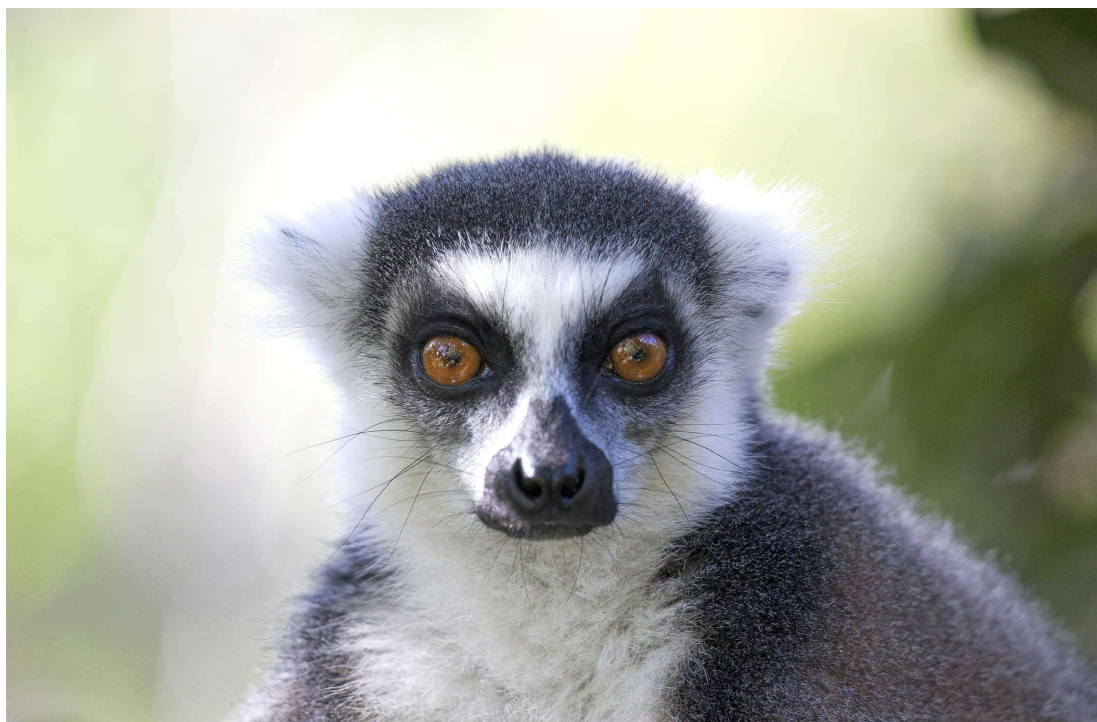




Reef & Rainforest



Special Group Itinerary:

An Overland Journey of Discovery through Madagascar with Daniel Austin

15 - Day Small Group Tour - Led by **Daniel Austin** and
Kenny Andriamaronjaka

14 – 28 September 2021

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 14 Sep Arrive **ANTANANARIVO (TANA)**. Met on arrival at the airport and transferred to your hotel. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX HOTEL.
- 15 Sep Morning transfer (3 hours) to the beautiful Mandraka Park for a riverside lunch. Continue a further 2 hours 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.
- 16 Sep 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.
- 17 Sep 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.
- 18 Sep 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) by road back to Tana. O/n RELAIS DES PLATEAUX HOTEL, B.
- 19 Sep Morning transfer (10 minutes) to the airport to take domestic flight to Tulear. On arrival in Tulear we transfer (20 minutes) to the community conservation **HONKO MANGROVE PROJECT** for a guided tour. We then drive on (15 minutes) to our hotel in Ifaty for time at leisure. In the late afternoon and evening we explore the unique spiny forest. O/n LES DUNES D'IFATY, B, L, D.
- 20 Sep An early morning excursion in the unique **IFATY SPINY FOREST** to see its specially adapted fauna and flora. After breakfast we take a **WHALE WATCHING EXCURSION** in search of humpback whales. The middle of the day is then at leisure. In the afternoon we will return to the spiny forest to watch the sun set over the baobabs before taking a night walk. O/n LES DUNES D'IFATY, B, L, D.
- 21 Sep A second early morning excursion in the **IFATY SPINY FOREST**. We then drive back to TULEAR (35 minutes) stopping at the **IFATY SALT PANS** for birdwatching and the **ANTSOKAY ARBORETUM** for lunch and a tour of the spiny bush plant collections. In the late afternoon we continue 4 hours' drive through beautiful grasslands to **ISALO NATIONAL PARK**. Late afternoon at leisure. O/n JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D.
- 22 Sep Day to explore the spectacular **ISALO NATIONAL PARK**, including the Namazaha trail to see ring-tailed and red-fronted brown lemurs. O/n JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D.
- 23 Sep Morning visit to the transitional forest of **ZOMBITSE NATIONAL PARK**. Return to the hotel for lunch. Afternoon walk or time at leisure. O/n JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D.
- 24 Sep Today we depart on a scenic drive north to **RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK** with stops of interest en route. A highlight will be a stop at the community managed **ANJA PARK** to see wild ring-tailed lemurs close up. O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.
- 25 Sep Morning and afternoon excursions in **RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK**. Night walk in the evening. O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.
- 26 Sep Morning excursion to Ranomafana's Vohipara Trail. Late morning drive (1.5 hours) to the **KIANJAVATO FOREST RESERVE** to see its rare lemurs, meet the researchers and assist with some reforestation. Return to the lodge. O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.
- 27 Sep Today we transfer (7-8 hours) north on a scenic drive through the highlands to **ANTSIRABE** with various stops en route. O/n AROTEL, B, L, D.
- 28 Sep A morning tour of Antsirabe. Later we transfer (4 hours) north to Tana. We will have an afternoon to explore the highlights of Tana. Later transfers to the airport for departing flights will be arranged or an overnight at the hotel depending on flight schedule. B.



