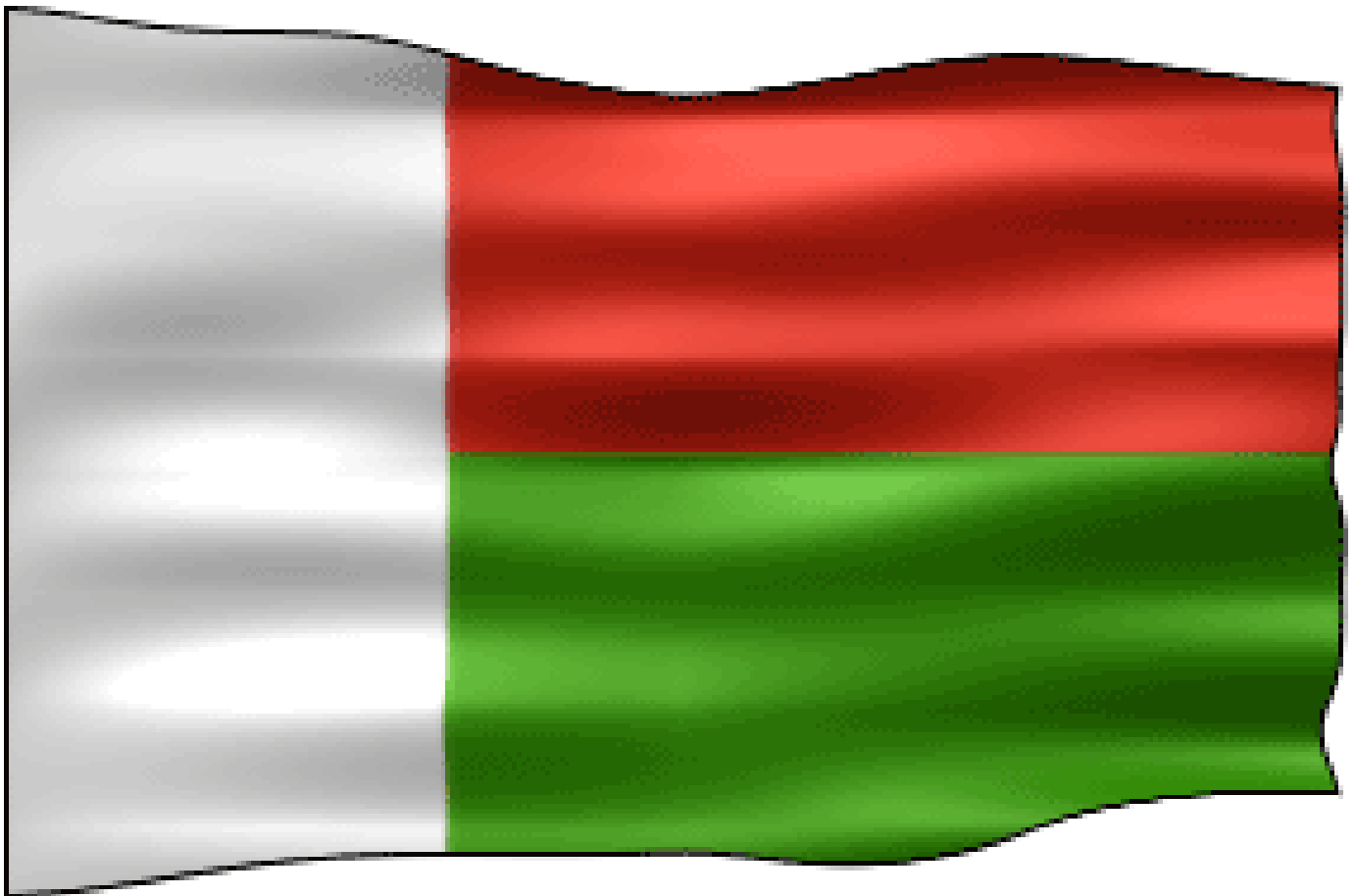


MADAGASCAR

by

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INTRODUCTION

Madagascar is an absolutely gorgeous location for a vacation. In the following pages you will discover many new facts about this country, some good and some not as much. Hey, no place is perfect. Every country has a couple of flaws, whether it is a military dictator or high infant mortality rates or low quality of life or, well the point is that no country is perfect. I know it will be disappointing to discover that, unlike the image of Madagascar that *Dreamworks* may have made you believe, it isn't all just dancing lemurs. But, this doesn't mean Madagascar isn't a good vacation destination. You can see gorgeous landscapes and wildlife (well, at least the wildlife that has not been misplaced due to deforestation). There are many festivals that you can attend (though, I wouldn't recommend the Sambatra; you'll know why soon enough). And, hey, if this book doesn't really make you want to go to Madagascar, there are at least a bunch of pictures of animals on the last page.

Look, Madagascar isn't perfect (good, is probably a reach), but if you are going to vacation in Madagascar, you probably will be staying in a really fancy resort that will allow you to rarely, if ever, see a typical Madagascar resident. So, really, you will just be experiencing all of the other of Madagascar's highlights, such as the unique wildlife, beaches, and vegetation.

Hopefully this book at least gives you some further insight into the unique culture and environment of Madagascar. And, how do I know if this book will or will not make you want to hop on a plane and fly to Madagascar? Maybe you're a person who, instead of focusing on all the problems in a country, focuses on all the positive aspects. If you're not, then at least you can add Madagascar to your list of places to avoid.

