

# MADAGASCAR

DETAILED ITINERARY

LAND OF THE LEMURS

Mar 03/24



Madagascar is like no other place on Earth! Eighty percent of its flora and fauna are found nowhere else. With over 100 different species and sub-species of lemurs, 108 endemic birds, unusual plant life, a fascinating culture of 18 distinct tribes, plus strong Indo-Malay and French influences, Madagascar is an ideal destination for the adventure traveler.

The journey starts in Antananarivo with a city tour, followed by a visit to Ambohimanga, where former Merina monarchs had their summer palaces. Our journey continues to Ranomafana, known for its thermal baths and a namesake national park, where we search for lemurs and endemic bird species in a lush rainforest.

In Isalo National Park, we encounter wildlife while exploring grassy plains and sandstone ridges (with fanciful hoodoos). Enroute to Berenty Reserve, we explore the Antanosy tombs. In the park, we wander through spiny forests, famous

## FACTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 18 land days • Maximum 16 travelers • All meals included • Start and finish in Antananarivo • Includes 3 internal flights • Wildlife hikes in Berenty Reserve and the national parks of Ranomafana and Isalo • Home to 18 different tribes • Native species (such as lemurs) found nowhere else on Earth • Enjoy the culture and scenery of the highlands and lowlands of Madagascar • Bird, lemur and reptile viewing in Analamazaotra Special Reserve (Perinet)

## DEPARTURE DATES & PRICE

**Oct 01 - Oct 18, 2024** - **\$8295 USD**  
**Oct 09 - Oct 26, 2024** - **\$8495 USD**

**Activity Level: 3**

**Comfort Level:** Some rough/dusty roads and long drives.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Comfortable hotels/lodges with private bathrooms.

**ELDERTREKS**



SMALL GROUP  
**EXOTIC ADVENTURES**  
FOR TRAVELERS 50 PLUS

for their varied and abundant wildlife. See ringtail lemurs, sifakas and nocturnal lemurs - and if we're fortunate, we may see striped civets and flying foxes!

We wrap up our adventure with a day of bird, lemur and reptile viewing in Analamazaotra Special Reserve (Perinet) before our return to Antananarivo.

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## DAY 1 ARRIVE IN ANTANANARIVO

Upon your arrival in Antananarivo, you will be met and transferred to our hotel. (Due to the late arrival time of most flights, our welcome briefing will take place after breakfast on day 2).

Overnight in Antananarivo.

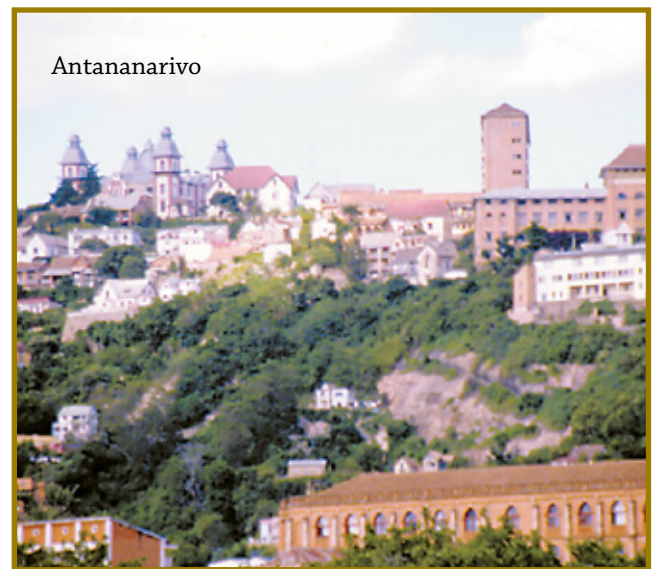
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## DAY 2 ANTANANARIVO

After breakfast and our welcome briefing, we enjoy the scenic drive to Ambohimanga (UNESCO Cultural Site), where the former Merina monarchs had their summer palaces until the last century. It's a beautiful and peaceful place with lovely views over the highlands, and a perfect way of gaining some insight into the fascinating and turbulent history of the Malagasy (pronounced Malagash) people. We return to Tana in time for lunch.

This afternoon, we visit the Akany Avoko orphanage. The Akany Avoko is an eco-friendly refuge offering shelter, care and the opportunity to develop skills to enable their children to grow into self-sufficient adults.

Overnight in Antananarivo.





Granite dome en route to Isalo National Park.

### **DAY 3 MADAGASCAR HIGHLANDS**

After breakfast we enjoy our drive to Antsirabe, through the highlands of Madagascar. On the way, we see the typical highland landscapes of rice fields and Malagasy architecture.

