

## Madagascar

### LAND OF THE LEMUR

- See Madagascar's unique flora and fauna including the Indri and the 'Avenue of Baobabs'
- Explore an exciting diversity of habitats ranging from montane rainforest to dry deciduous forest
- Personal, small group trip led by local wildlife guide
- Each tour carries a contribution towards the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust (DWCT)



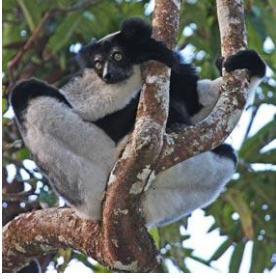
## Summary

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This exciting itinerary has been specifically designed to witness the spectacular diversity of Madagascar's unique fauna and flora. Incorporating a variety of habitats, ranging from Montane rainforest to dry deciduous forest, you will accompany park guides through a rainforest in search of the largest lemur, the Indri and venture on to the Pangalanes region where the littoral forest is host to several species of lemur, orchids, chameleons, frogs, birds and interesting plants. Your journey will then continue to Kirindy Forest, home to the fosa and where nocturnal walks are also particularly rewarding.

# Overview

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Accompanied by an experienced local wildlife guide, your journey will encompass a visit to a montane rainforest where, to the accompaniment of a cacophony of eerie cries, you will search for the Indri, the largest of the lemurs and one of the country's most iconic animals. The rainforest is also home to a host of other species, from colourful chameleons to extraordinary reptiles. You will then continue to the Pangalanes region, where you will spend your time exploring the Palmarium Reserve which consists of 50 hectares of littoral forest which protects a wide variety of palms, hence its name. The last few days of the trip are spent in the Morondava/Kirindy region, home to the splendid Grandidier's baobabs and the best place to look for a number of endemic dry forest species. It is also the most likely location to see the elusive fosa, Madagascar's largest carnivore.

Such diversity of habitat comes with a range of accommodation, from the luxury of a rainforest lodge to the simplicity of very basic parks bungalows in the Kirindy region in order to optimise the wildlife viewing in this region. Most of the regions visited offer little or no alternatives and where ever possible, we use the best accommodation available.



You will gain a great deal from the trip if you travel with an open mind and a flexible attitude given the logistical issues of travelling in such remote areas. However, in so doing, the trip will offer an unparalleled wildlife experience.

This tour aims to give you a fabulous Madagascan wildlife journey, whilst contributing towards Durrell's conservation work in the host country.

## **Habitat / Reserves visited:**

### **Andasibe Mantadia National Park**

Montane rainforest

Day excursions in both Andasibe and Mantadia Parks (nocturnal walks are not permitted within these parks)

Nocturnal walks in the nearby Mitsinjo Reserve

### **Palmarium Reserve**

Littoral forest

Day excursions



### **Kirindy Reserve**

Dry deciduous forest

Day excursions and nocturnal walks

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# Itinerary



## Day 1

Following your arrival in the capital of Antananarivo (Tana), you will be met and transferred to your hotel where you can relax after your flight and meet up with the rest of the group. This afternoon there is an optional excursion to Lemurs Park. Overnight at the Relais des Plateaux Airport Hotel (*or similar*) on a bed & breakfast basis.



## Day 2

After breakfast, you will depart for Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. The drive through highland villages, takes approximately two and a half hours and, after settling in to your hotel, you will have the opportunity to explore the nearby Mitsinjo Reserve on a nocturnal walk, to look for Mouse lemur and Horned-nosed chameleon. Overnight at Vakona Forest Lodge (*or similar*) situated on the outskirts of the Mantadia National Park on a half board basis.



## Day 3

After an early breakfast you will be taken on a guided walk in Andasibe National Park, the island's most accessible rainforest reserve and the best place to see (and hear!) Indri, the largest of the lemurs. Over and above the 11 species of lemur found in Andasibe, this is also a great place for bird watching, including specials such as the velvet asity, blue coua and nuthatch vanga and there is a good chance of seeing snakes, chameleons and frogs. This evening, partake in another nocturnal walk in the Mitsinjo Reserve before returning to Vakona Forest Lodge (*or similar*) where you will stay on a half board basis.



