

Reef & Rainforest



Special Group Itinerary:

Treasures of Northern Madagascar with Daniel Austin

17 - Day Small Group Tour - Led by Daniel Austin and
Daniel Razafimandimby

30 September – 16 October 2021

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 30 Sep Arrive **ANTANANARIVO (TANA)**. Met on arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX HOTEL.
- 01 Oct Morning transfer (3 hours) to Mandraka Park for a riverside lunch. Further 2 hours' drive to the village of **ANDASIBE**. In the late afternoon we visit the community managed **VOIMMA RESERVE** and take a night walk in the evening. O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D.
- 02 Oct Morning wildlife watching in the **ANALAMAZAOTRA (ANDASIBE) RESERVE**. Afternoon and evening to explore the community managed **MITSinJO RESERVE**. O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D.
- 03 Oct Morning excursion to the primary rainforests of **MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK** in search of more exciting wildlife. In the afternoon, an optional visit to the Lemurs Park. Evening night walk for nocturnal wildlife in the Orchid Park. O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D.
- 04 Oct Morning to explore the **MITSinJO RESERVE** for some very special and close sightings of indri and different wildlife. In the afternoon we return (5 hours with stops) by road back to Tana. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX HOTEL, B.
- 05 Oct Morning transfer (10 minutes) to the airport to take domestic flight to Diego Suarez. On arrival we transfer (45 minutes) to **MONTAGNE D'AMBRE NATIONAL PARK** for a guided tour. In the evening we explore the private forest reserve at our accommodation for an exciting night walk. O/n DOMAIN DE FONTENAY, B, L, D.
- 06 Oct A day to explore to **MONTAGNE D'AMBRE NATIONAL PARK** and the private forest reserve on morning, afternoon, and evening walks. O/n DOMAIN DE FONTENAY, B, L, D.
- 07 Oct Today we first drive back to Diego for a short visit to the **FRENCH MOUNTAIN** before continuing (approx. 6 hours) to **ANDRAFIAMENA** and our accommodation at Black Lemur Camp. O/n BLACK LEMUR CAMP, B, L, D.
- 08 Oct Day to explore the **ANDRAFIAMENA PROTECTED AREA** in search of Perrier's sifaka and other wildlife. O/n BLACK LEMUR CAMP, B, L, D.
- 09 Oct Today we drive (3 hours) to Ankarana East to explore the wildlife rich forests and tsingy escarpments of **ANKARANA NATIONAL PARK**. O/n RELAIS DE L'ANKARANA, B, L, D.
- 10 Oct A day to explore the landscapes and spot the exciting wildlife of **ANKARANA**. O/n RELAIS DE L'ANKARANA, B, L, D.
- 11 Oct A morning drive (4 hours) to the port of Ankify with a stop at a vanilla plantation en route. Boat transfer (45 minutes) to the island of **NOSY BE**. Afternoon at leisure. O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 12 Oct Half day excursion into the **BAY OF NOSY BE** to see and snorkel with whale sharks and turtles. Late afternoon return to hotel. O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 13 Oct Today we visit the **LOKOBÉ NATURE RESERVE** to see black and sportive lemurs, reptiles, frogs and a littoral rainforest habitat. O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 14 Oct Second excursion into the **BAY OF NOSY BE** for more marine life. O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.
- 15 Oct Transfer (45 minutes) to Nosy Be Airport. Domestic flight back to Tana and transfer to hotel. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX, B.
- 16 Oct Morning excursion to **LEMURS PARK** and afternoon city tour of Tana. Day use of room at the hotel before evening transfer to airport or overnight at hotel. B.



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Led by two of Madagascar's most experienced tour leaders, this exciting small group tour takes in the less visited but highly rewarding National Parks and marine life of Northern Madagascar.



Accompanied by Madagascar travel guide author, lecturer, photographer and naturalist Daniel Austin and expert local expert guide Daniel Razafimandimby, this unique holiday will take you to rainforests, dramatic limestone pinnacles, dry tropical forests and warm tropical island waters surrounded by spectacular marine life.

Starting with the lush rainforests of Andasibe-Mantadia, we will be introduced to our first lemurs, chameleons, and a plethora of other unique Malagasy creatures. One of the highlights will be unforgettable close encounters with inquisitive wild indri, the largest of all living lemurs.

Next, we take a domestic flight to the northern tip of the country to discover the fascinating fauna and flora of Madagascar's first National Park, Montagne d' Ambre. Wildlife here is particularly special with many species found nowhere else. Chameleon enthusiasts will be particularly excited by the miniature *Brookesia* family we can see here.