We reach Antsirabe in time for a late lunch. This afternoon we explore the beautiful town situated at an altitude of 4,900 ft (1,493 m) by *pousse-pousse* (rickshaw). The rest of the afternoon is yours to relax.

Overnight in Antsirabe.

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### **DAY 4 TO RANOMAFANA RAINFOREST VIA AMBOSITRA**

Today is a long travel day. After an early breakfast, we begin our journey to Ranomafana Rainforest with a drive south to Ambositra (which means “Place of Eunuchs”). Here we see fine local woodcarvers. We continue onward to Imahasoavahiny, where we enjoy a local lunch overlooking the picturesque Ambohimahasoia village.

This afternoon we continue our drive south over bumpy roads to the town of Ranomafana, one of the most pleasant places in Madagascar. Historically, it

served as a thermal bath center, but now the prime attraction is the newly established national park.

Overnight in Ranomafana.

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### **DAY 5 RANOMAFANA RAINFOREST**

This beautiful national park lies at an altitude of 2,600-3,900 ft (793-1,189 m) and is comprised mainly of rainforested hills, carved by numerous small streams feeding the whitewater of the Namorona River. The park itself is home to 29 species of mammals, including 12 species of lemurs. On an average day in the park we see red-bellied lemurs, red-fronted lemurs, and Milne-Edwards sifakas (commonly called chocolate sifakas). We may even glimpse a golden bamboo lemur, which is unique to this park and only recently discovered.

The diversity of flora is incredible, with orchids, tree ferns, palms, mosses, a variety of flowering plants and stands of giant bamboo - 278 species of trees and bushes as well as numerous other species of smaller plants. The Parc National de Ranomafana is part of the UNESCO Natural Heritage Site covering the rainforests of the Atsinanana.

Overnight in Ranomafana.

## **DAY 6 RANOMAFANA RAINFOREST - ISALO**

An early start, but short drive to the south takes us to Fianarantsoa (locally abbreviated to Fianar). Fianar has long been known as the academic and intellectual center of Madagascar and has recently become the wine-making center of the island. It is a charming town, dominated by the backdrop of 4,500-foot (1,372 m) Mount Kianjasa.

We'll continue to Isalo National Park, along the way enjoying a visit and hike in Anja Park. Anja Park not only offers incredible scenery but is also known for being a great location to view ring-tailed lemurs.

As we leave the lush highlands and drive down to a desert-like environment in the south-west, with land becoming progressively drier and more parched. In the heart of this semi-desert lies the magnificent Isalo Massif with its stark beauty.

Overnight in Isalo National Park.

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## **DAY 7 ISALO NATIONAL PARK**

The morning is spent in Isalo National Park, which encompasses the wildly eroded Jurassic sandstone massif. The park is characterized by alternating flat grassy plains and sandstone ridges dotted with palm trees and pachypodiums, commonly known as "elephant's foot". The landscape has been sculpted

by wind and water into fanciful hoodoos that appear to have eyes, ears, noses and beaks.

Typical of the Malagasy culture, this haunting place is filled with a variety of local fady (superstitions and taboos) that must be observed as one moves through the park. We'll have a picnic lunch at a beautiful natural swimming pool.

Overnight in Isalo National Park.

