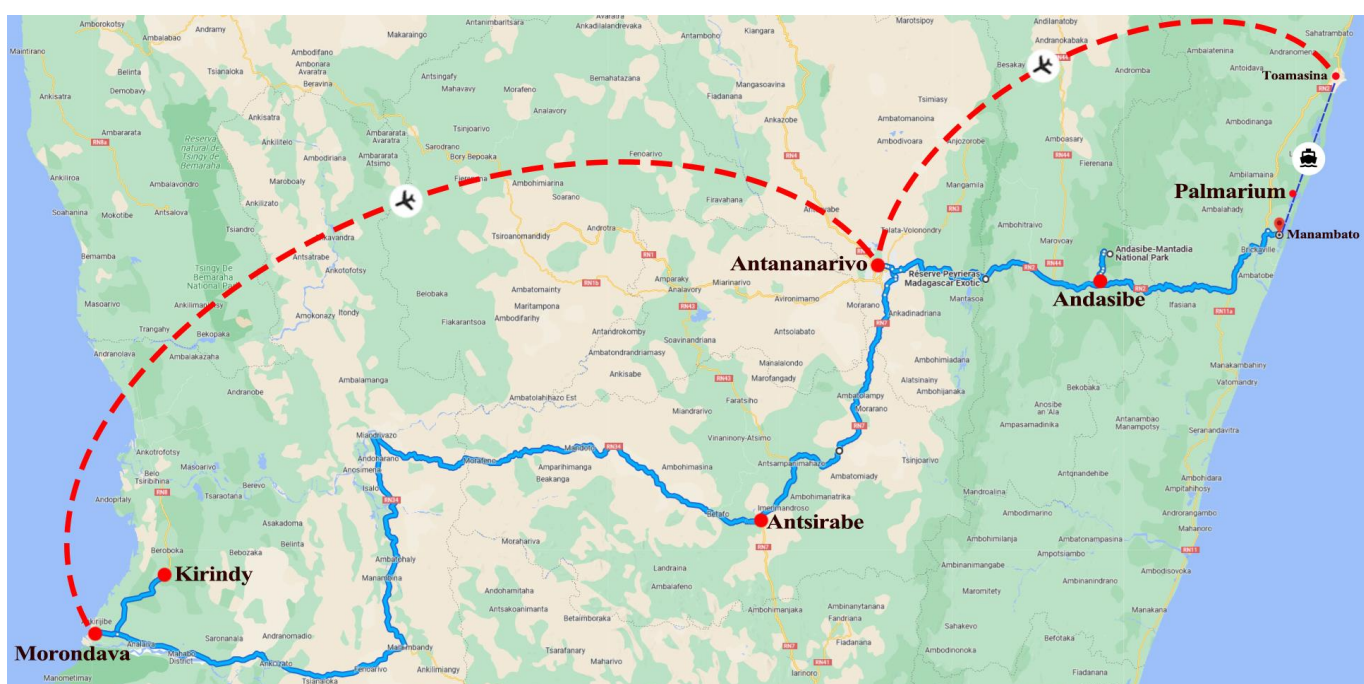


Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and unlike anywhere else. With approximately 90 percent of animals and plants being endemic, Madagascar is regarded as one of the world's very best destinations for wildlife photography. Whether it be the amazing lemurs, colourful chameleons, rare birds, geckos or frogs, you're guaranteed to be amazed by the extraordinary natural diversity on offer.

Madagascar's landscapes is however equally varied and impressive. From pristine white sand beaches to mangrove forests, endless jungles, incredible karst formations and the iconic Avenue of Baobabs, those keen on landscapes won't be disappointed. Untouched by mass tourism, the colonial towns, remote coastal villages and lively local markets are also uniquely interesting, whilst the welcoming locals will always greet you with a smile. Come and join us on what will surely be an endlessly photogenic journey.



Details

Duration: 15 days, including arrival and departure

Departure date: September 2024

Price: US \$????* per person twin share.

This tour is by invitation only and limited to a **maximum of 4 people**. For anyone requiring a single room, there will be an additional surcharge.

