

# Reef & Rainforest



Small Group Wildlife Tour with an Emphasis on Photography

## **The Wildlife of Madagascar's Magical Forests**

15 Days - Led by wildlife photographer Oliver Smart  
and local guide Daniel Razafimandimby

18<sup>th</sup> September – 02<sup>nd</sup> October 2020



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## ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 18 Sep Arrive into Antananarivo. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer to the hotel. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX.
- 19 Sep Transfer to the airport. Fly to **FORT DAUPHIN**. On arrival transfer 4 hours (on a bumpy road) through the spiny forest to **BERENTY RESERVE**. Afternoon and evening wildlife walks. O/n BERENTY LODGE, B, L, D.
- 20 Sep Full day to explore the spiny and gallery forests of **BERENTY RESERVE** in search of ring-tailed lemurs, dancing Verreaux's sifakas and other wildlife. Night walk in the evening. O/n BERENTY LODGE, B, L, D.
- 21 Sep Another full day to explore the **BERENTY RESERVE** for its wildlife. Night walk in the evening. O/n BERENTY LODGE, B, L, D.
- 22 Sep Today enjoy a final morning of wildlife viewing and photography in **BERENTY RESERVE**. Drive back to Fort Dauphin. O/n LE CROIX DU SUD, B, L, D.
- 23 Sep Transfer to the airport. Take morning flight back to Antananarivo. Afternoon visit to **LAKE TSARASAOTRA**. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX, B.
- 24 Sep Transfer to the airport. Fly to **MORONDAVA**. On arrival, transfer 2.5 hours to **KIRINDY RESERVE**. O/n KIRINDY LODGE, B, L, D.
- 25 Sep Morning and afternoon guided walks in **KIRINDY RESERVE** in search of its special wildlife. Night walk in the evening for nocturnal species. O/n KIRINDY LODGE, B, L, D.
- 26 Sep A last morning of wildlife photography in the **KIRINDY RESERVE**. Later return to Morondava for some time at leisure. Evening visit to **AVENUE OF BAOBABS** at sunset. O/n PALISSANDRE COTE OUEST, B, L, D.
- 27 Sep Transfer to the airport. Take flight back to Antananarivo. On arrival transfer 4 hours to **ANDASIBE**. Night walk in the evening. O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 28 Sep Morning and afternoon excursions in the **PERINET (ANALAMAZOTTRA) RESERVE** for rainforest wildlife. Night walk in the evening. O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 29 Sep Early departure to **MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK** for morning and afternoon guided walks in search of its wildlife. Night walk in the evening. O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 30 Sep Morning visit to the **VOHIMANA or PERINET RESERVE** or another area of rainforest. Afternoon transfer 4 hours to the **LE PALMARIUM RESERVE**. Evening aye aye watching. O/n PALMARIUM BEACH, B, L, D.
- 01 Oct Morning and afternoon lemur and other wildlife viewing and photography in the **LE PALMARIUM RESERVE**. Evening aye aye watching. O/n PALMARIUM BEACH, B, L, D.
- 02 Oct Today transfer 8 hours back to Antananarivo. Day use of a room at RELAIS DES PLATEAUX, B. Later transfer to the airport (overnight at the hotel also possible if required for flight time).



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### A Brief Description of the Group Itinerary

This expert-led small group tour focuses on the photogenic wildlife and landscapes of Madagascar's three main forest types. It includes habitats and iconic wildlife that showcase what makes Madagascar so unlike anywhere else on Earth. Not only is the fauna and flora unique, there is plenty of fascinating evolutionary history and stories behind the wildlife that we will encounter. In the areas we visit, the animals are mostly habituated thus affording excellent viewing and photo-opportunities. For those who enjoy close, intimate encounters with wildlife and/or have an interest in photography, this is an ideal destination, greatly enhanced by the expert guidance and tuition of the tour leaders.



This special itinerary concentrates on three of Madagascar's most wildlife-rich reserves that fall within very different habitat and climate zones, giving us a chance to sample a great selection of wildlife. Within these locations we will focus on finding and photographing Madagascar's most iconic and celebrated species including ring-tailed lemurs, indri, aye aye, "dancing" Verreaux's sifakas, tiny mouse lemurs, the fossa, all sizes of chameleons and other reptiles and frogs, peculiar insects and also plants ranging from huge baobabs to orchids and pitcher plants.

The famous and playful ring-tailed lemurs and acrobatic Verreaux's sifakas in the eerie spiny and gallery forests of Berenty will be our first stop. This private reserve in the far south of the country is perhaps very the best location in Madagascar for wildlife photography as the abundant and inquisitive lemurs regularly bound across open patches of forest against beautiful sandy backdrops.

Moving to the west coast of Madagascar, we enter the dry deciduous forests of the Kirindy Reserve. This is the home of the charismatic predatory fossa, the largest carnivore in Madagascar and another highlight of our journey. The reserve is also only a short drive from the spectacular Avenue of Baobabs, one of the most remarkable scenes in Madagascar.

Kirindy has a wide selection of unique fauna that we will not see anywhere else such as the bizarre giant jumping rat, the bokiboky or narrow-striped mongoose, curious red-fronted brown lemur, the miniature Madame Berthe's mouse lemur and rare birds like the Madagascar crested ibis and white-breasted mesite.