We then continue south to the wild landscapes of the remote Andrafiarana Protected Area, where our charming lodge provides the ideal base to spot the charismatic Perrier's sifaka. These beautiful lemurs are among the 25 most endangered primates on Earth and our visit here helps support their conservation.

We then explore nearby Ankarana National Park. Here we can admire the tsingy: a dramatic karst limestone geological feature peculiar to Madagascar. Ankarana's tsingy is characterised by thousands of sharp, pointy pinnacles protecting deep ravines filled with specially adapted foliage and rare wildlife including crowned lemurs.

We then move to the beautiful tropical island of Nosy Be offshore from the mainland. We have timed our visit here to coincide with the opportunity to snorkel with juvenile whale sharks that pass through the warm and clear waters of the bay of Nosy Be at this time. We will hope to encounter several of these gentle giants as well as huge green turtles, mobula or manta rays and dolphins and perhaps even a rare Omura's whale. We will also visit the island's Lokobe Reserve to enjoy the striking black lemurs, colourful panther chameleons and other fauna found on the island.

Accommodation is of an overall good standard and the nature of many of the trails in the National Parks and snorkelling at Nosy Be make this a more active but highly rewarding and memorable itinerary.

The group has been kept deliberately small to maximise wildlife viewing and access to your tour leaders, plus the knowledgeable local guides, who really know how and where to find the unique wildlife in their localities.

Tour Leader: **Daniel Austin**

Daniel Austin is a travel writer, naturalist, photographer, tour leader and lecturer who specialises exclusively in the exotic Indian Ocean island of Madagascar.



Based near London, he visits Madagascar every year to lead small-group tours and to explore and photograph the country's diverse wonders.

His fascination with this enigmatic country extends not only to its unique flora and fauna, but also to its people, culture, history, geology and beyond.

He has written three books (in seven editions so far) about Madagascar and contributed words and images to countless others. Daniel also presents occasional lectures on the country, including at the prestigious British Royal Geographical Society, as well as on specialist tours and cruises of the island. His expertise is frequently consulted by journalists, authors and filmmakers making documentaries about Madagascar.

In addition, Daniel is Secretary of the Anglo-Malagasy Society, a UK-based organisation founded in 1961, which holds events and meetings in London to promote knowledge of Madagascar amongst British people and to foster relations between the two countries.

He is also founder of the Madagascar Library, a private collection of some 5,000 books, maps and other documents about the country, available for use by academics, journalists, historians and other researchers. Born in central England, Daniel studied linguistics and cognitive science at the University of Cambridge and at UCL in London, as well as engineering science at the University of Oxford.

Tour 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.





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TREASURES OF NORTHERN MADAGASCAR WITH DANIEL AUSTIN AND DANIEL RAZAFIMANFIMBY

Thu 30 Sep Arrive at ANTANANARIVO (TANA) IVATO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. You will be met on arrival at the airport from your flight and transferred (10 minutes) to the hotel for the evening or day depending on the time of your international flight. (No meals are included today)

O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX, BB. Situated about 10 minutes' drive from the airport, this comfortable three-star hotel set in exotic gardens offers well equipped, en suite rooms including air conditioning, satellite TV and mini-bar, decorated in Malagasy design using local materials. Other facilities in the hotel include a local handicraft shop, restaurant serving French cuisine and local delicacies, bar and swimming pool (heated in the cooler months).



Fri 01 Oct Today our holiday begins in earnest and we will make the journey (5 hours in total but with stops) from Tana to ANDASIBE. We stop halfway at the lovely forest of Mandraka for a picnic lunch next to the river. We will then continue the drive passing through many villages and rice paddies arriving at our accommodation in the early afternoon. The reserves of Andasibe are an excellent example of the eastern rainforest habitat with many nature trails to explore.

The rainforests of Andasibe are home to the largest lemur, the indri and seven other diurnal species, as well as many chameleons, brightly coloured day geckos and frogs.



Temperatures may become quite cool, especially in the evening and early mornings. In the evening, we will explore the community managed VOIMMA FOREST RESERVE, part of Analamazaotra that receives fewer visitors than surrounding forest areas and is particularly good for night walks.

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This walk may reveal the nocturnal Goodman's mouse lemur, the Eastern woolly lemur, and the furry-eared (Crossley's) dwarf lemur. While other wildlife that may be encountered includes sleeping Parson's and blue-legged chameleons perhaps a pygmy chameleon such as (*Brookesia superciliaris*) and some *Boophis* tree frogs, stick insects and possibly even a camouflaged mossy leaf-tailed gecko. (All meals are included today)



O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D. The newly opened Mantadia Lodge is located along a ridge above the village of Andasibe and is surrounded by eucalyptus forest, but with views towards the rainforest of Analamazotra in the distance. The lodge is only a 10-minute drive from the entrance to Andasibe Reserve and an hour a half drive from Mantadia National Park. A highlight is that the song of the indri can often be heard at dawn.



