



seed **madagascar**

sustainable environment, education & development



SURVIVAL GUIDE

**SEED Madagascar
Conservation
Volunteering
Programme**



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Welcome to SEED Madagascar's award-winning Conservation Volunteering Programme!

We are a small, UK registered, grassroots charity, offering you the chance to experience and learn directly from the front line of our conservation work. SEED is committed to delivering well-managed projects with real impacts on the ground in Madagascar, which you will be participating in. From the moment you join the programme, you will be welcomed by our team and the community whom we have worked alongside for over 20 years. We invest all our profits from our volunteering scheme into our broad-ranging development projects.

SEED primarily works in the Anosy region in southeast Madagascar, our head office is in the principal city of the region, Fort Dauphin, and our conservation programme operates in Sainte Luce, a coastal area **1-2 hours'** drive north of Fort Dauphin. We have a small team of remote staff that support the team on the ground in Madagascar.

You will experience the world from a different perspective, which we hope will provide you with memories that last a lifetime and increase your knowledge of both conservation and the Malagasy culture. Life in Madagascar presents many challenges, so it is essential to come with an open mind, and a willingness to tackle any obstacles that lie ahead. Your experience may not always be straightforward, but we can promise that it will be extremely rewarding.

This guide is to fully prepare you for your exciting journey. Our experienced staff will support you to prepare for your trip, and whilst you are on your placement.

"For us here in this region, every extra volunteer means extra investment, extra employment and training, and a multitude of benefits."

- Mayor of Fort Dauphin

SEED's Conservation Research Programme:

Our conservation projects are located within the beautiful coastal area of Sainte Luce which consists of five villages surrounded by rare remaining fragments of sandy (littoral) forest and wetlands, where very little biodiversity research has been carried out and there is a high risk posed by the local mining industry. We work with the local village community to communicate the consequences of mining and to formulate a strategy to mitigate the negative impacts. The research findings help formulate the conservation strategy which will be key in helping to protect and conserve species before they are lost forever.

Participating in cutting-edge conservation research projects in a region of such great biodiversity and endemism is an unparalleled opportunity for anyone looking to pursue a career in these areas, or for those interested in conservation. The breadth of concurrent conservation projects allows volunteers to gain experience of a wide range varying conservation techniques and approaches. Volunteers learn from the Malagasy guides who share their vast and extensive knowledge of the local wildlife, flora and fauna. Additionally, SEED runs quarterly afterschool sessions to teach the local children about the importance of the local flora and fauna through activities and lectures relating to current SCRP projects.

Why are volunteers needed?

Conservation Volunteers provide vital support to the long-term research staff with collecting research data on a variety of ecosystems. Having more people working on the ground increases both the quantity and quality of the data collected, meaning we have greater capacity to achieve our conservation objectives. Data collected on these projects is used to inform and educate governments, businesses and communities responsible for the conservation of these areas and species. All our projects are ongoing, and volunteers will contribute to a variety of different ones during their time with SEED. You can find further information about the projects below:

- **Project Ala**—Increase and improve viable habitat for four endangered species of lemur including a newly discovered mouse lemur in the Sainte Luce littoral forest. This is achieved through the creation of reforested wildlife corridors connecting multiple forest fragments, coupled with strengthened local and regional capacity to support the conservation of lemurs and their natural habitats. Additionally, we are doing herpetological surveys and place camera traps as part of the Ala programme.
- **Project Rufus**—Conducting research and education to enhance the long-term survival of Madagascar's flying fox bats. We are monitoring the population through two different surveys. Both of these surveys give the volunteers the opportunity to see these incredible giants up close and personal.
- **School Outreach Sessions**—Once per month we do local outreach sessions with the schools in Ambandrika and Manafiafy, to help teach and get kids excited about the natural world and how to protect it. We also have colouring pages for the younger children and outdoor games and activities themed around the subject of the day. It's a really fun and important way to connect with the community and the energy of the kids is infectious!

- 
- **Herpetofauna long-term monitoring surveys**—This involves walking a transect through one of our five forest fragments and recording all of the frogs, lizards, snakes, and chameleons we see along the way. We also record some basic habitat data such as what kind of plant or substrate they're on, how much canopy cover they're under, how far they are from the transect, and how high up they are. It's a great way to see and learn about all of the different reptiles and amphibians that we have here in St Luce and a great opportunity for some incredible wildlife photos. We usually see really interesting insects, birds, and mammals along these surveys as well.
 - **Nocturnal lemur long-term monitoring surveys**—Similar to our herpetofauna surveys, this involves walking the same transects but exclusively at night, and looking for the three nocturnal lemur species that live here in St Luce. These include the Anosy mouse lemur, the Fat-tailed dwarf lemur, and the Southern woolly lemur. We record things like group size, what tree species the lemurs are inhabiting, and how high in the canopy they are. This is one of our most popular surveys as it gives volunteers the opportunity to see some of the most charismatic and unique residents of the St Luce littoral forests in their natural habitat.
 - **Varika long-term monitoring surveys**—Another transect-based lemur survey but this one occurs during the morning (usually around 7:30 am) and involves looking for our resident red-collared brown lemurs (Varika), which are some of the most charming and boisterous critters we have in St Luce. This is usually another opportunity for volunteers to get good photos as the Varika are rather large and will often get fairly close during these surveys.
- 

Find out more about our current and future projects [here!](#)



How could a typical week at the SCRP camp look like for you?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Morning	Cleaning transect 7	Herpetofauna Ala corridor 4	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring	Varika
	Varika	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring	Varika	Palms monitoring site 3
Afternoon	Camera traps installation	Malagasy lessons	Flying fox - flyout count	English lessons
Evening	Lemurs long-term monitoring	Herpetofauna Ala corridor 1	Lemurs Ala corridors	Lemurs long-term monitoring
			Herpetofauna long-term monitoring	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring	Manafiafy school session	OFF (weekend activities)
Afternoon	Data entry afternoon	OFF (weekend activities)	
Evening	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring	OFF	
	Herpetofauna long-term monitoring		

Meet the SCRP Team!

Antoine, Conservation Research Coordinator. After several short-term experiences in conservation projects around the world, Antoine left Belgium at the beginning of 2026 to join SEED. He leads the current projects, develops new ones, and coordinates the volunteer programme.

Labaza is our night guard.

You will also be working with our three guides. They will accompany us through the forest and help you identify any animals you may encounter. Asprin has been working with us since 2023, while Soalia and Charlot joined the team at the beginning of 2026.

Vayah is our camp chef. As one of our longest standing staff members, Vayah joined SEED when it was still 'Azafady' in 2007 and has been with us ever since. Working closely in Sainte Luce with our SCRP team, Vayah has looked after many volunteers and SEED staff with her fantastic cooking.

Sosoni: Day guard. As the camp's neighbour, Sosoni and his family have been an integral part of the camp and have ensured its security since it was established.

Hoby: As the national staff team leader, Hoby has been working with SEED since the organisation began in 2008. With nearly 20 years of experience, he has extensive knowledge of the organisation, the Sainte-Luce community, and the local wildlife.

Solo: He joined SEED Madagascar in 2007. After becoming a member of FIMPIA (the locally elected forest management committee), he has now been working as a local field guide for many years. In 2023, Solo became a Research Assistant. Through decades of experience, Solo has cultivated a deep and impressive knowledge of the wide variety of eco-systems in and around St Luce.

Solo Kely: Camp worker. Solo Kely works closely with Sosoni to help look after the camp and take care of its day-to-day needs.



Students and graduates

It is sometimes possible for the conservation programme to be undertaken as an independent research project for students wanting to assist in academic or professional development and/or to gain credits for a college or university course.

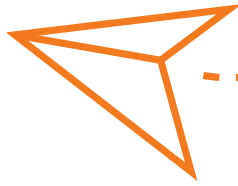
SEED does not currently offer internships because we do not have the resources/capacity to offer students additional support beyond the regular activity schedule of the volunteer programme. However, we have had students in the past who treat the programme as an internship with the understanding that they will need to fully fund this themselves and that activities which fall outside of the day-to-day programme routine will be accommodated where possible but we cannot make promises since our schedule is busy and so are our staff.