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Join Madagascar expert, travel guide author, lecturer, photographer and naturalist Daniel Austin and expert local guide Kenny Andriamaronjaka for an awe-inspiring and insightful journey through Madagascar's top wildlife hotspots.

This well paced and diverse small group tour is the perfect choice for those looking to experience the weird, wonderful, and spectacular natural history of Madagascar.

This popular itinerary offers the perfect mixture of both iconic wildlife and landscapes and takes in most of the key ecosystems found across the country on a relaxing yet ever-changing overland journey.



Beginning with the wonderful species rich rainforests of Andasibe-Mantadia, we will get our first taste for the unique fauna and flora. One of the highlights will be unforgettable close encounters with wild indri, the largest of all living lemurs.

Next, we take our only domestic flight of the trip as we head to the far south of the country to explore the arid and bizarre spiny forests and mangroves of Ifaty and Tulear. The specialist fauna and flora here has had to adapt to the hot and dry climate and here we can see a whole different cast of wildlife. Offshore we also have a chance of spotting any lingering humpback whales.

We then travel north to the rocky canyon lands of Isalo National Park. Here we explore this park's dramatic mountainous landscapes and wildlife riches, including close encounters with ring-tailed lemurs. From here we also visit the transitional and baobab forests of Zombitse National Park, home to leaping Verreaux's sifakas and bright green day geckos.

Our next destination offers more ring-tailed lemur encounters and also hopefully tiny brookesia leaf chameleons at Anja Park before we reach the moist cloud forests of Ranomafana National Park. The wildlife viewing here is fantastic and we can enjoy watching some very special lemurs, birds, frogs, leaf-tailed geckos, and chameleons. We have also included a visit to the little visited Kianjavato Forest Reserve and Field Station where we can track endangered greater bamboo lemurs and agile black-and-white ruffed lemurs with the research team. During our visit we can also learn about the excellent conservation work being undertaken by the Madagascar Biodiversity Partnership and help support their excellent reforestation project. The project planted their 3 millionth tree last year and our visit directly helps with this.

Accommodation is of a good standard as we visit some of the island's most rewarding and diverse National Parks as well as valuable community run reserves and conservation projects.

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.

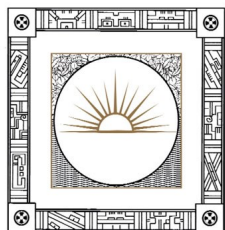
In addition, Daniel is Secretary of the Anglo-Malagasy Society, a UK-based organisation founded in 1961, which holds events and meetings in London to promote knowledge of Madagascar amongst British people and to foster relations between the two countries.

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: **Kenny Andriamaronjaka**

Throughout this tour you will also be assisted by local guide Kenny Andriamaronjaka. A highly experienced leader of several years' standing, Kenny's excellent knowledge and never-ending enthusiasm about Madagascar's wildlife and culture as well as excellent spoken English (he has a Master's degree in socio-linguistics) has made Kenny a firm favourite with our clients for many years.





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AN OVERLAND JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY THROUGH MADAGASCAR **WITH DANIEL AUSTIN AND KENNY ANDRIAMARONJAKA**

Tue 14 Sep Arrive at ANTANANARIVO (TANA) IVATO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. You will be met on arrival at the airport and transferred (15 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).

Wed 15 Sep Today we will make the journey (5 hours) from Tana to ANDASIBE, we stop halfway at the lovely forest of Mandraka for a picnic lunch. 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 as well as 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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Thu 16 Sep

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.



Fri 17 Sep

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.



