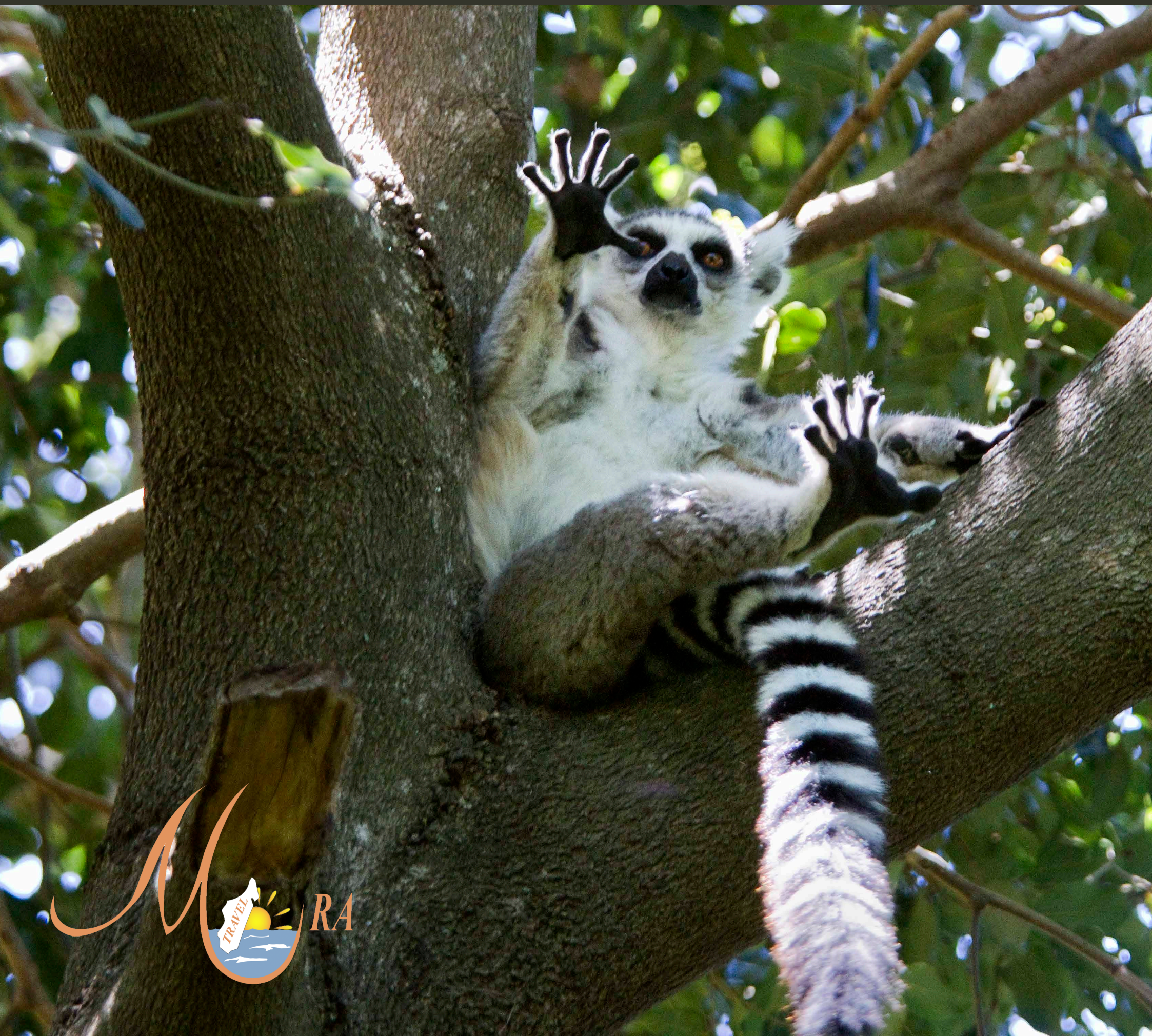


GET TO KNOW MADAGASCAR

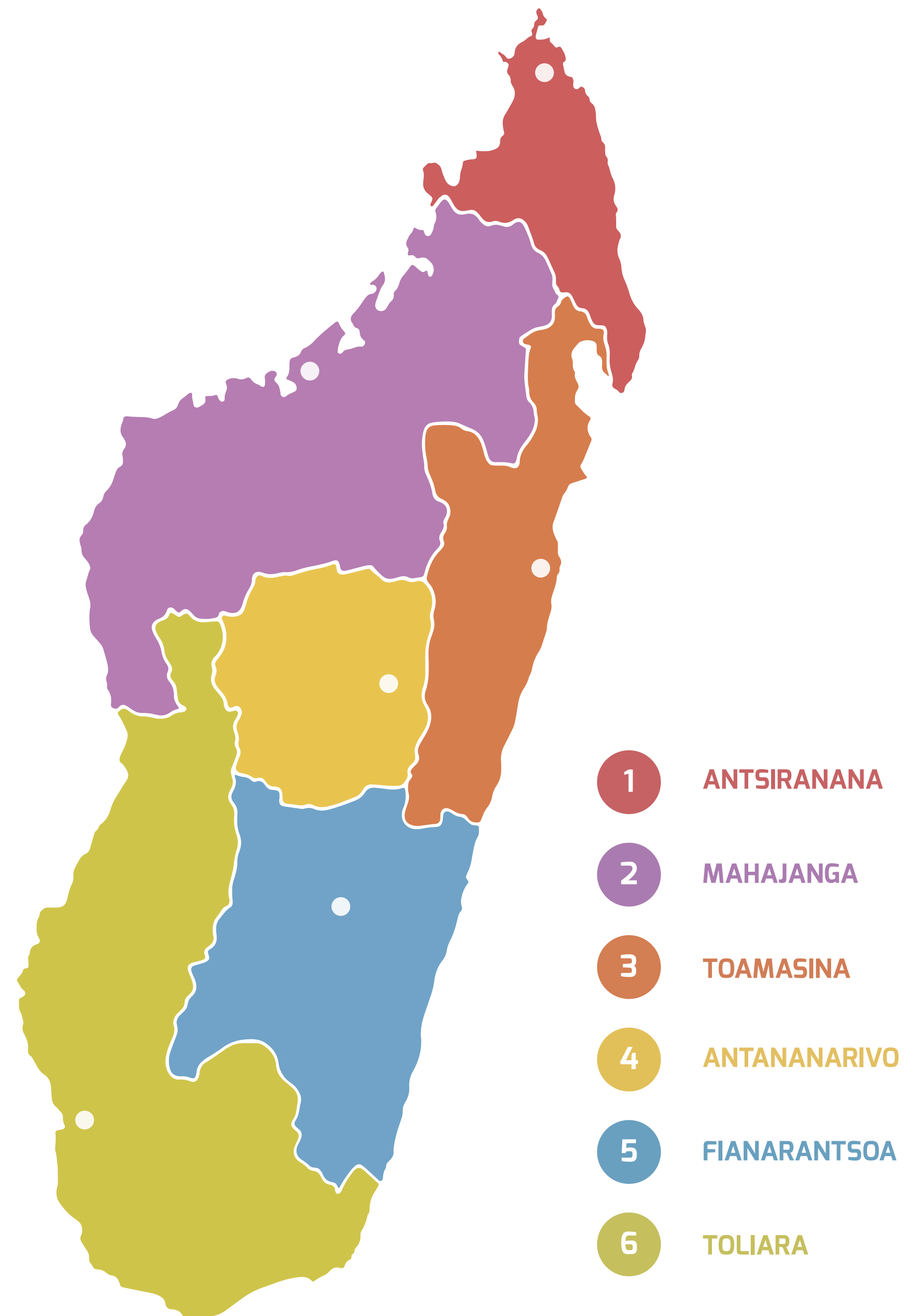


MADAGASCAR

Madagascar is a very large country, comparable with the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France combined. Therefore it is important to decide which part of Madagascar you wish to see before you book the tour.

Madagascar is divided into 6 provinces and 22 administrative regions. Apart from the knowledge about the size of the country it is essential to know that it does not have the infrastructure of France and the Benelux countries. Therefore, it is essential to make a deliberate choice when booking a 14 to 24 day tour.

