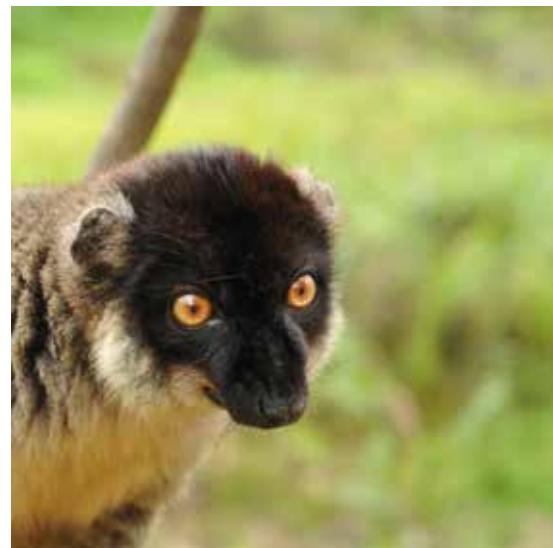


RUFUS READE TOURS



MADAGASCAR: THE NATURAL WORLD with Rufus Reade

22 October to 7 November 2020
with optional extension 6 to 11 November



Perhaps 135 million years ago, Madagascar split off from Africa and so began a rich evolution with a fauna and flora developing quite distinct from the rest of the world. Perhaps best known are the lemurs who evolved from something pre-monkey-like. There are over 100 kinds of lemurs! The island boasts an incredible array of distinct plants, birds, animals and insects. We can see these sometimes very close at hand (no need to bring a telescope!). The island was under French control, so expect nice hotels and good food. Tourism may be one of the ways to help preserve this lovely island from the worst excesses of deforestation. The tour is led by Rufus Reade.

Planes

Flights are not included in the price of the holiday. There are a number of options when it comes to flying to Madagascar. There are flights via Paris (Air France) and Mauritius (Turkish Airlines via Istanbul). We have arranged transfers to/from hotels meeting the Air France flight from/to Paris Charles de Gaulle which connects with flights from London and Edinburgh. Flights have not been published for October/November 2020, and will not be available until 11 months prior to the return date! If flight timetables remain more or less unchanged we can expect: departing London Heathrow/Paris: 0625/0845.; departing Edinburgh/Paris 0610/0905. The flight from Paris to Antananarivo departs at 1050/2335. These times are based on the current timetable which may have changed by the time the timetable becomes available. You can book your own flights once your holiday booking is confirmed (for example through the Air France website or a travel agency of your choice). We can recommend Ian Dickson Travel in Edinburgh (0131 556 6777) where you'll get a personalised service from Mark Robson.

JOURNEY DETAILS

Location	Madagascar
Dates	22 October- 7 November 2020
Duration	15 nights
Min/Max	9/15 travellers
Price	£3420 (based on sharing a twin/double room).
Single Room Supplement	£580
Deposit	£340
Optional Extension	6 - 11 Nov
Duration	4 nights
Min	4 travellers
Price	£426
Single Room Supplement	£150
Additional Deposit	£42

What's included: Accommodation in western-style hotels and (approx equivalent to 3 star rooms with attached facilities), breakfast and dinner, tips to all staff, all land transport by minibus, and two domestic flights, and entry to all the national parks & sites mentioned.

What's not included in the cost of the holiday: most lunches are not included, your international flights, Madagascan visa, luggage portage, personal travel insurance, laundry, camera fees, phone-calls, and all beverages.

Our Guides: National Guide and local naturalists/spotters in the national parks.

Tour Leader: the tour is escorted by Rufus Reade.

Walking: All walks are rated moderate.

The tour is organised by

Rufus Reade Tours,

40 Pilrig Street,

Edinburgh EH6 5AL

rufusreade@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel 0131 554 1078

Visa: Tourist visas are normally issued on arrival. Passports must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the last day of the intended stay in Madagascar with three free pages in your passport, and two recent passport photos.

Itinerary

22 Oct We will meet the Paris Air France flight into the capital at Antananarivo, commonly called Tana, and transfer to our hotel, the Hotel Bois Vert, near the airport.

23 Oct Transfer to the airport, to catch our flight to Morondava, in the west. We can expect a hot dry climate



(31°C). We'll stay in the Palissandre Côte Ouest Hotel (4*, swimming pool).

24 Oct We start early with 4 x 4s in the morning because of the heat, and drive to Kirindy Forest, where researchers are still active in their search for flora and fauna: the known and the unknown! Kirindy is the home of the Fosa, a large cat-like predator. Overnight Relais Kirindy (3/4*, swimming pool).

