

FURTHER INFORMATION



CYCLE MADAGASCAR

We cycle through highland villages, paddy fields, lush tropical fruit plantations and along coastal trails.

Sights we will be lucky enough to witness include the charming Lemurs, stunning vast wild landscapes, real village culture and idyllic sandy beaches – Madagascar may be an island but there’s nothing small about it. From the moment of registration, you will have embarked on an amazing journey, and with exceptional support from start to finish; we assure you that this challenge will be one to remember.

Join us for a unique charity cycling challenge and discover Madagascar!



“BELIEVE YOU CAN”



CYCLE MADAGASCAR



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INTRODUCTION

This document will provide you with challenge and route information along with approximate timings for each day. It is hoped this will give you an insight into what you can expect whilst on this awesome challenge and help you to prepare further.

Taking part in one of our challenges undoubtedly requires commitment, determination and, above all, a positive attitude from the outset. From the moment you sign up there are steps in place to ensure that you have the correct level of support and help throughout the entire journey not just on the challenge itself. Each participant should approach the challenge with an open mind and prepare to be adaptable throughout. Whilst thousands of hours of work will have gone into the preparation across all of our challenges, the itineraries are complex and things can often need to change on the ground, therefore they are strictly subject to change.

If you have any questions about the challenge you are about to embark upon which are not answered in this document, please do not hesitate to contact the office on 01244 676454 or email customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

By travelling with Global Adventure Challenges you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) under our ATOL licence number 6506.

When you buy an ATOL protected flight inclusive Overseas Challenge from us you will receive an ATOL Certificate. This lists what is financially protected, where you can get information on what this means for you and who to contact if things go wrong.

The CAA are the UK's specialist aviation regulator. They are a public corporation, established by Parliament in 1972.

As the Tour Operator we are responsible for your travel package. The whole philosophy of this type of challenge is one which allows for changes and a substantial degree of on-tour flexibility. The outline itinerary given later in this document is an indication of what you and the group are aiming to accomplish and not a contractual obligation on our part.



CYCLE MADAGASCAR

ABOUT GLOBAL ADVENTURE CHALLENGES

Global Adventure Challenges have been organising world-wide charity challenge events and adventures since the year 2000. Since we began organising challenge events we have grown and developed very steadily – we believe that our charity partners, participants and corporate organisations – basically, our customer base – are the best form of advertising. Word of mouth, they say, is the best form of marketing and we believe this also.

Our challenges have helped raise well in excess of £15 million for a wide range of charities located throughout both the UK and overseas. Over the years, we have taken tens of thousands of people on exciting challenges all over the world, helping them realise their dreams and fulfil lifetime ambitions. Our challenge events are “life-changing...” and these are the words of our participants, not ours!

We are extremely proud of the events we organise and we are here to give you a memorable lifetime experience. Without doubt our success lies in the dedicated team we have working both in the office, and out in the field.

Our passion for adventure travel and pushing your ‘comfort zone’, combined with extensive fundraising event experience, are what makes us different from

other operators. We believe that from the moment you enquire, you will be embarking on a journey that you will remember forever.

Travelling with Global Adventure Challenges is an enjoyable and satisfying way to show your commitment to fantastic charitable causes. Come and be part of our success! We are taking more and more individuals away on exciting challenge events every year... join them... join us!

MINIMUM NUMBERS

Each of our challenges require a minimum number of participants to enable us to run the challenge at the advertised costs.

For this challenge the minimum number of participants is 15.

If the group is smaller or becomes smaller than this minimum number in the run up to the challenge, we may consider the option to continue to run the challenge with less than the minimum number, however a small supplement will be applicable.

In this instance we will communicate this to you no later than 11 weeks before departure.

Our average group size for this challenge is normally between 25 - 30 participants.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

At our overseas destinations we work with small, local ground handlers who employ local guides and we use as much local infrastructure as we can to boost the economy and income. We aim to ensure that all local guides involved with our events are given a fair wage in accordance with appropriate local standards and each of our challenges is designed using the knowledge of local experts.

