earthwatch expeditions
by Nat Hab

Explore with Purpose



Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar

Table of Contents

Trip Overview 3

Itinerary 5

Accommodations 8

Meet the Scientists 10

Research & Impact 11

Discovery in the Field 13

Dates, Pricing & Info 15



Trip Details:

Days
11 Days / Jun–Jul, Sep–Oct

Price
From $14867 (+Air)

Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar

Follow the haunting calls of indri through Madagascar's misty rainforests, where chameleons blend in among the foliage and lemurs leap through the canopy. Explore Andasibe-Mantadia with expert naturalist guides, searching for wildlife found nowhere else on Earth. Then fly by private charter to Ranomafana National Park, where you'll venture deep into the forest with Malagasy researchers, tracking endangered sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs as they forage, navigate the treetops and interact with their families.

Gain rare access to a research program pioneered by Dr. Patricia Wright, whose discovery of the golden bamboo lemur helped establish Ranomafana National Park. Spend hours observing wild lemur families, recording feeding habits, social behavior and infant development. Help collect non-invasive samples to investigate lemur health and learn how logging, wildfire and invasive plants affect their survival. Beyond the fieldwork, explore rainforest trails after dark and visit Centre ValBio to discover how more than four decades of research are helping protect Madagascar's endangered primates.

Expedition Highlights

Follow Lemurs Through Madagascar's Rainforests

Search for indri in Andasibe-Mantadia, then track endangered sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs through Ranomafana. Encounter Madagascar's largest living lemur, powerful canopy-leaping sifakas and one of the world's rarest primates.

Enter the World of Pioneering Lemur Research

Join a research program that has followed generations of wild lemurs for more than four decades. Observe habituated families with Malagasy scientists and visit Centre ValBio to see how field observations inform ongoing studies.

Discover Madagascar Through Its People

Explore Ranomafana's living traditions, from silk weaving and natural dyes to medicinal plants and local healing practices. Browse the village market, where farmers and artisans gather to trade produce, spices and handmade crafts.

Research at a Glance



The Research Focus

Study endangered Milne-Edwards' sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs, comparing their feeding behavior, reproduction and survival across rainforest habitats. Investigate how logging, wildfire and invasive plants affect these primates.



What You'll Do

Follow wild lemur families through Ranomafana's rainforest, recording feeding habits, movements, social interactions and infant development. Help collect non-invasive biological samples for genetic, hormone and parasite studies.



Why It Matters

Your observations add to more than 40 years of lemur research, helping scientists pinpoint how forest disturbance affects endangered primates and identify which habitats are most important to protect or restore.



Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar Itinerary

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	ANTANANARIVO
Day 2	ANTANANARIVO / ANDASIBE
Days 3–4	ANDASIBE-MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK
Day 5	ANDASIBE / RANOMAFANA
Days 6–10	RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK
Day 10	RANOMAFANA / ANTANANARIVO
Day 11	ANTANANARIVO



Day 1

ANTANANARIVO

Gather in Antananarivo for Your Madagascar Wildlife Expedition

- Arrive in Madagascar's capital and settle into your hotel
- Meet your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers
- Discover what makes Madagascar's wildlife unique

Arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar's bustling capital, where you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Your journey begins on an island whose long isolation has produced wildlife found nowhere else on Earth. Gather with your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers for an introduction to the expedition ahead, from listening for indri in the eastern rainforests to observing endangered lemurs with Malagasy researchers in Ranomafana National Park.

Day 2

ANTANANARIVO / ANDASIBE

Enter Madagascar's Eastern Rainforest

- Journey east through Madagascar's countryside toward Andasibe
- Search the forest for chameleons, endemic birds and other wildlife
- Venture out after dark in search of nocturnal creatures, conditions permitting

Leave the capital behind and travel east through Madagascar's countryside toward the town of Andasibe, your gateway to Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. The landscape grows greener as you approach the rainforest, where dense vegetation shelters an extraordinary variety of endemic wildlife.

Settle into your accommodations before exploring the surrounding forest with expert local naturalist guides. Search for chameleons concealed among the foliage, listen for endemic birds and watch for movement in the canopy.