If I haven't scared you off by now, I think you're ready to dive into the vast collection of information on Madagascar contained in this book!

GEOGRAPHY

Location:

Madagascar's coordinates are 20°S and 47°E. These coordinates place it in the western Indian Ocean. It is about 435 km to the east of the coastlines of the African nations of South Africa and Mozambique.

Size:

Madagascar has an area of 581,540 square kilometers, which makes the island almost twice the size of the American State of Arizona. Madagascar also has 4,828 km of coastline; it is the fourth largest island in the world.



(2) =



VEGETATION



The principal type of vegetation in Madagascar is forest, and the vegetation mainly consists of very thick evergreen forests (right). One of the most notable types of vegetation is the baobab forests. The baobab tree (left) is the national tree of Madagascar.



The canopies of Madagascar vary quite a bit, height-wise, depending on their elevation. The canopies are 30m high at low elevations, and the canopies are 20-25m high at medium elevations.

Grasses, sedges (flowering plants; bottom-left) and mosses (bottom-middle) dominate all areas. At higher elevations, larger types of vegetation (such as trees) begin to disappear. At high elevation vegetation is shorter and consists mainly of bushes, and at highest elevation vegetation mainly consists of shrubs (bottom-right).

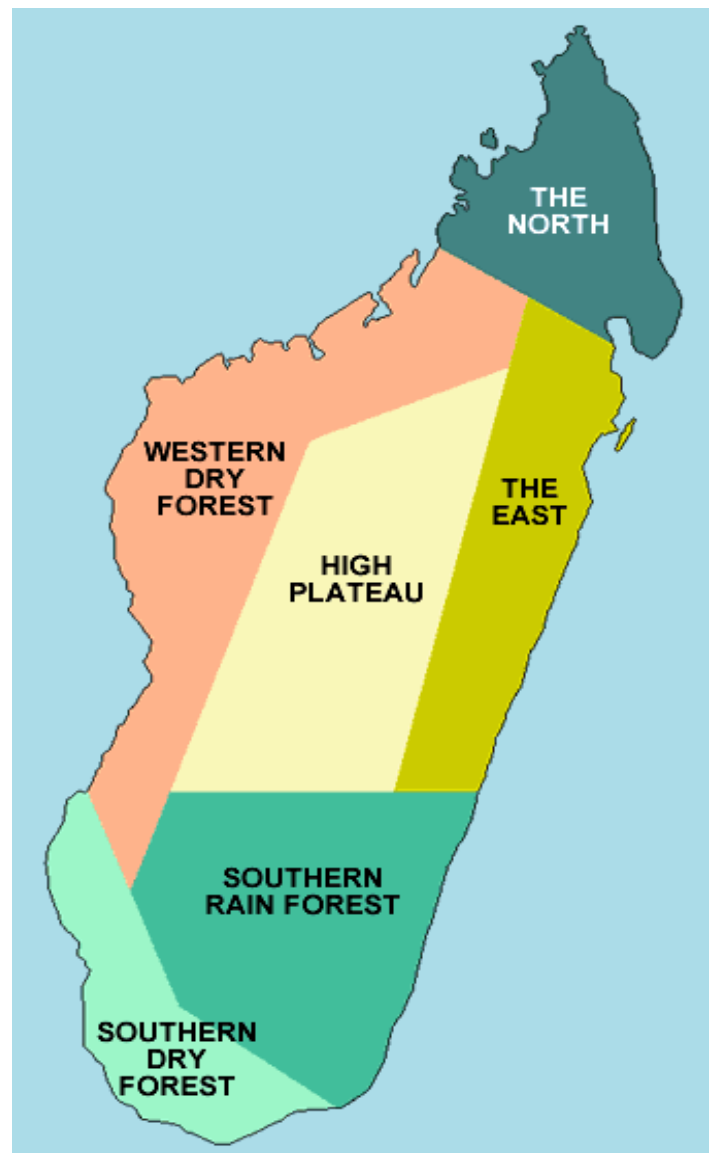


MALAGASY REGIONS AND THEIR CLIMATE

Madagascar, for the most part, has a tropical climate. The climate does vary somewhat between the different regions of Madagascar.

Madagascar is made up of six different regions (right), which include **The North, The West Dry Forest, The High Plateau, The East, The Southern Rainforest** and **The Southern Dry Forest**.

These regions vary on more than just weather. Read on, and you will get a summary of each region.



THE NORTH

Despite the fact that it has quite a small population, there are many different ethnic groups within this region. The low population is mostly due to the fact that it is isolated from the rest of Madagascar, because of the Tsaratanana mountain range that surrounds it.



THE WEST DRY FOREST

It is very hot and dry year round in this region, and is home to many beaches that are very popular among tourists. This region mostly consists of deciduous forests (forest made up of trees that lose their leaves at some point during the year).



THE HIGH PLATEAU

This region is the home to Madagascar's intellectual and political elite members of society, who live for the most part in the capital Antananarivo. It has a temperate climate year round, which makes the perfect condition for growing crops. This is why the region consists of many rice fields, and agriculture is its major industry.