The lodge offers some of the most comfortable accommodation, facilities and settings in the Andasibe area with 28 rooms including 2 suites. The accommodation features a garden and sun terrace, which can be enjoyed by guests if the weather permits. All rooms offer high speed Wi-Fi, flat screen TV, kettle and tea facilities, a safety deposit box in the bathroom and a wood stove for the cooler seasons. There is a superb onsite restaurant designed to maximise the exceptional views plus a drinks terrace. There is a well-stocked bar and a welcoming lounge with both inside and outside reading areas and also a beautiful infinity pool in the grounds, plus a spa.

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Sat 02 Oct

Today we will take a morning walk in the ANALAMAZAOTRA (Perinet) Reserve to enjoy some close sightings of the magnificent tail less indri. This section of forest is also the best location to see the stunningly beautiful diademed sifaka. At this time of the year we often get to see mothers with new-born babies on their backs too. Other diurnal (day active) lemur species we will hope to see here include the common brown lemur and Eastern grey bamboo lemur.



We will also hopefully encounter chameleons including the huge Parson's chameleon (*Calumma parsonii*) and side-striped chameleon (*Calumma gastrotaenia*). The insect life is also fascinating, and smaller creature highlights will surely include the bizarre giraffe-necked weevil. There are also many endemic rainforest bird species we will spot along the walk as well as admiring the interesting plant life, unique to this region of Madagascar.

We will then have some time at leisure during the middle of the day before we take another walk in the late afternoon in the community managed Mitsinjo Forest Reserve.

This quieter section can also be excellent for seeing the indri up close and for occasionally spotting the snuffling lowland streaked tenrec. This late afternoon walk will again turn into a night walk, once dark where we can hope to see a range of frogs and reptiles. (All meals are included today). O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D.



Sun 03 Oct

Today we rise early to drive 1 hour 30 minutes north on a bumpy track to MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK. Here we can enjoy spending the morning exploring the wonderful primary rainforest of this vast protected area with its special wildlife. We will take a packed lunch with us to enjoy inside the forest.

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The majestic old growth rainforest of Mantadia is another good location to spot the beautiful diademed sifaka and also the agile black-and-white ruffed lemur, which is often found on the higher ridgelines. With some help from our local park guide we can hopefully encounter some of these acrobatic, 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 colourful day geckos and Baron's mantella (*Mantella baroni*) frogs may be seen as well as interesting array of insects.



Mantadia is also home to a fantastic diversity of endemic bird species. Highlights we could to see include beautiful pitta-like ground roller, the secretive scaly-ground roller, (with some luck and patience), the shy red-fronted and blue coua, Madagascar blue pigeon and the red-tailed, hook-billed and nuthatch vangas to name just a handful.



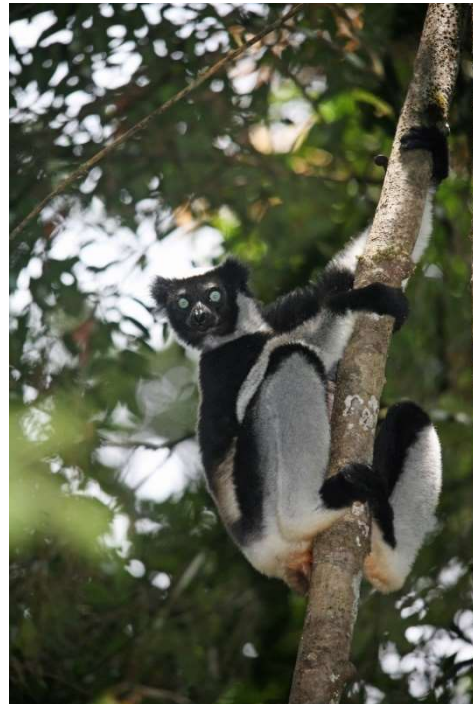
The walking in Mantadia is a little more strenuous than in Andasibe and VOIMMA, but it should be fine if one is fit with no mobility problems, and there are a couple of easier trails available too. This afternoon we will return to Andasibe. For those



interested a visit to the Lemur Island can be arranged this afternoon. In the evening we will take another night walk in the nearby Orchidee Park. (All meals are included today) O/n MANTADIA LODGE, B, L, D.

