Madagascar Essay, Research Paper

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Meeting Madagascar

Introduction of Country

Larger than California and Oregon combined, Madagascar is the world’s fourth largest island, after Greenland, New Guinea and Borneo. Located 250 miles off the south-east coast of Africa, the island extends 1,000 miles in length and 360 miles at its largest width. The island can be divided into three main parts: the East Coast, a narrow coastal strip abutting the steep slopes of the North-South mountain range, home of the rain forest; the Central Highlands, averaging 2500 to 4500 feet in altitude and culminating at 9430 feet, decorated with immense rice fields; and the West Coast, home of the baobabs and thorny forest. Coral reefs fringe a portion of the coast. Most plants and animals found in Madagascar exist only there.

Thirteen million Malagasy inhabit Madagascar. Exactly how and when the early Malagasy discovered and settled the island is not known. They have a dual Indonesian and African origin, attested by their physical features, language, agricultural practices, and customs. In spite of their diversity, they are united by a common language, rooted in the ancient Malayo-Polynesian, ancestor of the tongues spoken in the vast area bounded by Hawaii, the Tuamotu and Madagascar. The modern language has been enriched by words imported from Bantu tongues, Swahili, Arabic, English and French.

Traveling in Madagascar is may not for everybody. The most ancient road is not yet 100 years old and tourism is a very young industry. Many conveniences available and expected in heavily-traveled places like Greece or Japan simply do not exist. If you

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Insists on exact schedules, well-planned itineraries and plush accommodations, if you want to be able to hop on the next plane or place an urgent long-distance phone call, this country is may not for you. However, if you are flexible and looking for the unexpected, if you want to meet an extraordinary people, then go and discover this fascinating island! You will become attached to the country, verifying once more the Malagasy proverb: “They who drink the water from the Manangareza river always come back to Madagascar”.

Things about Madagascar!

Location

As a former piece of the African continent that has remained in close proximity throughout its evolutionary history, Madagascar is said to be located in Southern Africa. It is the fourth largest island in the world, strategically location along Mozambique Channel. The island itself is in the Indian Ocean, east of Mozambique. It is said to be slightly less than twice the size of Arizona. The islands Natural hazards are their periodic cyclones. Some of the islands current issues of location include, soil erosion from deforestation and overgrazing. Surface water contaminated with raw sewage and other organic wastes has recently become a problem there in Madagascar.

The Capital City of Madagascar, Antananarivo

Antananarivo, formerly Tananarive, city in Madagascar, capital of the country and of Antananarivo Province. It is situated in the central part of the island of

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Madagascar, on the slopes of a rocky ridge. The city is the chief economic, cultural, and administrative center of the country. It is the trade center for a rice-growing region, and industries here manufacture processed food, tobacco products, textiles, and leather goods. The city has an international airport and has rail links with Toamasina, a seaport on the Indian Ocean. The University of Antananarivo (1961), including a museum of art and archaeology, and an astronomical observatory are in the city. The city was founded as a fortress in the early 17th century by the Merina rulers, who made it their chief residence in the 1790s. The community grew in importance as the Merina dynasty, notably Radama I, gained control of most of the island in the 19th century. The French captured the city in 1895, and subsequently it became the capital of the French dependency of Madagascar. It continued as capital when the country achieved independence in 1960. The city was known as Tananarive until 1977.

The population of Madagascar

In July of 2000, Madagascar was estimated to have 15,506,472 men women and children living there. There is a 3.02% population growth rate, every year. With several different ethnic cultures and groups, there is much diversity. Between the many different ethnic groups such as Malayo-Indonesian (Merina and related Betsileo), Cotiers (mixed African, Malayo-Indonesian, and Arab ancestry – Betsimisaraka, Tsimihety, Antaisaka, Sakalava), French, Indian, Creole, Comoran, there is distinct differences like religion and

Languages. The official language of Madagascar is Malagasy, but many Malagasy speak French and English. Madagascar’s has a net migration rate that consists of a percentage of 0.

