



Remote River Expeditions Madagascar



East Meets West

Contrasts of the Great Red Island! ~ Rainforest, River, Sea and the West

18-Day Custom Program

(13 & 15 day programs also available)

Highlights Include:

- **Masoala National Park**
 - **Tsiribihina River**
 - **Tsingy de Bemaraha**
 - **Kirindy Forest Reserve**
 - **Avenue of the Baobabs**
 - **Cities and towns:**
 - **Morondava**
 - **Expert Naturalist Guides**
 - **Varied and excellent cuisine**
 - **And of course, lemurs, lemurs, lemurs...**
- ~ Eastern rainforest & coastal reserve ~ Sea Kayaking (option)
 - ~ Calm water canoeing
 - ~ World Heritage Site
 - ~ Western deciduous forest
 - ~ Baobabs in Love
 - ~ Antananarivo, Maroantsetra, Antsirabe, Morondava
 - ~ Mozambique Channel & the Chez Maggie Hotel
 - ~ English-speaking and multi-lingual staff

Detailed Itinerary

Day	Location / Activity
1	En route to Madagascar
2	Arrive Antananarivo . Remote River Expeditions representative will meet you at Ivato Airport for the transfer to our hotel. Orientation and welcome dinner. Overnight ICT Hotel (or similar). (D)
3	Early transfer to Ivato Airport for our flight from Antananarivo to Maroantsetra , the gateway to the Masoala National Park. (MD 408, 7:40-10:40) Transfer by boat to Masoala Forest Lodge our home base for exploring Masoala National Park. (B,D)
4 – 5	Paddling and trekking in Masoala National Park . Based at luxurious Masoala Forest Lodge we explore by boat and sea kayak (optional) the Masoala Peninsula. We'll visit various spots around the peninsula, including deserted islands, up the Fampotobe River and into the heart of the Masoala Peninsula. Here we pass stunning coastlines of sandy coves separated by rocky, forested headlands. We will also take time to snorkel the amazing waters and discover the littoral rain-forest on nature walks.
	One stop, Antalavia, (about 50 km from Maroantsetra), in a protected bay at the end of 10 km long beach. A cool fresh water stream flows through the beach into the sea and great cascades leads steeply into the heart of the high land rain forest. This area offers a great rain forest experience with many lemur species and endemic birds along with geckos, chameleons and other forest inhabitants. If time allows we may make a journey to Nosy Behento. A small remote tropical island located at the southern-most tip of the Masoala Peninsula at the end of the long barrier reef. (B,L,D)
	Masoala National Park: http://taniko.free.fr/parks/masoala.htm
6	After breakfast we return by boat to Maroantsetra . Overnight Coco Beach Hotel. (B,D)
7	Return flights from Maroantsetra to Antananarivo and travel overland south from Antananarivo through the highlands to Antsirabe . A volcanic region of rocky hills and grassland of zebu herds, and kasana and rice plantations. Overnight Hotel des Thermas (or similar). (B,D)
8	Leaving the highlands we travel west and descend into the Menabe (western) Region to the town of Miandrivazo . After a short visit in the village and final shopping we board our pirogues (local canoes) and begin our trip on the Tsiribihina River . No previous experience is needed as there are no rapids and the river remains calm throughout the journey. Local Malagasy paddlers propel pirogues as we travel downstream and we enjoy sandy camps along the river at night. (B,L,D) (See notes below)
9 – 10	Tsiribihina River . Camping on the river. (B,L,D)
11	Our final day on the river, we complete our journey at Antsiraraka . Overnight in simple bungalows (or camping). (B,L,D)

East Meets West ~ Rainforest, River & Sea, and the West

Detailed Itinerary

Day **Location / Activity**

12 Following an early breakfast we travel by 4X4 west and then north crossing the Tsiribihina River by ferryboat and passing through the town of Belo Tsiribihina. We continue north to the town of **Bekopaka** at the entrance of the Tsingy de Bemaraha. Depending on road conditions and travel time to Bekopaka we may make an afternoon visit to the 'Petite' Tsingy. Overnight Hotel Olympe de Bemaraha (or similar). (B,D)

Tsingy de Bemaraha

This is Madagascar's largest reserve, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO; fascinating raised limestone plateaus decorated with chaotic razor sharp pinnacles with the underground cave systems and many succulents growing in the crevices. (See notes below)

13 Early morning paddle on the **Manambolo River** to visit the Gorges of the Manambolo. Then we travel to the entrance of the Grande Tsingy and spend time exploring the wonders of the Tsingy. Overnight Hotel Olympe de Bemaraha (or similar).