THE EAST

This region has a tropical climate, which allows many expensive crops such as coffee beans, cloves, vanilla and tropical fruits to be harvested. Beach loving tourists will certainly love this region for it's many popular beaches. Along with The North, this region is home to the last untouched rainforest in Madagascar, called Maroantsetra.



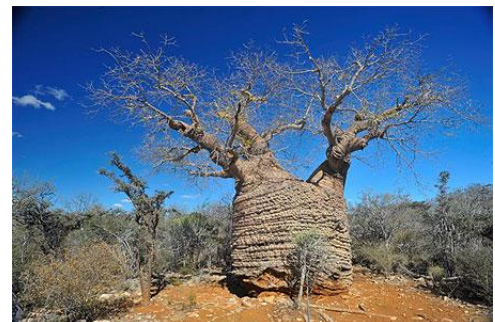
THE SOUTHERN RAINFOREST

The region receives abundant amounts of rainfall, which nourish the dense rainforests within the region. It also hosts long sandy beaches.



THE SOUTHERN DRY FOREST

This region receives hardly any rain at all. It contains an area called "The Grand Sud", which is isolated and has very little vegetation. Sapphires are mined in this region, and are of unusually high quality.



SEASONS

Madagascar has two distinct seasons, which are the dry and the rainy season. The dry season lasts from May to November. There is very little rainfall during this season. The temperatures range from about 5-25⁰Celsius in the highlands, with the temperature dropping drastically in the evening. The temperature ranges from 20-28⁰Celsius in the coastal areas.

The rainy season is from December to April, and Madagascar receives between up to 340 inches of rainfall during this time. The temperatures range from about 23-27⁰Celsius in the highlands, and range from about 27-32⁰Celsius around the coast.

CLIMATE QUIZ! To figure out which season best suits you, answer the following questions by circling A or B.

When rain falls, what do you do?

- A. Find a way to dance in the rain. B. Wait for the storm to pass.

How do you feel about humidity?

- A. I love it. B. I despise it.

At what temperature range, are you most comfortable with?

- A. As long as the temperature doesn't drop below 20⁰C, I'm fine.
B. I'm fine with the temperature dropping below 10⁰C, as long as it never drops below 0⁰C.

If you mostly circled A's, you should plan to visit Madagascar between December and April, because you would be most comfortable during the rainy season.

If you mostly circled B's, you should book your vacation for between May and November, because the dry season will definitely make you feel the most comfortable.

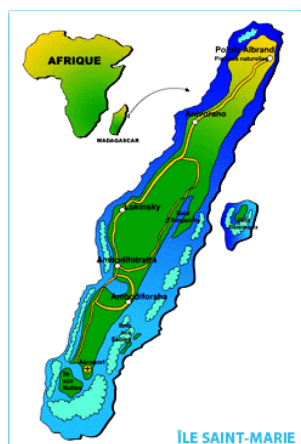
LANDFORMS

In the center of the island, there are many mountains and plateaus, and much of the coast consists of sandy beaches. The tallest mountain in Madagascar has an elevation of 2876m above sea level, and is called Maromokotro (right).



In addition to the main island, the country has control over Ile Sainte-Marie (see map on bottom left), which is an island off of the east coast that used to be a favourite base for pirates. To the left, is an image of one of the islands pirate cemeteries.

There is also an island off the northwest coast called Nosy Be (see map on bottom right). It was formed by an underwater volcano and now hosts the busiest resort in Madagascar, such as the one pictured to the right.



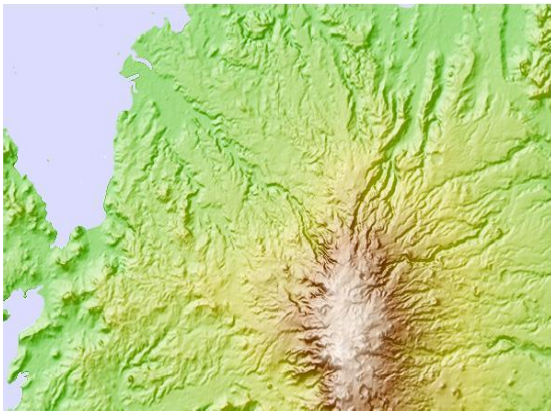
Madagascar has many lakes and rivers. Some of the lakes include the salt lake Lake Tsimanampetsotsa (located in southwestern Madagascar; pictured below left), Lake Kinkony, which is located in northwestern Madagascar and is an important wetland for birds; pictured below middle), a volcanic lake called Tridriva (which is located in southwest center Madagascar), and, lastly, there is Madagascar's largest lake which is named Lake Alaotra (pictured below right, it and its surrounding wetlands cover 7223km² and the lake itself covers 900km²).



As displayed in the image below, there are many rivers flowing in all directions out of the central highlands toward the coast into the Indian Ocean and the Mozambique Strait.



There are three active volcanoes in Madagascar. In northern Madagascar, there is Ambre-Bobaomby (see the image below left, for a satellite view), which rises 1475 meters above sea level. There is Ankaizina, which is also in the north and reaches 2878 metres above sea level. There is the Itasy Volcanic Field in the centre of the island, which produces many unusual landforms, such as the Analavory Geyser (below right). Finally, the island of Nosy Be was formed by an underwater volcano (bottom center).



The majority of Madagascar's waterfalls are located in the highlands, and the waterfalls near the capital are used as a source of hydroelectric power. Madagascar's one major waterfall called Mandraka (right) is located close to the capital, which is in the highlands, toward the eastern side of the island.



