



Flights advice

FACTSHEET

It is important to begin organising your travel in plenty of time. There are four areas to consider:

- Getting to Antananarivo and on to Toliara to join the ReefDoctor expedition
- Sorting out money and financial arrangements
- Considering safety and security in Madagascar
- Considering what communications you want

Depending on your travel plans you may also want to know about spending time in Antananarivo and Toliara.

Flights

Getting to Madagascar means flying to Antananarivo, its capital, or Tana as it is more commonly known. From Tana you will need to travel on to Toliara – please note that Toliara may also be written as Tulear (the French spelling) and Toliary (the old Malagasy spelling).

Unless you plan to travel in Madagascar prior to joining us, we suggest you fly to Toliara on your inbound journey. Although it is expensive, it is much quicker – it takes between 18 and 24 hours in a taxi-brousse.

Instead, we advise exploring Madagascar on your return trip to Tana when you can easily break the journey – in fact we highly recommend it to get a flavour for how the country changes from the southern coast to the inland highlands.

Arranging your flight via ReefDoctor

Although ReefDoctor cannot directly arrange your flight, we have an affiliation with WEXAS Travel who can organise travel at a very good price. WEXAS are experienced in sending our staff and volunteers to Madagascar and also offer excellent travel insurance.

To make your travel arrangements through WEXAS Travel contact Alex Crosby direct on:

Tel: +44 (0)20 7838 5861 / 3315

E-mail: alex.crosby@wexas.com

Arranging your own travel

If you are making your own travel arrangements you will need to get a flight to Tana, and then an internal flight to Toliara. There are normally two flights a day between Tana and Toliara, but you will need to stay overnight in Tana if your inbound flight arrives in the evening (there are no night flights to Toliara).

The main airlines flying in to Madagascar are Air Madagascar, Air France, Corsair and Air Mauritius. Arriving via Mauritius or Johannesburg can work out cheaper. For your reference the airport code for Tana is TNR and TLE for Toliara.

If you are flying to Toliara or want to fly within Madagascar, note that if your international flight is with Air Madagascar, you get a 25% discount on all internal flights, which can make it a cheaper option.

Luggage

However you arrange your travel be sure to check your luggage allowance – usually 23kg on international flights – and if you need more to accommodate your dive gear ask for a sports equipment allowance, making sure that any allowance you are given extends to your internal flights in Madagascar.

Not all airlines offer a sports allowance, and some charge a fee so explore all the options. Air France charges around €40 and asks that sports equipment is packed in a separate bag.

New security measures

Due to the threat of terrorist attack, airports and airlines are bringing in new security measures and controls. The UK Department for Transport has produced a factsheet on what you can and can't take on board a commercial airliner in your carry on bags. Visit our website to download it.

For your checked bags we recommend that you secure them all with a padlock. If you are concerned about security personnel opening your bags, check our website's travel advice links for guidance on choosing locks.

Remember that Madagascar's baggage handling facilities are basic – your bags will come in for rough treatment so make sure your luggage is sturdy and reliable.

Note: *The import and export of drugs, foodstuffs (including fruit), shell items, some wood items and protected plants and animals is illegal.*



Money advice

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Cash

Getting Malagasy money is impossible outside Madagascar. Instead you will need to change money when you arrive at Tana airport. There are Bureau de Change in the arrivals hall where you can do this, and one is always open for flights arriving at night.

Change enough money to cover getting to Toliara (the airport rates are reasonable). We advise everyone never to change more than £100 / €150 / \$200 at any one time, which would be more than enough to do this.

If you are coming from the UK, bring some pounds as it is possible for you to change these in Tana, and the pound is strong at the moment. However, in Toliara it is difficult to change pounds and we recommend euros for the majority of your cash needs.

US dollars can be changed in Tana and Toliara, but the banks do not like large (\$100) or small (less than \$10) denomination notes and offer a poorer rate for dirty or creased notes – try to get new ones if you can.

Traveller's cheques

You should bring half of your money as traveller's cheques, which can be changed at banks in Toliara. But note that you **MUST** bring the receipt stub for the traveller's cheques with you and present it with the cheque when you wish to cash it – if you have no receipt stub they will not be accepted.

Credit cards

Credit cards can be used in many shops in Tana, but fewer in Toliara where transactions are also often treated as cash advances so be aware of any additional fees your credit card company may charge for cash advances made overseas.

