

TRAVEL TIPS & PACKING LIST



1. VISAS

All visas are to be obtained on arrival in Madagascar. Passports need to have at least 6 months validity with 2 free pages. All visas are to be paid by Visa or Mastercard only. Note that Amex and cash payments are not accepted.

Visa costs are as follows:

15 days or less: 30 EUR / 35 USD

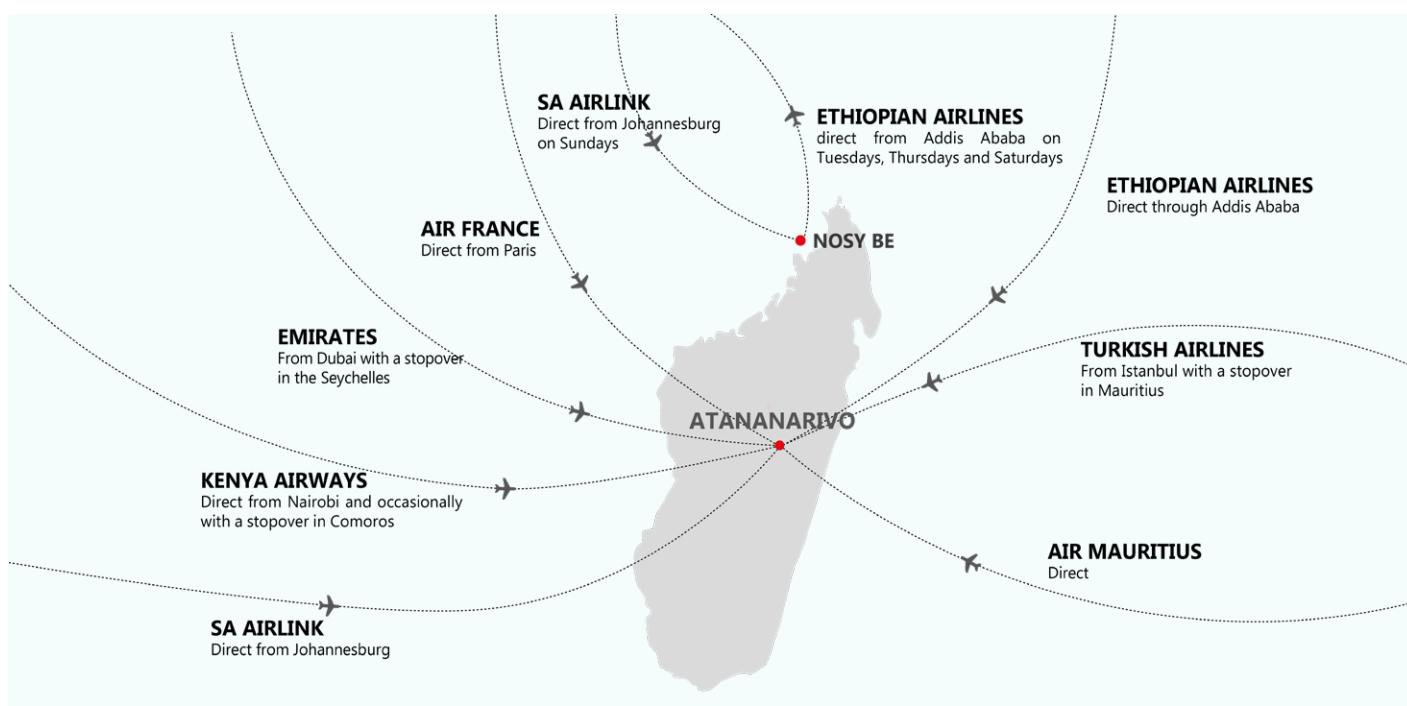
16 days to 30 days: 35 Euros / 41 USD

31 days to 90 days: 40 Euros / 47 USD

61 days to 90 days: 50 Euros / 56 USD

2. FLIGHTS

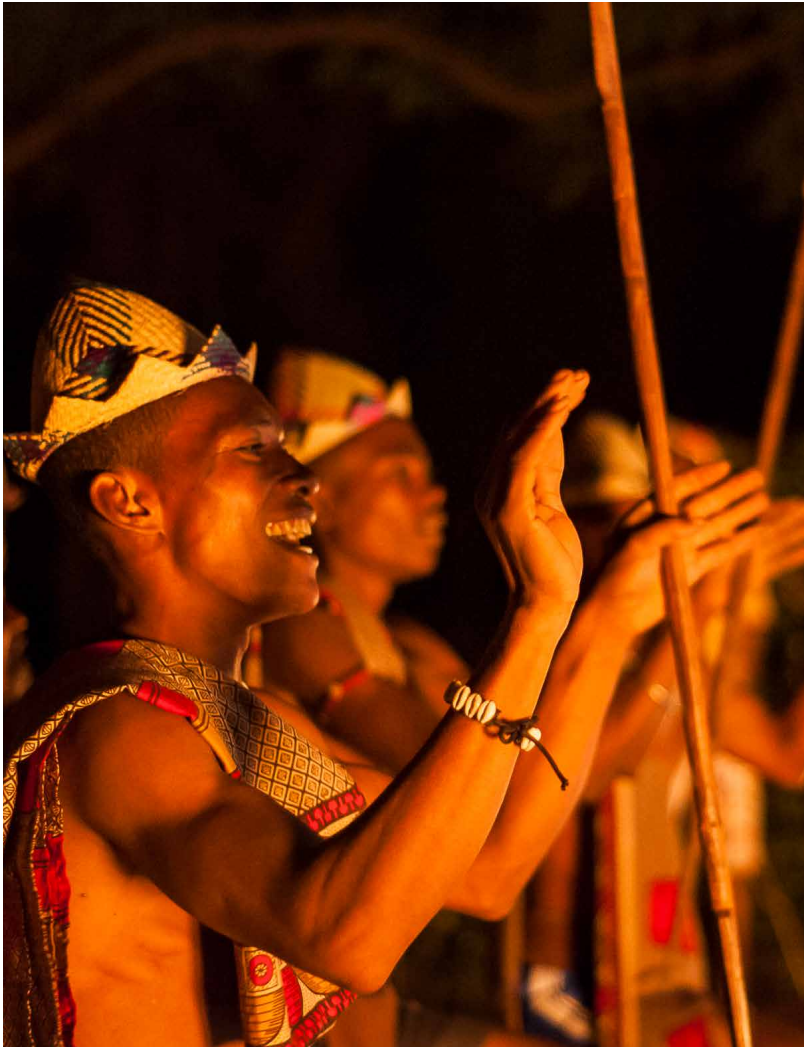
The two principal international airports in Madagascar are Antananarivo (TNR) the capital, and Nosy Be (NOS) the main beach destination. Flights operate several days a week with the following recommended carriers (please note that flight days may vary).



3. TIPPING

Unless otherwise stated, tipping is not included in the cost of your itinerary. Cash in US\$, Euros, or local Ariary is generally preferred. Here are our recommendations :

Porters	: 5,000 Ar~ \$1.2 per group
Drivers	: 20,000 Ar ~ \$4 per person per day
Guides	: 45,000 Ar - 90,000 Ar ~ \$10 - \$20 per person per day
Hotel staff (Communal tip box)	: 45,000 Ar - 90,000 Ar ~ \$10 - \$20 per person per day



4. MONEY

Although the official unit of currency in Madagascar is the Ariary, many of the island's people still use their old unit; the FMG (Franc Malagasy). This can be a little confusing as prices are often given in FMG, while notes are denominated in Ariary! 5 FMG is equal to 1 Ariary and the exchange rate is approximately US\$1 = 4,000 Ariary or 20,000FMG.

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

5. HEALTH

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

7. LANGUAGE

As a former French colony, the French language is widely spoken in the larger towns and cities throughout Madagascar. However, English was added as an official language in 2007 and is slowly becoming more widely spoken. In rural areas it is common for only Malagasy to be spoken but the MCC staff will always be there to help you translate and explain situations and events in fluent English.

A few words of Malagasy are always helpful:
Hello - "Manahoana" (in the highlands) or "Salama" (in the South-east)
Thank you - "Misaotra"
Excuse me - "Azafady";
Goodbye - "Veloma"



8. AIRPORT PORTER SERVICE

Airports in Madagascar have independent luggage porters who are not MCC staff. If you wish to use their services, your guide will inform you of how much to pay.

9. ACCOMMODATION

In addition to the MCC properties, there are a growing number of luxury high-end hotels in Madagascar, although this sector is still quite small. Non-luxury 2/3-star hotel accommodation is available throughout Madagascar and is generally clean and comfortable. Madagascar Classic Collection will recommend only the best quality boutique-hotels available in each location you wish to visit.

