Madagascar: A Wildlife Photography Tour

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London
Day 2	Arrive Tana & overnight
Day 3	Tana
Day 4	Morondava
Day 5/6	Kirindy Special Reserve
Day 7/9	Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park
Day 10	Tana
Day 11/12	Berenty Private Reserve
Day 13	Fort Dauphin
Day 14	Tana
Day 15/16	Andasibe-Mantadia National Park
Day 17/18	The Palmarium / Andasibe
Day 19/20	Depart Tana / Arrive London

Departs: July - November

Focus: Wildlife photography and astrophotography

Grading: Grade B (with an optional Grade C/D walk – see tour grading section) Moderate day and night walks

Dates and Prices: See www.naturetrek.co.uk (tour code MDG09) or our current brochure







Avenue of Baobabs (Dennis van de Water), Ring-tailed Lemurs (Eric Gevaert), Crested Coua (Hugh Lansdown)

Naturetrek Mingledown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051 E: info@naturetrek.co.uk W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Introduction

By any measure, Madagascar ranks amongst the most extraordinary countries on Earth. The fourth largest island in the world, it has been isolated from all other landmasses for some 80 million years. During that time, a dazzling array of endemic birds, mammals, reptiles, insects and plants have evolved, almost all of which are found nowhere else in the world. Madagascar has all of the world's species of lemurs (of which there are over 100, and still more being discovered!), half of the world's chameleon species and six out of eight baobab species. The entire native terrestrial mammal fauna has evolved from just four colonists (one primate, one rodent, one insectivore and one carnivore) that are thought to have completed the perilous journey to Madagascar, by chance, on rafts of vegetation. Then, over tens of millions of years, these early pioneers evolved into over 100 living species, filling all manner of ecological niches across the island, and all are found nowhere else on Earth.



Parson's Chameleon (Cathy Harlow)

The landscapes of this huge tropical island are similarly unique, ranging from luxuriant tropical rainforest to spiny desert and tsingy (limestone pinnacles). Because it is so completely different to anywhere else on Earth, biologists often refer to Madagascar as "the eighth continent". One 18th century traveller wrote: *"Of Madagascar I can announce to naturalists that truly this is their promised land. Here Nature seems to have created a special sanctuary whither she seems to have withdrawn to experiment with designs different from any she has created elsewhere. At every step, one meets more remarkable and marvellous forms of life."*

During this tour we will explore and photograph several of the most spectacular locations and endemic species by both day and night. We will also encounter the charming, hospitable Malagasy people, learning about their unique customs and beliefs.

This tour has been specifically designed to maximise photographic opportunities. It will be led by an expert wildlife photographer, and our carefully constructed programme will be complemented by detailed guidance on locations and photographic settings to use for each subject. Particular highlights of this tour include:

- Avenue of Baobabs at dusk, dawn and at night.
- Astrophotography to capture the stunning night skies of the southern hemisphere and the Milky Way with unique Madagascar landscapes as foregrounds.
- Kirindy Forest, one of the most biodiverse environments in the world for primates, where we will search for the island's largest carnivore, the Fosa, and largest rodent, the Giant Jumping Rat.

- Extraordinary landscape of the Tsingy de Bemaraha with its iconic limestone pinnacles.
- Dancing Sifakas, friendly Ring-tailed lemurs and spiny forest of Berenty.
- Amazing nocturnal wildlife including chameleons, leaf-tailed geckos, giraffe-necked weevils and many species of lemurs.
- Indri, the largest living lemur, and Aye-aye, the most bizarre of all the lemurs, in their rainforest homes.

To get the most from the fantastic experiences provided by this tour, we recommend bringing specialist photographic equipment. But anyone with a good camera and a passion for the natural world will enjoy the exceptional opportunities it provides.

Itinerary

Please note that this itinerary is based on Air Madagascar's current internal flight schedule. Should they change their flight timings, or days of travel, we may need to amend our itinerary accordingly. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Days 1 – 2 Flight; Antananarivo

We depart Heathrow this evening on an overnight flight to Tana via Addis Ababa or Nairobi (please see section below regarding flight connections). We then connect with a mid-morning flight to Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, arriving in the early afternoon. On arriving at Madagascar's international airport we will purchase our visas, clear immigration and customs, exchange currency and transfer to a comfortable hotel, our base for the first 2 nights of the tour. There should be the opportunity to visit nearby rice paddies for our first encounters with some of the birdlife.

