

Antananarivo geographic locations

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The Republic of Madagascar is the second-largest island country in the world. Its capital Antananarivo is in the Central Highlands near the centre of the island. It has the 25th largest exclusive economic zone of 1,225,259 km² (473,075 sq mi).

Madagascar can be divided into five general geographical regions: the east coast, the Tsaratanana Massif, the Central Highlands, the west coast, and the southwest. The highest elevations parallel the east coast. The total size is 587,040 square kilometres (226,660 sq mi), which makes it the world's second largest island country.

The Canal des Pangalanes, an 800-kilometre (497 mi)-long lagoon formed naturally by the washing of sand up on the island by the Indian Ocean currents and by the silting of rivers, is a feature of the coast; it has been used both as a means of transportation up and down the coast and as a fishing area. The beach slopes steeply into deep water. The east coast is considered dangerous for swimmers and sailors because of the large number of sharks that frequent the shoreline.

The southwest is bordered on the east by the Ivakoany Massif and on the north by the Isalo Ruiniform Massif. It includes two regions along the south coast, the Mahafaly Plateau and the desert region occupied by the Antandroy people.

The Mananara and Mangoro rivers flow from the Central Highlands to the east coast, as does the Maningory, which flows from Lake Alaotra. Other rivers flowing east into the Indian Ocean include the Bemarivo, the Ivondro, and the Mananjary. These rivers tend to be short because the watershed is located close to the east coast. Owing to the steep elevations, they flow rapidly, often over spectacular waterfalls.

The rivers flowing to the west coast discharge into the Mozambique Channel and tend to be lengthier and have a lesser gradient. The major rivers on the west coast are the Sambirano, the Mahajamba, the Betsiboka (part of Mahajanga is located at the mouth), the Mania, the North and South Mahavavy, the Mangoky, and the Onilahy. The Ikopa, which flows past Antananarivo, is a tributary of the Betsiboka. The Onilahy, located in the driest part of the island, occasionally dries up during droughts.

Madagascar originated as part of the Gondwana supercontinent. Its west coast was formed when Africa broke off from Gondwana around 165 million years ago. Madagascar eventually broke off from India about 88 million years ago. It is geologically located within the Somali Plate.

A 2019 global remote sensing analysis suggested that there were 1,748 square kilometres (675 sq mi) of tidal flats in Madagascar, making it the 18th ranked country in terms of how much tidal flat occurs there.

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Antananarivo receives practically all of its average annual 1,400mm (55.1in) of rainfall between November and April. The dry season is sunny, although somewhat chilly, especially in the mornings. Although frosts are rare in Antananarivo, they are common at higher elevations. Hail is common in many of the higher areas of the island (including Antananarivo), but there is no snowfall except on the Ankaratra massif where above 2,400m (7,874ft) it may occasionally fall and even remain for several days.

The west coast is drier than either the east coast or the Central Highlands because the trade winds lose their humidity by the time they reach this region. The southwest and the extreme south are semidesert; as little as 330mm (13in) of rain falls annually at Toliara.

Climate change is a significant threat to Madagascar's environment and people. Climate change has raised temperatures, made the dry season longer and has resulted in more intense tropical storms. The country's unique ecosystems, animal and plant life are being impacted.

Madagascar occasionally experiences the impact of cyclones. During February 2-4, 1994, Madagascar was struck by Cyclone Geralda. The cyclone killed seventy people and destroyed enough property to leave approximately 500,000 homeless, including 30,000 in Antananarivo and 80,000 in Toamasina. The cyclone also significantly damaged the country's infrastructure, most notably coastal roads, railroads, and telecommunications, as well as agriculture. The damage was estimated at US\$45 million.

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