

Cornell University

Cornell's Adult University (CAU)

CAU Study Tour: Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons, and Baobabs. Oh, My! July 22 - August 6, 2026

Led by Cole Gilbert, Director of Undergraduate Studies in
Entomology & Professor of Insect Physiology
AND Linda Rayor, Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Associate,
Department of Entomology



A Letter From Our Experts

Dear CAU Travelers:

Our passions are watching wildlife in their native habitat, experiencing local cultures, and eating good food. This happens in our woods in Central New York, but we have also lived and worked on several continents and visited all of them for the opportunity to discover new habitats and their indigenous creatures. Increasingly with climate change, our travel goals have expanded to explore habitats that are particularly at risk and those that are home to many endemic species. Like many CAU participants, our domestic conversations often involve what animals we most want to see in the wild and where we want to go to learn about them.

Both of us are passionate about teaching. We both come from families of educators. We relish the opportunity as CAU Study Tour leaders to share information with participants that helps them understand the underlying biology, ecology, geology, and behavior that contributes to what we are seeing/hearing/smelling in the community we are passing through. Along with providing lectures about the habitats we visit we want to enrich the participants' appreciation of what they experience on the tour.

It has been said that one of the hallmarks of traveling with us is that we occasionally don't wander very far because we find so many interesting creatures and plants to talk about along the way. Guilty as charged. Our goals are to point out awesome, often overlooked, insects, spiders, and herps during night walks, to get up early for birding and listening to mammal groups announcing their territory, and to experience as much nature as possible in our time traveling together – while eating good meals and learning how local communities live.

We have led wildlife-oriented tours in the Peruvian Amazon, Galapagos & Ecuador, Brazilian Pan-tanal, Belize & Guatemala, Panama, Borneo, Tanzania, Alaska, and Arizona. Visiting these places and working with local guides has changed our view of the world.

Our 2025 trip to Madagascar was spectacular! We were able to see impressive lemur diversity, so many camouflaged chameleons everywhere, and the snorkeling was amazing. The country was lovely, and the agriculture fascinating. We are certain that exploring Madagascar with us will also change your world view. Please join us!

Sincerely,
Cole & Linda

Cole Gilbert, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor of Insect Physiology
Linda Rayor, Senior Lecturer/ Senior Research Associate

Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs

To register, contact Distant Horizons at emilyw@distant-horizons.com or 562-983-8828

Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons, and Baobabs. Oh, my!

Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, is a land of unparalleled natural beauty and biodiversity. Discover towering limestone pinnacles, some of the world's most unique flora and fauna, and dense rainforests teeming with wildlife including 107 species of lemurs that are endemic to the island.

Discover Extraordinary Wildlife and Unique Flora and Fauna

Lemurs: Madagascar is famous for its lemurs, with over 100 species and subspecies found nowhere else on Earth. Our plan is to see as many as possible!

Chameleons and Birds: The island is home to half of the world's chameleon species, including the tiny satanic leaf gecko. Many bird species found in Madagascar are not found anywhere else in the world including the Madagascar Fish Eagle and the Madagascar Pochard, a critically endangered diving duck, rediscovered in 2006 after being thought extinct.

Baobab Trees: These iconic trees, found throughout Isalo and Tana, create striking landscapes.

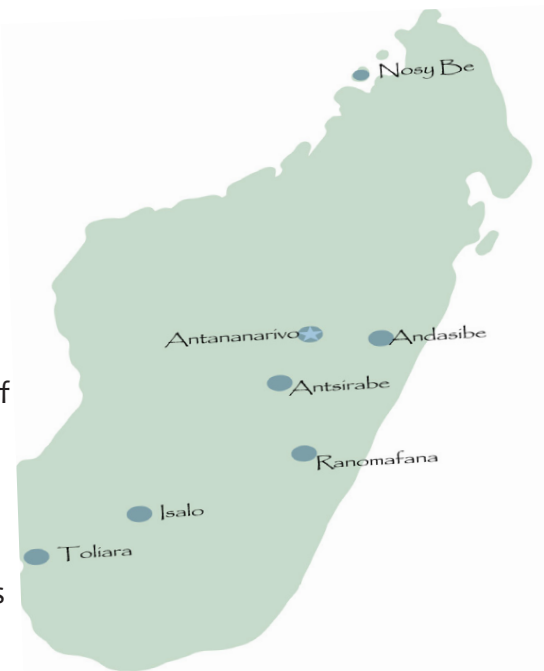
Orchids and Other Plants: Madagascar's flora includes a vast array of endemic plants, including orchids, palms, and the iconic Madagascar periwinkle.

Rainforests: Teeming with wildlife, the dense, lush rainforests of Ranomafana and Andasibe-Mantadia National Parks support species such as the Madagascar Serpent Eagle and the Velvet Asity.

