to negotiate a reasonable price before climbing on board, but remember, if you want to get to your hotel or destination quickly try to pick a young driver! The last time I rode a pousse-pousse in Antsirabe, my old driver could barely generate enough speed to reach walking pace.

Antsirabe is a lovely town and a stroll around its streets will bring you in contact with some fantastic little shops selling Malagasy artefacts and handicrafts. The shop owners really go after their sales so try not to be talked into buying something that you don't really want. Prices are negotiable and bargaining is a part of the shopping experience in Madagascar for visitors and locals alike so don't be scared to hold out for a better deal.

Antsirabe is also a centre for selling precious and semi-precious stones and numerous street vendors and stalls are willing to sell you some souvenirs. In some places you can watch them being cut and polished.

A popular spot in Antsirabe is the thermal springs and baths, located next to Lac (lake) Ranomafana (hot water). The complex provides private cubicles and body massages at bargain basement prices.

The countryside around Antsirabe is worth exploring, especially the lakes to the west of the town. Lac Andraikiba and Lac Tritriva are well visited locations and are relatively easy to get to. Many visitors hire mountain bikes and ride out to the lakes (approx 20 kms to Lac Tritriva, 7 kms to Lac Andraikiba).

Despite the Lonely Planet guide saying that it is an easy ride, it isn't. Although worthwhile, the roads are rough and sometimes treacherous, with many long, steep uphill sections. It is a hot and tiring ride with only a couple of refreshment stalls along the way selling unrefrigerated drinks and snacks. Start early!!!

Good quality bikes can be hired for a small fee from a vendor set up on the footpath near the Hotel de Eau on the Avenue de Lindependence.

Lac Andraikiba is a large lake that is suitable for swimming with many quiet areas for resting (especially if you are mountain biking). Lac Tritriva is smaller but more scenic and busier. A fee is payable at the boomgate that blocks the road leading to the lake area.

Children from the small, picturesque village of Tritriva which rests below the crater lake, will approach you offering to be your guide or sell you handicrafts. I found these children to be most polite, many with a good grasp of English, and valuable resources of information concerning the lake and the surrounding area. They did not demand money for helping me so I tipped them generously. They accepted the money gratefully and declared that they would buy some books and pencils to use in school!

The small town of Betafo is a little further on from Lac Tritriva and is a typical example of a Merina village. It is visited by many tourists taking day trips from Antsirabe. It is easily reached by taxi or bicycle from Antsirabe (following the mostly flat main road).

There are many places to stay and eat in Antsirabe. The Hotel de Eau on the Avenue of Independence has massive rooms with their own shower and toilets. Approx 40,000 Fmg per night. A small restaurant is located in the entrance foyer.

Le Zebu Philosophe is a great restaurant, also situated on the Avenue of Independence. Good service and a range of food to suit most appetites.

Nearby is Helenas Salon de The, a patisserie that is great to visit around breakfast time.

If anyone has any further information they would like to contribute to the Antsirabe section, please drop us a line and we will include it here Sean Lee (Editor Madagascar section).

## Antsirabe – Internet Cafes

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# **Canal des pangalanes**

## **Canal des pangalanes – Internet Cafes**

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# Fianarantsoa

Fianarantsoa is the largest town in the highlands south of Tana and is the capital city of the province of the same name. As with all of Madagascar's highland towns, the place is very hilly, so be prepared for some steep walks.

Your most likely introduction to Fianarantsoa will be the dusty, bustling taxi-brousse station along the busy Rue MDRM. Here it is easy to find a ride to your next destination or the way to a nearby hotel.

Hotel Arinofy is located close to the taxi-brousse station and is relatively easy to find, although the short walk does take you up a very steep hill! The hotel is extremely clean and has a nice restaurant on the bottom floor. The double story building has magnificent views overlooking the town and internet access is available. If the same chef is still working there, then he will offer to guide you around the town when he goes off shift. He is quite good and doesn't demand a fortune.

