



RING-TAILED LEMUR BY IAN SEGEBARTH

MADAGASCAR

Exotic Madagascar: Wildlife & Culture of the Red Island

17 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **MAY - OCT**

Madagascar inspires the imagination with its playful lemurs, strange-looking baobab trees, and distinct red-hued soil. The vast majority of its flora and fauna are endemic to the island, making it a true biodiversity hotspot. On this exploration of the “eighth continent,” come face-to-face with wildlife like chameleons, geckos, flying foxes, rare birds, and the country’s many lemur species, from the giant indri to the diminutive mouse lemurs. Madagascar’s vegetation is equally fascinating and is characterized by spiny forests, endangered palms, hundreds of orchid varieties, carnivorous plants, and dwarf baobabs. Take guided hikes in national parks and private reserves, learn about the Malagasy way of life, and relax in the turquoise waters off the coast of the “Great Red Island.”

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Lemur Island, a sanctuary where you can interact with and photograph lemurs rescued from the pet trade.
- Hike in the rainforests of Ranomafana National Park and learn about flora, fauna, and research efforts at Centre ValBio, a leading field research facility run by renowned primatologist Dr. Patricia Wright.
- Explore the sandstone canyons, rocky deserts, and cascading waterfalls of Isalo National Park and swim in a natural pool.
- Meet with local Malagasy community members to learn about commerce, conservation, art, and women’s initiatives.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting



ISALO BY FRANCESCO VERONESI



ANTANANARIVO

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - DEPARTURE

Depart the U.S. for Madagascar.

DAY 2 - ANTANANARIVO

Arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar on a late night flight. After clearing customs and immigration and exchanging money at the airport, meet your local guide and transfer to the hotel. Check in and rest after the long flight. *We recommend considering a stopover in Paris en route, or coming in a day early, to rest. *Overnight at Relais Des Plateaux.*

DAY 3 - ANTANANARIVO

Enjoy a morning at leisure to recover from your long journey. After lunch and a program orientation, receive an overview of Madagascar's culture, economy, political structure, and diverse environments. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. *Overnight at Relais Des Plateaux. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - ANDASIBE

After breakfast, drive to Andasibe. En route, admire the large *Raphia farinifera* palms along the road. Upon arrival at the hotel, check in and visit Lemur Island, established by Vakona Lodge to provide sanctuary for displaced lemurs that were former pets and not suited for reintroduction into the wild. The lemurs are isolated on the island and accustomed to human visitors, offering guests the unique opportunity to interact and be photographed with them. This evening, enjoy dinner overlooking the Madagascan rainforest. *Overnight at Vakona Forest Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - ANDASIBE

Rise early for breakfast and a full-day exploration of the Analamazaotra Reserve in Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. Andasibe-Mantadia contains dense, humid, primary forest

rich with lianas, mosses, fern trees, and more than 100 orchid species. Other common plants growing here are *Pandanus utilis*, traveler's tree, *Tambourissa*, bamboos and some precious woods. Conservation of the forest is a critical challenge in this region due to the graphite mines inside the park; discuss conservation initiatives as they relate to natural resources. Tonight, take a walk in the Mitsinjo Analamazaotra Forest Station, a community-managed protected area, to look for nocturnal species, such as the locally endemic Goodman's mouse lemur, furry-eared dwarf lemur, hairy-eared dwarf lemur, leaf-tailed geckos, and the tree frogs *Boophis viridis* and *Boophis pyrrius*. *Overnight at Vakona Forest Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - ANDASIBE

This morning, have breakfast while listening to the peculiar call of the endangered indri, the largest living lemur species—some reach up to three feet tall! Andasibe-Mantadia is an ideal place to observe the indri, as there are some indri families there that have been habituated to humans. Considered a sacred animal in Madagascar, the indri is the focus of several myths. An additional 13 lemur species can be seen, including the woody lemur, gray bamboo lemur, diademed sifaka, brown lemur, red mouse lemur, red-bellied lemur, black-and-white ruffed lemur, and aye-aye. These forests are also home to 15 other mammal



INDRI INDRI BY PELIN KARACA

species, more than 100 types of birds, 50 species of reptiles, and 80 amphibian species. *Overnight at Vakona Forest Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - ANTANANARIVO

This morning, have breakfast, check out of the hotel, and then transfer back to Antananarivo. Have lunch at a local restaurant. This evening, have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Royal Palissandre. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - ANTSIRABE