We then explore the lush tropical rainforests that run along Madagascar's Eastern mountains from our base in Andasibe. Our excursions here will reveal the magnificent indri, the largest of all living lemurs. Encounters with these endearing, tail less lemurs can be remarkably close, affording us some superb photography and an experience never to be forgotten.

## A Brief Description of the Group Itinerary Continued

Beautiful diademed sifakas, acrobatic black-and-white ruffed lemurs and gentle bamboo lemurs will all also hopefully be encountered. While our final location at the Palmarium Reserve on the Pangalanes Canal gives us the chance to see and photograph the weirdest of all the lemurs, the fascinating nocturnal aye aye.

In addition, we should encounter a wide range of Madagascar's spectacular reptile and frog diversity including numerous species of chameleon of all sizes, bright green day geckos, perfectly camouflaged leaf-tailed geckos, colourful endemic frogs, impressive snakes and wonderfully weird insects like the giraffe-necked weevil and flatid leaf bug. Madagascar's birdlife is also a highlight with many stunning endemic bird families such as the vangas, couas, and ground rollers to enjoy. We might also encounter snuffling tenrecs (similar in appearance to hedgehogs and shrews) in the leaf litter and observe huge Madagascan flying foxes at their roosts.



There will be many stops that enable us to experience the very different landscapes and gain an insight into the customs, lifestyles and vibrant cultures of friendly Malagasy tribes. There will be an emphasis on photographic opportunities and tuition in addition to observation of Madagascar's special wildlife at a leisurely pace. Please note that not every wildlife sighting can always present great photographic opportunities, due to the nature of the wildlife itself, weather conditions and other factors, but every effort will be made to see and photograph as much as we can.

The tour will be jointly led by award-winning wildlife photographer, naturalist and ornithologist Oliver Smart and local wildlife expert Daniel Razafimandimby who together will help you make the most of each experience. The combination of their good humour, knowledge and extensive experience in the field will help you gain maximum enjoyment and image results from this exciting adventure.

With the majority of the key wildlife species that could be encountered there should be good opportunities for photography, although please note that some patience, perseverance and luck will always be a factor with any photography. For most of the wildlife on this trip a full-frame DSLR or mirrorless camera with a telephoto lens between 300-600 mm or a powerful zoom or bridge camera will produce the best results. Madagascar has some superb landscapes, so a wide-angle lens is also ideal if you have one and there will also be plenty of smaller wildlife that a macro or smaller lens will be most useful for and is highly recommended. A tripod can be very useful in many situations in Madagascar, particularly with landscape and night sky images. It can also be very useful for aye aye and nocturnal wildlife photography which will be in very low light conditions. However, a tripod is not all that necessary for most of the daytime wildlife photography on this tour, which will sometimes involve fast moving lemurs under forest canopies, so handheld photography will also be best in some situations.





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Joint Leader: **Oliver Smart**

An alumnus of the University of Birmingham, Oliver is an acclaimed wildlife photographer and ornithologist. His clear passion for the natural world and significant experience of wildlife photography will be an asset to the group members. Oliver has won awards from the Zoological Society of London and The Bird Photographer of the Year, and has been published and highly commended in numerous magazines, national newspapers, nature books and wildlife guides. His deep understanding

of wildlife behaviour and experience photographing wildlife in a range of habitats throughout Madagascar will help you to capture some fantastic images of the extra-special fauna, flora, landscapes and culture of Madagascar. Oliver's friendly and outgoing personality, sense of humour and immense knowledge of wildlife and photography will ensure you gain the very best possible enjoyment and photographic results from this exceptional tour. Oliver will also offer Lightroom tuition during downtime to encourage you to achieve the best results from your images. He'll also be glad to stay up late in the evenings to assist you in photographing the bright stars and Milky Way visible in the dark, unpolluted skies of Madagascar.



Joint Leader: **Daniel Razafimandimby**

With a degree in English from the University of Antananarivo and well over a decade's worth of experience in Madagascar tourism and guiding, Daniel has always been highly regarded by our clients. He is an exceptionally popular choice to lead the group. Daniel's profound knowledge of Madagascar's wildlife and Malagasy culture combined with his natural charm and excellent spoken English will greatly enhance your knowledge of your surroundings and enjoyment of the tour. Always cheerful, patient and attentive, Daniel is bound to be a firm favourite with all the group members, as always.





# Reef & Rainforest

## THE WILDLIFE OF MADAGASCAR'S MAGICAL FORESTS

Fri 18 Sep (Your international flights are your own arrangements) Arrive at ANTANANARIVO IVATO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. Met on arrival at the airport and transfer (15 minutes) to the hotel. (No meals are included today)

O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX. Situated about 10 minutes' drive from the airport, this comfortable three-star hotel set in exotic gardens offers well equipped, en-suite rooms with air conditioning, satellite TV and mini-bar, decorated in Malagasy design using local materials.



Other facilities in the hotel include a handicraft shop, restaurant serving French cuisine and local delicacies, bar and swimming pool (heated in the cooler months).

Sat 19 Sep Today we have a leisurely breakfast before a transfer to the airport to take the TSARADIA flight TZ 716 at 1250 to FORT DAUPHIN arriving 1440. (NB: domestic flight times are subject to change). On arrival at the airport, we will commence the interesting drive to the Berenty Reserve.