AGRICULTURE

Most of the Madagascar economy is based on farming, despite how mountainous the island is and how many areas receive very little rainfall. Only about 5% of the land is used to cultivate crops. The most important crops grown in Madagascar include sugar cane, tobacco, bananas and cotton.



Cultivation of rice paddies is also very important, because rice is a core aspect of the diet for residents of Madagascar (right).



Cloves, coffee, peanuts and peppers are also grown in Madagascar, and Madagascar produces 75% of the world's vanilla (left).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Madagascar's natural resources mainly involves harvesting lumber (right), but they also mine important substances such as graphite, coal, chromite, bauxite, semi precious stones (like the sapphire below right), salt, and mica. See below right, for an image of a sapphire mine. There is also fishing around the coast.



FRESH WATER

Madagascar has two main natural sources of fresh water: the rivers that flow through the high plateaus in central Madagascar to the coast and the many fresh water lakes.



URBAN/RURAL AND MAJOR CITIES

Madagascar has a population of approximately 20 million people, and 70% of them live in rural areas or small villages. This means that only 30% of the population lives in urban areas.

Madagascar's major cities include...

...it's capital, Antananarivo (right), pictured below, is located near the north-south center of the island, inland from the east coast, and has a population of about 900,000.



...Toamasina (left), located on the east coast, has a population of about 179,000.



...Fianarantsoa (right), located in south central Madagascar, has a population of about 150,000.



...Mahajanga (left), located on the northwest coast, has a population of about 135,000.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



Madagascar's natural environment has been damaged quite a bit, due to the actions of humans. One of the major environmental problems is that most of Madagascar's rainforest have been cut down and burned (see above). This deforestation is also one of the culprits for a lot of the soil used for cultivation being lost due to erosion (below). The dry climate in many regions is also partially the cause, as well.



The natural environment of Madagascar does influence the people's lives quite a bit. Most of the people in Madagascar need to use whatever is available on the island close by which means they mostly grow rice and herd cattle. Most of the cattle are called zebus, like the ones pictured to the right.



People also survive by growing fruits and vegetables and, if they are near water, by fishing (left). People of Madagascar also need to find most of their building materials nearby which means their houses are mostly made up of logs and grass.

The people have to worry about occasional destructive cyclones, such as cyclone Giovanna, which struck the island in February 2012 (right). There is also the threat of droughts and infestations of locusts that destroy crops.



DANGERS

WARNING!

Like many other countries, Madagascar has a few things you should look out for. Please read the following list of dangers, to assure that your vacation goes smoothly and safely.

1. Surprisingly, Madagascar has almost no dangerous animals, except for the Nile crocodile (top right). Some floated onto the island from Africa before rhinoceroses, apes and lions even evolved. It is the most dangerous animal in Madagascar.



2. There are bombardier beetles that shoot hydrochloric acid (middle right).



3. There are centipedes that bite and give people a burning hot red sore.

4. There are very poisonous scorpions; their bite can even kill you (bottom right).



5. There are prickly pears (below), as well as vines that are covered in needles which will penetrate the skin of anyone who comes into contact with them.



HISTORY

On August 10, 1500, the Portuguese sea captain Diogo Dias(right) sighted Madagascar, making him the first European to do so.

In 1800, the Kingdom of Imerina which was located in the high plateau and had the Antananarivo (Madagascar's current capital) as



its capital began to take over the other regions of the island. The rulers of the resulting

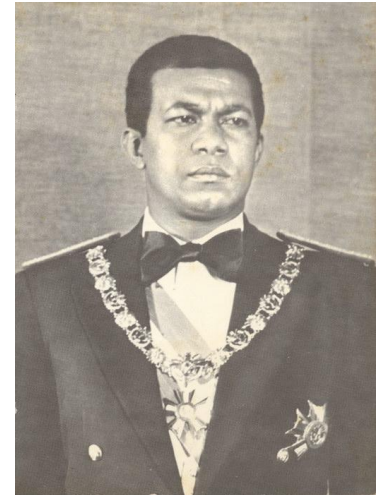
Kingdom of Madagascar developed ties with Britain over the next more than 100 years, helping Madagascar establish schools, government institutions, and infrastructure. The last Queen of Imerina was Ranavalona III (left). The dynasty of Imerina rulers ended after France declared Madagascara protectorate in 1890 and then dismissed

Ranavalona III, declaring Madagascar a colony in February of 1896.

In June of 1960, Madagascar declared its independence from France. The first president was Philibert Tsiranana (standing to the left in the picture on the right).



In December of 1975, Madagascar adopted a new constitution, in which it became known as the Democratic Republic of Madagascar. Under the Presidency of Didier Ratsiraka (right), the government formed closer ties with the communist U.S.S.R. and took control of many industries. The country ended up in debt and suffered food shortages and price increases. After re-elected in 1989, there was suspicion that the election was fraudulent, resulting in strikes and demonstrations (below).



In 1992 Madagascar adopted a new constitution in which there was a more democratic system established and Albert Zafy (left) replaced Ratsiraka as President in March of 1993.

In 2009, widespread rioting forced the democratically elected government from office (below left). The mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina (below right), now rules as President of Madagascar's High Transitional Authority. It is a government that does not have the recognition from the international community.