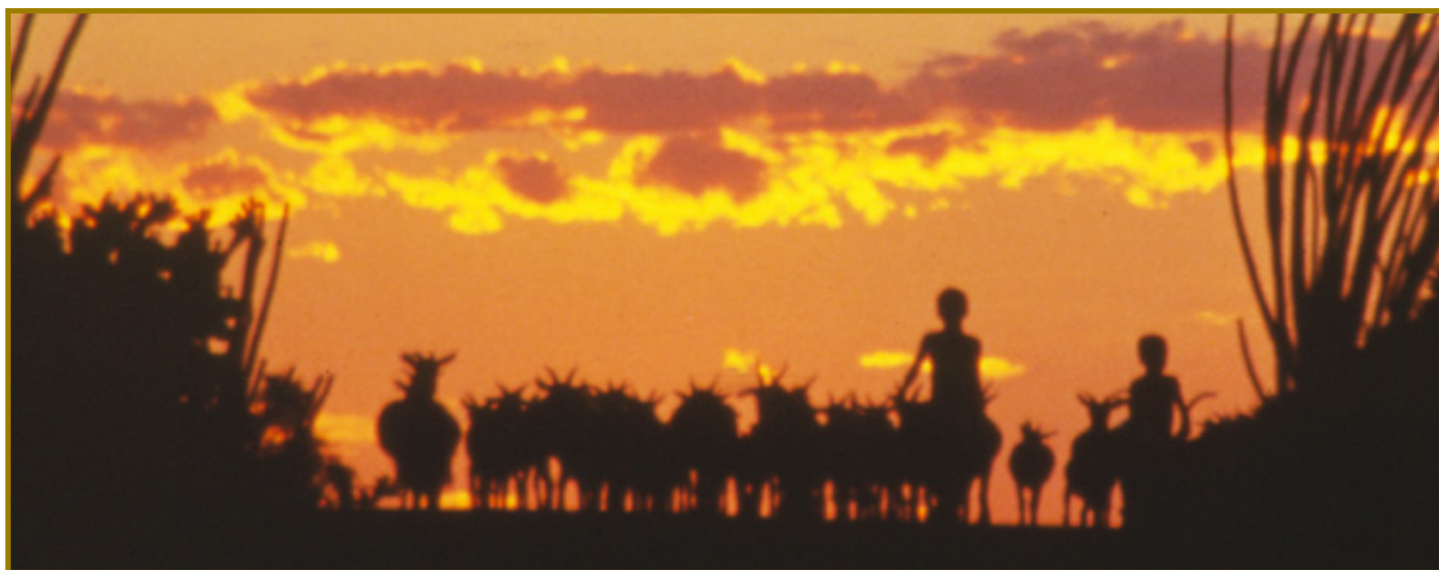
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## **DAY 8 TO TULEAR**

Today, we start with a drive to Tulear on the west coast. We stop enroute at Zombitse National Park which offers amazing view of baobab trees, orchids and home to the Verreaux Sifaka and Zombitse sportive lemurs, endemic birds such as Appert's tetraka and standing geckos.

We arrive at the Arboretum Antsokay, just outside of Tulear in time for a late lunch before enjoying the bizarre and exotic spiny forests thriving in the southern arid region. Time permitting we will visit the small ethnographic museum to learn about the unique and interesting cultures and tribes found in southern Madagascar.

Overnight in Tulear.



## **DAY 9 FLY TO ANTANANARIVO, CROC FARM**

After an early breakfast, we transfer to the airport for our flight to Antananarivo for our overnight stay.

After lunch, we take a short ride from our hotel to the zoological and botanical farm called Croc Farm, one of the most visited private parks in Madagascar.

The park offers us the opportunity to see 80+ species of animals, plants and flowers from Madagascar.

Trained guides will show us the smallest chameleon in the world, free-living Sifaka lemurs, fossa, snakes, frogs, parrots, tortoises and more. The main attraction, however, is the huge Nile crocodiles, the biggest predator of Madagascar.

The Croc Farm also informs us about the serious threats the few wild-living crocodiles face in Madagascar, and about various legends that surround these impressive reptiles.

Overnight in Antananarivo.

## **DAY 10 FLY TO FORT DAUPHIN**

This morning we'll return to the airport and fly to the beautiful town of Fort Dauphin set amidst windswept green hills, blue seas and fine beaches. We'll visit the Nahampoana Reserve and here you will have an opportunity to see many lemur families which live in the park up close.

The white and black zebra-tailed lemurs are a mascot for the reserve. You may also see chameleons, tortoises, crocodiles and a wide variety of bird species.

Back to Fort Dauphin and a brief visit of the town.

Overnight in Fort Dauphin.

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## **DAYS 11 BERENTY RESERVE - MADAGASCAR'S PREMIER RESERVE**

After an early breakfast, we then make the long bumpy drive to Berenty Reserve. Enroute, we stop to see various interesting plants, including the indigenous didieraceas (a family of unusual spiny-stemmed succulents found almost exclusively in Madagascar), the skyscraper baobabs, triangular



palms, the carnivorous pitcher plants, as well as the sacred banyan trees.

The Berenty Reserve is the country's best known reserve - its director was awarded the World Wildlife Fund's Getty Prize for nature conservation. The reserve contains nearly a third of the remaining tamarind gallery forest in Madagascar and is the best place to see ringtail lemurs and Verreaux's sifakas (large white lemurs which are among nature's most accomplished acrobats, hurling themselves across vast distances between tamarind trees).

In addition to other varieties of lemurs, there are striped civets and flying foxes (large fruit bats). The reserve is one of the best bird-watching sites in the country with 83 different species, including nine birds of prey, and also 26 different species of reptiles. During the next two nights we have the exciting opportunity to go on a night walk in search of the nocturnal grey mouse and white-footed lemurs.

Overnight for the next two nights at Berenty Lodge.