After sunset, conditions permitting, head out on a guided night walk. Scan branches for tiny mouse lemurs, sleeping chameleons and tree frogs as the forest reveals wildlife rarely seen by day.

Days 3–4

ANDASIBE-MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK

Follow the Haunting Calls of Indr

- Follow the far-carrying calls of Madagascar's largest living lemur
- Explore the rainforest trails of Analamazaotra and Mantadia
- Spot leaf-tailed geckos, colorful chameleons, frogs and endemic birds

Rise early and enter Andasibe-Mantadia National Park as the haunting calls of indri echo through the rainforest. Follow expert local guides beneath the canopy, searching for Madagascar's largest living lemurs as they call to one another from the branches.

Over two days, explore the trails of Analamazaotra and Mantadia, two distinct rainforest areas within the protected landscape. Watch for leaf-tailed geckos nearly indistinguishable from tree bark, brilliantly colored chameleons, unusual frogs and endemic birds. Your guides help reveal the subtle movements and markings that make these animals so difficult to spot.

Along the way, learn about the pressures facing Madagascar's eastern rainforests and the efforts underway to protect and restore critical wildlife habitat.

Day 5

ANDASIBE / RANOMAFANA

Enter the Heart of Lemur Research

- Travel by private charter to the Ranomafana region
- Discover the story behind Dr. Patricia Wright's golden bamboo lemur discovery
- Meet the Malagasy researchers leading the expedition's field studies

Return toward Antananarivo, then board a private charter flight to the Ranomafana region, avoiding a lengthy overland journey.

Ranomafana National Park is home to a lemur research program with more than four decades of field observations. In 1986, Dr. Patricia Wright discovered the golden bamboo lemur here, a finding that helped spur the park's creation. Researchers have since followed generations of wild lemurs through these forests, documenting their behavior, reproduction and responses to habitat disturbance.

Meet members of the Malagasy research team and learn how scientists identify individual lemurs, follow family groups and record observations in the field. You'll soon put these methods into practice on the forest trails.

Days 6–10

RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK

Ranomafana National Park

- Track endangered sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs with Malagasy researchers
- Record lemur behavior and investigate how forest conditions affect survival
- Explore Centre ValBio, rainforest wildlife and local Malagasy traditions

Set out with Malagasy researchers into the steep, humid rainforest of Ranomafana National Park, home to endangered Milne-Edwards' sifakas and critically endangered golden bamboo lemurs. Search for families that scientists have followed for generations, then begin recording their behavior. Watch a sifaka launch itself between branches, an infant cling to its mother's fur or a golden bamboo lemur pause to feed. Record what the animals eat, where they travel and how family members interact, adding your observations to more than four decades of research.

Explore disturbed and relatively undisturbed rainforest habitats, comparing areas affected by selective logging, wildfire or invasive Chinese guava with less disturbed rainforest. Notice changes in vegetation and feeding opportunities as researchers investigate how these conditions influence lemur behavior, reproduction and survival. Depending on current research priorities, you may also help collect non-invasive biological samples for genetic, hormone and parasite studies.

Between field sessions, search for colorful chameleons, leaf-tailed geckos, frogs and endemic birds along Ranomafana's forest trails. Visit Centre ValBio, founded by Dr. Patricia Wright, to meet scientists and discover how long-term observations help identify habitats that need protection or restoration.

Your time in Ranomafana also offers a closer look at Malagasy traditions. Meet women from the FAMIOVA cooperative to learn about silk weaving and natural dyes, and explore medicinal plants and healing practices with FIMARA traditional healers. When the schedule allows, browse the village market, where farmers and artisans gather to sell tropical produce, spices and handmade crafts.

As your fieldwork draws to a close, review the observations collected during your expedition and learn how they contribute to ongoing studies of Madagascar's endangered lemurs.

Day 10

RANOMAFANA / ANTANANARIVO

Return to Madagascar's Capital

- Fly by private charter from Ranomafana to Antananarivo
- Reflect on your days tracking lemurs and collecting field observations
- Reconnect with fellow travelers as your expedition draws to a close

Bid farewell to Ranomafana and the researchers who have introduced you to the lives of its endangered lemurs. Board your private charter flight back to Antananarivo, leaving the rainforest behind after days of close wildlife observation and fieldwork.