We believe that we need to preserve and respect the locations in which our challenges take place in order for future generations to experience the same fantastic places as we do now. More information regarding our Responsible Tourism Policy can be found on our website.



CYCLE MADAGASCAR

CHALLENGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the stunning Mantasoa Lake.
- Explore many species of wildlife at the Indri reserve in Andasibe-Mantadia National Park.
- Cycle out of the suburbs of Antananarivo.
- Celebratory finish beside the shores of Foulpointe Beach.



A FEW NOTES ON MADAGASCAR

Madagascar is the 4th largest island in the world and sits off the south-east coast of Africa. It is believed that the island split from the Indian peninsula approx. 88 million years ago. This allowed plants and animals to evolve in isolation meaning that over 70% of its wildlife is found nowhere else on earth,

while 90% of the estimated 14,000 plants native to Madagascar are also found nowhere else. The unique ecology of Madagascar has led some scientists to refer to the country as the "eighth continent" of the world. It also has the 3rd largest coral reef system in the world, the Toliara coral reef, off the south-western coast.

At the beginning of the 18th century most of Madagascar was united and ruled by the Kingdom of Madagascar. In 1897 the monarchy collapsed and the French colonial empire ruled the island, but in 1960 it gained independence again calling itself the Malagasy Republic. It became the Democratic Republic of Madagascar in 1975 and the Republic of Madagascar in 1993.

Ecotourism, agriculture, and greater investments in education, health, and private enterprise, are key elements of Madagascar's development strategy as it is still classed as a third world country. It is one of the world's main suppliers of vanilla and cloves, while coffee, lychees and shrimp are also important agriculturally. The country also currently provides half of the world's supply of sapphire stones.

Traditional pastimes in the country include Moraingy which is a type of hand-to-hand combat, tolon-omby the wrestling of zebu cattle, is also popular in regional areas, while fanorona, is a famous board game invented there.



Fact File

- **Population:** Approx. 22 million.
- **Capital city:** Antananarivo.
- **Religion:** About 50% is made up of traditional tribal religionists and the other main religion is Christianity.
- **Language:** Malagasy and French.
- **Time difference to GMT:** +3 hours.

CURRENCY

The local currency is the Malagasy Ariary (MGA). The current exchange rate is approximately MGA 4,330 to the £1. The most accepted foreign currency is the Euro but GBP can be easily changed. We recommend that you carry a mix of denominations.

You'll find people wanting to change money for you on the street or at the airport. Exchanging money in this way is illegal. The best exchange rate for all major currencies is provided by the BFV/Société Générale Bank, which is represented in all big cities.

Most major credit cards are starting to be accepted in top hotels and major travel agencies in the capital and other major towns, but have limited usage elsewhere.



CYCLE MADAGASCAR

CLIMATE, TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Because of its geography, Madagascar's climate is highly variable. Generally, Madagascar has two seasons: a hot, rainy season from November to April and a cooler, dry season from May to October.

The east coast is the wettest part of the country and thus home to the island's rainforests. This area is also hit periodically by devastating tropical storms.

The central highlands are considerably cooler and drier so they are the location of much of Madagascar's agriculture, especially rice. The west coast is home to dry deciduous forests. Deciduous trees lose all their leaves during the 6- to 8-month dry season. When rains return, these forests erupt in a sea of bright green leaves.

The southwest of Madagascar has the island's driest climate. Parts of this area can be considered desert because so little rain falls.

The climate throughout the island is moderated by altitude, with the coast being hotter (average temperatures 21–27°C, or 70–80°F) and wetter than the plateau (average temperatures 13–19°C, or 55–67°F). As an example Toamasina (Tamatave), on the east coast, has 284 cm (112 inches) of rainfall

annually, while Antananarivo inland has about 140 cm (55 inches).

The temperature chart below gives you an indication of the approximate minimum and maximum temperatures, along with average rainfall, throughout the year for Antananarivo.