## Day 4

This morning is another early start as you depart for Mantadia National Park which comprises of virtually untouched primary forest and provides the possibility of seeing the diademed sifaka. Other species found here include the Red-bellied lemur, the common Brown lemur, the Madagascar tree boa and the beautiful Parson's chameleon. Overnight at Vakona Forest Lodge (*or similar*) on a half board basis.



## Day 5

Today you will be transferred by road to the village of Manambato, at the edge of Lake Rasoabe, from where you will transfer by boat to Akanin'ny Nofy (Lake Ampitabe), meaning 'house of dreams'. Spend three nights based at the La Palmarium, which is adjacent to the Palmarium Private Reserve, a 50 hectare littoral forest reserve which has broad, well-maintained trails on flat terrain and home to several species of lemur. Overnight at La Palmarium (*or similar*) on a half board basis.



## Days 6 - 7

Two full days to explore this region. This is one of the few places in Madagascar where it is possible to see lemurs close up and unafraid, and offers some excellent photo opportunities. Submerged within the thick vegetation, small lodges scatter the banks of the Pangalanes. Apart from the sights of cargo boats and fishermen travelling by on the water, the surrounding reserve is especially rewarding for photographers. Overnight at Le Palmarium (*or similar*) on a half board basis.



## Day 8

Today you will be transferred by road to Toamasina where you will meet the Air Madagascar flight back to Antananarivo (Tana). Following your arrival in Tana, you will be met and transferred to the Relais des Plateaux Hotel. Overnight at the Relais des Plateaux Airport Hotel (*or similar*) on a dinner, bed & breakfast basis.

## Day 9

This morning you will fly to Morondava. On arrival you will be transferred to your hotel where you will overnight. Chez Maggie Hotel is situated in the port of

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Morondava. It lies on a long, sandy spit of land called Nosy Kely, which runs southward from the town centre, flanked by the Indian Ocean to the west and a mangrove-lined tidal river to the east. Overnight at Chez Maggie Hotel (*or similar*) on a dinner, bed & breakfast basis.

#### Day 10

Today you will be transferred to Kirindy Reserve where you will stay for two nights. The drive from Morondava, via the 'Avenue of Baobabs' takes about 2 hours and the road is very bumpy in places. This evening, explore this rewarding reserve on a nocturnal walk. Stay in the Kirindy Bungalows on a full board basis.



#### Day 11

A full day to explore this region on day and nocturnal walks. This is one of the most rewarding wildlife habitats on Madagascar and yet it is not part of the network of national parks and reserves. Kirindy remains the best place to look for a number of endemic dry forest species like giant jumping rat, narrow-striped mongoose and pygmy mouse lemur. It is also the most likely location to see a fossa. Stay in the Kirindy Bungalows on a full board basis.



*Please note that a tailormade extension to Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park can be arranged on Day 12.*

#### Day 12

Today you will be transferred to Morondava where you will meet the Air Madagascar flight back to Antananarivo (Tana). Following your arrival in Tana, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Overnight at the Relais des Plateaux Airport Hotel (*or similar*) on a dinner, bed & breakfast basis.

#### Day 13

Today you will be transferred to the airport to meet your exit flight, stopping en route at local craft markets.



*Please note that tailormade extension options to various other regions such as Ile St Marie (whale season July - September) can be arranged.*

***Please note the itinerary is flexible and is to be used as a guide only. The itinerary will be dependent on any unexpected flight schedule changes. Given the adventurous nature of the tour and the areas visited, the itinerary can and will change at short notice. A combination of the activities mentioned will be undertaken, but the order in which they take place can and will change on a daily basis!***

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### **Accommodation**

Given the diversity of regions covered, we use a mix of simple and comfortable accommodation:

#### **Relais des Plateaux:**

Situated ten minutes from the airport and one hour from the city, this comfortable, clean hotel is in a quiet residential area. There is a large open restaurant and heated pool. All rooms are en-suite with TV, minibar, room safe, hot / cold air conditioning.



**Vakona Forest Lodge:** Situated about 30 minutes by road from the turn-off to Perinet Reserve. Accommodation comprises of brick bungalows each with their own bathrooms, heaters and mini bar. Mosquito nets are provided. There is a large lounge area and the open plan restaurant is built around an open fire. There is a small souvenir shop and swimming pool.

