

Magical Madagascar 2024

The Zoology of a Gondwanaland Island

Day 1: Saturday 13 July 2024 Arrival in Antananarivo

Those who have purchased flights with Temple World will board an Air France flight to Paris early this morning. Changing aircraft in Paris, continue to Antananarivo, arriving the same evening at 22.10. Our group will be met at the airport by our local partners and transferred to the Relais des Plateaux Hotel, which is located around 10 minutes by car from the airport.

Overnight: *Relais des Plateaux or similar* | Meals: -

Day 2: Sunday 14 July 2024 Exploration of Antananarivo

Meet the group, your trip scholar and your guide properly this morning at breakfast. Full day exploration of Antananarivo, including the UNESCO heritage listed Royal Hill of Ambohimanga, one of the most important spiritual and historic sites for the Malagasy people. Occupied since the fifteenth century, it was a fortified political capital, royal palace and royal burial ground. In the nineteenth century, the French colonial authorities made several attempts to undermine the significance and national symbolism of Ambohimanga, all of which proved unsuccessful. Visit the wonderful craft market which has beautiful fossil specimens for sale as well as stalls selling baskets, woodcrafts and of course vanilla pods. Dinner and overnight in Tana.

Overnight: *Relais des Plateaux or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 3: Monday 15 July 2024 Fly to Tulear – Transfer to Ifaty

Transfer to the airport and fly from Tana to Tulear in the far south of the island. Drive north through degraded spiny forests to the small fishing village of Ifaty on the shores of the Mozambique Channel. Check in for a two night stay at Le Paradisier, built above Ifaty's beach. Here the rooms all overlook the water and spiny forest plants line the pathways. Dinner and overnight at Le Paradisier Hotel.

Overnight: *Le Paradisier Hotel or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 4: Tuesday 16 July 2024 Ifaty and Reniala Botanic Garden

This morning, explore the Reniala Botanical Garden. The forty-five hectares of spiny forest include two majestic species of baobab and the flora is a chaotic ensemble of drought resistant plants such as Pachypodiums, Moringas, Hildergardia and Delonix.

There are orchids as well as aloe and commiphora. Birding is superb with long-tailed ground-rollers, Lafresnaye's vangas, sub-desert mesites, running couas and Archbold's Newtonia. The remainder of the day is at leisure to enjoy time at the beach. The hotel can arrange snorkelling or mountain bikes for those who wish. Dinner and overnight at Le Paradisier Hotel.

Overnight: *Le Paradisier Hotel or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 5: Wednesday 17 July 2024 Ifaty - Isalo

From Ifaty, drive to Isalo, home to some of Madagascar's most stunning scenery, and a sacred place for the Bara tribe, whose burial sites are marked by mounds of tiny stones placed in crevices in the rock face. Stop at the dry deciduous forest at Zombitse on the way, and pass by some impressive baobabs (*Adansonia za* and *A. grandidieri*). It will be obvious that Isalo is nearby when the ruiniforme rock formations start to appear. Check into the lovely Jardin du Roy, a hotel close to the Isalo National Park. Dinner and overnight at the Jardin du Roy.

Overnight: *Jardin du Roy or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 6: Thursday 18 July 2024 Isalo

Explore Isalo National Park, a vast, dry massif of 'ruiniforme' sandstone formations with a fascinating plant community including some very localised species of palm, aloe and the squat 'elephant's foot' pachypodiums, which flourish on the rock faces. With luck, some ringtail lemurs or Verreaux's sifakas may be seen in dense vegetation lining the canyon streams. There is the option to take a dip in a natural pool after exploring some of the massif on foot. Dinner and overnight Jardin du Roy.

Overnight: *Jardin du Roy or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 7: Friday 19 July 2024 Isalo - Ranomafana

Leaving the highlands early after breakfast, drive across the desolate southern interior to the rainforests of Ranomafana via Ambalavao, the southernmost town in the highlands. Here, stop to see how pulp paper is made before visiting Anja Park, known for its iconic ring-tailed lemurs. Check in at Hotel Thermal for two nights.