TEMPERATURE CHART

Month	Max Temp °C	Min Temp °C	Rainfall (mm)
Jan	26	17	274
Feb	26	17	279
Mar	26	16	204
Apr	25	15	65
May	23	12	23
Jun	21	10	8
Jul	20	10	11
Aug	21	10	10
Sep	24	11	11
Oct	26	13	76
Nov	27	15	188
Dec	26	16	310



SNAKES & BUGS

There are a few snakes, scorpions and spiders that inhabit the area, however it is unlikely that you will encounter any of them (except for the odd spider), especially if you follow a few simple rules:

- Never put your hands or feet anywhere you cannot see.
- Shake out all clothes and shoes before reaching into them.
- Never go barefooted.
- Use a torch at night so you can see where you are walking.

Your local guides will inform you of any other precautions that may be necessary.

As with most wildlife they would rather avoid an encounter with you as much as you would with them!



CYCLE MADAGASCAR

HEALTH & VACCINATIONS

As part of the registration process we require you to complete a medical questionnaire in full. Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act and our policy is to encourage and support as many people as possible to take part in our challenges. We request medical information from you in an endeavour to minimise risk to all participants, and for that reason **we ask that you disclose all your medical history**. Depending on the answers given you may need to get your doctor to sign and stamp your medical declaration. If you are 70 years of age or over at the time of travel you must be authorised by your doctor to take part in the challenge regardless of the answers given.

It is strongly recommended that you consult a medical professional to ensure your vaccinations are all up to date. You must discuss your own particular needs and contra-indications to vaccines or tablets with them.

The following information is given as a guideline only – always seek professional advice:

- You should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in the UK. These vaccinations include for example measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine.

Malaria & Dengue Fever – both are present in Madagascar so please discuss further with a medical professional and ensure you take mosquito bite avoidance measures, such as mosquito repellent (containing DEET) to avoid being bitten. Apply repellent at different times throughout the day.

Plague - outbreaks of plague tend to be seasonal and occur mainly during the rainy season, with around 500 cases reported annually. Whilst outbreaks are not uncommon in rural areas, the latest outbreak in 2017 has seen an increase in reported cases in urban areas, including Antananarivo. The Ministry of Health of Madagascar officially announced the containment of this outbreak on 27 November 2017. None of the deaths recorded related to international travel.

Yellow Fever – a vaccination card/certificate is only needed if you have been to an infected area within 6 days of entering Madagascar.

If you take prescription medication please make sure they are in the original packaging with a label showing your name, alternatively take a copy of the prescription with you or a letter from your doctor confirming you have been prescribed this medication.

Wash your hands wherever possible to avoid stomach upsets. We highly recommend that you bring a couple of small bottles of antibacterial dry wash, this is especially important when washing

facilities aren't available. We also recommend you use a high factor sunscreen and re-apply regularly.

SAFETY & SECURITY

To ensure the safety and security of your group all guides will be in radio/phone contact with each other.

You should always be vigilant when staying in an unfamiliar environment and it is sensible to look after your personal possessions as you would do at home:

- Keep handbags closed and wallets in zipped pockets.
- Don't leave valuable equipment such as cameras and mobile phones unattended on tables etc.
- Don't wear expensive jewellery/watches or carry large amounts of cash.
- Use hotel safes and lock boxes where available for passports, tickets and other valuables when leaving your accommodation for the evening.
- Our recommendation is to leave valuables at home. If you don't need it, don't bring it!

Credit card for emergencies – in the unlikely event you have to curtail your challenge, you will have to cover any additional costs such as extra accommodation or transfers. Often these additional costs incurred can be claimed back through your travel insurance on your return to the UK.



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PASSPORT & VISA

Passports should have a validity of at least 6 months after your return. You should have at least 2 blank pages in your passport on arrival. Please ensure that your passport is in good condition as you may be refused entry onto the plane if it is damaged in any way.

You can get a 30-day tourist visa for a fee of approximately €35/US\$37 (payable in cash in Euros or US Dollars) at the airport on arrival. Make sure an entry stamp is recorded in your passport. A tourist visa has a maximum validity of 3 months and isn't extendable. There's no Embassy of Madagascar in London.

You will be asked for evidence of onward or return travel at check-in in the UK and on arrival in Madagascar.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly recommend that you take out comprehensive travel insurance at the earliest opportunity. A comprehensive travel insurance policy is available through Global Adventure Challenges and details of how to apply are given in your welcome letter.