All interns and researchers must get in touch with our Volunteer Coordinator to discuss your plans. SEED needs to be aware of the requirements for your internship/research in order for us to decide if it will be possible. If you do not inform us of your needs before your travel, we can give you no guarantees that we will be able to accommodate your requirements.



" Leaving Sainte Luce was not easy and I could have stayed on forever! I would recommend the SCRP volunteer programme to anyone and advise to make the most of every second as it will fly by. Go with an open mind, ready to work hard and enjoy the most unique adventure of a lifetime! "

Bella - Volunteer 2022



VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Volunteer Requirements

- Be in good physical and mental health
- Be able to communicate in English
- Be open-minded, patient and adaptable
- Be willing to embrace the challenges of the project
- Have an appropriate level of fitness, physical capability and mobility. Conservation work can require long treks on forest trails over rough, uneven ground (up to 10km a day in hot humid conditions)
- Have a positive attitude towards living in a rural setting and working in a team.
- Be willing to take WHO approved Malaria Prophylaxis and have all the vaccinations we require (see page 22).

Challenges you may face when volunteering in Madagascar

Environment	• Hot and tropical climate with high humidity • Insects and tropical wildlife are common • Language barrier • Attitudes towards time-keeping and plans can be relaxed • Remote locations with limited communications and transport • Very basic camping facilities for the duration of the programme • A lack of variety of food (Rice and Beans for lunch everyday) • Living in a community with regular power shortages and sporadic supply of water • Living in a low-income tropical coastal town
Physical	• The days can be very long sometimes. • Trekking through the forest to the research sites in different weather conditions can be tiring. • Physically demanding roles (you can break when you feel it is necessary!)
Mental	• You may experience culture shock. • You may experience homesickness; this is common in your first few days. • Working and living with a diverse group of volunteers from different ages, nationalities and backgrounds



APPLICATION PROCESS



Application Process

01

Discover Us

Read over the webpages about our conservation volunteering programme at <https://madagascar.co.uk/volunteer>

02

Apply Online

Complete the online application form through the website links. We will review your application and usually reply within 48 hours with either a Letter of Acceptance or requesting further clarification.

03

Consider

Read through this guide thoroughly to understand the environment we work in, challenges and requirements of volunteering with us and steps required to plan your trip. Any questions do not hesitate to contact us!

04

Book your place

Once you have received your Letter of Acceptance secure your place with a £200 deposit and submit your online MoU.

05

Confirmation

We will email you a Letter of Confirmation and you can then book your international flights.

06

Preparation Checklist

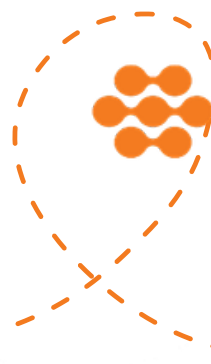
Follow the steps below to get ready to start your volunteer adventure!

1-3 months before start date (or as soon as possible)

1. To confirm your place:
 - Pay your £200 deposit via direct bank transfer or Enthuse
 - Carefully read and complete the Memorandum of Understanding (link in your Acceptance Letter)
2. Book international and internal flights (once your place is confirmed)
3. Arrange travel insurance
4. Visit your doctor or travel clinic to arrange vaccinations and anti-malarials/medications
5. Check passport is valid for your period of travel (at least 6 months from entry)
6. Arrange criminal record (DBS) / Police Check
7. Apply for a visa if you prefer to get one prior to travel (you can also get one on arrival in country)

3-4 weeks before departure

1. You should pay the balance of your donation 6 weeks prior to departure. If you are fundraising, this can be extended to 4 weeks
2. Complete and submit the online pre-departure form
3. Photocopy and store important documents—email a copy of your passport, flight itinerary and insurance to SEED
4. Money—obtain Euros or US Dollars and check your cards will work abroad. Inform your bank of your travel plans
5. Familiarise yourself with FCO health and safety advice for Madagascar and register with your country's embassy
6. Leave a copy of SEED Madagascar contact numbers with family/friends
7. Print a copy of SEED Madagascar's Travel Document to take with you (this will be emailed to you a couple of weeks before you travel)



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INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNAL FLIGHTS

International and Internal Flights

Arrival Day	Your programme starts on your First Day (Day 1) in the Fort Dauphin Office. You need to arrive in Fort Dauphin on or before Day 1. Fly into Antananarivo - Ivato International Airport (TNR) at least one day before Day 1 Stay one night in the capital. This is recommended as internal flights can be unreliable and booking your international flight and domestic flights one calendar day apart can prevent issues. We recommend Les Flots Bleu Hotel at around (£22) per night, you can book a hotel transfer with the hotel. If you need assistance please contact info@seedmadagascar.org. Fly to Fort Dauphin on Day 1 of your programme.
	Internal flights from Antananarivo (TNR) to Fort Dauphin / Taolagnaro airport (FTU) are operated by Air Madagascar/Air Tsaradia • Checked in baggage allowance is 20kg (which is less baggage allowance than international flights) • A second bag (max 20kg) will cost £35, and £11 for 2kg in addition to this • Hand luggage is limited to 1 x 5kg
Departure Day	Depart Fort Dauphin the day after the last day of your programme Allow for one night stopover in Antananarivo prior to taking an international flight out of Madagascar
Compare prices for your international flights with search engines BUT we recommend you book directly with your chosen airline: • Skyscanner - https://www.skyscanner.net/ • Kayak - https://www.kayak.co.uk/ • Google Flights - https://www.google.co.uk/flights/ For internal flights, book directly with Tsaradia - https://madagascarairlines.com/	

Logistics

Think carefully about your travel plans before you finalise your flights. If you would like to travel in Madagascar before or after your time with SEED, please consider that 90 days is the maximum time for a tourist visa.

Proof of exit from Madagascar will be required before you're allowed on your outward international flight. Ensure you have an exit flight ticket from Madagascar before you start travelling.

Air Madagascar/Tsaradia operate all domestic flights and often change or cancel flights at short notice. We strongly recommend one overnight stay in Antananarivo between international and internal flights to avoid missing connections on both outward and homebound journeys.

Flight Costs

It is advised to book your international flights as far in advance as possible for cheaper prices. UK to Madagascar return is approx. £500 - £1,000 but this can be higher in the summer months.

It is best to book internal flights directly via Tsaradia airline's website or on Skyscanner. SEED can assist with booking if needs be. Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin return is approx. £250.

Before booking flights through an agency, do check if buying the internal flights separately is cheaper.

Carbon Offsetting

To help offset the carbon emissions generated by our school construction programme, SEED's [Project Sekoly Maintso](#) plants trees at school sites that also serve as valuable natural resources for the local community. However, we acknowledge that any air travel required to reach Madagascar contributes additional carbon dioxide emissions, further accelerating climate change and disproportionately impacting the very communities SEED works with in southeast Madagascar.

To help reduce these emissions, SEED encourages travelling volunteers to limit the number of connecting flights where possible and to choose airlines with fuel-efficient fleets or strong sustainability commitments. Some airlines will offer you the choice to carbon offset your flight too.

Recommendations for Volunteers	• Book direct flights (e.g. Air France, Ethiopia) to reduce emissions from extra takeoffs/landings. • Choose airlines with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) programmes or modern fleets (such as Emirates, Air Mauritius, KLM/Air France). • Use carbon offsets where offered during booking. • Minimise layovers by flying through major hubs (e.g. Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Paris, Dubai).	
Sustainable Airlines Serving Madagascar	Airline	Sustainability Highlights
	Emirates	Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) trials, fuel efficient fleet, eco-operations
	Ethiopian	New Dreamliners, high service standards
	Air Mauritius	330neo/A350, CORSIA, green ground operations
	Air France / KLM	SAF, fleet update, offsets, science-based goals
	Kenya Airways	SkyTeam sustainability practices

Internal flight

After spending a night in Antananarivo you will take an internal flight down to Fort Dauphin. Bare in mind that Fort Dauphin is also locally called **Taolagnaro**.