Back in the capital, gather with your Expedition Leader and fellow travelers to share favorite encounters and stories from the field, from the calls of indri to your days following endangered lemur families through Ranomafana's rainforest.

Day 11

ANTANANARIVO

Depart Madagascar

- Enjoy a final morning in Madagascar's capital
- Transfer to the airport for your departing flight
- Depart with firsthand insight into Madagascar's endangered lemurs

Return home with memories of indri calling through misty rainforests, endangered lemurs leaping through the canopy and days spent exploring Madagascar's wild side with Malagasy researchers. After breakfast, transfer to Antananarivo's airport for your departing flight.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-548-7555



Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar Accommodations



Mantadia Lodge

Set high on a ridge overlooking the rainforest 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 rainforest ecosystem and the local community that protects it.



Novotel Antananarivo

Just 15 minutes from the international airport serving Madagascar's capital, this contemporary 5-star hotel features sleek modern rooms plus a swimming pool, fitness center and rooftop terrace Skybar overlooking the courtyard and gardens.



Relais des Plateaux Hotel

Set amid jacaranda trees and palms, this colorful, relaxed hotel features Malagasy furnishings, a heated outdoor pool, lobby with a wooden spiral staircase, spa facilities and local cuisine.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/madagascar-lemur-conservation-research-travel/accommodations.

Meet the Scientists

Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar



Patricia Wright, Ph.D.

Distinguished Service Professor and Herrnstein Professor of Conservation Biology, Stony Brook University

Center ValBio Research Station, Ranomafana, Madagascar

Dr. Patricia Wright is a Distinguished Service Professor and Herrnstein Professor of Conservation Biology at Stony Brook University and founder of Center ValBio Research Station in Madagascar. As a primatologist, tropical ecologist and conservation biologist, she has studied Madagascar's lemurs and rainforests for nearly four decades. Her long-term research in Ranomafana National Park focuses on the behavioral ecology of Milne-Edwards' sifakas and other lemurs, exploring their reproduction, development, genetics, feeding, health and responses to environmental change.

Conservation has been central to Dr. Wright's research since she arrived in Madagascar in 1986 searching for the greater bamboo lemur, which was feared extinct. She rediscovered the species—and also discovered a species previously unknown to science, the golden bamboo lemur. When logging threatened lemurs' rainforest habitat, Dr. Wright helped spearhead the creation of Ranomafana National Park, established in 1991. She later founded Center ValBio, which combines scientific research with community-based initiatives supporting education, health, sustainable livelihoods and responsible management of the region's natural resources.

Dr. Wright and her research teams track sifakas through Ranomafana's rainforest, using systematic behavioral observations to record what individual animals eat and where they travel. Researchers map important feeding trees with GPS and collect biological samples to study genetics, reproduction, parasites and other aspects of lemur health; their long-term records track births, deaths, weather and seasonal changes in forest plants. This research has built a decades-long picture of lemurs and their changing habitat, providing data that guides the protection of Madagascar's extraordinary lemurs and rainforests.

Education

Ph.D., Anthropology, City University of New York

B.A., Biology, Hood College

Research & Impact

Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar

Deep in Madagascar's Ranomafana rainforest, follow endangered lemurs through the canopy with researchers who have studied their families for generations. Track Milne-Edwards' sifakas as they leap between trees and watch golden bamboo lemurs forage among the branches. Learn to recognize individual animals, document their behavior and contribute to a scientific record spanning more than 40 years. Few travelers experience Madagascar's wildlife with this level of access—or help investigate how its endangered primates survive in forests affected by logging, wildfire and invasive plants.

Research Focus

In Ranomafana National Park, a long-running study examines how forest disturbance affects two endangered primates: Milne-Edwards' sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs. Researchers compare groups living in undisturbed rainforest with those inhabiting areas affected by selective logging, wildfire and invasive Chinese guava. Their diets, social relationships, group composition and reproductive success offer clues about how each species responds to altered habitats.