If you are opting to use your own personal travel insurance then details of your policy should be sent to us. Please be aware that we will not vet or check your own personal travel insurance policy details. Therefore you and you alone are responsible for ensuring that you have adequate personal travel insurance with protection for the full duration of the challenge in respect of at least medical expenses, injury, death, repatriation, cancellation and curtailment. You should also make sure there are no exclusion clauses limiting protection for the type of activities included in the challenge.



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FLIGHTS

Flights normally depart the UK from early to late-evening and arrive back into the UK in the afternoon. Your flights will normally have a combined total of approximately 16 to 20 hours flying time on both the outbound and inbound legs, including any stopovers and can often include two or three separate flights on each leg, so you need to prepare yourself for long journeys at the start and end of the challenge.

Your exact flight details will be confirmed to you in the lead up to your challenge. Flight bookings will normally be made on a group fare basis and will be in economy class. If you would like us to look into upgrading you to a different class please contact Global Adventure Challenges on 01244 676464 or customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com

You are responsible for checking in at the correct time and for presenting yourself to take up all pre-booked components of your Challenge.

Unfortunately, we have no control over cancellations and delays, which are subject to operational decisions by carriers, airlines and/or traffic control authorities.

Where it is not possible to ensure your timely return to the departure point due to unavoidable and extraordinary circumstances, we will bear the cost

of any necessary accommodation for a period not exceeding 3 nights.

LUGGAGE

You will need a large holdall/rucksack for your main luggage which will be transported between our accommodation on each day.

We recommend that your main piece of luggage weighs no more than 20kgs irrespective of whether the airline has a higher baggage allowance. Please remember our ground crew, porters and in some cases animals, will be transporting your luggage whilst you are on the challenge and so with their health and safety in mind, it is advisable not to pack any heavier.

You will also need a small backpack/camelbak to carry any essentials with you during the day i.e. sunscreen, tissues, camera, small personal first aid kit etc.



EXTENDING YOUR STAY

If you would like to take the opportunity to extend your stay, it might be possible for us to arrange an extension for you with the airline so you can spend some extra time immersing yourself in the culture and beautiful landscape on offer.

If you are interested, please contact the Customer Care team to request an extension form at customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com or by calling us on 01244 676454. We recommend you do this as soon as possible as all extensions are strictly limited, subject to availability, given on a first come, first served basis and the final decision always rests with the airline. Your request will be placed on a list in order of receipt and we will contact you at the earliest opportunity before the date of travel to confirm whether the extension has been granted. Therefore please do not make any plans for your requested extended period until you have heard back from us.

There is a minimum £60 + VAT charge to have your return airline ticket extended.

Through our in-country ground handler it may also be possible for us to create bespoke/tailor-made extension packages to suit your needs.



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ACCOMMODATION

Whilst on the challenge, we endeavour to stay in twin share hotels and lodges with washing facilities, but at times we may need to use triple and possibly quadruple bedrooms. Whilst Madagascar is a truly beautiful island it is also a third world country and the quality of life is still quite low meaning that it is still not fully geared up to tourism. Therefore, we could incur changes to the itinerary and need to understand that the standard of accommodation will not be the same as in the UK. Whilst these lodges can be quite basic some will have facilities such as an outdoor swimming pool.

We submit our rooming lists for your challenge 8 weeks before the challenge departure. Please make sure you have informed us of anybody you would like to share with along with your relationship to them before this time as we are unable to amend the rooming lists once submitted. If you are a solo participant we will partner you with another participant of the same sex, and where possible, of a similar age.

Please contact the Customer Care team at customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com if you would like the cost of a single supplement.

TOILET & WASHING FACILITIES

Toilets will be available at our accommodation but it will sometimes be necessary to use 'the great outdoors' whilst cycling. Please ensure you carry your own tissues and 'nappy sack' type bags for disposing of them (also useful for dirty socks, rubbish, etc.).

Remember to wash your hands wherever possible to avoid getting stomach upsets. A small bottle of antibacterial hand gel is a must.