Spiny Forests: The dry, spiny forests of the southwest are home to species like the Subdesert Mesite and ringtail lemurs.

Coastal Areas: Beaches with clear turquoise waters, rich in marine biodiversity, offer excellent snorkeling opportunities.

Traditional Villages: As we drive through rural areas learn more about the island's rich cultural heritage and diverse ways of life. Malagasy villages vary significantly across different regions, reflecting the distinct cultures of the various ethnic groups inhabiting the island.



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FACULTY EXPERTS:

CAU adventures are accompanied by some of Cornell's most engaging faculty members. During your tour, these experts will provide lectures on the subjects about which they are most passionate; their enthusiasm shows in the rave reviews we receive from travelers. With extensive experience in both the focus and location of your trip, and access to behind-the-scenes tours, our faculty experts will help you delve deeply into the culture and history of the places you visit.



Linda Rayor
Senior lecturer and senior
research associate,
Department of Entomology,
Cornell University

Dr. Linda S. Rayor, Senior Lecturer/ Senior Research Associate Emerita, was on the faculty of the Department of Entomology at Cornell University from 1994 – 2026. Linda taught courses on how to do scientific outreach (Naturalist Outreach), Spider Biology and Social Animal Behavior: Arthropods to Apes. Her innovative teaching has been recognized by national societies (2016, 2008 Entomology Society of America; 2015 Animal Behavior Society) and within Cornell University (2007 Innovative Teacher Award; 2005 Kaplan Service-Learning Award). Linda is a behavioral ecologist whose research focuses on social spiders and other arachnids, with research experience on social dynamics in primates, prairie dogs, and paper wasps. Her research focuses on the behavioral, physiological, and systematic patterns found in the large group-living and solitary huntsman spiders [<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/subsocial-behavior-among-delena-huntsman-spiders>]. She is Past President of the American Arachnological Society.

Helping others understand and appreciate science has permeated all aspects of Linda's career – from running the Naturalist Outreach Program, a K-12 STEM Outreach Program which trains and sends Cornell students into classrooms to give hands-on presentations on biodiversity and ecology [<http://blogs.cornell.edu/naturalistoutreach>], to starring in the nature documentary 'Monster Bug Wars' (@MonsterBugWarsTV), producing videos explaining nature-oriented biology with her Naturalist Outreach students ([youtube.com/naturalistoutreach](https://www.youtube.com/naturalistoutreach)), and helping develop parts of Australian Museum's stunning 'Spiders: From Fear to Fascination' blockbuster exhibit which is touring the USA and Canada, to leading CAU wildlife tours around the world. Along with tours, Linda has taught numerous CAU workshops on spiders. A proud field biologist, she has done research in Colorado, British Columbia, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Australia.



Cole Gilbert
Professor and current
Director of undergraduate
studies in Entomology,
Department of Entomology,
Cornell University

Growing up in eastern Missouri, Cole enjoyed a childhood exploring nearby woods and creeks and returning from expeditions laden with all manner of creatures, living, dead, and fossilized. His interest in insects was fostered by a neighborhood physician with an avocation studying butterflies and studying animal behavior and neurobiology while attending college at Washington University in St. Louis.

These topics became Cole's principal interest: how an animal acquires sensory information, evaluates it, and produces adaptive behavior. He earned graduate degrees in insect behavior at the University of Kansas, where he met Linda. He did post-doctoral work in visual physiology at Indiana University, and in neuroscience at the University of Arizona before joining the Entomology Department at Cornell in 1992.

Along the way, he spent a Fulbright year in West Germany, served a year as a program officer at the National Science Foundation, and taught for 7 summers at the Marine Biological Laboratory on Cape Cod. At Cornell, he has taught courses in Introductory Biology, Evolution, Insect Biology, Insect Physiology, Comparative Physiology, and Art & Vision for which he earned university, state, and national teaching awards. He served 7 years as Director of Undergraduate Biology and is currently Director of Undergraduate Studies in Entomology. He also enjoys working with "life-long learners" and since 2002 has taught 10 CAU on-campus courses, co-led multiple CAU Study Tours with Linda, and for the past 13 years has taught workshops for New York State Master Naturalists. When not biologizing, Cole enjoys cooking (and eating) dishes from a variety of cuisines, and listening to improvisational music, such as jazz and bluegrass.

Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs

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YOUR ITINERARY

DISCLAIMER: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Cornell's Adult University and Distant Horizons. Please carefully read the terms and conditions enclosed.



Wednesday/Thursday, July 22 - 23, Antananarivo

Arrive in Antananarivo and transfer to the *Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel*. Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world and host to a vast and unusual mix of exotic flora and fauna. With over 90% of these species found nowhere else on the earth, it is often referred to as the Eighth Continent!

