



# Cost savings madagascar

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I was enthralled by the country's beauty during my visit. There are sweeping canyons and gorges, grand waterfalls, and a diverse landscape that spans the entire island. One day you're in a tropical jungle, the next you're in an arid plain, and a few hours later you're on a pristine beach. The scenery here is unlike any other destination I've been to. Plus, there really are a seemingly endless variety of cute lemurs!

While traveling Madagascar is challenging, it's also incredibly rewarding. The travel trail here isn't well-worn, which means visitors get a much more rugged, unique experience.

This Madagascar travel guide will help you plan the trip of a lifetime, save money, and ensure you make the most of your time in this off-the-beaten-path destination.

Baobab trees are massive trees that can grow 30 meters (98 feet) tall, 11 meters (36 feet) wide, live up to 1,000 years, and are completely unique to Madagascar. While the trees can be found throughout the country, this road lined with them is one of the most iconic images of Madagascar.

This park, near the western coast, is really two parks: Great Tsingy and Little Tsingy. It's not an easy place to visit (it takes a full day via 4WD on very rough terrain to get here) but the views are worth it. The rock formations here are amazing and otherworldly. Admission is 55,000 MGA.

Featuring multiple rugged hiking trails, cliffs, ravines, gorges, canyons, and plentiful fauna, this Westworld-like park blew me away. You are required to hire a guide before you explore though (they are found at the entrance). Admission is 65,000 MGA and guides cost between 80,000-100,000 MGA.

Nosy Be is the place to go for Madagascar's trademark beaches. Located 8 kilometers (5 miles) off the coast, this small island is home to white-sand beaches, expensive restaurants, and upscale resorts. Beach parties erupt each Sunday and there's some amazing snorkeling, diving, fishing, and whale watching.

This small west-coast town is famous for its expats, pizza (a seriously popular dish in the country), and for being a launching pad for diving excursions to the Great Reef offshore. There's not much else to do except sit by the beach and relax. Driving here on the N7 (the only north-south highway) is also pretty amazing as you can take in Ranomafana National Park, Isalo National Park, and other stunning vistas along the way! A single dive costs 180,000 MGA.

The capital of Madagascar, known as Tana for short, it's a gritty city with terrible traffic -- but there's a lot of history and culture here that make a short visit worthwhile. See the lemur park and the Rova (the old palace), get a sense of the international scene in the city and use it as your launching pad for stops further afield.

Zebu is a type of cow with a large hump on its back. It's more of a work animal, like an ox, and you'll see them all over the country (they are even used as dowries in weddings). It's the only kind of beef here, and it is always on the menu (along with healthy portions of rice). The meat is really tough (thanks to all the work the animals do in the fields) and so it's best in a stew. Be sure to try it while you're here!

Located 160 kilometers (100 miles) east of the capital, Mantadia National Park is a protected area spanning 155 square kilometers (60 square miles). It's home to 14 species of lemurs as well as over 115 types of birds and 84 kinds of amphibians -- many of which are endangered. The landscape is a stunning mix of old-growth forest and rainforest, and you'll see lemurs almost everywhere you go! Admission is 45,000 MGA and the required local guide is 60,000-80,000 MGA. There are also lodges in the park where you can stay overnight for 57,000 MGA per night.

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