

Madagascar national day

Madagascar marks 49th independence anniversary

Every June 26, Madagascar and its people celebrate the anniversary of the country's independence.

Madagascar, in the Indian ocean, is a founding member of the African Union, it is the world's 46th-largest country and the fourth-largest island. It is slightly bigger than France, which ruled the island from 1896 to 1960.

Madagascar's population is predominantly of mixed Asian and African origin. Research suggests that the island was uninhabited until Indonesian seafarers arrived in roughly the first century, probably by way of Southern India and East Africa. Subsequent migrations from the Pacific and Africa further consolidated this original mixture, and 18 separate tribal groups

emerged.

Madagascar has world-class tourism assets and high potential for development in the sector because of its biodiversity, wildlife and long coastline. Its long isolation from neighboring continents has resulted in a unique mix of plants and animals, many found nowhere else in the world; some ecologists refer to Madagascar as the "eighth continent."

Of the 10,000 plant species on Madagascar, 90 percent are indigenous to the island. Madagascar shelters a significant portion of the world's natural heritage. In 1985, there

were two national parks in Madagascar, today there are over 14.

Montagne d'Ambre National Park, on the northernmost tip, offers a splendid array of waterfalls, lush forests and seven lemur species, including the fork-marked lemur, which is endemic to the park. It is one of the island's most visited attractions. Lush forest covers a large portion of the park and over 70 species of birds have been observed there.

National Park Tsingy of Bemaraha, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a vast area of limestone pinnacles, formed

by wind and water over hundreds of years. The bluish forest of peaks and sharp-edged stones preserves some of the most unique flora and fauna in the world.

National Park of Mananara-Nord contains some of the

last-surviving lowland rain forests in Madagascar. The park also offers a great opportunity to experience rural Malagasy culture as it is located in a secluded rural area.

The eastern, or windward side of the island, is home to

tropical rain forests while the western and southern sides, which lie in the shadow of the central highlands, are home to tropical dry forests, thorn forests, and deserts and scrublands.

Agriculture, including fish-

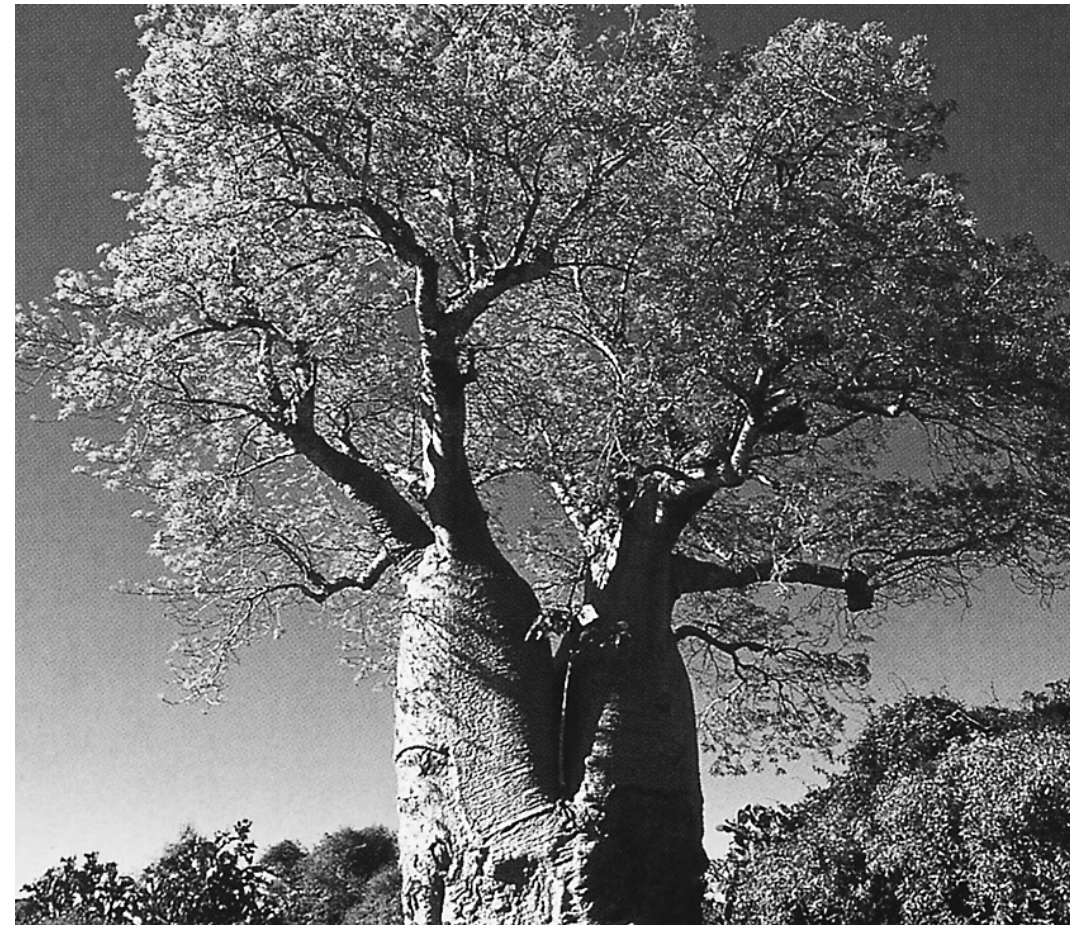
eries and forestry, is a mainstay of the economy, accounting for more than one-fourth of gross domestic product and employing 80 percent of the population.

