

GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

MADAGASCAR

Madagascar is a country which one frequently hears about, but even then, a simple question like **where is Madagascar** is surely going to raise a few eyebrows. It keeps many guessing about the actual location of Madagascar. There is a simple answer to this simple question. The island nation of Madagascar is situated in the western part of the Indian Ocean. Its geographic coordinates are 20 00 S, 47 00 E. The fact that the eastern coast of South Africa is at a distance of about 425 kilometres helps one to guess **where Madagascar is**. It occupies a strategic location along the Mozambique Channel.

Madagascar was once a part of Gondwanaland which disintegrated to form the continents. It occupies a total land area of 581,540 square kilometres, whereas, the water bodies cover an area of 5,500 square kilometres. The island stretches over a total area of 587,040 square kilometres. A comparative study of its total area with the state of Arizona in United States of America shows it to be slightly smaller than twice the size of the American state. It is 2.5 times the size of Great Britain. The coastline of Madagascar runs for about 5,000 kilometres.

The island of Madagascar is broadly classified into five major geographical entities, namely, the central highlands, the western coastal regions, the south western portion of the country, the eastern coast and the Tsaratanana Massif. The mountains lie parallel to the eastern coast whereas the land slopes as one move towards the western coast.

The location and isolation of Madagascar makes it one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Its numerous places of interest make people curious to find out where Madagascar is. With its excellent weather and a number of tourist locations, Madagascar has emerged as one of the most visited countries in the whole world

GEOGRAPHY

The island nation of Madagascar is located in the Indian Ocean and occupies an important position along the Mozambique Channel. It is also the fourth largest island in the world. Madagascar geography includes information pertaining to the various landforms, rivers, climate, natural resources, flora and fauna of the island.

Madagascar stretches over a total area of 587,040 square kilometres of which 581,540 square kilometres is land area and the remaining 5,500 square kilometres are taken up by various water bodies. The island has narrow coastal areas, whereas, the mountains and plateaus occur

of the central part are wide. Maromokotro is the highest peak at an elevation of 2,876 meters. The topography of the island is broadly divided into five main regions, namely, the central highlands, the east coast, the south west part, the east coast and the Tsaratanana Massif. The biggest river of Madagascar include :

- Mangoro
- Maningory
- Mananara
- Ivondro
- Mananjary
- Betsiboka

These rivers of Madagascar drain the flood plains making them fertile for agriculture. The climate of Madagascar varies as one moves further inland. The coastal regions experience a tropical climate whereas the inlands have a more temperate weather throughout the year. The southern part of the island, however, is dry. The island has rich resources of coal, graphite, bauxite and chromites

CLIMATE

Generally the climate of Madagascar is subtropical, with a hot and rainy season between November and April, and a cooler dry season from May to October. However, there is a big variation in climate depending on altitude and geographical position. The west coast is drier than the east coast and the central highlands, while the far south and south west is a semi-desert region that experiences very little rainfall. The east coast receives the most rain and is hot and humid during the wet season, and also prone to cyclones between February and March. Temperatures are much cooler in the highlands. In Antananarivo the temperature can drop to as low as 08°C at night, though it is usually around 20°C during the day. If you plan to hike in the highlands the temperature may be even lower at night and there are occasional frosts on higher peaks. Along the coast temperatures range from 81°F to 90°F (27°C to 32°C) in the wet season and 64°F to 72°F (18°C to 22°C) in the dry season. May to October is the most pleasant time to travel to and in Madagascar, with cooler temperatures and little rain.