GOVERNMENT

November 2010 was the beginning of the fourth republic of Madagascar after the country voted in favour of a new Constitution. Currently, President Andry Rajoelina draws his support from the Madagascar military. The constitution allows for Rajoelina, as the leader of the Highest Transitional Authority, to remain in power indefinitely, until he decides to call an election. Democratic Presidential and Parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held in Madagascar in November 2012. Madagascar is not currently democratic, because it is ruled by a military-supported dictatorship.

Will the election actually happen?

Recently, Madagascar has planned to hold a number of elections, but each time has decided to push them back a few months. Originally, the November 2012 election was going to be held in 2009, but then it was postponed until 2010, then to 2011, and then again to May 2012. This does look bad for the Madagascar government, but everyone has tried to delay doing something they really didn't want to do at some point. Andry Rajoelina must be going through something like that at the moment, since he probably prefers to remain the country's ruler.



HUMAN RIGHTS

One of the major human rights offenses in Madagascar is that the people of Madagascar are being ruled without their democratic consent by the military-backed dictator, Andry Rajoelina. There are also many other human rights offenses in Madagascar, which include: unlawful killings and assaults by security forces (bottom left), harsh prison conditions that sometimes result in prisoner deaths (see an image of Antanimora Prison, left), arbitrary



arrests and detentions of citizens, long waits for criminal trials to be held, censorship of media, intimidation of journalists with arrests and violence, restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, corruption by government officials

without threat of punishment, discrimination and violence against women, trafficking of women and children, and forced child labor (bottom right).



CULTURE

Ethnic groups:

The population of Madagascar is called Malagasy. There are two subgroups – “Highlanders”: Merina, Sihanaka, and Betsileo of the High Plateau and the “Coastal Dwellers”, consisting of more than 15 tribal groups. Below, a Betsileo man is presented in the image to the left and a boy member of the Coastal Vezo tribe. The ruling group in Madagascar has traditionally been the Merina. A Merina “woman in bereavement” appeared on a 1910 stamp (bottom right).



The Highlanders are mainly of Austronesian and Polynesian origin (Indonesia/Malaysia), whereas “Coastal Dwellers” are mainly of African origin. The descendants of almost all of the population of Madagascar settled there after traveling by sea, either across the Mozambique Strait or the Indian Ocean. The various members of ethnic groupings in Madagascar maintain their own cultural practices within the larger society.



SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

It isn't official, but the Highlanders generally have a higher status than the Coastal Dwellers, in that they have more wealth, access to education and more political power, overall.

Traditional social structure is hierarchical – families are ranked precisely according to superiority or inferiority, as are individuals within families according to age, descent, and gender.

To the right is an image of a Malagasy family.



Status comes from the ancestors in the form of *hasina* or “life-giving power”. Royal people were thought have more *hasina* than non-royal people, when monarchy controlled the island. In families, elders have more *hasina* than younger members because of their closeness to the dead, not only their greater experience. Males have more *hasina* than females. Each member of many Malagasy households eats meals in turn, oldest first and on until the youngest eats last.

Madagascar society remains divided into three unequal social groups according to one's family background – nobles at the top, commoners in the middle, and slaves at the bottom. Nobles and commoner families have specific links to the historic royal family of Madagascar that define their social roles. There is mainly segregation between these groups and people with slave origins are expected to do menial tasks and to be submissive to members of the other groups.

RELIGIONS

About 55% of Madagasy people hold traditional religious beliefs held by their tribe. These beliefs emphasize the close links between the living and the dead. A main component of these religions involve acceptance that there is a supreme God, Zahanary, (or Creator) or Andriamanitra (or Sweet Lord). The dead, and especially dead relatives, are thought to mediate between God and the living and are sometimes called, “gods on earth”. Ancestors provide the life force and are honoured for creating Malagasy customs and ways of life. Malagasy people view themselves as expressions of the dead and so the dead must be respected.

The connection between living and dead is centered on a family's burial tomb (an example is in the image to the right).

Building and maintenance of the tomb can be more expensive than that of the family's actual house.



About 40% of Madagascar residents are Christians, with equal numbers belonging to Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. Approximately 5% of Malagasy people are Muslim. Christian and Muslim citizens often continue older traditions in their ritual handling of dead loved ones and their keeping and maintenance of family tombs (an image of a Christian tomb is presented in the image below).



LANGUGES

The official languages are Standard Malagasy, French, and English. A significant number of residents also speak Arabic, Chinese, Réunion Creole French, or Morisyen. French is a common language, because of Madagascar's historical association with France, as represented by the combination of the two country's flags in the pin at the bottom left and the picture of French Foreign Legion soldiers at the bottom right.



VISUAL ART

Hand-woven clothes, called “lamba”, are used as ceremonial gifts and are made from wild silkworm cocoons. Traditionally, the lamba cloths were used as funeral shrouds for the deceased. Textiles are a popular artistic medium, in the form of colourful woven baskets, blankets, and room dividers, in addition to clothing.