Visa cards are the most popular credit card and can be used in shops and ATMs in both Tana and Toliara, although fewer shops in Toliara accept credit cards.

MasterCard is only accepted in a limited number of places in Tana, and while some banks may be able to arrange cash withdrawals in Toliara, most will not. Only bring it for emergency use.

Money Transfers

Should you need to arrange an emergency cash transfer there is a Western Union office in the bank that ReefDoctor regularly uses in Toliara.

Malagasy currency

The Malagasy currency system is currently changing. The old colonial currency, the Malagasy franc or FMG, is being replaced by the Ariary, which was the name of the original Malagasy currency prior to French colonisation.

The old FMG denomination is written on all new Ariary notes but care should be taken when paying for anything as you could be fooled into paying a lot more (or a lot less) than is necessary. The Ariary is exactly one fifth of the FMG value.

The table below gives a quick guide to the currency denominations and their approximate values:

Ariary		FMG		£ / US\$ / €
100	=	500	=	2 p / 5 cents / 3 cents
200	=	1,000	=	5 p / 10 cents / 7 cents
500	=	2,500	=	12 p / 25 cents / 17 cents
1,000	=	5,000	=	25 p / 50 cents / 35 cents
2,000	=	10,000	=	50 p / \$1 / 70 cents
5,000	=	25,000	=	£1.25 / \$2.50 / € 1.75
10,000	=	50,000	=	£2.50 / \$5 / € 3.50

Exchange rates based on July 2006 figures.

The final switch over from FMG to Ariary is due to take place in January 2007.

In Tana most shops, hotels and restaurants quote their prices in Ariary already, although street markets may not. In Toliara people often still quote prices in FMG.

Always check the currency you are being quoted when agreeing prices, especially with taxis, pousse-pousse drivers and street vendors where it is not always clear which currency they are using.

After January 2007, you should also look out for old FMG notes. The larger denomination notes are rare these days and most have been withdrawn from circulation but you occasionally still get FMG notes in the smaller denominations. These have no Ariary amounts on them and show the FMG value in large numbers. If you are in doubt look for an Ariary AND an FMG value – if it doesn't have both it is an FMG note and you should not accept it, although they make an interesting souvenir.



Security and safety

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Madagascar is a safe country compared to mainland Africa and the people are very friendly and approachable. However you should be aware that this is a very poor country and you will be seen as wealthy by the people who live here.

As with all developing and developed cities and towns there is a risk associated with walking around at night, however the danger is low in Madagascar.

Here are a few general tips to avoid awkward or potentially dangerous situations:

- Most hotels have safes and these should be used to keep your valuables.
- Make two copies of your passport and other important documents. Leave one at home and keep the other separate from the documents.
- If you explore the capital, have the address of your hotel written down so that you can give to a taxi driver to get you home.
- Keep your wallet and passport close to your person (i.e. in a money pouch or money belt) as like most big cities Tana has pick pockets.
- Try not to flash your money around, put your large notes in one place and keep lower denominations where they are easily accessible.
- If you are overwhelmed by street sellers and do not wish to buy anything, smile and say no thank you (non merci) avoiding eye contact.
- Never raise your voice in anger unless it is absolutely essential or an emergency. To gain attention say "aide-moi" (help me) or "gendarme" (police).
- Look left and right twice before crossing roads - traffic and people come from all angles and vehicles have right of way.
- Carry identification at all times. The police can and do stop vehicles and pedestrians to check papers, particularly late at night. In Toliara we will arrange to an authorised copy of your passport for this purpose.
- Certain parts of the country and many practices are covered by fady (taboos) and may be forbidden to foreigners. These tend to be in remote areas but if you intend to travel get prior advice locally or from your tour operator.

When using local transport always:

- Agree a price for the journey before entering a taxi, pousse-pousse or taxi brousse – check the currency too.
- Try to ensure the driver of the taxi or pousse-pousse knows your destination – this is not always the case even when they say they do!
- Try and ensure that you know, as far as possible, the directions to your destination e.g. the correct name and the area of town it is in.
- Always try to have the correct money to hand, rather than pulling out a lot of money and then trying to find the correct amount – taxis and pousse-pousses frequently have no change!

ReefDoctor has been working in Madagascar for over five years staying in Tana, Toliara and Ifaty, and many of our staff and volunteers have travelled in the country before leaving. In that time we have had no serious incidents.

If you do have any problems while you are travelling in Madagascar, or while you are with us, make sure that you have the contact details for your home embassy or consulate in Madagascar.

