

Fianarantsoa*

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Fianarantsoa, or Fianar for short, is a marvelous city located 406 km south of Tana. It's the academic and intellectual capital of Madagascar, and its name means *the place where one can learn something good*.

The city is built in a region of hills. It follows that to reach any place in Fianar, you have to climb uphill or descend a gentle or steep slope.

Like Tana, old houses were in general built in the hills and the new ones were built in the valleys. The most popular place in Fianar is called *Ampasambazaha*. At this place, you can see many kinds of stores, restaurants, delis and hotels. The soccer stadium also stays at Ampasambazaha.

When you are in Fianar and look at the highest hill called *Kianjasoa*, which stays at the western part of the city, you can't miss the big statue of the Virgin Mary and Her Son Jesus Christ. Some people say that this big statue protects Fianar, but I'm not sure if it's true. I can tell you nothing about that issue.

Wherever you go in Fianar, you'll always see carriers who push a kind of wooden cart called *varamba*. This special cart distinguishes Fianarantsoa from other cities in Madagascar. Carriers use it, for instance, for carrying kegs, barrels, goods, fruits or vegetables from the train station to *Anjoma*—the main market place—by following the steep slope called *Isaha*.

Last but not least, I'd like to dash off a sketch about the wine because Fianar is also known as the capital of wine. Excellent red, white and gray wines are being produced in the surrounding areas and widely spreaded to the rest of Madagascar. The most famous is the one produced by a large association of vine-farmers called *Lazan'i Betsileo*. Still, it's not the only good wine from Fianarantsoa. You can taste for instance *clos malaza*, *maromby*, *manomisoa*, *S.V.S.*, *cotes de Fianar*, *zanatany*, *tsaralaza* and so forth.

Fianarantsoa is the gate to the natural reserve Isalo and the national park Ranomafana. Well, I have umpteen things to tell you about Fianar, unfortunately this website is not only for Fianarantsoa but also for the rest of Madagascar. So, please check the links below if you want to know more about Fianarantsoa.

F.C.E.: <http://www.fce-madagascar.com/>

Hotel Soafia: <http://www.soafia.com/>

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