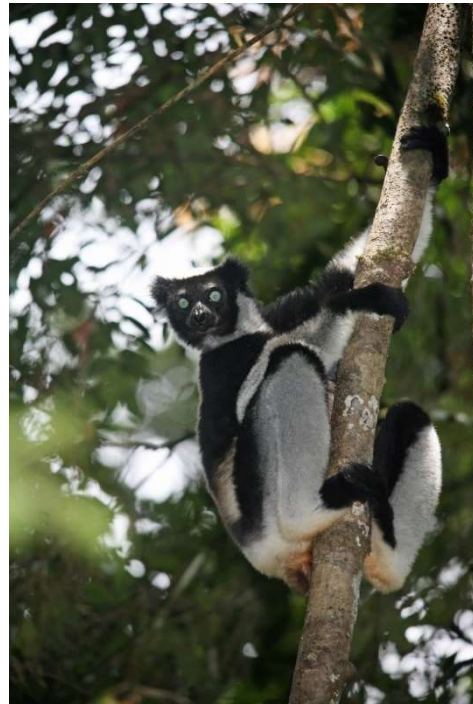
The walking in Mantadia is a little more strenuous than in Andasibe and VOIMMA, but it should be fine if one is fit with no mobility problems, and there are a couple of easier trails available too. This afternoon we will return to Andasibe. For those



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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Sat 18 Sep 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.



Sun 19 Sep After breakfast we transfer just 15 minutes to Tana's domestic airport to catch our TSARADIA domestic flight to TULEAR. **(Please note that the exact timing of this flight may be subject to change).** On arrival in Tulear we will transfer (35 minutes) north towards the small village of IFATY, on the coast of the Mozambique Channel. Swamps en-route harbour birds such as little bittern, purple swamphen and greater-painted snipe amongst herons, ducks and some waders.

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We will make a stop at the HONKO MANGROVE PROJECT for a guided tour. In 2007 two marine scientists set up the Honko Mangrove Conservation and Education charity to preserve, restore and sustainably manage the mangrove ecosystem of the Bay of Ranobe.



Here we can take a leisurely and interpretative walk through the mangroves along the boardwalks observing the wildlife and learning about the different species of mangrove and their importance to the local communities. We may see several species of mudskippers, crabs, dragonflies and birds such as swamp warblers and herons.



Five local villages are dependent on the mangroves and the project has enabled these local communities to develop sustainable ways of living off this natural resource. Since its foundation, the project has helped to



restore a large area of mangrove forest and each year expands with more planting. After our visit to the mangroves, we continue to our hotel for some time to settle in and rest.

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O/n DUNES HOTEL, B, L, D. One of the best hotels in Ifaty, comfortable and well positioned near the spiny forest and right on a beach. There is a swimming pool close to the beach as well as a restaurant serving European dishes and a beach bar for lunches. Wi-Fi is only available in the reception area and is quite weak. Please also note that mobile reception is also very poor.



Ifaty has several diving operations where diving and snorkelling trips may be arranged (OPTIONAL – please consult the tour leader and hotel staff) snorkelling at the ROSE GARDEN is a good option. The beach may not always be suitable for swimming, except at high tide and is not the most picturesque. At low tide it is good for observing rock pool life, but please note that there can often be locals trying to sell souvenirs nearby.



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Mon 20 Sep Very early this morning (around 0500) we will visit the local SPINY FOREST habitat at either Reniala or Mosa Reserve. Here we will search for the diurnal wildlife of the spiny forest.

This region is especially dry as it falls within a rain shadow produced by the eastern and central mountain ranges and only receives around 500 mm of rainfall annually. This arid climate has created a unique vegetation known as spiny forest or bush, dominated by the cacti like *Didiereaceae*, or octopus, trees.



Birds are highlight with several locally endemic spiny forest speciality species to look for. These include the fantastic long-tailed ground roller, sub-desert mesite, Lafresnaye's, red-tailed and sickle-billed vangas, Archbold's newtonia and banded kestrel.



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The forest is also home to many reptiles such as the three-eyed iguanid (*Chalarodon madagascariensis*), the Merrem's Madagascar swift (*Oplurus cyclurus*) some beautiful plated lizards (*Tracheloptychus petersi*) and the blonde hognose snake and Dumeril's ground boa.



The enormous Madagascar giant swallowtail butterfly can also often spotted feeding from the flowering bushes in the forest.

We will return to the hotel for breakfast and then set out on a boat trip in search of humpback whales. A small population of humpbacks return to these waters every year to give birth in the sheltered bays. Although sightings are not guaranteed as it is a little late in the season, we hope to spot a few whales, perhaps even teaching their calves to breach before they set off on their migration to Antarctic waters. We will return to the hotel for lunch and some time at leisure.

Later in the afternoon we will return to the local spiny forest to enjoy the late afternoon sun on the majestic bottle baobab trees.

As the sun sets, we will begin searching for the nocturnal wildlife of this unique forest. We are likely to see the localised Petter's sportive lemur and tiny grey-brown mouse lemur, two nocturnal lemur species only found in spiny forest.