There is only one airline that operates domestic flights in Madagascar, and that is **Tsaradia** (sometimes referred to as Air Madagascar).

You can book your Tsaradia flight through the [official website](#) or on [SkyScanner](#).

Booking your Tsaradia flight

You should try to book your internal flight so that you arrive in Fort Dauphin on Day 1 of the programme. If you are able to find a flight that arrives in the morning, this is ideal. You will then have time during the day to have a town tour and get all the last minute things you might need for Sainte Luce.

The domestic flight from Tana to Fort Dauphin goes everyday, at different times. Unfortunately flights have recently been going very early in the morning, around 3:00/4:00 am. You can always choose to arrive in Fort Dauphin a day early to try to avoid this.

One important thing to keep in mind about your domestic flight is that the Tsaradia airline has a history of being quite unreliable. Flight times often change at the last minute, so it is useful to be vigilant with checking your phone and emails (including spam inboxes) in case they contact you about a change.

It is also quite common that there are delays at the airport. If you experiences this, don't worry! We will be checking the flights before leaving to pick you up and will see any changes.





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TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is essential, and SEED Madagascar stipulates that you have suitable travel insurance to cover **both** your time on the programme and travel to and from the programme.

This cover must include **emergency repatriation**, including (but not limited to) that relating to medical grounds and **personal liability** whilst working (**without heavy machinery**) on humanitarian and conservation projects in southeast Madagascar, as well as suitably covering you to undertake work abroad.

It is vital that you provide your insurance company with information about:

- the work and remote nature of the places you will be visiting.
- Any **existing medical conditions** that you may have.

If you do not provide this information, it is possible that your insurance cover may be **invalid**.

If you already have travel insurance check it carefully as many policies do **NOT** cover volunteering. You may also need to check it covers any other activities you may wish to do during free time or independent travel.

Other key tips and requirements:

Arrange travel insurance once you have booked flights so that you have flight cancellation cover. Read your policy details carefully and take a copy of them when you travel.

Supply the following information on the SEED Madagascar pre-departure form:

Insurance company name	
Insurance policy number	
Date of issue	
Cover period	
Type of insurance	
Emergency contact details	
Claims information	

Additional Insurance information

If SEED Madagascar is required to assist you at any time due to personal, medical, political or other issues associated with anything other than the planned programme, it does so without obligation and you will be liable to pay for any costs incurred.

SEED Madagascar will, in the case of emergency, cover whatever reasonable costs it can afford to ensure a volunteer's best interests, but only on the understanding that these will be repaid whether or not the insurance company agrees to cover said costs. These may include overseas phone calls, hire of 4x4 vehicles to collect you from remote areas, medical fees, accommodation and food whilst away from the group etc.

Once you arrive in Fort Dauphin, SEED Madagascar may only cancel the Volunteer Programme in the case of an 'act of god' (a natural disaster) or civil disturbance, which would cause danger to you or other persons if the programme were to continue or for any other reason beyond SEED Madagascar's control.

We require that on your application form you nominate a person who we should contact in the case of an emergency. By completing the online Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) you are giving your permission for us to contact this person and your insurer. It is vital that SEED has full, up-to-date contact information for the nominated person and, if you wish, you may also provide a second contact person. Please provide as many relevant details as possible including email address and telephone/mobile numbers for day and night. This way we will ensure that we can act quickly in the case of an emergency.





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HEALTH

Health

This section only provides some guidelines, but you **must** also seek advice from a healthcare professional.

Vaccinations

Arrange to see your doctor or travel clinic as soon as possible, as least **2 months** before your trip, as some vaccines have to be given in stages.

UK-based volunteers can access up to date travel health recommendations from the **NHS Fit for Travel** website and travel vaccination services including purchase of medical kits from the websites listed below:

- <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/madagascar/health>
- <https://www.nomadtravel.co.uk/travel-vaccines>
- <https://www.citydoc.org.uk/destinations/madagascar/>

You will be undertaking manual work where nicks and cuts to the skin will be common so all volunteers must have a **Tetanus** vaccination.

Requirements change and individual needs differ so it is important to check the latest advice. The UK National Health Service currently recommends that as well as being up to date with vaccines for life at home you should have the following vaccinations for travel to Madagascar:

Failure to have the recommended travel vaccinations or medication may invalidate any related medical claim through your travel insurance.

Essential:	Diphtheria Hepatitis A Hepatitis B Tetanus Typhoid
Recommended:	Rabies
Please also discuss:	Polio Tuberculosis Meningitis Yellow Fever - <i>no risk in Madagascar but you may need a vaccination for travel</i>

Anti-malarials

Malaria is common in the region of Madagascar where we work. **To participate in our programme, you must take the World Health Organisation approved anti-malarial as advised and prescribed by your health care professional.** This is one of the conditions of the MoU.

Please consider the following information when discussing the choice of anti-malarial with your health care professional:

SEED will not make a specific recommendation but would like you to be aware that we have had many problems with volunteers taking **Doxycycline** as a malaria preventative. Doxycycline often increases sensitivity to the sun and makes you more prone to sunburn. Over 40% of SEED's volunteers who have taken Doxycycline have suffered unacceptable sun- sensitivity which affected their ability to work.

Larium (Mefloquine) is another antimalarial available but the use of this drug does have some severe and long-lasting side effects including insomnia, dizziness and psychiatric reactions. If you are going to bring Larium on your trip and have not taken it before, it is highly recommended you do a three-week trial before you travel to see if you develop any of these side effects.

From previous volunteer's experiences we have found that **Malarone** has the least severe side effects. But please discuss with your doctor and make your own assessment on what is best for you.

Prevention Methods

Malarial prophylaxis is essential, but the first line of defense is not to be bitten. Please consider the following:

Tent - choose a tent with insect screens. If you have a hire tent from SEED, they have insect screens

Mosquito nets - if you plan to stay in basic hotels when travelling after your volunteering programme bring or buy a mosquito net (they are available at low cost in Fort Dauphin)

Mosquito repellent - preferably non-DEET as they damage the wildlife and environment*. Eucalyptus and citronella oil works great as a natural repellent, can be used inside your tent and to use on your skin

Clothing - bring long sleeves, light colours and loose-fitting long trousers, preferably with ankle ties. Wear at dawn or dusk, as these are the worst times for mosquitoes

Mosquito coils - these should only be used in well-ventilated areas. They are useful when eating or relaxing outdoors and are available to buy locally.

***Please be aware that insect repellent containing DEET can be damaging to wildlife**

What if you contract Malaria?

Do not panic!

Prophylaxis combined with bite avoidance measures significantly reduces the risk of malaria, but nothing is 100% effective. It has been known for volunteers to occasionally contract malaria. The prevalent form of malaria in Madagascar is *Plasmodium falciparum*, which can be severe, but responds well to Coartem, a very effective drug available locally. Coartem treats malaria rapidly and most people feel better within 24 hours and often return to work within a few days.

Our staff are trained to recognise the early signs of malaria (usually temperature) and volunteers exhibiting signs will be advised to start treatments as soon as possible (malaria tests can be easily bought for around 10,000 Ariary = £1.90). Volunteers may return to Fort Dauphin (the nearest town) to recover.

If you are currently taking any other medications or have any health concerns, it is vital to check with your doctor that these will not interact with Coartem, should you need to take it. If you have concerns about taking this medication, we suggest you do some background research on the drug to help reassure you.

Food Poisoning and Traveller's Diarrhoea

Some people find that it takes a couple of days for their stomach to adjust to being in Madagascar. There are many different kinds of pathogens and bacteria here that you would not encounter at home which can potentially upset your stomach. This is completely normal!

Make sure you bring appropriate medication with you such as rehydration salts, anti-spasmodic tablets and for more severe cases, Imodium.

