



**NEW** LIMITED EDITION SMALL GROUP JOURNEYS

## Madagascar A Naturalist's Guide with Charlie Gardner 2019

12 days from \$7,495

Limited to 18 guests

**This journey is a unique opportunity to travel with other international guests on a limited-edition itinerary operated by A&K Australia.**

Curious and other-worldly, Madagascar is full of surprises and extraordinary creatures. It has people, wildlife and landscapes found nowhere else on earth and a culture far removed from any of its near neighbours. On this fascinating journey you'll explore the island nation and its flora and fauna with a wildlife expert who knows the destination and its inhabitants like the back of his hand. Still largely untouched by tourism, Madagascar is astonishing. You'll be amazed by its rain forests, its clear blue seas, white beaches and spiny forest habitat. Growing up in Africa and around the Indian Ocean, Dr. Charlie Gardner caught the wildlife bug at an early age and has been fascinated by the natural world ever since. Charlie has worked as a scientific advisor for WWF as well as Madagascar National Parks and the award-winning marine conservationists Blue Ventures. He completed a PhD in 2014 and has published some 50 papers on Madagascar's wildlife and its conservation, including the discovery of several new species unknown to science. He has appeared on wildlife documentaries and assisted with the filming of Sir David Attenborough's BBC series 'Madagascar'. Engaging and passionate about Madagascar, Charlie makes the perfect companion on this incredible journey.

### A&K Advantages

Plenty of time to spend with your engaging Guest Host and hearing firsthand about his fascinating life and the work he does

Watch local fishermen paddling *pirogues* on the ocean from your secluded tropical retreat Combine wildlife, culture, rainforest and beach at Manafiafy

Stroll through the colonial Haute-Ville district of Tana

Seek out rare animal and bird life on escorted wildlife outings by day and night

Tick off several varieties of lemur and chameleon in the country's finest national parks

Hike through 500-year-old baobabs in the Sacred Spiny Forest, one of the oldest on the planet

Experience the culture of the unique Atandroy tribe, one of the most traditional in Madagascar

While away a lazy afternoon swinging in a hammock at your beachside eco-lodge

Combine wildlife, culture, rainforest and beach at Manafiafy

# Itinerary

## DAY 1 ARRIVE ANTANANARIVO

On arrival into the hilly Malagasy capital you are met by A&K and transferred to your hotel in the embassy district of Haute-Ville (upper town). This part of the city is a tangled assortment of steep, partly cobbled streets; red-tiled roofs; and pastel-coloured houses with a lovely cool climate. After time to settle in, your Guest Host, Charlie Gardner, will introduce himself and give you a briefing on the adventure ahead over welcome drinks and dinner in the hotel.

Hotel Colbert | Meals: Dinner

## DAY 2 ANTANANARIVO – ANDASIBE

We head out of the city today heading east to Andasibe, our first destination about four hours' drive from the city. The journey provides a gentle introduction to rural life here as we pass rice fields, redbrick houses and roadside stalls selling seasonal fruits and vegetables. Andasibe is a stunning rainforest park comprising two protected areas — the Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia National Park. Perinet is world famous for its population of Indri, which is the largest living lemur species. After arriving at your lodge in time for lunch, spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before joining a guided night walk late this evening in the forest surrounding the reserve. Look out for a variety of nocturnal lemur: mouse lemur, white footed sportive lemur, fat-tailed dwarf lemur, as well as the woolly lemur.

Mantadia Lodge | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3 ANDASIBE

Today we go in search of the comical Indri in the 810 hectare Perinet Reserve. With a barely visible tail, black and white markings, and a surprised teddy-bear face, this lemur is one of the few animals in the world that cannot survive in captivity. There are another 11 species of lemur to spot as we walk through the rainforest. We may find a troop of grey bamboo lemur, common brown lemur, Diademed Sifaka, and black and white ruffed lemur. Birdwatchers should look out for the velvet asity, blue coua and nuthatch vanga, and many more endemic species. Perinet is also home to many reptiles, invertebrates and some of Madagascar's thousand orchid species.

Mantadia Lodge | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4 ANDASIBE – ANTANANARIVO

A visit first thing this morning to Lemur Island, a small private reserve that protects a number of habituated lemur. There are four species to see here: the bamboo lemur, the black and white ruffed lemur, brown lemur, and one diademed sifaka. We return to the capital after lunch.