14 Following breakfast we return south the deciduous forestland to the **Kirindy Forest**. A rich reserve for endemic Malagasy floral and fauna. We explore the forest in the late afternoon and after dinner enjoy take an evening walk for nocturnal species. Along with a stunning variety of unique flora the Kirindy Forest is home to 8 lemur species; a variety of tenrecs species; the narrow-striped mongoose; the giant jumping rat and the fossa. Overnight in the rustic bungalows (or camping) in the forest. (B,D) (See notes below)

15 Early morning walking in the Kirindy Forest (especially good for birding). After we head south to **Morondava**. Along the way we make stops at the **Sacred Baobabs, Baobabs in Love** and the world famous **Ave of the Baobabs**. Overnight at the Chez Maggie Hotel. (B,D)

16 Largely an undiscovered gem we enjoy a relaxing day in the tranquil coastal town of **Morondava**. Our home base is the Chez Maggie Hotel, a romantic hide-away in a comfortable garden setting. The hotel features: air-conditioned 2-story chalets and bungalows; superb cuisine; swimming pool and a full service bar. Lunch is on your own but included optional activities are available: paddling in the mangrove swamps or dowha sailing on the Mozambique Channel.

The choice is yours: stroll along the beach, swim in the warm water of the Mozambique Channel, lounge by the pool, or take a walk through town for local flavour and shopping. After enjoying the setting sun over the channel we sample the excellent cuisine of Le Masoandro Restaurant at the Chez Maggie. Overnight at the Chez Maggie Hotel. (B,D)

17 Morondava. Relaxing and optional excursions. (B,D)

18 Following breakfast we transfer to the airport for our flight from **Morondava to Antananarivo**. Transfer downtown with time for sightseeing and shopping before our sunset farewell dinner at the Grill du Rova overlooking the capital. Early evening transfer to Ivato Airport for outbound flights. (B,D)

End of services.

Please Note:

- * Exact program will vary according to international flight arrival and departure times and domestic flight schedule.
- * If road conditions make it impossible to visit the Tsingy de Bemaraha, time in Belo sur Mer and / or Kirindy-Mitea National Park may be substituted.

Cost: TBA

~ Subject to change and availability

Includes: Domestic flights: Antananarivo – Maroansetra - Antananarivo & Morondava - Antananarivo; English speaking guides and naturalists; airport transfers and all ground transportation; all hotels and meals outside Antananarivo (except as noted above); Masoala NP, Tsingy de Bemaraha and Kirindy Park entrance fees; all local guides; river trip (including meals and water); camp and cook staff; camping and commissary equipment (except sleeping bag); and room occupancy taxes.

Excludes: International flights; visas, airport taxes; insurance of any kind; tips; excess baggage; cost of immunizations; drinks (water, sodas, alcoholic drinks); items of a personal nature: and any services not listed as included.

Note on the Itinerary

The itinerary is subject to change with schedule and availability of domestic flights. Accommodations are subject to change due to availability. Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control. If the trip is delayed because of bad weather, cancelled or delayed flights or delays on other modern transportation, sickness, or other situations for which Remote River Expeditions or its agents cannot make provisions, the cost of delays is not included.

East Meets West ~ Rainforest, River & Sea, and the West

Tour Notes

Post Trip Options: We highly recommend spending a bit more time in Morondava at the end of the program at the **Chez Maggie Hotel**, with its wonderfully relaxed setting and superb restaurant it's just to place to reflect on the journey and recharge the batteries before moving on. We're also happy to assist with arrangements and services for all areas of Madagascar including: **Belo sur Mer, Ifaty, Berenty and Isalo National Park.**

Andasibe (Perinet) Reserve: East of Antananarivo Mantadia National Park, crossing the famous cliff of La Mandraka with a panoramic view of the Anjira plain. On the way we'll visit the Peireyras Farm for an introduction to some of the unique wildlife of the island including butterflies, crocodiles, lemurs and reptiles. Day walking safari within the fauna reserve of the Analanmazaotra rainforest. This is the domain of the Indri-Indri, the tallest living lemur. Walking safari in the primary forest of the park we enjoy other lemurs numerous endemic birds, orchids, fern trees, pandanus and many palms. Smaller Fulvus, Bamboo and Rubriventer lemurs may also be seen. Night walking safari for nocturnal lemurs (bush baby) and birds (nightjars and owls).