Which part of the country you wish to visit and which parcs you very much like to see. To facilitate your choice this E-book will describe the provinces in detail. We hope you get an idea of the different possibilities per province, so you can choose the trip of your dreams. We can of course combine different provinces.





Road from North-East to North

1. ANT SIRANANA

The extreme north of Madagascar integrated in the province Antsirananana is also known as Diego-Suarez.

The Eastern part of this Northern province has real original rain forest, featuring in documentaries by David Attenborough, who filmed a sizeable part of the mountainous compact rain forest which is home to the white Simpona lemur, only to be spotted in this part of the country. This mountainous rain forest is for the nature lover, who likes to walk and is not deterred by differences in height, a fabulous spot! You can camp in the forest in 3 different places and there are several hikes (from 2 to several days) possible. There is also a possibility to climb the top of the forest.

Heading North, there is the Tatersalli Camp where the Golden Crown Sifaka can be seen. Even further North, you will leave the rainforest zone. You can head to the Iharana Bush Camp. For us, this is a very special encampment. It lies next to a small lake with a magnificent view over the Tsingy d'Ankarana.

The North East is also known for Vanille in the cities of Sambava and Antalaha.

The dry North is home to the Tsingy D'Ankarana National Park; with its famous suspension bridge and many many caves. You will also find the National Park Montagne d'Ambre here, where the smallest chameleon lives. We can let you stay the night at the nuns, a very special experience in that area. In addition, on your way to the far north you will also find the private park The Red Tsingy where the Black Sifaka can be seen.

Around the Northern City Diego-Suarez there are several bays to visit. Also, very beautiful! here is the mer D'emerade, breathtaking for snorkeling, but wind and kite surfing are also possible in this northern point. A fascinating city and environment.

If we go down the North West coast you can sail to Ankify to the island of Nosy-Be. This island is known as the best dive site in Madagascar with several islands around it. Here we recommend authentic sailing and kayak trips on this truly paradise-like spot.

In the South West of this province lies Ambanja: this is where you enter this province from the RN. It is a forgotten town, which we think is definitely worth a visit. It is the region of coffee, cocoa, clove, vanilla, herbs and spices and is also a region full of small rivers. You can mountainbike or take an organised trip with a pirok which will take you to breathtaking waterfalls. Or you can visit the herbal plantations from the water. Here you really get a taste of the local 'hinterland'.

2. MAHAJANGA

Mahajanga is the largest province of Madagascar bar one, but from a touristic point of view the least popular. The national route in the direction of the Northwest from the capital is as far as the first part of the trip is concerned somewhat monotonous, but the landscape offers a lot of variations and beautiful contrasts in the later stages, starting with the National parc Ankarafantska, known for its many endemic bird species and therefore for bird watchers and absolute must. Many lemures are here at home as well.

Mahanung is the largest city in this province and situated at the coast. The city is fairly developed and has a number of mosques, which is striking because there are no more than 1,5/2% Madagasy who practice the Islamic faith. Another interesting aspect of Mahajunga. A short distance north of Mahajunga we find a beautiful ecolodge, starting point of a variety of excursions to rivers, the sea and the hinterland, enabling us to offer a complete picture of the region.

Further northwards along the RN and in the vicinity of Maromandia in a beautiful community you may find the special blue-eye maki. It is really unique. Proceeding from Maromandia you may reach the most northerly province of Antsiranana instead of taking the generally know RN7 in southward direction.

The coast of the province Mahajunga is breathtaking, but difficult to reach by land. We organize a few times each year, in cooperation with the owner of a beautiful authentic ship, sailing voyages along this coastal city, and you may then join a migrating ship sailing from north to southwest for maintenance and vice versa. Water lovers will find this a must and a really unique experience. Please consult our social media for offers regarding these unique sailings.



Antsantia by the sea to the north of the city of Mahajunga



Guide Joseph in Masoala

3. TOAMASINA

Toamasina is the real rainforest part of Madagascar, also known as the hotspot of biodiversity. Lemures are not absent in this part of Madagascar. Here the largest variety of lemure of the island the 'Indri' appears and the more rare nightlemure the Aye Aye and many other species night- and day lemures. This part of the island is wet, at the coast wet and warm, but above all green!