Please note that it is a roughly 4-hour drive to BERENTY, and the road is in a very poor condition with many potholes. This drive is however very memorable as it takes us through rare transitional habitat zones. Starting from the green, well-watered mountains of



Fort Dauphin, we then pass through transitional forests and rice fields, before entering the eerie SPINY FOREST, a uniquely Madagascan flora with snake-like didieraceae trees, and bottle-shaped baobabs. There are also now an increasing amount of sisal plantations in this region.



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The gallery and spiny forest reserve of BERENTY is famed for its abundant, habituated and curious ring-tailed lemurs (beware of your bananas), as well as “dancing” Verreaux’s sifakas. The



reserve has been the site of lemur research for over 40 years and has been featured on numerous documentaries and publications.

There is also a radiated and spider tortoise breeding project on the site as well as a low-key museum on the natural history of the region and culture of the local Antandroy tribe. The Antandroy tribe of this region are largely unaffected by the outside world, holding onto their strong beliefs and living very naturally. The forest and associated wildlife of the area is preserved by the people themselves who hold them sacred as resting places for their ancestors.

We should arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon in time for dinner, followed by an evening night walk. During our night walk in the spiny forest, we can search for nocturnal wildlife including both the grey and grey-brown mouse lemur, white-footed sportive lemur and lesser hedgehog tenrec and reptiles such as the warty chameleon, big-headed gecko and Madagascar nightjar and Torotoroka scops owl. (All meals are included today)



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O/n BERENTY  
LODGE, B, L, D.  
Accommodation is in a  
simple en-suite  
bungalow with fan and  
air-conditioning. Please  
note that food and  
service can be basic  
here due to the remote  
location and electricity  
only operates for  
limited hours each day.



However, unlike many reserves, the walking is level and gentle along wide, well-tended trails and the accessibility and photographic opportunities of the wildlife are superb.



Sun 20 Sep

Today we can enjoy a day to explore BERENTY RESERVE in search of its iconic wildlife. The riverine forest is dominated by tamarind trees where many ring-tailed lemurs can be found and easily approached, enabling good photography conditions.

This habitat is also favoured by many birds such as the hook-billed vanga, Madagascar paradise flycatcher, the ashy cuckoo shrike, white-browed owl, greater and lesser vasa parrots and souimanga sunbirds.



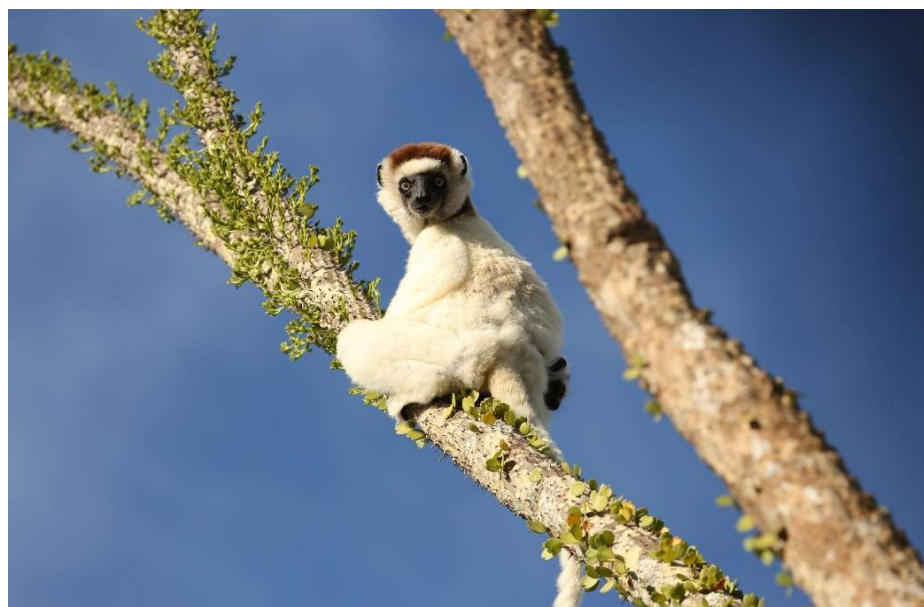


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Fascinating reptiles such as thick-tailed gecko, zonosaurus plated lizards, skinks, warty, jewel and Oustalets's chameleons and snakes such as the Dumeril's ground boa could also be found. Berenty is also one of the best locations to see the Madagascar hissing cockroach, giant millipedes, flatid leaf bugs, scorpions and many other unusual invertebrates.



The undoubted highlight though will be observing and photographing the large numbers of ring-tailed lemurs and Verreaux's sifakas which can often be seen "dancing" across the ground as they hop between gaps in the forest that are too large to cross in the trees. This is one of the best locations in Madagascar to observe and photograph this wonderful behaviour. While the curious and bold ringtails will also provide many memorable encounters and photography as they interact with each other and walk the trails with their tails up in the air. With luck we will also hopefully see some baby lemurs clinging to their mothers. The reserve also supports a large colony of Madagascar flying foxes (fruit bats) too, which can be seen in their day roost at a little distance.