Included

The complete tour as per the itinerary, all domestic airfares as per itinerary, all domestic airport and airline taxes & charges, meals as specified (B/L/D).

Not included

International airfares, inclusive of taxes and charges, visa, travel insurance, any expenses of a personal nature (such as laundry, phone calls, personal tipping etc.), any meals other than those specified, any drinks (alcoholic or non-alcoholic).

Highlights

- **Antananarivo**, the lively capital of Madagascar, commonly known by its colonial shortened name Tana.
- **Réserve Peyrieras**, where we will have the opportunity to photograph some of Madagascar's unique animals.
- The amazing fauna and flora of **Andasibe-Matadia** national park.
- Exploring the **Pangalanes Canal** by boat, with its white sand beaches bordering the Indian ocean and lush forests and mangroves harbouring an incredible array of fauna and flora.
- The laid-back coastal town of **Morondava** and nearby iconic **Avenue of Baobabs**.
- **Kirindy Forest** and Madagascar's most sought-after predator, the Fossa.
- Colonial towns, coastal villages, lively markets and the welcoming Madagascan people.
- An incredible array of fauna and flora.

Tour Itinerary



Day 1: ARRIVE IN ANTANANARIVO (L/D)

After arrival in Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar, we will be transferred by road to the city for our overnight stay.

The capital of Madagascar has grown rapidly in the past few years, yet the history of the nation is still found in older buildings from pre-colonial times, while the French influence is everywhere, from shops and signs, to colonnade architecture. Tana is a cross-section of the culture and history of the nation and its people. Our journey from the airport to the city will pass through rice filled paddy's, sprawling urban areas and into the hills that form the centre of the city.

Overnight at **Le Louvre Hotel, Antananarivo.**

Day 2: ANTANANARIVO – ANDASIBE NATIONAL PARK (B/L/D)

This morning we depart for Andasibe, a journey of 145kms on quite good roads (about three hours duration). We will stop at Réserve Peyrieras, a private reserve created by Mr. Peyrieras. Almost all species of Madagascar's insects and butterflies are represented here. Visitors can observe them at all stages of their development at the large aviaries adapted to their natural environment. Mr. Peyrieras also has a large collection of chameleons, plus various amphibians, snakes, lizards and crocodiles. The nearby forests are home to a group of the colourful Coquerel Sifaka, and if they are nearby, we will visit them for some close-up photos.

After our visit we transfer to our lodge. This afternoon we visit Vakona Private Reserve, which is a nature reserve owned by Vakona Forest Lodge. Within the reserve lies "Lemur Island", offering us a great opportunity to get up close to Lemurs in a natural setting.

This evening there will be the opportunity to undertake a night-walk through the forests that surround the hotel. This will show us a totally different world from that seen during daylight hours.

Overnight at **Eulophiella Hotel, Andasibe.**



Day 3: ANDASIBE NATIONAL PARK (B/L/D)

Today we visit the Analamazaotra Reserve. The Andasibe-Mantadia National Park with its 154 km² encompasses two distinct areas: the small Réserve Spéciale d'Analamazaotra (popularly known by the old French name of the nearby town and railway station, "Périnet") in the south next to Andasibe village; and the much larger Parc National de Mantadia to the north. Both parts belonged to the same humid forest, but because of human activities are now divided in two. The park was created in 1989.

The Reserve is famous for the Indri which is the largest of all lemurs and whose calls can be heard widely during the mornings. There are 13 other lemur species found here. The extraordinary animal diversity is completed with another 15 mammal species, more than 100 of birds (many of them endemic, like the Madagascar yellowbrow, Madagascar baza, Madagascar wagtail or the Madagascar serpent-eagle), 50 species of reptiles, among them the biggest chameleon of the island - the boa manditra, many leaf-tailed geckos and more than 80 species of amphibians. (A picnic lunch will be taken with us)

In all of the nature reserves we visit expect to do quite a bit of walking. In this reserve in particular it may be hot and humid. Depending on the route we take, it can be quite hilly, and after rain, a little muddy.