Le Relais des Plateaux | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5 TANA – IFOTAKA

This morning fly to the port city of Fort Dauphin in the far south of the island. In order to provide travellers with exclusive accommodation at the Manafiafy Beach & Rainforest Lodge and Mandrare River Camp, the group will be divided. Group One visits Mandrare River Days 5-8 and Manafiafy Beach Days 8-11. Group Two does the reverse. Your Guest Host, Charlie, will remain at Mandrare Days 5-11 while your local escort stays at Manafiafy. The itinerary following relates to the programme scheduled for Group One. We head into the interior by road to Mandrare River Camp with its classic tented safari accommodation and majestic views over the Mandrare River. In the late afternoon, we venture on foot into the Sacred Spiny forest which has the highest percentage of endemic plants in any habitat in Madagascar and is dominated by the distinctive thorny octopus tree. In addition to some extraordinary wildlife, including Verreaux sifaka, chameleons and ground boa constrictor, the forest is also filled with 500-year-old baobabs and the ancestral tombs of the local Antandroy tribe, one of the most traditional in Madagascar. You'll be introduced to their culture and customs before sundowners on the river bank.

Mandrare River Camp | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6 IFOTAKA

This morning visit the stunning Sacred Gallery forest south of camp. Depending on water levels, walk or take a boat across the Mandrare River to reach the largely deciduous forest. Inquisitive groups of ring tailed lemurs and the always entertaining Verreaux sifaka are the highlight of this excursion. Return to camp for lunch and a relaxed afternoon. A night walk in the Forest of Zenavo is a fantastic way to see diurnal lemur bedding down, and the nocturnal lemurs emerging in the eerie and prehistoric Spiny Forest. Look out for sifakas and sleeping white-footed sportive lemur and once the sun has set, two mouse lemur species, sleeping birds, chameleons, owls and the now active sportive lemur.

Mandrare River Camp | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7 IFOTAKA

Another visit to the Spiny Forest for an early morning walk. See the sunlight break through the octopus trees while looking out for the many endemic birds such as crested coua, a variety of vangas and the running coua. Return to camp for breakfast followed by a visit to the local market or the local village to meet members of the fascinating Antandroy tribe. A relaxed afternoon watching life along the river from your tent terrace. This evening, memorable sundowners are included amidst the baobabs as the sun sets and the moon rises; views across the baobabs to the mountains beyond are simply magical. Later on enjoy a traditional performance by the villagers.

Mandrare River Camp | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8 IFOTAKA - MANAFIAFY BEACH

We return to Fort Dauphin for lunch and then in the afternoon head north to Manafiafy Beach, a secluded tropical paradise. Also known as Sainte Luce, Manafiafy is a beautiful sandy bay, fringed with forest-covered mountains and wildlife-rich mangroves. We'll spend the next three nights at the lodge with time for an afternoon swim on arrival and cocktails as the sun sets over the bay.



Manafiafy Lodge | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### DAYS 9-10 MANAFIAFY BEACH

Two days to do as you please. The lodge offers a wide range of wildlife and sporting activities which are all included: day and night walks in the rainforest to see five species of lemur, snorkelling in the bay and nearby cove, kayaking and scenic boat trips to the mangroves, a whale-watching tower (humpback whales on their migratory path between July to September), boat trips to the nearby islands for a secluded picnic lunch, walks along long empty beaches, and trips to the local village and school, supported by the lodge.

Manafiafy Lodge | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

#### DAY 11 MANAFIAFY - ANTANANARIVO

Return by road to Fort Dauphin airport where the group reunites for the flight back to Tana. This evening farewell cocktails and dinner is planned at Le Café de la Gare, a lovely restaurant in Tana's abandoned central railway station. This typically French station was built in 1910.

Hotel Colbert | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

#### DAY 12 DEPART TANA

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

**Program Note:** Travel in this remote region entails travel to remote regions; long travel days over variable road surfaces; best available accommodations; limited access to Western cuisine; and an unpredictable climate.

## Dates & Prices

Prices are in USD, per person, based on double occupancy.

Dates	Prices	Single Supplement	Internal Air (From)	Availability
Nov 10 - Nov 21, 2019	\$7,495	\$1,495	\$800	Call for Availability

### Journey Details

**Minimum number of guests to guarantee operation:** Departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 2 guests

**Maximum number of guests:** Limited to 18 guests

**First group event:** Welcome briefing at 6:00 p.m. on Day 1.

**Last group event:** Farewell dinner at 7:30 p.m on Day 11.

**Tour inclusions:** All accommodation as detailed on a double occupancy basis with private facilities; meals as specified; bottled water during transfers and touring; airport welcome; assistance with luggage and group transportation by private air-conditioned vehicle; services of English speaking A&K Resident Tour Director & Guest Host; economy flights only if specified as included in itinerary, all entrance fees, planning, handling, operational and communication charges, all tipping excluding Guest Host (tipping is not expected of Guest Host).

**Tour Exclusions:** International flights, visa, insurance coverage of personal loss, injury, illness or damages incurred during your trip; items of a purely personal nature such as drinks, laundry, dry cleaning, internet, fax or phone charges; transfers/ sightseeing or meals not specified in itinerary; excess baggage charges. Tipping is not expected or required for Guest Host.

Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Internal and international air not included. See complete terms and conditions [here](#).