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Mon 04 Oct Today we have a final morning to explore the community managed MITSINJO Reserve where we have an excellent opportunity to see the indri up close. The local guides at Mitsinjo have habituated several groups of indris which often come lower in the trees to take a closer look and sometimes receive a handout of their favourite leaves. This intimacy makes for an unforgettable sighting and also photographic opportunity.



We could then perhaps focus on some of the smaller wildlife including the many birds, chameleons, day geckos' other reptiles, frogs, insects, and also the plant life too. The forest here is rich in epiphytic plants, pandanus, palms and dominated by towering hardwood trees.

In the afternoon we will transfer (5 hours) back to TANA with a couple stops at points of interest en route. (Breakfast only is included today) O/n RELAIS DES PLATEUX, B.



Tue 05 Oct After breakfast we transfer just 15 minutes to Tana's domestic airport to catch our TSARADIA flight TZ 312 at 0700 to ANTANANARIVANA (DIEGO SUAREZ) arriving 0855. **(Flight time is subject to change)** On arrival in Diego we then transfer 45 minutes south to our lodge on the edge of a wonderful private rainforest reserve to settle in and have lunch. In the afternoon we then explore the MONTAGNE D'AMBRE NATIONAL PARK just up the road.

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This is the oldest National Park in Madagascar and protects an isolated mount of rainforest in an otherwise semi-arid landscape. The park is home to many lemurs as well as rare birds such as Madagascar crested ibis and Madagascar pygmy



kingfisher and the local Amber Mountain rock thrush. We will spend the afternoon walking the trails in search of lemurs such as the beautiful crowned lemur, Sanford's brown lemur as well as the many birds, reptiles and insects.

The park is home to at least 11 species of chameleon many of them unique to the park. One of our highlights will hopefully be finding one of the tiniest of all reptiles in the world, the Montagne d'Ambre leaf chameleon: (*Brookesia tuberculata*).



This minute chameleon is only 25 to 35 mm in length when fully grown and lives its entire life in the leaf litter of the forest floor. With the expertise of



our local guide we should find a few of these mind-bogglingly tiny chameleons.

Other reptiles we may spot include the striking Boettger's and Amber Mountain chameleons, bright green giant day gecko and perhaps a Madagascar ground or tree boa. In the park's campground the inquisitive ring-tailed vontsira (mongoose) can often be found searching for leftovers.

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There are many trails through the stunning scenery, some leading to sacred waterfalls and viewpoints. The park is full of huge tree ferns, lianas, orchids and impressive bird's nest ferns, giving a primeval feel.

We will return to our lodge for dinner and once dark, take a night walk in the lodge's private forest reserve. Night walks here can be



very productive, and we may be rewarded with seeing nocturnal lemurs such as the localised Montagne d' Ambre fork-marked, dwarf or mouse lemurs, plus sleeping chameleons, frogs, stick insects and more. This little reserve is particularly noteworthy though for its spectacular leaf-tailed geckos. We could encounter three different species here including the impressive giant leaf-tailed gecko. (All meals are included today)



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O/n DOMAIN DE FONTENAY B, L, D. A small, friendly and simple but comfortable lodge with its own 300-hectare private rainforest reserve, ideal for night walks. The main building is a restored colonial villa with a large garden. Rooms are spacious and individually decorated with colonial era furniture and decor. The lodge is situated on the edge of JoffreVille village just 15 minutes' drive from Montagne d'Ambre National Park.



Facilities include a small restaurant furnished with rosewood and other local Malagasy woods offering authentic and refined cooking, including both French and local Malagasy cuisine, plus a bar and terrace for relaxing. The garden has a path leading straight into the rainforest reserve where a variety of wildlife can be found. There are plans to install Wi-Fi in 2020 and the friendly staff are sure to make your stay an enjoyable one.



Wed 06 Oct Today we can enjoy morning and afternoon walks in both the National Park of Montagne De Ambre and our lodge's own private forest reserve. We hope to encounter a great variety of the special fauna and flora of this isolated rainforest ecosystem. In the evening we can again take a thrilling night walk into the forest reserve to discover more nocturnal wildlife. (All meals are included today) O/n DOMAIN DE FONTENAY B, L, D.



Thu 07 Oct This morning we set off for the approximately 1-hour drive north of Diego Suarez where we make a short stop at the Montagne des Français Reserve just outside of the town. Here we can see the localised baobab (*Adansonia suarensis*) growing on the slopes of the limestone massif. After perhaps a short walk we will continue by road to our next destination. The journey to Black Lemur Camp, our next accommodation from here is unfortunately a long one due to the poor state of the road which is now very potholed and bumpy.