After breakfast, begin the drive to Antsirabe. En route, visit the small town of Ambatolampy and its aluminum pot factory for a glimpse into Madagascan industry. Though this factory is small-scale, one craftsman can make as many as 20 of these robust pots per day. Visit the local market, where the guide will explain the seasonality of available foods and how local commerce works. Have lunch at the Rendez-vous des pêcheurs in town and then continue to Antsirabe. After checking in, have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Hotel Couleur Cafe. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, transfer to the mountainous Ranomafana National Park, on the edge of Madagascar's High Plateau with elevations ranging from 1,640 to 4,921 feet. Ranomafana contains a variety of forest environments and is part of the Rainforests of the Atsinanana World Heritage Site. It has served as a model for subsequent parks and reserves in Madagascar and abroad. En route, stop in Ambositra to visit a workshop and discuss local commerce in rural Madagascar. Check in at the lodge and have dinner. This evening, take a walk along the road bordering the national park in search of nocturnal species like chameleons and mouse lemurs. *Overnight at Setam Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 10 - RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, hike in the 102,000-acre Ranomafana National Park. Please note that hikes are moderately difficult and uphill on the way in, and often include off-trail experiences. The pace will be based on the physical ability of the participants. Ranomafana's rainforest is home to the critically endangered greater bamboo lemur, golden bamboo lemur, and 11 other lemur species, plus species of precious wood, palm trees, orchids, and carnivorous plants. Have lunch at Centre ValBio (CVB), a world-famous research station established in 2003 and managed by Stony Brook University. Run by Dr. Patricia Wright, the accomplished American primatologist and conservationist, the CVB focuses on biodiversity, community health, environmental arts, and reforestation. After lunch, receive a presentation on the flora, fauna, and research efforts at ValBio. Continue to Tanala village, where you'll spend time with the tribal king and sing

and dance with the villagers. This evening, have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Setam Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 11 - ISALO NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast, begin the journey to the Great South and Madagascar's most visited park, Isalo. The day's drive is along some of the best roads in the country with breathtaking scenery. En route, stop at Anja Community Reserve, a 74-acre forest managed by the local community and a vital example of sustainable tourism in Madagascar. The reserve boasts a diverse variety of endemic species, including several families of orchids and saxicolous plants. The target here is the ring-tailed lemur. Have lunch in a nearby restaurant, then continue the journey to Isalo. After a long day of driving, check in at the hotel, have dinner, and relax in anticipation of Isalo and its beautiful landscapes of sandstone canyons, fauna and flora, natural swimming pools, and waterfalls. *Overnight at Le Relais de la Reine. (BLD)*

DAY 12 - ISALO NATIONAL PARK

Spend the day exploring Isalo National Park, a continental sandstone plateau dating to the Jurassic Period. Hike across varied landscapes with different forms of sandstones, dotted with the famous dwarf baobab. After an hour's walk with short climbs, stop to rest in a spectacular valley with beautiful views. The overlook shows miles of azure sky, rocky desert, and winding greenery. Continue to a white-sand natural pool for the chance to go swimming before returning to the starting point. Transfer back to the hotel for a cocktail and dinner. *Overnight at Le Relais de la Reine. (BLD)*



MALAGASY WOMEN BY STEPHANIE KOWACZ

DAY 13 - IFATY

This morning, continue the final leg of your journey southward. Stop at Antsokay Arboretum, a 100-acre site created in 1980 by amateur Swiss biologist Hermann Petignat and dedicated to the conservation of the country's endemic flora. Continue to the seaside town of Toliara, which lies near the Tropic of Capricorn. *Overnight at Le Paradisier. (BLD)*

DAY 14 - IFATY

Rise early for a special sunrise walk in Reniala Private Reserve, managed by a local environmental association working to develop ecotourism in the area. Hike some of the trails to explore the spiny forest, a unique ecosystem that only occurs in the southwest of Madagascar. The reserve contains more than 2,000 plant species, as well as impressively old baobabs—including one that is 41 feet in diameter. There are also 65 species of birds; rare endemics such as the Red-capped Coua and the Blue Vanga can easily be seen. Return to the hotel for a late breakfast, and explore the beach or hotel amenities.

This evening, enjoy a special dinner under the baobab trees. *Overnight at Le Paradisier. (BLD)*

DAY 15 - ANTANANARIVO

Transfer to the airport for the flight back to Antananarivo. This evening, have dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Relais Des Plateaux. (BLD)*

DAY 16 - DEPART

Today, explore the city during a drive to Ambohimanga Royal Hill, a hilltop fortress and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the palace dwellings and heritage of Madagascar, then head to lunch at an open-air restaurant. The traditional meal will also be accompanied by the singing and dancing of a local dance troupe. Return to the hotel for dinner and time to pack, enjoying the use of a day room as you await your departure flight. This evening, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. *Day room at Relais Des Plateaux. (B)*

DAY 17 - ARRIVE US

Arrive back in the U.S. following your overnight flight.

LAND PRICING

\$5,495 (12 participants + 1 leader)

\$5,675 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, flights within Madagascar, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, bilingual local guides, and carbon offset.

International airfare, visa fees, gratuities, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Non-refundable final payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe



ACTIVITY LEVEL 4 MODERATE-STRENUOUS

WHAT TO EXPECT

This journey provides an in-depth look at an island nation whose culture is unique, and whose flora and fauna are found nowhere else on earth. Your comprehensive itinerary covers six locations with epic landscapes ranging from towering forests to sandstone canyons to rocky deserts and idyllic beaches. But great distances and a poor infrastructure make travel between them taxing. Some days involve long drives of up to 7 hours, often on bumpy, dusty roads. Cultural discovery includes lectures and folkloric performances; plus visits to tribal villages, an historic fortress-palace, a factory, and an artisanal workshop. Expect some early mornings and hikes that may last up to 4 hours. The hike in Ranomafana is moderately difficult and uphill on the way in, with the possibility of going off-trail. The physical ability of your small group (12 members, maximum) will determine our pace. April through October is the dry season, when there is less humidity and average temperatures fall between 68–79°F. Overland transfers use air-conditioned, 4x4 vehicles.