Day 3 Antananarivo

This morning we will travel the short distance to Parc Tsarasaotra, an oasis for birdlife in the urban sprawl. It is a RAMSAR site, the smallest in the world in fact, but it is often overlooked by tourists and locals alike, meaning we are likely to have the place to ourselves. The lake here is filled with hundreds of Red-billed Teal and White-faced Whistling Duck paddling across the surface, and the vegetation of the island in the middle bends under the large numbers of various heron and egret species that seek refuge here. Butterflies abound and geckos and chameleons can be found in the foliage of the surrounding shrubs and trees.


White-faced Whistling Duck

After the relative clam of the morning, we will head into the historic centre of Tana, experiencing the hustle and bustle (and traffic!) of the capital as we go. We will pass the main market, the old central railway station, and the main central avenue, before winding our way up to the summit of the largest hill in the city. Here presides the Queen's Palace as it is locally known, named after Queen Ranavalona I, who reigned in the 19th Century and embarked on a bloody and relatively successful quest to eradicate foreign influence in the country, which included throwing enemies from the sides of the palace down the steep hillside. We will have a tour of the palace and take in the impressive views over Tana, before heading back to our hotel.

Day 4 Morondava

After breakfast this morning, we transfer to the airport for our flight to Morondava. Depending on the final flight timings, we hope to have time to relax on the beach and perhaps enjoy a little snorkelling to appreciate the beautiful coral reefs along the coast of western Madagascar.


Avenue of Baobabs at night (Nok Lek)

In the late afternoon we will travel to the Avenue of Baobabs, one of Madagascar's iconic landscapes. We will photograph the giant *Adansonia grandidieri* baobabs at their most attractive using "golden hour" light and hope for a flaming sunset against which the trees can be silhouetted. Dusk falls quickly at this tropical latitude and within an hour after sunset we will be able to make our first astrophotography images of the stunning southern hemisphere night sky. The brightest part of the Milky Way, within which the centre of our galaxy lies, is high in the evening sky at this time of year, along with the Large and Small Magellanic clouds, separate galaxies outside our own which are never seen from Europe. Our tour has been scheduled so that the early evening sky will be moonless and in the absence of light pollution we can look forward to exceptionally good viewing conditions, using the instantly recognisable baobab trees silhouetted against the night sky. We will then return to our hotel in Morondava for a night's sleep.

Days 5 – 6 Kirindy

Kirindy forest reserve has long been the only place in Madagascar where the otherwise elusive Fosa may reliably be seen. Looking like a small puma (but actually an evolutionary descendant of a mongoose), Fosa are the top land predator in Madagascar. They can frequently be found both in the reserve and around the reserve's campsite. It's also one of the few places where we may find the beautiful Narrow-striped Mongoose (or Boky boky) and the only place that offers us a chance of seeing one of the most endangered mammals in Madagascar, the Giant Jumping Rat. This quirky animal, which looks somewhat like a rabbit and somewhat like a bandicoot, both walks and hops. It is nocturnal and has a very restricted range, most of which falls into Kirindy reserve.

During our two night stay at Kirindy we will make the most of the unique opportunities that the reserve's beautiful tropical deciduous forests offers for both diurnal and nocturnal mammal photography. Species that we expect to see and photograph during the day include Verreaux's Sifaka and Red-fronted Brown Lemurs, and around dawn and dusk we hope to see the elusive Fosa. Our cameras need to be kept ready at all times since we never know when a sighting may occur. Many mammal species are active only at night, including nocturnal lemurs such as Pale Fork-marked Lemurs, Red-tailed Sportive Lemurs, the beautiful caramel-coloured Coquerel's Giant Dwarf Lemur, Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur and Grey Mouse Lemur. With some dedication, there is also the chance of finding Madagascar's smallest primate, Madame-Berthe's Mouse Lemur, believed to be the world's smallest primate at less than 100mm long and weighing only 30g. On one of our two evenings, we will endeavour to track the Giant Jumping Rat and, while there are no guarantees, there is a very real possibility of photographing this remarkable animal. Nocturnal wildlife photography will require powerful flash units and we strongly recommend that you bring an external, battery-powered flash gun on the tour.


