



Hidden Madagascar Safari

October 21- Nov 5, 2012

FINAL ITINERARY

Day 1 ~ Oct 21 ~ Arrive in Antananarivo

Your Mountain Travel Sobek leader (or a representative) will meet you outside the customs and immigration area at the airport, then drive you to our hotel. Built on a series of hills and crisscrossed with cobblestone streets, Antananarivo (or Tana, as it is locally called), has a joie de vivre all its own. At an elevation of 4,000 feet, Madagascar's capital rests among the island's lush green central highlands and is surrounded by twelve hills. Some flights arrive late today, so you'll meet your group and your guide at breakfast on Day 2. No meals are included today, but the hotel has a nice restaurant or can recommend places nearby.

La Varangue Hotel

Day 2 ~ Oct 22 ~ Fly to Maroantsetra

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll transfer back to the airport for our flight to Maroantsetra, departing at 10:50am and arriving around 12:00pm. Upon landing we'll transfer to the Relais du Masoala, a beautiful eco-lodge on the north coast of Madagascar. Relais du Masoala consists of fifteen hand-crafted thatched bungalows providing spacious accommodation with en-suite facilities and private verandas overlooking the Bay of Antongil. We'll enjoy an early dinner before taking a night walk into the surrounding forest to find nocturnal amphibians and reptiles.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Relais du Masoala

Day 3 ~ Oct 23 ~ Nosy Mangabe

Morning departure by boat to the tiny island of Mangabe—the “great blue island”—for a full-day excursion. Nosy Mangabe is a natural reserve and sanctuary for the world's rarest lemur: the nocturnal aye-aye. The world's largest nocturnal primate combines the face of a rodent, the body of a monkey, and the hunting method of a woodpecker. It taps trees to find grubs inside, then burrows into the tree and fishes out the grubs with its elongated middle finger. The island is also home to frogs, leaf-tailed geckoes, and the curious brown lemur. Enjoy a nature walk, hiking, and swimming in the Indian Ocean at a wild, deserted beach. A more challenging uphill climb reveals black-and-white ruffed lemur high in the trees and an ancient Malagasy burial site. We'll also discover rocks where pirates and merchantmen carved their names centuries ago. We spend the night at the edge of the untouched wilderness of Masoala National Park at the new Petit Relais eco-lodge. (optional 3-4 hours hiking.)

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Petit Relais

Day 4 ~ Oct 24 ~ Masoala National Park

Hike in the pristine forest—habitat of the red-ruffed lemur, brightly colored frogs and chameleons, and the endangered Madagascar red owl and serpent eagle—followed by a picnic lunch. In the afternoon, explore the nearby forest or snorkel in the Tampolo Marine Reserve or simply relax on the sandy beaches outside your bungalow. (2-3 hours hiking)

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Petit Relais

Day 5 ~ Oct 25 ~ Return to Antananarivo

Relax at the lodge this morning before our flight back to Tana at 1:25pm. Upon arrival in Tana, we'll do a brief city tour before an early dinner at a downtown restaurant, then transfer to the La Varangue hotel.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/La Varangue

Day 6 ~ Oct 26 ~ Fly to Tulear, drive to Isalo

Early this morning we'll transfer to the airport for our flight to Tulear, a small coastal town reminiscent of dusty Old West towns. We'll stop here for lunch then drive inland for about four hours on decent paved roads. We'll arrive in Isalo National Park, where bizarre sandstone formations shelter rare plant and animal species and create a serene, otherworldly atmosphere.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Jardin du Roy

Day 7 ~ Oct 27 ~ Isalo National Park

After gathering our park permits, we begin our picturesque hike in Isalo National Park. We start very early for the best chance to see lemurs. Possibilities include the sifaka and red-fronted brown lemurs, as well as plenty of ringtailed lemurs. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch in the park during this full day of hiking (5-6 hours). Return to the hotel for dinner and sundowners.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Jardin du Roy

Day 8 ~ Oct 28 ~ Zombitse Botanical Gardens

This morning we will make a day excursion to visit the Zombitse Botanical Gardens and Vohibasia National Park, a great spot for birding enthusiasts. We'll return to the Jardin du Roy for dinner and overnight.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Jardin du Roy

Day 9 ~ Oct 29 ~ Fly to Morondava

Easy morning before our 9:55am flight to Morondava. We arrive just after 11am and begin our 8-hour drive to Bemaraha. The roads are rough, but the route is very scenic and it's the only way to reach the Tsingys of Bemaraha without chartering a small plane. We drive through the Kirindy Forest and make rest stops along the way.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Olympe de Bemaraha