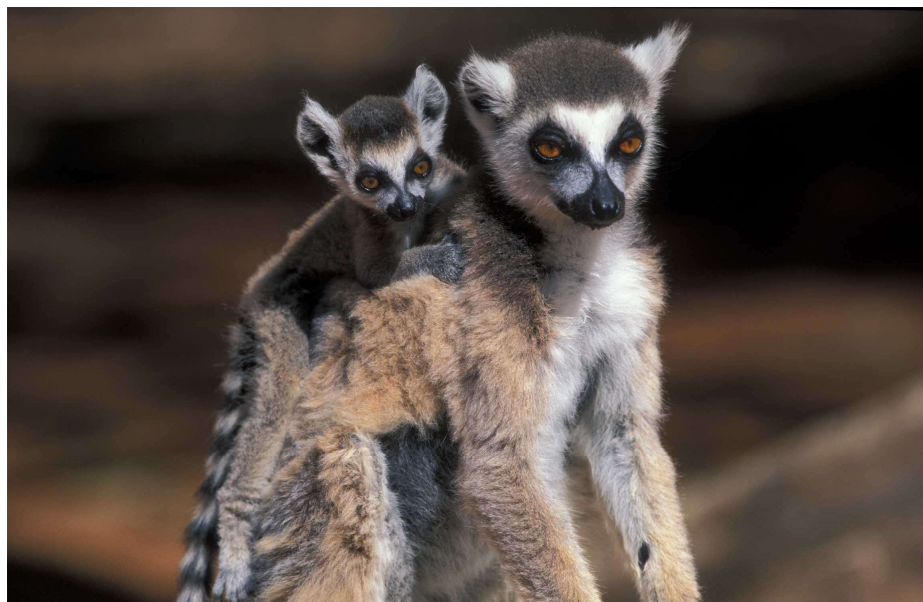


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We will also explore the unique spiny forest habitat at the front of the reserve. This strange habitat contains many endemic plants adapted to the arid conditions and is dominated by the thorny *Didiereaceae*, or octopus, trees and the local baobab, *Andansonia rubrostipa* (fony). Several special of endemic bird species such as the sickle-billed vanga, running, green-capped and giant coua can all be spotted here.



The best times for our walks are the early mornings and late afternoons to escape the heat of the midday sun and catch the very best lighting. (All meals are included today) O/n BERENTY LODGE, B, L, D.



Mon 21 Sep Today we will enjoy another day of morning and afternoon guided walks in the BERENTY RESERVE enjoying the superb lemur and other wildlife viewing. (All meals are included today) O/n BERENTY LODGE, B, L, D.



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Tue 22 Sep Today we have a final morning to enjoy watching and photographing the lemurs and other wildlife of BERENTY RESERVE. After lunch we will make the 4-hour drive back to FORT DAUPHIN arriving at our hotel in the late afternoon. (All meals are included today)

O/n LE CROIX DU SUD, B, L, D. The hotel is one of the best in town and is quite centrally located with air conditioning and a good restaurant in a lovely setting.



Wed 23 Sep This morning after breakfast we transfer 20 minutes to the airport. Take TSARADIA flight TZ 715 flight at 1005 to ANTANANARIVO (TANA) arriving 1155. (**Flight time is subject to change**) On arrival we will transfer 15 minutes to the hotel to firstly drop our bags and then in the afternoon make a visit to TSARASAO TRA LAKE (aka. LAC ALAROBIA) in a district of Tana for some unusual Hauts Plateaux birdwatching.

Numerous dimorphic egrets and squacco herons can be found alongside the more familiar great- and cattle egrets and occasionally Madagascar pond herons and Humboldt's herons also turn up. Ducks are very abundant with white-faced whistling ducks, red-billed teal, knob-billed ducks, fulvous whistling ducks, hottentot teal, and with luck the rare endemic Meller's duck.



Also found are Madagascar swamp warblers, Madagascar fody, Madagascar coucal, Madagascar kestrel, manikins and other widespread endemics. A selection of dragonflies, butterflies and other insects can also be found in the scrub around the Lake. (Breakfast only is included today) O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX, B.





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Thu 24 Sep Today we we will transfer from the hotel at around 10.30 to the airport to check in for our flight. We will take TSARADIA flight TZ 702 at 1220 to MORONDAVA arriving 1320. **(Please note that the flight time is subject to change)** On arrival we will transfer (2.5 hours) to the KIRINDY RESERVE, passing the Avenue of Baobabs en route.

The 10,000-hectare Kirindy reserve is a rare remnant of Madagascar's threatened dry tropical deciduous forest. The reserve contains such oddities as the endangered giant jumping rat (vositse) which appears like a miniature kangaroo as it hops along the forest floor. These unusual nocturnal animals were of great interest to the conservationist Gerald Durrell on his visits to Madagascar and later he began a captive breeding programme for the species at the Jersey Zoo.



Kirindy is also the best place in Madagascar to see the charismatic fossa - Madagascar's largest predator which resembles a small puma crossed with a giant mongoose. However, they are actually a member of a unique carnivore family, endemic to Madagascar and wonderful animals to observe and photograph.



There are also six species of nocturnal lemur including the pale fork-marked lemur, Coquerel's dwarf lemur and the smallest of all primates, the (pygmy) Madame Berthe's mouse lemur. Kirindy boasts one of the highest densities of lemurs of any forest in Madagascar. Diurnal (day active) lemurs include the acrobatic Verreaux's sifaka and red-fronted brown lemur, both of which are easily approached at close range here and make for superb photography subjects.