Fosa (Dudarev Mikhail)

During the middle of the day we will be resting at the camp. Species to look out for at this time include Madagascar Hog-nosed Snakes, which are common here, and abundant birds in the dry forest. We'll also be on the look-out for Crested Coua, Giant Coua, Rufous Vanga, Sakalava Weever and Madagascar Hoopoe, as well as the localised White-breasted Mesite.

Day 7 Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park

Today, we set off early for the long drive north to one of Madagascar's most extraordinary natural wonders and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park. As it's a poor road up to Bemaraha we expect the drive to take us most of the day – potentially up to 8 hours depending on the road condition – but we'll break the journey along the way, and there will be plenty of wonderful scenery to keep us entertained. This journey feels like a real expedition, including a river crossing. We expect to arrive in the late afternoon at our comfortable hotel, where we will spend the next three nights.

Days 8 – 9 Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park

We now have two full days to explore this wonderful reserve, dominated by jagged 'tsingy' peaks and limestone pinnacles, with splashes of green *Pachypodium* clinging to the rock crevices. The spectacular canyon of the Manambolo River marks the entrance to the park. We'll make day walks

into the national park, enjoying the Petit Tsingy trails on our first day and, for those that wish, the more challenging Grand Tsingy on our second day. Both trails include pinnacles, canyons and forests. Group members will need a good degree of fitness for the Grand Tsingy, where you will be roped much of the time and scrambling is required. It is, however, well worth the physical effort! For anyone that doesn't wish to undertake this walk, your Naturetrek leader will offer an easier alternative. After dark, we will take night walks in the areas that surround the park. As it gets hot during the day at Bemaraha, dawn starts will be the norm during our stay here.



Tsingy de Bemaraha (Pierre-Yves Babelon)

Our primary focus will be on landscape photography of the other-worldly tsingy. However, we will also see and photograph numerous mammals, birds and invertebrates that live amongst the limestone pinnacles and the surrounding forests. No fewer than 11 species of lemur live in Tsingy de Bemaraha, including the bright white Decken's Sifaka which is readily seen here, along with Red-fronted Brown Lemur during the day. At night, nocturnal lemurs resident here in the national park and surrounding area include Cleese's Avahi (or Cleese's Woolly Lemur, named after actor John Cleese!), the tiny Western Rufous Mouse Lemur and Fat-tailed Dwarf Lemur.

On the lake at the entrance to the park we can often find Humbolt's Heron and Purple Heron, along with White-faced Whistling Ducks and perhaps a pair of resident Madagascar Fish Eagles, which are now critically endangered. Nearby the lakes and mangroves are home to Madagascar Crested Ibis and Bernier's Teal. The huge Madagascar Flying Fox is resident here, and Falanouc and the western subspecies of the beautiful Ring-tailed Mongoose are also possible. During our exploration of this spectacular 'stone forest', we will look for both Giant and Coquerel's Couas amongst the limestone formations, and those with a very keen eye might spot the secretive Tsingy Wood Rail which was only described in 2011, or the tiny Antsingy Leaf Chameleon, *Brookesia perarmata*. The *Chalaroden madagascariensis* iguanid is endemic to Bemaraha, as is the *Heterixalus carbonei* frog. This national park is still relatively unexplored, with new species are being described every year, and so our time here is sure to be one of discovery.

Day 10 Tana

This morning, after a final visit to the reserve, we transfer to a local airstrip where we fly by privately chartered plane directly back Tana, thereby avoiding the long return journey by road. We overnight at a comfortable hotel.

Days 11 – 12 Berenty Private Reserve

Today we take a flight south to the town of Tolagnaro (also known as Fort Dauphin), located on Madagascar's south-eastern tip. From here the journey to the private Berenty Reserve takes around 4 to 5 hours, and although the road is bad, the scenery is varied and dramatic from the cultivated paddies and fields around Fort Dauphin to the transitional and Spiny Forests of Andohahela National Park. As we near Berenty the landscape flattens out and we will start to pass through the endless tracks of Sisal, a crop which has blighted the natural environment in this area of Madagascar and led to the destruction of so much of the native habitat.

We will spend 2 nights at the comfortable chalets at Berenty, which gives us plenty of time to enjoy the lemurs and birds of this small but well-known reserve. The reserve belongs to Jean D'Heaulme, whose father established sisal plantations in the region in the 1930s. Some small pockets of spiny desert and gallery forest were saved from plantation, and the gallery forest harbours dense populations of Ring-tailed Lemurs, Verreaux's Sifakas and the (introduced) Red-fronted Brown Lemur. It is also good for birds and we hope to see to see such species as Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher, Sickle-billed and White-headed Vangas, Giant Coua, Crested Coua, Broad-billed Roller, Souimanga Sunbird and many others. But above all the joy of Berenty is observing and photographing the troops of Ring-tailed Lemurs either high in the tamarind trees or as they move along the ground.