If you experience any gastrointestinal illness during your time in Madagascar, it is important to monitor your symptoms and update the SEED staff on how you are feeling. Please do not feel embarrassed - we've all been there!

It is vital that we are always aware of your health status so that we can make appropriate adjustments, and help you to get medical advice from a doctor if necessary. Diarrhoea in particular can lead to dehydration, which can be serious in the hot climate of Madagascar, so make sure to let us know how you are doing.





PASSPORT AND VISA

Passport

Ensure it is in good condition.

There must be **at least 6 months** before it expires **from the date of entry into the country**.

Leave a photocopy with your nominated next of kin and email a copy of the photo page to SEED Madagascar.

Visa

All nationalities will require a Tourist Visa valid for either 30 or 60 days. For those staying longer than 60 days, please obtain the 60 days visa and this will then be extended once down in Fort Dauphin. When completing the visa form, give the purpose of your trip as **tourism** (avoid using the word work or volunteering as officials may assume you need an employment permit). Use the information below to complete the form.

Obtaining your visa prior to travelling out to Madagascar, consider the following advice:

Madagascar has embassies in many countries worldwide. We advise you to check to see if there is an embassy in your home country.

Aim to apply for your visa at least 8 weeks before you are due to leave for Madagascar, please note that most visas must be activated within 6 months of the date of issue. To apply for a 90-day Tourist Visa (e.g. for US citizens) you will need:

90-day tourist visa checklist:

- ☐ Valid Passport (check that it had 6 months before it expires)
- ☐ 4 Passport pictures
- ☐ Copy of your round-trip flight
- ☐ Signed visa form application
State your purpose of travel as: **Tourism**
- ☐ Visa fee (please double check this price with your embassy)

Please double check these things with your embassy as requirements do change and remember, the visa will allow you 90-days stay in Madagascar as the absolute maximum. You can apply in person or by post but do allow at least two months before departures to ensure it is returned on time.



Visa Information

As a volunteer you will be required to obtain a short-stay visa for your trip to Madagascar and this must cover your for the entire length of your stay. The short stay visa can be either 30, 60, or 90 days, and this can be bought online in advance of your trip or on-arrival once you land in Ivato International Airport in Antananarivo.

If staying more than 60 days, you must apply for a long-stay visa in advance through the Madagascar embassy in your home country. Extensions beyond 60 days can only be done in-country once you get to Fort Dauphin.

 Visa on Arrival (for stays up to 60 days)	For most people travelling to Madagascar, the easiest option is to get a visa on arrival. You can buy this at the visa desk before passport control. You will need: • Passport (valid for at least 6 months after entry) • Return flight ticket • Proof of accommodation (SEED address) • Visa fee in cash
 Online e-Visa Option	Volunteers can pre-apply online for a visa before they arrive via the official Madagascar e-visa platform. How to apply: 1. Fill in your details and travel info 2. Choose 30-day or 60-day tourist visa 3. Pay online via credit/debit card 4. You'll receive a QR code or confirmation email to show at immigration 5. Final visa sticker is issued at the airport on arrival
 Address in Fort Dauphin:	SEED Madagascar Villa Rabemanda Aminanikely BP318 Tolagnaro
 SEED Madagascar Contact:	Tsina Endor Deputy Director Tel: +261 (0) 34 20 520 40 +261 (0) 33 07 350 72

Registering with your embassy

We advise you to register your trip and passport details online with your government prior to departure. You may need to open an online account prior to departure, so allow time for this. It is a very simple process and is a particularly useful tool for Embassies in an emergency like a cyclone or political unrest. Your embassy can also help in the event of losing your passport.

UK: The British Embassy does not register UK Nationals, but the FCO now advises overseas British travellers to subscribe to email or social media updates. For those wanting to subscribe, go to the www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice and select the country you are travelling to.

Travel advice updates will also be issued via the British Embassy X account [@UKinMadagascar](https://twitter.com/UKinMadagascar) and their Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ukinmadagascar/about/>

Keeping in touch

You are in a developing country where mobile reception and internet connections can be patchy. Plans change, days in town may turn into days in the bush. We advise that whilst you can tell friends and family you will be in touch, do not promise to contact them at set times and on set days. They will only worry if you cannot contact them. If you wish, SEED Madagascar can call/email a nominated friend or relative on your arrival in Madagascar to let them know you are safe.

Mobile phone reception is available in Fort Dauphin and Yas network is available in camp - bring an unlocked mobile phone (or purchase a basic phone locally for around £15). Purchase a Malagasy Sim card which costs around £1.50 - this is great for connecting data to the local network so that you can use WhatsApp. Our staff use the Yas network in Fort Dauphin and in Ste Luce.

- Volunteers generally use WhatsApp to message and call home.
- There is an intermittent electricity supply from solar panels in our Research Centre at camp. Volunteers can charge their phones there, however there may not be as much charge on cloudy days.
- There is Wi-Fi available at a number of hotels, bars and restaurants around Fort Dauphin. Since March 2026, we have reliable Wi-Fi at Sainte-Luce camp.

Emergency contacts to give to friends and family

Mark Jacobs - London	+44 (0)203 633 4208	mark@seedmadagascar.org	Emails checked at weekends. Daily contact with the office in Fort Dauphin.
Lisa Bass - London	+44 7939276654 (WhatsApp)	lisa@seedmadagascar.org	Director. Works from the UK and can reach field-based teams on mobile phones
Tsina Endor - Fort Dauphin Office	+261 (0) 34 20 520 40 +261 (0) 33 07 350 72	tsina@seedmadagascar.org	Deputy director of SEED. Works from the Fort Dauphin Office
Conrad Wormald - Fort Dauphin Office	+44 79 61 092419 (WhatsApp) +261 34 709 9876	info@seedmadagascar.org	Volunteer Logistics officer. Works from the Fort Dauphin Office



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MONEY

Money

- The currency in Madagascar is the Malagasy Ariary (MGA).
- Exchange rate is about 5,400 MGA to £1.00 but this fluctuates regularly.
- Malagasy Ariary cannot be purchased outside of Madagascar and cannot be legally exported from the country. When you leave Madagascar, you could be searched, and anything other than the official souvenir limit will be confiscated.

Advice for taking cash

Take cash in Euros, USD dollars or Sterling to exchange on arrival at the airport in Antananarivo. It is best not to take large denomination notes; maximum 50 Euros / £20 / \$50.

If you need cash in an emergency, Western Union can transfer money immediately from your home country and has offices in all major towns in Madagascar including Fort Dauphin (UK tel: 0800 833 833).

Advice for bringing debit and credit cards

Visa Debit cards are the best for drawing out cash from ATMs in Fort Dauphin. **Credit cards are not widely accepted!**

MasterCard and Maestro Cards are accepted at two banks (BNI and BOA), but there are always long queues - consider getting a low commission Visa (Delta, Electron) debit bank card, or a prepaid currency/travel card, to withdraw cash.

Notify your bank that you are travelling to avoid your card/account being frozen, check you can use your bank card in Madagascar and what the fees and limits are for withdrawing money.

There are two ATM's at the airport in Tana from which you can usually withdraw cash (max. 400,000 MGA per withdrawal, multiple withdrawals permitted up to your usual daily limit).

Budgeting

During your stay with us you will only need money for extra trips, drinks, snacks, meals out in town, souvenirs etc. When you arrive in Fort Dauphin you can go to the ATM to take out cash in the local currency (ariary) to spend in Sainte Luce.

In Sainte Luce you may want to pay for optional foods such as lobster and pizza, and there are also the Stitch and Mahapmy shops where you can buy locally made crafts.

You will be able to get by on about £200 - £250 (approx. 290 Euros, \$350 USD) for a 4/6 week volunteering duration, but this will depend on your length of stay and if you plan on doing extra trips or activities in your free time during the scheme.

Do not forget that you will need to take more than £250 if you plan to stay in hotels or travel before or after the scheme. Most hotels and restaurants etc in Madagascar only take cash!