To find them visit our web site resource centre and look the Visa section under Registering your travel plans.

Please remember that Madagascar is a very poor country. Facilities and vehicles are often in an impoverished condition and breakdowns are common – try not to get frustrated by it, the Malagasy people don't.

In comparison to many of the people that you will meet in Madagascar, you are rich and may be over charged on occasion.

Try to remember how small the amounts really are, and while we do not suggest that you allow yourself to be over charged – bargaining is part of Malagasy life – in many instances you are unlikely to get the prices that locals do.



Communications advice

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Internet

There are many Internet cafes in Tana and Toliara but none in Ifaty where you'll be staying (most volunteers travel to Toliara on Friday or Saturday for internet).

Prices are reasonable although connection speeds can vary (around 200 Ariary per minute). In Toliara ReefDoctor has a discounted rate at Prilimite Ganivala, which has a reasonably reliable connection and is easy to find in the centre of town.

When you arrive in Toliara our staff will show you where it and other internet cafes are.

Telephones

Malagasy telephone numbers consist of a two digit area code followed by a five digit number, both of which must be dialled even if you are making a local call.

When passing on Malagasy landline numbers to friends and family at home, they will need to dial:

- 00 - the international dialing prefix
- 261 - the Madagascar country code
- 20 – the prefix for all Malagasy landlines (not required for calls between Madagascar landlines)
- and the phone number you are using.

For mobile numbers you do not need the 20 or the leading 0 of the mobile number:

032 077 9954 becomes 00 261 32 077 9954.

International calls can be made from hotels and public phone boxes but they are expensive - £2 / min from phone boxes and more in most hotels (though you can get family and friends to call you back in a hotel).

To use public phones you need to buy phone cards, which are available at La Poste, Agence d'Accueil Telecom and at some shops and hotels.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are a better option for calling home and mean you can also communicate with friends in Madagascar. Malagasy SIM cards are around 15,000 Ariary (£4) but make sure you get an Orange card as other networks have no coverage in Ifaty.

For your mobile to accept a Malagasy SIM card it must be unlocked. This can be done at home, or in Madagascar with newer phone models. Alternatively you can purchase a phone and SIM card package for

around 250 - 300,000 Ariary (less than £15) when you get here.

Malagasy phones and SIM cards are pay-as-you-go services, and credit can be topped up easily using charge cards, which range from 2,000 – 40,000 Ariary and are available from many shops in towns (and in Ifaty). International calls on a Malagasy SIM card cost around 2,000 Ariary per minute.

You can also send and receive text messages cheaply but they are unreliable – do not be surprised if friends or family say they did not get your message, or you do not get theirs.

If you use your mobile to call Malagasy landlines you'll need to add 020 to the front of the seven digit number.

Post

While you are with us it is possible to have post delivered to you c/o the IH.SM in Toliara. However, be aware that it can take anything up to 3-4 months for mail to reach Toliara, so if you're joining us on a six week visit ...

Letters and postcards are normally quicker and arrive within 2-3 weeks, but packages can take a long time and have been known to never arrive!

If you are asking people to post things to you while you are with us ensure that packages are kept small and do not include expensive items. If you need something posted to you urgently, use a courier service.

Letters and postcards that you send can suffer the same delays, but will usually arrive at their destination before you leave us. We do not recommend sending packages or anything of value through the post.

During your stay with ReefDoctor your address is:

ReefDoctor
c/o Institut Halieutique et des Sciences Marines
Université de Toliara
Route du Port
Mahavatse 1
B.P. 141
Toliara (601)
Madagascar



Antananarivo guide

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The capital of Madagascar, Antananarivo or Tana as it is more often known, is a very beautiful city situated on the highland plateau in the north central area of Madagascar. It is 1400 feet above sea level so the climate is more temperate than the arid south. In the winter months it is cold during the evenings and early mornings so make sure you have a fleece or jumper if you are joining us in the Malagasy winter (June – August).

Tana is spread over a large area with very few high-rise buildings compared to many capital cities. The rich live amongst the poor and some living situations are dire, as with many African cities.

When you arrive at Tana airport in the Ivato district, your first port of call will be the Bureau de Change in the arrivals hall to get some Malagasy currency. In this short distance you will be approached by a great many taxi drivers.

If you are flying directly on to Toliara simply say no thank-you (non merci), if you are staying overnight or longer you will need a taxi. All taxi drivers carry an official identity card that includes the rates for journeys. Ask to see the card if you are unsure.

