

Face to Face with the Malagasy population and the lemurs Group Tour 2024

A new program for a group tour, guided by Klaus Heimer (64), who has been living in the country for more than 20 years as photographer and journalist and also works for the Madagascar guidebook of the Reise-Knowhow serie in german language (it came out in 2009, 2012, May 2015 and probably in 2024).

This tour of around 3000 km in an internationally mixed group leads first to the west of the country, into the volcanic landscape around Analavory, Miarinarivo and Ampefy, then through the hilly area via Faratsiho and Sambaina on National Road 7 to Antsirabe. The next day to Fianarantsoa, and then with the 2020 refurbished "Train of Life", also called Jungle Express (currently only runs Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to Manakara; Wednesday, Friday and Sunday back) to the town of Manakara 163 km away on the south-east coast. Another highlight is a visit to Ranomafana National Park. Then back to Tana, and from there to the east of the fourth largest island in the world and by minibus and boat via the Pangalanes Canal, Tamatave, Foulpointe, Fenerive Est and then by ferry from Soanierana-Ivongo, provided it is allowed to travel thanks to low waves, to the former pirate island of Sainte Marie, where humpback whales cavort from June to September. From there, it's back to the capital by plane on the domestic flight with "Tsaradia". A beach extension on Sainte Marie is possible, the duration of the extension must be adapted to the domestic flight schedule.

This tour includes the visit of two Nationalparks and several small reserves. Meet the local population, enjoy the knowledge of your English and German speaking guide, and many opportunities to take great pictures. You'll also experience some culinary highlights. As a bonus, you can bring a USB stick with you and you'll get a copy of all pictures which the guide Klaus Heimer will take, he'll also take pictures of the participants.

We'll offer this tour in 2024 at the following 8 dates, **in an internationally mixed group. There can also be german speaking clients in the group.** If there'd be four or more English speaking persons in the group, we'll normally add a supplementary English speaking guide:

April 11. to 28. (Arrival the latest on April 12th 05AM, departure the earliest April 27th at 8PM)
May 02. to 19. (Arrival the latest on May 3th 05AM, departure the earliest May 18th at 8PM)
May 23. to June 09. (Arrival the latest on May 24th 05AM, departure the earliest June 8th at 8PM)
July 04. to 21. (Arrival the latest on July 5th 05AM, departure the earliest Juli 20th at 8PM)
Aug. 01. to 18. (Arrival the latest on Aug. 2nd 05AM, departure the earliest Aug. 17th at 8PM)
Aug. 29. to Sept. 15. (Arrival the latest on Aug. 30th 05AM, departure the earliest Sept 14th at 8PM)
Oct. 17. to Nov. 03. (Arrival the latest on Oct. 18th 05AM, departure the earliest Nov. 2th at 8PM)
Nov. 14. to Dec. 01. (Arrival the latest on Nov. 15th 05AM, departure the earliest Nov. 30th at 8PM)
Other dates upon request, but then with another guide than Klaus Heimer

Le Voyageur Tour operator Travel agency

Lot II I 22 AJ Morarano Alarobia
P. O. Box 40 Ambohimananarina
Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
Tel: +261 20 22 43521
voyageur@madagaskar.travel
www.madagaskar.travel

Bank: BMOI, Ankorondrano, 101 Antananarivo, Madagascar
Acc. No. 02020500183-32
IBAN: MG46 0000 4000 0402 0205 0018 332
BIC: BMOIMGMG

R.C.: 97 B 481 NIF: 2384140 Id. Stat.: 583 702

Subject to modifications of the flights

Depending on the chosen airline, some additional nights in Tana will be necessary, you'll find the tariff per supplementary night here below.

1st day Thursday: ANTANANARIVO

Depending on flight arrival, meet and greet at the international airport of Antananarivo Ivato (short form for Antananarivo is "Tana") and transfer to the hotel Belvedere in the city center or similar, overnight there.

Due to the events on some airports in the world, the safety regulations have been tightened, and only people with a valid flight ticket have access to the airport now. Don't let your luggage out of hand. The driver will wait for you with a sign just outside of the arrival hall.