Stitch Sainte Luce



Stitch Sainte Luce is one of SEED's **sustainable livelihoods projects** and provides embroidery training to local women, giving them valuable skills as well as a reliable source of income. The Stitch Cooperative produces high-quality and beautifully hand-crafted bags, purses and accessories (£10-40). The cooperative is next to the campsite, so you will have the opportunity to visit and purchase products. Some examples of products can be found on our [Etsy Store](#).

“

“The experience exceeded all of my expectations and the only thing I would change is that I would’ve loved to stay for longer.”

Charlotte - Volunteer 2018

”



Stitch Sainte
Luce





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PACKING LIST

Packing List

We suggest everyone pack for a 2-4 week duration period, for those on a 4-8 week programme most things (e.g. eco-friendly shampoo, conditioner, soap, washing powder, snacks) can be bought in the market in Fort Dauphin when you return for scheduled breaks.

April to September schemes need to double up on clothes for the colder months (e.g. long trousers, warm fleece, extra socks & two pairs of covered shoes) as it is hard to get wet clothes dry when camping in the bush at this time of year! Consider investing in a few items (pants, t-shirts, socks) in fast-drying technical fabrics.

Documents

ESSENTIAL

Passport	
Insurance details	
Tickets /e-Tickets	
2 copies of passport (photo page and visa page)	
4 passport photos	
Other means of identification (preferably with photo)	
Medical details	
Money (cash and cards)	

Bringing your own tent

Ellipse-shaped dome tents tend to be the best. It must have a good level of waterproofing, a sturdy built-in groundsheet and an insect screen to provide protection from mosquitoes.

We strongly recommend you to take a 2-man tent for each individual. The extra room is much more comfortable, especially if you are volunteering for a long period of time.

You should be looking to spend approximately £80-150 on a tent - any less (unless in a sale) and it is likely to not be good enough quality to stand up to the conditions in Madagascar. A tent repair kit (including duct tape) is also important to consider bringing.

Camping Gear

ESSENTIAL

Waterproof 2-man tent - with ventilation, built in ground sheet and integral insect screens. Tent repair kit (duct tape)	
Camping Mattress and Travel pillow - a self-inflating mat is ideal	
Head Torch (LED) - with plenty of rechargeable batteries, or a solar charged one. A headtorch is essential for the Conservation Programme night walks and general use at night. A good quality head torch will make a big difference in spotting the lemurs and other wildlife at night!	
Padlocks - for your bags during travel, combination locks recommended to avoid losing keys.	
Dry bag - essential for keeping electrical items dry in your day pack	

Tent Hire

You may be able to rent a basic tent from SEED Madagascar. This must be pre-booked using your pre-departure form and you will need to pay the hire charge into our bank account prior to your arrival in Madagascar. Please contact us about prices.



Packing List

Clothes and Shoes

ESSENTIAL

Everyday work clothes - 3 T-shirts, 3 vest tops and 2 pairs of knee length shorts and 1 or 2 pairs of long trousers - these clothes will get snagged and dirty so do not pack anything you would not want to get ruined. (White clothes in particular will get stained!)	
Warm Clothes - it gets cold at night and wet/chilly days occur in the cooler months. Fleece, a jumper/sweater for layering - both can be worn or wear one/wash one! Hooded tops are a great idea for cool cloudless nights in the bush. N.B this depends on the typical weather during your chosen scheme, see page 18 .	
A good quality waterproof jacket and good quality waterproof trousers - suitable for tropical downpours. A poncho can also be handy to place in your day pack for lightweight and quick protection from the rain.	
Plenty of socks - as your feet can get very cold and/or sweaty and will get wet on forest walks April-September	
Swimwear - bikinis are perfectly acceptable in Madagascar	
Sunglasses and Sun hat - wide-brimmed for sun protection very important in the hotter months	
Pair of covered shoes - walking shoes or an old pair of trainers are ideal. You will wear these in the evening or when walking in the forest as sandals will not protect your feet from mosquitoes. Whatever you bring be prepared for them to get dirty!	
Comfortable Sandals/Crocs - These are essential as most of the day surveys and activities include wading through water and swamps. Make sure they are comfy and worn in before bringing them out, and you are happy for them to get wet. Ensure all shoes and boots are cleaned before coming to Madagascar, so as not to bring over any unwanted invasive plant/fungus species.	
Flip flops/sliders - great for walking round camp and for use in the showers, can also be used on some surveys.	

Packing List

Toiletries

ESSENTIAL

Eco-friendly soaps/shampoos/detergent - Please bring where possible eco-friendly products as the water drains straight back into the bush	
Anti-bacterial gel for sanitizing hands and biodegradable wet wipes are also useful for keeping clean.	
Nailbrush - extremely useful for hand washing clothes and scrubbing feet when camping in Sainte Luce	
Towel - lightweight fast-drying travel towel. Face Flannel recommended for bucket showers.	
Insect repellent - see " Malaria Prophylaxis "	
Sunscreen - minimum factor 25. It is hard to get in Madagascar and is of debatable quality.	
Toothbrush & Toothpaste	

**It is a good idea to trim your nails short before coming to Madagascar. Acrylic/gel nails are not advised because they can break and dirt can get underneath. They're pretty, but not practical for conservation work!*

Ladies

ESSENTIAL

Sanitary products - You can get these in Fort Dauphin but not in Sainte Luce	
Sarong (Lambasax in Malagasy) - ESSENTIAL. It is inappropriate to show above the knee when walking through communities, so you will need to bring a sarong or similar to wear over shorts.	
***It is inappropriate to wear tight trousers/shorts or very short shorts. Loose shorts mid-thigh and longer are ideal	

Miscellaneous

ESSENTIAL

Small day pack - for day-to-day use e.g. water bottle/snacks. Waterproof cover for the pack is useful.	
Travel Bag - A rucksack if travelling around after your programme. If with SEED throughout, then a suitcase is fine.	
Mobile Phone - Check with your operator if your phone will work in Madagascar/that you can use a local sim card. Conservation Volunteers in Sainte Luce can access internet and mobile signal most of the time by walking to a 'signal' spot close to the campsite. WhatsApp is the best means for communication.	
Wax / Foam Ear Plugs - these are essential for aiding a good night's sleep	
Large water bottle - 1 litre bottle	

Packing List

Miscellaneous

NICE TO HAVE

One set of nice clothes - for a night out in town	
Travel Mirror	
A good sharp folding knife - or Swiss Army knife is useful with all the gadgets	
Books/Kindle - A good supply for reading and sharing in your spare time	
Camera - (Large capacity memory cards and cable)	
A two-pin round plug adaptor - (for Standard French/European sockets) for charging digital cameras, phones, tablets etc. There is a secure electricity point (220V), and a USB charging port only at Sainte Luce so you will have the opportunity to charge items.	
Portable solar charger / External battery pack - Depending of power availability, conservation volunteers might only be allow to charge essential devices (phones and head torches/rechargeable batteries for head torches) in Sainte Luce. You may wish to bring batteries and external power packs to charge other items if the sun is lacking.	
Tablet - can be useful for entertainment	
Plastic zip-lock bags	
Hammock/chair - if there is space in your bag, this is great to have for relaxing in the shade during the heat of the day	
Hilary Bradt's Guide to Madagascar - or a Lonely Planet Guide. The Bradt Guide is a lot more informative on Madagascar as a whole but the Lonely Planet Guide can be useful if travelling independently after the programme.	
Field guides - of personal interest or relevant to projects you will work on	
Games - a small travel game, a ball, cards, nooks, portable speaker...	
Special Treats - that will travel (e.g. boiled sweets, peanut butter, tea bags or energy bars). Chilli sauce, soy sauce, BBQ sauce, spices to prep up your rice and beans - these can also be bought in the market in Fort Dauphin. Protein powder can be very useful if you are staying for a long period of time. Packing sweets/candy and granola bars can be useful for snacks on the go.	

