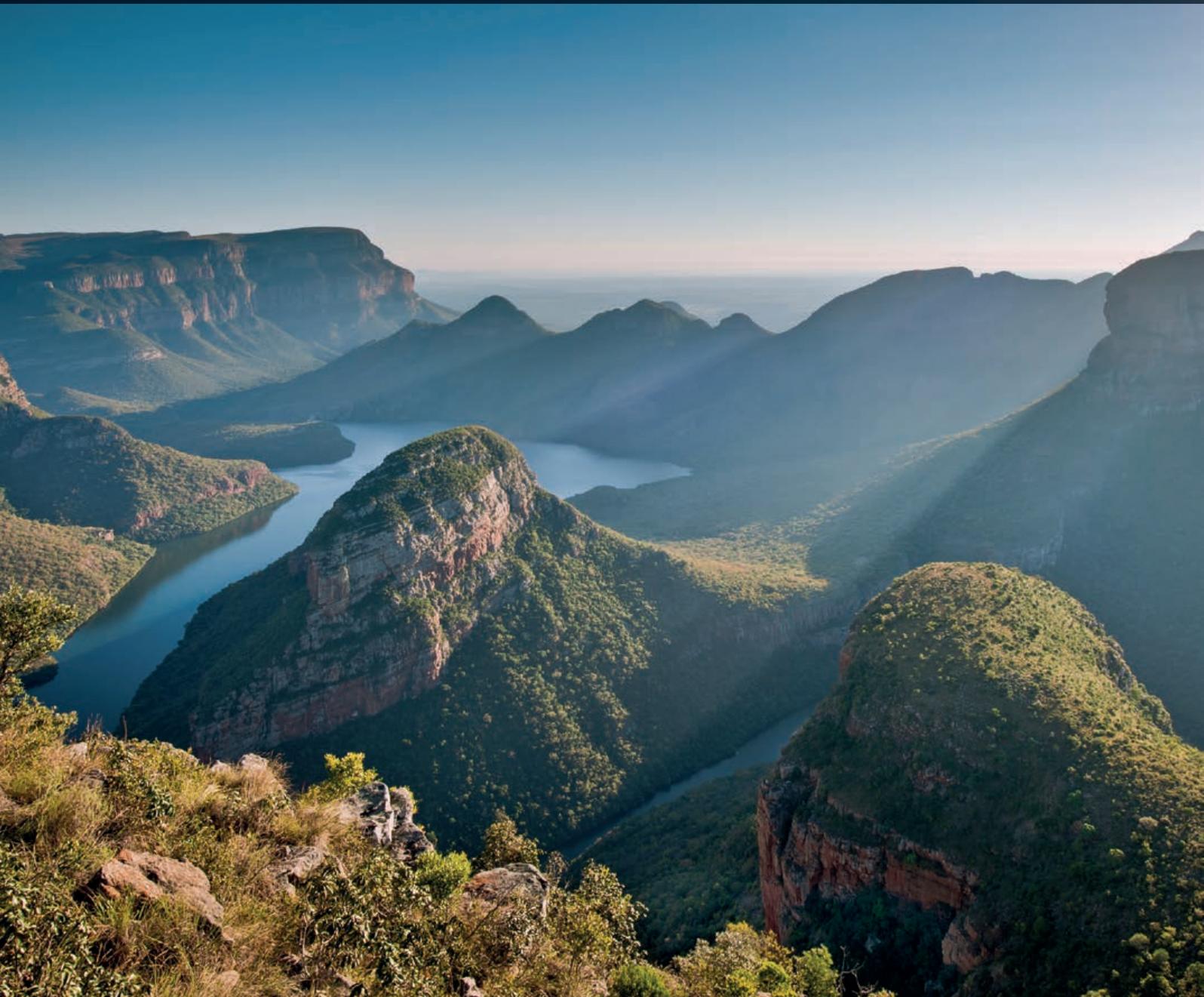


AVVENTURA

IMMERSE IN THE EXTRAORDINARY

BROCHURE

2019/2020



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COLOMBIA

WHERE COLONIAL MEETS CONTEMPORARY



FROM £7,699 PER PERSON*

*based on two guests sharing a twin or double room and excluding international flights.

DISCOVER COLOMBIA

For colour and contrast Colombia is hard to beat. From cities in the sky, high up in the magical Andes Mountains to the lush jungles and plains of the Amazon basin, Colombia is a world of variation. Nestling between the Pacific and the Caribbean, this is the true unspoilt Latin America. See the natural beauty of its abundant wildlife. Hear the waves from two seas lap the beautiful beaches. Feel the energy-giving warmth of a luxurious tropical climate. Taste and smell the world's favourite coffee on the traditional farms where it is nurtured and treasured. The world is only just waking up to Colombia's delights. Visit Colombia and be one of the first to discover one of Central America's best kept secrets.

Here, the mighty Andes meets the mysterious rainforest and the fabled Amazon river. Colombia has coasts on the North Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. If you want swaying palms, apparently endless beaches and lush majestic mountains, Colombia has them all. Colombia's plant life and animals come in remarkable variety. Scientists say it's the second most biodiverse country in the world. Wax palms soar skywards from the jungle floor, roosted in by eagles, toucan and fifty-four different breeds of parrots.

Close to the equator, the climate is tropical and the passing seasons are barely noticeable as temperatures stay roughly the same all year round. Elevation is the key and the higher you go (and you can climb to 5,775 metres or 19,000 feet) the cooler it gets. The big variable is rain. The dry season (or winter as it's called by Colombians) is from December to March but even then, the variation across the country can be massive, from the thin air of the snow-capped Andean peaks to the steamy interior of the world's densest rainforest.

Christopher Columbus arrived here in 1499 and while Spanish rule ended in 1819 the country we know today as Colombia finally emerged in 1903. In human terms, Colombia is one of the most diverse countries in the world; its people are a mix of no fewer than eighty-five different ethnic groups.

Colombia produces some of the world's finest coffee, often lovingly grown and tended in the same way as it has been for more than a hundred years. The much sought-after bean became so important to the nation's culture and heritage almost by accident. A Catholic priest with a taste for a good cup told members of his congregation that instead of saying three Hail Marys after confession they should plant three coffee plants - and thus an industry was born.

While fifty percent of Colombia is jungle, all but three percent of the people live in the land beyond. Man's mark on that land stretches from ancient ruins from times before the Incas through to glorious colonial architecture. No trip to Colombia would be complete without spending time in that most colourful of capitals, Bogotá, with its cobbled roads and vibrant street art and some of the finest and most exotic galleries and museums in the world.

Colombia is a fusion of cultures, from Spanish and indigenous Colombian to African and even Arab influences - all of which are reflected in the food and drink, the music and dance, the costume and architecture.

Visit Colombia with Aventura and you will see places even many seasoned travellers to this unspoilt land have seldom seen nor even known about. Let our hand-picked local guides show you their Colombia, a land of colour and contrast, of warm inquisitive, welcoming people, a country of beauty and intrigue. Follow in the footsteps of Columbus. Colombia is waiting for you to take your voyage of discovery.

DESTINATION GUIDE

Capital
Bogotá

Language
Spanish

Currency
Peso (COP)

Flight time from UK
11hr 10m

Time Zone (+/- GMT)
-5 hours



TOUR DATES

26th October 2019 - 7th November 2019	12 Nights
30th November 2019 - 12th December 2019	12 Nights
8th February 2020 - 20th February 2020	12 Nights
29th February 2020 - 12th March 2020	12 Nights
16th May 2020 - 28th May 2020	12 Nights
20th June 2020 - 2nd July 2020	12 Nights

TOUR DETAILS

DAY 1 – BOGOTÁ

Your Aventura Representative will meet you at Bogotá International Airport to take you to your first port of call, the Hotel Sofitel Victoria Regia. Once you've had a chance to freshen up and find your feet you will be off for an afternoon tour of this great capital city. Bogotá sits just north of the equator on a high plateau, ringed by the mighty Andes Mountains. You will visit the historic centre of the city now most famed for its nightlife, La Candelaria. This neighbourhood is the oldest and most historic part of the city and also home to the main government buildings including the Presidential Palace and Congress. It's very much the cultural heart of the city with its universities, Colonial plaza, museums and churches all rolled up with a slightly bohemian feel. It's a part of the city that has to be explored to understand Bogota and Colombia. The Gold Museum has the largest display of gold anywhere in the world and this priceless collection would not look out of place in the principal museums of Europe or North America. The vibrant and often politically charged street art scene is also fascinating and seeing Colombia's social side through the eyes of the local street artists gives a different and interesting perspective on the city.

This evening, enjoy a welcome cocktail at your hotel.

DAY 2 – BOGOTÁ TO THE AMAZON

After breakfast you will be driven to Bogotá Airport for the flight to Leticia. On the way you'll stop off at the colourful Paloquemao Fruit and Flower Market. Flowers are one of Colombia's biggest exports and this market serves the local buyer. It's a riot of colour and blooms and a photographer's delight. Inside the market there will be an opportunity to sample some of the myriad fruits and juices for which Colombia is famous.

On arrival in Leticia, you will be transferred to your home for the next three nights, the Calanoa Jungle Lodge. Here you are at the heart of the Colombian Amazon, the largest ecosystem on the planet with innumerable diversity of flora and fauna. The Calanoa Jungle Lodge is surrounded by rainforest and is part of a national park conservation project. Tonight, there will be a jungle walk to see the array of creatures which only come out after the sun goes down. Dinner will be in the hotel.



DAY 3 – THE AMAZON

After breakfast, today is about choice; one option is to take a boat trip along the Matamata River using the traditional wooden canoes made by local people here for thousands of years. Alternatively, journey instead on foot to the home of the indigenous Vergal tribe. A community of 750 people, the Vergal will share their traditional way of life with you and explain how they have used particular skills to thrive in the extreme jungle environment over the centuries. It's a great way of seeing the bio diversity of the Amazon. The Amazon region is a complex and delicate part of the world, today will be an opportunity to see both its wildlife and start to understand the challenges, pressures and conflicts that converge here. All meals today and tomorrow will be taken at the Lodge.

DAY 4 – THE AMAZON

After breakfast at the lodge you will head for Mocagua Island – famous for its beautiful painted buildings. The island is home to four different tribes and also of woolly monkeys which had been in danger of being hunted to extinction. All the tribes people have now come together to stop killing the creatures and there's even a small, not-for-profit rescue centre for orphaned animals. Mocagua is right on the border with Peru, and here you can find the pink river dolphins of the Amazon. They are born grey but turn pink as they age. Nobody knows why they are this unusual colour although it's believed they may lack the usual pigment and that the pink colour is caused by blood vessels showing through their translucent skin.

The flora and fauna of the region is world famous and today will be an opportunity to explore it in all its glory. From bird to marine life, the local expert guides will be on hand to help seek it out, while also explaining how the cultures and local communities here co-exist with the forest.

Later there will be the chance to have a shamanic jungle ritual experience. The local shaman, still playing a vital part in local jungle life, will give you a blessing to help you connect even further with this important part of the world's eco-system.

DAY 5 – THE AMAZON TO BOGOTÁ

This morning you will have a short walking tour of Leticia, capital of the Colombian Amazon. Despite its rural jungle location accessed only by plane or boat, it's a bustling little port town and a wander round will help to understand how rural and human activity connects in this mini jungle commercial hub.

At lunchtime, you will return to the airport for a flight to Bogotá. Your Aventura representative will be waiting for you to take you to the Grand Hyatt Hotel where you will stay in an enchanting, Andes View room. The rest of the day is to spend at your leisure.

DAY 6 – BOGOTÁ TO LOS LLANOS

It's an early start this morning to catch your six o'clock flight to Yopal where there will be time for breakfast before driving the two and a half hours to the Corocora Tented Camp (you can leave any luggage you won't need for the next couple of days at the Grand Hyatt to pick up on your return). Set on a private reserve in the Llanos Orientales area of Colombia you are now in the Orinoco region, famed as cowboy country. After lunch, choose from a number of different activities including setting up cameras to capture the visiting wildlife which can include jaguars and giant anteaters. There are also options of a nature walk and horse riding. If you'd rather just relax, there are ample opportunities here, including taking it easy in one of the hammocks perfectly placed around the camp.

Enjoy cocktails as you watch the sunset before heading to dinner.