2nd day Friday: ANTANANARIVO – AMPEFY (about 120 km, max. 3,5 hours driving time, with a lot of stops)
Breakfast at around 07.30, then slow drive on the National Road No. 1 towards the "wild west" with many opportunities for taking nice pictures. In the morning, we'll buy at a supermarket in Tana all we need for an open air picnic lunch. Stop after around 21 km at the lemurs park where 9 species of lemurs can jump around freely on 5 hectares. A short stop later in the small village Ambohikely, you can see how many families manufacture from used beer cans and other recycled materials miniature vehicles which will be exported worldwide. Continuation via Miarinarivo, where we'll visit residential home for pupils (only possible during school season), run by a German/Malagasy association. Continue and arrive then to Ampefy at the lake Itasy (rich in fish). In the region are grown tomato, pineapple, papaya and avocado. If there is still time, visit the geysers or the Lili waterfall today. Overnight with breakfast at the Hotel Kintana Fleuron or similar.

3rd day Saturday: AMPEFY (max 100 km, on some dirt tracks)

Leisurely walks to the viewpoint "Ilot de la Vierge", to the waterfall of the river Lily and to the cold water geysers at Analavory are on the programme. Lunch and dinner possible at Chez Jacky. Overnight stay with breakfast again at Kintana Fleuron.

4th day Sunday: AMPEFY – FARATSIHO - ANT SIRABE (155 km, around 5 hours drive)

Drive through one of the coldest areas of Madagascar on a newly renovated road through mountainous terrain via Soavinandriana to Faratsiho, then continue through many coniferous forests to Sambaina, where the road joins the national road No. 7. In this area, a lot of rice is also cultivated, partly in artfully laid out terraced fields on the slopes. Then drive to Antsirabe (37 km). In the afternoon, city tour in Antsirabe, an economic metropolis also called "city of water" because of its hot water springs, but also because of its crater lakes. In Antsirabe there are also many bicycle rickshaws. Overnight at the hotel Flower Palace hotel or similar.

5th day Monday: ANT SIRABE – AMBOSITRA – FIANARANTSOA (around 240 km (some 6 hours driving time) on the RN7 (national road No. 7))

Drive through beautiful landscape via the woodcarving town of Ambositra to Fianarantsoa, the "place where one learns the good". From the highest point of this "city of a 1001 churches", we'll have a nice view towards Ambalavao. In the shop of the most known Malagasy photographer Pierrot Men, we'll get a nice view into his works. We'll then get the tickets for next day's train ride. Overnight at the Villa Sylvestre or La Rizière (which is a tourism school training hotel and restaurant) or similar.

6th day Tuesday: **FIANARANTSOA – MANAKARA** (163 km, 8 – 17 hours of driving time with the jungle –Express, in rare cases, it even takes longer)

Around 7 a.m., we take the legendary Jungle Express (first class) to Manakara on the southeast coast. For the 163 km with 67 bridges and 48 tunnels we need, if it runs very fast, eight hours, but it can be massively longer (in the past sometimes until midnight). At each station, depending on the season, the population offers everything that is typical there, from crayfish to grilled fish, bananas, mandarins to manioc and rice cakes. Shortly before Manakara we cross the tarmac of the airport. This exists only a total of three times in the world. At the train station in Manakara, where rickshaw drivers will intercept the arriving passengers, the driver picks us up and takes us to the H1 Hotel or similar. If the train should be out of order or departing with a big delay, we'll visit the historical upper city of Fianarantsoa instead. We'll then drive to Ambalavao and spend the night there at the Bougainvillées Hotel or similar.

7th day Wednesday: **MANAKARA – RANOMAFANA** (ca. 200 km, around 4 hours driving)

We'll greet in the morning the fishermen who come back from the catch, and can do a little walk on the beach. We'll then drive to Ranomafana, along ravinala palm trees, small spice plantations etc. Ranomafana has thanks to the thermal sources even a swimming pool. Night walk with an experienced local guide along the road to spot the mousemaki, chameleons, frogs etc. Overnight at the Lodge Chez Gaspard or similar with breakfast. If the train should be out of order or departing with a big delay, we'll visit the Anja reserve 12 km south of Ambalavao, where we'll have good chances to see some families of Katta lemurs. After that drive to Ranomafana and overnight.

8th day Thursday: **RANOMAFANA – AMBOSITRA** (some 215 km, around 4 hours)

Morning visit of the approximately 41.000 hectares large Nationalpark Ranomafana which is situated at the Namorona river, with its fauna and flora, such as the golden bamboo lemurs discovered only in 1986 by the german researcher Bernhard Meier, the red fronted and the red-bellied lemurs and the Sifaka. This walk is a bit tiresome, as it goes up and down and sometimes through the forest, it can also be a bit slippery at times. It requires a good fitness level and condition from the participants. Early in the afternoon, we'll drive the short distance back to the National road no. 7 (RN7), and then north until Ambositra. The people from the Betsileo tribe are good landscape architects. They use the ground even in relatively high altitudes for rice crop growing. Overnight at the Artisan hotel, or similar.