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Also present are the localised narrow-striped mongoose (bokiboky), and 50 species of reptile including the Madagascar hog-nosed snake, ground boa, collared iguanids (*Oplurus cuvieri*), plated *Zonosaurus* lizards and *Trachylepis* skinks. There are also 11 species of chameleons found in Kirindy and the nocturnal panther gecko (*Paroedura picta*) is another highlight. While other smaller creatures that make for good photography subjects include stick insects, many beautiful butterflies and the Madagascar hissing cockroach and flatid leaf bug.



Kirindy is part of the Menabe forests, also noted for their diverse botany that includes three of the islands seven endemic baobabs, including the giant baobab (*Adansonia grandidieri*) and the smallest, the bottle baobab (*Adansonia rubrostipa*). Birding is also excellent, and we could see the Madagascar nightjar, Madagascar crested ibis, both Coquerel's and crested couas, the beautiful white-breasted mesite and many species of vanga including the sicklebill, white-headed, Chabert's, blue and rufous vangas. Birds of prey could include the Madagascar buzzard, harrier hawk and impressive Henst's goshawk if lucky. The trails are broad and mostly flat, making walking easy.



This evening we will take a gentle walk hopefully in some attractive afternoon sunlight to spot lemurs, birds and reptiles. As dusk approaches, we will take a night walk for nocturnal species such as the tiny Madame Berthe's mouse lemur, red-tailed sportive lemur, pale fork-marked lemur, giant jumping rat and much more. (All meals are included today)



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O/n KIRINDY GITE, B, L, D. Accommodation in a very rustic and basic wooden bungalow with very simple en suite toilet and showers. Please note that hot water is not always available but as the temperatures are hot in the day it can be welcome. Please note



that the rooms are simple and very small, it can also be quite cold at night and bedding is minimal, therefore extra warm clothing for sleeping is recommended. It can then get very warm during the day though and there are no fans inside the rooms. Electricity is provided by generator but is only on for a few hours each day, so charging of batteries can only be done at these times. There is no phone signal or Wi-Fi at Kirindy, however wildlife is all around the lodge. The impressive wildlife encounters should leave you feeling that the nights in basic accommodation was well worthwhile.

Fri 25 Sep

Today we will take morning and afternoon guided walks in the KIRINDY RESERVE in search of the Verreaux's sifaka, red-fronted brown lemur and other diurnal wildlife.



In the very early mornings and evenings (around 5 pm), both fossa and narrow-striped mongooses often pass through the lodge grounds in search of water and opportunities to feed. There are currently at least eight fossa in the



Kirindy area and several of these individuals have become habituated to human presence as a result of a long term study in this area. These bold predators often provide outstanding views and photo opportunities in the early mornings and evenings and are fascinating to observe.



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This evening we will take another night walk in search of Kirindy's special nocturnal wildlife including the giant jumping rat, the two species of mouse lemur, the red-tailed sportive lemur, pale fork-marked lemur and the rare Coquerel's dwarf lemur. (All meals are included today) O/n KIRINDY GITE, B, L, D.



Sat 26 Sep Today we will have another morning of exploration in KIRINDY RESERVE in search of more of its special fauna and flora. We can perhaps spend time close to the lodge for the fossa and birdlife or on trails where we may encounter red-tailed sportive lemurs in their day roost. We will then return 2.5 hours back to Morondava for a late lunch and some time to rest or swim in the pool during the afternoon.

Later in the evening, we will drive 30 minutes out of town to the iconic AVENUE DES BAOBABS for sunset. This is the perfect time to take some great pictures of these impressive 800-year-old trees at their finest. (All meals are included today)



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O/n PALISSANDRE COTE OUEST, B, L, D. A comfortable international hotel located in the Nosy Kely area of Morondava. Accommodation consists of 30 bungalows made of local materials. The spacious and comfortable air-conditioned rooms have private



bathrooms, satellite TV, safe and a mini bar. Facilities at the hotel include a restaurant offering international and local cuisine, bar, spa and swimming pool. There is Wi-Fi around the swimming pool, but the speed is quite slow. Please note that the beach is public, and the sea is not suitable for swimming due to strong tides.

Sun 27 Sep

This morning for those interested, we can rise early for another visit to the wonderful Avenue of Baobabs for a sun rise photography session. Alternatively enjoy a leisurely morning.



We will then return to the hotel for a late breakfast before a transfer to the MORONDAVA airport to take TSARADIA flight TZ 703 at 1355 back to TANA arriving 1455. **(Flight time is subject to change)**

On arrival back in Tana we will transfer 4 hours to the village of ANDASIBE, home to the PERINET RESERVE (also known as ANALAMAZAOTRA), passing through many villages and rice paddies.



The Perinet Reserve is most famous for the largest living species of lemur, the indri, and seven other diurnal lemur species, as well as many chameleons, endemic frogs and other wildlife. The reserve is an excellent example of Madagascar's eastern rainforest habitat and contains many exciting nature trails. Temperatures may become quite cool, especially in the evening, night and early mornings so wrap up warm (a fleece and waterproof jacket are recommended).