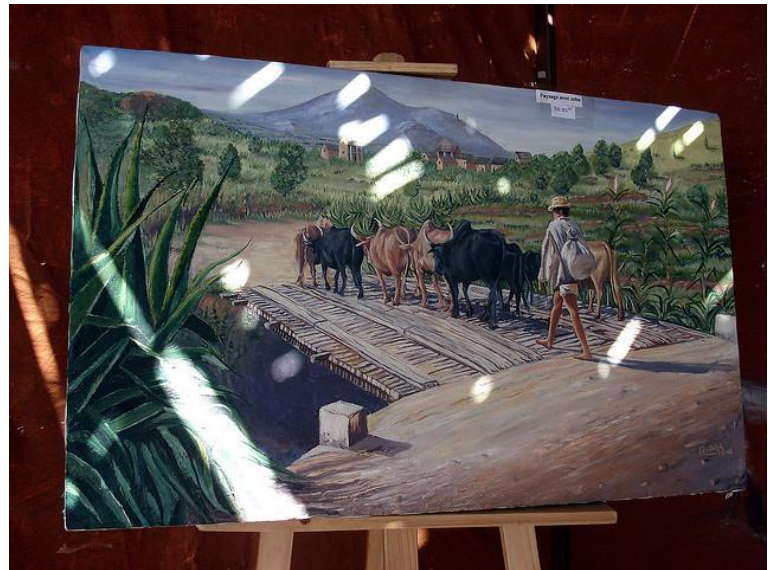
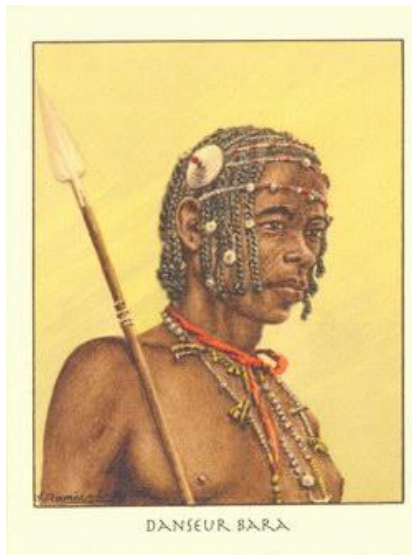
For instance, other than lamba clothes and shrouds, master weavers have for many centuries used dyed raffia cloth, called laimasaka (“cooked tapestry”), to create vividly decorated clothing, tents, and room dividers (left).

Face painting is an important aspect of Madagascar art forms. Many women put yellow paste on their face in elaborate designs (right). It is made from wood and



is meant to keep skin healthy and safe from sun and mosquitoes.

More recently, western influence has led to an emergence of painting in Madagascar. The painting scene has received criticism for being dominated by French influences and the lack of much indigenous quality to the works of Madagascar paintings. Two examples of Malagasy painting can be seen below.



MUSIC

Traditional instruments include *mandolin* and *kabosy*, which are variations on the guitar and inspired by early Arab and European seafarers who visited the island. The *djembe* – rope-tuned, skin-covered drum (top of next page) - originated from mainland Africa and the *valiha*– a bamboo tube string instrument played by a man in the picture to the right – is the national instrument of Madagascar, but is derived from a similar instrument brought by Austronesian settlers.





ROPE-TUNED DJEMBES

One of the oldest instruments on the island is the *sodina*— and end-blown flute (right) — which probably derives from European visitors to the island starting in the 18th century. The *conch shell* is an ancient instrument brought by early Austronesian settlers (bottom left) — features a lateral blowhole and is reserved for ritual or spiritual uses.



Regions differ in their musical tradition — in the High Plateau, *valiha* and more subdued vocal styles are most common; in the south, there is an a capella vocal tradition that is similar to the choral harmony common in South Africa.

Modern Malagasy musical styles, such as *salegy* (a fast-paced form of dance music dominated by ringing electric guitars, accordion, and call-and-response multi-person vocals, which often also includes bass, a drum kit, djembe, and shakers) or *tsapika* (an up-tempo form of dance music that is even more rapid than *salegy* that has been adapted to electric guitar, bass guitar, and a drum kit and multiple female vocalists) have evolved from traditional styles with incorporation of electric guitar, bass, drums, and synthesizers. Many western styles of music have gained popularity in Madagascar, such as rock, gospel, jazz, reggae, hip-hop, and folk rock. Below, *salegy* group is pictured in the image to the left and a *tsarika* performer is pictured to the right.



Eastern and western coasts practice *tromba* during musical performances (below), in which listeners enter a trance state. Music is thought to bring listeners and performers in greater contact with the ancestors.



DANCE

Dancing forms occur in important social events, such as weddings, exhumations, inaugurations, and religious ceremonies. *Tromba or Salamanga* are religious-magical dances in which performers put themselves into a trance state. Fampithana (see the drawing to the right) are dances to assure social relationships.

Hira-gasy is a form of operatic theatre that includes dancing (see the image at the bottom). Dances can be used to present criticism of leadership in communities for onlookers or to translate traditional histories and myths. The most common arrangement of dances is circular. Among some groups, dancing is segregated based on gender and age. Many dances are

meant to imitate waves to represent people's relationship to nature. In some cases, dances are designed to imitate mythical birds by moving fingers and hands

delicately. In other cases, foot patterns and small jumps or shoulder movements dominate.



CELEBRATIONS

Hira Gasy (right) is mainly celebrated by communities in the High Plateau region and originally meant as a thanksgiving to the King. It is a daylong spectacle of music, dance, and competitive speeches.