Overnight at **Eulophiella Hotel, Andasibe.**

Day 4: ANDASIBE NATIONAL PARK – LAKE AMPITABE (B/L/D)

We depart from Andasibe and travel east, down the escarpments to the coastal plain, where after winding our way through coastal villages we end up at the town of Manambato. We leave our vehicles here and start our journey through the waters of the Pangalanes.

This section of canals was constructed under the governance of General Joseph Gallieni during the early French colonial years of 1896-1904. It was designed to facilitate transportation of goods to the main trading port of Toamasina (Tamatave), because shipping along the Indian Ocean coast was too dangerous. The canal still dominates daily life in this region as it provides the main source of trade, transport and travel. Many traditional Betsimisaraka villages can be seen along the banks, as well as pirogues (traditional dugout canoes), local fishermen, over-crowded ferries and rafts with straw huts carrying timber en-route to Toamasina.

We travel about 25kms on the water to reach “Le Palmarium” (also known as Ankanin’ny Nofy) which is set on the banks of Lake Ampitabe. The lodge is found on a small private reserve set up to preserve some of the area's unique flora and fauna. Palm trees, orchids and even carnivorous plants can be found growing in the gardens, and lemurs are easily spotted all year round. The lodge has eleven bungalows with en-suite bathrooms. The bungalows are simple inside, but with all of the essentials. They have a very natural feel, with thatched roofs, polished stone floors and white washed walls.

Either this evening or tomorrow (before dinner) we shall have the opportunity of visiting a small island which is home to some extremely rare “Aye-Aye” lemur. Palmarium has exclusive access to this location and their staff accompany us to find some of the Aye-Aye.

Overnight **Palmarium, Lake Ampitabe.**



Day 5: LAKE AMPITABE (B/L/D)

This morning we undertake a guided walk through the private reserve of Palmarium. There are 10 different lemur species living here and although wild, some are very confident and it is a great chance to get close to these creatures, endemic to Madagascar.

This afternoon is free for your own discovery of the Reserve and the areas surrounding the lodge, or take a wander along the shores of the lake. If possible, we might visit Andranonkoditra, a small fishing village overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Overnight **Palmarium, Lake Ampitabe.**



Day 6: LAKE AMPITABE – ANTANANARIVO (B/L/D)

This morning it's back onto the water as we continue our journey through the Pangalanes, witnessing more of the local people going about their daily lives.

We continue north through the canals and lakes and end up at Toamasina (commonly known as Tamatave). It is Madagascar's second largest city and with the presence of the main regional seaport has a growing potential for economic activities. It is the country's largest port, and therefore the country's commercial hub, handling much of the island's foreign trade.

We leave our boat here and transferred to the Calypso Hotel for lunch. This afternoon we take a walking tour of Toamasina. Wide avenues, palm trees, French colonial buildings and one of the most modern daily markets in the whole of the country will be ours to explore. Later in the afternoon we transfer to the airport for our flight* back to Antananarivo, where we will be met and transferred to Hotel Louvre.

Overnight at **Le Louvre Hotel, Antananarivo.**



** Depending on flight availability, our flight may be the following morning.*



Day 7: ANTANANARIVO (B/L/D)

Today we enjoy a guided tour of the city. This will include historic and cultural areas, plus some of the major markets which are so crucial to the daily life of the city.

Afternoon at your leisure to further explore the city.

Overnight at **Le Louvre Hotel, Antananarivo.**

Day 8: ANTANANARIVO – MORONDAVA (B/L/D)

This morning we will be transferred to the airport for our flight to Morondava. Upon arrival we transfer to our hotel for lunch.

This afternoon we will explore the beach and peninsula of Morondava. Depending upon the winds and the weather we may find many local families enjoying their afternoon at the beachfront – a true Malagasy tradition in these coastal locations.

Overnight at **Palissandre Cote Ouest Hotel**, Morondava.



