



WWF INSIDER JOURNEYS

MADAGASCAR WILDLIFE ADVENTURE



TRIP ITINERARY

A WWF journey with Shauna Mahajan,
WWF Western Indian Ocean Seascape Director

September 4–16, 2025

Madagascar is truly a world apart. Located off the east coast of Africa, Madagascar is the world's fifth largest island; at 144 million acres, it's almost the size of Texas. The island harbors lush rain forests, tropical dry forests, plateaus, and deserts. Its more than 3,000 miles of coastline and over 250 islands are home to some of the world's largest coral reef systems and the most extensive mangrove areas in the Western Indian Ocean.

Its rain forests are home to diademed sifakas, indris, fossas, and tenrecs, while baobabs and achypodia dot its sandstone deserts. Curious about these exotic-sounding names? For even the best-traveled nature lover, Madagascar offers a kaleidoscope of discoveries. In fact, more than 80% of the island nation's rare and intriguing plants and animals,



including more than 100 different varieties of lemur, exist nowhere else.

There's no better way to experience this living time capsule that broke away from the supercontinent 160 million years ago than on our exclusive small-group journey, with private chartered flights to maximize your time and comfort. As you journey through one of the most unique places on



Earth, you'll learn how WWF is working with governments, scientists, industry, and local communities to secure the future for the island's people and wildlife.

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE 12 Days

Day	Date	Location	Accommodation
1	September 4	Arrival / Antananarivo, Madagascar	Novotel Antananarivo
2 - 4	September 5 - 7	Antananarivo, Madagascar / Andasibe-Mantadia National Park	Mantadia Lodge
5 - 6	September 8 - 9	Ranomafana National Park	Hotel Thermal Ranomafana
7 - 8	September 10 - 11	Isalo National Park	Relais de la Reine
9	September 12	Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park / Isalo	Relais de la Reine
10 - 12	September 13 - 15	Anjajavy Private Reserve	Anjajavy Lodge
13	September 16	Antananarivo / Depart	

ITINERARY IN DETAIL

Day 1, September 4: Antananarivo, Madagascar

Our adventure begins in Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. Known locally as “Tana,” Madagascar’s largest city is home to roughly 3 million people, while the balance of the country’s population lives mostly in rural areas. A transfer is included from the airport to our hotel, located in the heart of the city’s business and shopping district. Gather this evening for a welcome dinner with our Expedition Leader. *Overnight: Novotel Antananarivo (D)*

Days 2–4, September 5-7: Antananarivo, Madagascar / Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

Leaving the city behind, we pass rice paddies and small villages to reach Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. Within this protected rain forest, we have our first opportunity to hike in search of lemurs, primitive primates found only in Madagascar. The country is home to approximately 100 species and subspecies of lemur, and the world’s largest, the indri, is found in this park. As exciting to hear as it is to see, this pied creature has a distinctive call, its loud, eerie wailing ringing out through the trees. We may also spy gray bamboo, Eastern woolly and black-and-white ruffed lemurs, as well as diademed sifakas that spring through the canopy like athletic dancers. On night walks, look for tree frogs, chameleons, and palm-sized brown mouse lemurs that skitter among the strangler figs and giant ferns.



Madagascar’s premier national park is a critical component of the country’s efforts to conserve its biodiversity in the face of extensive deforestation. Besides lemurs, this threatened biome contains a thousand different orchid species that bloom during the rainy season, numerous medicinal plants, the iridescent green and turquoise Parson’s chameleon (one of the largest in the world—as long as your forearm), and a spiky insectivore called a tenrec, which looks like a striped hedgehog. This protected tract of rare montane rain forest is one of the world’s

top birding locales. We also visit Lemur Island, a small sanctuary where lemurs rescued from captivity are thriving. Three species, including the common brown lemur, bamboo lemur, and black-and-white ruffed lemur, have become habituated to visitors, allowing for close encounters and delightful photo opportunities.

As you're searching for lemurs, you'll continue to learn about what WWF is doing to help protect the 107 species of lemurs and their surrounding environment. 96% of lemur species, or 103 out of 107 species, are facing extinction due to habitat loss from the routine clearing of forests for wood charcoal, firewood, and subsistence farming, as well as being taken from the wild for the illegal pet trade. In southwestern Madagascar, WWF is working with communities to protect lemurs in the community-managed Amoron'i Onilahy Protected Area by keeping habitat intact for lemurs and the people who rely on the forest for survival.