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On our way we will pass through dry forest, typical of northern Madagascar as well as many small villages, giving us an insight to the tribes, cultures, history and landscapes of this region. The drive will take approximately 6 hours, depending on the local conditions.

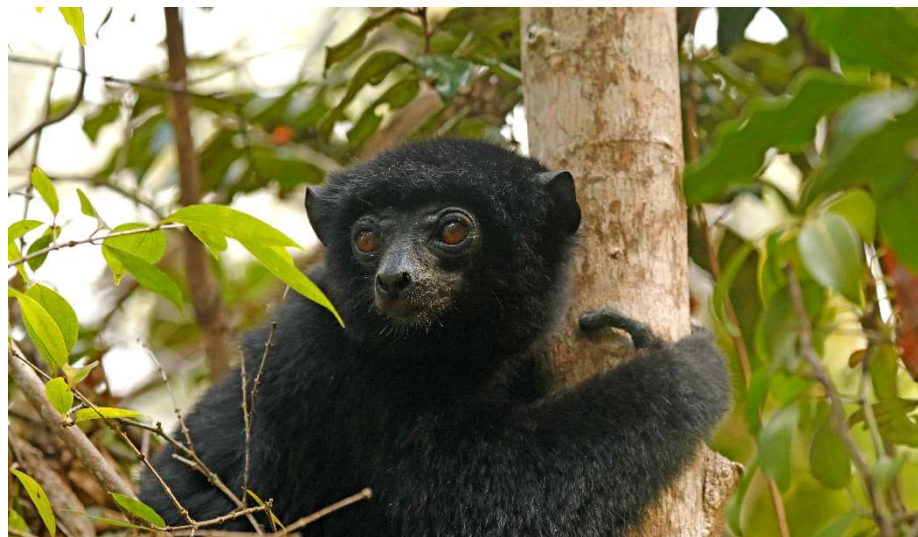
In the early evening we will arrive at the ANDRAFIAMENA PROTECTED AREA and our accommodation at the Black Lemur Camp run by the community conservation charity FANABY. (All meals are included today)

O/n BLACK LEMUR CAMP, B, L, D. Accommodation is in 10 rustic chalets with private bathrooms (simple showers only), mosquito netting a flat screen TV and private balcony. There is a spacious main building with wonderful sweeping views down the valley which also houses a restaurant and bar and lounge area. Solar power is used to provide electricity and Wi-Fi 24 hours a day and the friendly staff are all employed from the local Anjahankely village.



Fri 08 Oct

Today we will explore the ANDRAFIAMENA PROTECTED AREA. The reserve protects a large area of hilly, semi-humid and dry deciduous forest. This little-known wilderness is home to a good range of wildlife and a friendly and engaging rural community. The reserve is of most importance for its population of the critically endangered Perrier's sifaka, of which there are only around 250 individuals left in the wild.



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The enigmatic, all black Perrier's sifaka occurs only in remote patches of northern Madagascar, where its population has been greatly reduced by ever-increasing habitat loss. There are currently no Perrier's sifakas in captivity and with the remaining population so tiny and fragmented, this beautiful and little-known species is highly threatened with extinction. The species is now listed as one of the world's top 25 most endangered primates by the IUCN. Our visit here makes a real difference to their survival though by supporting the community-based conservation work of the lodge.



We will explore the forest with the assistance of local guides from the village that are experts in locating habituated groups of the sifakas, so we have an excellence opportunity to see these rare lemurs. The sifakas are usually found in an area of forest, 45 minutes' moderately uphill walk from the lodge. We will likely take a packed lunch out in the forest with us so as to explore more of the trails some of which lead to waterfalls and natural swimming pools.

Other wildlife we may spot includes crowned lemurs, *Daraina sportive* lemur and birdlife. In the heat of the afternoon we will return to the lodge and perhaps take a night walk in the evening. (All meals are included today) O/n BLACK LEMUR CAMP, B, L, D.



Sat 09 Oct

This morning we could perhaps make a second early morning walk to see the sifakas or maybe wander around the local village to learn about way of life in this remote region, where perfumed white rice is a local speciality. Later in the morning we set off for the scenic but bumpy drive of approximately 3 hours to ANKARANA NATIONAL PARK.

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We will arrive at our lodge close to the park entrance in time for lunch. In the late afternoon we will take a walk on one the shorter trails in the National Park.