This research builds on field observations dating to 1986, allowing scientists to trace changes across generations of wild lemurs. Behavioral records, population monitoring and non-invasive biological samples help reveal how forest conditions influence lemur health and survival—and aid in identifying priorities for protecting their remaining habitat.

Conservation Impact

Madagascar's remaining rainforests shelter primates found nowhere else on Earth. Research at Ranomafana examines how specific disturbances affect endangered lemurs, providing evidence that can guide forest protection and management.

- **Extend a 40-year research record:** Add observations to decades of data on lemur behavior, reproduction and population changes.
- **Compare forest conditions:** Examine how lemurs fare in forests affected by logging, wildfire and invasive plants versus undisturbed habitats.
- **Monitor endangered populations:** Record group composition and infant development to help track reproductive success.
- **Investigate biological clues:** Collect non-invasive samples supporting genetic, hormone and parasite studies.
- **Guide habitat protection:** Contribute to findings intended for Madagascar's park authorities, environmental agencies and the IUCN.

Together, these findings can help scientists identify long-term trends and determine where habitat protection may be most needed.

Your Role in the Research

This is a chance to experience Madagascar's rainforest as a field researcher, not simply a visitor. Follow known groups of Milne-Edwards' sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs with Malagasy scientists, learning to identify individuals and document the details of their daily lives.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-548-7555

Spend extended periods watching families feed, travel and interact. Document family dynamics, feeding choices and infant behavior, then examine how those observations vary across forest habitats. Depending on research priorities, you may also collect non-invasive fecal samples and help organize field records. Each observation becomes part of a larger picture, adding another chapter to a study that has followed generations of wild lemurs since 1986.

Life in the Field

Your morning begins on a rainforest trail, following Malagasy researchers into the dense vegetation of Ranomafana National Park. Somewhere ahead, a family of sifakas is traveling through the canopy. Once you've found them, the patient work of observation begins.

Watch a sifaka launch itself between trees, follow a mother carrying her infant or note which plants an animal selects for its next meal. Researchers help you recognize individuals and record the behaviors that distinguish one family group from another.

Other days may take you into bamboo stands in search of golden bamboo lemurs. Observe which shoots and leaves they select, gathering clues about their dependence on this specialized habitat.

At Centre ValBio, meet members of the research community and discover how observations collected in the forest become part of a decades-long scientific record. Beyond the fieldwork, explore Ranomafana with local naturalist guides, searching for leaf-tailed geckos, colorful frogs, chameleons and endemic birds.

Research routes and activities depend on where the lemurs travel and what the scientific team needs to document.

Field Conditions

Ranomafana's dense rainforest makes for demanding—but rewarding—fieldwork. Research outings involve steep, uneven trails that can become muddy and slippery after rain. Expect early starts, humid conditions and extended periods on foot while following lemurs through the forest.

Walking & Terrain: Field hikes may cover 2–6 miles depending on wildlife movements and research locations. Travelers must be able to walk at least 2 miles unassisted over challenging ground and should be prepared for 3–4 hours of physical activity on several days. Keeping up with moving lemurs may require a moderate to brisk pace.

Weather & Temperature: Rain is possible year-round. Across the expedition's destinations, daytime temperatures may range from approximately 60–100°F, depending on season and location. June and July are generally cooler, while October and November can be warmer and wetter. Ranomafana's elevation and forest cover also affect conditions on individual outings.

Elevation: The expedition reaches elevations of approximately 4,000 feet.

Research Flexibility: Wildlife movements, rainfall and scientific priorities determine the day's routes and observation periods. Some outings involve longer walks, while others require staying in one location to document a lemur group's behavior.

Discovery in the Field

Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar

1 **Hear the Indri's Haunting Calls**

Follow expert local guides into Andasibe-Mantadia's misty rainforest, listening for the far-carrying calls of Madagascar's largest living lemur. Search the canopy for these striking black-and-white primates as they communicate with their families.

2 **Track Endangered Lemurs Through the Canopy**

Venture into Ranomafana with Malagasy researchers to follow habituated families of Milne-Edwards' sifakas and golden bamboo lemurs. Spend extended periods observing feeding, movement and social behavior in groups whose lives have been documented across generations.