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This evening we will take a short walk along the nearby road for nocturnal wildlife. This walk may reveal the local Goodman's mouse lemur, the cute furry-eared dwarf lemur and Eastern woolly lemur (Eastern avahi). Other wildlife that may be encountered includes pygmy chameleons such as the *Brookesia superciliaris* and colourful endemic Boophis tree frogs, prickly stick insects and more. (All meals are included today)



O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D. Located close to ANDASIBE-MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK, this hotel offers accommodation in 12 comfortable and spacious bungalows with private bathroom, satellite TV, safe, mini bar and heating for the cooler months. Each room also has a private terrace. Facilities at the hotel include a restaurant, bar and swimming pool and there is Wi-Fi in the public areas.



Mon 28 Sep Today we will take a morning walk in the ANALAMAZAOTRA (Perinet) Reserve to enjoy some close sightings of the magnificent tail less indri. The indris here are habituated and often allow a close approach and a very intimate and memorable sighting. We will likely wake in the mornings to the sound of their incredible whale like songs echoing through the nearby rainforest at dawn.





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Other diurnal (day active) lemur species we will hope to see and photograph include the common brown lemur, Eastern bamboo lemur and beautiful diademed sifaka.



We will also hopefully encounter some chameleons which could include the huge Parson's chameleon (*Calumma parsonii*) and side-striped chameleon (*Calumma*

*gastrotaenia*). The insect life is also fascinating, and highlights will surely

include the bizarre giraffe-necked weevil. We can then take another walk in the late afternoon perhaps in one of the community-run sections of Perinet such as the Voihamana or Mitsinjo Reserve.



These quieter sections are also excellent for indri and for the snuffling lowland streaked tenrec. This late afternoon walk can then turn into a night walk where we can hope to see a range of nocturnal frogs and reptiles maybe including a

camouflaged leaf-tailed gecko. (All meals are included today) O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D.



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Tue 29 Sep

Today we will rise early to drive 1 hour 30 minutes on a bumpy track to MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK, to the north. We will then spend the morning exploring the primary rainforest of this large Park for its special wildlife.



The old growth forest in Mantadia is a great location to spot diademed sifaka and the agile black- and-white ruffed lemur, which can be more elusive. With some help from our local guide we can hopefully encounter one of these acrobatic and characterful lemurs leaping through the canopy. The indri is also found here as is an impressive range of other fauna and flora.

Extraordinary leaf-tail geckos and painted mantella (*Mantella madagascariensis*) frogs alongside many interesting insects will be among the smaller creatures we hope to find and photograph.



The bird diversity here is also exceptional and highlights could include (with some luck and patience) the secretive scaly-ground roller, beautiful pitta-like ground roller, shy red-fronted coua, Madagascar blue pigeon, red-tailed, hook-billed and nuthatch vanga to name just a few.



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The walking here is a little harder than it is in the Perinet Reserve but, should be fine if one is fit with no mobility problems and easier trails can be taken if necessary. This evening we will take another night walk along the road next to the lodge to see more nocturnal wildlife before dinner. (All meals are included today) O/n ANDASIBE HOTEL, B, L, D.



Wed 30 Sep This morning we could return to MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK, or the PERINET RESERVE depending on our sightings, the groups interests and the local conditions.

After lunch at around 1230, we will transfer 3 hours by road to the Manambato village to board a motorised pirogue for the final part of the journey through the Pangalanes Canal to the Palmarium Reserve. We will arrive at the lodge in the late afternoon and after settling into our accommodation, prepare for the night excursion. At around 1730 we depart for a 15-minute boat ride to a small forested islet on the edge of Lake Ampitabe, followed by a short walk to a viewing area.

Eight aye ayes are currently living wild on this islet and each evening the local rangers leave coconuts out for them at a designated viewing spot. The aye ayes are not dependent on the free food offering and still live and forage naturally on the islet.

Up to four different aye ayes have been seen feeding together in the past here and they are regular visitors to the coconuts. Flash photography is not allowed, as it is harmful to the eyesight of these highly nocturnal lemurs, but the aye ayes are illuminated by torch light from the local guides for photography and video. (A sturdy tripod is also recommended here to help with the low light conditions).





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The extraordinary aye aye was described by Gerald Durrell as resembling a Walt Disney witch's black cat with a touch of ET thrown in for good measure. The nocturnal aye aye is one of the most extraordinary of all lemurs. Believed by many Malagasy to be an ill omen and harbinger of death, they are persecuted and often killed in many areas of the country and have sadly become very rare. However here they are well protected, and this is one of the best locations to observe and photograph them at close range. We will return to the lodge for a late dinner. (All meals are included today)

O/n LE PALMARIUM BEACH LODGE, B, L, D. Located on the edge of longest canal system in the world; the Pangalanes Canal, the Palmarium Beach Lodge is a simple but comfortable lodge. The lodge is located inside the private Le Palmarium Reserve which means nest of dreams in Malagasy.



The lodge consists of 11 wooden bungalows with solid built en suite bathrooms and mosquito nets over the beds. It is situated on the shore of Lake Ampitabe and has a peaceful setting. The bungalows have shared verandas with hammocks and are only a few steps from the lake's sandy beach and backed by a private littoral forest reserve, home to a wide range of endemic palms.



The restaurant has a very fresh menu as much of the food comes from the local market, while the adjacent main lodge building has a small but comfortable lounge area and bar. The lodge is only accessible by boat and is around 1 hour by boat from Manambato village and 4 from Andasibe. Due to its remote location, electricity is only available for limited hours and there is no Wi-Fi or facilities to use credit or debit cards at the lodge.