The most famous national parcs are situated in this province. PN Analamzoatra (Perinet/ Andasibe) en Mantadia, literally blending into each other, is home to the Indri. Surrounding these parcs many privately owned properties are situated and so is a beautiful ecolodge, so the area caters for everybody, with the possibility to discover this rain forest.

In the direction of the coast we find canal Pangalanes. In the northern, more touristic part a privately owned, small parc can be found, home to many lemures. Also, a nightly walk to see Aye Aye lemures is possible. Once arrived in Tamatave we support a visit to the Ivoloïna Parc, a scientific center, where valuable research is conducted. There is also a zoo and forest station covering 282 hectares . In the zoo lemures that have been mistreated, are cared for by the personnel until such time that the 12 species can be returned to their natural habitat. Project have been started for local children and adults to teach them preservation of nature. It would be interesting for visitors to spend a day with them, dormitories and smaller rooms are available for visitors who wish to spend the night there.

East of this province we find the small island of Sainte-Marie, which administratively speaking belongs to this province. You can either fly or sail tot his island. An abundance of rainfall guarantees that the island is totally covered by vegetation. At the turn of the 18th and 19th century St. Marie was known as one of the most important pirate's stronghold. They gathered vast fortunes which was instrumental for the growth of the island into a major trade center.

In exchange for the loot merchants from every part of the world offered a large variety of products, with gun powder and weapons featuring prominently.

During the months of July, August and the beginning of September whales can be spotted along the coast, a truly spectacular sight. But Sainte-Marie also offers excellent possibilities for walking, cycling, diving, snorkeling, in short a pearl in the sea.

If we continue in northern direction in this province we encounter an almost impassable road between Tamatave and at present the road between Mananara and Maroantsetra is totally impassable. This part of the province is reserved for the true expedition lovers. Maroantsetra does belong to this province and is worthwhile visiting. The famous national parc Masoala with a high degree of primary rain forest is part of it. If you like to stay in a rain forest, or close to it, Masoala is certainly a serious candidate. From Maroantsetra is it only reachable ferrying by boat over the sea. As mentioned before, a true expedition, but really worth while. Intrigued? Call us regarding the possibilities and accessibility of these locations.

The most interesting aspect of Masoala is that the Marine parc, the Coastal parc and the rain forest can be visited from one spot. You can easily stay more nights to admire the varied ecosystems. During the July - September period whales swim along the coast. Excursions to the surrounding villages are possible for those who, besides nature, also want to enjoy something of culture / lifestyle. Again, a unique piece of Madagascar.