The exquisite upland rainforest at Ranomafana National Park nearby is one of Madagascar's top wildlife hotspots. The 12 lemur species resident at Ranomafana National Park include not only all 3 bamboo lemurs, but also the striking Milne-Edward's diadem and the robust Black and white ruffed lemur. There are also scores of reptiles and beautiful chameleons. Dinner and overnight Hotel Thermal.

Overnight: *Hotel Therma or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*



Day 8: Saturday 20 July 2024 Ranomafana NP

Full day in Ranomafana National Park which has an excellent network of walking trails. Expect to see various lemurs, such as red-fronted brown lemur, red-bellied lemur and the shy grey bamboo lemur, and more again on night walks. Ranomafana is superb for birders as many of the rainforest dwelling endemics occur in the park such as brown mesite, blue coua and the velvet asity. Ranomafana is a herpetologist's paradise, with a variety of chameleons, geckoes, skinks and frogs. The floral diversity is bewildering, with numerous species of palm, bamboo and orchid thriving here. Overnight Hotel Thermal.

Overnight: *Hotel Thermal or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 9: Sunday 21 July 2024 Ranomafana - Andsirabe

Depart Ranomafana and transfer by road to Andsirabe. a small spa town with a crumbling colonial past. Located on a high plateau, Antsirabe is known for its multitude of local craft workshops making sweets, delicate lacework and tiny model bicycles. On the way, pass through Ambositra, the 'woodcarving capital' of Madagascar, and stop for lunch at scenic Imhasoavahiny which overlooks the stunning valley of Ambohimahaso. Check in to the Arotel or Couleur Café. All accommodation in this area is fairly simple but these two hotels are clean and comfortable.

Overnight: *Arotel /Couleur Café or similar* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 10: Monday 22 July 2024 Andsirabe - Perinet

Today, travel from Antsirabe to rainforest area of Perinet in the scenic high plateau. Time permitting, a first walk in the forest on arrival. Check into the lovely Mantadia Lodge for dinner and overnight. Mantadia Lodge is the newest accommodation in the Perinet area, set on a hillside overlooking the Andasibe forest. This hotel with a swimming pool offers some of the most modern and comfortable accommodation and facilities in the area and is well-located for exploring the two parks.

Overnight: *Mantadia Lodge* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 11: Tuesday 23 July 2024 Perinet/ Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

The Andasibe-Mantadia National Park is a pristine primary growth rainforest reserve, separated into two sections, each home to plants and animals found only in that part. There are 11 species of lemur in the National Park, and today there is a full day today to explore the Mantadia section, looking for lemurs, reptiles and rare endemic birds. One of the strangest lemurs can be found here, the rarely seen nocturnal Aye Aye, known as a living fossil for its archaic features which have lead to confusion in its classification.

Overnight: *Mantadia Lodge* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 12: Wednesday 24 July 2024 Perinet/ Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

A full final day to discover the second section of the Andasibe-Mantadia Park, the Analamazaotra, which is famed for its population of Indri, Madagascar's largest lemur. There are numerous other species to see as well, such as the bamboo and the brown lemur, the emerald-green parson's chameleon and a number of rainforest dependent birds. A night stroll will enable everyone to go in search of tree frogs, chameleons and the eastern woolly and mouse lemurs. Farewell dinner this evening at the lodge.

Overnight: *Mantadia Lodge* | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 13: Thursday 25 July 2024 Perinet – Antananarivo – Tour ends

After a leisurely morning, drive back Antananarivo and transfer to the Relais des Plateaux hotel in Antananarivo where the tour ends. There will be a little free time this afternoon – the hotel will be happy to store your baggage if you would like to head off on independent exploration. Dinner has been arranged at the hotel this evening for those who have not yet departed on flights or post-tour arrangements.

Those who have arranged Air France flights back to London with Temple World to coordinate with this tour will be taken to the airport after dinner to catch the very late overnight flight to London via Paris.

Overnight: - | Meals: *B, L, D*

Day 14: Friday 26 July 2024 Arrival in London (Temple World flights only)

Those who have purchased coordinating flights with us using Air France will arrive in Paris this morning and catch a connecting flight to London this afternoon.