Fianarantsoa has plenty to offer its visitors. There is an Antaimoro paper factory not far from the Arinofy Hotel where you can watch a family go through each stage of paper making, from mashing up the sisal to adding the decorative flower petals and stems to the drying phase. Examples of the finished product are available for purchase and make great gifts or souvenirs. There is a larger and more famous Antaimoro paper factory in Ambalavao, but this one is nice and a bit more intimate.

A walk to the site of the old Rova, the highest point in town, is well worth the sweat. Even though the Rova is gone (the French destroyed it in the 1940s), magnificent views over Fianarantsoa and the surrounding countryside await those who make it the whole way. A flat stone slab at the site was used by cruel kings and queens of the past to inflict severe bodily harm on their underlings in that they were made to lie on it while their heads were cut off. If there are any local children present then they will mime out the vicious act for you!!

To get to the old Rova site you need to find your way to the upper town and then follow Rue P. Ramasitera.

Fianarantsoa also hosts a wonderful market. Not quite as crowded as some of the markets in Tana but still full of bustle and it sells almost anything. You will find it towards the upper town, off Ave Fahaleovantena.

The Hotel Sofia, on the way into town from the north, is worth a look even if you are not staying there. It is a large complex with boutique (expensive) shops and interesting architecture.

Fianarantsoa is also the town from which most visitors embark on Madagascar's most sensational rail journey. The train runs from Fianarantsoa to Manakara on the east coast, and stops at every point along the way. Winding its way through magnificent mountain scenery, it is a journey well worth taking. For more details about the rail journey please follow this link: [Fianarantsoa–Manakara Rail Journey](#).

Ranomafana national park is easily accessible from Fianarantsoa and features mountain scenery, dense forest, hot springs and plenty of lemurs. For more information, follow the link.

## Fianarantsoa – Internet Cafes

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# Ihosy

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# Isalo

Isalo [pronounced eeshall] National park in the south-west of the country. 203,900 acres. 150 miles from Toliary.

Canyons, cliffs, gorges and other striking geological features, due to wind and rain erosion. Exotic flora, native palm trees, giant cactus. Lemurs, harmless reptiles.

Camping and visiting permit delivered by the "Direction des Eaux et Forets" in Antananarivo, by the "Service Provincial des Eaux et Forets" in Fianarantsoa, or by the Forestry Ranger in Ranohira.

# Isalo – Internet Cafes

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## Notes:

# Mahajanga

Mahajanga is a city on the north-west coast of Madagascar. Great beaches and lots of interesting hikes in the area. There are many nice colonial buildings here and the town somehow has an oriental atmosphere.

Mahajanga province covers an area of 150,023 km<sup>2</sup>. It has a population of 1,733,917 (July, 2001).

## Mahajanga – Eating Out

**all**

### **Thi Lan**

Vietnamese restaurant

address: Av. Tsiranana

tel: 6229 61

### **HOTEL DE FRANCE**

In the centre – 150m from the seashore.

address: 10,rue du Maréchal Joffre BP 45– 401 MAHAJANGA

email: h.France@dts.mg

tel: (261 20 ) 62 237 81 / 62 223 27

## Mahajanga – Internet Cafes

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# Masoala peninsula

## Masoala peninsula – Internet Cafes

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# Morondava

## Morondava – Accommodation

## Morondava – Internet Cafes

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## Notes:

## Nosy be

Along the north-west coast lies a number of islands, the largest of which is Nosy Be. Marvelous beaches and coral reef in a protected national zone, natural lemur reserve, wonderful fishing, numerous nearby desert islands, all await the lucky traveller.

The unfortunately named Hell-Ville is the largest town and port of Nosy Be (Big Island). Three-quarters the size of Singapore, Nosy Be has 60,000 inhabitants, half of whom live in Hell-Ville, and the island is apparently the centre of what little tourism exists in Madagascar (only about 150,000 tourists visit the country each year).