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Other nocturnal species that we may encounter includes the tiny lesser hedgehog tenrec, the Madagascar scops owl and nightjar plus reptiles such as sleeping warty chameleons and the beautifully patterned big-headed (ocelot) gecko plus fascinating insects like the Kung Fu cricket. (All meals are included today) O/n DUNES HOTEL, B, L, D.



Tue 21 Sep This morning we can take another early visit to the local SPINY FOREST to search for more spiny forest speciality birds, reptiles, and insects. Alternatively enjoy a lie in this morning if preferred.

After breakfast by the beach back at the hotel we will then pack up to move on to our next destination. We will first stop just up the road at the IFATY SALT PANS to look for wading birds. This is the prime location to see the highly endangered and fast declining Madagascar plover, alongside more numerous Kittlitz's plovers, turnstones, greenshanks and herons and egrets. We may also see greater flamingoes in the distance too.



We will then continue the drive (1 hour 20 minutes) to the ARBORETUM D'ANTSOKAY for a guided walk and lunch. Here we can see more of the strange flora endemic to southern Madagascar, particularly focusing on the different spiny forest plants. As well as admiring the extraordinary adaptations, we can learn about the various practical and medicinal uses of the plants to local people. This is a good spot for birdwatching too with green-capped couas particularly confiding.

After lunch, we set off on a longer (approx. 4 hours) drive through very scenic landscapes as pass-through wide-open plains reminiscent of East Africa. We will arrive at our hotel on the edge of spectacular Isalo National Park in the late afternoon with time to relax in the evening.

O/n LE JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D. The hotel, on the edge of ISALO NATIONAL PARK, blends in wonderfully with its surroundings. Luxurious for Madagascar – this is one of the best hotels in the country, using beautiful stonework throughout. There is a large swimming pool in a lovely natural setting and a wonderful restaurant offering beautifully presented European influenced food and service. Free Wi-Fi is available in the rooms but is best in the main building.



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Wed 22 Sep This morning we will explore the spectacular ISALO NATIONAL PARK. The park is a runiforme limestone massif, which contains wonderful and very different scenery, unusual plants like the endemic 'elephant's foot' *Pachypodium rosulatum* and is a sacred burial ground for the local Bara tribe.

In the morning we will likely take the easy walk through wonderful shaded canyon-land scenery to the forest of NAMAHAHA. This is a good spot for lemur-spotting where both ring-tailed lemurs and red-fronted brown lemurs can be seen up close around the campsite.

After some lemur watching and picnic lunch, we could perhaps take a refreshing dip in the PISCINE BLEUE and PISCINE NOIRE (blue and black) natural pools before walking back to the vehicle and returning to the lodge to rest.

The timings for the day and the trail choices will be discussed with the group, according to interests/fitness levels (some other trails can be reasonably strenuous and the conditions hot). In the afternoon we can rest, or another walk can be arranged for those interested.



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Besides the lemurs, other wildlife, we may encounter includes the jewel, white-lined and Oustalets's chameleons, Duméril's Madagascar swift (*Oplurus quadrimaculatus*) and skinks such as the (*Zonosaurus ornatus*). Birds such as greater and lesser vasa parrots, Madagascar harrier hawk, Madagascar kestrel, buzzards, hoopoe, and the localised Benson's rock thrush are all possible to see. O/n LE JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D.

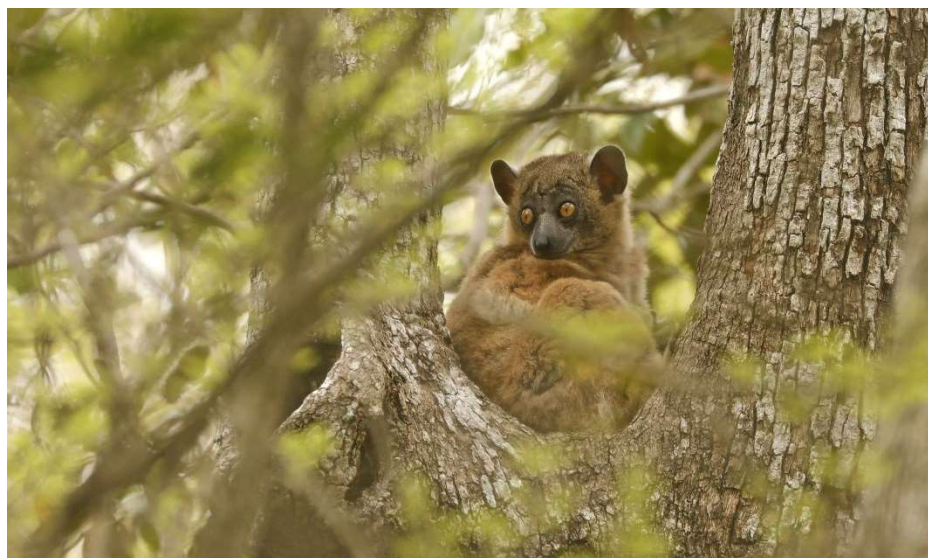


Thu 23 Sep

Today we will rise early to drive 1 hour 30 minutes to ZOMBITSE NATIONAL PARK. Zombitse-Vohibasia acts as a transition zone between the dry and the humid forests of Madagascar. The flora is especially rich within the protected area with bottle baobabs and several orchids particularly common.