Medical Packing List

When working in the bush, you will usually be no further than 12 hours away from Fort Dauphin. There are several doctors and a hospital in the town of Fort Dauphin, but medical facilities are basic. For treating serious emergencies, the nearest hospitals are in Réunion Island or South Africa and would involve repatriation under your insurance.

It is sensible to know and have a note of your blood group when you travel.

Our team always carries a first aid kit for emergencies and staff use.

You **MUST** have your own medicines and medical kit - bring a first aid kit and a small medicine kit with essential items listed in the packing list.

Traveller's First Aid Kit and Small Medicine Kit can be bought online from Nomad Travel by UK based volunteers, or from high street pharmacies.

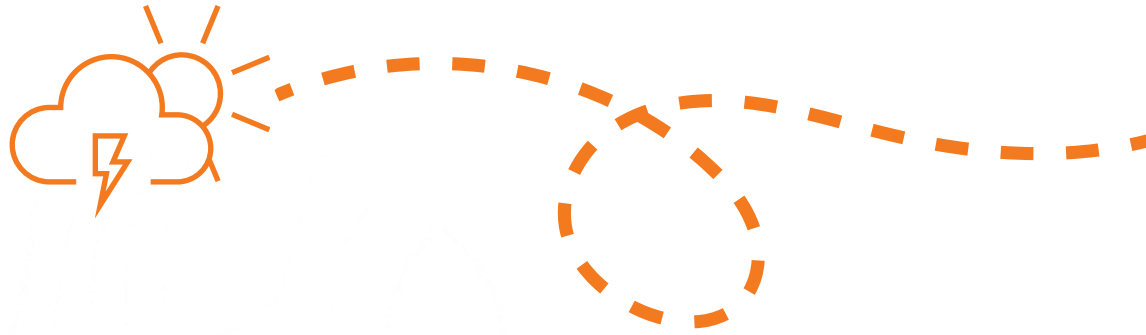
ESSENTIAL

Malaria prophylaxis	
Any branded drugs that you rely on at home	
Antiseptic powder or spray (creams tend to be ineffective in humid conditions in the field)	
Antiseptic gel (used to keep cuts clean)	
Plasters/band aids - spray on plaster is much more effective in the bush	
Gauze pads/dressings - to clean and cover wounds	
A tube of strong antihistamine cream or spray for stings or bites	
Antihistamine tablets for allergic reactions (preferably non-drowsy e.g., Loratadine/Claritin)	
1 tube of anti-fungal cream (Canesten)	
Scissors , nail clippers, tweezers, and safety pins	
Needle - for splinters and sewing rips in clothes	
Oral rehydration sachets*	
Tablets for diarrhoea (Imodium, Loperamide) *	
Pain killers (aspirin and paracetamol)	
EpiPens if necessary (ensure to inform us of any allergies)	

USEFUL

Tea tree oil as an antiseptic	
Flagyl/Metronidazole (for giardia and amoebic stomach infections) *	
Multi-vitamin tablets for an 8-10-week volunteer (the diet in Madagascar maybe more basic than your body is used to)	
Flea powder - useful when they are more prevalent towards the end of the year	
*These items may be bought in Fort Dauphin if needed to top up supplies and are items which are regularly stocked at camp	

If you are an EpiPen carrier, please be aware that EpiPens can become less effective when left out in the sun. Adrenaline is sensitive to light and can be damaged by high or low temperatures.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Accommodation in Fort Dauphin

When in Fort Dauphin, either at the beginning of the scheme or during breaks from the field locations, SEED can book you into one of our partner hotels, or we can assist volunteers in finding their own place to stay. It is important to keep in mind that accommodation here can be quite basic; you will almost always have a bed with bedding, a flushing toilet, cold shower and electricity. Some hotels will have hot showers and wifi, but issues with electrics and water supply in Fort Dauphin are not uncommon! When staying anywhere in Fort Dauphin you are within the community, and we strongly recommend ear plugs and eye masks to help with sleep. Malagasy life starts very early - usually from 4am!

Town Trip Every Four Weeks - Back to Fort Dauphin

All the conservation team, staff and volunteers, return to Ft. Dauphin at the end of every month for a long weekend. These trips occur around week four and week eight of each scheme. During this time volunteers will need to pay to stay within a hotel, costs around £25 per night at a hotel, or at a homestay. During these town trips it is possible for excursions and one popular trip is to Berenty Reserve, which can cost around £150-200, Nahampoana Wildlife Centre or whale watching. For volunteers who are staying on for the longer programme and those coming over week four and eight, please bear in mind to budget for a couple of nights in Ft. Dauphin. If you would like further information about the excursions that can occur over these long weekends, please ask!

Meals and Drinking Water

At camp a team cook prepares 3 simple, tasty meals a day for the duration of your programme. Breakfast options usually include local 'mofo' (crispy fried donut balls), bananas, rice pudding, local honey and cake. Lunch is a filling portion of rice and beans, with a different bean daily. Dinner is normally rice or spaghetti with a vegetable sauce or vegetable curry and meat, fish or eggs are usually on the menu once a week. Safe, treated drinking water is always available. In the bush we collect and treat rainwater as far as possible. When volunteers are based in town there are some excellent local restaurants serving traditional Malagasy food and an abundance of great international standard restaurants.

Free Time in Sainte Luce Campsite

Volunteers often spend free time after work or on the weekends walking to local markets, relaxing with a book or playing cards. Villages usually have small local shops selling soft drinks, bottled water, beer, rum, soap, washing powder and biscuits. At Sainte Luce campsite, free days are also spent swimming and relaxing at the nearby beautiful beach. There is a risk of contracting the Schistosomiasis parasite and there have been occasional crocodile sightings in the past, therefore, follow the guides advice and we advise to undergo tests for schistosomiasis on return home. Other activities include canoeing down the river in the early morning to look for birds, hiking down to the swamp at night to find frogs, or learning how to make embroidered or woven bracelets with some of the local artisans. Placements are designed for you to be independent, with a core volunteer role and some free time during which you are welcome to explore the local area. Please note, you are expected to act responsibly and take care of your own welfare at all times.





Antananarivo Airport

On arriving at the airport, pay for your visa at the kiosk to your right then present your documents to the passport control point for processing. Collect your stamped passport, and your bags and come through customs into the arrivals hall...

You will be immediately pestered by porters and cab drivers in the arrivals hall. Keep a close eye on your luggage and do not let them pick up your bags! Porters will be looking for tips for helping (or helping very little!) with your bags, and you **should tip 5,000 Ariary per person** although they will argue for more if there is a lot of luggage. You may only have 20,000 Ariary notes from the ATM so do not get caught out!

There are two ATM's near international check-in from which you can normally withdraw cash. You can exchange money at bank kiosks to your right as you exit, check for the best rates displayed outside each bureau.

Note: the Kiosks are only open during 9am - 5pm.

Resist making black market money changes at this stage because you do not know the rate and it is easy to make mistakes when you are tired and flustered.

Buy a Yas sim card (500MGA, you will need your passport) and some credit for your phone at the Yas Kiosk (there will be chance to buy this in Fort Dauphin if you do not have time).

For connecting flights straight through to Fort Dauphin (not advised)

The Domestic Flight Departure terminal is next door to the International Arrivals accessed through a passage in the car park. Do not use a porter - trolleys are not allowed down the connecting passage - they will just take you the long way round outside and expect payment.

There is a small café within the internal departure lounge where you will be able to buy a drink and snack.

If you are spending time in Antananarivo

If SEED Madagascar have booked a hotel and transfer for you, look for a taxi driver with a sign with your name or the hotel name on it.

Volunteers with alternative arrangements: A cab into the city normally charges around 80,000 Ariary and can take an hour or more, traffic dependent. Always check prices before you accept a cab.

Do not be pressured, you should get yourself a cab only once you are ready!

Hotels in Antananarivo

SEED Madagascar can organise hotels and airport transfers for you, which you then pay locally. You will have to cover any unpaid hotel bills on rooms we have booked if you do not show up for your booking.