DAYS 7 AND 8 – LOS LLANOS

The endless plains of the Los Llanos region are one of the countries (lesser known) natural treasures. Vast plain, immense skies and superb wildlife spotting make this region a fascinating and rewarding stop. Added to this the unique llanero cowboy culture, they ride barefoot to round up the cattle.

For the next two days you will have the chance to explore Corocora to its fullest and to see the nature of the region as close-up as can be. The name Corocora comes from the scarlet ibis which inhabits the region and your visit here will help to fund conservation work to protect endangered species and to pay for local people to help with that endeavour. Activities include horse-riding with the local cowboys, four-wheel drive tours, bird watching or joining the feline conservation biologists from the Cunagero project which is striving to protect the ocelots, jaguars and pumas. There will also be the chance to join a wildlife safari across the open plains.

On one of the evenings there will be the opportunity to meet and mingle with the indigenous people who will sing and recite their music and poetry as you sit around your campfire. All meals will be taken at the camp.

DAY 9 – LOS LLANOS TO COFFEE REGION

After breakfast it's time to make the journey back to Yopal and onward to Bogotá where you will have lunch at the Grand Hyatt and retrieve any stored luggage. You will take off again, this time for Armenia, arriving just before seven. On arrival at Armenia airport, you will be met and driven to Hotel Hacienda Bambusa, where you will stay in a suite for two nights.

Your first evening at Hacienda Bambusa will be at leisure.

DAY 10 – COFFEE REGION

Colombia's Coffee Region is spectacular with rolling green, coffee covered hillsides, dotted with brightly painted homes, and farm or fincas. It's another total change from the scenery of the first part of the trip and shows again the incredible diversity Colombia has to offer.

Colombia produces some of the world's finest coffee, so much so that this area is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Most of the best crop goes for export because of its high value although there will be plenty of opportunities for you to taste a Colombian brew at its best. After breakfast at the hacienda you will visit the traditional, brightly painted colonial town of Filandia.

After lunch in a local restaurant you will learn more about the complete coffee process with a visit to Café San Alberto which offers fantastic views over the Coffee Region. You will take part in a coffee cupping session where you can taste and smell the aromas of the different types of coffee produced.

Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.



DAY 11 – COFFEE REGION TO CARTAGENA DE INDIAS

Today you will fly from the Coffee Region to Cartagena des Indias via Bogotá . Cartagena was founded almost five hundred years ago when it swiftly became the most important port in the Americas. Gold and silver from all over the Spanish Empire came through here on its way back to Europe. One of the most beautiful cities in South America it is known for its cobbled streets, beautiful churches and atmospheric plazas and considered by many to be the jewel in the crown for South American colonial architecture. Your Hotel, Hotel Casa San Augustin, where you will enjoy a deluxe room, is situated within the old city walls of what is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

This afternoon there will be a short introductory walking tour ending in a local bar for cocktails and sunset.



DAY 12 – ROSARIO ISLANDS

Today is a day to relax on the beach with a trip to the exquisite Rosario Islands off Colombia's Caribbean coast. Your private boat tour will take you to Acasi Island where you can swim, snorkel or just laze in the sun. The sand gleams white and the water is purist, clearest turquoise. As part of a National Park (the only one to be largely underwater) sea and land are beautifully maintained in what is a tropical paradise. Palm trees are wafted by the wind and thatch roofed huts adorn the beach so that you feel a world away from the city. There surely can't be a better way to end your Colombian adventure.



DAY 13 – DEPART CARTAGENA DES INDIAS

It is time to say goodbye to Colombia. After breakfast you will be driven to the airport for your international flight home.

ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL SOFITEL VICTORIA REGIA, BOGOTÁ

The elegant Hotel Sofitel Victoria Regia is situated in the heart of one of the most absorbing areas of Bogotá among the best restaurants, bars and cultural attractions of the capital. Designed by Miguel Soto one of the most renowned architects working in Colombia today, the hotel is decorated in a mix of modern French style and classical local features.



The hotel is named after a Colombian water lily that floats on the Amazon and its beauty has characterised the style of the hotel. Charming and cosy, the excellent Basilic restaurant specialises in French haute cuisine where chef, Mauricio Rodriguez, combines the best of Mediterranean tradition with the latest international trends and local ingredients. The restaurant also boasts an enviable selection of wines and liquors.

CALANOA JUNGLE LODGE, CALANOA NATURAL RESERVE

Calanoa Jungle Lodge is situated in The Calanoa Natural Reserve deep inside the Amazon forest. It is described as a "low-impact, small-scale settlement" in harmony with its surroundings.

The buildings have been designed by celebrated Colombian architect and artist Diego Samper. He has taken traditional materials and construction techniques and, using modern building know-how, has created a genuinely sustainable environment in which to stay. The roofs are made from woven palms and the walls and floors are cleverly designed to increase air circulation. Because the visitor cabins are built on stilts why also afford better views than if they were at ground level and each is equipped with an observation platform for bird and monkey watching.

There is a bedroom and bathroom on the first floor and a loft with room to sleep six people in each. The cabins are fully covered with a mosquito screen, and each bed also has an individual mosquito net. A boardwalk connects the cabins with the dining/social pavilion which has a central screen tent and large dining table and enjoys a wonderful view of the river. There are hammock swings and seats where guests can relax. A wooden deck connects to the kitchen pavilion where guests can go to see their food being made or even join in with the preparation.

Calanoa's cuisine mixes local Amazonian fare with Brazilian, Colombian and Peruvian cuisine and there is abundant organic and fresh local produce and cooking over open fires, with bread being baked fresh daily.



GRAND HYATT, BOGOTÁ

The Grand Hyatt Bogotá is only ten minutes from the airport and city centre. The rooms are modern, light and airy with floor-to-ceiling windows providing breathtaking views of the Andes beyond, the city all around and lush gardens below.

There is a choice of cuisine with delicious Colombian dishes served at Capitalino restaurant and excellent Japanese fare is available at Ushin while it's always cocktail hour at the Ilustre Bar.

The Zaitania spa is the perfect place to relax after a day hiking or enjoying nearby attractions including the Gold Museum and the Aldeana Market where you can find a perfect cup of Colombian coffee.

COROCORA CAMP, LOS LLANOS

Corocora Camp is a luxurious private tented camp, set inside a private nature reserve. The site overlooks the sprawling plains of the Casanare department of Los Llanos in the fabled Orinoco region. The accommodation comprises four fully equipped sleeping tents and a social tent. There are a number of big hammocks hung in the trees to just relax and take in the sights, sounds and smells of your environment. Each tent has its own private outdoor terrace overlooking the river – a perfect vantage point for seeing the local bird and animal life up close, or to just watch the sun go down. The camp is partly powered by solar panels to be as sympathetic as possible to the natural environment.



Chefs will prepare all your meals on site are served in the social tent by Corocora's onsite chef using primarily local produce. Food concentrates on traditional recipes and cooking techniques from the Los Llanos area and other regions of the country to demonstrate the best of Colombian cuisine.

The Llanos Orientales is part of the vast Orinoco region which straddles the border with neighbouring Venezuela. While staying at Corocora Camp you will feel delightfully cut off from the rest of the world in the most comfortable surroundings.

HACIENDA BAMBUSA, ARMENIA

Hacienda Bambusa is an ideal spot from which to explore Colombia's Coffee Region. This perfect piece of tranquillity is set on a large estate in the shadow of the mighty Andes.

The hotel has been built in the traditional local style with clay tiled roofs and rustic bamboo balconies. Rooms are light and airy and tastefully decorated and your air-conditioned suite will also have a private terrace. Here you can while away the hours lying in your own hammock – a perfect vantage point for taking a close look across the spacious tropical gardens or to watch hummingbirds feeding on exotic flowers.

The simple restaurant produces traditional recipes from local produce and the chef will even share his knowledge with you, even providing a cookery class so you can take some of the secrets of Colombian cuisine home with you.



HOTEL CASA SAN AUGUSTIN, CARTAGENA DES INDIAS

This beautiful property, comprising three white-washed seventeenth century buildings will give you an authentic experience of old Cartagena. Ancient walls, grand archways, original frescoes, hand-painted tiles and original wood beam ceilings make this an exceptionally romantic retreat.

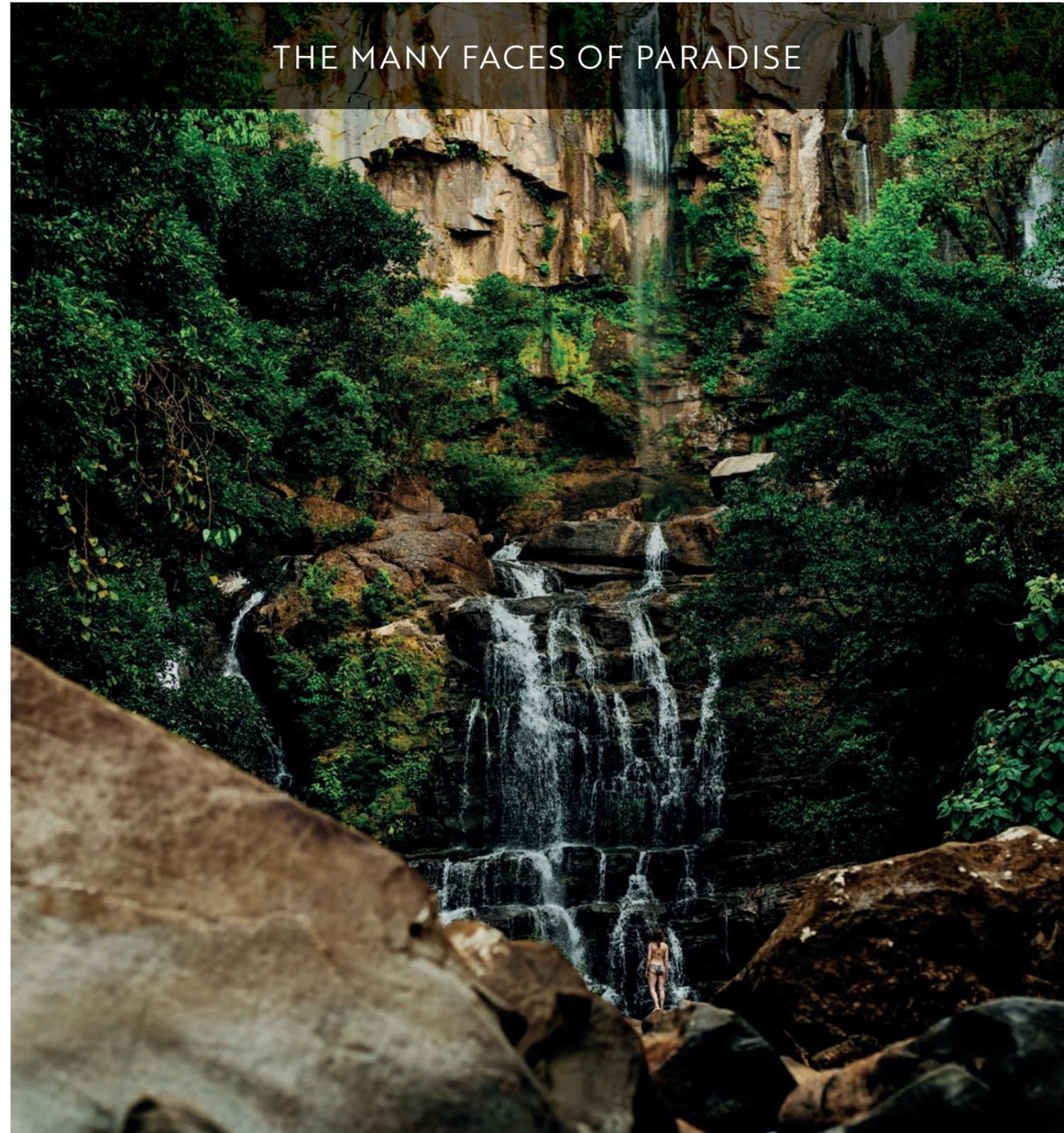
The seventeenth century theme continues in your spacious Deluxe room with king-size bed. Outside there are elegant terraces laid out with palm fronds and stylish loungers. One of the three historic structures which make up the hotel's main buildings was once part of an aqueduct system which took water into the walled city and which has now been incorporated into the delightful swimming pool.