Ankarana is famous for its spectacular areas of ancient limestone pinnacles and karst known as tsingy which forms a huge plateau here. It also supports sunken tropical dry deciduous forest and must be on the country's most exciting national parks. (All meals are included today)

O/n RELAIS DE L'ANKARANA, B, L, D. Situated just 200m from the entrance of the park, this hotel is simple but very convenient for access. The spacious bungalows have beds with mosquito nets and ensuite bathrooms. Hot water is usually available, but it can be variable due to the remoteness making showers sometimes a (likely welcome) refreshing experience! The open-air restaurant serves simple meals with friendly service.



Please note that there is no Wi-Fi or phone reception here and the food although generally good can be a little variable.

Sun 10 Oct

Today we can enjoy both morning and afternoon walks in ANKARANANA NATIOANL PARK to discover its fascinating natural history and geology. This park offers a complete contrast in landscape to anything we have seen previously with the magnificent tsingy formations giving us the feeling we are walking through a stone forest.



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There are also huge caves and underground canyons and we can perhaps include a visit the GROTTE DE CHAUVE SOURIS bat cave.

Ankarana supports one of Madagascar's highest densities of lemurs with crowned and Sanford's brown lemurs particularly abundant in the dry forests. We may also spot the nocturnal Ankarana sportive lemur as they rest during the day.

We will also keep a look out for the many reptiles and birdlife of the park which includes the Madagascar harrier hawk, Madagascar crested ibis, crested coua, Madagascar cuckoo roller and white-throated rail. Most trails cover some rocky and uneven terrain and the temperatures can be hot. (All meals are included today) O/n RELAIS DE L'ANKARANA, B, L, D.



Mon 11 Oct This morning we set off for a drive of approximately 4 hours to ANKIFY. We will pass several plantations specialising in growing different produce and we will make a short stop at a vanilla and cacao plantation to learn more about this industry. On arrival in Ankify we continue (45 minutes) by boat to the



luxuriant tropical island of NOSY BE. On arrival in the port of Hell-Ville on the island, we will transfer to our vehicle and then continue 45 minutes by road to our seaside hotel. We can enjoy the rest of the day to relax in the lovely grounds of the hotel. (All meals are included today)

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O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D. Situated on the west coast of Nosy Be, the stunning Vanilla Hotel combines the charm and authenticity of the Malagasy culture and patrimony. Its wide range of high-quality services ensures



comfort and security to its guests. Every room at the Vanilla Hotel is well appointed with private terraces, balconies and gorgeous views of the ocean and gardens. Facilities include a lovely tiered swimming pool and infinity pool overlooking the ocean, a spa with Jacuzzi, hammam and massage rooms, four bars and a library. There are two restaurants where morning breakfast and dinner are served both a la carte and buffet.

Tue 12 Oct Today we will depart the hotel early after breakfast for a transfer into town before embarking on an exciting boat excursion into the Bay of Nosy Be in search of marine life. Our principle aim will be to hopefully snorkel alongside whale sharks and other marine life.

This thrilling excursion will be in a small boat (without a toilet) with all snorkelling equipment provided. The typical schedule of the excursion is that the morning is dedicated to locating, observing, and hopefully snorkelling with whale sharks and any other marine life found. Please note that you must follow the guidelines of the skipper and local guide regarding behaviour around any marine life. Please note that our group may be split between two boats and travel with other guests.



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Around 1300 we will usually stop for lunch, served on the beach of the nearby island of Nosy Sakatia, followed by an opportunity to swim and snorkel over an area of shallow seagrass home to green turtles and now a designated turtle reserve. Up to 14 huge green turtles are thought to be resident here and the warm water is clear and mostly shallow allowing for good visibility.



Please note that this excursion is subject to local weather conditions, so in rare circumstances it may have to be scheduled for another day.

The whale shark is the largest fish existing in the ocean today; they can grow up to 50 feet (15 metres) in length. It is only the smaller but still impressive juvenile whale sharks though



that pass through the Bay of Nosy Be at this time of year. These sharks are around 7 -10 meters in length. The whale shark prefers waters of warm surface temperature, with upwelling's of nutrient rich colder water - these conditions are favoured by blooms of plankton on which the sharks feed.

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These precise conditions occur in the tropical waters around Nosy Be during October and November. This protein-rich habitat is equally ideal for giant manta and mobula rays and the subsequent food web also attracts dolphins and rare Omura's whales.



The sharks feed on or just below the surface by filtering small planktonic organisms out of the water through its baleen: a built-in hair-like structure replacing teeth. Whale sharks are very docile creatures and when approached by snorkelers typically hardly notice as long as they are not touched or approached too closely (maximum distance 3 meters). Please note that the water temperature is usually warm at around 38 degrees with good visibility, but thermal hangs causing some blur to photographs can occur. A lightweight and short wetsuit or old t-shirt and swimming shorts are advisable to help protect from the strong sun when snorkelling and please remember to take plenty of drinking water, sun cream and sunglasses with you.