3 **Go Behind the Scenes at Centre ValBio**

Meet scientists at Centre ValBio, the state-of-the-art research station founded by Dr. Patricia Wright. Discover how observations of wild lemur families contribute to a research record spanning more than 40 years.

4 **Investigate Lemur Health in the Field**

Help collect non-invasive biological samples used to study genetics, hormones and parasites. Learn how researchers combine these findings with behavioral observations to investigate lemur reproduction and survival.

5 **Seek Out Madagascar's Rainforest Wildlife**

Search the forests of Andasibe-Mantadia and Ranomafana for brilliantly colored chameleons, leaf-tailed geckos camouflaged against tree bark, unusual frogs and endemic birds. Keep your eyes on the branches, trunks and forest floor for wildlife easily overlooked.

6 **Explore the Rainforest After Dark**

Search for tiny mouse lemurs, sleeping chameleons and elusive frogs on guided evening walks. Listen as the forest comes alive with unfamiliar calls and movement after sunset.

7 **Discover Madagascar's Living Traditions**

Meet women from Ranomafana's FAMIOVA cooperative to learn about traditional silk weaving and natural dyes, then explore medicinal plants and healing practices with FIMARA traditional healers. Browse the local market, where farmers and artisans gather to sell tropical produce, spices and handmade crafts.

8 **Fly by Private Charter Between Rainforest Regions**

Travel by private charter to and from Ranomafana, avoiding lengthy overland journeys and giving you more time in the rainforest with Madagascar's endangered lemurs.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-548-7555

9

Unwind in Madagascar's Rainforest Retreats

Retreat to comfortable accommodations near the rainforest, from the lush surroundings of Mantadia to the tropical gardens of Ranomafana. Enjoy time to unwind between field excursions at properties that emphasize local sourcing, resource conservation and community connections.

10

Explore with a Group of Just 10 Travelers

Enjoy an intimate field experience with a dedicated Expedition Leader, expert local guides and Malagasy researchers. Take time to observe wildlife closely, ask questions and notice the subtle details of lemur behavior that larger groups might overlook.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $14867 (+Air)

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Tracking Lemurs in Madagascar Dates, Pricing & Info

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
Jun 3 - Jun 13, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Jun 17 - Jun 27, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Jul 8 - Jul 18, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Jul 22 - Aug 1, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Sep 2 - Sep 12, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Sep 16 - Sep 26, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Oct 14 - Oct 24, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	
Oct 28 - Nov 7, 2028	**From $13896** +internal air	

2029 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2029		
Jun 9 - Jun 19, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Jun 30 - Jul 10, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Jul 14 - Jul 24, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Jul 28 - Aug 7, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Sep 8 - Sep 18, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Sep 22 - Oct 2, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Oct 13 - Oct 23, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	
Oct 27 - Nov 6, 2029	**From $14896** +internal air	

See https://www.nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/madagascar-lemur-conservation-research-travel/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Earthwatch Expeditions' professional Expedition Leaders, research staff, equipment and permitting, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

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, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Internal air: All light aircraft flights within the itinerary (this will be listed separately on our invoicing).

Important Information About This Trip

Madagascar's varied ecosystems offer a range of nature encounters. We will hike in rainforests (which can be hot and humid), take boat rides to view wildlife, and we may have the chance to snorkel, for those who desire. Participation in all physical activities is optional. We ask our guests to understand that the accommodations in Madagascar are not, collectively, of the standard that may be found in other more established African safari countries. Some lodgings are relatively luxurious while others are plain but clean

and comfortable. In all cases, we have selected the best accommodation available at each location. Changes to the itinerary may occur in order to take advantage of conditions unique to the season and/or to accommodate unexpected internal chartered flight schedule changes; therefore, itineraries may on occasion need to be rerouted or redesigned without notice.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes a minimum of $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-548-7555.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Because it’s a long international journey, we recommend arriving one night before Day 1 to rest and start the trip refreshed. We do not suggest arriving more than one day early, as we cannot provide custom activities before the program begins. Recommended hotels for early arrivals will be listed in your pre-departure materials.

You must **arrive in Antananarivo by 5 pm on Day 1** to attend the 7 pm welcome dinner.

You may **depart Antananarivo anytime after 2 pm** on the final day.



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