Meet your fellow travelers over a glass of wine and a light dinner this evening.

(D)



Friday, July 24, Antananarivo

Spend the day exploring Antananarivo, or, as most people affectionately call it "Tana". Admire the "Rova" where Malagasy's rulers once lived on top of the highland capital's highest hill. Admire the towered walls that guarded the central palace, a touch of Medici Florence and the triumphal entry arch.

A few steps away admire the work of Malagasy artist Charles Rabemanantsoa whose detailed **bas-relief** tells the history of Madagascar.

Close by is the country's first Museum of Photography which provides a deep insight into the history of Madagascar through different periods.



After lunch visit the Andohalo Cathedral to see one of the leading Gothic-style places of worship in the country. Imported Christianity has played a significant role in shaping Malagasy society and churches, not as grand as this cathedral, are found all over the country.

End the day at the Is'Art Galerie, the only contemporary art space in the city. Formerly functioning as a laundry, now used as a creative space.

This evening enjoy a more formal welcome dinner at the hotel's formal dining restaurant which serves French-themed cuisine.

(B,L,D)

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Saturday, July 25, Andasibe

Head east this morning to the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. Travel along one of Madagascar's best roads which links the capital to the country's most important port of Toamasina. Drive by small villages where villagers make building bricks during this time of year and fields where vegetables are grown during the dry season and the paddies are used to grow rice during the wet season. Pass Moramanga, capital of the Bezanozano people, the earliest inhabitants of the island, where colorful rickshaws ply the streets. This small town is rapidly growing with an influx of nickel mines recently established by Canadians, Japanese and French.

Spend time on Lemur Island, a private lemur sanctuary accessible only by a short boat ride. Despite the managed aspect of the park, time here provides an excellent opportunity to see a wide variety rescued lemurs that are somewhat tame. The principal four lemur species found here are the bamboo lemur, the black and white ruffed lemur, the brown lemur and the diademed sifaka.

Overnight at the spectacular *Mantadia Lodge* where you can endlessly admire the wild beauty of the landscapes and animals of Madagascar. Enjoy a freshly prepared dinner tonight using locally sourced ingredients.

(B,L,D)



Sunday, July 26, Andasibe

Spend the day exploring Andasibe-Mantadia National Park inside the small Réserve Spéciale d'Analamazaotra. The ground here is reasonably flat and provides excellent opportunities to track down the rare indri whose unforgettable wail can be heard emanating from the misty forest throughout the day. There are about 60 resident family groups in the park. We may also see woolly lemurs, grey bamboo lemurs and the black and white ruffed lemur. In addition to lemurs, the park is home to the immense and colorful Parson's chameleon as well as twenty species of amphibians including tomato frogs and mantellas.

After dinner enjoy an evening guided walk, watching out for nocturnal animals such as tiny mouse lemurs and greater dwarf lemurs.

(B,L,D)

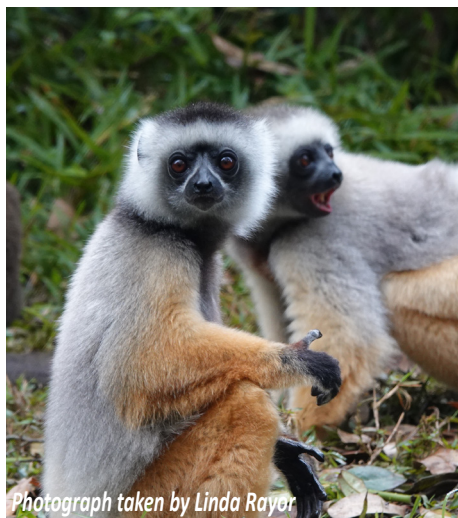


Monday, July 27, Antsirabe

Depart the hotel this morning for a long, but scenic day driving west and then south to Antsirabe along the famous N7 road. Green fields rise-up to red mountains and terraces cut deep into the mountains provide endless bucolic scenes of daily life. Along the way, enjoy stops to meet with local artisans. Visit a home where a simple kiln in the garden produces beautiful recreations of traditional Malagasy homes.

It will be a day of landscapes and markets with the country's beast of burden – the Zebu– never far from sight.

Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs



The Zebu is essential to the life of the Malagasy people providing not just transportation but also play a critical role in the wide-spread farming practiced throughout the country.

Arrive in Antsirabe late afternoon and transfer to the *Couleur Café*. The city is known for its textiles, tobacco and agricultural production.

Enjoy dinner this evening at the hotel.