9th day Friday: **AMBOSITRA- ANT SIRABE - ANTANANARIVO** (270 km, around 7 hours)

After breakfast visit of a Zafimaniry woodcarving workshop. After a little walk through the small city drive on a winding road through the highlands to Antsirabe, and then via Ambatolampy to Antananarivo. Overnight at the Hotel Belvedere, or similar.

10th day Saturday: **ANTANANARIVO – ANDASIBE** (142 km, about 4 hours driving time, on a good tared road)

Drive on the National Road No. 2 (RN 2) around 142 km to the well-known National Park Andasibe (Analamazaotra – Mantadia). On the way, stop at the private reptiles park in Marozevo where we can see chameleons and other animals close up. In the morning, we'll buy at a supermarket in Tana already all we need for an open air picnic lunch. Check-in at the hotel Feon'ny Ala or similar. Possibility to do a nocturnal visit along the road outside of the park with a local nature guide, where with the help of flashlights you can see nocturnal lemurs (mostly Goodman mouse lemurs with maximum 50 grams, wooly lemurs and fat tail lemurs), sleeping chameleons, tree frogs, etc.. We'll walk maximum one hour along the flat road. Dinner possible at Mary's guesthouse. Overnight at the Feon'ny Ala hotel or similar.

11th day Sunday: **ANDASIBE – MANAMBATO - AKANIN'NY NOFY** (Akanin'ny Nofy means „Nest of dreams“, 125 km on good road, then 7 km on dirt track, then some 1,5 hours on the boat on the canal)

The around three hour long early morning walk (first a little ascent, then mostly flat) leads from around 07h30 with a local park guide through the evergreen secondary forest of the Park Analamazaotra, on the trail Indri 2. Here we can see with some luck two of the 63 families living in this area of the biggest lemur, the Indri, with its distinctive call. You can also see many birds, some reptiles (if its not too cold) and other species of lemurs (Diadem Sifakas, Brown lemurs,

Bamboo lemurs etc.). Then drive on the RN2 to Brickaville, we'll then shortly after the big railway bridge turn right and drive -then by 4WD car - on a dirt track to Manambato which is situated on the shore of lake Rasoabe. Then drive by boat along the Pangalanes canal to Akanin'ny Nofy at lake Ampitabe, where we'll stay in the Palmarium hotel with an attached lemurs park or at the annex "Palmarium beach". Overnight with breakfast at the Palmarium hotel or annex , electricity is produced by a generator and switched off at night. We'll only take light luggage (day pack) with us if possible for this two days.

12th day Monday: AKANIN'NY NOFY

In the morning, walk of several hours in the Palmarium park to spot several species of lemurs, who'll watch us attentively, we'll see some from quite close up. When night falls, boat excursion to a place where you can spot the very rare and nocturnal Aye Aye lemur (*Daubentonia madagascariensis*) with the long middle finger, eight of them live on this well guarded island in the canal. Should the weather be good on the day before, we'll be flexible and do this visit then. Overnight with breakfast again at the Palmarium hotel or at the annex.

13th day Tuesday: AKANIN'NY NOFY - TAMATAVE - FOULPOINTE (around 2,5 hours by boat, then some 60 km on the road to Foulpointe)

60 km long Motorboat transfer to Tamatave, the biggest harbour town of Madagascar, then lunch or buy a picnic lunch, and continue after by minibus to Foulpointe, a seaside resort, which is also popular among the Malagasy on weekends. If there's enough time, we'll discover the 1817 to 1824 built old Fort Manda with its guide Fidel. We'll enjoy the sea and its food, walk along the beach or relax. Dinner possible at the "Friendly Fisherman" restaurant. Overnight at the Manda Beach Hotel or similar.

14th day Wednesday: FOULPOINTE – SOANIERANA-IVONGO - SAINTE MARIE (around 100 km on the road with potholes, then some 1,5 to 2 hours on the ferry boat to the former pirate island)

Early breakfast at 05h30 AM, then at 6 AM departure to Soanierana-Ivongo, then do the registration formalities there and then cross the sea with the "Gasikara Be" ferry to the beautiful island of Sainte Marie. Overnight at the bungalow hotel Lakana or similar on the beach between the airport and the city of Ambodifotatra, on half board base.