We currently book our volunteers in hotel Les Flots Bleu which is conveniently close (20 min drive) to the airport. Rooms, food and staff are great, all at a very reasonable cost per night, around 90,000 Ariary per person (about £22) including your airport pick up and drop off. You can pay on a visa card for the cost of the hotel. We have a list of recommended hotels in Tana which we can share with you if you wish to book your own.

Antananarivo - Information and Security

Information

Tana can be a really nice city in which to spend a day or two before or after your volunteering programme. Our advice on spending time here is dependent on the security situation and currently we recommend that volunteers do not spend time wandering around the city centre, and instead we advise that you travel there by taxi. If you would like further advice, please do not hesitate to ask.

Check Trip Advisor or Lonely Planet websites for places to visit in Antananarivo - there are several great restaurants and patisseries well worth visiting, serving excellent food of an international standard. You may also be interest in visiting:

Marche Artisanal - a great craft market on the road to the airport (short taxi ride from Les Flots Bleu Hotel) with a wide variety of stalls selling lovely souvenirs

Ambohimanga - World Heritage Site - an ancient royal city and burial site which remains a place of cultural and spiritual significance for many Malagasy

National Park at Perinet (Andasibe-Mantadia) - we recommend a 2-3 day trip to see Madagascar's largest lemur species, the Indri – possible with public transport or organise private transport through your hotel

Security

Antananarivo is a beautiful place, with a fascinating history. It is full of wonderful people but like any big city in a developing country, there is also extreme poverty. Here is some safety advice:

- You must have identification with you at all times! This is required by law, so carry your passport or an official stamped photocopy (obtained in Fort Dauphin) with you at all times. Police can demand to see passports at any time of the day or night, and the penalty for not carrying it, payable in cash directly to the officer, is usually steep.
- Antananarivo has a reputation for more thefts and robberies than many other part of Madagascar. Be aware at all times, try to never wander the streets alone, and always take a Taxi at and after dusk.
- Do not walk around anywhere in Madagascar with expensive smartphones/devices, cameras, watches or gold jewellery on show.
- The Avenue Independence is interesting to visit but has become particularly problematic in recent times and people have their bags snatched on a regular basis. If you do go there, do not take valuables with you.
- Always remember that you are in a very poor city and you will look rich by comparison. Do not make yourself a target for muggers or street children who work as pickpockets.
- On occasion, due to the political situation, people may congregate for political demonstrations and at these times SEED Madagascar may advise you to stay away from the city centre. If this is the case you will be informed before you travel to Madagascar and you will be updated again before you leave Fort Dauphin.
- If you are travelling independently before or after the scheme you are advised to call SEED Madagascar before you go to Antananarivo. You may want to keep updated with the political situation via online news. The same basic rules apply in Fort Dauphin (most of it common sense) but bear this advice in mind wherever you are before the start of the scheme. You will receive an in-depth security briefing as part of your orientation at the start of the scheme.

Enjoy your stay, look around, explore, be safe and you will have a great time!

Travelling from Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin

We strongly advise all volunteers to travel to Fort Dauphin by taking an internal flight with Air Madagascar (also called Air Tsaradia). We do not recommend travelling from Tana to Fort Dauphin by Taxi Brousse (bush taxi) without speaking to us beforehand. There have been security threats along this route recently, and the journey can take 2-3 days of hard travel.

About your Programme

We ask you to be in Fort Dauphin on the **First Day (Day 1)** of your programme; it is okay for you to fly in on this day. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel in town or straight to our office. Then, on Day 1 or 2 you will receive:

- A project orientation which includes information about Madagascar, local customs and the specific development project work you will be involved in
- The programme rules and health and safety guidelines
- Advice on cultural sensitivity when working alongside the village communities and local taboos which are known as “fadys”
- Guidance on local costs, and advice on locking up valuables. Usually, you can store valuables and money which you do not need regular access to in the SEED office in Fort Dauphin.

For all volunteers that join us on Day 1 or a new 8-week scheme, you will also receive the following (although on occasion this may be delivered at the end of your first session in the bush when you return to town):

- A tour around the town, led by your guide, so you can visit banks (ATM's), shops, the pharmacy, find internet cafes, call at the Yas shop to buy a local sim card. You may have time to visit shops where you can buy sweet chilli sauce, Nutella, peanut butter, biscuits and snacks to supplement your diet in the bush, as well as soap, shampoo and washing powder. This may not be possible for 2-week volunteers on a tight schedule.

Volunteers will be travelling and working with Malagasy and international SEED staff, who have the experience and expertise to ensure the group is safe, happy and healthy at all times. There is full support and encouragement to understand and appreciate the very difficult culture and environment that your programme will take you into. Volunteers should be prepared for physical work, adventurous road journeys and long walks to reach remote and beautiful project sites. The work and lifestyle are challenging but incomparably rewarding.

**Whilst in Fort Dauphin SEED Madagascar have security rules that you must follow:
Volunteers arriving prior to joining our programme please ensure you follow advice given below:**

- During daylight hours always walk in groups, preferably with a guide
- After dark, always take a taxi (tuk tuk/bajaj) and travel in a group with a guide, even to go to a nearby restaurant. Taxi fees are around 2,000 - 4,000 MGA per person within Fort Dauphin town after dark
- Always tell your coordinator of your plans. Never walk around after dark - you may attract unwanted attention
- Never go to, or stay on, any beach at dusk or after dark
- Never invite any visitor back to any SEED Madagascar campsite and hotel
- Always carry an endorsed/officiated copy of your passport and visa - SEED Madagascar will organise copies for you on Day 1
- Do not walk around with large bags, obvious cameras, expensive smartphones or large amounts of money
- Adhere to current security precautions at the time of your arrival as advised by SEED Madagascar staff

These rules are in place for your safety. Repeatedly ignoring them may breach your agreement with us and could result in being asked to leave the organisation.



Facilities in Fort Dauphin

Fort Dauphin offers the usual facilities of any small town, check out Trip Advisor!

Banks / ATMs / Pharmacies / Photocopy Shops / Book - Art Shop / Small Supermarkets and souvenir shops

Market - Open every day! You can buy just about anything in the market including fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, other foods, most toiletries, clothes, furniture, pharmaceuticals, woven baskets. The first price they quote is usually the **vazaha** (foreigner!) price, which is generally 2 to 3 times the local price. You may never get the local price!

Bars/Restaurants - These are a wide selection of bars and restaurants you can visit when your team is in Fort Dauphin. There are restaurants serving anything from pizza, to seafood, to traditional Malagasy dishes, and in addition there are numerous roadside stalls selling fried fish, pineapples and cassava fritters.

Medical Facilities - There is a reliable Clinic run by Dr. Jane, a South African doctor, in Fort Dauphin, which is between 1-2 hours from rural camps under normal circumstances. At rural camp there will always be a First Aid trained staff member and transport can be arranged back to town if required.

Free Time in Fort Dauphin

Swimming / Surfing

- Beaches surround Fort Dauphin and they are all worth exploring. Ankoba beach is close to the office and is good for swimming and surfing. The best place for swimming is Libanona beach, 20 minutes' walk from the office, although you may be hassled with people trying to sell their wares.
- Some beaches are well-used defecation sites and the team in Madagascar will ensure you are aware of which ones so avoid swimming or surfing there, as faecal contamination is not unheard of.

Local Excursions

- Nahampoana Reserve - This a great day trip and a fantastic chance to get close up to Shifaka, Ringtail and Brown Collared lemurs. You can organise this yourself for a cost of around 50,000 MGA per person. Speak to SEED staff for help with transport
- St. Luce and Evatra have beautiful beaches. They are both definitely worth a visit if they are not on your schedule.
- Talinjoo Hotel on the edge of town provides a boutique style luxury pool and restaurant for relaxation!

Shopping

- There are a few small shops in town to buy gifts and souvenirs. There is a 'Maki' brand souvenir shop that sells more commercial gifts such as branded t-shirts, sun hats and bags. There will also be people following you around town with their silver bracelets, shell necklaces, vanilla pods, baskets, spears and tablecloths.