(B,L,D)

Tuesday, July 28, Ranomafana

This morning our focus will be on the vibrant craft culture of the city much of which depends on the recycling of waste. Stop in at Chez Mamy where Mr. Rajamason creates miniature bicycles from recycled materials including soda cans, pieces of electric wire, bottle caps and more. Next door his wife makes exquisite embroidered cotton cushion covers and table cloths. At Atelier Corne de Zebu household objects are created out of Zebu horns using an old washing machine and discarded jeans.

After lunch, drive along the plateau of central Madagascar further south to Ranomafana, which means “hot water” in Malagasy.

Arrive at the Ranomafana National Park which is a part of the UNESCO inscribed Rainforests of Atsinanana.

Overnight at the *Hotel Thermal Ranomafana*.

Tonight, enjoy a gentle walk through the rainforest surrounding the lodge to spot some of the many nocturnal animals in the park including nocturnal lemurs, reptiles such as the satanic leaf geckos, and many tree frogs, and fascinating invertebrates including the Madagascar comet (lunar) moth.

(B,L,D)



Wednesday, July 29, Ranomafana

This morning explore the sub-humid evergreen Ranomafana National Park which was created in 1991 after Dr. Patricia Wright's 1986 discovery of the rare golden bamboo lemur. The park's landscape consists of rolling hills fed by rushing streams and a tough, uneven terrain which needs careful navigation. Accompanied by our guide, we will move slowly up and through the park in search of, for sure, the golden bamboo lemur but also the other 12 species of lemur, including the Aye-Aye.

After a later lunch we will visit the spectacular Centre ValBio where we plan to meet with Mr. Florent Ravoavy, Coordinator of Conservation Education & Outreach Department. The architecturally stunning ValBio was created by Dr. Patricia Wright in 2003 to help both indigenous people and the international community better understand the value of conservation in Madagascar and around the world.

Dinner at the hotel tonight.

(B,L,D)



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Thursday, July 30, Isalo



This morning drive southwest towards **Isalo National Park** with some interesting stops en route.

Pass through Fianarantsoa, located on Ivoenana hill. The city is home to many intellectuals, schools, bookstores and over fifty Lutheran, Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The city is also known for its vineyards and tea plantations.

Continue driving through a magnificent landscape of vineyards and terraced fields, descending from the central plateau to Ambalavao to visit a small family run business where silk is worked from the cocoon to the final woven product. Another workshop specializes in the production of Antaimoro paper, similar to parchment, from the bark of the AVOHA, a shrub endemic to southern Madagascar. After boiling and pounding, the fragments are poured with water into a shape and cut into sheets. Fresh flower petals are applied and the paper is set out to dry.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before continuing on to Isalo National Park.



Arriving at the Isalo National Park in the later afternoon marvel at a breathtaking landscape of craggy rocks and dazzling mountains.

Dinner and overnight at the **Isalo Rock Lodge**, sculpted out of the local sandstone, and providing breathtaking vistas of this moon-like landscape.

(B,L,D)

Friday, July 31, Isalo

This morning we will set out to explore the Isalo National Park which was established in 1962 to protect a landscape dominated by a dramatic sandstone massif that had been eroded by time and weather into an otherworldly collection of plateaus, canyons, gorges and pinnacles. Iron and mineral deposits stain the rock formations a rainbow of different colors, and the dense forests and grassland plains that surround them are filled with unique flora and fauna. Isalo National Park lies in the southwestern Isalo Massif and is quite unlike anywhere else on the island.

Biological highlights include several species of lemur and two locally endemic frogs. Birdlife in the area includes Benson's rock-thrush, white-throated rail, Madagascar coucal, Madagascar wagtail and Madagascar kestrel. Reptiles and frogs are numerous including: Oustalet's chameleon, jewel chameleon, spiny-tailed iguanid lizard, stump-tailed chameleon, Malagasy rainbow frog and the Isalo Madagascar frog. Plants endemic to the region include the dwarf baobab, Isalo aloe, kalanchoes, pandanus and the elephant's foot plant.

Depending on weather, we will determine a route. We plan to cover about three miles as we discover this landscape of dramatic ridges and high plateau where deep canyons are shot through with streams, lush vegetation and pools for swimming!

Return to the lodge for a free afternoon followed by a lovely dinner at the lodge.