- 1) <http://taniko.free.fr/parks/andasibe.htm>
- 2) <http://homepage2.nifty.com/wwgkanda/MAD/birdperi.html>
- 3) <http://homepage2.nifty.com/wwgkanda/MAD/mamlperi.html>

Tsiribihina River: The Mahajilo and Mania Rivers crash and tumble out of the highlands, joining near the town of Miandrivazo to form the tranquil Tsiribihina—"where one must not dive"—western Madagascar's biggest river. On its way to the Mozambique Channel, the Tsiribihina cuts through the limestone Bemaraha Plateau in a series of forested gorges, rich in endemic flora and fauna. Although less remote the Tsiribihina offers a view of Malagasy river life as we pass villages and small settlements along the way. We enjoy the stretch from Masiakampy to, stopping for forest walks, birding, and exploring the amazing streams coming off the Bemaraha. We visit Anosin' Ampela waterfall and lovely blue-water grottos, and travertine chutes.

Lemurs found along the river include the red-fronted lemur and Verreaux's sifaka, with mouse lemurs and lepilemurs spottable by night. We pass fruit bat roosts and sandstone cliffs whose ledges and eaves attract peregrine falcons and barn owls. On the sandbars we see flocks of knob-billed and white-faced whistling ducks and many herons. Endemic couas and vangas lurk in the riverside forest, while the cuckoo-roller noisily circles the heights, sharing the skies with the very rare Madagascar fish eagle, the Mad. Harrier hawk and the Mad. kestrel. The night audio is punctuated with the distinctive and ubiquitous calls of the Mad. nightjar and Mad. scops owl, and the plinking of bats.

<http://remoterivers.com/en/docs/gallery.php?id=tsiri&title=Tsiribihina+River&ct=9&overview=gallery-madagascar.php>

Tsingy de Bemaraha: This is Madagascar's largest reserve (152,000 hectares.) and classified as one of the world wonders by UNESCO. The fascinating raised limestone plateau is decorated with a frail, chaotic razor-sharp collection of pinnacles, the "Tsingy". Areas of deciduous forest also provide the chance to see brown lemurs and a variety of birdlife, we may also meet the rare all white Decken's sifaka.

The great variety of flora includes: aloes, orchids, numerous pachypodium and baobabs. The deciduous forest is home to over 50 species of birds; 7 species of lemurs (including the all-white Decken's sifaka) and the rare stump-tailed chameleon (Brookesia perarmata).

Please Note: The site of Bemaraha is managed under special UNESCO regulations in order to protect the fragile site from damage. Access is restricted and the areas we are allowed to visit vary from time to time. In keeping with regulations we will visit what areas we can.

http://www.wcmc.org.uk/protected_areas/data/wh/bemaraha.html

Kirindy Forest Reserve: The 25,000-acre Kirindy Forest has the greatest density and diversity of primates in the world. Probably the best western reserve for seeing Madagascar's endemic dry forest species, the Kirindy is home to the giant jumping rat, found only in this area. Dominated by majestic baobab trees, the forest is home to the world's smallest known primate as well as dozens of amphibian and reptile species (and no poisonous snakes). As well the forest boasts more than 60 species of birds and 8 lemur species.

The Kirindy boasts more than 60 species of birds. Possible sighting include: White-headed Vanga, Rufous Vanga, White-breasted Mesite, Coquerel's Coua, Crested Coua, Sickle-billed Vanga, Chabert's Vanga, Cuckoo Roller, Grey-headed Lovebird, Madagascar Nightjar, Henst Goshawk and Banded Kestrel. Along with a stunning variety of unique flora the forest is home to 8 lemur species.

<http://taniko.free.fr/parks/kirindy.htm>

Morondava: Largely an undiscovered gem, with a long sandy beach (safe swimming at any tide) offering opportunities for good body-surfing sets. You can go sailing in an outrigger canoe or paddle in the mangroves, stroll in town, and stay late at the beachside *bdite*. It's an indescribable delight to be on a coast, facing west to the sunset, breathing that crisp dry air that makes you feel so good. Excellent seafood may be washed down with a cold Three Horses beer or a Lazan'l Betsileo vin gris.

Chez Maggie Hotel: For more information on Morondava and the Menabe Region please visit: www.chezmaggie.com