Verreaux's Sifaka (Hugh Lansdown)

One of the most challenging and rewarding photographic objectives of this part of the tour will be to capture images of the celebrated 'dancing lemurs', the Verreaux's Sifakas of Berenty. These come down to the ground to cross between trees by hopping, crab-wise, on their hind legs. With patience and the correct technique, we hope to make some striking images of these sifakas and their unusual mode of locomotion.

We will take a trip into the spiny forest to capture images this unique environment and the lemurs that live with it. In the drier areas around Berenty another species of baobab, *Adansonia za*, can also be found, which we will photograph at dusk and after nightfall. As well as lemurs, Berenty protects a wide range of other animals. We should find Oustalet's Chameleon and Jewel Chameleon and, if fortunate, the large Madagascar Ground Boa. The reserve also has a protected area for Radiated and Spider tortoises confiscated from smugglers and kept before being returned to the wild. Berenty is also excellent for nocturnal wildlife and we will not need to walk far from our chalets to find a host of chameleons and geckos, along with extraordinary invertebrates such as praying mantis and hissing cockroach. All of these make wonderful photographic subjects. We recommend bringing a macro lens and synchronised twin flash units mounted on brackets either side of the camera to make the most of this opportunity.


Ring-tailed Lemur (Gudkov Andrey)

Day 13 Tolagnaro

After a final morning in the reserve, this afternoon we make the return journey to Tolagnaro, where we overnight ahead of our flight back to Tana.

Day 14 Tana

Today we fly back to Tana for an overnight stop.

Days 15 – 16 Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

Today we continue our journey driving eastwards to the rainforest reserves of Andasibe (Périnet). Our route heads east through a relatively productive agricultural region with highland scenery of terraced slopes and flooded rice paddies in the valley bottoms. Eventually, the road begins its winding descent to the East Coast, when we will start to see patches of rainforest on the steeper slopes. We will pass through a variety of small colourful villages, all thronging with life and many with wonderful names such as Ambohimanagekely, Ambohimahandry and Manjakandriana, before eventually arriving in Andasibe itself around lunchtime. We spend the next two nights in a comfortable forest lodge.

We will rise early to visit the special reserve of Analamazaotra (Périnet) in order to see the Indri (*Indri indri*), Madagascar's largest and most vocal lemur whose eerie cries, once heard, are never forgotten. They are also one of the world's most attractive primates and are frequently likened to large black and white teddy bears! Each visit presents a different aspect of the life of this large primate. Some years we have been treated to spectacular family singing contests, whereas in other years the Indri were silent but came to the ground within a few feet to eat soil. Incidentally, the

word Indri is actually Malagasy for "look!" The early French explorer and naturalist, Pierre Sonnerat, heard his local Malagasy guide point at a lemur in a tree and took the word to be the animal's name. The Malagasy name for the Indri is 'Babakoto'. Indri can be tricky to photograph as they are often encountered within dense forest, where the light can be contrasty. Our photographic opportunities will be maximised by using the correct settings and timing our visits for the most favourable lighting conditions.


Indri (Arto Hakola)

After photographing the Indri we will have time to take the reserve trails at a relaxed pace, watching birds and possibly catching a sight of other lemurs such the beautiful Diademed Sifaka, widely regarded as the most beautiful of all lemur species, as well as Common Brown Lemur, Eastern Grey Bamboo Lemur, and perhaps a daytime roost of Eastern Woolly Lemurs. Amongst the birdlife we will look out for are Collared Nightjar, Red-fronted Coua, Red-breasted Coua, Malagasy Pygmy Kingfisher, Blue Vanga, Nuthatch Vanga, Velvet Asity, Madagascar Starling, Madagascar Paradise Flycatcher and the Pitta-like Ground Roller. The rainforest here is also a good site for reptiles such as the Madagascar Tree Boa, Parson's Chameleon and Short-horned Chameleon.