During our excursion we could if lucky possibly encounter a pod of spinner, pantropical spotted or Indo-Pacific bottle-nosed dolphins.



The elusive Bryde's whale and similar looking but only recently described Omura's whale are also both found in the area. Please note that observations and snorkelling opportunities with whale sharks are highly likely between mid-October and mid-November but cannot be guaranteed on every excursion due to the local conditions and the animals themselves.

We will return to Nosy Be and our hotel in the mid-afternoon. The rest of the day is then at leisure. (All meals are included today)
O/n VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.

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Wed 13 Oct Today we will have an excursion to the forested **LOKOBE NATURE RESERVE** in the southeast corner of the island.

To reach this reserve we will first transfer by road (30 minutes) and then traditional dugout canoe (45 minutes) past mangroves and beautiful forested hillsides. Lokobe is an excellent example of lowland rainforest covering 740 hectares with numerous trails amongst ancient hardwood trees and towering palms.

The reserve is most noteworthy for its population of curious black lemurs, the very rare and local Nosy Be (Hawk's) sportive lemur and for its reptile (50 species) and frog (35 species) diversity.

These include the beautifully marked multi-coloured panther chameleon and some different species of Brookesia chameleons plus mantella frogs and boas. After exploring the rainforest in the morning we will have a lunch on

the beach before returning to our hotel. The afternoon is again at leisure. (All meals are included today) O/n **VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.**

Thu 14 Oct Today we can enjoy a second excursion into the Bay of Nosy Be for hopefully more snorkelling with whale sharks, rays and turtles. Return to the centre around 1530 pm and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. (All meals are included today) O/n **VANILLA HOTEL, B, L, D.**



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Fri 15 Oct This morning we can enjoy some time at leisure by the beach or to explore nearby. Later in the day we will transfer (45 minutes) to the Nosy Be (NOS) airport.

We will take the TSARADIA Airlines flight TZ 327 at 1750 to TANA arriving 1925. **(Please note that the flight timing is subject to change and could be scheduled in the morning)** On arrival at Tana airport we will transfer (10 minutes) to our hotel. (Breakfast only is included today) O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX B.

Sat 16 Oct Today we will have an excursion to the LEMURS PARK, an hour, and a half drive from the hotel on the outskirts of Tana. Here we can enjoy the beautiful botanical gardens which are home to 9 species of lemur and several species of



chameleon, radiated tortoises and other reptiles. The lemurs here have been confiscated from the illegal pet trade and given a safe new home at the park. The lemurs are very confiding allowing for some great up-close photographs and interactions.

In the afternoon we will take a tour of Antananarivo (Tana) by vehicle with a stop at the Children's orphanage Akany Avoko which provides a home for abandoned and vulnerable babies, children, and teenagers. Other points of interest we may visit include the old Prime Minister's palace, the presidential palace, the Queen's Palace, the historical old town, train station, independence square, the La Digue market and or some of Tana's impressive Catholic churches.

Alternatively enjoy the afternoon at leisure if preferred. In the evening we will have a final farewell dinner (not included in the tour price) and a presentation on some of the highlights of our journey through Madagascar. (Breakfast only is included today) This afternoon and evening you will have use of a room at the RELAIS DES PLATEAUX hotel.

Later in the night pick up from the hotel and transfer (10 minutes) to the airport to check in for your onward international flight.

(Overnight at RELAIS DES PLATEAUX is also possible depending on your flight schedule.)

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Minimum group size is 6, maximum 10 plus the tour leaders.

Start Date in Madagascar	Adult Price	Single Supplement
Thursday 30 September 2021	£5,533	£1,077

Included in the above; Domestic (economy class) flights from Tana to Diego Suarez and Nosy Be back to Tana, all ground transportation; all accommodation in double/twin rooms; all meals as described; (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), all entrance fees; and private guided activities with the two tour leaders and local naturalist guides/spotters in each National Park/Reserve and financial protection through ATOL and Townergate Chapman.

Not included: International flights; 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.