The park is home to eight lemur species, including the acrobatic Verreaux's sifaka, which we often see leaping great distances from tree to tree. We will also hope to spot the locally endemic Hubbard's (Zombitse) sportive lemur and the striking Standing's day gecko is among the reptilian highlights.



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Zombitse-Vohibasia also supports a wide variety of interesting bird species, many of them endemic, with Zombitse's special attraction being the rare Appert's tetraka which only lives in this forest and a remote montane evergreen forest at Analavelona. Other bird species include the white-browed owl, red-tailed, blue, rufous and Chabert's vangas, Madagascar cuckoo roller and the impressive giant coua. After our guided walk, we will return to the lodge for lunch. In the late afternoon we can visit another section of Isalo National Park such as the Piscine Naturelle or enjoy time at leisure if preferred. O/n LE JARDIN DU ROY, B, L, D.

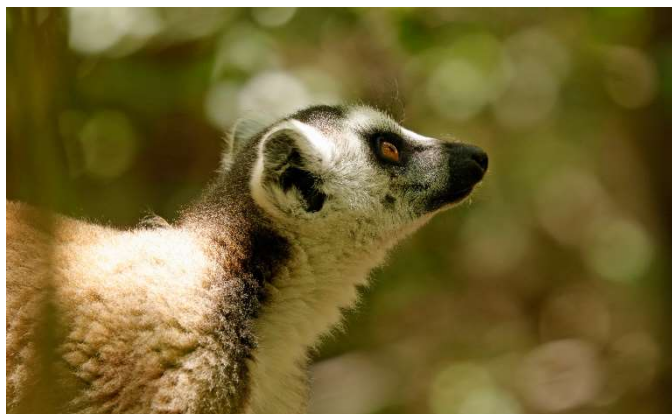


Fri 24 Sep

After breakfast we will depart on one of the most scenic drives in the country as we travel north through vast open plains of golden grass and impressive mountainous landscapes with some dramatic granite peaks. This highland landscape is mostly quiet for wildlife but open a few open country birds such as the Madagascar partridge, bush lark and cisticola may be spotted. The scenery soon becomes more impressive as we pass the edge of the Andringitra Massif. The first half of the journey takes around 4 hours' drive.



We will then make a stop at the community-managed ANJA PARK where we can enjoy close encounters with groups of ring-tailed lemurs as they go about their day.



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This beautiful park was set up by the local community over 20 years ago when most of the surrounding forest had been cut and burnt and only around 70 ring-tailed lemurs survived. Thanks to the reforestation efforts of the local community, the area of forest has now greatly increased, and the population of ring-tailed lemurs has grown to over 360. The lemurs here are well protected and used to people affording exceptionally good views and excellent photographic opportunities. During our walk we will also hope to see the large Oustalets's chameleon and tiny *Brookesia brunoï* chameleons and the colourful painted locust.



After our visit to Anja Park, we will have lunch at a local restaurant in the town of Ambalavao and perhaps visit the paper making factory. In the afternoon we will continue the drive north (3.5 hrs) through ever-changing scenery to arrive at our lodge just outside of Ranomafana National Park in the early evening. Today involves lots of driving, but it takes us through many climatic zones and is broken up with very interesting and rewarding stops. (All meals are included today)

O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.

Located close to the entrance of Ranomafana National Park, this lodge offers good views to the forest. There are 20 bungalows each with a small sitting area and private bathroom with hot water

showers. The restaurant has good views to the forest and serves European and Malagasy dishes. Please note that there is only Wi-Fi in the restaurant, and it is not very fast.



showers. The restaurant has good views to the forest and serves European and Malagasy dishes. Please note that there is only Wi-Fi in the restaurant, and it is not very fast.

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Sat 25 Sep

Today we will explore RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK on morning and afternoon walks in search of its wonderful rainforest wildlife. Ranomafana is an exceptionally rich high-altitude rainforest with an extraordinary biodiversity. The park is famous for the very rare golden bamboo lemur which was first discovered here and is also home to eleven other lemur species.



With the help of experienced local guides and spotters we will hopefully enjoy good views of the rare golden bamboo lemur which the park was first established. We will also search for the beautiful Milne Edwards's sifaka, red-fronted brown lemur and the only two remaining greater bamboo lemurs in the park. Please be aware that the trails in Ranomafana especially the Talatakely trail can be steep and slippery, but generally the going is moderate. Easier trails such as the Vohipara circuit are also available.