4. ANTANANARIVO

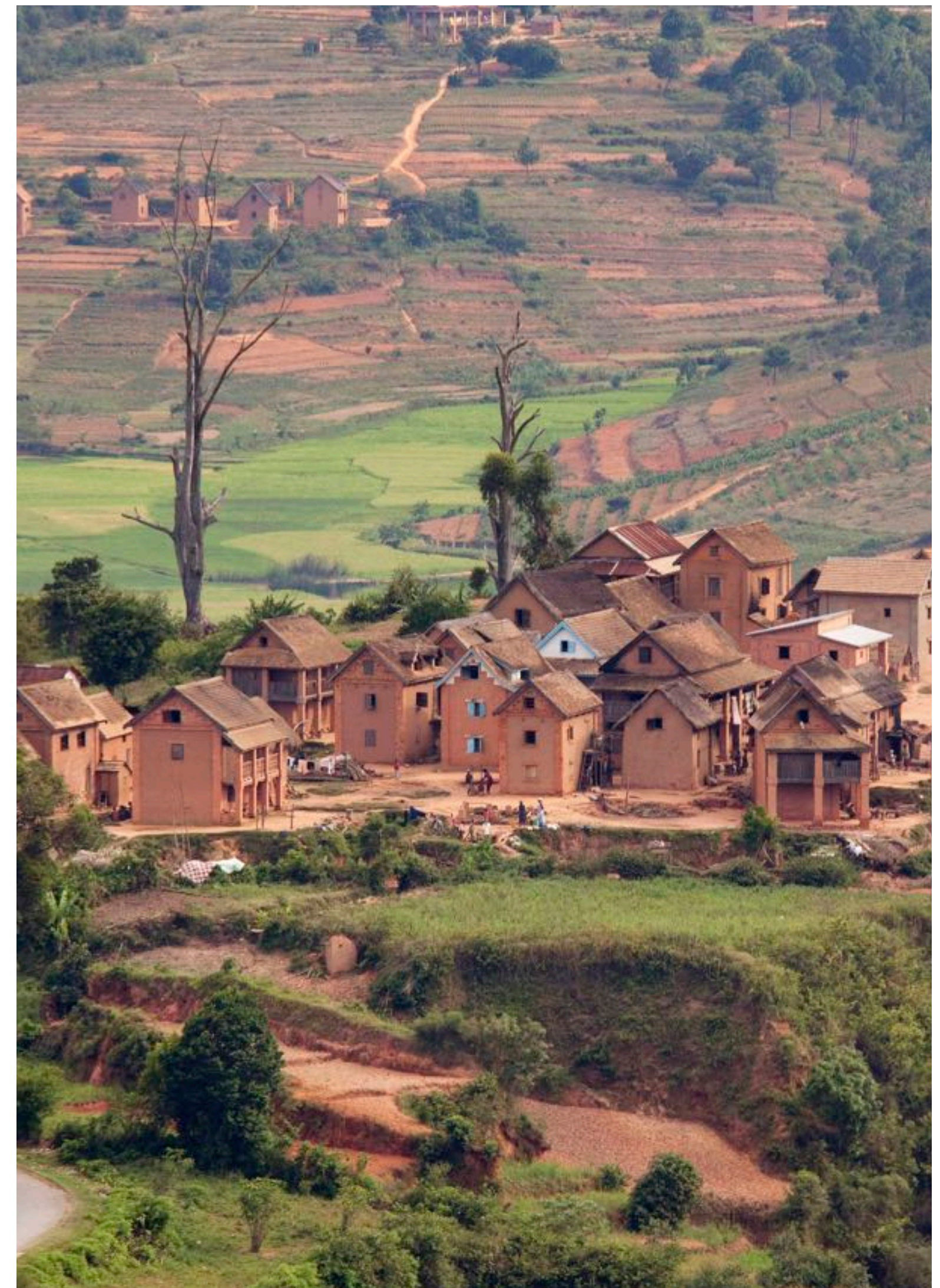
Antananarivo is usually the province where you arrive. Most flights land in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. In this province you find yourself on the Highland of Madagascar which is characterised by hills, red glued stone houses, rice fields and agriculture. This part of the country and its population has many similarities with the Asian landscape.

In addition to a visit to the capital and surrounding historical interesting hotspots there are more activities we can recommend. To mention a few bike trips on the Highlands around Antsirabe, walking tours enabling you to find close contact with the local rural populations with the possibility to sleep in Gite rural or a visit to the

Highland which is quite a separate part of the fascinating island, contrasting the rest of the country.

Start of all RN on the island
RN7 south
RN2 east
RN north

If you wish, you may start the tour in the north of this province with a unique hiking and sailing trip across the Manambolo river in western direction, to the well known Unesco classified Tsingy de Bemaraha



Typical highland village



Milne Edwards Sifaka

5. FIANARANTSOA

Fianarantsoa is a large province, with a lot of diversity. The well-known Ranomafana rainforest is located in this province. Ranomafana is a national rain forest of 41,601 hectares and contains an large endemic biodiversity. Here, you will find rare lemur species (including the Hapalemur Doré, the Grand Hapalemur and the Hapalemur Griseus), rare plant species, but also endemic birds. There are many streams of water running through the park, all of which come from the Namorona River. There are various walks and hikes possible in this region.

For scientists Ranomafana is possibly the most important parc on Madagascar. It is for that reason that Ranomafana is an international scientific center under management of the world renowned primatologist Patricia Wright.

A small town in the North of this province is Ambositra, known for its wood carving. Certainly worth including for its culture. A stroll to the hinterland is an absolute must. Not only because of the woodcarving in small villages but also because of the presence of the remnants of a Rova, which means castle. The local guide will be too pleased to tell you about the colourful history of the Rova!

The privately owned parc Anja, near Ambalavao, is a nice community based reservate known for its ringtail lemur. Anja is one of the highlights in this province and should not be omitted to a visit to Fianarantsoa.