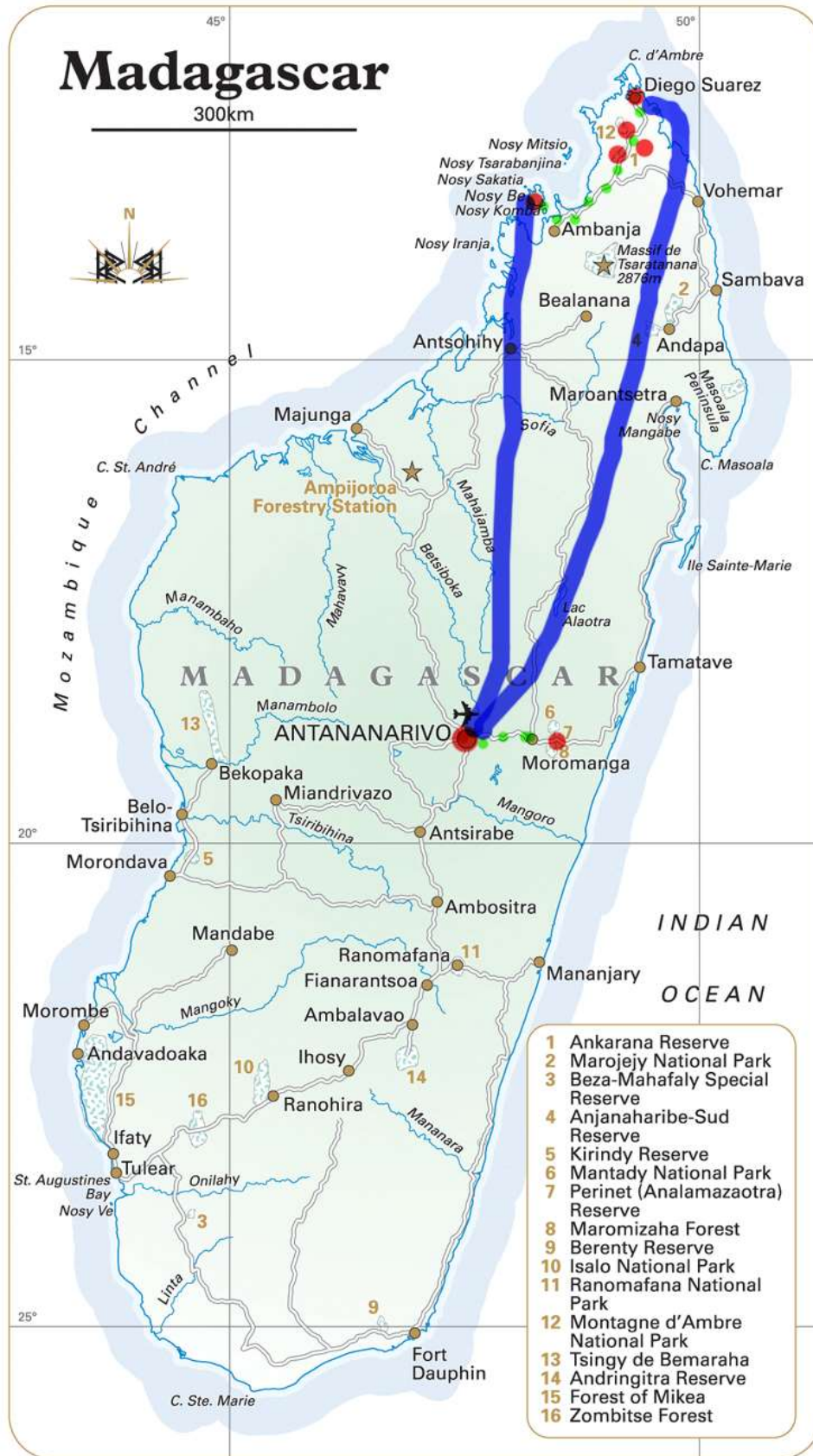
*Prices subject to possible revision. Please call **01803 866965** if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations in Madagascar or another destination.

Please Note: The checked luggage allowance on the domestic flight is 20 kg per person with 1 piece of hand luggage weighing 5 kg per person, plus one small extra item. Excess luggage can be stored in Tana and collected before your time in Andasibe if necessary.

Please Note: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers, some of which will at times be over rough, bumpy and unsurfaced roads. These overland transfers however will add to your experience of Madagascar and enable you to see much more of the country and its different landscapes and culture.

Please Note: This itinerary involves walking along rainforest trails which can be steep and slippery in places as well as some walks in hot conditions in Ankarana 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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IMPORTANT NOTES TO ACCOMPANY THE ABOVE ITINERARY

NB: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers. The overland transfers however will add to your experience of Madagascar and enable you to see 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 Tsaradia 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: 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. Tsaradia 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 Montagne De National Park) in places as well as some walks in hot and rocky conditions in Ankarana 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.

Reef and Rainforest Tours Ltd.

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