Overnight: Mantadia Lodge (B, L, D)



Days 5 & 6, September 8-9: Ranomafana National Park

Return to Antananarivo by road and take a chartered flight to the hilltop town of Fianarantsoa, noted for its 19th-century colonial Old Town filled with colorful houses and winding streets. From here, we make a scenic drive to Ranomafana National Park, created in 1991 following the discovery of the endangered golden bamboo lemur. Today, the park is a hub of research and discovery that is vitally important for the conservation of regional wildlife. Comprised of steep, mountainous terrain, Ranomafana's 250-square



miles encompass varied habitats at a range of altitudes, from lowland rain forest to cloud forest to high plateau forest. Cliffs draped in lush vegetation and waterfalls abound in this rugged wilderness, which we explore on guided hikes. With multiple guides, we can split the group according to physical ability, tailoring hikes accordingly.

The park is home to 12 species of lemur, including three different bamboo lemur species, 120 frog species, numerous chameleons and other reptiles, 90 butterfly species, and the fascinating but rarely seen fossa. Birds are abundant, too, with more than 100 species present, including ground-rollers, red-fronted coua and collared nightjar. A night walk may reveal brown mouse lemurs and various amphibians active after dark. The lush rain forest also harbors many different carnivorous plants. Throughout the trip, you may notice some threats to the island's flora and fauna — rampant forest clearing,

illegal wildlife trade, and climate change have pushed several species, including some chameleons, to near extinction.

You'll learn about WWF's work to halt further losses and conserve the island's natural resources by working with the government to set new targets for sustainable development, supporting projects to restore degraded forests and ecosystems, and facilitating community trainings on ecotourism. These efforts, coupled with other initiatives, are designed to help protect biodiversity as well as people's health and livelihoods.
Overnight: Hotel Thermal Ranomafana (B, L, D)

Days 7 & 8, September 10-11: Isalo National Park

Constantly changing views unfold on a full-day scenic drive to southern Madagascar. Get glimpses of local life as we pass through small villages into a landscape in stark contrast to the eastern rain forests. Stop en route at the Anja Community Reserve for a picnic lunch and a chance to see rambunctious ring-tailed lemurs feeding in the trees or foraging on the ground. Continuing south, we enter a region of mountainous plateaus and eroded canyons reminiscent of the American Southwest, as massive rock outcrops rise from dry grass plains. Reaching the striking Isalo massif, witness fascinating flora that thrives against this Jurassic-era sandstone backdrop, including the odd-looking swollen pachypodia, or "elephant's foot," with its bright yellow flowers.

Several varieties of lemur live among the cacti, aloes and palms, especially the ring-tailed lemur we look for on a hike in Isalo National Park. The 200,000-acre park is also home to more than 80 bird species and 33 reptile species. It is the sacred homeland of the tribal Bara people, whose burial sites are marked by mounds of tiny stones placed in crevices in the rock faces. Amid the arid landscape, we come upon a swift stream running through an ancient deep gorge. There's an option to climb a series of steep steps to a natural pool fed by a thundering waterfall that has carved its course into the sandstone. Later, as the sunset fades, look up at the ebony sky for some of the best stargazing on the planet.

Overnight: Relais de la Reine (B, L, D)



Day 9, September 12: Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park / Isalo

Drive west to Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park today, a little-visited reserve on the border of two biological zones—dry deciduous tropical forest and more humid forest and savanna. The park is an island of green in the middle of a widely deforested region, and as such, it provides crucial natural habitat for an array of flora and fauna.

Some of Madagascar's finest birdwatching is here, with a number of endemic species including the very rare Appert's tetraka native to this forest alone. We also look for the giant coua, the iridescent souimanga sunbird, greater and lesser vasa parrots, Oustalet's chameleon, and, always, lemurs. Among the park's eight lemur species, we may see Verreaux's sifaka, red-fronted brown lemur and the Hubbard's sportive lemur, a prize sighting found only in this park, if we're lucky. We feel especially fortunate to be here, knowing that our presence as tourists is helping to protect this rare habitat from destruction. Late this afternoon, return to our secluded ecolodge in Isalo to spend one more night.