Dining is chic and relaxed under the guidance of creative and imaginative local chefs with a reputation for great seafood. The hotel enjoys its own tranquil private beach with crystal clear waters and a cooling breeze. If pampering of a more humankind appeals, the hotel also has its own relaxing and invigorating spa.



COSTA RICA

THE MANY FACES OF PARADISE

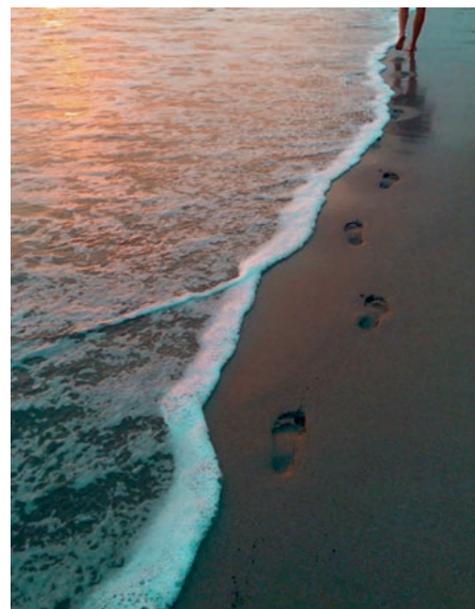


FROM £8,649 PER PERSON*

*based on two guests sharing a twin or double room and excluding international flights.

DISCOVER COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is renowned not only as a land of natural beauty but one of liberty and equality. One of the world's oldest democracies it is regarded as among the twenty best-run countries in the world and by far the most stable in Central America. The Europeans came in 1502 when Christopher Columbus claimed the land for Spain, with the Costa Ricans gaining their independence in 1838 and establishing a democracy thirty years later. It has had no armed forces for more than seventy years having turned all its barracks and camps into schools and colleges.



Just over half the size of Scotland, it has eight hundred miles of breathtaking coastline with glorious beaches. The weather can be as varied as the country and the main factor affecting it is height above sea level. High up you can experience a cooling mountain mist while down on the Pacific coast on Costa Rica's celebrated beaches it will simultaneously be hot and dry. The basic rule is that the higher you go the cooler it gets. Average temperatures range from 21 - 27 degrees Centigrade, 70 to 81 Fahrenheit.

The Costa Ricans are justly proud and protective of their environment and nowhere is more stunning than the gulf of Golfo Dulce. Only accessible by private charter flight and boat, you will stay at the Playa Cativo Eco Lodge, a secluded hideaway surrounded by rainforest. This is the perfect spot to get close to some of the country's most delicate animal and plant life on your Tropical Rainforest guided excursion and among the lodge's own Private Nature Reserve, Biological Research Station and Organic farm.

A quarter of the land is covered by designated reserves and forests and Costa Rica is home to more than five percent of earth's total biodiversity. With caimans and crocodiles, hummingbirds and hawks, turtles, manatees and spider monkeys, a trip to Costa Rica is a zoological journey like no other. Some of the best views of this natural wonder can be found from above, not least from the hanging bridges across the treetops of the forests clinging to the Arenal volcano. The open air cable car gondolas of the Sky Tram will take you to the mountain's highest point 1,670 metres (almost five and a half thousand feet) above sea level.

The capital, San Jose is regarded as one of the safest cities in Latin America. The city is known for its many beautiful theatres and fascinating museums. While the culture is predominately a mix of Spanish and indigenous Costa Rican, there are exciting undercurrents of German and Italian influences and even Jamaican and Chinese. The Costa Ricans pride themselves in being relaxed and friendly folk always welcoming to visitors.

Beer is very popular in Costa Rica as is the national spirit called guaro which is made from sugar cane and best sampled with delicious slices of lime. The food relies heavily on a range of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables and tends not to be too spicy. Whether you're looking for ancient and modern culture, adrenaline highs, beautiful landscapes, warming seas or welcoming souls, Costa Rica has it all.

DESTINATION GUIDE

Capital
San José

Language
Spanish

Currency
Colon (CRC)

Flight time from UK
11hr 15m

Time Zone (+/- GMT)
-6 hours



TOUR DATES

22nd January 2020 - 2nd February 2020	11 Nights
10th March 2020 - 21st March 2020	11 Nights
22nd April 2020 - 3rd May 2020	11 Nights
11th June 2020 - 22nd June 2020	11 Nights
15th July 2020 - 26th July 2020	11 Nights
13th August 2020 - 24th August 2020	11 Nights
14th September 2020 - 25th September 2020	11 Nights
2nd November 2020 - 13th November 2020	11 Nights
7th December 2020 - 18th December 2020	11 Nights

TOUR DETAILS

DAY 1 – FINCA ROSA BLANCA COFFEE PLANTATION

Upon arrival at Juan Santamaría International Airport you will be welcomed by your Aventura tour concierge and driven to the Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort. This evening there will be a welcome dinner for the group at the hotel's El Tigre Vestido Restaurant. The food here is prepared in accordance with instructions laid down by Creative Director, Chef Jose Pablo Gonzales who trained at the celebrated Le Cordon Bleu Institute in Paris. The menu combines international cuisines and New World fusion recipes and relies heavily on the hotel's own extensive organic gardens, orchards and coffee plantation.

DAY 2 – HEREDIA

After breakfast, your concierge will meet you for a tour through Finca Rosa Blanca's organic sustainable coffee plantation. Find out about the entire process from planting to harvest and of the passion that goes into cultivating some of the world's best coffee. At the end of the tour you will have the chance to sample the produce with a frothy cappuccino made by one of the hotel's expert baristas and served with homemade pastries.

After lunch you will visit the Costa Rica Meadery to learn the secrets of beekeeping, taste the honey and stroll through the botanical gardens before sampling the mead. The Costa Rica Meadery supports family farms to promote beekeeping and improves the biodiversity of Costa Rica's tropical forests.



DAY 3 – HEREDIA TO GOLFO DULCE

After breakfast at the hotel, you will be driven to Juan Santamaria Airport for a one-hour private charter flight to Golfito. During the flight you will see some of Costa Rica's diverse mountainous landscapes as you fly over Drake Bay and the Oso Peninsula before touching down at Golfo Dulce. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your private boat transfer to Playa Cativo Lodge – an exclusive and extremely private hotel, perfectly positioned to explore the rainforest. Look out for playful dolphins that are often sighted in this region.

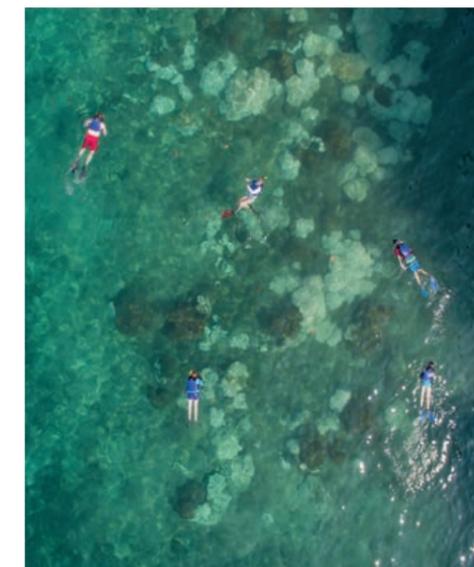
After lunch at the lodge, you will be introduced to the tropical rainforest with a guided walk through the lush vegetation. Later, you can meet the hotel's local farmers who will explain the variety of fruit and vegetables being grown as well as the medicinal benefits of the plants.

Enjoy a lecture from the hotel's biologist; learn about Golfo Dulce's flora and fauna and discover why this area is considered to be the only tropical fjord in the Americas. Dinner this evening will be by candlelight under the stars and accompanied by the sounds of nature.

DAY 4 – GOLFO DULCE

After breakfast, it's time to look at the rainforest from a different angle with a kayak through the Rio Esquinas mangroves. This aquatic forest is home to an extraordinary variety of bird life as well as caimans, water turtles and crocodiles. As you glide through the waters you will also be able to see remote working farms.

The rest of the day is at leisure and there are plenty of activities available from the lodge. Paddle along the beautiful coastline in search of rays, turtles and dolphins or snorkel amongst Cativo Bay's colourful tropical reef fish. Alternatively, you may wish to head inland to explore the many hiking trails to Valle de los Sainos where you may see deer and monkeys.



DAY 5 – GOLFO DULCE

After breakfast, you will spend the day seeking out the local marine life. Golfo Dulce is one of just four tropical fjords on earth, a term first coined by the legendary explorer Jacques Cousteau. At 200 metres (more than 650 feet) it is one of the ten deepest such geographical features in the world and has some of the purest water to be found anywhere. Golfo Dulce boasts two different kinds of dolphin, jumping stingrays and sea turtles. Visitors between July and October may even see humpback whales with their calves. After a picnic lunch, served on a private beach, the rest of the day can be spent relaxing on the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

DAY 6 – GOLFO DULCE TO ARENAL

It's time to bid farewell to the rainforests of Golfo Dulce and travel to the volcanic landscapes of Arenal. Returning by boat and vehicle to the airstrip you will fly by charter plane back to San Jose's International Airport. You will be met on arrival and driven approximately three hours and thirty minutes to the Arenal region. En route, lunch will be served on the edge of the rainforest at the Restaurant El Sendero, part of the Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel and Nature Reserve. A fusion of traditional regional dishes and popular classics from across the country, the cuisine at El Sendero is enhanced with innovative sauces, spices and combinations of fresh herbs and vegetables hand-picked from the hotel's gardens and greenhouses. After lunch, there will be time to explore the nature trails through the hummingbird gardens before continuing your journey to La Fortuna de San Carlos.

On reaching La Fortuna de San Carlos the beautiful Arenal volcano dominates the land around. Arenal only ceased regular eruptions less than ten years ago and it is now in what experts describe as the indeterminate resting phase, which effectively means it could erupt again at any time. Home for the next three nights will be the Nayara Springs Resort & Spa which as its name suggests sits among natural hot springs which feed into the private plunge pool at your villa.

This evening you will hear about the local landscape from one of its most esteemed experts. Mr. Gino González is a geologist, volcanologist and professor at the Universidad de Costa Rica. He is the director of Volcanes sin Fronteras, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the study of volcanoes. Drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be available during the lecture and dinner will be under your own arrangements.

DAY 7 – ARENAL

Following breakfast at the hotel, you will be immersed in the world of volcanology with a morning tour of the Arenal Volcano with Gino González. Learn about its unique landscape as you explore the pyroclastic cones and active faults. Visit the historical sites of La Fortuna Waterfall, where the ancient eruptions of the Chato Volcano are located. You will have also the opportunity to make experiments and assist Gino in collecting samples.

Lunch today is at Don Rufino Restaurant and the rest of the day is at leisure followed by a five-course dinner with wine pairing at the resort

DAY 8 – ARENAL

After breakfast, explore the beauty of the rainforest from high up among and above its canopies on a treetop walk along the hanging bridges. Later, take the aerial Sky Tram, an open-air gondola that rises smoothly through the forest and up to the highest point of the mountain at 1,670 metres (almost five and a half thousand feet) above sea level.

This afternoon brings a tropical Costa Rican cookery class. Chef Scott Alan and his local team will teach you how to make an assortment of tropical dishes and cocktails. You will help to create a delicious three course meal while discovering the farm fresh crops and traditional cooking techniques which contribute to the individuality of the country's cuisine. The class is great for beginners as well as for experienced cooks.

DAY 9 – ARENAL – MIRAVALLS – UPALA

After breakfast it's time to head to Rio Perdido at Miravalles at the Province of Guanacaste, where you will enjoy a choice of two from three high adrenaline activities of a canyon adventure, white water tubing or mountain biking. The Canyon Adventure at Río Perdido is a fabulous example of how to make the most of your natural surroundings. Expertly and elegantly designed you will follow a trail of discovery over the yawning Rio Blanco Canyon via a series of fifteen suspended platforms six of them rock-based and nine suspended on the canyon walls. There are five zip lines up to eighty metres long (more than 260 feet), a fifteen metre (fifty feet) "Tarzan" swing and a pendulum cable. The canyon is awe-inspiring from above, carved out by the river roaring through it over millions of years.