25 Oct Drive to Bekopaka: our visit coincides with the end of the dry season (May to the beginning of November). Bekopaka is the gateway to the Tsingy. In 1991, the Tsingy was declared a UNESCO world heritage site (and declared a National Park in 1997). This eroded karst limestone massif with narrow canyons, sunken forests and razor sharp pinnacles was carved out by the wind and the weather, offering one of the most spectacular landscapes on the island. The park is occupied by lemurs, the land and aquatic birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles, the mammals and the indigenous flora of more than 650 vegetal species, all specially adapted to this extraordinary landscape. First of three nights in the Soleil des Tsingy (3/4 *, swimming pool).

26 Oct Today we'll visit the Tsingy landscape and enjoy a pirogue (canoe) trip on the Manambolo River. Our second night in the Soleil des Tsingy.

27 Oct A second visit into this limestone landscape, and return for our third night in the Soleil des Tsingy.

28 Oct After breakfast, we'll drive back to Morondava, hoping to see the baobab trees towards the end of the day as the sun goes down. Overnight at Palissandre Côte Ouest Hotel

29 Oct After breakfast, we'll drive across the Highlands to Antsirabe (7 to 8 hours), the town of 3000 rickshaw drivers and also famed for its semi-precious stones. First of two nights at the comfortable Plumeria Hotel.

30 Oct Antsirabe is known as the town of 3000 rickshaw driver, and as the town "where there is much salt ", with its thermal springs and its precious stone. Our second night at the Plumeria.

31 Oct After breakfast we'll drive to Fianarantsoa, the second largest city in the country. And this is also the centre of the Betsileo tribe and Catholicism. The city is regarded as the gateway to the South. We'll stay for one night at the Zomotel Hotel (3*, indoor pool).

1 Nov Today we have a long drive to Ranohira, pausing at the delightful Anja Park (12 km from Ambalavao) which is a good place for lunch (independent arrangements), and a chance to walk amongst vast boulders to see a troop



of ring tailed lemurs who live in this extraordinary environment. A delightful experience! We'll stay two nights at the very lovely Hotel de la Reine outside Ranohira (whose 3* rating conceals a generous 40 hectares of birding, walks and canyons!).

2 Nov This hotel invites you to take it easy, to walk, possibly to ride (there are sometimes horses to hire), to birdwatch. There is an optional botanical walk, (and we may see the lovely Benson's Rock-thrush). The end of a hot walk brings us to a natural rock pool where you can cool off with a swim before returning to the hotel for an independent lunch. The hotel sits in extensive grounds where a late afternoon walk may reveal

more plants and birds. Our second night in the Relais de la Reine.

3 Nov We'll continue to Tulear, passing en route some of the biggest baobabs of the island, and spotting the Mahafaly tombs. Towards the end of the day's drive we'll find ourselves at the Antsokay Arboretum, which demonstrates what vision and hard work can do in this arid landscape to show off the extraordinary diversity of local plants. We'll continue to Ifaty, north of Tulear, right on the ocean's edge. We'll have three nights in the Dunes Hotel (3*, swimming pool, and beach)

4 Nov The illusion of a free day conceals the offer of an optional

early morning walk in the plant and bird reserve at Reniala, where an hour or two usually reveals wonderful bird sightings amongst exquisite trees. Second overnight at the Dunes Hotel.

5 Nov Our second free day at the Dunes Hotel: it's a relaxing place to rest, with birds in the garden, a pleasant atmosphere, and the chance to swim. Our third night in the Dunes Hotel.

6 Nov We'll catch a flight to Tana in time to have a wash and change, plus dinner before transferring to our (midnight) flight to Europe.

7 Nov Air France flight.

6 Nov Overnight at the Hotel Bois Vert.

7 Nov After breakfast, we drive about 3 hours towards Perinet. Through a landscape of rice paddies and vegetable farming. Perinet is known as the home of lemurs: these forests are particularly known for the Indri, the largest lemurs of Madagascar. First of three nights at the Andasibe Hotel.

8 Nov We will visit the rain forest at dawn, which is the best time to spot the Indri, and some species of birds as well: Perinet is one of the best places for bird watching. We can visit the island of lemurs at Vakona: these are lemurs habituated to human beings who have been confiscated from homes where they are illegally kept as pets. Second night at the Andasibe Hotel.

9 Nov We'll shift our focus to another part of this primary forest. The two protected areas of Mantadia National Park and the Indri Special Reserve cover a total area of 12,820ha. We will hope to see in the primary forest, lemurs (black and white, indris, black-headed macaws, diadem-sifaka, gray bamboo lemur, red-bellied mackerel) and the varied birdlife. Our third night at the Andasibe Hotel.

10 Nov We'll have a relaxed day until it's time to drive back to Tana for dinner and our (post midnight) flight back to Europe (Departing on 11 Nov).

Extension

RUFUS READE TOURS,
40 PILRIG STREET, EDINBURGH EH6 5AL
RUFUSREADE@BLUEYONDER.CO.UK

WWW.RUFUSREADETOURS.COM

TEL 0131 554 1078

VAT N° 202654931