

# Wildlife of Madagascar Adventure

## *Natural History Tour*

The vast island of Madagascar has some of the highest concentrations of unique plant and animal species found anywhere on Earth. The island's varied topography ranges from soaring highlands to spectacular coastlines, supporting distinct climatic zones that range from steaming tropical rainforest habitats, unique spiny forest and arid desert plains. Up to 90 % of the wildlife of these habitats can be seen nowhere else.

This expedition takes you to explore Madagascar's very best nature reserves. Doing so supports conservation efforts (as visits to the National Parks include mandatory contributions), and allows you to come face to face with some of Madagascar's most emblematic wildlife!

### ONE OF OUR BEST TRIPS!

**Previous groups have left Madagascar completely spellbound!**

Past groups have encountered up to 18 species of lemur, 12 species of chameleon (including the world's smallest, the *Brookesia* chameleon), 4 species of leaf tailed gecko, tenrecs, many amazing snakes, numerous mantids, hissing cockroaches, several owls and nightjars, crocodiles, day geckos, tortoises and giraffe beetles!

The plant life we have the chance to encounter is no less impressive; from carnivorous pitcher plants (*Nepenthes madagascariensis*), four species of ancient baobabs, *Alluaudia* (octopus trees) to *Pachypodium*, *Euphorbia*, and many species of orchids.

We explore rainforest, dry spiny forest, gallery forest and semi-desert, with adventures to the incredible Tsingy rock tower pinnacles carved in red laterite and limestone.

**COST:** We organise this expedition on a bespoke tour basis. We can set this itinerary up for private groups up to 16 people. The cost depends upon the group size. Please email for a quote.

**START POINT:** Antananarivo, Madagascar.

**END POINT:** Antananarivo, Madagascar.

**DATES:** To fit your preference. We recommend July to October. Starting this 16 day itinerary on a Saturday and ending on a Sunday minimises the number of week days required.

Email [sales@redfernadventures.com](mailto:sales@redfernadventures.com) for more information and to make bookings.

**Pre- or post-expedition extensions:** Stay at a luxury beach resort at Antsanitia for diving trips or undertake an adventurous climbing trip up Mount Marojejy to see the unique silky sifaka. Email us for options and a quote.

**Getting there:** Regular flights are available to Antananarivo from Cape Town, Johannesburg, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Direct flights (Air France and Air Madagascar) fly from Paris to Antananarivo.



## ITINERARY

Please see a promo video for this expedition: <https://youtu.be/Z37IUYDlvjM>

Aye Ayes (filmed during recent Redfern trips): <https://youtu.be/xBYsZSOyDNM>

### Day 1: Antananarivo to Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

Pick up from your hotel in Antananarivo at 8.00 and drive to the Peyrieras Reptile Reserve (approx 4 hours) to see up close several species of captive chameleons which are part of a breeding programme (including panther, island, stump-tail, Parsons and Brookesia chameleons) as well as golden Mantella frogs, tomato frogs, Madagascar tree boas, leaf-nose snakes, cat-eyed snakes and numerous species of leaf tail geckos. The curators of the reserve usually take the animals out of their enclosures to allow close photographs. Drive on to Andasibe. Optional night walk this evening (recommended!) Dinner in a local restaurant at Andasibe.



### Day 2: Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

After breakfast, we visit Andasibe-Mantadia National Park and walk on trails to see many wild lemurs including diademed sifakas, woolly sifakas, common brown lemur and the famous Indri (the biggest lemur of all), as well as orchids and birds. Sightings are usually close up with the animals just a few metres above us in the trees. During the afternoon, we can undertake walks along nature trails and visit birding locations. Dinner in a local restaurant. Accommodation at a resort or hotel nearby.



### Day 3: Andasibe to Pangalanes Canals

After breakfast, we visit the Vakona private reserve and go to "lemur island" (a small island in a river), where habituated (rescued and relocated) common brown lemurs, grey bamboo lemurs and black-and-white ruffed lemurs live for very close encounters (they often jump on your shoulders). We can visit the Vakona zoo (home to a fossa, crocodiles and other native animals). After lunch, we have a long drive, passing through groves of traveller's palms, we arrive at Brickaville and enter the Pangalanes Canals, reaching Palmarium.



# ITINERARY

## Day 4: Palmarium and the Pangalanes Canals

We explore the beautiful forests around Palmarium, home to indris, Coquerel's sifakas, black lemurs, crowned lemurs, black and white ruffed lemurs and red lemurs. Nearby, coastal walks offer the opportunity to see pitcher plants (*Nepenthes madagascariensis*). We can visit a nearby island at 17.30 to go in search of the famous Aye-Aye (the strangest member of the whole lemur family). The tour takes approximately one hour and includes return boat transfers. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant. Palmarium and the Pangalanes Canals are a real highlight of the trip.



## Day 5: Drive back to Antananarivo

Today is a long day of travel. We journey from Palmarium, back to Antananarivo, arriving in the late afternoon. We reach the Highlands through the Mandraka escarpment, making stops at view points, as time and circumstances allow. Dinner and overnight in Antananarivo.

## Day 6: Antananarivo to Berenty Reserve

We fly from Antananarivo to Fort Dauphin in the south of Madagascar. On landing, we transfer into 4x4 vehicles and drive to the Berenty Reserve (a real highlight of the trip). It is a long and bumpy drive (6 hours), but there are many stops along the way, especially as we pass through spiny forest, home to baobabs, several species of *Alluaudia* (ocotillo or octopus trees), *Pachypodium*, and *Euphorbia*. We reach Berenty and can undertake a night walk (strongly recommended). We overnight and have dinner at the lodge accommodation at the Berenty Reserve.