Travelling along the canyon at water level in the white-water tubing experience provides a whole different perspective and will carry you deep into the dark, narrow spaces between its sheer walls. Listen out for birds and monkeys as you squeeze through the exposed rocks.

Alternatively, put your foot to pedal on the mountain bike circuits ranging from eight to twenty kilometres (five to twelve and a half miles) with ramps, bridges and rocky segments, stopping along the way to admire the rich beauty of the land from a number of panoramic lookouts. There's so much to explore with two waterfalls, a cave, the ruins of a home that dating back to colonial times and a naturally carbonated spring rumoured to have healing qualities.

Lunch is at the hotel restaurant after which just relax at the Rio Perdido natural thermo-mineral river. This forty-five metre, thermo-mineral gorge draws its soothing energy from volcanic magma flowing deep below the earth's surface.

Along the riverbed, there are eight known springs from which more than 4,000 gallons of hot water pours every minute. As these subterranean springs mix with the cool water of the river, they produce pools of varying temperatures so you can choose your own perfect swimming environment.

Meet your guide at the hotel lobby to transfer to Origins Luxury Lodge.

DAY 10 – UPALA

After breakfast, pick from a selection of the adventures offered by Origins. These include exploring the Lodge's estate for a spot of bird watching. How many of the hundred and fifty species identified here will you see? Alternatively, climb into the saddle for horse riding into the jungle, either on your own or with a guided group. For those who like to fish there are eleven well-stocked lagoons in the hotel grounds. There are also extensive vegetable gardens to explore, either in the company of the hotel chef in search of fresh delicacies or with our expert botanist who will show you the sweetest blooms you may ever have smelled. Discover the plants and trees with medicinal properties used by local people for thousands of years.

When the sun goes down there's a moonlit walking tour under the expert guidance of a professional naturalist who will help you track down some of the sixteen species of amphibians living here along with bioluminescent fungus, mammals and other creatures.



DAY 11 – UPALA TO SAN JOSÉ

Today sees you journey by private transfer to San José and a Junior Suite at the Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort.

DAY 12 – DEPARTURE OR BEACH EXTENSION

If you're going home today you will take the short trip to Juan Santamaría International Airport for your flight back home. Alternatively, if you choose to extend your stay, you will board a short internal flight to Daniel Oduber International in the city of Liberia. From there, it's straight to Hermosa Beach where following a scenic private boat transfer, you will wade ashore at the superb Kasiya Papagayo Eco Retreat.



DAYS 13 AND 14

The next two days are fully yours to enjoy the delightful facilities of Kasiya Papagayo including kayaking, snorkelling and paddle-boarding. If that all sounds too energetic, just enjoy the beach and the seclusion or get yourself thoroughly pampered at the spa. Resident healer Yamuno will use indigenous plants and muds to revitalise you and Movement Coach Bruno will explore how to use your body to bring you more in harmony with your environment.

DAY 15 – DEPARTURE

After breakfast and check out, board a 4 x 4 vehicle for transfer to the Daniel Oduber International Airport for a domestic flight to Juan Santamaría International Airport in San José and your flight home.

ACCOMMODATION

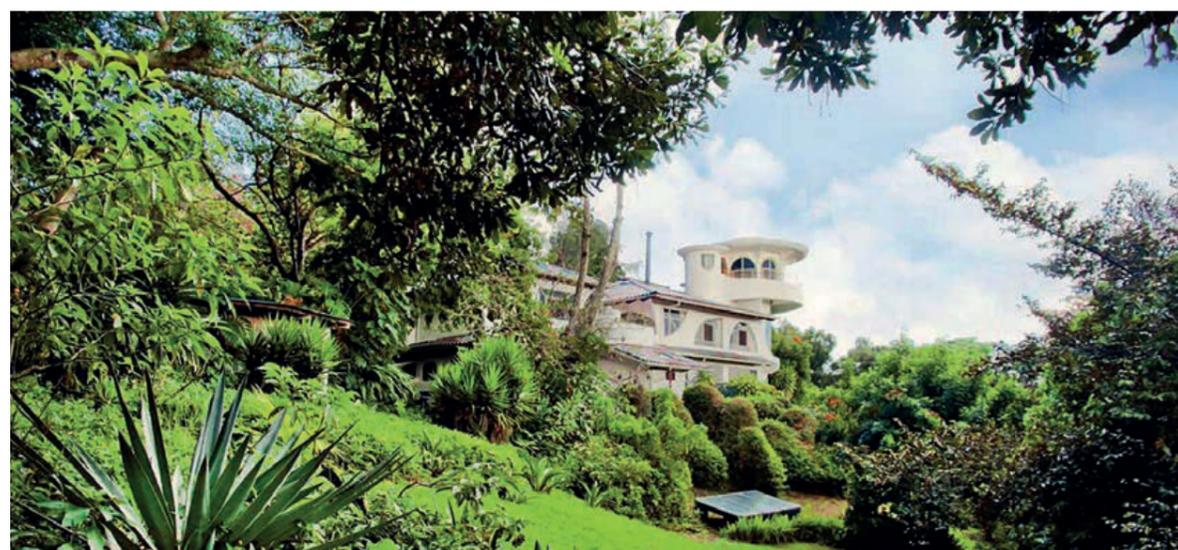
FINCA ROSA BLANCA COFFEE PLANTATION, SAN JOSÉ

Perched on the top of a hill in Costa Rica's Central Valley, Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort is listed among Fodor's Best 100 Hotels in the World. Set in an elegant rural mansion on a working coffee plantation, the property enjoys many desirable facilities including an ionized swimming pool, Jacuzzi and ten acres of private land.

Combining luxury and sustainability, the resort helps to support its local community not just through employment but through environmental education and providing incentives for people in the area to protect the precious natural world around them.

While staff at Finca Rosa Blanca are rightly proud of the coffee grown here, that's not all they produce. Ingredients for the kitchens are freshly picked each day from the resort's own organic greenhouse, orchards and gardens. Here Costa Rican cuisine meets international and Latin Fusion dishes of the highest quality.

Your Junior Suite is utterly luxurious, equipped with handcrafted furniture, murals and original artwork throughout and has its own private outdoor decking area.



PLAYA CATIVO, GOLFO DULCE

Your privacy and comfort are assured at Playa Cativo which is only accessible by private charter flight and boat. Surrounded by some of the most unspoilt virgin rainforest in the world, this luxury eco lodge sits on the calm waters of the Golfo Dulce on the Osa Peninsula in southern Costa Rica. There can be few better places to get acquainted with some of the country's most exquisite animal and plant life. Your expert guide will make sure you miss none of it with a Tropical Rainforest excursion around the lodge's own Private Nature Reserve, Biological Research Station and Organic farm.

The guest rooms are designed to be sympathetic to the natural environment and are built from precious reclaimed hardwood and colourful tiles handmade by local craftspeople. The seductive open-air design provides a breathtaking 180-degree view of the ocean and the rainforest and the sights and sounds of birds, frogs, monkeys and the lapping waves are ever-present.

There is a chemical-free fresh water swimming pool and library and a spa and wellness centre where therapies and treatments are provided in the relaxing rainforest surroundings.





NAYARA SPRINGS RESORT, ARENAL

This ultra-exclusive adult only boutique resort comprises welcoming and secluded luxury villas deep within the lush vegetation of Arenal's pristine rainforest. There are private plunge pools fed by natural mineral hot springs in every room.

The resort boasts some enviable facilities including an award-winning spa and yoga pavilion, a gym, two large infinity pools, a lap pool and swim-up bar. The premises are reached by a 75 metre (250 feet) long foot bridge above the canopy of the trees, ensuring your privacy.

The resort's restaurants are among the most highly rated in the Arenal area.

ORIGINS LUXURY LODGE, UPALA

Your concept of luxury may be shaken and remade once you experience the comfort and elegance of the Origins Luxury Lodge. Relax on your hand-built canopy bed and admire the 180-degree view before you from sunrise to sunset or enjoy a serene soak in your wood-fire heated terrace bath.

Dining at Origins is a treat, lovingly prepared by Michelin-starred chef, Jean-Luc L'Hourre. This seafood specialist is also Un des Meilleurs Ouvriers de France, one of the highest accolades of the profession. His globetrotting is evidenced by the international nature of the cuisine, accented with both his French heritage and local traditions and ingredients.



KASIIYA PAPAGAYO ECO RETREAT (TOUR EXTENSION)

Kasiya Papagayo Eco Retreat is a brand new resort imagined and designed in the depths of the wild by world-renowned architects AW2. The luxury tented suites are all built on timber platforms from natural materials, and remarkably, not one single tree had to be cut down during construction. Each tent is accessed by its own private path and is conceived to feel like a part of the nature which surrounds it.

Resident healer Yamuno will use indigenous plants and muds to revitalise you and Movement Coach Bruno will explore how to use your body to bring you more in harmony with your environment.

Under the creative guidance of chef Sebastian Guevara, the cuisine has been compiled to reflect this ethos and to be as beautiful as and harmonious with its surroundings. Chef Sebastian Guevara believes the cuisine of Kasiya should be as beautiful as the land itself. The views, the air and the smell of the ocean inspire his dishes.



SOUTHERN AFRICA

A LAND OF ASTONISHING DIVERSITY



FROM £6,399 PER PERSON*

*based on two guests sharing a twin or double room and excluding international flights.

DISCOVER SOUTHERN AFRICA

Cape Town's beautiful working harbour offers some delightful shops and restaurants along the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and provides the opportunity to take a number of short cruises including to Robben Island. The former prison where Nelson Mandela spent much of his twenty-seven years behind bars is now an open memorial to his struggles and those of his fellow campaigners against apartheid.

There is no better place to look for South Africa's "big five" in their natural environment than Marakele National Park. Lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant and Cape buffalo were so named because big game hunters regarded them as the most difficult creatures to track and kill on foot. Today, gun barrels are being replaced with camera lenses and much of the 670 square kms (260 sq. miles) of this protected area is highly accessible through a network of roads and trails.

Johannesburg is South Africa's largest city. No more than a cluster of farms, gold was found in the 1880s bringing a rush of prospectors. Today it is a lively modern metropolis which is home to more than four and a half million people with a host of museums, galleries, shops and restaurants to explore. The city lays claim to being the home of street art in sub-Saharan Africa and the walls and buildings which are its canvas change on an almost daily basis as local artists rub shoulders with those of international renown, all adding new splashes of vibrant colour to the busy streets.

A cycle tour of Soweto is a great way to meet and talk to people. This sprawl of busy local neighbourhoods used to be synonymous with protest against the nationalist government so it is fitting that today it is home to The Apartheid Museum which tells the story of the journey from oppression to freedom. Today, the vibrant community of Soweto is a trend setter in fashion, dance, music and politics. A visit to southern Africa has to include Victoria Falls. Named for Queen Victoria by the explorer David Livingstone, indigenous names for this spectacular work of nature include The smoke that thunders and The Place of the Rainbow, thanks to the constant kaleidoscope of shimmering light playing in the booming spray. The 6,000 acres of the Victoria Falls Game Reserve borders the Zambezi National Park and the "big five" are all in evidence along with the incredibly rare and critically endangered black rhino. Enjoy an Exciting "Flight of Angels" helicopter flight to really appreciate the scale and grandeur of this natural wonder of the world. Don't forget to take your camera up with you.



DESTINATION GUIDE

 Capital
Pretoria, Cape Town & Bloemfontein

 Language
Afrikaans & English

 Currency
Rand (ZAR)

 Flight time from UK
Cape Town 11hr 30m

 Time Zone (+/- GMT)
+2 hours



TOUR DATES

7th December 2019 - 18th December 2019	11 Nights
16th January 2020 - 27th January 2020	11 Nights
8th February 2020 - 19th February 2020	11 Nights
1st March 2020 - 12th March 2020	11 Nights
19th April 2020 - 30th April 2020	11 Nights
5th May 2020 - 16th May 2020	11 Nights
12th June 2020 - 23rd June 2020	11 Nights
9th July 2020 - 20th July 2020	11 Nights
1st August 2020 - 12th August 2020	11 Nights
16th September 2020 - 27th September 2020	11 Nights
1st October 2020 - 12th October 2020	11 Nights
8th November 2020 - 19th November 2020	11 Nights
3rd December 2020 - 14th December 2020	11 Nights

TOUR DETAILS

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL CAPE TOWN

Your Avventura Representative will meet you in the Arrivals Hall at Cape Town International Airport to introduce you to your driver, ready to start your Southern African adventure. A little over half an hour later you will be at your first resting place, the MORE Quarters Apartment Hotel. Located within Cape Town's city bowl, MORE Quarters Apartment Hotel provides the privacy of apartment living with the service and hospitality of a hotel. Settle in and relax or take a stroll into the city centre where the boutique shops and restaurants of Kloof Street are a few steps away.