(B,L,D)



Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs

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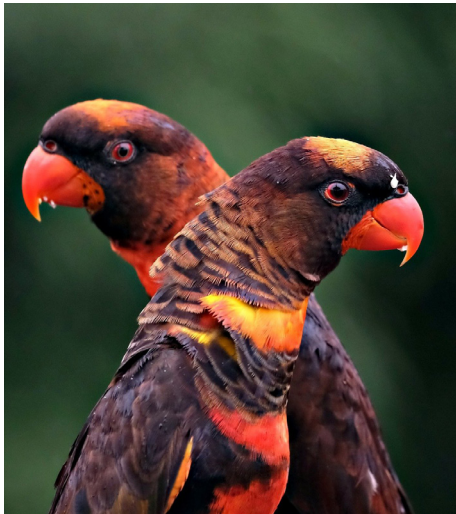
Saturday, August 1, Isalo



Photograph taken by Linda Rayor



Photograph taken by Linda Rayor



Enjoy an early morning walk from Isalo Lodge. Paths close by the lodge lead across dry grasslands and rocky outcrops, with occasional palm trees and hardy plants breaking the horizon. Birds begin to call, and with luck, a ring-tailed lemur may be seen moving through the rocks. The walk is peaceful, with clear views of the valleys and canyons that make this area one of Madagascar's most striking natural settings.

Enjoy some free time after lunch at the hotel.

This evening, we have planned a night visit to the **Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park**. This rarely visited park falls within the eco region classified as Madagascar succulent woodlands, an ecoregion that is known for high local endemism. Although we will be returning tomorrow morning, our goal this evening is to track down the elusive *fossa* who is the most prominent predator in Madagascar. While it resembles a slender, long-tailed cat, it is actually a member of the mongoose family and is Madagascar's largest native carnivore. A significant part of the *fossa*'s diet consists of lemurs. Their semi-retractable claws, long tail for balance, and flexible ankles allow them to hunt prey both on the ground and in the trees, even climbing down headfirst. Although there are no guarantees we will do our best to track one down and a night visit, regardless, will offer other exciting possibilities.

(B,L,D)

Sunday, August 2, Ifaty

Retrace our steps west and return to the **Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park** for a morning visit. The park's dense dry forest shelters an astounding 85 recorded bird species including the Appert's Greenbul which survives nowhere else in the entire world. Indeed, the park is known to be the showcase of the rich birdlife of Madagascar. Most of the birds in the park exist nowhere else. Lemurs are also an attraction here. Zombitse-Vohibasia is currently the only area for seeing the newly-described Zombitse sportive lemur (*Lepilemur hubbardorum*), which can easily be found even during the day as it peers out from daytime sleeping sites. Additionally, there are 33 reptile species including 9 species limited to the region cohabit on the site as well as 8 amphibian species, including colorful Mantella poison frogs that have independently evolved similar gaudy warning coloration to the Latin American poison frogs.

After lunch, continue on to Ifaty and our hotel for the night - *Les Dunes d'Ifaty*. Enjoy dinner at the hotel.

(B,L,D)

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Monday, August 3, Antananarivo



This morning we will depart the hotel, with provided snorkeling equipment, to explore the reef that stretches along the south-western coast of Madagascar making it one of the largest coral reefs in the world.

To reach the reef, we will board a pirogue, a dug-out canoe, the primary means of transportation in these coastal areas. These pieces of makeshift art are managed skillfully by their crew who are so attuned to the direction of the winds that a journey that might take an hour is considerably less on a pirogue.

The Toliara reef system is one of very few places in the world inhabited by the coelacanth, a 400-million-year-old species of fish. Over 6,000 different species have been recorded here, including four species of marine turtles, and eleven species of cetaceans.

This afternoon leave the ocean for dry land and the Arboretum d'Antsokay, a kaleidoscope of fauna and flora condensed into one great micro-ecosystem in the island. Founded in 1980 by Swiss botanist Hermann Petignat, the main aim of the Arboretum association is to safeguard the endemic flora of southern Madagascar.

Admire a remarkable collection of succulents, lemurs, radiated tortoises, snakes and chameleons, and many other species adapted to the region's arid conditions. The collection of baobab trees located here is impressive with their striking shapes and sizes. These spectacular trees have also influenced human culture, inspiring innumerable arts, folklore and traditions.

Return to Tana and stay the night at *Nosy Manga Hotel*. Dinner at leisure this evening.

(B,L)

Tuesday, August 4, Nosy Be



Take a mid-day flight to the island of Nosy Be, located off the northwest coast of Madagascar. Nosy Be was first inhabited by migrant tribes from the Madagascar mainland, including the Antakarana and Sakalava people. Later, it was settled by traders from India, Comoros, and the Swahili Coast before being ceded to the French in 1840. Its capital, Hell-Ville, is named after the French governor of colonial Réunion, Admiral de Hell. Nosy Be became part of Madagascar in 1896 and gained independence, alongside the rest of the country, in 1960.

Upon arrival drive to **Mount Passot**, named after the French naval captain Pierre Passot. From the terraced lookout, admire dense forests and the turquoise Mozambique Channel. Eight volcanic crater lakes dot the slopes, considered sacred by local Sakalava people.