Tana domestic airport

Tana domestic airport is next door to the international airport, you simply turn left outside and walk across. If you take a porter in the international airport they will carry your baggage for you, but will expect to be paid for this service – usually around 500 Ariary. If you don't want a porter say no thank-you.

If you have a long wait between flights you'll need to stay with your bags until you can check-in for your flight as there are no left luggage services.

Overnight stops

If you are only staying in Tana overnight it is easier to stay in a hotel in Ivato, as central Tana is about 45 minutes from the airport, which can become over an hour in the rush hour – between 7-9am and 5-7pm.

A taxi from the airport to the nearby hotels below (all around 10 minutes by taxi) should cost you around 10,000 Ariary (prices go up at night). For accommodation near the Airport (rates may vary seasonally) try:

Motel au transit - Tel: 00 261 20 22 44581 (room with hot water, 13,000 Ariary per night)

Hotel Ivato - Tel: 00 261 20 22 74305 (rooms from 21,000 Ariary per night, recommended by most past staff / volunteers)

Mahavelo - Tel: 00 261 20 22 00464 (rooms from 35,000 Ariary per night)

Staying in Tana

If you plan to stay longer in Tana you will want to arrange a hotel in the centre of town. A taxi to the centre of town from the airport costs around 20,000 Ariary (prices go up at night).

There are a number of good hotels in Tana that are frequented by other travelers, scientists and students (again, rates may vary seasonally), try:

Hotel Isoraka

Tel: 00 261 20 22 35581 / 65854

Hotel Sakamanga

Tel: 00 261 20 22 35809

Hotel Shanghai

Tel: 00 261 20 22 31472

Hotel Mellis

Tel: 00 261 20 22 23425 / 62535 / 66070

Hotel Gregoir

Tel: 00 261 20 22 22266

These hotels range from 30,000 - 80,000 Ariary (£8 - 20 per night).

If you want to splash out on a bit of luxury (perhaps on your return journey - finances permitting) try:

Hotel du Louvre

Tel: 00 261 20 22 39000

Hotel Royal Palissandre

Tel: 00 261 20 22 32614/15/21 (on the hill overlooking the town centre - very beautiful and the food is amazing)

Plaza Hotel

Tel: 00 261 20 22 66260 / 21865

These hotels will cost around £50 - £70 per night but they are extremely classy and the equivalent standards in Europe would cost up to a £300 a night.



Travel in Toliara and Ifaty

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For information on flights to Toliara see our Flights advice sheet. If you are planning to travel to Toliara by another method, the following should give some idea of travel times and prices.

Hired vehicles

It is possible to hire 4x4s or smaller vehicles for taking trips around Madagascar or for travelling between Toliara and Tana. The cost of hiring a 4x4 divided between four people is cheaper than going by plane from Toliara to Tana and it's a great opportunity to see the countryside. While you may wish to drive yourself, strict regulations for car hire mean that in most instances your vehicle will come with a driver.

Madabus

Madabus is a private company offering mini-bus transport between Madagascar's major cities. It is more expensive than public taxi-brousses – and quicker and more comfortable – but is still significantly cheaper than flying. The buses have air conditioning and comfortable reclining seats.

Buses from Tana to Toliara depart on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from Toliara to Tana on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The full journey takes about 18 hours and costs about £35 / € 50 / US\$61 / 124,976 Ariary. Buses leave at around 6:00am.

If you prefer to break up the journey and see more of Madagascar on your trip you can stop at Antsirabe, Aboitra, Fianarantsoa, Ambalavao and Ranohira along the way at no extra cost.

Due to bad road conditions services between Tana and Toliara do not run in the months of February and March, but you should check services if you are arriving in December or January as weather conditions can result in cancelled services at this time of year.

To find out more or to make a reservation visit www.madabus.com

Public taxi-brousse

If you prefer a more rough and ready ride you can choose to take one of the public taxi-brousses. These come in many different shapes and sizes from mini-bus vans (typical on the Tana to Toliara route) to large camion trucks or small flatbed trucks (usually for shorter routes or on less well travelled roads).

While it is significantly cheaper than Madabus – a third of the price on the Tana to Toliara trip – the vehicles are less comfortable and the possibility of breakdowns increases. It also takes closer to 24 hours to make the trip from Tana to Toliara in one go - our record is 52 hours so be prepared and always give yourself plenty of time if you have a travel deadline.