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Thu 01 Oct Today we can enjoy morning and afternoon guided walks in the Palmarium Reserve to observe and photograph the diurnal wildlife in this palm and orchid rich littoral forest reserve.

The Le Palmarium Reserve protects around 50 hectares of coastal littoral rainforest and provides a refuge for a selection of native wildlife. The wildlife highlight is the population of eight aye ayes that live on a small forested islet in the lake. The aye



ayes here live in a wild state and still forage naturally, but are also offered coconuts by the local rangers each evening at a designated viewing area, 15 minutes by boat from the lodge. This excursion offers a very rare and special opportunity to view these mysterious, elusive and fascinating nocturnal lemurs at uniquely close quarters.

The private reserve is also home to numerous diurnal species of lemurs including black-and white ruffed lemur, indri, crowned lemur, black lemur and Coquerel's sifaka. However, most of these species have been introduced to the reserve from outside of their natural range and some have also hybridised. Many of these lemurs are very inquisitive and fully habituated, so will often approach to within a few feet in the hope of some banana handouts.



Although many of diurnal lemurs are not naturally occurring here, this is a fantastic location for photography as the lemurs are so comfortable with people.

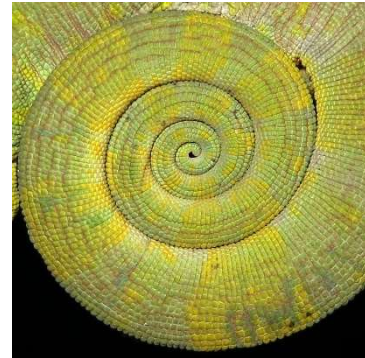
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This is the perfect location for us to enjoy some very intimate views and photography of lemurs and is therefore ideal for those looking to take more abstract and artistic images and practice with their camera.

There are also many reptiles and beautiful endemic frogs including the blue-black reed frog to search for here as well the staggering diversity of orchids, carnivorous pitcher plants, palms and pandanus plants to admire. The trails are mostly flat and easy going and much of the wildlife is very approachable.



In the evening we will take another aye aye excursion and perhaps later a night walk in the main reserve for woolly lemurs, frogs and reptiles. (All meals are included today) O/n LE PALMARIUM BEACH LODGE, B, L, D.



Fri 02 Oct Today we can enjoy a final very early morning walk in the Palmarium Reserve, before we make the long journey of approximately 8 hours back to Tana stopping for lunch (not included at a local restaurant on the way. (Breakfast only is included today) We will arrive back in Tana in late evening and have day use of a room at the Relais des Plateaux Hotel to pack, rest and freshen up before the international flight.

Later we will transfer to the international airport to check in for our onward flight. (An overnight at the hotel and airport transfer the next day can also be arranged, dependent on your flight time) B.

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Minimum group size is 6, maximum 8 persons – plus the two leaders.

<i>Tour Start Date</i>	<i>Adult Price*</i>	<i>Single Supplement*</i>
Friday 18 September 2020	£5,187	£750

Extensions are available to other areas of Madagascar such as Nosy Be, Ifaty or the Anjajavy Hotel for different wildlife and beaches, please ask for suggestions and further details.

\*Prices subject to possible revision. Please call **01803 866965** if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations in Madagascar or another destination.



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Included in the above; All domestic flights in Madagascar (Economy class with 1 piece of checked luggage at 20 kg per person - extra luggage can be stored with our colleagues in Tana in between the domestic flights); all ground transportation in air-conditioned vehicles (usually a minivan); all accommodation in double/twin rooms; all meals as described; (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), all entrance fees; and all guided activities with the two tour leaders and local naturalist guides in each National Park/Reserve and protection through ATOL.

Not included; International flights (We would be pleased to arrange these or give advice on international flights if required, please let us know); tips; other meals unless indicated; drinks; items of a personal nature; activities marked as OPTIONAL; Visa (35 Euros per person on arrival or online) and travel insurance.

**Please note:** Wildlife watching and photography in Mantadia National Park could involve walking over some uneven and at times steep terrain, sometimes away from a marked path in order to view or find an animal. There will also be some walks along mostly flat and wide trails but in hot conditions in Berenty and Kirindy Reserves. All walks within the Parks and reserves will be taken at a very leisurely pace, however the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

**Please Note:** This itinerary involves a couple of fairly long overland transfers which can be on bumpy and unsurfaced roads. The overland transfers however will add to your experience of Madagascar and enable you to see and photograph much more of the country and its different and changing landscapes and culture.

**Please Note:** The itinerary has been based on current Tsaradia domestic flight schedules, which can be changed at any time by the airline.

**Please Note:** This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to the terrain, weather, road and other local conditions, schedules of the domestic airline and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of



some activities may need to change or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.

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## **IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY**

NB: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers which are unavoidable to reach many areas of interest and these journeys can be on bumpy and unsurfaced roads. The overland transfer however will add to your experience of Madagascar and enable you to see and photograph much more of the country and its different landscapes and culture.

NB: The above itinerary and its quoted price are based on specific hotels and lodges. Should there be insufficient availability at the time of booking, or if the lodges over-book their rooms (Madagascar hotels/lodges are notorious for this) alternative hotels and lodges of a similar standard may have to be booked instead, in which case the itinerary and/or price may change.