If the sea should be too rough and the boat transfer forbidden, we'll change the program spontaneously, and stay another night in Foulpointe, and try next day.

15th day Thursday: SAINTE MARIE

Free day on Sainte Marie. We can explore the south of the island with the Ile aux Nattes or explore the North or east by walking or bicycle or by Tuk Tuk, or do water sports or relax on the beach. The pirates cemetery is also interesting to see at low tide (communal tax around 4 €/person), it can now be reached easily. Between July and September, a whalewatching excursion can be booked through the hotel. Enjoy the nice sunset. Overnight again at the Hotel Lakana or similar.

If due to the rough sea, the ferry transfer to Sainte Marie wasn't possible, we'll start the drive back, and will drive until Andasibe or Moramanga (depending on hotel availability), overnight there and continue to Tana next day.

16th day Friday: SAINTE MARIE - ANTANANARIVO (domestic flight, not daily)

Depending on flight schedule, transfer to the airport and flight to Tana, if there's no last minute change with Air Madagascar / Tsaradia. Rest of the day free. Overnight at the Belvedere Hotel or similar.

If the Sainte Marie island visit wasn't possible due to weather conditions, we'll continue the drive back to Tana

17th day Saturday: ANTANANARIVO

Visit the historical sites of Ambohimanga (UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001). It is the sacred city of the Merina, and was once the residence of the most powerful of all Merina princes, King Andrianampoinimerina. No stranger was allowed to enter it until its conquest and final subjugation by the French in 1896. It had seven city gates, and the most powerful of them still serves as the entrance gate to the place. Next to the gate stands a huge, smoothly polished and almost circular stone slab. In earlier times, it was rolled in front of the entrance gate every evening. From the 1468-

metre high "Blue Hill" - as Ambohimanga is called in translation - you have a beautiful view of Tana and the surrounding area. Then if flying with AF, day use of a room where you can relax a bit, shower and change and possibly have dinner. Then, depending on departure time, transfer to the airport for the return flight with Air France. Or if flying with ET or another airline, then an overnight stay in a hotel.

18th day Sunday: **ANTANANARIVO - HOME**

Take off at about 01.25 AM or later, or, depending on the airline, transfer to the airport for your flight back home

TARIFFS PER PERSON, public rate

From 02 People:

In DOUBLE ROOM: 2670 Euro

Single supplement: 520 Euro

Supplementary night in Antananarivo at Belvedere hotel, if necessary due to flight arrival:

Tariff per person incl. tourist levy and breakfast:

In DBL room: 36 €

In SGL room: 66 €

Including:

- Transfers airport – hotel - airport
- Accommodation based on bed and breakfast in the above mentioned or similar midrange hotels, except on Sainte Marie: on half board there
- Parks and reserve fees (Andasibe, Ranomafana)
- Service of local guides in parks and reserves
- Visits which are mentioned in the program
- Sedan car, Minibus or bus rental with a driver and fuel for the road trip
- Train trip Fianarantsoa to Manakara (if there should be changes of the timetable, tour must be adjusted accordingly), so if the train isn't working, the alternative program will be chosen as written above.
- Transfers by the hotel owned boat (there may be other passengers on board) Manambato – Akanin'ny Nofy – Tamatave
- Boat transfer with the local ferry Gasikara be from Soanierana-Ivongo to Sainte Marie, there can be other passengers on board, If the sea should be too rough, this will be cancelled and the program changed accordingly.
- Day Use at the Hotel AU BOIS VERT
- English/ german speaking guide escort from the agency
- Aye Aye nocturnal visit
- A bottle of drinking water per person per day
- Tourist levy and VAT

Excluding:

- International flights and their taxes
- Domestic flight Sainte Marie – Tana, approx. 150 to 250 € incl. taxes
- Visa fees (35 Euro for stay of max. 30 days)

- Other meals and drinks
- Water sports, bicycle rental etc. on Sainte Marie
- Whale watching excursion on Sainte Marie
- Individual travel insurance, also for luggage, accident, theft and cancellation

Changes in the program reserved, especially if train timetable changes ect

The above mentioned hotels are planned for the tour, but this is subject to modification:

Tariffs are subject to changes, especially if heavy fluctuation in exchange rate and/or fuel prices. All tours and tariffs are subject to changes in case of cancellations or overbooking of flights or trains, changes in timetable, bad weather and road conditions, strike, political troubles, problems with fuel supply, tribal and other war, closing of sites, natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods and other acts of God. Please also see our general conditions.