**Le Palmarium:** While the rooms are simple, but comfortable, the real joy of visiting the Palmarium is the lemurs. The Palmarium Hotel is two hours by boat from Tamatave, with clean and spacious rooms, all with lake views.



#### **Chez Maggie**

Set on an endless white sandy beach, in a secluded garden setting, Chez Maggie is a charming hotel, where the service is warm and friendly and the cuisine, especially the seafood, is very good. Each chalet and bungalow has its own unique and distinctive flair and features a large sitting area and colourful bathrooms. Activities available include a boat excursion to Belo sur Mer, a picturesque village home to the Vezo boat builders where the craftsmen construct traditional 'boutry', the large masted cargo and passenger sailboats which ply the waters of the west coast.



#### **Kirindy Bungalows:**

The accommodation here comprises of very simple bungalows that are sparsely furnished - bed and mosquito net (no fans or air conditioning) and there is only cold water available here. The ablution facilities are communal and extremely basic. There is a central 'restaurant' area where meals are taken. *Please note that this accommodation is very basic and dry forests are renowned for being hot (in November, daily maximums of over 33°C are likely).*



# Dates

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2012 (Antananarivo / Antananarivo)

Saturday 15 September - Thursday 27 September **FULLY BOOKED**

Tuesday 30 October - Monday 12 November

## Main tour cost

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From £2'209.00 per person in twin share accommodation

Based on a minimum group of 10

### Includes

All road transfers, accommodation, domestic flights, meals as stated, English speaking local wildlife tour leader and park guides. Park fees and excursions listed. A contribution to Durrell.

### Excludes

All international flights, vaccinations, travel insurance (mandatory), all drinks, laundry, some meals, telephone calls, all personal expenses and gratuities.

### Flights

This itinerary is based on Kenya Airways International flights, please note the group flight schedule which you would need to base your flights on:

Arriving Antananarivo at 11.40 on Day 1 (subject to flight schedule changes)

Departing Antananarivo at 12.40 on Day 13 (subject to flight schedule changes)

If you are travelling to or via South Africa or Kenya, you will need two blank adjacent pages in your passport and it must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date in order to clear immigration.

### Single Supplements

If you are happy to share accommodation with a fellow traveller of the same sex then you will not be charged a single supplement for your holiday. This is of course dependent on there being another same sex traveller on the trip who is also wanting to share. If we cannot find a partner with whom you can share then unfortunately we will be left with no choice but to pass on the single supplement, imposed by the properties we are using. We will endeavour to keep this supplement to a minimum. Naturally should you wish to have a single room then this is possible by simply opting to pay the single supplement as per the itinerary. The cost of a single supplement is £620.

### Tailormade Extensions

Pre- or post- group trip extensions can be arranged. July - September are great months for whale watching and extensions to Ile St Marie can be arranged.

### *Bemaraha Extension:*

**Day 12:** Transfer by road to Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park where you will stay for four nights at the Olympe de Bemaraha Hotel on a half board basis, including daily park visits.

**Day 16:** Transfer by road to Morondava where you will overnight at Chez Maggie on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

**Day 17 & Day 18:** As per Day 12 and Day 13 of the main group trip itinerary above.

**Cost: £680.00 per person sharing, based on a minimum group of 4**

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# Important information

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## Ground only arrangements

We are happy to quote you either in US dollars or Euros for the tour including return flights to Antananarivo. However, owing to currency fluctuations, we will quote you at the time of your enquiry using the current exchange rate and base this on current flight availability. Please do contact us for a costing.

## Vaccinations and Visas

All visitors must be in possession of a valid passport with at least six months left before expiry. It is your own responsibility to obtain a visa for Madagascar. A visa for 30 days is granted on arrival for UK and US citizens, and the visa fee is currently suspended (*subject to change*). Other nationalities should contact the Madagascar Embassy in your country of residence for visa requirements. Vaccinations for Typhoid, Tetanus, Hepatitis A and Polio are recommended. Malaria is widespread and expert advice should be sought. Please consult a medical practitioner or ring MASTA on 09068 224100 (premium rate call) at least two months before you travel. **IMPORTANT - if you are travelling from a yellow-fever endemic area to Madagascar, you may be requested to provide proof of your current Yellow Fever vaccination.**

## Health and Fitness

A good to high level of fitness and good health is required for the walks and in order to better handle the heat and humidity of some of the areas.