NB: Prices are based on specific airlines and specific seating classes. The price may change if those are not available at the time of booking. We strongly advise booking early to secure the prices quoted, particularly as the seating classes quoted for are usually the first to be filled.

NB: Your itinerary involves domestic flights with Tsaradia, an airline which frequently changes its schedules both before and after departure. Flights may be delayed, postponed, cancelled and/or changed to other dates at short (or even no) notice. Reef & Rainforest and our in-country representatives will do all we can to re-organise your tour to mitigate the effects of such schedule changes caused by Tsaradia (which are entirely out of our control) including organising private charter flights subject to the client agreeing to cover the full cost of such charters. Equally, if new hotel rooms need to be booked due to Air Madagascar schedule changes after departure, the costs for those rooms will be borne by the client or the client's insurers. That is because the hotel rooms already booked for the itinerary will have been paid for by us prior to departure and refunds are not normally forthcoming from hotels for last-minute cancellations or "no-shows". Most other costs arising from such schedule changes by Tsaradia (such as extra transfers, extra hours of work by our staff, and some replacement excursions) will not normally be passed on to the client.

NB: The quoted price for the above itinerary is based on current airline fares (both international and domestic), fuel surcharges and flight taxes. These (and other tour costs) may be subject to unanticipated increases beyond our control at short notice, either before or after you have booked the tour, in which case the price would need to be revised accordingly.

NB: Prices are based on standard rooms unless otherwise stated in the itinerary. Should you wish to upgrade please let us know.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change without notice to take into account possible airline flight schedule changes which can take place before the departure date or during the tour, and other operational factors.

NB: Once the tour has been booked and a deposit paid, any further changes initiated by the client may be subject to additional charges.

NB: Inclusive tours and excursions as stated in the itinerary will have been pre-paid. Once full payment has been made and/or clients are actually at their destination, should clients be disinclined to partake of any inclusive tour or excursion, no refunds will be possible.

NB: Some service providers may require that guests sign an indemnity waiver form and may refuse services if these forms are not signed. Reef and Rainforest Tours cannot give refunds for services not provided due to a refusal to sign such forms.

NB: Any Excursions marked as 'Optional' are not included in the price.

NB: This tour involves some travel in remote areas. This adds to the adventure and increases the opportunity to enjoy a true wildlife experience. However, due to terrain, weather, road conditions, and other factors beyond our control, some elements of the tour may have to be altered. Times of some activities may need to be changed or even cancelled due to the conditions. If an activity is cancelled it will usually be replaced with an alternative activity that is more appropriate for the conditions. Advance notice will be given for any changes where possible, although at times changes may need to be made whilst the tour is in progress.



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NB: With any trip involving wildlife it is impossible to guarantee a sighting, but each trip is designed around known habitats. Every effort will be made to ensure a sighting but cannot be held responsible if no sighting is made due to the wildlife itself, weather, or any other elements beyond our control.

NB: Despite recent improvements, Madagascar still has some accommodation of a lower standard than that normally expected by western travelers, and a precarious infrastructure including unreliable domestic flights, poor telecommunications and bad roads. Many of our tours visit areas well off the beaten track, and therefore far from medical and other services. Trails can often be arduous and slippery, and campsites are usually very basic. Bookings will only be accepted on the understanding that the client accepts Reef and Rainforest Tours has done everything in its power to ensure there are no difficulties, but has no control over standards of some equipment, available accommodation and services, airline reservation policies, flight schedule changes or possible breakdowns in communication in Madagascar.

NB: Before and after booking, clients must familiarise themselves with current UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advisories so as to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the destination(s) to be visited in this itinerary. All decisions relating to the tour will be based on UK FCO advisories, and not those of any other countries' governments. In the event of any emergency or other problem encountered in the destination, it is advisable if appropriate to contact the local UK Embassy, High Commission or Consulate for assistance. The FCO in London also has dedicated telephone call centres: Crisis Management Dept - 0207 008 5335 (during UK office hours), and Global Response Centre - 0207 008 1500 (out of UK office hours).

NB: Adequate insurance cover is mandatory. Please supply us with details of your cover.

NB: It is a condition of booking that full travel insurance including Emergency Medical Repatriation is taken out by each person travelling. Your insurance cover must also include Missed Departure and/or Missed Flight Connection for both outbound and return flight sectors (such cover might be subject to a small additional premium – please confirm with your insurers). We ask that you send us a photo/fax/electronic copy of your policy document together with the 24hr medical assistance telephone number issued by your insurer.

NB: Flight timings are subject to change. Air Madagascar schedules are particularly unreliable and can affect itineraries and connections. Please do not rely on the timings in this itinerary. Check 24hrs before flying (your guide/hotel should be happy to assist).

NB: Visas are now easily obtainable on arrival for EU residents (35 Euros per person at time of writing but subject to change without notice). PLEASE CHECK THE LATEST INFORMATION WITH YOUR LOCAL EMBASSY/CONSULATE.

NB: Tips/gratuities are payable locally.

NB: In some hotels, English will be spoken either badly or not at all.

NB: This itinerary involves walking along rainforest trails which can be steep and slippery (especially in Mantadia National Park) in places as well as some walks in hot conditions in Isalo National Park. Although all walks within the parks and reserves will be taken at a leisurely pace, the tour is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

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