Additionally, in this region you may find the only operating train for passengers. The line is called FCE line (Fianarantsoa Cote Est), connecting Fianarantsoa with Manakara, straight through a rain forest. Be game and enjoy this unique experience but disregard the timetable. De trip could take anything from 7 to 14 hours, but certainly worth considering.

Following the eastcoast you could sail from Manajary in northern direction, passing the Pangalanes Canal. It is an unexplored portion of Madagascar far away from tourism. The Pangalanes canal is far away from the civilised world, the silence is deafening.

In this province the National Parc Andringitra is situated, completely contrasting the rain wood parc of Ranomafana. This dry, rocky parc offers many walking and hiking possibilities. A moderate climb to one of the hills guarantees a panoramic view of the entire area, sometimes as far as the ocean. Various species of lemures are at home here. The camps in the Tsaranoro Valley is a little paradise for nature lovers: mountain climbing and paragliding are on the menu.

Of course, local guides know the area very well and offer their services for strolls and hiking tours.

In this area the Pic Boby of Pic Imarivolanitra (2658m) is situated, the third highest mountain of Madagascar, but the highest to be climbed. The hiking tour including but not limited to a climb to the summit of this high mountain is a distinct possibility for the fervent walker.

Fort Dauphin, situated at the most southerly, special and unique point of Madagascar, is surprisingly counted as part of this province. Fort-Dauphin is the most important city in the southeastern part of Madagascar. It is beautifully situated on a rocky peninsula. The city is surrounded from 3 sides by a blue sea, has many beaches and lush green hills. The first European citizens in this area were a group of Portuguese sailors, who came ashore in 1504 after a shipwreck. In 1642 cardinal Richellieu ruled that the island had to become part of the French empire, which resulted in the construction of Fort Dauphin. It took another 250 years for the area to become a French colony. This region is now inhabited by Antanosy 'people of the island'. Because of its extreme position many travel tours bypass the area, although it has a lot to offer to tourists.

We can offer a luxury tour for a week in this area, combining a river lodge in a dry forest region with very extreme vegetation and a beach lodge near a rain forest, with the possibility - albeit limited to the season - of spotting whales. In short, Madagascar compressed in a small area. But Fort Dauphin has to offer many possibilities to the non-luxurious desiring tourist as well, such as visiting beautiful bays, walking to rain forests and much more. Please note: the sea in this area is very wild with high surf. Are you there, surfers? For wind or kite surfing the North is more suitable.

Last but not least, let us not forget the National Parc Andohahela, unique in the world, with a rain forest south of the tropic of Capricorn with transitional ecosystems between 'the Wet East' and the 'Dry South'

6. TOLIARA

Toliara is the largest province of Madagascar, with a rather sizeable number of nature parcs and in particular the probably most showed picture of Madagascar, the famous 'lane of the baobabs'.

Should you wish to choose the well known RN7 in southern direction the first parc you will encounter is the Isalo National Parc. The Isalo mountain range is an immense scenery of nature of eroded sandstone formation suitable for easy walking. The dry climate is responsible for a diminished development of an abundant vegetation. Looking from the road the landscape may appear to be barren and dry, however, walking by foot towards the mountains you may discover how special the flora is. There are deep canyons, caves, rivers and - of course- lemures. It is the home of the real dancer amongst the lemures, the white Sifaka. They easily show themselves to you

South of Isalo you will find the Zombits national parc, somewhat less known, nevertheless very interesting. Especially for the bird watchers amongst us. Additionally to 6 species of lemures primarily many different endemic bird species have contributed towards the fame of this parc.

The province is called after Tulear, the second sea port of Madagascar, Tamatave being the first one. Primarily known because of the coastal village of Ifaty in the north and Anakao, a village in the South. Where you can dive, visit the beaches, and more parcs. It is a versatile coast resort, close to Anakao we find for instance the National Parc Tsimanpesotse, perhaps best knows for the pink flamingos, home here, around the crystal-blue lake but also the various species of reptiles and peculiar endemic vegetation. It is the perfect place for snorkelling diving and enjoying the scenes with villages and fishing boats. Ifaty, north of Tulear, is more touristic and is home to the Spiney Forest with the well know Boabab trees in the shape of a bottle and cactus-like vergetation. Underway from Tulear to Ifaty is the Honko Mangrove reservate worthwhile a visit. Also the turtle village, where neglected turtles are cared for and treated is interesting to be visited. The fishermen's villages around Ifaty are fascinating too.