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Photograph taken by Linda Rayor

Appreciate the island's volcanic origins, its lush biodiversity, its spiritual traditions, and the dramatic coastal panorama. Depending on timing we might be able to walk along one of the trails and spot chameleons, lemurs and exotic birds. At the summit, the lookout provides a sweeping 360-degree vista of Nosy Be and the surrounding islands scattered across the Mozambique Channel, especially magical at sunset when the sky burns gold and violet.

Transfer to the ***Ravintsara Hotel*** which sits along the coast surrounded by tropical gardens and views of the Mozambique Channel. Its bungalows are built from natural wood and stone, blending with the landscape and emphasizing calm and privacy. The hotel focuses on wellness, with a spa offering treatments that use local oils and botanicals. A large pool, open-air restaurant, and quiet beach access make it a peaceful retreat.

Enjoy dinner this evening at the lodge

(B,L,D)

Wednesday, August 5, Nosy Be

This morning we will focus on the wonderful waters around Nosy Be. We will take a boat to **Nosy Sakatia** where we expect to see a wide range of reef fish such as parrotfish, angelfish, butterflyfish, and clownfish. Green and hawksbill turtles are common, often feeding in shallow seagrass areas. Schools of snappers and fusiliers, as well as the occasional moray eel or octopus, are frequent sights. August falls during the humpback whale migration period and sometimes it's possible to see surface sightings.

Midday head to the **Lokobe National Park**, the last remaining primary forest in the region, known for being home to the rare black lemur and the Nosy Be panther chameleon. Located in the south-east of Nosy Be, the Lokobe forest covers a mountain considered the highest peak on the island and covers an area of 862 hectares. Initially a study area for scientists and closed to the public, the reserve has been open to ecotourism since the 28th of June 2014. The primary forest is home to more than 370 species of spectacular wildlife, including 16 species of bats, 11 species of primates, 84 species of reptiles and more than 100 species of birds.

Access to the park is by pirogue and is influenced by the island's semi-diurnal tidal system, meaning there are two high tides and two low tides each day. The tidal range averages about 2 to 3 meters. At low tide, it is not possible to take the boats all the way to the park and there is a chance we will need to walk along wide mudflats to reach the park. After lunch walk through the primary forest looking for snakes, geckos, frogs, chameleons, kingfishers and, of course, lemurs including mouse lemurs, the Nosy Be sportive lemur or even the endangered black lemur. Despite their name, only the males in this species are black, the females are a reddish-brown color.

(B,L,D)

Thursday, August 6, Nosy Be

Return home directly from Nosy Be to Addis Ababa and beyond.

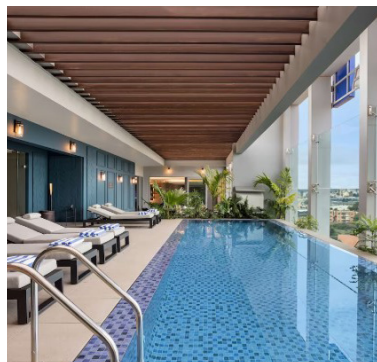
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Your Accommodations

RADISSON BLU HOTEL ANTANANARIVO WATERFRONT, Tana

Located in Antananarivo, 2.5 km from Soarano Station, Radisson Blu Hotel Antananarivo Waterfront provides accommodation with a fitness centre, an indoor swimming pool, a garden and a terrace. The hotel offers rooms with air conditioning, a desk, a kettle, a minibar, a safety deposit box, a flat-screen TV and a private bathroom with a shower. Guests also enjoy access to several excellent restaurants on the property, offering some of the finest dining options in Antananarivo's vibrant waterfront district. Expect maximum comfort and luxury from this 5-star hotel.



MANTADIA LODGE, Andasibe

Mantadia Lodge provides the tranquility, space, and light of this vast region. Inspired by the hilly area of the mountains on which it rests, Mantadia Lodge is a welcoming oasis from where you can endlessly admire the wild beauty of the landscapes and animals of the most beautiful National Park of Madagascar.



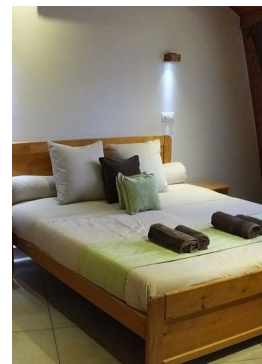
COULEUR CAFÉ, Antsirabe

Couleur Café Hotel in Antsirabe is a charming lodge located just 500 meters from the town center. It is made up of 15 brick, tile, and wooden bungalows surrounded by a lush flower garden, creating a serene and welcoming atmosphere. The rooms feature fireplaces, private bathrooms, and décor that blends Malagasy craftsmanship with contemporary touches. The on-site restaurant serves homemade dishes combining Malagasy flavors with French influences, and there is also a small boutique offering authentic local handicrafts.