Days 10-11 ~ Oct 30-31 ~ Tsingy de Bemaraha

Tsingy de Bemaraha is Madagascar's true wilderness, with very few visitors, and as such is perhaps the island's best example of unspoiled wildlife habitat. Its grand limestone pinnacles—some towering as high as 160 feet—provide an exhilarating experience, and add to the cachet of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. During our stay here we'll have options to take an easy hiking circuit through the Petit Tsingy, crossing boardwalks and short ladders surrounded by extraordinary rock pinnacles or combine this hike with a forest walk on the Andadoany circuit. On the second day, those in top hiking shape can opt for the all-day hike to Grand Tsingy; the tsingy here consists of 50 meter pinnacles and involves quite a bit of climbing. Or you can opt out of the tough hike and paddle a pirogue up the Manambolo River, where you can see the Madagascar fish eagle and caves with stalactites. Each night we'll return to our accommodations just outside the park.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Olympe de Bemaraha

Day 12 ~ Nov 1 ~ Return to Morondava

Depart Tsingy de Bemaraha for the all-day return drive to Morondava. We stop along the way at Bekopaka, a Malagasy settlement, and we visit the famous Avenue of the Baobabs. About a dozen trees nearly 100 feet tall, of a species endemic to Madagascar, line the Avenue. Baobab trees, up to 800 years old, are a legacy of the dense tropical forests that once thrived on Madagascar. The trees did not originally tower in isolation over the serene

landscape of scrub but stood in dense forest. Over the years, as the country's population grew, the forests were cleared for agriculture, leaving only the baobab trees. Tonight we stay at the Palissandre West, a 5-star beach resort in Morondava.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Palissandre West

Day 13 ~ Nov 2 ~ Perinet, Mantadia National Park

Today we'll take a morning flight from Morondava back to Antananarivo. From Tana, we drive to Perinet and Mantadia National Park, with a brief stop en route for lunch.

Perinet Mantadia National Park encompasses an area of virgin rainforest and is home to a number of lemur species including the largest - the indri - with its eerie wailing call. The forest is bursting with all manner of plants, birds, insects, reptiles and mammals which can be spotted on forest walks.

The extraordinary animal diversity is complemented by more than 100 bird species (many of them endemic, like the Madagascar yellowbrow, Madagascar baza, Madagascar wagtail or the Madagascar serpent-eagle), 50 different reptiles, among them the biggest chameleon of the island, the boa manditra and many leaf-tailed geckos and more than 80 amphibians. There are also a few local endemic fishes swimming in the small rivers and hundreds of insects, among them many extraordinary, colorful, and large butterflies.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Vakona Forest Lodge

Day 14 ~ Nov 3 ~ Exploring Mantadia National Park

A full day to explore the wonders of Mantadia National Park and the reserve known as Analamazaotra. We start early to see the indri indri and hear their haunting "singing" call. Easy hiking provides a good opportunity to experience the abundant flora and fauna of the eastern rain forest. A primary rainforest, Mantadia is home to many species not found in Perinet. The trails here are a bit more rugged with greater variations in altitude and consequently a greater diversity of habitats and species. You may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the diademed sifaka and black and white ruffed lemurs. Both Perinet and Mantadia are exceptionally rich in frogs and reptiles, too. We'll try to go on a night walk from our hotel.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner/Vakona Forest Lodge

Day 15 ~ Nov 4 ~ Return to Antananarivo

This morning, there should be time for a visit to Lemur Island before our drive back to Antananarivo in time for some last-minute shopping or sightseeing before your long flights home. Farewell dinner tonight in Tana.

Breakfast, Lunch/Dinner/La Varangue Hotel

Day 16 ~ Nov 5 ~ Depart Antananarivo

Transfer to the airport today for your flights home (unless you've extended your stay with us!)

Breakfast

What's Included

- expert leadership
- accommodations as noted in itinerary (or similar)
- meals as noted in the itinerary, please note that "Breakfast" in Madagascar is Continental European style, so often only includes bread and jam and coffee. Larger breakfasts with eggs, sausage, etc will incur additional costs.
- airport transfers
- sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- ground transportation
- additional guides and porters where necessary
- entrance fees and permits, unless noted separately in costs
- bottled water in the vehicles
- basic medical and evacuation insurance

What's Not

International airfare; meals not noted on itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Mountain Travel Sobek, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes (international—varies by location); cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (all beverages, laundry, etc.).

Note on Itinerary

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at www.mtsobek.com/faq and the form itself at www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf.

Terms & Conditions

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form (www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

© 2012, Mountain Travel Sobek

CST 2014882-10

Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

HIDDEN MADAGASCAR SAFARI

FOR QUESTIONS CALL TOLL-FREE 1 888 MTSOBEK (687 6235) 5