On the plus side, public taxi-brousses are more frequent (at least one a day and often more) than Madabus services and if used to make a long journey in short legs offer the chance to meet local people and get a better feel for Malagasy life. For long trips you can book your place in advance and it shouldn't get too crowded – only the available number of seats are sold.

To travel to Toliara on a public taxi-brousse you'll need to leave Tana from the Southern Taxi-brousse station at Anosibe, which is a bus or taxi ride from the centre of town. If you are doing the journey in reverse arriving at Anosibe does mean running the gauntlet of taxi drivers wanting your fare to the centre of town.

Arriving in Toliara

When you arrive in Toliara ReefDoctor covers the cost of one night at the Sax'Aphone Hotel. Please let us know when you expect to arrive so that we can make a reservation and meet you (for more about Sax'Aphone see our Toliara guide sheet).

If you arrive in Toliara by plane we will meet you at the airport and bring you to Sax'Aphone by taxi. If you are coming by Madabus or a public taxi-brousse we will try to ensure that you are met by a member of staff but since these often arrive late at night and can suffer delays we may not be able to.

If we are unable to meet you, you should get a taxi and ask to go to Sax'Aphone in the Besakoa district. It should cost approx. 4,000 Ariary (20,000 FMG) at night (see Travel in Toliara and Ifaty for more information on taxi prices).

If you do experience delays in any part of your trip, please let us know on +261 32 077 9954 so that we can make sure you have a room when you arrive.



Travel in Toliara and Ifaty

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Transport in Toliara

Once in Toliara your main transport options are taxis and pousse-pousses.

Taxis

Toliara taxis are usually old Renaults. They have a fixed price for any journey and the price list is usually on the sun visor of the front passenger seat. Ask to see it if you are unsure.

Normal daytime rates are 3,000 Ariary (15,000 FMG) per journey but prices do change due to the fluctuating price of fuel. Remember, if you ask the taxi to stop at any point along the way you will have to pay for two journeys.

In general you are safe in taxis and drivers are helpful if you're not sure exactly where you are going, although often they are not sure either! For travelling at night we recommend that you use taxis.

Taxis can also be hired for day trips in the Toliara region, although they may not be any more reliable than taxi-brousses when it comes to breakdowns!

Pousse-pousses

Pousse-pousses are a very old form of transportation similar to the rickshaws of India. All Madagascar's towns and cities (except Tana) have pousse-pousses though their size, design and carrying capacity differ regionally, with Toliara pousse-pousses being the biggest (able to take two people comfortably and 200kg in weight) and the most colourful.

Though the concept of this form of transport may seem imperialistic and demeaning to the guys pulling you along, the local population use them as it is the cheapest way to get around.

Also, the pousse-pousse drivers rent their pousse-pousses and if they do not make enough money to pay the rent they forfeit them and are unable to make a living. This rapidly becomes obvious as they are continually asking you to hire them with shouts of 'pousse' whenever you pass by.

The standard rate for a trip of about 15 minutes duration is 500 Ariary (2,500 FMG) or double for a longer ride. However, most drivers will ask you – a foreigner or vazaha – for more. While we ask you not to over pay for rides (drivers have been known to ask for more than the cost of a taxi), think about giving a small

caddeaux (tip) if the driver agrees to take you at this price – it is only about 15 pence.

We advise against taking pousse-pousses at night unless there is a group of you travelling together.

Pousse-pousse drivers want your custom and will often say they know your destination when they do not – try to make sure you have a general idea of where you are going so that at least they are not pulling you in the wrong direction!

Joining us in Ifaty

Ifaty is about 27km north of Toliara and you will be joined by a member of the ReefDoctor team on your first trip to the ReefDoctor camp.

Taxi-brousses to Ifaty leave Anketa in the morning at around 9am and are usually flat-bed trucks with seats down the sides of the back. Bags are carried on the top of the taxi-brousse so remember to keep valuables and money in a smaller bag that you can keep with you.

There are few restrictions on the number of passengers so you may find a child on your knee and a chicken under your seat – they make the Tana to Toliara taxi-brousses seem like luxury!

The journey usually takes about an hour but there is always the possibility of a breakdown, which can extend that by anything up to six hours!

The taxi-brousse to Ifaty costs 2,000 Ariary (10,000 FMG) and you may be asked to pay extra for bags carried on top if you have a lot. You will probably also be asked for a caddeaux by the people that load your bags – it is up to you but if you do give, try to make sure you don't over tip – 100 or 200 Ariary is fine, depending on the number of bags you have.

You should also be aware that Ifaty is a district and includes the tourist village of Mangili just north of us. At the taxi-brousse station most locals assume that a foreigner will be going to Mangili, even if you say Ifaty. Taxi-brousses to Mangili take a slightly different route and while it is possible to walk from the main road, it is a long way if you have luggage with you. On your first visit we will show you the taxi-brousses that are local to us.



Toliara guide

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When you arrive in Toliara you will be met by a member of the ReefDoctor team who will help you accomplish some of your first tasks. You will need to:

Change money – we recommend no more than £100 / €150 / US\$ 200. When you get to Ifaty, ReefDoctor staff will give you access to the ReefDoctor safe.

Photocopy your passport – all tourists MUST carry identification at all times. You will need to get a copy of your passport with visa and entry stamp, authorised by the Mayor of Toliara. When this is done we suggest you laminate it. ReefDoctor staff will help you with this, but you will need to pay for the photocopy and laminating.

Contact home – let your friends and family know you have arrived. Once in Ifaty it can be difficult to contact home so do it while you are in Toliara by phone or e-mail. If you want to buy a phone or local SIM card now is the time to do it, we will show you where.

Orientation – you will be shown the internet café, pharmacies, the main markets, the police station and local shops where you can buy toiletries, batteries, films etc. and you should have time to explore a little as well. ReefDoctor will cover your first night's accommodation at the Sax'Aphone Hotel, but any additional nights and your food and drink are your own responsibility.

Accommodation in Toliara

ReefDoctor has an arrangement with Sax'Aphone Hotel and will pay for one night there when you arrive.

Sax'Aphone is a short walk from the centre of town in the Besakoa district. There is a choice of bungalows with two beds or double rooms in the house. Our discounted prices of 15-20,000 Ariary per night, make it good value. It has an excellent restaurant and piano bar in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. Tel: 94 44088

L'Escapade is close to the taxi-brousse station for Tana and has a restaurant with a good range of food, a view of the town and a pool table. Tel: 94 41182

Chez Alain is next to L'Escapade in its own enclave away from the hustle and bustle with bungalows in a well-kept garden, a restaurant and a bar. Tel: 94 41527

Chez Lala is a near Mahavatse away from the centre. It is cheap and simple with a restaurant. Tel: 94 43417

Central Hotel is in the middle of town and has large airy rooms. It is reasonably priced but the area can be risky at night. There is no restaurant but breakfast can be delivered to your door. Tel. 94 42884

Night life and restaurants

Toliara's nightlife centres on restaurants and bars and Zaza club. Like the restaurants mentioned above, the following can all be reached by taxi or pousse-pousse.

Zaza club has an entrance fee of around 2,000 Ariary and drinks are more than in bars and restaurants, but it provides music and dancing all night all week.

Le Jardin is a simple Italian restaurant in a garden setting with good-sized portions for the price.

Zanzibar is known for the best pizzas in Toliara.

La Maison is a more modern restaurant with an excellent pizza menu and live music on Saturdays.

La Bernique is an excellent meeting place with great cocktails, food and tapas.

Vassilis Greek restaurant has excellent food. Prices are good and staff commendable.

A two course meal with a drink at most of these restaurants is about 15,000 Ariary (£4 / €6 / \$8).

Chez Zaza is a Malagasy restaurant with excellent and cheap local dishes prepared and served fast.

Dragon rouge is another local restaurant in the town centre with a good and reasonably priced menu.

There are also food stalls in Toliara (and Ifaty) selling small snacks throughout the day and into the early evening. Prices are cheap and the food is tasty, but your stomach may not thank you!

Shops

Toliara's shops are fully stocked with many products from the west. It is possible to buy brand name toiletries as well as cheaper products and the stores carry most food items. Pharmacies sell standard medicines and local remedies for traveller's tummy are very effective.

The markets have a range of souvenirs from baskets and hats to musical instruments and carvings. There is a shell market, which also sells everything from table linen to the ubiquitous silver bangles, please don't encourage the trade in shells.

There are also a great many street sellers who approach you with everything from vanilla and fruit to souvenirs. They can be persistent so politely say no thank-you if you don't want to buy anything.

Clothes are reasonably cheap in Madagascar although you may not be up to wearing some Malagasy fashions!