Day 9: MORONDAVA – KIRINDY (B/L/D)



Today we rise early to photograph the Avenue of Baobabs during sunrise. After breakfast back in Morondava we commence our journey north to Kirindy, passing the amazing Avenue of Baobabs again. Kirindy (also known as the Swiss Forest) is arguably the best place to see some of Madagascar's nocturnal inhabitants such as the fossa, Madagascar's largest carnivore, and the endangered giant jumping rat, endemic to this area.

The forest also has a good cross-section of lemur species (Fork-marked lemur, Coquerel's dwarf lemur, fat-tailed dwarf lemur, Milne Edward's sportive lemur, grey mouse lemur and the very rare pygmy mouse lemur). Bird life here is very diverse and numerous reptiles (like chameleons) abound. This afternoon we spend time in the reserve.

Our overnight stay here is a new modern lodge, Relais du Kirindy.

Day 10: KIRINDY (B/L/D)

In addition to having some time to relax and enjoy the environment, today we will explore forest walks during the daylight and in the evening.

Overnight at **Relais du Kirindy.**



Day 11: KIRINDY – MORONDAVA (B/L/D)

Today we return to Morondava after a short morning's walk in Kirindy Forest. On the way back will be stops to see some unusual baobabs and more village life.

Depending on timing, we will return to the Avenue of Baobabs for sunset and/or a night shoot.

Overnight at **Palissandre Cote Ouest Hotel**, Morondava.

Day 12: MORONDAVA (B/L/D)

This morning (depending upon the tides) we set out across the nearby river and pay a visit to the village of Betania. This is a fishing village of around 1,000 people and has very basic facilities. It is inhabited by the Vezo tribal group (part of the Sakalava group). Fishing is practiced with net fishing from dug-out canoes and line fishing from outrigger canoes. We will have the opportunity to photograph some of the locals.

Later in the day visit the centre of town and see the local markets. There will be further opportunities to photograph the Avenue of Baobabs today, depending on what the group prefers.

Of the nine baobab species in the world, six are endemic to Madagascar; two are found in Africa and another in Australia. The best place to see one of these species, the “*Adansonia granddieri*”, is the Avenue des Baobabs. This is a large region with the majestic tree in abundance, and a sacred baobab with offerings around it showing the significance of the trees. There are also two that have become intertwined, and are known as “Les Baobabs Amoureux”.

Overnight at **Palissandre Cote Ouest Hotel**, Morondava.



Day 13: MORONDAVA – ANT SIRABE (B/L/D)

Today we have a long road journey from the west coast and up into the central highlands of Madagascar and the city of Antsirabe. The journey will take us through a wondrous cross-section of Malagasy life – farms of various sorts, small towns and villages, changing housing architecture and different ethnic sub-groups.

We will stop for lunch at the regional town of Miandrivazo, our last lowland town before we commence the climb into the highlands.

Antsirabe is the third largest city in Madagascar and has a population of approximately 183,000. Due to its altitude (about 1,500m) temperatures are cooler generally, and very cool in winter. The temperate climate was probably the reason why Norwegian missionaries chose this place to settle down in 1872. Its name means “where there is salt” honouring the large number of hot springs the town has, a fact that has given the city the nickname of “Malagasy Vichy”. Thermal baths had been long appreciated for their curative effects by the local population before French colonists decided to locate a thermal bath here in the 19th century.

Our stay here will be at Couleur Café Hotel. The brick bungalows are located in a pleasant garden and the main building has a communal lounge and restaurant.

Overnight **Couleur Café Hotel, Antsirabe**

Day 14: ANT SIRABE – ANTANANARIVO (B/L/D)

Early morning we visit Antsirabe markets before commencing our journey back to Tanananarivo. On the way we will stop at Ambatolampy to visit the local aluminium smelter and nearby market.

Depending on traffic and our arrival time in Tanananarivo, we may go to the hills above the city for a late afternoon scenic shoot.

Overnight at **Le Louvre Hotel, Antananarivo.**





Day 15: ANTANANARIVO – DEPARTURE (B)

Depending on our departure time, you may have some time to explore the streets surrounding our hotel, otherwise you can casually set about preparing for your departing flight.

If you are interested in joining me on this fantastic photographic tour or require additional information, please contact:



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