The Famadihana (below), related to returning of the RAZANA (the bones of the dead) to their burial tomb 2-7 years after a person's death, using a lamba shroud. Families save all year to fund the celebration, which consists of animal sacrifices, as well as song and dance performances performed by the family and friends of the deceased. The celebration is meant to guide the dead to God so that they may be reborn.



The Fitampoha (right) is ritual among the Sakalava people along the western edge of the island that involves bathing the relics of the ancient Sakalava kings in the Tsiribihinariver.



The Sambatra

(right) occurs every 7 years among the Antambahoaka tribe of the island (who inhabit part of the southeastern coast), in which they perform a ritual of collective



circumcision of the boys born in the seven previous years. It is meant as an initiation rite, permitting the boy to transition from infancy to boyhood. Boys are to engage in reflection on their family's origins during a month-long preparation for the ceremony.

Tsagantsaina is mainly celebrated by tribes from the northern region of the country, the festival is held every 5 years and was traditionally meant to honour the royal family. There are song and dance performances, including the “dance of the stick” or *manimpa*. There are also animal sacrifices and prayers in honour of the ancient kings of the island.

Malagasy people also celebrate western holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, since many residents of the island were converted to Christianity through their contact with French and British settlers.

Public Holidays:

New Year's Day, March 29th (Commemoration of the 1947 Rebellion against the French colonists/A.K.A. Martyr's Day), Easter Monday, Labor Day (May 1st), Ascension Day (May 17th), Independence Day (June 26 to celebrate independence from France), Assumption (August 1st), All Saints' Day (November 1st), and Christmas Day.

EDUCATION

As a French colony, Madagascar's education system expanded from larger cities into more remote and rural communities. The early French schools taught basic literacy and the French language. Good students became civil administrators in colonial government. After Independence (Madagascar's First Republic from 1960 – 1975), the school system continued to focus on French influences. In the Second Republic of Madagascar (1975 – 1992), the emphasis was on indoctrinating children into the socialist ideas of the country's dictator, Admiral Didier Ratsiraka, which were influenced by close ties with the Soviet Union.

During the Third Republic (1992 – 2010), Madagascar received greater funding from Western nations that allowed them to reform their school system with guidance from the United Nations. At that time, Madagascar engaged in a massive effort to increase school quality, access to schools, and to hire thousands of more teachers. The goal of this new system was to shift toward more student-centered instruction based around work with groups of other students. The picture below shows a school that was built in 2007.



By 2009, Madagascar was on track to have all primary-aged children enrolled in school. There remain challenges: low student achievement, poor teacher quality, shortage of materials, access to education above the primary level, and poor student health. Since 2009, the termination of the Third Republic has eliminated all but emergency foreign aid, which had done much harm to the education system.

WESTERN CULTURAL INFLUENCES



Since old Madagascar traditions and cultural practices must compete with influences from wealthier nations.

Christianity and other aspects of Western culture have grown in influence, beginning with the arrival of British sailors in the 1700s, through the colonization

of Madagascar by the French in 1896, and up to recent efforts by United Nations organizations to help Madagascar governments

modernize various aspects of the society. Residents of Madagascar have been strongly influenced by Western movies (viewed at cinemas like the one in Antananarivo pictured above), music, and dancing. For example, instead of traditional tribal dancing and celebrations, many Madagascar young adults go to drink and dance at nightclubs (right), just as Canadians or Americans do.



HOUSES/ARCHITECTURE

The earliest settlers to the island established the architectural style that they brought with them from southern Borneo, which is an island that is part of in present-day Indonesia. Most houses are rectangular, rather than round, and have a steep, peaked roof supported by a central pillar.



Often, houses are built on pile foundations. The most common materials are



available plant materials, such as bamboo. A lack of wood on the island means that use of wood for houses is rare. Sometimes sticks or cobs form part of the structure. Stone is mainly used only for building tombs. Some examples of housing structures in Madagascar are pictured on this page. In cities,

European influences have resulted in a heavy reliance on brick, concrete, glass, and iron construction and the design of Western-style residential streets in cities (at the bottom left is a picture of a street in Antananarivo).



STYLES OF DRESS

The “lamba” is an important feature of traditional Madagascar dress. It means “cloth”, but refers specifically to two matching pieces of colourful fabric. One piece goes around the waist or chest and the other goes around the head or shoulders. The lamba is most often worn by women (right).



Men typically wear lamba during ceremonies (left), but older men in rural areas may wear them

every day. Otherwise, men mainly wear Western styles of clothing, such as jeans, t-shirts, and shorts (bottom). For both men and women, these imported clothing styles have increasingly replaced traditional clothing styles in Madagascar.



FOOD

Most meals use rice as the base (called *vary*), often topped with an accompaniment (*laoka*), which might be zebu meat, pork, fish, or shrimp. Sauces tend to include ingredients, such as ginger, onion, garlic, tomato, vanilla, salt, and curry powder. The two images below provide examples.



If not rice, some people use maize, cassava melon, or curds from fermented zebu milk as the meal's base. Tropical and other fruits are common for meals and desserts – e.g., apples, lemons, pumpkins, watermelon, oranges, cherries, strawberries, coconut, mango, pineapple, avocado, and passion fruit.