HOTEL THERMAL, Ranomafana

Hotel Thermal Ranomafana offers a simple yet comfortable base just minutes from the entrance of Ranomafana National Park. The property features clean, modest rooms and a natural hot-spring pool that reflects the area's geothermal heritage. Guests can appreciate the peaceful setting, leafy surroundings, and easy access to the park's trails and wildlife. While facilities are basic, the hotel provides a convenient and atmospheric place to stay for exploring Madagascar's famed rainforest.

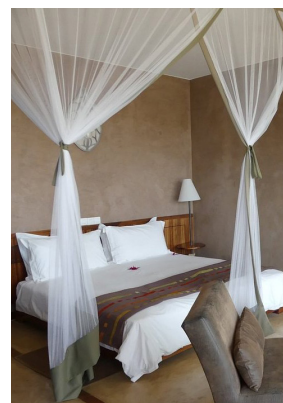
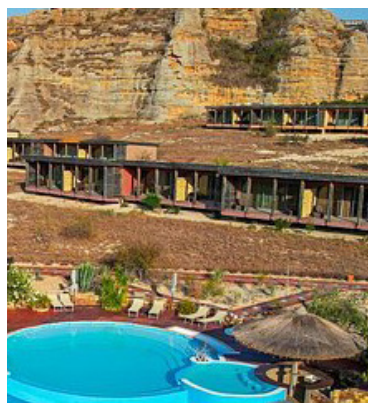


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ISALO ROCK LODGE, Ranohira

High in the Sandstone Mountains overlooking the Isalo National Park, Isalo Rock Lodge boasts 60 rooms, all with spectacular views of this unique wilderness. Amenities include: fitness centre, a garden, a shared lounge, a terrace and a restaurant. All the units have fully equipped private bathroom with a shower and free toiletries. Guests at the lodge can enjoy billiards on site, or go hiking or cycling in the surroundings. Isalo Museum is a 16-minute walk from the accommodation.



LES DUNES D'IFATY, Toliara

Les Dunes d'Ifaty is a serene beachfront resort in southwest Madagascar, located about 27 km north of Toliara, overlooking the Mozambique Channel near the fishing village of Mangily. It's built using local materials and is powered by solar energy. The property offers a mix of villas and bungalows set within tropical gardens, and features a restaurant, lounge/bar area, swimming pool, and direct beach access for snorkeling and relaxation.



NOSY MANGA HOTEL, Tana

Charming hotel a stone's throw from Ivato airport that includes a rooftop swimming pool. Located in the Antananarivo, 10 miles from the Soarano Station, Nosy Manga provides accommodations with a terrace, restaurant, and bar. This 4-star hotel with an eclectic artsy feel offers room service and a 24-hour front desk with guest rooms equipped with air conditioning, a flat-screen TV, an electric tea pot, shower, free toiletries, and a safety deposit box.



RAVINTSARA WELLNESS HOTEL, Nosy Be

Ravintsara Wellness Hotel in Nosy Be is a tranquil beachfront resort set in a lush 5-hectare tropical garden facing Sakatia Island. It offers spacious bungalows with garden or sea views, a large spa with hammam and treatment rooms, outdoor pools, direct beach access, and a restaurant serving Malagasy and international cuisine.



Madagascar: Lemurs, Chameleons and Baobabs

To register, contact Distant Horizons at emilyw@distant-horizons.com or 562-983-8828

WHAT TO EXPECT

In order to participate in this trip travelers must be fit and able to walk at least three miles a day unaided on dirt paths. While the national parks included on this program provide set walking routes, we may leave the path and go for a short distance off-path to get close to a lemur group or other wildlife. Many of the paths are not entirely flat and will require some uphill and downhill walking.

Hotels on this program range from very comfortable and luxurious to simple. There will be some **very long days** of driving. Roads around Antananarivo and toward key regional hubs—are paved but can still be narrow, slow, and affected by heavy truck traffic. Once outside of Antananarivo, the roads quickly give way to rough laterite tracks, where deep potholes and wash-outs can make travel slow and unpredictable. We will be surrounded by magnificent landscapes often passing through villages where livestock, children, and market stalls spill close to the roadway, adding to the sense of navigating through lived-in, rural landscapes. Be prepared for this challenging infrastructure—moving at a slower pace that reveals the island's remote highlands, forests, and coastal regions in a very immediate, unfiltered way.

To enjoy this program to its fullest you should have a spirit of adventure, boundless energy and be physically prepared for the rigors involved.