A staggering 120 endemic frog species have also been recorded within the National Park. While over 100 bird species have also been recorded in Ranomafana with specialities including the attractive pitta-like and rufous-headed ground rollers, yellow-browed oxylabes, velvet and yellow-bellied sunbird asities and brown emutail. Many of these species are elusive and skulking though and are best seen on the high altitude Vohipara Trail, which will visit on the other days. The inquisitive ring-tailed vantsira (previously known as a mongoose) is another mammal we could encounter during the day.



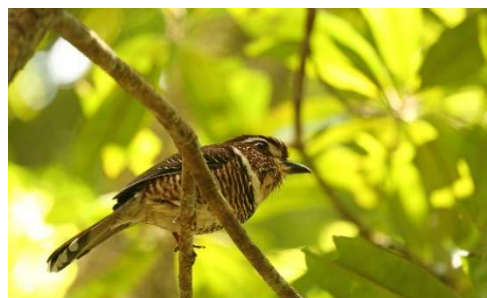
(16).../

This evening we will take a night walk along the nearby road in search of rufous mouse lemurs and sleeping chameleons such as the large O'Shaughnessy's chameleon and beautiful blue-legged chameleon. We may also spot a Madagascar tree boa and some colourful boophis tree frogs. With more luck we could encounter the spectacular satanic leaf-tailed gecko. (Please bring a powerful torch, waterproofs, and an umbrella in case of occasional rain showers on this walk). Please note that some of the trails in Ranomafana are mostly on steep terrain, but all walks will be taken at a gentle pace. (All meals are included today). O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.



Sun 26 Sep This morning we will walk the gentle and flatter Vohipara Trail. This quieter section of the park takes us through stunted high-altitude forest and is the best section of the park to spot the beautiful red-bellied lemur.

The lower canopy forest here provides habitat for rare bird species such as the yellow-bellied and common sunbird asity, the skulking brown mesite, elusive rufous-headed and short-legged ground rollers, the Pollen's vanga and white-throated and yellow-browed oxylabes.



This area of forest is home to many frogs, and we will look for the for the colourful Tsarafidy Madagascar Frog (*Guibemantis pulcher*) in the Pandanus plants and the striking Baron's mantella frog (*Mantella baroni*).



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Later in the morning we will transfer (1.5 hours) to the east of Ranomafana to explore the KIANJAVATO FOREST RESERVE AND FIELD STATION, which is managed by the Madagascar Biodiversity Partnership. The Kianjavato area was identified as a location in vital need for conservation action due to its series of highly fragmented forests that still support important populations of some of Madagascar's most threatened lemur species.

The Madagascar Biodiversity Partnership applies research, education, and conservation in its efforts to create a sustainable future at Kianjavato. It is providing a sustainable conservation solution for some of Madagascar's most threatened species while at the same time providing the local community with the opportunity to improve their livelihoods. The site is also the base for ongoing field research into the endangered lemurs of the eastern rainforests and their increasing threats.

The organisation also provides educational opportunities that directly involve the locals in the process of conservation and encourage them to be advocates for their natural environment. It currently supports 100+ full-time Malagasy employees as field assistants, project supervisors, office employees, horticulturists and supporting field personnel.

In addition to its important research and educational work, the organisation also plants millions (3 million as of December 2019) of native tree species to reverse the decline in rainforest acreage in the east of Madagascar. This practical work is of the utmost importance and will help conserve the endangered endemic species which inhabit these rich rainforests. Our visit here directly helps with each of these projects.



This afternoon we will first explore the rainforest reserve with two local field researchers each studying two critically endangered species: the greater bamboo lemur and the agile black-and-white ruffed lemur.



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The greater bamboo lemur is the largest of the bamboo lemurs and sadly one of the most endangered primates in the world, with a wild population of only around 500 individuals.



Just over 100 of these individuals can be found in the Kianjavato Forest Reserve which is why this site is so important.

This species was once widespread but because of deforestation and fragmentation it became so rare in the 20th century that it was once thought to be extinct, until it was rediscovered in 1972 near to Ranomafana. These gentle lemurs feed almost exclusively on the Malagasy giant bamboo (*Cephalostachium madagascariensis*) and we can usually observe them at close range feeding in the bamboo thickets near the reserve entrance.

We will also look for the charismatic and acrobatic black-and-white ruffed lemur. These large and agile lemurs often take a little more walking to observe but are a fantastic sight in their natural habitat. The droppings of these large fruit eating lemurs are also being used to help grow tree saplings from the germinated seeds for the reforestation project.



This also benefits the local communities by providing fruit bearing and timber trees close to their villages that can be sustainably harvested.

Eastern grey bamboo lemurs, red-bellied lemurs and red-fronted brown lemurs are also present in this forest. After our lemur viewing, we will make a short visit the project's tree nursery and field station, where we can perhaps help plant some trees and learn more about the project. Our visit here directly helps with the project's important conservation, education, and reforestation work.