During our stay we will also take night walks in the private Mitsjino Reserve to look for Crossley's (Furry-eared) Dwarf Lemur, Eastern Woolly Lemur, Goodman's Mouse Lemur and Madagascar Long-eared Owl. Some of the most engaging photographic opportunities are presented by the fantastically camouflaged geckos found in the rainforest, including Mossy Leaf-tailed Gecko (*Uroplatus sikorae*) and the wonderfully named Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko (*Uroplatus phantasticus*). We also hope to find the equally bizarre Giraffe-necked Weevil (*Trachelophorus giraffe*), another Malagasy endemic.


Satanic Leaf-tailed Gecko (Ryan M Bolton)


Giraffe-necked Weevil (Dennis van de Water)

Days 17 – 18 Palmarium


Aye-aye (Paul Winser)

This morning we transfer to the Palmarium Lodge by road and river. Situated on the coast beyond Andasibe, this delightful reserve will give us the opportunity to see and photograph the most bizarre of all Madagascar's lemurs, the Aye-aye. On arrival we will spend the afternoon with the diurnal lemurs of the reserve, including very approachable Indri and Black-and-White Ruffed Lemurs. However, it is the Aye-aye that is likely to be the highlight of our stay here. This scruffy-looking lemur with its trademark skeletal middle finger, staring eyes and bat-like ears is a secretive and highly nocturnal creature that is usually very difficult to see in the wild. Staying at the Palmarium, however, gives us the opportunity to watch wild, habituated, Aye-ayes, on a little island which is reached in around 15 minutes by boat from the lodge. This lemur, which is thought by some of the Malagasy to be a Harbinger of Death, eats grubs which it extracts from tree trunks using its skeletal middle finger. In essence, it has evolved to fill the ecological niche occupied elsewhere by woodpeckers, which are absent from Madagascar. We spend the night at a comfortable lodge at Palmarium and the following morning we will have further photographic opportunities around the reserve. We then return to Andasibe for a further evening of nocturnal wildlife viewing and our final night in Madagascar.

Days 19 – 20 In Flight

After an early breakfast this morning we must return to Tana for the final time. Our flight usually departs from Ivato International Airport in the early afternoon, arriving back into London the following morning, though some flights depart in the early hours of Day 20 arriving back into London later that same day.

Holiday Inclusions / Extra Expenses

The following costs are included in the price of the holiday:

- International and domestic flights in economy class, plus charter flight
- Full board accommodation throughout (i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- All transport and guiding
- Park fees and reserve entry fees
- Tips to reserve / national park guides and trackers, drivers, waiters, porters and other locals

The following are not included and should be budgeted for:

- Visa (e-visa or purchased on arrival in Tana)
- Drinks (though your guides will keep a supply of bottled water on the bus for you to help yourself to during the day)
- Tip for Local Guide (who will be with you the whole time)
- Any other personal spending e.g. souvenirs, laundry

Tour Focus

Wildlife photography, astrophotography and landscape photography. This is a specialist photography tour designed to enable you to capture stunning images of this unique island and its exceptional wildlife. As such, we will spend longer in the best locations and photographing key species at the best times of day than would be the case on a general nature tour.

Equipment Requirements

The recommended equipment for this tour is as follows:

- Digital single lens reflex or mirrorless camera (a cropped sensor SLR/mirrorless camera would also be fine). A second camera body as a backup would be advisable.
- Lenses ranging from wide angle (16mm on full frame DSLR) through standard zoom (e.g. 24 to 70mm) to telephoto (at least 300mm focal length; up to 400mm or 500mm recommended). A fast wide angle lens (F/2 or lower) will be very useful for astrophotography, particularly the Milky Way. A fast telephoto lens (F/4 or lower) would be ideal for wildlife photography in low light forest conditions. A macro lens for invertebrates, geckos, small chameleons etc.
- Powerful flash units (essential) for nocturnal forest wildlife and / or a twin macro flash unit (optional) for macro photography.
- Polarising filter is useful for multiple shots including landscapes and cutting out reflections of leaf shine in rainforests.
- Sturdy tripod (essential for landscapes and astrophotography) and monopod (optional but useful for wildlife).
- Remote cable release.
- Memory cards to store several thousand images.
- Portable device to download and store images (e.g. laptop) and at least one backup drive.
- Sturdy shoes or hiking boots.
- Head torch and hand torch.
- Spare batteries and chargers for all the above.

Flights and Baggage Allowances

Our preferred route to Madagascar is with Ethiopian Airlines from Heathrow flying via Addis Ababa (there are no direct flights from the UK to Madagascar). Flights are usually overnight in both directions and there is the option to fly from Manchester to Addis.

Air France does provide a viable alternative, flying via Paris, but we have found this route unreliable in recent years, with difficult connection times in Paris and an extremely late arrival into Tana. Should you wish to instead fly with Air France, we would strongly recommend flying to Paris and staying overnight at an airport hotel ahead of your flight to Tana the next morning. This flight arrives in very late the same day as the Ethiopian arrival, meaning that you would meet up with the rest of the group at breakfast on your first morning in Madagascar.

Flying with Ethiopian Airlines means that we arrive on a much smaller aircraft at a more civilised time of day, making the (somewhat chaotic!) process of purchasing a visa on arrival a little easier. It also allows the afternoon to recover from the long journey. The downside is that there is a fairly long transfer in Addis Ababa on the way home. Please contact the Naturetrek office for a Business Class quote (there is no premium economy).

Domestic flights across Madagascar are provided by the national airline, Air Madagascar, which only flies some routes on certain days of the week, and can be prone to delays or even cancellations, so buffers have been built into the itinerary to allow for this (and a flexible mindset is necessary). On one occasion we will travel by chartered plane from Bemaraha to Tana to avoid the long return road journey. The plane has a maximum payload, and the luggage weight allowance on charter flights will depend on the weight and number of people on board.

Tour Grading

This tour has been graded B, though there are optional walks around the Tsingy de Bemaraha which should be considered C or even D at times. We will be covering considerable distances on this holiday, although the overland travel has been cut significantly by the addition of four internal flights. There is no major trekking on tour, but there will be plenty of daytime walks in a variety of Malagasy habitat types and in some of the major forest reserves of Madagascar we will organise night-walks to see nocturnal lemurs, reptiles and sometimes roosting birds. Since all wildlife viewing and photography takes place on foot in Madagascar, at least an average level of general fitness, and the ability to carry sufficient photographic equipment (plus water) for each excursion is required. All walks are optional and taken at a leisurely pace, but they will often be over hilly, rocky or forested terrain, and in hot, humid conditions. Kirindy and Bemaraha in particular will be hot at this time of year, and some of the best routes at Bemaraha are steep and tiring and require scrambling at times. Here we will offer a choice – most likely your local guide will take those that wish on one of the tougher trails, and your Naturetrek leader will stay back and offer an easier alternative. We will make the most of the cooler hours just after dawn, and whenever possible we will relax back at our base during the hottest part of the day. Walking boots are a must and some people may find a trekking pole useful. We may also opt to leave the main trails and clamber over rough terrain or through dense vegetation in order to find wildlife that has been spotted deeper into the forest. Since animal activity dies away quite quickly after the first few hours of daylight, we will need to make full use of the early hours and so dawn starts will be encouraged.

When travelling in Madagascar it is necessary to accept that the roads may be poor on occasion and the internal airlines may not always leave exactly on time! Likewise, whilst we will provide

comfortable lodge and hotel accommodation throughout, it must be stressed that Madagascar is a very poor country and has yet to establish the same high standard of tourist facilities found in many other African destinations. Several of the hotels/lodges are basic in nature and lacking in many of the comforts found in western hotels. What is needed more than anything, therefore, is a good sense of adventure, and if you come equipped with this you are sure to enjoy the fascinating animals, birds, plants, culture and landscapes of this unique African island.

Food and Accommodation

All of the hotels and lodges used on this tour have private facilities. Please note that Madagascar is becoming ever more popular as a holiday destination and at present there are too few beds for the number of people who wish to visit. It is getting increasingly difficult for groups to secure an allocation of rooms and, whilst we at Naturetrek always reserve our room allocation up to two years in advance of the holiday, we do occasionally find that we do not get our first choice of hotel or lodge. This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that hotels and lodges in Madagascar are notorious for overbooking their rooms. Although we always strive to keep our groups in the same lodge whilst exploring a park, on rare occasions it may be necessary to split the stay, or group, between two. The names of the hotels and lodges will be confirmed a little closer to the departure date, but if you require any additional information on accommodation please do not hesitate to call.

Your Safety & Security

You have chosen to travel to Madagascar. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/madagascar regularly prior to travel.

How to Book Your Place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost and any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website.