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## Day 7: Full day at Berenty Reserve

We spend a full day exploring the many trails at Berenty. The reserve is home to six species of lemur and the south's largest colony of Madagascar fruit bats. The ease with which one can observe sauntering ring-tailed lemurs and 'dancing' Verreaux sifakas has turned this small protected area into one of the Madagascar's prime destinations. We can explore several trails and visit an arboretum and spiny forest preserve that is full of life: tortoises, sportive lemurs, Scop's owls, hissing cockroaches, aloes and bats. The spiny forest is truly fascinating. We can also visit an excellent ethnological museum that depicts the life of the local tribe, the Antandroy, and features a re-constructed Antandroy village. We have a second opportunity for a night. We overnight and have dinner at the lodge accommodation at the Berenty Reserve.



## Day 8: Berenty Reserve to Fort Dauphin

After breakfast, we begin the drive back to Fort Dauphin. Depending upon our arrival time, we can drive for a short distance to the north to see vast populations of the endemic pitcher plant *Nepenthes madagascariensis* in a preserved wetland, as well as (with luck) ring tailed lemurs. Dinner and overnight in local hotel.

## Day 9: Fort Dauphin to Antananarivo

Fly from Fort Dauphin to Antananarivo. Rest and Relax time in Antananarivo. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.

## Day 10: Antananarivo to Diego Suarez

Flight to Diego Suarez (Antsiranana) then drive to Montagne d'Ambre National Park. The park is home to *Brookesia minima*, one of the smallest chameleons in the world (less than 25 mm in length), and several species of leaf tail geckos. We also look for the ring-tailed vontsira, the fossa, and as many as 8 different lemurs (Sanford's brown lemur, crowned lemur, lesser bamboo lemur and are five species of nocturnal lemurs)! The forests are home to 75 different bird species (35 of which are endemic to Amber Mountain, such as the Amber Mountain rock-thrush). With luck, we find the stump-tailed chameleon, several interesting snake species, and study some of the 35 frogs and more than 40 butterflies known from the park. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.



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## Day 11: Visit the Tsingy Rouge

Drive to Ankarana via Tsingy Rouge, a stunning geological formation of towers and pinnacles of red laterite formed by erosion. The landscape is breath-taking. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.



## Day 12: Ankarana National Park

We spend a full day exploring Ankarana National Park, including a hike through bizarre landscapes of grey 'Tsingy Tsingy' limestone pinnacles, mixed with patches of dense tropical jungle, deciduous forest, deep caves and canyons. The underlying rocks undergo heavy erosion producing an amazing karst topography, including the famous limestone 'tsingy' spires. Key animal species include the paradise flycatcher, the sunbird, the vagas, the crowned lemur, the Sanford's brown lemur, the northern sportive lemur, the brown mouse lemur, the fat-tailed dwarf lemur, the fork-marked lemur, the eastern woolly lemur, Perrier's sifaka and the western lesser bamboo lemur. The Reserve also has several micro-endemic species of reptile and amphibian which we may see as well. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.



## Day 13: Blue-Eyed Black Lemurs at Ambodimanga

Drive to Antsohihy (6-7 hours) but scenery is beautiful and we will be able to stop at Ambodimanga forest trying to find the very rare blue eyed black lemurs. The colourful panther chameleon can also be seen around Ambanja and Antsohihy. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.



# ITINERARY

## Day 14: Ankarafantsika National Park

Morning drive to Ankarafantsika National Park and afternoon walk along the trails. The park covers a vast area that combines deciduous forest, savannah and wetland, Ankarafantsika is one of Madagascar's largest parks, occupying a staggering 1,350 km<sup>2</sup>. The area is a birdlife haven and a large number of visitors come for this reason alone (particularly to see the Madagascan fish eagle). There is a host of over wildlife, including the rare Madagascan big-headed turtle, the rhinoceros chameleon, the dwarf chameleon, and eight species of lemur (including two species of mouse lemurs that are among the world's smallest primates). Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.



## Day 15: Return to Antananarivo

A final long drive (6-7 hours) but scenery is beautiful and there are many endemic plants that can be seen along the road. We learn more about local lifestyle and culture as we will pass through small villages. We arrive back in Antananarivo around sunset. Overnight in a local hotel and dinner in a local restaurant.

## Day 16: Flights Home

Transfers to the airport for departing flights. If flights are afternoon or evening, we can undertake a city tour to visit the French colonial ruins of the city, as well as interesting gem trader markets. End of tour.

### INCLUDED:

- All entrance tickets and permits to visit national parks, including all local guide fees.
- All accommodation and food.
- All ground transportation.
- All domestic flights.
- Professional tour leader.

### NOT INCLUDED:

- Drinks (participants purchase direct).
- Tips (optional).

**NOTE:** Madagascar is a beautiful county, but the road infrastructure is extremely under-developed. Many roads are bumpy and travel speeds are slow. This itinerary does include many long road journeys. While there is always something fascinating to see, and journeying by road is often the only way to access the best reserves, participants should come expecting the long road journeys listed above.



# SIMPLIFIED ITINERARY

Vehicle Transfer



Air Transfer