For visitors looking for leasuring around the coast, enjoying panoramic views, like very far away places and are looking for 'something different' it may be worth the trouble to explore the area along the coast between Tulear and Morondava (or in the reversed order)

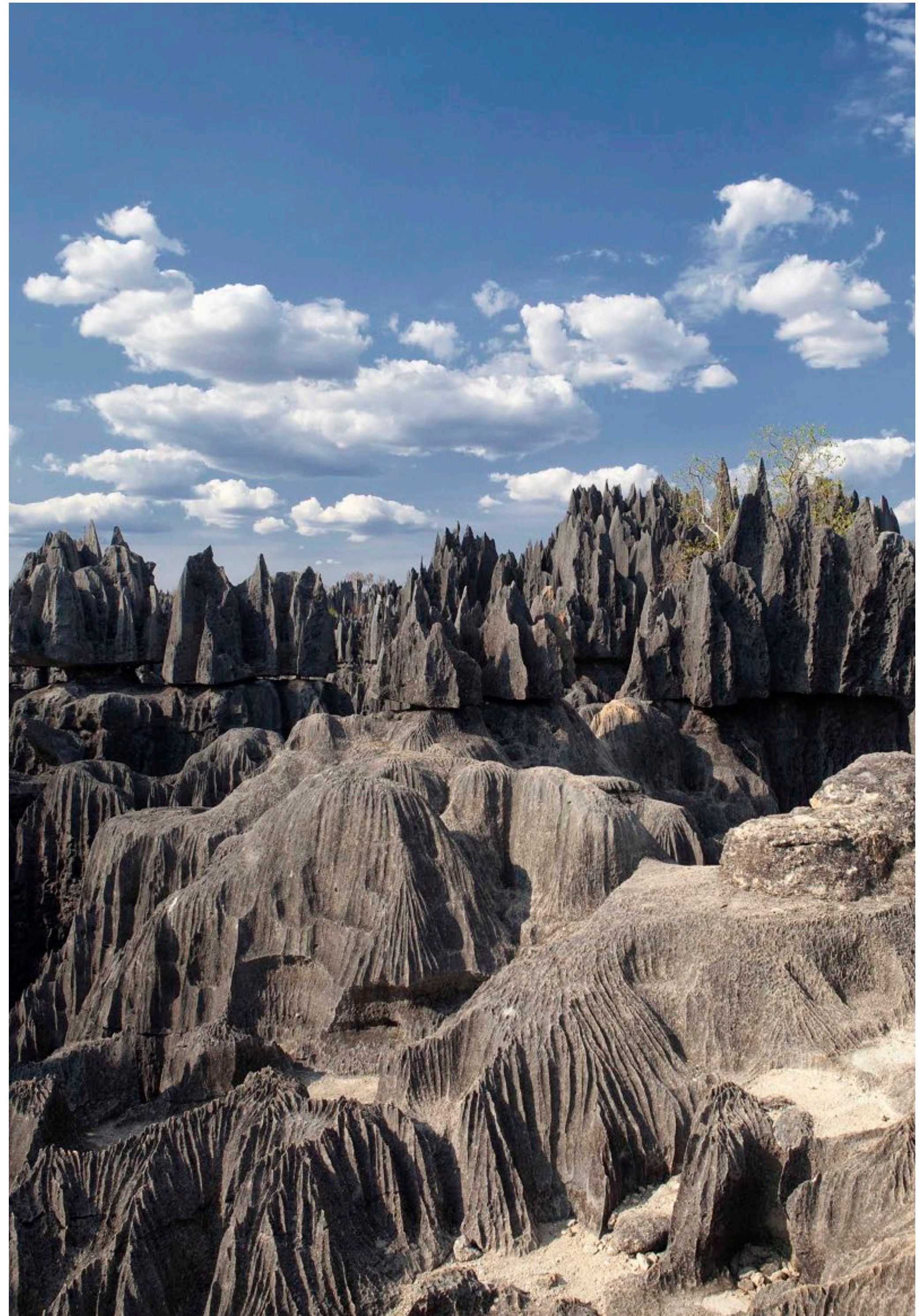
At the moment it is the only itinerary we an offer as a tour, without inland flights, but requires some flexibility along this coastal road and a few longer travelling days. On the way you will see the special Mikea Forest with the Baobab trees and you will drive along the coast where much research is being conducted into the marine life and therefore is protected.