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Where in Madagascar?

The cities of Madagascar

Starting with, MAHAJANGA (MAJUNGA); Madagascar’s second port, is by far the most cosmopolitan of all the Malagasy cities and towns. Located on the estuary of the Betsiboka, the town is quite extended and has two centers: one around the city hall and one by the port. Second, we discuss Morondava. This small coastal town is the sole port along the 700 km long coast that lies between Majunga and Tulear. In the surroundings regions you will see vast savannas, baobabs, fields of cotton, corn and peas as well as citrus orchards. Moving on to Ampijoroa Forest Statio, located 106km from Majunga in the dry, temperature northwest of Madagascar. Next is the Forest North of Morondava (Kirindy. This section of forest is situated 30km north of Morondava on the unpaved road leading to Belo-sur-Tsiribihina. There is a very good network of footpaths within the concession, and the road itself is excellent for purposes of observation, particularly of aquatic species. The above cities and towns mentioned are those of large tourism. All together there are 9 major cities of Madgascar: MAHAJANGA, TOAMASINA, ANTANANARIVO (The capital of Madagascar), MORONDAVA, MANANJARY, FIANARANTSAO, MANAKARA, TOLIARA, and TOLANARO.

Running Madagascar

Governmental

Madagascar has been an autonomous republic within the French Community since 1958. Madagascar became an independent member of the community in 1960. In May of 1973,

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an army coup led by Major General Gabriel Ramanantsoa ousted Philbert Tsiranana, president of Madagascar, since 1959. Comdr. Didier Ratsiraka, named president on June 15, 1979, announced that he would follow a socialist course and, after nationalizing banks and insurance companies, declared all mineral resources nationalized. Repression and censorship characterized his regime. Ratsiraka was reelected in 1989 in a suspicious election that led to riots as well as the formation of a multiparty system in 1990. In 1991 Ratsiraka agreed to share the power with democratically minded opposition leader, Albert Zafy, who then overwhelmingly won the presidential election in February of 1993. But Zafy was impeached by parliament for abusing his constitutional powers during an economic crises and lost the 1996 presidential election to Ratsiraka, who became president in February 1997. On Wednesday February 4, 1998 the parliament threw out an attempt by the opposition to impeach President Ratsiraka. Correspondents said the result was a foregone conclusion, as fewer MP’s turned up to vote. That the two-thirds majority of assembly required for impeachment. Opposition MP’s, headed by the former president Albert Zafy, said that President Ratsiraka’s plans to devolve power to the provinces and increase the president’s powers breached the constitution. President Ratsisaka wanted the plan put to referendum in March 1998. – President Didier Ratsisaka has been president since than along with Re’ne’ Tantely has been prime minister since July 23, 1998.

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Concluding Madagascar

Travel Safe

The first thing to remember about traveling to Madagascar or any other developing nation is that there are certain preparations that you will have to make in order for your journey to be a success. Before you make any plans you should do research of your own on Madagascar. This may seem like common sense, but the less you know about the place you are traveling to, you increase your risks in having a negative experience. Buy a Guide Book that not only fills you in on sites and scenary but also provides you with annotated accounts about the history of Madagascar. I highly recommend Hilary Brandt’s book entitled Guide to Madagascar. I have used her book during my travels and in creating this web page. It is an insightful and educational book about Madagascar and its culture. Brandt has recently produced the Fifth Edition for 1997. Here are some hints that will make your trip much pleasant and safer. Carry your money while traveling through Tana or any other city inside your pants in a pouch. DO NOT CARRY MONEY around in your pockets or in a visible pouch. Invest in a money sack that you can stick in your pants or shorts. Watch out for the Zoma market in Tana. There are many seemingly adorable street children ready to snatch any available visible pouch or pocket!! Travel with a partner and a flashlight at night. Many villages only turn on the electricity on average about four hours a day. Last but certainly not least Travel very light.

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