DAY 2 – CAPE TOWN

After breakfast, meet your Avventura Tour Concierge and head off to the Table Mountain Cable Way to make your way up to the top of the famous peak by cable car. This is your opportunity to hike around the hidden dams and valleys usually not seen by visitors to Cape Town's most famous landmark. From here you will walk down to the wine farms of the Constantia Valley, through the low pass called Constantia Neck to Klein Constantia. Wine has been made here since 1685. Set among ancient trees on the foothills of the Constantiaberg Mountain, this must be one of the most beautiful wine farms in the world. Find out why soil type has such a significant impact on taste and how the vines are looked after before heading off by bike for stunning views of the valley en-route for Groot Constantia, another of the country's oldest wine estates. Your Avventura Tour Concierge will then select a mystery wine farm where you can taste the fruits of their labours for yourself. Return to the hotel in the late afternoon for an evening to explore the area more or just to relax.

DAY 3 – CAPE TOWN

After breakfast you will travel along the coast to take a boat to Seal Island. Put on your wetsuit and swim with these enchanting and friendly animals in their natural Atlantic Ocean environment. Sitting a little under six kilometres (three and a half miles) off the northern beaches of False Bay, Seal island is home to upwards of 60,000 Cape fur seals, all crowded in to just 800 metres by 50 (approximately 2,600 by 160 feet). Look closely at the rocks and you'll see names carved into the island's granite by seal hunters almost a hundred years ago or just watch the seals weaving in and out of the kelp forest beneath the waves.

If the weather is poor or the swell too great there will be a hike to the Cape Point Nature Reserve. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the reserve is home to more than 250 species of birds as well as otters, baboons, steenbok and Cape mountain zebra.

You will then be taken along the spectacular coastal route of Chapman's Peak for incredible views of where the mountains meet the sea. Lunch will be at the Noordhoek Farm Village where you can enjoy some taste sensations courtesy of the food-pairing experts at the Foodbarn Restaurant. Renowned chef, the aptly named Frank Dangereux, will delight you with his seafood inspired six-course wine-paired menu.

After lunch you'll follow the coast to Simon's Town where an expert local conservationist will share their insight on the African penguin colony that has settled at Boulders Beach. If the weather allows, mount a stand-up paddleboard or kayak to get closer to these adorable birds. If you prefer to stay on dry land, take a conservation walk to see if you can find a penguin splinter colony away from the crowds.

Leaving the penguins behind you'll move on to Kalk Bay Harbour to see the seals and meet the local fishermen who work from the harbour. Enjoy a sundowner either in Kalk Bay or one of the neighbouring beaches before returning to your hotel.

DAY 4 – CAPE TOWN

Take today to enjoy the pleasures of Cape Town in your own time. The city nestles in a natural bowl with the harbour to one side and Table Mountain looming on the other. Also known as the Mother City, Cape Town is an extraordinary place with so much to see from riotous street art and the brightly painted frontages of the Bo-Kaap to the bathing chalets of Muizenberg. You could take a trip to Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned or stroll along the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront. From nature at her most serene to man at his most intense, you will be captivated by this remarkable city and its inhabitants.

DAY 5 – CAPE TOWN TO MARAKELE NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast you will be driven to Cape Town Airport for your scheduled flight to Johannesburg where you will be met for a four hour drive to Marakele National Park. Your home for the next three nights will be Marataba Safari Lodge which borders the park, sitting at the foot of the stunning Waterberg Mountains in Limpopo province.

Spend your afternoon relaxing at the lodge or enjoy game viewing activities.



DAY 6 AND 7 – MARAKELE NATIONAL PARK

For the next two days you will experience the delights of the Marataba Game Reserve, a malaria-free, private section of the Marakele National Park. This is your chance to see the "big five" as they should be seen. The lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant and Cape buffalo were given this title because they were the most challenging beasts to track.

On one of the days you will explore the reserve on foot. Expert Field Guide Association of South Africa accredited guides will lead you through hiking trails discovering different eco-systems. Look out for the critically endangered black rhino, and rare plant species of yellowwood and cycad trees. Marakele is also home to one of the world's largest colonies of endangered Cape vultures.

The guides have many years of experience in leading hiking trails within 'big five' territories. As well as their extensive knowledge of the flora and fauna, safety is their first priority and they will carry first-aid kits and satellite telephones at all times.

The Iron Age past of this area is only just beginning to yield its secrets, but the 67,000 hectares (260 square miles) of the park is all about the wildlife. This area is known as the Waterberg Biosphere and is recognised by UNESCO as being of global importance.

DAY 8 – MARAKELE NATIONAL PARK TO JOHANNESBURG

After three exhilarating days enjoying the wildlife of Marakele, today you will hit the road, making the trip to Johannesburg to stay at the award-winning Fairlawns Boutique Hotel and Spa in the exclusive residential suburb of Morningside Manor.

After lunch at the hotel, you will visit the fascinating Apartheid Museum which tells the story of South Africa's struggles from tyranny to freedom. The path through the museum leads you on a journey beginning with the racial segregation introduced in 1948 which formed the cornerstone of apartheid. It takes you back through the history of the various cultures converging during the pre-apartheid era, the years of race classification and the detentions and oppression of the nationalist regime.

After the museum tour you will return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.



DAY 9 – JOHANNESBURG

This morning you will take a private guided graffiti walking tour. This tour focuses on the street art and graffiti of Johannesburg's Inner City. Johannesburg has a unique graffiti culture with artwork brightening up the city. The walking tour will be run by a specialist guide and will include art by local and international artists who have contributed to this unique industry.

Once a byword for violence and poverty, Soweto is an area on the up and, after lunch, you will take a bike ride through the streets and neighbourhoods, exploring the sights including Nelson Mandela's house. A young and vibrant community emblematic of the new South Africa, Soweto sets the fashion, dance, music and political agenda that much of the country now follows. This is the perfect opportunity to meet some local people and learn more about the area's pivotal history in the Apartheid struggle.

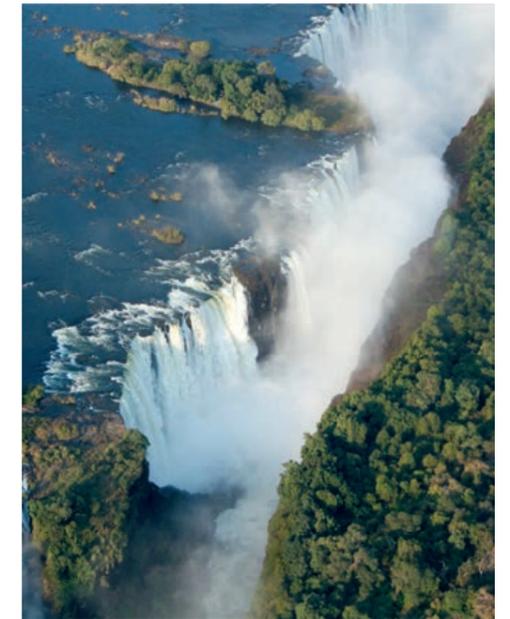
Return to the hotel with the rest of the evening at your leisure.



DAY 10 – JOHANNESBURG TO VICTORIA FALLS

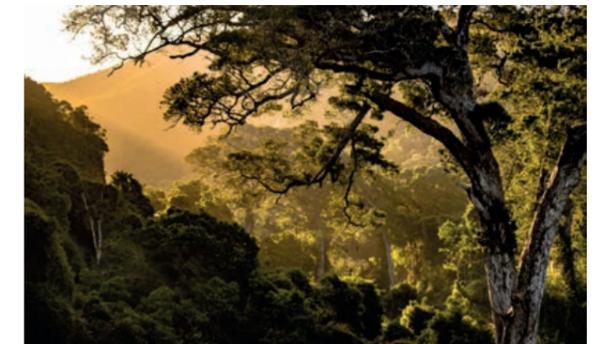
Today you will fly from South Africa to Zimbabwe where you will be met and driven to the Stanley & Livingstone Boutique Hotel in the middle of a private game reserve, a stone's throw from Victoria Falls. You will be staying in one of only sixteen luxury garden suites in the heart of the parkland. The 6,000 acre (24 square kilometres) Victoria Falls Game Reserve borders the Zambezi National Park where you are only ever feet away from the rich wildlife of Africa. The intrepid Victorian explorer, David Livingstone, gave the Falls their name which in the local Tonga dialect means, "the smoke that thunders."

In the afternoon you'll be taken on a sundowner cruise along the legendary Zambezi River before returning to the hotel for dinner.



DAY 11 – VICTORIA FALLS

After breakfast, you will be taken for your guided tour of Victoria Falls. These are the largest falls in the world being one and a half times wider than Niagara Falls and twice as high. Parts of the adjacent rainforest have the distinction of being the only place on earth where it rains all day, every day. This is due to water vapour rising from the Falls immediately turning to rain. One of the seven natural wonders of the world, a staggering five million tonnes of water crosses the Falls every minute. To really appreciate the scale of this enormous geological feature you need to see them from the air. You will now experience the "Flight of Angels," an unforgettable helicopter ride over and around the Falls. The title for this experience of a lifetime comes from the words Livingstone wrote on first seeing this unique place. He said it was, "a sight so wonderful that Angels must have gazed down on it in flight." Your highly skilled pilot will fly you round the Falls from both sides so you can film or photograph them from every conceivable angle.



The rest of the day is free so you might also consider a tour round the jungle canopy or a guided visit to a local village. Depending on water levels there may also be the chance to go white-water rafting on the mighty Zambezi. This evening there will be a farewell dinner at the hotel.

DAY 12 – DEPART VICTORIA FALLS

After breakfast you will be driven to Victoria Falls Airport for a scheduled flight to Johannesburg for your international flight home.

ACCOMMODATION

MORE QUARTERS APARTMENT HOTEL, CAPE TOWN

MORE Quarters Apartment Hotel combines apartment living with the service and hospitality of a hotel and is perfectly situated within Cape Town's city bowl. The hotel comprises a collection of converted heritage townhouses each with their own individual character and with their own convenient street entrances. Furnishings are of a classic contemporary style of clean lines adorned with pure linen and cotton fabrics in shades of natural stone and sea green. Wood floors, marble fireplaces and crystal chandeliers all help to accentuate the grandeur of the hotel.

The alluring restaurants and boutique shops of Kloof Street and the surrounding city centre are in easy walking distance and the hotel is a perfect base from which to explore the mountains, beaches and wine farms of the city.



MARATABA SAFARI LODGE, MARAKELE NATIONAL PARK

It is rare to find such luxury so close to the wild as at Marataba Safari Lodge. With fifteen comfortable and elegant tented suites, it borders Marakele National Park at the foot of the Waterberg Mountains in Limpopo. Painstakingly constructed from stone and canvas, the suites are wonderfully indulgent with carefully chosen furnishings and decor and a king-size bed. Even this close to nature the en-suite stone bathrooms are equipped with indoor and outdoor showers and roll top bath as well as double basins and a dressing room. The suites all come with their own private deck with stunning views over the plains and the winding river below.



At Marataba Safari Lodge there are plenty of opportunities to lay back and unwind. There are a number of hammocks set among the trees, a communal swimming pool, a stylish colonial-style library and access to spa treatments in your suite. Food is locally sourced and prepared on site and can be taken in the tastefully appointed dining room or in the wild on the dining veranda.

As the Lodge is check-by-jowl with the Marakele National Park guests will never be far from the wildlife so many people come here to see. The big five are all to be found in the local area along with cheetah, hippopotami, hyena and many more species.



FAIRLAWNS BOUTIQUE HOTEL & SPA, JOHANNESBURG

Fairlawns Boutique Hotel and Spa is a multi award-winning hotel boasting highly individualised, world-class luxury suites. Originally a family home, Fairlawns is a grand Palladian style property comprising highly individual and uniquely decorated suites giving a sense of gracious living. There is a very European feel to the hotel with high ceilings, tall doors and elegant fabrics. It is set in elegant parkland filled with mature trees, perfect for a stroll or to watch the ample bird life.