Overnight: Relais de la Reine (B, L, D)



Days 10–12, September 13-15: Anjajavy Private Reserve

A truly exclusive journey awaits today, as we board a chartered flight north to the 17,000-acre private nature reserve of Anjajavy. This vast protected area on the Indian Ocean is reached only by chartered small aircraft, with access via the reserve's private airport. The lodge fronting the cerulean waters of the Mozambique Channel is our base for exploring the dry deciduous forest of northwest Madagascar. This remote area, less disturbed than other regions of the country, harbors a striking number of endemic species. Look for the common brown lemur and black-and-white Coquerel's sifaka during guided forest hikes, though we frequently see the latter on the lodge grounds as well. Night strolls may reveal gray and golden brown



mouse lemurs, giant hairy crabs and various reptiles. The forest contains some 1,800 plant species, among them richly colored rosewood trees and massive baobab trees shaped like squat bottles. Our 4-star resort, Madagascar's only member of the exclusive Relais & Chateaux group, accommodates guests in deluxe thatched bungalows overlooking a private white sand beach.

Private boat excursions offer a close-up view on this secluded region that's mostly uninhabited except for a couple of nearby fishing villages. While we may pass a few fishermen

in their dhows with triangular white sails or paddling wooden pirogues, we're largely alone along this wild coastline. It's a scenic landscape of rocky outcrops and tiny indented coves with unspoiled beaches dotted by pale ghost crabs. Travel by boat to Moramba Bay to view eroded limestone formations protruding from the sea, and huge baobab trees that stand sen-



tinel over densely vegetated environs. Search the coastline for the Madagascar fish eagle, rare Madagascar sacred ibis and crested ibis. A sunset cruise through the mangroves reveals more birds, and, if we're lucky, and we may even see Madagascar flying foxes leaving their roosts at dusk. From the lodge, you may also opt to explore the coastline by kayak, snorkel over a coral reef from the beach, and explore a subterranean cave where we may spy bats. On the lodge grounds, the "Oasis" provides a garden sanctuary for a wide variety of aquatic and climbing plants, papyrus, tree ferns and palm trees that offer refuge to green kingfisher, red fody, and active sifaka lemurs. A saltwater infinity pool overlooking the ocean provides refreshment after a day of discovery.

Overnight: Anjajavy Lodge (B, L, D)

Day 16, September 16: Antananarivo / Depart

After a leisurely breakfast at the lodge, we fly by chartered aircraft back to Antananarivo for connecting flights homeward, or on to your safari extension.

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Please note: The itinerary provided is meant as a guideline and is subject to change without notice. On rare occasions, it may be necessary to deviate from our regular itinerary for reasons beyond our control. In these instances, we will provide the best available alternative.

Meet Our Expert



Shauna Mahajan, Seascope Director, Western Indian Ocean

Shauna is an interdisciplinary social scientist and program lead with a background in resilience and systems thinking, marine conservation, and development. In her role as Seascope Director, Shauna partners with stakeholders in the Western Indian Ocean region to advance shared goals on inclusive area-based conservation and transitioning towards a sustainable 'blue' economy.

Shauna's conservation career started in the Western Indian Ocean where she researched the emergence of community-led marine conservation in Kenya, and since, has developed a diverse research and conservation portfolio around the world, including in agriculture landscapes of Quebec, river basins and coastlines in the eastern United States, and fishing communities across the Indian Ocean. Shauna has also led research on enabling evidence-informed conservation, using systems thinking to inform transformative conservation strategies, and community-led conservation.

Outside of WWF, Shauna is a hatha yoga teacher and folk singer-songwriter, where her passion for mindfulness and storytelling intersects with her desire to create a more sustainable and just future. In 2023 she traveled to Madagascar three times and is thrilled to return to accompany this Insider Journey to visit this amazing island that is home to incredible people, wildlife, and nature.

What to Expect and Physical Requirements

This adventure is considered Moderate to Difficult. In order to participate fully in this adventure, guests must be able to hike unassisted for at least 3 miles in a single stretch along dirt trails, up and down steep and sometimes slippery slopes, over or around tree roots that protrude from the trail, up and down tall steps cut into the paths, and occasionally off-trail and into the brush over wet leaves, tree roots and through hanging vines to see wildlife. The group may do multiple hikes during a day, and total distances may exceed 5 miles. Travelers must be comfortable crossing a sturdy bridge over a gorge, walking through sand and into knee-deep water to climb into and out of a boat with assistance, and walking along wooden boardwalks without a railing. All guests must be able to climb stairs unassisted.

Throughout the itinerary we will travel with more than one guide, allowing us to divide the group by varying physical ability level, to accommodate those who

prefer more or less demanding hikes. But in all cases, guests must meet the minimum physical requirements as explained here.