Small boats are available to make the short journey across to the nearby island of Nosy Komba (Lemur Island), where a pretty village sprawls along the northern beach. It is an enchanting spot, and the inhabitants are amiable, especially the ever-present children. Life here is simple, based on fishing, small-scale cultivation, and the rub-off from tourists arriving to see the 5,000 black lemurs that roam the island. At the end of the village, a small tribe of these delightful mammals is so habituated to human contact that they will jump onto one's shoulders to eat bananas out of one's hands. The nearby jungle defines the term "tropical paradise". Fruit trees grow wild all around, with lemons, oranges, bananas, papayas and mangos waiting to be plucked. Coffee bushes, vanilla orchids, pepper plants and other spices abound, chameleons sun themselves on the acacia branches, and birds sing in every tree. Life here feels good.

*Contributed by Howard Banwell*

## Nosy be – Internet Cafes

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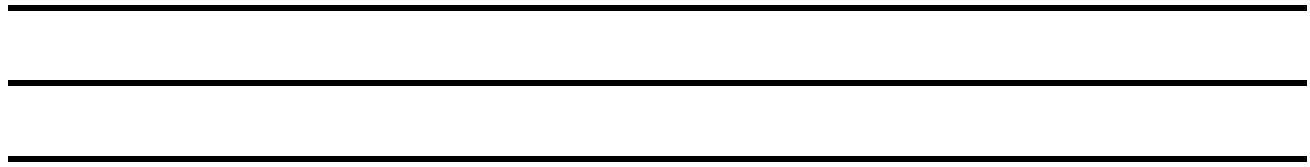
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# **Nosy boraha**

## **Nosy boraha – Internet Cafes**

## **Nosy boraha – Accommodation**

**all**

### **Masoandro Lodge**

The Masoandro Lodge is a cluster of charming bungalows located on Sainte Marie Island. The Masoandro Lodge is a real Ecolodge located on a hill overlooking a magnificent inlet with wonderful aquatic life.

It is close to the traditional villages where you can experience the hospitality of the local people and their warm and open nature. It is located just 35km from the airport and 1km from the Ikalalao forest where you will discover lemurs, chameleons, beautiful birds and rare orchids.

The bungalows are overlooking the sea and tropical turquoise waters.

They come fully equipped with hot water, electricity, fan, mosquito net, private terasse and private bathroom.

For the ultimate in adventure, discover the island on foot and partake in a guided excursion or jungle trek! Or go on a whale watching expedition!

The hotel facilities include a restaurant, bar, bar on the beach and BBQ area.

There are a host of activities to partake in including guided excursions, jungle trips, deep sea fishing, whale watching, snorkeling and diving.

Whatever your interests, you will discover a natural, exotic paradise on Ile Sainte Marie.

### ***Facilities***

*Restaurant*

Car Parking Available

Laundry

Airport Pick Up

Bicycle Hire

Credit Cards Accepted

Bar

Towels

Luggage Storage

Telephone/Fax Facilities

Travel Desk/Travel Info

Bureau de Change

Bike Parking

BBQ Area

Taxes included in price

email: soanambo.tana@simicro.mg

address: Ambia, Ile sainte Marie, 515, Madagascar

CostOfDoubleForANight: 40 to 80 usd

url: [www.hsm.mg](http://www.hsm.mg)

tel: + 261 20 57 040 67

### **Soanambo Hotel\*\*\***

Hotel Soanambo is a 3 star hotel located on Sainte Marie (Nosy Boraha), a tranquil island in a lagoon of turquoise waters just east of Madagascar. This hotel is part of the HSM hotel group (Masoandro Lodge, Hôtel Napoléon et La Cocoteraie Resort)

The hotel is renowned for the past 20 years for its quality of service and its excellent personnel who will endeavour to make your stay as enjoyable as possible.

Hotel Soanambo features 40 luxury rooms and bungalows stylishly decorated and fully equipped with satellite TV, private bathroom, direct dial telephone, air conditioning and mini bar.