Fairlawns boasts a large fully equipped gym and a Balinese spa offering a range of delicious treatments. The hotel has an exceptional a la carte restaurant providing an exciting modern international menu. The hotel goes to great lengths to be environmentally responsible including powering suites with solar energy for heating and using a full grey water recycling system to minimise waste. Organic, local produce is procured wherever possible and the hotel only serves provably sustainable seafood.



STANLEY & LIVINGSTONE BOUTIQUE HOTEL, ZIMBABWE

The Stanley & Livingstone is a luxury boutique hotel nestling within a private game reserve minutes away from Victoria Falls.

The big five are well represented in the 15,000-hectare Victoria Falls Game Reserve which borders the Zambezi National Park. Pleasantly secluded from the tourist town of Victoria Falls itself, the hotel is set in beautiful safari country.

Sixteen luxury lodges overlook the reserve and there are bountiful views across the dense grassland and meandering rivers. The suites are approached by walkways set in lovely gardens with comfortable and relaxing private furnished terraces. Features include canopied king-size beds, air conditioning, lounge with satellite TV and en-suite bathroom. The swimming pool is surrounded by lush green gardens.

The menu offers a delicious selection of European and African-fusion dishes relying heavily on fresh local ingredients and has an enviable selection of wines.



VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

FASCINATING HISTORY & CAPTIVATING LANDSCAPES



FROM £5,999 PER PERSON*

*based on two guests sharing a twin or double room and excluding international flights.

DISCOVER VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

The ancient Cham culture of Vietnam can seem impenetrable to western minds so there is no better way to explore it than with the guidance of Mr. Tran Ky Phuong, a leading authority who has written extensively about the Vietnamese and their past. He will reveal the mysteries of the sprawling My Son complex of temples, some of which have stood for seventeen hundred years in this Cham, Valley of the Kings.



Ho Chi Minh City is still known to local people as Saigon. It's one of the youngest cities in the world with half of its eight million inhabitants under the age of thirty-five. Touring the streets on the back of a vintage Vespa scooter gets you right to the heart of this noisy, buzzing place filled with cafes, bars and boutiques with their inventive locally produce, food and fashion, all among the atmospheric colonial buildings.

Among the beauty of the country, both natural and manmade, it would be wrong to visit Vietnam without seeing the Cu Chi tunnels. This underground world was first created by the resistance to the French colonial masters and greatly expanded during the Vietnam war. At that time this labyrinth was 200 kms (125 miles) long and 3-4 metres (10-13 feet) deep. It includes countless chambers excavated by hand into meeting rooms, medical posts and weapons stores.

From human ingenuity in war to man's search for the spiritual, the contrast with Siem Reap in Cambodia could not be greater. The needs of visitors to the Angkor temple complex have fuelled the growth of Siem Reap from a village to a city in about a hundred years. Its restaurants and bars have transformed it into an Asian gourmet paradise - contemporary earthly pleasures to contrast with the divine ancient structures on its doorstep. Visitors to Cambodia generally have a visit to an Apsara dance show high on their wish list. A world away from the shows concocted to do the rounds of the tourist hotels, the Sacred Dancers of Angkor are the original Aspara dancers, performing a Khmer ballet with its roots in the earliest forms of Cambodian culture. Regarded as a conduit between man and the gods, the elegance and grace of the performance is accompanied by silence broken only by the tinkling of the xylophones which mark time for them.

Nothing can prepare the first time visitor to Angkor Wat for the scale and splendour of this amazing place. Watch the sunrise in the shadow of the world's largest religious building surrounded by sprawling temples in every direction, and then explore the jungle trails by bike. The abandoned city is believed to have been the largest in Southeast Asia during the late Dark Ages and was home to a million people when London's populace numbered no more than 50,000. The Bayon temple was built on the orders of Jayavarman VII in part to demonstrate his glory. Its fifty-four towers are bedecked with more than two hundred huge grinning faces carved into the stonework. Jayavarman's mother is responsible for the construction of another of Angkor's wonders, the temple of Ta Phrom, also known as the Tomb Raider Temple. Everywhere masonry is entwined by jungle vegetation as if it were trying to reclaim the land back from man on nature's behalf.

DESTINATION GUIDE

-  Capital
Hanoi
-  Language
Vietnamese
-  Currency
Dong (VND)
-  Flight time from UK
12hr 30m
-  Time Zone (+/- GMT)
+7 hours



TOUR DATES

6th December 2019 - 20th December 2019	14 Nights
9th January 2020 - 23rd January 2020	14 Nights
14th February 2020 - 28th February 2020	14 Nights
5th March 2020 - 19th March 2020	14 Nights
8th May 2020 - 22nd May 2020	14 Nights
5th June 2020 - 19th June 2020	14 Nights
3rd July 2020 - 17th July 2020	14 Nights
6th August 2020 - 20th August 2020	14 Nights
11th September 2020 - 25th September 2020	14 Nights
15th October 2020 - 29th October 2020	14 Nights
12th November 2020 - 26th November 2020	14 Nights
4th December 2020 - 18th December 2020	14 Nights

TOUR DETAILS

DAY 1 – HANOI

On arrival in Hanoi you will be thrown into the maelstrom of energy and colour which characterises city life in Vietnam. Your Adventura Representative will take you on the forty-five minute journey to the Sofitel Legend Metropole Hotel for prearranged early check-in to your luxury room. After a hot breakfast you can head out on your own to enjoy your first explorations of this thriving capital city.



DAY 2 – HANOI

Today you will take a very different kind of city tour, sitting in a classic Jeep as used by the Soviet and Vietnamese armies in the 1950s and 60s. This is the perfect open-topped vantage point to take in the sights and sounds of the city. You will be taken to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum to view the extraordinary final resting place of the founder of modern Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh was Chairman of the Workers' Party of Vietnam and read the declaration of independence in 1945 which led to statehood for the country. The granite building is modelled on Lenin's tomb in Moscow and the embalmed former leader makes periodic visits to Moscow even now, for his body to be maintained by experts so he is absent from mid-September to mid-December. Please note visitors are obliged to cover their legs and stand silently in pairs (no crossed arms or hands in pockets is permitted) to view the glass sarcophagus.

In the same complex as the mausoleum is the One Pillar Pagoda. Built on a lake in the eleventh century this most unusual structure is designed to look like a lotus flower (the national flower of Vietnam) emerging from a sea of suffering. The water around it is alive with carp. Vietnamese pagodas are much smaller than their better-known Chinese counterparts and local people visit them regularly to pray or to receive blessings, especially those hoping for Buddha's help in conceiving.

The Ethnology Museum will give you an insight into the fifty-four different ethnic groups which each contribute to the incredible cocktail which is Vietnamese culture. Founded specifically not just to celebrate but to preserve the diverse influences which make Vietnamese society what it is. Inside the museum is a bewildering array of artefacts from the different groupings while the outdoor area has a selection of traditional homes including a Viet house and a Tay stilt house.

In the afternoon, you will visit the Temple of Literature on the site of Vietnam's first University. Built a thousand years ago it was intended solely for the learning of princes and very senior officials. It is a stunning example of the best of Vietnamese architecture from the period with stunning ancient courtyards, altars and roofs. If it looks familiar, it's probably because it also appears on the back of a 100,000 Vietnamese dong banknote.

Following your tour of Hanoi, you will enjoy a well-earned chocolate break at Marou Bean and Bar to sample the finest chocolate and pastries in the city. Vietnamese chocolate is quite different from that sold in Britain, Europe or the United States. This is because it is made from the trinitario cocoa bean giving it smells and undertones of liquorice and tobacco. Spend the rest of the day and evening doing some more exploring of your own or relaxing at your comfortable hotel.

DAY 3 – HANOI TO HAI PHONG TO LAN HA BAY

After breakfast at your hotel you will be taken to Hai Phong to board the Heritage Line ship, Ylang, for your overnight cruise. The vessel is beautifully decorated in a mix of Asian and French styles and with only ten spacious suites across two decks you will feel transported to a bygone age of luxury travel. Each suite has floor-to-ceiling doors opening onto a private balcony and filling your quarters with light. There are also spa, yoga and Tai Chi facilities and lessons on board for you to enjoy. Setting off around noon, you will be served your lunch in the dining room on the terrace deck so as to get a proper look at the breathtaking scenery you will pass. Look out for the picturesque lighthouse built by the French more than a century ago.

The Ylang next makes landfall at Southern Cat Ba Island from where you will have a look around the village of Viet Hai. Paved paths wind through all-enveloping tropical forest to the village itself where you can meet and get to know the locals as they go about their daily lives. After re-embarking your captain will find a quiet and relaxing spot to moor overnight and you will be served a sumptuous multi-course dinner before deciding whether to join the crew fishing for squid, get to know some of your fellow passengers over a movie or just lay back and watch the stars while listening to the sounds of the water which surrounds you. This is Lan Ha Bay, a part of the coastline less frequented by tourists and thus more easily enjoyed by you in its natural state.

DAY 4 – LAN HA BAY

When you wake aboard the Ylang enjoy hot drinks and pastries or if you're feeling inspired, join a tai chi session or yoga class. Breakfast can be taken in the dining room or in your suite if you prefer a gentle, private start to the day. The first stop on this leg of the journey is at one of the few remaining local floating fishing villages where you will discover how people live and work on the water as they have for generations. Continue to the shore and travel the short distance along scenic island roads to Cát Bà National Park where a gentle hike will bring you face-to-face with the jungle. Cát Bà National Park is a World Heritage Site founded to help preserve Vietnam's most endangered flora and fauna. Among the thirty-two different species of mammal which live here are most of the world's last white-headed langur or leaf monkey. Only sixty-five of these unusual creatures still exist making it one of the most at-risk species in the world.

While you enjoy your lunch Ylang continues its serene passage through the bay to a secluded cove. The afternoon is free for you to choose from a swim and sunbath on a natural beach or take a kayaking tour. After dinner, learn more about Lan Ha Bay and Halong Bay or simply relax on your private balcony and absorb the natural splendour.

DAY 5 – HAI PHONG TO HANOI TO DANANG TO HOI AN

Your last morning aboard the Ylang will be spent cruising the emerald green waters until you disembark and transfer to the Tuan Chau Pier in Halong Bay, a journey time of about an hour. Now you will take to the skies for a spectacular twenty-five minute seaplane flight over the bay and its countless clusters of towering limestone islands crowned with verdant rainforest. Peter Pan, James Bond and King Kong are among the many cinematic characters whose adventures have unfolded here.

It's time to get back on the road now for the two and a half hour journey to Hanoi Airport from where you will depart for Danang. An hour and twenty minutes later, your Adventura representative will take you on the short journey to The Four Seasons Nam Hai. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.



DAY 6 – HOI AN

A full day to enjoy Hoi An at your leisure.

DAY 7 – HOI AN

As the day begins, you're invited to experience a private yoga lesson on An Bang Beach while the sun's awakening light reveals the beautiful landscape around you.

After breakfast, you will travel to the Cham Museum to meet Mr. Tran Ky Phuong, a journalist, writer and expert on the Cham culture, today considered every bit as important in the history of the region as the Khmer and on a par with Angkor in Cambodia, Borobudur in Indonesia and Bagan in Myanmar. Under his knowledgeable guidance you can explore the labyrinthine My Son temple complex, some buildings of which are seventeen hundred years old. My Son (which translates as "beautiful mountain") is the Vietnamese equivalent of Egypt's Valley of the Kings, having been used as a ceremonial and burial site for Cham royalty from the fourth to the seventeenth century. Its seventy temples are dedicated to Shiva, one of the most important figures in the Hindu pantheon of the gods.

When your visit to My Son is complete you can take in some more of the city as you choose or perhaps relax on the beach. In the evening you will be taken on an adventure in a bamboo basket boat, paddling along the Coco River as the sun sets around you, arriving finally at the beautiful The Field Restaurant to have dinner overlooking the rice paddies and the river, all served beneath a bamboo gazebo on the lake.