## Food

Malagasy food comprises of simple but tasty dishes served with lots of rice and an abundance of tropical fruits in season. Hotels tend to serve a host of mouth-watering French dishes. Vegetarians can be catered for. Breakfasts included in this itinerary are Continental Breakfasts only.

## Weather

This programme has been devised to provide the best possible wildlife viewing. Madagascar has only two seasons: a hot, rainy season from November to April and a cooler, dry season from May to October. However the different regions have very different climates.

The east coast is the wettest region of Madagascar as it receives the heaviest rainfall; it rains quite often throughout the year. This region is notorious for its hot and humid climate, with the average maximum temperatures varying from 30°C in February to 25°C in July and August, while the average minimum temperatures vary between 22°C in January and 17°C in August.

## Essential items that you will need

We will provide you with a very comprehensive information document when you book, but the following is a guideline for what you need to take: good first aid kit, water bottle, rain poncho, day pack, insect repellent, cheap watch with alarm, good torch with spare batteries, preferably a head torch, binoculars (waterproof if possible), zip lock bags. We recommend that you bring comfortable old trainers/running shoes rather than walking boots as the terrain is wet, and your footwear will need to dry quickly.

## NOTE:

Travel to Africa especially Madagascar, for whom tourism is a relatively new industry, involves lifestyles and conditions that are very different from our own - the pace of life is slower and delays occur. You must be prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. We meticulously arrange your holiday arrangements, however you must understand things can and do go wrong. Therefore patience and a sense of humour are important prerequisites to the enjoyment of your holiday.

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## Our commitment

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An unavoidable consequence of travel is the emission of carbon dioxide into the high atmosphere and while Steppes Discovery takes measures to reduce the carbon footprint of its holidays, regrettably it is not yet possible to make them carbon neutral. If you are able to, we suggest you consider offsetting the carbon emission of your long haul flight by using Rainforest Concern's Forest Credits scheme. Details can be found at [www.forestcredits.org.uk](http://www.forestcredits.org.uk)

Rainforests have a central role to play in the slowing of climate change and yet we are removing forests from the planet at a faster rate than they can grow back. Rainforest Concern supports projects that look to preserve the forests that we have rather than replanting new ones, working to safeguard biodiversity and local communities and in so doing mitigate climate change.

In 2007 we celebrated 10 years of spectacular achievement as pioneers in the field of nature travel.



We have raised a significant amount in support of the world's leading wildlife and conservation agencies, researchers and experts, and increased awareness of travel and conservation through newsletters, lectures and consistent media coverage. Furthermore we have voluntarily spearheaded collective action campaigns such as Travel Operators for Tigers in South Asia.



Durrell's mission is saving species from extinction. Founded by Gerald Durrell nearly 50 years ago, it has a worldwide reputation and pre-eminent expertise in the conservation of endangered species. Its largest field conservation programme is in Madagascar, where intensive work in seven different areas of the country focuses on numerous species, the habitats they live in and the local surrounding communities. In 2011, Durrell celebrates 25 years of saving species and supporting communities to manage natural resources sustainably in Madagascar. For further information, follow the weblink: <http://www.durrell.org/madagascar25>

Our travel partners, accommodation, service providers and ground agents are all carefully chosen to ensure their commitment to the environment, most being quality, family owned businesses - reflecting the unique character of the places, the abiding hospitality of its people and the remarkable spirit of its wilderness.

## Want to discuss this trip?

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Please call Jarrod Kyte on 01285 643333 for more details or to make a booking

A love of wildlife and wild places has long been my main motivation for travelling. I am at my happiest when photographing big cats in Africa or when trekking in the shadows of mighty Himalayan peaks. Before joining Steppes Discovery I consummated my love affair with Africa by upping sticks and moving to Kenya for 2 years to manage a luxury tented camp in the Masai Mara. While Kenya takes some beating I have also been known to flirt with Namibia, India, Nepal, High Arctic, Antarctica, Galapagos and Peru in search of remote places and inspirational wildlife.

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