



Madagascar coastal trail

MADAGASCAR / MADAGASCAR

Explore **Madagascar's east coast** in the saddle, where the lush green scenery gives way to the blue of the Indian Ocean breaking over long stretches of gallop-worthy beaches. Discover a country with a rich culture and unique wildlife, including a visit to meet the famous lemurs!

Trail Riding	 9 days / 5 days riding	 From £1,820	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Discover the beauty of the east coast and the Pangalanes Canal as you ride across beaches on the Indian Ocean's shore
- Camp in the heart of this magnificent island and embrace the local way of life in the country's more remote areas
- Experience the warm welcome and array of emotions that will greet you as you pass through villages where locals will, due to the relatively recent introduction of horses to their island, still find you something of curiosity!
- No trip to Madagascar would be complete without an introduction to the Lemurs, on a private Lemur reserve. Unique to the island, spend some time interacting with these incredible species

Day 1 — 1 : ARRIVE IN ANTANANARIVO

On your arrival into Antananarivo airport, you will be met by your guide from the local team and taken to your hotel to settle in for the evening.

Flights are not included but we can assist with this on request.

Day 2 — 2 : ANTANANARIVO - ANDASIBE - No riding

After a good night's rest you will take the road east (3 hours by car) and head to Moramanga where you will stop off for a brief rest and a hearty lunch before checking into Feon'ny Ala Hotel (or similar). The hotel is situated on the edge of a dense forest, a stones throw away from the Vakona Lodge reserve. Here you will have your first encounter with the famous species that are unique to the island - the lemur. Overnight at the hotel.

Day 3 — 3 : ANDASIBE - PANGALANE - AMBILA - 3 hours riding

After breakfast you will be driven to meet the team of horses that will be patiently waiting for you at Brickaville, a town found at the end of Route Nationale n° 2. The route slaloms its way down the cliff sides leading towards the east coast of the island. You will have your lunch at Brickaville before getting back in the saddle and heading out along a back path to reach the ferry crossing to the Pangalanes Canal. Here, you will see the the most spectacular view across the Indian Ocean- a picture that will no doubt be imprinted in your memories forever.

You will experience a true adrenaline rush as you cross the open iron railway arch bridge consisting of 2 rails and no parapet, 20 metres above the canal waters. The crossing is well worth it, as on the other side you will find the stunning Ambila beaches, bathed in blue Indian Ocean waves, right at your feet. You will spend the night wild camping against the unforgettable backdrop of the shores of the ocean at Ambila.

Overnight at camp.

Day 4 — 4 : AMBILA - 4-5 hours riding

Today's ride will expose you to another side of the Madagascar landscape as you ride through the sand dunes between the Canal and the Ocean, crossing an idyllic lagoon, on horseback, and riding through lush subtropical forest along sublime riding trails. Following unforgettable gallops towards the Rianala River estuary and the Indian Ocean, Andovoranto - with the air of being at the ends of the earth - will be waiting to welcome you.

Before having lunch in the restaurant Les Cocotiers, you will have a chance to take in the view (and maybe a few photos!) of this magical spot where the ocean and gentle waters of the river meet. If time allows, the more courageous riders may be tempted to take a swim with their horses in the placid waters of the Pangalanes Canal lagoon; here and there, the gushing water from the thermal springs will bubble up to warm your legs and offer a veritable 'natural spa treatment'.

You will wild camp once more at Ambila.

Day 5 — 5 : AMBILA - VAVONY - AMBILA - 5-6 hours riding

Today, you will ride north, along a seemingly never-ending, picturesque path flanked by forest and well-suited to a fast pace. Enjoy the temperate heat as you ride the tracks from Tana-Côte-Est station to the beach. On your arrival at Vavony, a fishing village on the banks of Rasoabe Lake, water spirits allowing, you will gallop along the riverbanks through the shallow's foam and spray. You will return to the village of Ambila riding across the beach (should the spirits allow it...) to a late lunch before enjoying a range of activities in the sand - jumping the wooden canoes, riding into the waves, swimming and vegging out!

Overnight at camp.

Day 6 — 6 : AMBILA - 4-5 HOURS RIDING

You get back to Vavony from Lake Rasoabe to find the horses later in the morning. You ride back to Ambila, following the coastline. In the afternoon, enjoy an excursion in a traditional pirogue to discover the beautiful Pangalanes Canal differently. When you get closer to the stables, you're in for a chance to swim with the horses. In the afternoon, you are greeted by the local children as you head back to Camp.

Dinner and camping at Ambila.

Day 7 — 7 : AMBILA - BRICKAVILLE - ANTANANARIVO - 3 hours riding / 6-7h transfer

After breakfast, your ride will start with you once more crossing the Pangalanes Canal. The horses will push forward, energised by the past 4 days spent in the sea air. You will enjoy a fast-paced and varied ride and make the most of your last gallops through this unique and beautiful countryside.

You will say your goodbyes to the horses and be driven to Antananarivo, having lunch en route. You will spend the night in a comfortable guesthouse in Antananarivo.

Day 8 — 8 : ANTANANARIVO

Today, you will enjoy some free time and a free day to explore the capital city of Antananarivo, often simply called Tana. Here, you will have a chance to visit the city's craft market, be immersed in the fragrance of the local Madagascar vanilla, try the rum and discover the local ambience and maybe chat to a few locals!