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### **DAY 12 -13 BERENTY, TO FORT DAUPHIN**

After breakfast, we make the drive back to Fort Dauphin where the remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure.

Overnight in Fort Dauphin.

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### **DAY 14 FLY TO ANTANANARIVO**

Transfer to the Fort Dauphin airport for our flight to Antananarivo. After lunch we visit the Queen's Palace, overlooking the beautiful city of Antananarivo, as well as the Madagascar Photography Museum.

Overnight in Antananarivo.

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### **DAY 15 ANTANANARIVO - ANDASIBE**

We drive to Analamazaotra Special Reserve through the typical highland landscape of terraced rice paddies. The reserve was named after the river which traverses it.

This afternoon we will have the first of several nature walks, including a visit to lemur island. The park is well known for its nine species of lemur.

Overnight in Andasibe

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### **DAY 16 ANALAMAZAOTRA SPECIAL RESERVE**

Today we go deeper into the reserve, looking for the famous three foot tall indri, the largest of the lemur species which can live for up to 30 years and can jump upwards of 30 feet! Early in the morning, it is possible to hear their haunting song which can be heard for several miles. We will be on the watch for grey bamboo lemurs, common brown lemurs, diademed sifakas and chameleons, of which eight species are found here. There are 24 species of amphibians including some endemic to this reserve. Bird life is also abundant. After a late lunch we enjoy some free time before a visit to lemur island.

Overnight in Andasibe.

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### **DAY 17 ANDASIBE TO ANTANANARIVO**

We depart the reserve in the morning and drive back to Antananarivo. We will have free time this afternoon for last minute shopping. Tonight we will have our farewell dinner.

Overnight in Antananarivo.

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### **DAY 18 DEPART**

We bid a fond farewell to Madagascar. You will be transferred to the airport in time for your departure flight.

Over 60 species &  
sub-species  
of Lemurs









Sifaka Lemur





Chameleon



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### 1. HOW BIG ARE THE GROUPS?

Each group is limited to 16 participants. Small groups are an important ingredient in adventure travel. Small groups allow for more interaction and more personalized service throughout the itinerary.

### 2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

All accommodations throughout; all meals, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); bottled drinking water throughout the trip; all internal transportation; airport transfers on day 1 and departure day (i.e. the last day of the ElderTreks tour); all day trips and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary; tips for hotels (porterage) national guide, and bus driver, restaurants and spot guides; services of a trip leader.

### 3. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE?

International flights, tips to ElderTreks tour leader, alcoholic drinks, visas and travel insurance.

### 4. ARE THESE “EDUCATIONAL” TOURS?

Yes, in the broadest sense of the word, “educational”. We visit many nature reserves and local villages. We also have talks and discussions on many aspects of Malagasy history and culture, but this is only one aspect of what we do. We believe that it is equally educational to meet new people on a non-commercial basis, visit their homes and even try to learn a few words in the native language. Sometimes the most “educational” moments are spent having a cold drink with locals in a street market.

### 5. HOW DO WE TRAVEL DURING THE TOUR?

All land transportation is included in the land price of the trip. We have our own vehicles for road travel and we have two internal flights.

### 6. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

We travel to Madagascar during the pleasant winter and fall months (summer and spring in North America), when you can expect daytime temperatures between 70 – 90 °F (21 – 32°C), under generally clear and sunny skies. Night time temperatures are quite a bit cooler and it can be chilly at night when we are in the highlands. Rain occurs sporadically throughout the year but we avoid the rainy season.

### 7. WHAT ARE OUR ACCOMMODATIONS LIKE?

We always stay in good accommodations where every room has a private shower or bath. The accommodations have been chosen on the basis of location and atmosphere. In areas with very limited accommodations, we use the best available.

### 8. WHAT MEALS ARE INCLUDED?

All meals are included, starting with dinner on day 1 and finishing with breakfast on departure day. We will be dining in hotels and local restaurants that specialize in delightful Malagasy and French dishes. In many cases, we simply order a number of shared dishes, so that we can try everything. There are several picnic lunches

### 9. IS MEDICAL INSURANCE REQUIRED?

Insurance coverage is not included in the cost of your trip. Please note that medical insurance is not required for this adventure but is recommended. ElderTreks offers comprehensive travel insurance and we are happy to provide you with a quote if you call our office. If you are purchasing insurance elsewhere, please ensure you provide the details to ElderTreks as soon as possible.

*\*Please note those travelers with pre-existing medical conditions must take out travel insurance at the time of deposit*

### 10. WHAT SHOULD I TAKE ON THE TOUR?

There is a detailed “What to Take” list in our Trip Kit, which we will send to you after you have booked the trip.