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(An OPTIONAL and very challenging night walk is also available at Kianjavato to look for radio collared aye ayes for those interested.)

Please Note: The walk to look for the black-and-white ruffed lemurs may involve some steeper sections of path and walking through undergrowth. All walks will be taken at a gentle pace.

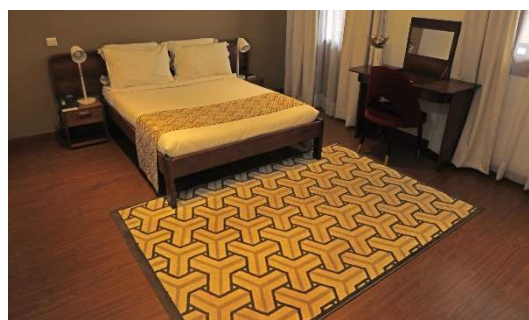


We will then return to the vehicle and drive back (1.5 hours) to our lodge for an evening night walk and dinner. (All meals are included today).
O/n SETAM LODGE, B, L, D.

Mon 27 Sep Today we depart for our longest drive north (7-8 hours depending on local conditions) to Antsirabe stopping at points of interest along the way such as the woodcarving centre of AMBOSITRA, the origin of the intricate inlaid wood designs that are found throughout Madagascar. Later in the day, we will arrive at the handicraft market of Antsirabe; an attractive Hauts Plateaux spa town founded by Norwegian missionaries and noted for its rickshaws and thermal baths. (All meals are included today)



O/n AROTEL, B, L, D. A smart international standard hotel located on Antsirabe's Independence Avenue that re-opened in 2019 after extensive renovations. It features a large outdoor swimming pool, restaurant and 45 modern rooms. The rooms are relatively spacious and feature mini bars, satellite TV, safety deposit box and en suite bathrooms with shower only in most. There is good Wi-Fi throughout the hotel and outside is a pool bar and seating area plus spa and tennis court. The large restaurant serves buffet breakfasts and a wide range of French, Malagasy and international cuisine.



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Tue 28 Sep Today we firstly take a short tour of the city and for those interested visit the local handicraft ateliers. We will then set off on the 4-hour journey north through rice growing paddy fields and hills to Tana and our hotel.

On arrival back in Tana we will check in to our hotel where we have day use of rooms until the evening. 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.)

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

Start Date in Madagascar	Adult Price	Single Supplement
Tuesday 14 September 2021	£4,583	£954

Included in the above; Domestic (economy class) flight from Tana to Tulear; 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.

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.

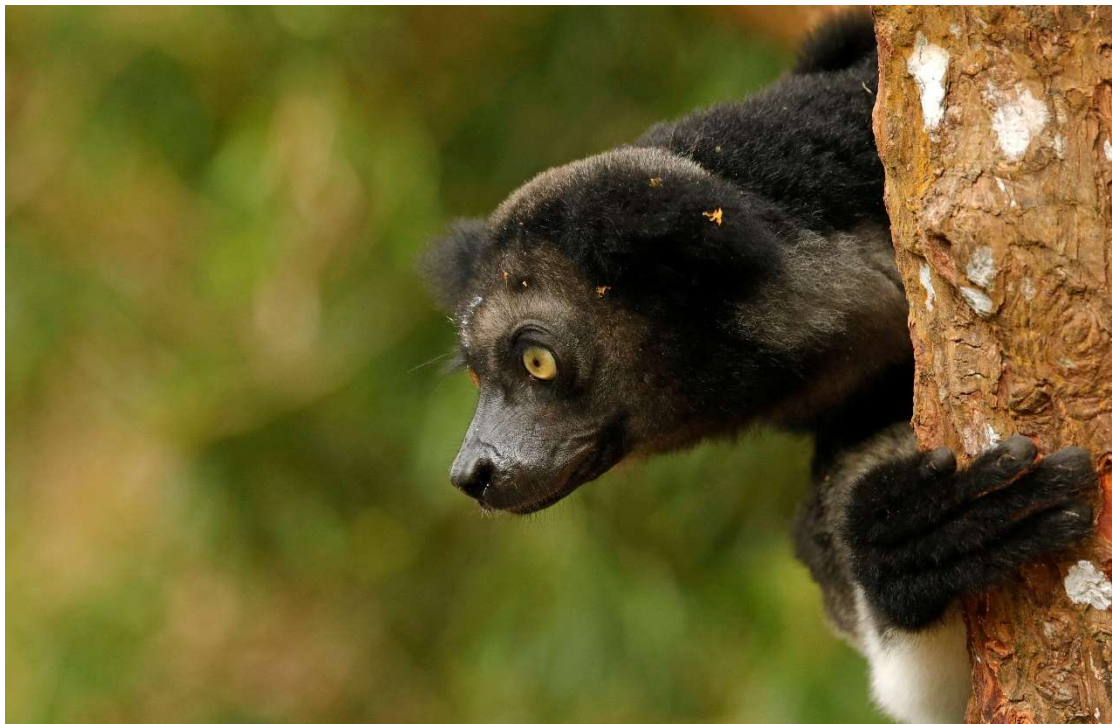
*Prices subject to possible revision. Please call **01803 866965** if you have any queries, would like to secure your place on the tour, and/or if you would like to extend the tour to include other locations in Madagascar or another destination.