Day 9 — 9: DEPARTURE

You will then be taken to the airport to catch your flight back to Europe.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE

RETURN

PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS

STATUS

20/07/2024	28/07/2024	£1,820	Open
17/08/2024	25/08/2024	£1,820	Open
14/09/2024	22/09/2024	£1,820	Open
05/10/2024	13/10/2024	£1,820	Open

Price details

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room/tent during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 2 riders and a maximum of 6 international riders, plus guides.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share your room, you will be charged a single room supplement of approx €300/\$320/£260. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date.

- Rider weight limit: 90 kg / 14,2 stones / 198 lbs.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

A riding guide and expedition leader who speaks English, Malagasy and French

LOGISTICS

1 groom for every 3 horses

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

1 cook

1 assistant cook

1 vehicle, driver and camp attendant

INLAND TRANSPORT

Minibus organised for all transfers mentioned within the itinerary

Return airport transfers

ACCOMMODATION

3-man tents for 2 people sharing - foam mattresses provided

Hotel on the first and last nights - rooms for 2-3 people with a private bathroom

MEALS

Full-board from breakfast on day 2 to breakfast on the last day

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

International flights

Visa fees

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

You will be riding geldings and stallions from local farms, and also from Mauritius and South Africa. These large horses are all in excellent condition, docile, patient and are well adapted to long days riding. They are 1,40 cm to 1,70 cm high.

Guide & local team

Your guide will be local to the area and Malagasy, French and English speaking.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

This ride is suited to experienced and seasoned riders, at ease in the saddle at all three paces outdoors on varied and uneven terrain. Certain of the horses are livelier than others and best ridden by experienced riders, however the herds also include mounts that are perfectly suited for riders of a more intermediate level.

Rider weight limit: 90 kg / 14,2 stones / 198 lbs.

PACE

The base pace of the ride is a walking pace, the terrain will regularly allow for long stretches of trotting as well as some unforgettable gallops. You will experience some long very rhythmic stages.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

A team of grooms take care of the horses throughout the ride. They will also tack and untack your horses at the beginning and end of each day's ride, however if you wish to work alongside them in caring for the horses, you are more than welcome!

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

In order to get the most out of this expedition, you need to be in good all-round physical condition. The temperature during the day can reach highs of up to 30°c in May and November, so you must be prepared to ride in hotter weather than perhaps you are used to all whilst spending long days in the saddle.

Previous experience of a ride over several days is a plus but is not obligatory. On embarking on this adventure to Madagascar, you will meet people from a different culture with a different mindset to your own, you must be ready to accept and respect any differences you encounter.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English tack

Saddle bags are provided

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Your nights camping will be spent in 3-man tents shared between 2 riders. A shower and toilet tent will also be set up for the camp.

For your remaining nights, you will stay in 2* standard hotels in double rooms with private bathrooms.

MEALS

Your meals will be had around a camp fire in comfortable chairs. During your lunchtime picnics and dinners, you will enjoy varied and quality Madagascan cuisine.

CLIMATE

The area surrounding Antananarivo has a high altitude tropical climate. Although Madagascar is situated in an intertropical zone, the yearly average temperature is moderated by the effects of the altitude. The climate is marked by its cool and dry winters, from May to October, and mild, rainy summers, from November to April. During the cooler seasons, the temperature rarely falls below 10 °C and in the hot season, it rarely tops 30 °C.

Frosts are rare but not completely unheard of; during June, the morning temperature can drop to 1°C. Days when the sun doesn't make an appearance are equally as rare - less than ten sunless days per year!

TIPS

Tipping is customary in Madagascar, especially within the tourism industry. Any tip you leave will be split between the porters at the airport and in your accommodation, your waiters/, the grooms, drivers and camp helpers, the cook and their assistant.

An acceptable tip would be around 20000 Ariary (£4 - £6) each day for the driver and for the guide. For the porters, waiters/ waitresses and other staff 2000 to 10000 Ariary (£0.5 - £3) per worker. These amounts are just a suggestion and any tips left are at your own discretion.

PACKING LIST

Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable. You also have the option of buying protective shells to go under your hats (Ranch & Rider, Lexington Safety Products) or western hat helmets (Troxel).
- Sunhat (indispensable under the African heat)
- Sunglasses with high protection lenses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun, wind or rain

Upper body

- T-shirts in cotton and long-sleeved shirts (to protect against the sun) or t-shirts made from rapid-dry material
- 1 lightweight fleece or jumper
- 1 lightweight waterproof jacket made from Gore-Tex or a similar material that is waterproof and breathable

Legs

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- 1 change of riding trousers or jeans
- A swimming costume
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

Hands and Feet

- 1 pair of comfortable riding or walking boots. We recommend short boots with half-chaps specifically for riding. We don't recommend taking your favourite leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Nightwear

- Tents, sleeping bags and mattresses are provided. We recommend you bring a sleeping bag liner.

Other useful items

- Travel bag 60-80 litres (hold luggage)
- Travel bag 25-30 litres (cabin bag)
- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Swiss army knife or equivalent (in checking-in luggage!!)
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)

- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- A pair of binoculars

Medical kit - our recommendations

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and clearly stated in your medical kit. A group pharmacy will also be provided.

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations

- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- If you wish to travel 'light' and wash your clothes throughout the ride, please bring with you laundry detergent that is biodegradable
- All waste that could be considered toxic (batteries, aerosols, batteries, empty cream tubes, film) needs to be kept with you and transported back home, where recycling is done well and efficiently. Avoid, wherever possible, to bring with you unnecessary packaging

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .