



Antananarivo – Ile St. Marie

THE CHALLENGE – AN OVERVIEW

**'I don't think a person can be indifferent to Madagascar.
It delights and offends, grabs and holds on.'** *A travellers perspective*



This trailblazing itinerary takes you on an 8 day cycle of approximately 600km, to the north east of this amazing island. We start the challenge in the outskirts of the capital city of Antananarivo and cycle from the golden highlands to the paradisaical island of Île St Marie. The route offers terrific and varied biking with some fantastic down hills, tough climbs and long flat stretches along the coast. The terrain is an exciting combination of tarmac, dusty red-earth off-road trails, and a few potholes thrown in for good measure!

Our first few days take us up and down across a patchwork of shimmering emerald and brown paddy fields and highland villages, where little Malagasy huts built from bricks of bright terracotta, are strewn along the roadside and contented Malagasy folk go about their simple daily business. On the way to Mantsoa we take a short detour to pass by Ambohimalaza and

the remarkable cemetery of La Nécropole Royale. The Malagasy have many cultures, traditions and 'fady' (local taboos). Second burial and exhumation is the focus of their beliefs.

The lush green rainforests fill the air with moisture and delicious smells and after some challenging biking we arrive at the beautiful Andisibe Nature Reserve where you will have the opportunity to take an evening and early morning walk amongst the indigenous nocturnal indri lemurs, chameleons galore and many other species of unique flora and fauna.

After the tranquillity of the jungle, and to bring you back to third world civilization, on our fourth day of biking we cycle to Madagascar's second largest town and major port, Toamasina. This is a dusty place, alive with music, markets and lots of traffic and you'll be able to find an internet café for the last time before our route becomes more remote.

With more ups and downs, plantations of banana, mango, papaya and lychee lead us towards the Indian Ocean with the spectacular endemic Ravinala palm and its huge hand-like fronds becoming the extraordinary feature of the skyline. Then after an exhilarating and flatter ride along the coast we finally reach the colourful and bustling little market port of Soanierano Ivongo where we board a specially chartered boat to take us across to Île St Marie – here we will cycle off-road the length of this tiny and unspoilt island, finishing on the glorious white sands of Pointe de Cocotiers where whales can be seen swimming in the clear azure seas. What an idyllic finale to this long and testing journey!

Île St Marie - Photo by Hilary Bradt - Travel Writer.



Our accommodation will mainly be in simple Malagasy cabin-style hotels, full of character and often by a lakeside or on the sea shore with perhaps the occasional necessity for just a few of us to sleep under the stars. (This all depends upon current building programs being completed by 2005!) The weather should be dry and warm, cool at night in the highlands, with the possibility of showers in the forests. This is an extremely poor country and whilst the Malagasy are incredibly hospitable and kind, the facilities and infra-structure are very third-world. However, we should always have electricity, 'though power-cuts can happen, and running water, 'though not at times hot. Telephone signals are poor, and sometimes non-existent, but throughout the event Classic Tours will ensure that in case of emergency we are in communication at all times.

All in all, a magical but tough cycle ride, and one that will justly deserve all the sponsorship that you raise for RIED. Whilst very challenging on all counts, it will be enormously rewarding and a huge adventure that will leave you with very special memories, not only of your personal mission but also of this unique and beautiful island and it's truly enchanting people.

Supported by



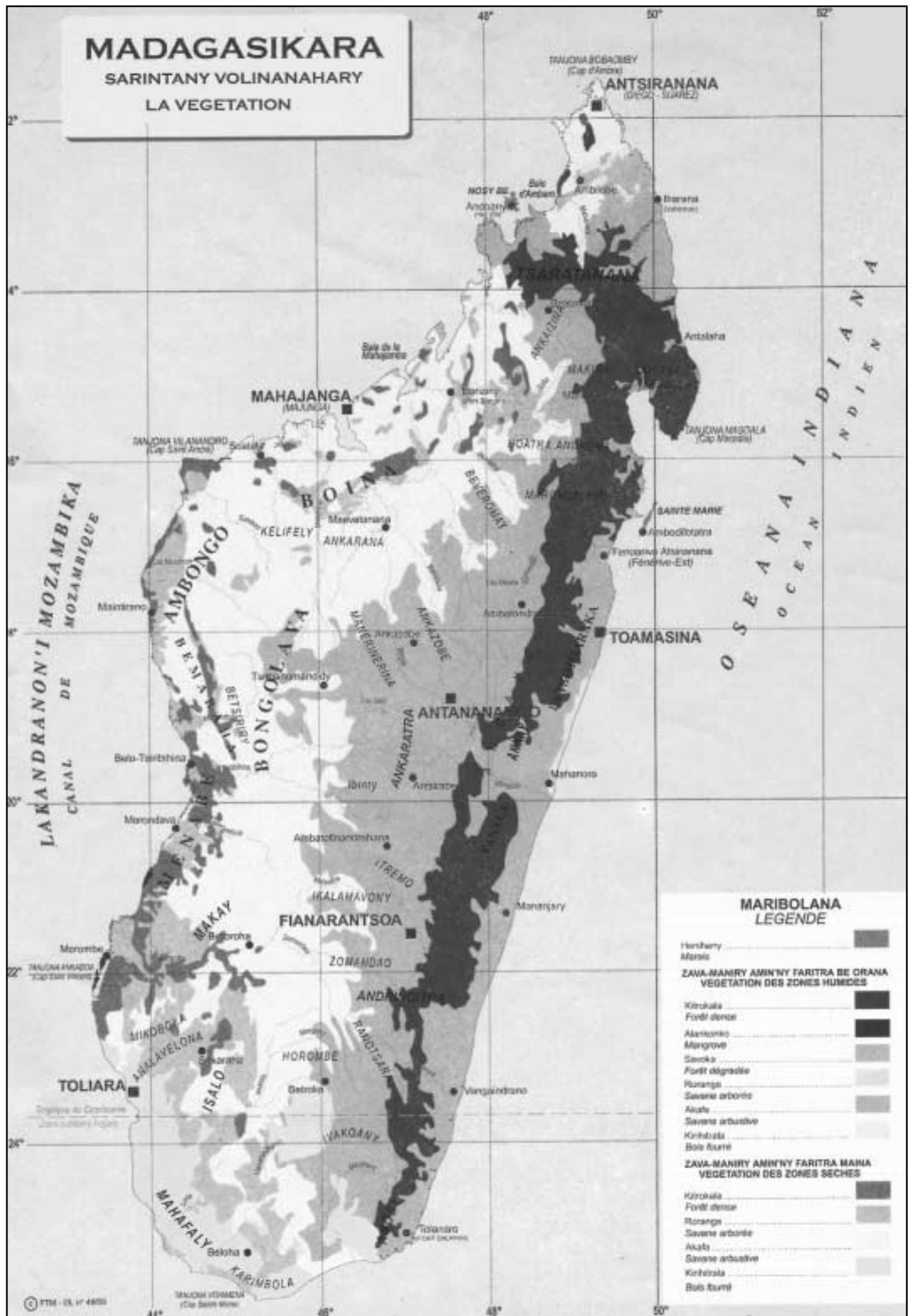
Research Into Eating Disorders 57 Lonsdale Road London SW13 9JR. Tel: 020 8748 5669 Fax: 020 8748 4771 Email: ried.madagascar@bikerider.com

To raise funds for the Eating Disorders Research Unit, Institute of Psychiatry - London via The Psychiatry Research Trust. Registered Charity Number 284286. Operated by Classic Tours Atol Number 3379

MADAGASIKARA

SARINTANY VOLINANAHARY

LA VEGETATION



MARIBOLANA LEGENDE

- Heryhary
 - Morona
- ZAVA-MANIRY AMIN'NY FARITRA BE ORANA
VEGETATION DES ZONES HUMIDES**
- Kirokila
 - Forêt dense
 - Alantoko
 - Mangrove
 - Savoka
 - Forêt dégradée
 - Roranga
 - Savane arboree
 - Akala
 - Savane arbustive
 - Kinirala
 - Bois fourré
- ZAVA-MANIRY AMIN'NY FARITRA MAIMA
VEGETATION DES ZONES SECHES**
- Kirokila
 - Forêt dense
 - Roranga
 - Savane arboree
 - Akala
 - Savane arbustive
 - Kinirala
 - Bois fourré