DAY 8 – HOI AN

It's time to get on your bike today, heading for Hoi An's Old Town, the peaceful, narrow, winding streets of which are closed to cars. This has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site with its historic buildings dating back hundreds of years. The old town was once a very significant trading post with a multi-national population which explains the presence of Chinese temples, pagodas, a Japanese bridge, locally designed wooden shop/houses, impressive French colonial buildings and canals. From here you will ride to a small village surrounded by towering areca palms to take a break and to taste some delicious grilled seafood and coconut rice paper.

After your break, cross the bridge to the far bank of the Thu Bon River and the village of Dong Binh, renowned for its mat weaving and a carpenters' village where the residents produce unique hand-crafted furniture. A local ferry will take you back to the Old Town and to Tra Que Village, where the speciality is growing vegetables and herbs with dizzy tastes and aromas. You can enjoy these in the company of a local host who will also give you a well-earned foot massage and a gorgeous homemade meal.

After lunch, just rest up or if you're still feeling the urge to discover, return to the Old Town for more exploration.

DAY 9 – HOI AN TO DANANG TO HO CHI MINH CITY

Today you will take a flight to Ho Chi Minh City where your Aventura Representative will meet you to take you to the Park Hyatt Hotel to spend the afternoon as you choose.

In the evening, you will be taken to Café Zoom where you can enjoy a cocktail or aperitif before climbing on the back of a classic, lovingly restored Vespa scooter. Ho Chi Minh City is still known to its inhabitants by its historic name of Saigon and this remarkable ride will take you to numerous of the city's nooks and crannies not so frequently seen by visitors. With a population similar to that of London, half Saigon's inhabitants are under thirty-five and riding pillion on a scooter is one of the best ways to see their world. The city is separated into twenty-four districts, some of which have names but most are known purely by a number. Hence you will start your journey in District 4 amid noisy, energetic, bustling streets and alleyways where you can sample some local seafood dishes. Breathe in this vibrant and fast-growing metropolis as you move to District 3 and District 1 before alighting at a tucked away café where you can enjoy live Vietnamese music. The night's tour reaches its final destination at a lively bar, again with contemporary Vietnamese music before heading back to the hotel at about ten.

DAY 10 – HO CHI MINH CITY

After seeing just how much modern Ho Chi Minh City has to offer it's time to experience something of Vietnam's troubled past. After breakfast at your hotel you will be driven to the pier to board a boat bound for the Cu Chi Tunnels. Dug out entirely by hand by the Viet Minh (Resistance Force) during the French-Indochina War (1946-54), this underground network was expanded and used to great effect during the Vietnam War. Originally 200 kms (125 miles) long and 3-4 metres (10-13 feet) deep this was once a whole underground world with hospitals, barracks and meeting rooms. A visit to the tunnels provides a unique insight into the war from the Vietnamese perspective. The tour* begins with a documentary explaining the conflict and the significance of the tunnels and ends with a taste of what those living underground ate in the darkness; Cu Chi, khoai my luoc (boiled cassava) is a traditional Vietnamese dish that was eaten daily during the war.

* Please note, due to the narrowness of the tunnels, this tour is not recommended for anyone who suffers from claustrophobia.

Returning to the city you will be the guests of two passionate local musical artists, Dinh Linh and Tuyet Mai. They will perform a traditional Vietnamese music concert and be delighted to help you discover and try the many traditional music instruments they own.

DAY 11 – HO CHI MINH CITY

Today you will be taken the short distance from the city centre to Galerie Quynh, Vietnam's leading contemporary art gallery. You will be guided round the exhibits by the gallery's curator who will explain Vietnam's burgeoning art scene and how the gallery supports young and up-and-coming artists. Galerie Quynh started out promoting the country's most ambitious abstract painters but now has a broader remit, also taking in works from foreign artists. The rest of the day is free for you to explore Ho Chi Minh at your own pace.



DAY 12 – HO CHI MINH CITY TO SIEM REAP

Today you will leave Vietnam and take the short flight to Siem Reap in Cambodia where your Aventura Representative will meet you to drive you to your hotel, Phum Baitang.

In the evening, you will be taken to the Divine Sala and welcomed into the garden of this ancient Khmer house, where the Sacred Dancers of Angkor host a performance. Their performance represents over 10 years of devotion and practice to Khmer ballet. They have mastered the repertoire of the Khmer classical ballet with refined precision and perfect synchronisation in accordance with the rhythm and the sacredness of the original divine motions. The money collected from the entrance fees goes directly to support the prestigious Nginn Karet Foundation for Cambodia School (NKFC), supporting the preservation of the traditions of the Khmer Classical Ballet. You're free to make your own arrangements for dinner.

DAY 13 – SIEM REAP

This morning you will be able to watch the sun rise over the archaeological and spiritual spectacle which is Angkor Wat. The sheer size of the temple complex is hard to take in. The best way to see the sprawling mass of buildings is by bike. Weaving through the jungle trails you will discover an abandoned city, once the largest in South East Asia. In the days before the Norman Conquest London was considered a grand city of 50,000 souls; at the same time this was home to more than a million.

First stop is the looming South Gate of Angkor Thom, the great capital of the Khmer Empire. Then it's on to the Bayon temple, widely regarded as one of the most beautiful edifices on the site. This imposing structure was built to demonstrate the glory and worldly power of King Jayavarman VII. It has fifty-four gigantic towers with more than two hundred enigmatic, smiling faces carved into the stone. It was Jayavarman's mother who built the temple of Ta Phrom, also known as the Tomb Raider Temple. The jungle growth appears to be trying to utterly envelope the stonework, the intertwining tendrils and branches struggling to reclaim the land for nature.

While exploring the temples you will have passed by the Srah Srang baray or reservoir which was used as Royal baths during the days of the ancient Khmer Empire. Following a ten-minute walk through the local village, you will come to a charming, traditional Khmer timber house. Here, in perfect tranquillity, you can enjoy your picnic lunch.

After an aperitif in a rice field you can choose to return to your hotel by bike or by car.



DAY 14 – DEPARTURE

On the last day of your trip to Vietnam and Cambodia you will have breakfast at your hotel before taking the fifteen-minute transfer to the airport for your flight home.

ACCOMMODATION

SOFITEL LEGEND METROPOLE, HANOI

Perfectly positioned in the old French Quarter of the city, walking through the doors of the Sofitel Legend Metropole in Hanoi is like stepping back into history. The world's first superstar, Charlie Chaplin, stayed here. Two celebrated works of English literature were written here; "The Quiet American" by Graeme Green and "The Gentleman in the Parlour" by W Somerset Maugham. Opened at the turn of the last century it has been a regular resting place for ambassadors and heads of state. Behind its white facade, there are sixty-four opulent rooms and suites furnished with style and elegance.



Alongside the past there is cutting edge modernity with a well-equipped spa and gym of the highest quality. The cuisine also combines the classical with the ultra-current. Head chef of Le Beaulieu restaurant, Raphael Kinimo, has worked in Michelin-starred and award-winning restaurants around the world and produces sumptuous traditional and new French fare.

Its sister restaurant, the Spices Garden, is under the care of Mrs. Nguyen Thanh Van. The first Vietnamese woman to become a member of the exclusive l'Académie Culinaire de France she has showcased her nation's food around the world.



CRUISE SHIP YLANG

The cruise ship, Ylang, is the newest addition to the Heritage Line's fleet in Lan Ha Bay. The final word in beautiful Asian-Vietnamese design with French Colonial influences, Ylang was hand decorated by local artisans. Each of her ten spacious suites is dedicated to a particular blossom which together tell the story of the unfolding seasons in Vietnam. Accommodation is split over two decks cleverly designed to allow the natural light to flood in through floor-to-ceiling panoramic doors which open onto a private balcony.

This brand new vessel boasts an expansive spa and her team of therapists offers yoga and Tai Chi sessions and lessons on top of a wide range of indulgent treatments including massages, sauna, steam bath, manicures and pedicures.

The terrace deck is the perfect place to relax and admire the stunning scenery or to take a dip in the pool under the shade of the ship's billowing canvas.



THE FOUR SEASONS NAM HAI, HOI AN

Four Seasons Resort, the Nam Hai, is perfectly positioned on Vietnam's unspoilt coastline in easy reach of the ancient heart of Hoi An. All villas are newly renovated and include outdoor showers, terraces, and generous living space indoors and out.



Three infinity pools lie at the centre of the resort with shady palm trees and enviable views of Hoi An's gleaming white sandy beach and the sea. Explore the thirty-five hectares (eighty-six acres) of tropical gardens or take advantage of the serenity of the well-equipped spa.

Three top quality dining venues offer a wide range of food options including new interpretations of Vietnamese classics and tasty morsels from around the world.

PARK HYATT, HO CHI MINH

Perfectly positioned in District 1 in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City and overlooking the Opera House on Lam Son Square, Park Hyatt is a short walk from the city's most popular attractions. French colonial in style, the Park Hyatt hotel is a heady blend of urban luxury with sophisticated design, handcrafted detail and modern-day comfort.

There is a choice of delightful restaurants; Square One specialises in Vietnamese cuisine while Opera is a cosy, warm Italian trattoria.

Guests can enjoy a swimming pool and fitness centre while the spa offers pampering using the most up-to-date equipment and a tempting range of indulgent treatments.



PHUM BAITANG, SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

Phum Baitang literally translates into English as "green village" and is so named because of the beautiful eight hectares (twenty acres) of lush tropical gardens and rice paddies in which it is set. All the villas are built on stilts in the traditional Khmer style using the highest quality materials including wood and bronze. Each is authentic and luxurious and is surrounded by a tropical garden and lemongrass fields.

Twin restaurants, Bay Phsar and Hang Bay, provide elegant cuisine from around the world. Bay Phsar presents a range of exciting Cambodian flavours made from locally sourced ingredients including rice grown in the paddies surrounding the hotel. Hang Bay offers a fusion of international cuisine from the freshest seafood to the finest steaks.

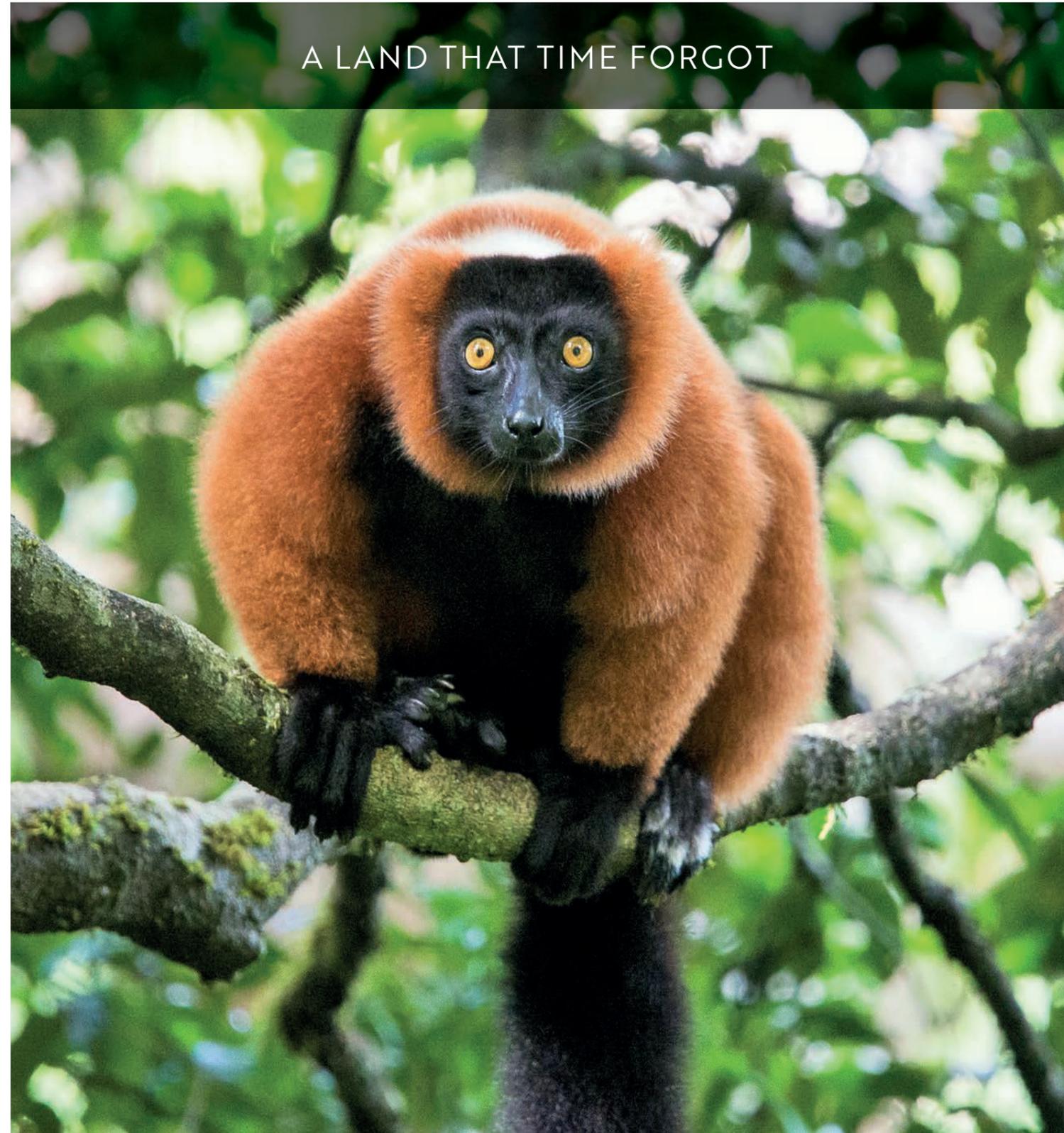
There is a fifty metre infinity pool with bar perfectly positioned for stunning views. The spa has seven treatment rooms, a sauna, steam room and relaxation area, a yoga pavilion and a fully-equipped fitness room.