Popular drinks include coffee, fruit juices, teas, and alcoholic drinks, like rum, wine, and beer. Cakes and fritters, called *mofo* (literally, “bread”), are commonly sold in city kiosks. The most common is *mofo gasy* (“Malagasy Bread”), shown in the image to the right. It is made from



sweetened rice flour poured into circular moulds and cooked over charcoal. *Mofo* is a popular breakfast food.

GAME/LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Popular sports in Madagascar include tennis, football, rugby, and basketball. Madagascar has contributed swimmers, tennis players, boxers, and alpine skiers to participate in the Olympics. Zarah Razafimahatratra participates in tennis competitions for Madagascar (right).



Although he is Canadian, Mathieu Razanakolona (below) competed in downhill skiing for Madagascar in the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.



The beaches provide plenty of opportunities to participate in various activities, such as swimming, sunbathing, and boating. The coast, as well as lakes and rivers inland, provide ample opportunities for fishing.

ECONOMY

Types of Work/Pay:

About 69% of the population lives below the poverty line threshold of \$1 per day.

Agriculture employs over 80% of Malagasy adults, such as the rice workers to the right, and 15% work in mining (like the



child being lowered into a sapphire mine below right) and manufacturing. Smaller numbers of people work in the tourism industry, working in hotels, restaurants, and serving as guides. Most jobs are labour-intensive and pay poorly. Often people are earning barely enough to keep themselves and their family members alive.

About 500,000 children work in difficult jobs, as servants in households and in mines. Families need the money and children can be paid less by employers, providing motives for parents and employers to persist in forcing children into the workforce.



Working Conditions:

Laws establish a minimum wage of \$25.30 per month, which is not enough to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and his or her family, especially in cities. Employers often do not pay the legal minimum wage. The law also sets the standard workweek as 40 hours in non-agricultural jobs and 42.5 hours in agricultural jobs. 86% of employees work more than the legal workweek and overtime hours are commonly unrecorded and unpaid. The legal limit of overtime hours is 20, but employers often violate this law when they need workers to meet production targets. There is no legal opportunity for workers to avoid workplace dangers without risk of losing their job.

UNIT OF MONEY

The Malagasy Ariary (right) is the unit of money in Madagascar. One US Dollar = about 2,000 Malagasy Ariary).



QUALITY OF LIFE

The average life Expectancy in Madagascar is 66.2 Years. Infant Mortality is rather high with 55.7 per 1000 children not surviving to age 5 and 41 per 1,000 infants not surviving to their first birthday. Giving birth to children is also a major threat to mortality; 440 mothers per 100,000 live births die during childbirth. Only 43.9% of live births are attended by a skilled health professional. Even if a person survives into adulthood in Madagascar, there is not much opportunity for doing anything other than struggling to get enough to eat and providing for a family. Even learning to read is not a certainty for people who live there. Only 75% of males and 62.5% of females are literate.



These two Malagasy people are lucky to be alive.



AIDS claims about 1,700 lives per year, and malaria results in 20 deaths per 100,000 people per year. It is a problem that only just over half of Madagascar citizens are immunized against harmful diseases. For example, only 64% of infants receive Immunization against measles. There are only .161 qualified physicians and 0.3 hospital beds per 1,000 citizens.

Sadly, only 29% of the rural citizens have access to water treatment facilities (71% have access in urban areas). Much disease results from poor sanitation facilities. Only 10% of rural residents and 15% of urban residents have access to sewage treatment facilities. As a result of inadequate access to food, 25% of the population is undernourished, 36.8% of children are moderately or severely underweight (12.6% severely), and most people in the cities live in cramped and filthy slums (78%).

HEALTH PROBLEMS

High malnutrition rates, high infant and maternal mortality rates, high risk of infectious diseases, and low access to health care means that Madagascar rates fairly low in the quality of citizens' health. Mosquitoes (right), ticks (bottom left), and contaminated water (like the canal the children are playing in to the bottom right) contribute to the spread of deadly diseases in Madagascar.



TECHNOLOGY

Madagascar is not a very technologically advanced nation. Only about 180,000 land telephones are in use in Madagascar (.83 per 100 inhabitants), but there are over 8 million mobile phone subscribers (39.79 per 100 inhabitants). There are only about 100,000 personal computers in Madagascar (.58 per 100 inhabitants) and only about 350,000 Internet Users (1.7 per 100 inhabitants). Madagascar has 27 airports with paved runways, like Antananarivo Airport (right) and 57 airports without. There are 854 kms of railways, 7,500 kms of paved roads ~58,000 kms of unpaved roads, and 600 kms of navigable rivers and canals. Madagascar has 4 major seaports: Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), Mahajanga, Toamasina, and Toliara (Tulear).



Most residents of Madagascar, being very poor, do not have as easy access to modern technologies as people in Canada. Most travel is on foot or riding bicycles (bottom left). People often will travel farther distances by taking a bus (bottom right). Not many people own cars or even have much chance to drive one, unless driving is part of their job.



Common medical treatments in Canada may be very hard to access in Madagascar, the lack of clean water can mean long walks to a well, and sewage systems in cities and in the countryside are often poor quality. Production of high-technology products only results in about \$10,000,000 worth of exports per year, most of which consists of electrical machinery.



Although there are many problems in Madagascar and the nation is not very rich or advanced, the island does have many fascinating animals that are not easy to find in other places, such as large snakes (left), mongooses (below left), fossa (below right), geckos (bottom left) and lemurs (bottom right).