Major exports are coffee, vanilla (Madagascar is the world's largest producer and exporter), sugar cane, cloves, cocoa, rice, cassava (tapioca), beans, bananas, peanuts and livestock products. Exports of apparel have boomed

in recent years primarily due to duty-free access to the United States.

Madagascar's ongoing political crisis has impacted the economy and the tourism sector in particular.

Travelers are recommended to monitor the latest security conditions in Madagascar. The current travel advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan can be found at www.mofa.go.jp/anzen



Homegrown: Seven of the world's nine species of baobab are found only in Madagascar. Some of the trees are more than 1,000 years old. The Western part of the island is their home and the most famous photographed spot is "Baobab Lane (Allee des Baobabs)" in Morondava.

Madagascar in brief

- Area: 587,000 sq. km
- Government: Republic
- Capital: Antananarivo
- Climate: Tropical with two seasons, dry from April to December and rainy from January to March. Average temperature is 21 C in the highlands and 29.5 C on the coast.
- Population: 20,653,556 (2009 est.)
- Population growth: 3 percent (2009 est.)
- Ethnic groups: 18 Malagasy tribes; small groups of Comorans, French, Indians and Chinese
- Religions: Traditional beliefs 52 percent, Christian 41 percent, Muslim 7 percent
- Official languages: Malagasy, French and English
- Life expectancy: 62.89 years (2009 est.)
- Literacy rate: 68.9 percent (2003)
- GDP: \$9.729 billion (2008)
- GDP growth: 7 percent (2008)
- Inflation rate: 8.2 percent (2008)



Congratulations

to the People of
the Republic of Madagascar on the Occasion
of Their 49th Independence Day



G VALUE
with you
Global Glowing Generating

TOYOTA TSUSHO CORPORATION
Metals/ Machinery & Electronics/ Automotive/ Energy & Chemicals/ Produce & Foodstuffs/ Consumer Products, Services & Materials

Head Office : 9-8 Meiki 4-chome, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya 81-52-584-5013
Tokyo Head Office : 8-1 Marunouchi 3-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 81-3-5288-2081

www.toyota-tsusho.com

Societe RASSETA

(Official Authorized Toyota Distributor in Madagascar)
P.B. 3779 Lot Iwe 92, Soarano, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar
TEL: 261-20-22-257-70 FAX: 261-20-22-224-47
Web site: <http://www.toyota-africa.com/countrytop/madagascar>