Days are often long, as mornings typically start before daybreak with dinner served after sundown. All wildlife-viewing activities happen on foot and require a combination of endurance, balance and a good view of the trail underfoot. Trekking poles can be very helpful, enhancing stability, and we will provide them to anyone who wishes at any point during the trip. Most hikes are considered moderate with regard to exertion level, though some are more difficult, particularly in the rain forests where terrain can be especially rugged and/or slippery. While our longest excursions can last up to four hours, we move at a leisurely pace, interspersing many stops to view wildlife in the trees around us with bursts of more moderate exertion as we trek between wildlife sightings. While all activities are optional, those who can walk longer distances on more strenuous trails will gain the most from this trip and may see more wildlife species that reside deeper within the forest. Longer and more difficult hikes may be offered in certain areas when time permits, though guests have the option of whether or not to seek that extra challenge, since we are able to split the group according to different physical abilities.

Our private chartered flights utilize unpressurized turbo-prop aircraft that may fly as high as 10,000 feet. Elevations can reach 4,700 feet above sea level during our excursions. Temperatures can be quite cold in some areas, especially during the months of July and August, while heat in other areas can demand greater exertion, particularly in September through November departures. Additionally, roads in Madagascar are bumpy and winding, including dirt roads with many ruts and pot-holes which may cause you to bounce in your seat. There are several full days of overland travel and guests with back or neck problems or other health issues should take this into consideration. Guests prone to motion sickness are advised to carry medication for such conditions.

Accommodations



Novotel Antananarivo

An easy 15-minute drive from the international airport serving Madagascar's capital, the 5-star Novotel Antananarivo is located in the heart of the city's business and shopping district. The ultra-contemporary luxury hotel's 180 rooms have panoramic views of the city, courtyard gardens or nearby hills. Within walking distance is Tsarasaotra Bird Park, a sanctuary for protected wetland birds.



Mantadia Lodge

Set high on a ridge the lodge features contemporary stone and stucco bungalows that have terraces overlooking the rain forest near Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, these contemporary stone and stucco bungalows have terraces with broad views over the natural habitat of the indri.



Hotel Thermal Ranomafana

Set on the edge of Ranomafana National Park, this sustainable hotel is in harmony with the rain forest ecosystem and the local community that protects it.



Relais de la Reine

Craftsmen used local Madagascar granite and sandstone to build this family-run boutique ecolodge, blending it seamlessly with the natural environment.



Anjavy Lodge

Madagascar's only Relais & Chateaux property, this luxury ecolodge on the Mozambique Channel enjoys a singular setting within a private nature reserve accessible only via chartered aircraft.

About WWF Insider Journeys

WWF Insider Journeys is a special conservation travel program for our closest supporters to see first-hand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making. Each of these curated journeys is accompanied by WWF experts and offers exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work; and immerse yourself in the worlds of our staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world alongside other WWF supporters and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

About Our Travel Partner



This journey is being arranged by Natural Habitat Adventures of Boulder, Colorado. For more than a decade, WWF has partnered with Nat Hab to take travelers to view nature's greatest sights. WWF selected Natural Habitat as its partner because of its longstanding commitment to conservation and the exceptional quality of its adventures.

Reservation Information & Trip Details

To register or if you have questions, please contact Aly Jacobsen at Natural Habitat Adventures (888) 993-8687 or alyj@nathab.com.

DATES:	September 4 – 16, 2025
GROUP SIZE:	Limited to 8 guests
LAND COST:	\$14,295 per person in double occupancy (+internal air) Internal air cost: \$3,988 Single supplement: \$1,995
DEPOSIT:	\$500 per person (nonrefundable)

INCLUDED: Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s), local guides and camp staff all meals from dinner on Day 1 through lunch on final day, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees. All charter flights within the itinerary (this will be listed separately on our invoicing)

NOT INCLUDED: Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry and internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

PAYMENTS: A nonrefundable deposit of \$500 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to Natural Habitat Adventures.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Cancellations must be received in writing at NHA by US mail, email or fax. At the time WWF receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: 121 days or more before departure: lose deposit. 120 to 61 days before departure: forfeit 50% of tour cost. 60 days or fewer before departure: no refund.

INSURANCE: Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat Adventures, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:

You must arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar by 3 pm on Day 1 for a 7 pm welcome dinner. You are free to depart Antananarivo any time after 2 pm on the final day (Day13).

We can best serve you if our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk makes your reservations, since we are intimately familiar with the special requirements of this program and can arrange the most efficient travel. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer you the best possible rates available to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may find special web rates or better fares online.

While WWF Insider Journeys are intended for WWF's closest supporters and enhanced with WWF Experts, exclusive site visits, and enriched content, a minimum number of guests is required to run each trip. To avoid canceling, WWF and Nat Hab may fill remaining available spots with WWF and non-WWF members.