10. TRANSPORT

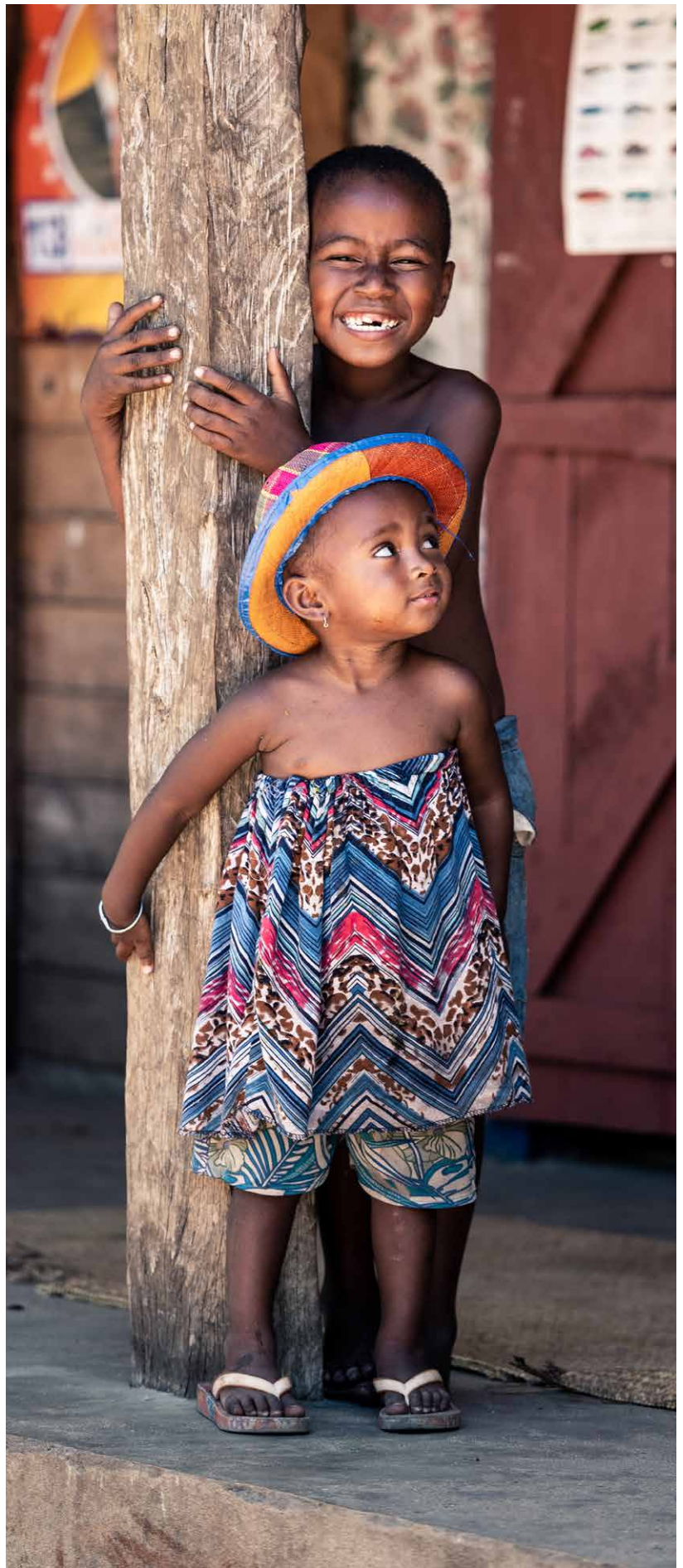
Madagascar is the 4th largest island in the world and it takes time to get around. Roads are generally in poor condition so transport outside of the main cities is always in 4x4 vehicles. MCC transfers include both a driver and an English-speaking guide. Where possible, we recommend flying with private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

11. SECURITY

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

12. DAILY LIFE IN MADAGASCAR

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



13. MCC EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS (GMT +2/+3)

For any assistance whilst in Madagascar, please see with your guide or the following MCC staff:

Mrs Landy - *Operations Manager*
Tel / WhatsApp : 00 261 34 21 619 41

Antoine - *General Manager*
Tel : 261 38 15 619 13
WhatsApp : 00 33 6 31 79 63 86

14. DONATIONS TO SCHOOLS

We encourage guests not to give sweets or money to local children. If you feel you wish to help local schoolchildren, please talk to your guide or manager and they will assist you with this. If you intend to donate any materials for a local school, we recommend: notebooks, pens, pencils, drawing equipment, sports equipment etc.



What to bring?

1. A soft bag is better than a hard suitcase. Total luggage is limited to 20kg on charter flights.
2. However, laundry services are available in all hotels and is usually either free or very inexpensive. Luggage restrictions on Madagascar Airlines are 20kg checked luggage and 5kg hand luggage.
3. Good pair of walking boots.
4. Walking pole / stick if necessary.
5. Head torch (Bright LED) for night walks.
6. All camera equipment, chargers and batteries.
7. Binoculars for birdwatching.
8. Good insect repellent.
9. Warm clothes for the May to August winter period.
10. A light sweater / fleece for early morning chill (all year).
11. Light waterproof jacket.
12. Long sleeve tops and long trousers for forest walks.
13. French Style 2-pin plug adaptor (220v).
14. Visa debit / credit card.
15. Sun hat, sunscreen and sunglasses.
16. Bradt Guide to Madagascar.
17. Swimming gear.
18. All medication you may need including malarial medication (consult your physician)
19. Passport with 6-months validity and two clear pages.
20. Reading materials (these are difficult to obtain in Madagascar)