### 11. WHEN IS PAYMENT DUE?

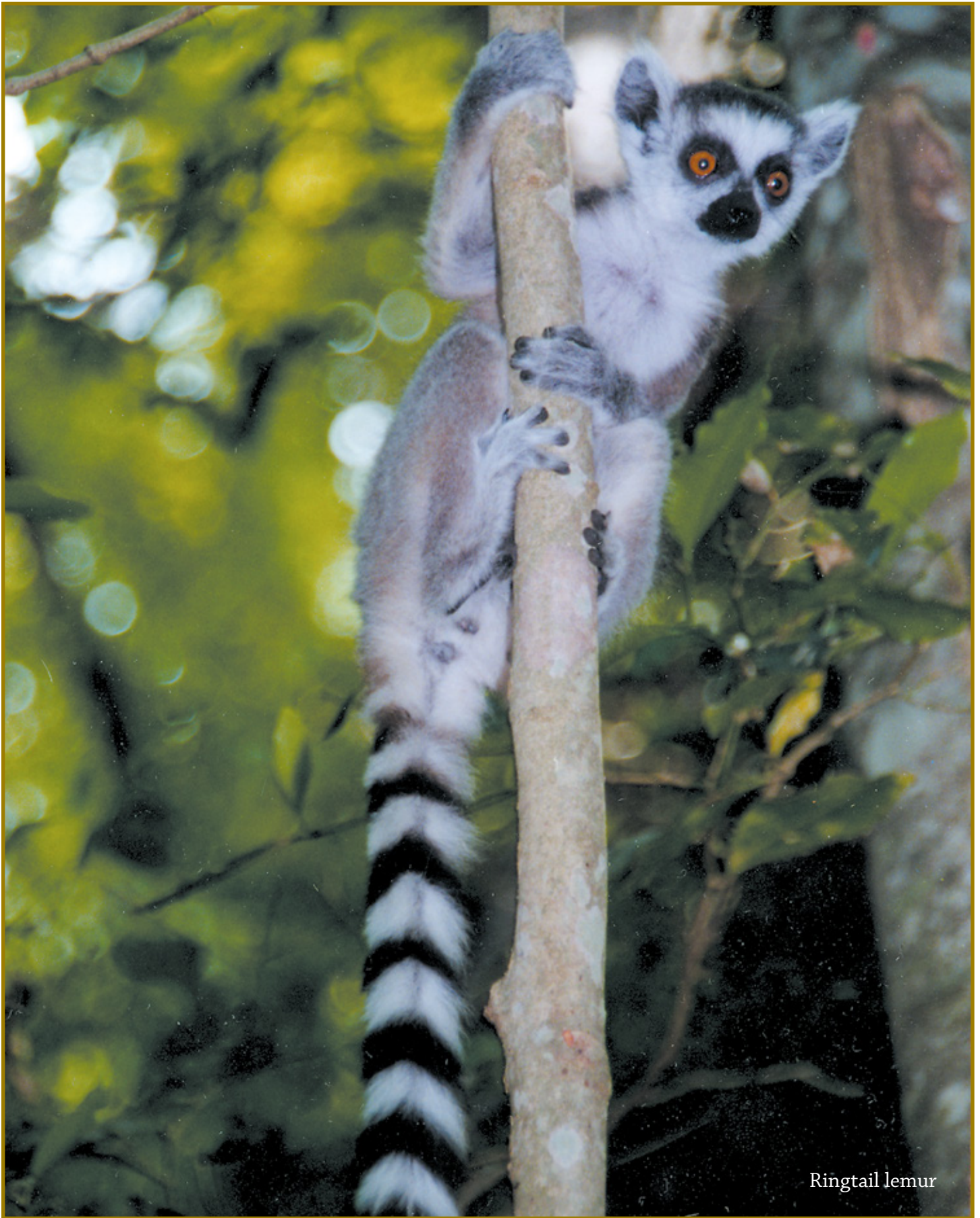
A non-refundable deposit of \$500 USD (plus insurance if you desire it) is due as soon as you decide to go and will reserve your place on the tour. The balance of the land payment is due 120 days before departure. Cancellation charges are applicable and these are outlined in the “Terms & Conditions” section of our brochure.

### 12. CAN YOU ARRANGE MY FLIGHTS?

We would be happy to take care of your air arrangements. ElderTreks offers personalized flight itineraries — not group flights. Stop over en route, come in a few days early, or extend your stay. Call us for a customized itinerary.

### 13. WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION?

Please contact our office for additional information. A Trip Kit containing further details will be sent to you once you have booked the trip.



Ringtail lemur