Madagascar remains a welcoming and generally safe destination for travelers, even as the country navigates a transitional political moment. In mid-October 2025, following several weeks of youth-led political unrest, a transitional and provisional government was formed under Colonel Michael Randrianirina. This development, confirmed by the Constitutional High Court, sets the stage for democratic elections in the next 24 months. The transitional leadership has stressed its commitment to stability and constructive reforms, aiming to organize new elections and restore broader political normalcy over the coming months. In early December, the US State Department classified Madagascar as a level 2 – the same level as most of Europe – a clear indication of their confidence in the new government's intent. The U.S. Department of State classifies countries on a four-level travel advisory scale, ranging from Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions to Level 4: Do Not Travel, based on security, health, and geopolitical conditions. These levels are updated regularly and help travelers understand the degree of risk associated with visiting each destination.

Distant Horizons will closely monitor the political and security landscape in Madagascar in the months leading up to the tour.

If, more than 30 days before departure, conditions shift in a way that compromises traveler safety, Distant Horizons will cancel the program and **travelers will be fully refunded all payments made to Distant Horizons.**

If, within 30 days of departure, conditions shift in a way that compromises traveler safety, Distant Horizons will cancel the program. In that event, **travelers will receive 75% of the amount paid to Distant Horizons for the Madagascar tour as a direct refund issued by check. The remaining 25% will be provided as a credit applicable toward a future Cornell program with Distant Horizons within three years.**

We encourage all participants to be aware of recent events and to understand that all travel carries risks. It is important to review the cancellation terms and date thresholds outlined in the “Terms and Conditions” section to ensure a full understanding with the timeline in the event that one makes an individual choice to cancel. For added peace of mind, we strongly recommend considering a comprehensive travel-insurance policy—ideally one that includes “Cancel for Any Reason” (CFAR) coverage—so travelers may make decisions aligned with their own comfort level and personal circumstances.

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Terms And Conditions

Prices

A deposit of \$2,500 per person to Distant Horizons is required to reserve a space on this trip. Deposits are applied to your full program charge.

Register now as spots are limited!

Prices for Madagascar are as follows

- Double occupancy: \$12,300
- Single supplement: \$1,780 (limited availability)

Full payment will be due 90 days prior to departure. If registering after this date, payment of the full program charge is due at time of registration.

Unless otherwise specified, program charges include

- The full educational program
- Expertise of CAU faculty
- Distant Horizons tour manager who will travel with group throughout
- Pre-trip reading materials
- All accommodations during the program
- Meals specified on the itinerary
- Wine is included at the welcome dinner and the farewell dinner. All other days, alcohol is "pay as you go."
- Site visits and entrance fees
- Transportation in a private motor coach throughout in addition to the plane flight from Tana to Nosy Be as detailed in the itinerary
- All taxes and gratuities for staff, guides, drivers, and other personnel

Unless otherwise specified, program charges do not include

- Airfare to and from your destination
- Luggage, cancellation, and accident insurance
- Meals and beverages not specified in the itinerary
- Personal expenses such as laundry, telephone calls, and email service
- Any item not listed

Refunds and Cancellations

If you need to cancel your registration, you must send written notification of your wish to withdraw to Emily Whitson from Distant Horizons at emilyw@distant-horizons.com. Your official date of withdrawal will be the date on which this email is sent.

- For cancellations at or more than 90 days prior to departure, the cancellation charge is \$1,500.
- For cancellations between 89 days and 60 days prior to departure, the cancellation charge is 50% of the trip cost.
- No refunds shall be issued for cancellations received less than 60 days prior to departure date.
- No refunds shall be issued after the tour has commenced.
- No refunds shall be issued for occasional missed meals, added sightseeing tours, or any unused services.

Refunds do not include the cost of airfare.

We strongly advise you to purchase trip cancellation insurance in case you must cancel your registration after you have made full payment. Tour operators can rarely recover money paid in your name after the program's refund deadline.

DISCLAIMER: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Cornell's Adult University and Distant Horizons. Please carefully read the terms and conditions enclosed.

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Travel Safety

While Cornell is pleased to facilitate travel opportunities for its alumni and friends with tour operators that specialize in high-quality educational travel, please be aware that Cornell does not conduct, manage, or operate these travel experiences, or act as an agent for travelers interested in tours. Tour operators and travelers are responsible for making their own safety decisions concerning this travel, and, as a facilitator between travelers and the tour operators with whom travelers make arrangements for completing travel, Cornell's role and liability are strictly limited. Specific tour operator and national health and safety protocols will apply to each trip, and travelers should review all protocols and trip terms and conditions, including terms and conditions regarding cancellations, refunds, health and safety, and insurance prior to making a reservation. Cornell is not responsible for changes to trips or travel arrangements or for losses, expenses, damages, or injuries resulting from travel.



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