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.

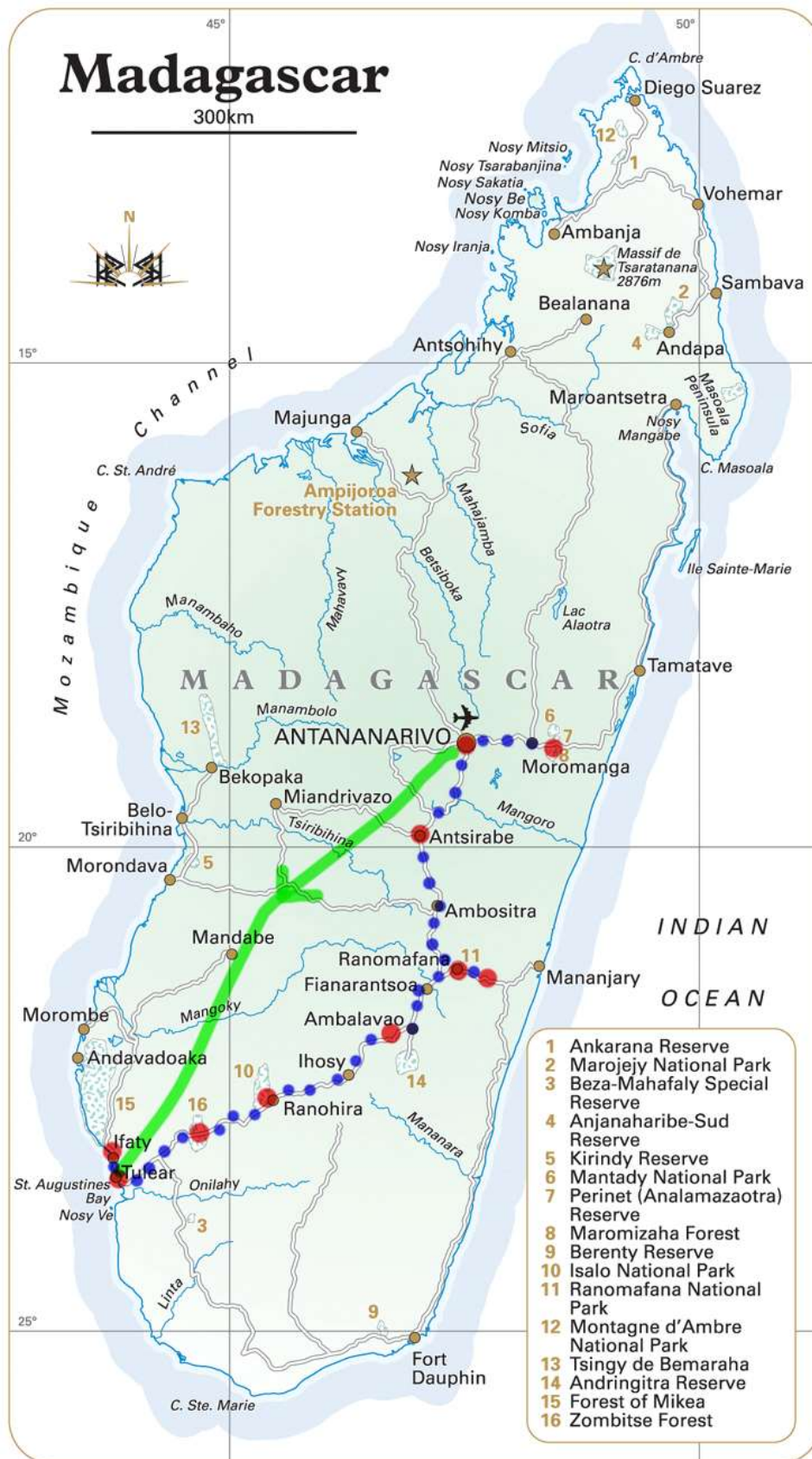
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Please Note: This itinerary involves some long overland transfers, some of which will at times be over rough, bumpy and unsurfaced roads. These overland transfers however will add to your experience of Madagascar and enable you to see much more of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

Please Note: This itinerary involves walking along rainforest trails which can be steep and slippery (especially in Ranomafana, Kianjavatio and Mantadia) 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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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 Ranomafana National Park and Kianjavato Forest Reserve) 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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