TELEPHONE & WI-FI

Due to the type of terrain in the areas we cycle through, mobile phone signals can be patchy and shouldn't be relied upon.

Wi-Fi may also be limited along the route but more information can be found on Wi-Fi availability at the hotels we stop at in the Accommodation Information Document.

There will be the opportunity to charge electrical items at hotels/lodges in the evening so make sure you bring the appropriate travel adapter for Madagascar.



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OTHER COSTS THAT YOU NEED TO BUDGET FOR

Below are some approximate costs for other expenditure you may incur for the challenge:

Item	Approx. cost
Kit and clothing	Please see kit list
Visa	€35 – this is subject to change
Travel insurance	£63
Spending money	£200 - £250
Hotels the night before your UK departure and/or the night of your UK arrival	£60 - £100 per night
Airport car parking	£75 - £150
Travel to and from the UK departure airport	The cost depends on how far you need to travel and type of transport you are taking – flights and trains are quicker but also more expensive than going by coach.

Average costs - costs vary greatly from town to town, however a rough average cost for the price of coffee is MGA 3,000 and an imported beer is MGA 6,000.

How much spending money you will need usually depends on how many presents and souvenirs you want to bring home!

TIPPING

Tipping waiters etc. is ALWAYS expected, generally at a rate of 10% of your bill when eating/drinking privately in restaurants/bars. Your local guides will tell you if tips have been included at the restaurants we eat in as a group.

Tipping your crew is appropriate, customary and always appreciated. Your guides work in teams and evenly split all gratuities they receive. Your gratuity should reflect the quality of service you received and anything special your team did to enhance your trip. We recommend around €40 from each participant, but this does depend on your budget and what you feel is appropriate.



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DIFFICULTY & TERRAIN

Our challenges are graded from 1 (Challenging), 2 (Tough) or 3 (Extreme). This challenge is graded at 2 (Tough).

You will be cycling for a minimum of 7 hours most days for 5 consecutive days and covering approx. 374km in hot and possibly humid weather.

The terrain will be varied, from paved road to gravel/dirt tracks with some significant climbs and descents.

As mentioned previously this itinerary has been designed to maximise our chances of success. It is worth remembering it is not a race and one top tip you should follow is to cycle at a steady pace.

Our policy is to encourage and support as many people as possible to take part in our challenges. But they may not be suitable for all people due to restriction posed by limitation in mobility, physical or cognitive disability, pregnancy or other various medical conditions. GAC reserves the right to refuse a booking if we feel unable to accommodate the particular needs of the person(s) concerned. If you have any doubts regarding your suitability for your challenge please contact our office immediately to speak to one of the team.

CHALLENGE GRADING

Each of our challenge events are designed to be achievable by most individuals, providing you are prepared to put the effort into training. You do not need to be a professional athlete or 'super fit', however, the fitter you are the more you will enjoy the challenge!

Please keep in mind that these guidelines are to give an insight into the difficulty level associated with the challenge. You may find that an event rated 'Challenging', could have a 'Tough' day, or we may find that a 'Tough' challenge, may have a day rated 'Extreme'.

TOUGH

A 'Tough' cycle features more demanding activities and the days are generally longer and harder than a challenge graded as 'Challenging'!

It may also be classed as 'Tough' due to the weather conditions. The weather can be more unpredictable on these challenges, and the temperature can be very cold, very hot or anywhere in between!

TRAINING TIPS

Training is a critical component in the preparation for your challenge. Good cardio vascular fitness is essential and it is important that you are fit enough to complete this challenge, therefore prior fitness preparation is a MUST!

Training tips can be found on our website and in your welcome pack to point you in the right direction. We also offer training days and weekends to help you prepare.

As mentioned previously this challenge has been graded as 'Tough' and we strongly recommend training for this challenge.

Our training tips include:

- We recommend that you train as much as possible for hills and try and get used to riding on rough rocky terrain - visit a mountain bike centre or forest fire roads. If you haven't experienced a sore bum or aching hands then we think you probably haven't trained for long enough!
- Try to go training on consecutive days instead of doing one big day. This will help your muscles get used to the strains of cycling over consecutive days.
- Work on improving your stamina.