Hotel facilities include 2 restaurants, bar, swimming pool, huge pontoon, tennis courts, pedal boats, bikes, motorbikes and motorboats. Guests can try a host of water sports including boating, snorkeling and diving

Enjoy a massage on the edge of the pool with a view out to the magnificent lagoon.

For the ultimate in adventure, discover the island on foot and partake in a guided excursion or jungle trek! Or go on a whale watching expedition!

Whatever your interests, you will discover paradise on Sainte Marie Island and this Hotel is the ideal base from which to explore a tranquil haven.

***Facilities***

*Restaurant*

Car Parking Available

Internet Access

Laundry

Airport Pick Up

Bicycle Hire

Credit Cards Accepted

Bar

Towels

Luggage Storage

Swimming Pool

Children Friendly

Telephone/Fax Facilities

24 Hour Reception

Travel Desk/Travel Info

Bureau de Change

Bike Parking

email: soanambo.tana@simicro.mg

address: BP 20 Ile Sainte Marie, 515, Madagascar

CostOfDoubleForANight: 50 to 70 usd

url: [www.hsm.mg](http://www.hsm.mg)

tel: + 261 32 07 635 71

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# Nosy mangabe

## Nosy mangabe – Internet Cafes

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# **Perinet**

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# Taolanaro

Taolanaro is a very beautiful city. It is also called fort dauphin. Surrounded by the Indian Ocean on three sides, Fort Dauphin is a picturesque town that should be included in every visit to Madagascar. Founded in 1642 and named after King Louis XIV, it has long been a popular destination on account of its pleasant climate. To get a good view of the town and its surroundings a hike up the Pic St. Louis is recommended.  
whEe ^\_ ^ www.xanga.com

## **Taolanaro – Internet Cafes**

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## Notes:

# Toamasina

Toamasina is Madagascar's largest port. The central market in the heart of the city appears to be the one and only sight deemed worth showing to the few tourists who visit this city. Driving around, the economic deprivation is palpable. One of the poorest nations in the world, Madagascar has a per capita GDP of just US\$750, only 60,000 passenger vehicles in the whole country, 20 TV sets per 1000 population, and less than 50,000 telephone land-lines. Rarely does one see such urban poverty and infrastructure decay. The metalled roads both in and out of town are badly damaged and pot-holed everywhere; public buildings are black with tropical mildew and pollution and undoubtedly receive no maintenance. The town's 120,000 or so inhabitants do not appear to be starving, but clearly they live at a subsistence level in their metal shacks or bamboo and atap huts. Very little sophisticated economic activity is to be seen, and even small-scale businesses apparently depend on foreign capital. The tour company handling our ground arrangements was owned by a Frenchman, and the restaurant we stopped at for refreshments by an Englishwoman.

Driving north from Toamasina on pretty dreadful roads for some twelve kilometres, and then several more on a muddy, rutted track along the bank of a river brings you to Ivoloina Gardens. This attractive nature reserve promotes the conservation of Madagascar's unique animals and plants, which are under massive threat from the erosion of their natural habitats. The main focus is on lemurs, thirteen species of which are to be seen in the reserve, five of which range free in the forests near the caged species. Ivoloina Gardens gets about 14,000 visitors a year of which about 70% are Malagasy nationals, and the small scale but apparently effective approach taken in this reserve is partly supported by the Madagascar Fauna Group, a global consortium of 38 zoos, universities and conservation centers headquartered at the San Francisco zoo. The lemurs are certainly adorable creatures and given the immense poverty and lack of resources in the country such efforts to conserve and regenerate these species are to be applauded and supported. In addition to the lemurs, you may also be able to see spider tortoises, cryptic chameleons and the brilliantly colored tomato frogs all species unique to Madagascar.

*Contributed by Howard Banwell*

## Toamasina – Internet Cafes

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# Tulear

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