Morondava is the second city of this province and known for its Baobab Allee. The Kirindy forest is not very far away either. The best night walk of Madagascar is likely to be here. This walk will lead through the forest. After soon 8 hours of driving the well known Tsingy de Bemaraha can be visited. We hasten to say that you should not suffer from fear of heights. The moonlike scenery includes great heights, but is a perception you will not experience anywhere else. You can spend two whole days straying through the various parts of this unique national parc. Again lemures, reptiles and chameleons are active. But especially the spectaculair pointed rock formations are fantastic.

In the vicinity of Morondava we also work with ca community based local lodge where you may be immersed in the local life and works. You may really make intense contact with the local population in this warm Baobab region.

There is a beautiful ecolodge near the sea some 2,5 hours sailing from Morondava. Should you wish to finish your tour in the area near the see, we recommend this lodge.

Far away in the north of this province Miandrivazo is situated, perhaps the warmest place in Madagascar. Start here for instance a river cruise on the Tsiribihina river to Tsingy de Bemaraha and spend half a day on one of the branches of the Tsiribihina river. Something to be considered.



Tsingy de Bemaraha

“The thing I love the most is when my customers close Madagascar in their hearts after their trip. Just like I did”



MONIQUE VAN DER HEIJDEN

I am Monique van der Heijden, of Dutch origin, and I am the founder of Mora-Travel. After Studying business communication I lived and worked in Switzerland for 6 years. Perhaps the very opposite of Madagascar. During my study, but also in the period I lived in Switzerland I got involved in nature- and development work. As a dedicated supporter of the World Nature Fund and active volunteer for the Swiss NGO Terre des Hommes I realised I wanted to do more.

The urge to work in this environment became so strong, that I resigned my job and on 1st April (no joke) I travelled to Madagascar for the first time. I started to work as a volunteer with a Malagasy orphanage and adjacent school under the auspices of Terre des Hommes. Principally, I intended to stay for 1 year, but in actual fact I lived on Madagascar for 10 years. After the first year on the island I started to work as volunteer with the German NGO 'Welthungerhilfe'. I was given the opportunity to get to know the finer aspects of the job, because I lacked experience in the world 'on the field'. I worked there for 5 years followed by a further 4 years as expat. I dare say I learnt to live there with very little to sustain myself and later in the real world of an expat. All aspects contributed to my experience and appreciation of Madagascar.

In 2000 I started with Mora-Travel, initially working by myself from a small room in Tana. But within too long I employed a Malagasy to help me, on a fulltime basis. Slowly but surely it developed into a team with an office in Antananarivo. We survived the crisis in 2002 as well as 2009.

I stopped working for Welthunderhilfe in 2008 and the crisis of 2009 forced me to return to the Netherlands and look for a job.

I wanted to continue with the project Mora-Travel and Madagascar and be of value to the country. It was not easy, but I prevailed under adverse circumstances. At present I dedicate my time travelling between the Netherlands and my Madagascar office and Mora Travel continues to organise more and more tours, in doing so - albeit small - contributing to a better standard of living for the local population

Some people asked me how it is possible to change from development work to the private sector, such as tourism. I firmly believe that by promoting economic activities it is possible to develop a country and increase the educational standard of the local population. I am convinced that Mora-Travel offers a small contribution to that effect. It is intercultural cooperation, to build a better future for anybody working with us, directly and indirectly, in this sector of the economy, it is not easy for me and many challenges await me, but I love this country and its population. I am convinced we offer a sustainable experience for a very modest consideration. The tourist enjoys a unique, unforgettable experience and in the process the population of Madagascar benefits with thanks to you the traveler and the Mora-Travel team.