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SUPPORT ON YOUR CHALLENGE

There will be a strong support team with a professional Global Adventure Challenges leader from the UK, along with knowledgeable and experienced local professional guides and bike mechanics.

An air-conditioned vehicle/coach will also provide support to the group.

There will be a comprehensive first aid kit carried with the group at all times. All Global Adventure Challenges leaders are 16 hour outdoor first aid qualified. Our in-country ground crew are also wilderness first aid trained.

Madagascar's healthcare system comprises western medicine and traditional medicine practices. Public and private hospitals in Antananarivo can only handle routine operations. Complex surgery requires evacuation to Mauritius, South Africa or La Reunion. Find out in advance whether your travel insurance provider will make payments directly to local healthcare facilities or will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures (most medical facilities and doctors in Madagascar expect payment upfront).

FOOD, WATER & REFRESHMENT STOPS

More information about the meals provided on the challenge can be found in the Accommodation Information Document. Most dietary requirements can be catered for as long as we know in advance. Plenty of food and snacks will be available to you during the challenge.

Madagascan food tends to have a French influence and fries are often offered instead of rice. Steak is a popular meat but as you get closer to the coast seafood naturally becomes the main element of dishes.

We will have buffet style meals most days except for the odd day when we will have a sit down meal at a restaurant.

On cycling days water will be supplied in the morning and at the end of the day - approximately 1.5 litres a day. Water is **not** provided on non-cycling days.

At rest stops there will also be a variety of snacks such as sweet and salty biscuits (local produce), nuts, raisin mix and fruit which due to the time of year we travel means it will normally be bananas and pineapple.



We suggest you bring along some of your absolute favourite snacks to give you an extra boost when you find the going tough.

TRAFFIC

Traffic drives on the right in Madagascar. As we leave cities or towns we will encounter busy roads which trucks, vans and public vehicles use, so we will need to be mindful of these when cycling as you would in the UK, but once out of the city/town the roads normally become much quieter.

It is vital you wear your helmet at all times and pay attention to the instructions of your Global Adventure Challenges leader and local support crew.



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TRANSFERRING YOUR PLACE

It may be possible to transfer your place to another person. Any transfer request must be made at least 7 days before the departure of your challenge. Costs associated with a transfer are detailed below.

- 56 days or more before challenge departure: £60.00 plus VAT.
- Within 56 days of challenge departure: £100.00 plus VAT.

Suppliers associated with the challenge may also charge additional fees (as an example an airline will often charge a name change fee).

All costs associated with a transfer must be paid in full before it can be confirmed / granted.

In addition to the costs above the person taking your place on the challenge must meet all registration formalities including completing a full registration form, medical questionnaire and if necessary get their GP's signature confirming they are physically and mentally fit enough to complete the challenge.

As you know our challenges are not your normal 'flop and drop' trips! Therefore, we reserve the right to decline a transfer request. For example, this may be because we don't feel there is sufficient enough training and preparation time before the challenge departs.

COMPLAINTS

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as putting things right for you.

If there is something that you perceive to be a lack of conformity during the performance of the challenge you must inform your challenge leader without undue delay. This will allow us the opportunity to remedy the situation on the ground.

If you have any form of complaint in the lead up to your challenge please contact the Customer Care team on the details below who will endeavour to put things right.

customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com



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DAY	TRANSFERS	DIFFICULTY RATING	RIDE STATS (APPROX.)	ITINERARY NOTES
Day 1: Depart UK	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We depart the UK on our overnight flight to Madagascar.
Day 2: Arrive Madagascar	1 hour transfer from the airport to our hotel	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On arrival in Madagascar we will be met by one of our local guides and then take the transfer to our hotel in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar (commonly known as Tana). Once checked-in we should have some time to freshen up. Later on we will have a bike fitting, briefing and dinner.
Day 3: Antananarivo to Lac Mantasoa	N/A	Tough	Distance cycled: 70-73km Cycling time: 7 hours Ride surface: 50km paved, 20km dirt road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We head out of the city in an easterly direction tackling some uphill climbs before heading off the beaten track for some dirt road cycling where we'll discover stunning scenery and fantastic views of the Malagasy highlands. Once out of the city, the roads become much quieter and we cycle on good tarmac roads. At approximately 48km our route starts to take us south as we head towards the secluded Lake Mantasoa – an artificial lake built in 1931. We will cycle 20km on dusty dirt road trails which includes some sharp ascents and descents, but the views across the lake make our efforts worthwhile.
Day 4: Lac Mantasoa to Andasibe	N/A	Tough	Distance cycled: 94km Cycling time: 7-8 hours Ride surface: 79km paved, 15km dirt road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After breakfast we cycle out of the reserve to get back on to tarmac roads and the landscape becomes dotted with rice paddies and huts. Heading east our route is mainly downhill and winds between lush forest and bamboo. We stop for lunch and then continue cycling through the village of Moramanaga, whose name means “easy to beautify” and has an important place in Madagascan history. Our route then becomes gently undulating as we head to Andasibe for our overnight stop.
Day 5: Andasibe to Manambato	Approximate 1½ hour transfer after lunch to Brickaville	Challenging	Distance cycled: 45km Cycling time: 4-5 hours Ride surface: 38km paved, 7km dirt road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After an early morning breakfast we cycle to the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, where we have time to explore on foot the Indri Special Reserve, home to many species of wildlife. Once back on our bikes we enjoy some stunning panoramic views of the surrounding hills as we cycle along tarmac roads lined with lush banana and mango plantations, lychee trees and the endemic Ravinala palm, whose enormous fan-like leaves are used for roofing in the area. After lunch we take our coach transfer to Brickaville, then we're back on our bikes as we cycle the last 7km towards the sea on a rough dirt track that is mainly downhill. We pass through the little hamlet of Manambato to the shore of Lake Rascoa where we have dinner and stay overnight.



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DAY	TRANSFERS	DIFFICULTY RATING	RIDE STATS (APPROX.)	ITINERARY NOTES
Day 6: Manambato to Toamasina (Tamatave)	N/A	Tough	Distance cycled: 106km Cycling time: 8-9 hours Ride surface: 97km paved, 9km dirt road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today is our longest day in the saddle as we head to Madagascar's second largest town, Toamasina – a lively port with a real buzz about it! Our route is rather flat and straight at the beginning with the road lined with lychee trees and bamboo forests. We proceed deep into the lush eastern plains of Madagascar and the road begins to gently undulate as we cycle through palm tree plantations and an array of tropical fruits – banana, mango and papaya. As we edge closer to our overnight stop in Toamasina the road levels out and we regroup before making our way through the market lined roads.
Day 7: Toamasina (Tamatave) to Mahavelona (Foulpointe)	N/A	Challenging	Distance cycled: 59km Cycling time: 4-5 hours Ride surface: 58km paved, 1km dirt road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After breakfast we cycle through simple suburban villages alongside the river. The roads are flat, quiet and rural with little traffic, making them great for cycling on. We head towards sand dunes and follow the beautiful coastline northwards, passing modest resorts and the occasional village. As we cycle up the coast we continue along the river with a Laguna separating the road from the coast. We then cross tracks to the beautiful Foulpointe beach, the finish line of our challenge. This evening we toast our achievements with a celebratory meal!
Day 8: Mahavelona (Foulpointe) to Antananarivo	Approx. 2 hour transfer from Mahavelona to Toamasina and approx. 1 hour transfer from the airport to our hotel	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After breakfast we have a free morning at the beach. We have an early afternoon transfer by bus to Toamasina where we will have a light meal before catching our internal flight to Antananarivo which should take approximately 45 minutes. On arrival at our hotel we will have a snack buffet and then late evening we can go into town where there is a range of night bars and discos.
Day 9: Depart Madagascar	1 hour transfer from the hotel to the airport	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following breakfast we take our transfer to the airport for our flight back to the UK.
Day 10: Arrive UK	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We arrive back into the UK, say our final goodbyes as a group and make our onward journey home.