Facts about Madagascar

Madagascar is an island located in the Indian Ocean off the coast of southern Africa. It is also the home to 70 lemurs found nowhere else on Earth... Click here to discover: [12 interesting facts about Madagascar](#)

Capital City	Antananarivo ("Tana")
Time	GMT +2 or + 3 hours (depending on day light saving)
Currency	Ariary (MGA)
Human Development Index	World Rank 161/189 -Extreme
Poverty Biodiversity Hotspot	95% endemism (plants and animals unique to Madagascar)
Literacy Rates	20% of the population can read
Infant Mortality	34 children out of every thousand die before the age of five
Population	31 million (<i>World Bank 2025</i>)
Area	587,041 square kilometres
Economy	GDP per capita \$1416
Main Exports	Coffee, seafood, vanilla, sugar, fabrics & minerals
Religion	55% Tribal/Ancestral, 40% Christian, Muslim 5%
Life expectancy	63 years (men), 66 years (women)

Climate - Fort Dauphin (Taolagnaro)

Madagascar is a great place to visit all year round. We need volunteers throughout the year to support our development work, although some activities are seasonal (e.g. tree planting can only be done at certain times of year).

There are seasonal variations in weather and it might be colder in the bush than in town. We cannot predict the exact weather as with climate change the seasons are now very unreliable, but we can make a few suggestions which you should bear in mind when packing. Good waterproofs are always required! See today's weather in Fort Dauphin [here](#).

Malagasy Phrasebook

In Madagascar the local dialect is Malagasy, however many people also speak French. Below is an introduction to Malagasy, with some useful phrases. Different regions have different dialects, in Fort Dauphin the local dialect is Antonosy. If you'd like to learn more Malagasy, we can send you a link to a "Memrise" course which has Malagasy vocab exercises.

Some Useful Expressions

English	Malagasy Official	Antanosy
Hello	Salama (Shalama)	Salama (Shalama)
Thank you	Misaotra	Misaotra
Thank you very much	Misaotra betsaka	Misaotra betsaka
Thank you all	Misatra anareo	Misatra anareo
You're welcome	Tsy misy fisaorana	Tsy misy fisaorana
How are you?	Manao ahoana	Manao anao akory Thanao
Good, thank you	Tsara fa misaotra	Tsara fa misaotra
What's new?	Inona vaovao?	Ino vaovao?
Nothing!	Tsy misy!	Tsy misy!
Yes	Eny	Eka
No	Tsia	Aha
Goodbye	Veloma	Veloma
Goodnight	Soava mandry	Soava mandry
Until tomorrow	Rahampitso e!	Maray
Until we meet again	Mandra pihaona	Maray koa
Bon Voyage	Soava Dia	Soava Dia
I don't understand	Tsy Azoko	Tsy Azoko/ Tsy Mazava
I don't know	Tsy fantantro	Tsy fantako
Excuse me/ please	Azafady	Azafady

Some Useful Expressions

English	Malagasy Official	Antanosy
How much is this?	Hoatrinona ity?	Hotrino tiky?
It's too expensive!	Lafo!	Lafo!
I don't want it, thank you!	Tsy mila/Tsy mi-vidy/Efa nahazo	Tsy mila/Tsy mi-vidy/Efa nahazo
I'm hungry	Noana aho	Resy zaho
I'm not hungry	Tsy noana aho	Tsy resy zaho
Enjoy your meal	Mazotoa misakafo	Mazotoa misakafo
Let's go	Andeha	Ando tsika
Wait	Andraso	Dignaso
Stop!	Ajanony	Azanogno
Congratulations	Arabaina	Arabaina!
What's your name?	Iza noanaranao?	Iza gny agnaranao?
My name...	Anarako....	Agnarako
Please pass...	Azafady, mba omeo	Azafady, mba omeo
I'm sorry (serious)	Mamela ahy	Azafady
Could I have...	Afaka manana ... zaho	Omeo ... zaho azafady
I'm happy to see you	Faly mahita anao aho	Faly mahita anao zaho
I'm happy to meet you	Faly mahala anao aho	Faly mahafatatsy anao zaho
Give my best to	Mampamangy an'	Mampamangy an'
Good luck	Ho ambinin-tsoa	Bonne chance

Numbers

English	Malagasy Official	Antanosy
1	ray	raiky
2	roa	ro/roa
3	telo	telo
4	efatra	efatsy
5	dimy	dimy
6	enia	enina
7	fito	fito
8	valo	valo
9	sivy	SIVy
10	folo	folo
50	Dimam-polo	Dimam-polo
100	zato	zato
1000	arivo	arivo
10,000	Ray alina	Ray aly
1,000,000	ray tapitrisa	ray tapitrisa
Plus	amby	amby
And	sy, ary	sy, ary



Final Note

Things do not always go to plan in Madagascar! Go with an open mind, be prepared to be flexible and keep a positive outlook when plans change at short notice as you will have a happier and more productive experience. Be prepared for long waits in the rain or hot sun for transport that does not turn up, appointments with people who are not there when you arrive, project leaders who get stuck in the bush and run late, and the need to change your agenda to suit circumstances with a big smile on your face and a light-hearted attitude.

We hope this information has answered most of your questions - let us know if you think there are things for us to add or amend - we always appreciate your feedback. On your return, please let us know how it all went by completing the online [Feedback Form](#) that is sent at the end of your trip.

Summary of Travel

Flights	
Fly Into:	Antananarivo - Ivato International Airport (TNR)
Internal Connecting Flight to:	Fort Dauphin / Tolagnaro Airport (FTU) - where you will be picked up
Tsaradia - Internal Flight Baggage Allowance	• Checked in baggage in 20kg (less than the 23kg allowed by international flights) • A second bag whatever size or weight (max 20kg) will cost 40 Euros. • Hand luggage is limited to 1 piece of no more than 5kg
Arrival Day	Fly into Antananarivo one day before your First Day, stay one night. Fly to Fort Dauphin on Day 1 of your programme
Departure Day	Depart Fort Dauphin the day after your placement date (Last Day). Allow for one night stopover in Antananarivo prior to taking an international flight out of Madagascar



Resources

There is an ever-increasing number of books and field guides on Madagascar. Some recommended ones include:

- **H. Bradt and D. Austin (2020) MADAGASCAR – The Bradt Travel Guide.** Bradt Travel Guides
- **H. Bradt, D. Schuurman & N. Garbutt. (2014) BRADT WILDLIFE GUIDE: Madagascar Wildlife, A Visitor's Guide.** Bradt Travel Guides Ltd
- **E. Filou and P. Stiles (2020) LONELY PLANET — MADAGASCAR 9.** Lonely Planet Publications
- **A. Jolly (2015) THANK YOU MADAGASCAR; The Conservation Diaries of Alison Jolly,** Zed Books
- **N. Garbutt (2007) MAMMALS OF MADAGASCAR.** A&C Black
- **S. Goodman & B. Patterson (1997) NATURAL CHANGE AND HUMAN IMPACT IN MADAGASCAR.** Smithsonian Institution Press Washington and London
- **R. Mittermeier et al. (2008) LEMURS OF MADAGASCAR.** Conservation International
- **P. Morris & F. Hawkins (1998) BIRDS OF MADAGASCAR: A Photographic Guide.** Pica Press
- **P. Tyson (2013) THE EIGHTH CONTINENT – Life, death and discovery in the lost world of Madagascar.** William Morrow An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers
- **S. Osterhoudt & M. Dove (2017) VANILLA LANDSCAPES: MEANING, MEMORY, AND THE CULTIVATION OF PLACE IN MADAGASCAR (ADVANCES IN ECONOMIC BOTANY)**

Films and Documentaries:

- Planet Earth II (2016)
- Songs of Madagascar (2016)
- Island of Lemurs: Madagascar (2014)
- David Attenborough's Madagascar (2011)
- Souli (2004) - a Malagasy drama based on Shakespeare's Othello
- Madagascar: Africa's Galapagos" (2010)
- *Our Planet* (2016)