Relive the comfort of the colonial past in the Cigar & Cocktail Lounge. Installed in a hundred year old farmhouse it is furnished with rattan wing chairs and oriental carpets with a comfortable outdoor terrace.



MADAGASCAR

A LAND THAT TIME FORGOT



FROM £7,279 PER PERSON*

*based on two guests sharing a twin or double room and excluding international flights.

DISCOVER MADAGASCAR

Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world at two and a half times the size of the UK. It is so far from everywhere (three hundred miles off the coast of Africa) that most of its plants and animals are not found anywhere else. It has no creatures symbolic of its neighbouring continent. Instead there are unique orchids and birds, baobab trees and of course, lemurs. Madagascar's natural beauty is also like nowhere else. From the limestone forests of the Tsingys to the spiny tamarind trees to its glorious beaches, this is an otherworldly land without comparison.

Most of the reptiles and amphibians that live here are unique to Madagascar as are half of its birds and, of course, all hundred and seven known lemur species. These remarkable and enchanting creatures vary enormously in size and appearance. The biggest is the indri which grows up to three feet tall and weighs in at up to twenty-two pounds. With its black and white silky fur and tufty ears the indri is often said to look like a teddy bear. During your Madagascar tour with Adventura Travels you may see and hear these adorable creatures, as they sing to each other in the trees of the Andasibe National Park. The smallest lemur is Madame Berthe's mouse lemur which is just four inches long and weighs about an ounce. Fossil evidence shows that the largest lemurs ever to live here in prehistoric times were the size of a gorilla. Lemurs live in family groups called troops, many of which are run by a dominant female. Some come out at night and others are active during the day spending most, in some cases all their time in the trees.

The land itself is as strange and unfamiliar as its animal inhabitants. When you visit Madagascar with Adventura Travels you will go to the Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve and the biggest tsingy forest in the world. Tsingy are great razor-sharp pillars of limestone. The rock was formed at the bottom of a huge lagoon millions of years ago but erosion has turned it into a sea of stone towers. So impenetrable are these that much of the forest remains unexplored and is believed to be home to many species of plants and animals as yet undiscovered by man.

There is an air of prehistory about so much of Madagascar. The Avenue of the Baobabs is like two columns of sentries – towering tree trunks with splayed branches high up above look like arrows shot by a giant straight into the ground. Arab sailors who came here a thousand years ago had another theory, that the devil had ripped the trees out of the ground and replanted them upside down, with the roots high up in the sky. Up to a hundred feet tall and a hundred and sixty feet around the trunk, these monolithic monsters have only recently stood alone, as much of the island was once covered by dense forests of them, since grubbed up and cut down by man.

Madagascar's eighteen hundred miles of coastline comprises beautiful unspoilt beaches. You will visit one of the best if you opt for the extended fourteen day tour and visit the idyll that is the Masoala peninsula. Home to the island's largest remaining area of tropical rainforest, Masoala's beaches stretch for miles and its coral-filled waters offer a rewarding experience for swimmers and snorkelers.

There is much debate about when man first came to Madagascar. It had been believed that the island was first discovered as late as AD 500, although it now seems likely that people came here from Indonesia (across almost five thousand miles of ocean) and later from Africa, about two thousand years ago. Madagascar is a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities with more than twenty distinguishable groups.

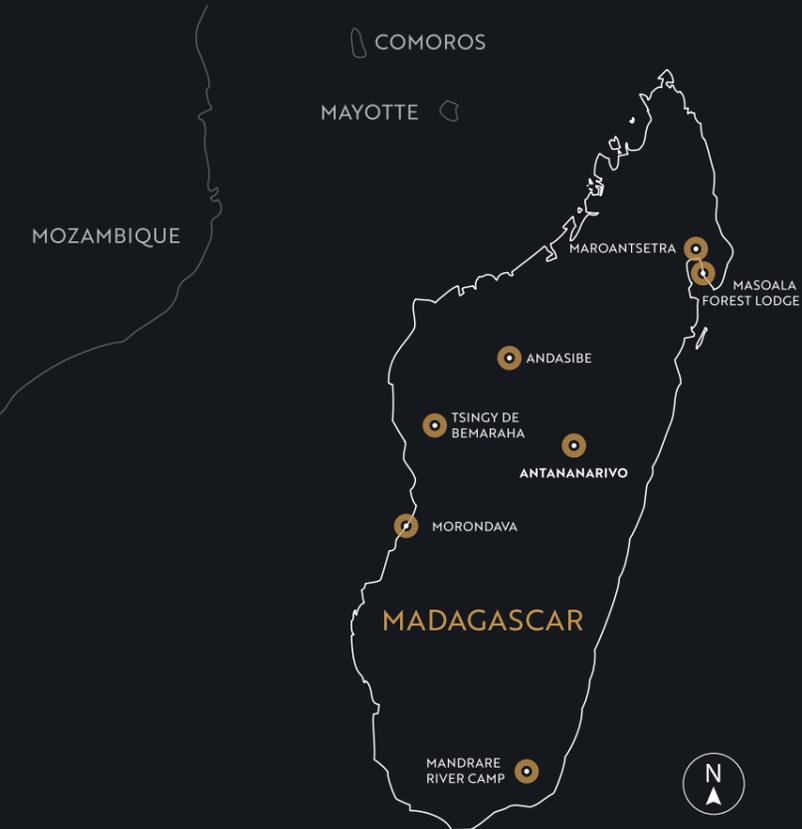
The country's most famous ruler was Queen Ranalova I; whose palace looms over the nation's capital Antananarivo (known as Tana). Ranalova's most unpleasant claim to fame is that she is possibly the most prolific female killer in history. During her thirty-three year reign (1828-1861) half of Madagascar's population, about two and a half million people, were murdered on her orders. Despite her violent methods, Ranalova is a hero to many in Madagascar for the way in which she maintained the nation's independence from the European powers who cast greedy eyes towards her island kingdom.

With such a richly mixed cultural heritage the people of Madagascar indulge in many varied traditions. The most famous, and to European thought incomprehensible, is "famadihana," or the act of celebrating one's ancestors by bringing them out of their tombs (generally once every seven years) and rewrapping the bodies accompanied by singing and general festivity. Some of the most fascinating tombs to be seen in the country are those of the Sakalava people in Morondava, which you will see on your Adventura holiday. Made from wood and beautifully sculpted they are a reminder that ancestor worship is alive and well on this island to this day. Malagasy people have a very strong tradition of observing taboos called fady which can refer to people or places, actions or things. For example, in some parts of the country it is taboo to get into a boat without washing your hands and mouth first and throughout the land it's unacceptable to point at a grave or to eat eels if you're pregnant.

One thing Madagascar's people have in common is that they are warm and welcoming to visitors. Here in one of the poorest countries in the world a smile goes a long way, and you can be assured when you come here that you will feel very much at home in this land so far removed from our own lives.

DESTINATION GUIDE

-  Capital
Antananarivo
-  Language
Malagasy & French
-  Currency
Malagasy Ariary
-  Flight time from UK
14hrs
-  Time Zone (+/- GMT)
+3 hours



TOUR DATES

22nd July - 1st August 2020 10 Nights

28th October - 7th November 2020 10 Nights

TOUR DETAILS

** option to extend to Masoala Forest Lodge for three nights.*

DAY 1 - ANTANANARIVO

Your Aventura Airport Representative will meet you at Ivato International Airport to take you to the Palissandre Hôtel & Spa hotel in the upper town of Antananarivo. The city is known locally as "Tana" and was the capital of the Merina people before the arrival of colonists from Europe. There are strong Indonesian influences here, more so than in the rest of the country. Antananarivo translates as, "City of the thousand" which refers to the soldiers used by the first Merina king to take power here in his conquest of the city. Antananarivo was built from the hillsides downward into the valley, and the great Queen's Palace or Rova dominates the skyline from on high. Once you've had a chance to settle in your guide and driver will help you find a restaurant of your liking in the city centre.

DAY 2 - ANTANANARIVO TO ANDASIBE

After an early breakfast, your guide will drive you east to the glorious rainforest park of Andasibe. En route you will wind your way through the island's high plateau seeing much of traditional rural life as rice fields, redbrick houses and roadside stalls selling seasonal fruits and vegetables line the route. You will arrive at your second hotel, Mantadia Lodge, in time to check in and have lunch.

Andasibe Park is made up of two protected areas, the Perinet Special Reserve and Mantadia National Park and is home to twelve different species of lemurs. This afternoon you will visit the community-run Mitsinjo forest within the park to meet the largest of them, the indri lemur. Madagascar's relative geographical isolation has allowed myriad species of plants and animals which can't be found anywhere else on the planet to thrive here. Even when you don't see the indris you may hear them, especially in the mornings when they sing to each other in the trees. Indris spend their entire lives in the trees and have never been successfully kept alive in captivity; so, this really is the only place in the world you will ever see them.



Later you will be taken for a guided night walk through the VOI MMA community reserve to see more lemur species. There are a host of nocturnal members of the lemur family here including mouse lemur, white-footed sportive lemur, fat-tailed dwarf lemur and the woolly lemur. The reserve is home to more exotic and unique creatures including several chameleons from the two foot long Parson's chameleon to the tiny nose-horned and Brookesia chameleons. Your guide will help you spot these and the plentiful varieties of amphibians and birds which are also unique to this island.

DAY 3 - THE AMAZON

After breakfast, your local guide will take you deep into the Perinet Reserve in search of wildlife. There are 25,000 animal species so far discovered on Madagascar of which three-quarters are endemic. You may find a troop of grey bamboo lemurs, common brown lemur, diademed sifaka or the black and white-ruffed lemur. 287 bird species have been recorded on Madagascar and again, 105 of those are unique to the island with a handful of others are shared only with the neighbouring Comoros Islands. Far too many of these are recognised as endangered or critically endangered so for some of them your visit here could quite literally be a last chance to see them in their natural habitat. Perinet is also home to a host of reptiles, invertebrates, and many of Madagascar's more than a thousand orchid species.



After lunch you will be taken to the lemur rescue centre on the Vakona Lodge private reserve. These animals have all been found sick or injured in some way or have been liberated from captivity after being kept illegally as pets. Some are tame enough to approach visitors or even to jump onto their shoulders. You will also see at close quarters, bamboo lemur, black and white ruffed lemur, brown lemur and diademed sifaka. There will be a night walk tonight in the Mitsinjo forest where you will see Goodman's mouse lemur, Parson's chameleons, Uroplatus geckos and more.

DAY 4 - ANDASIBE (MANTADIA NATIONAL PARK)

Today you will be driven to a different kind of habitat in Mantadia National Park in search of more lemur species in this breathtaking location including the indri, diademed sifaka, grey bamboo lemur, red-bellied lemur and whiteruffed lemur. The trees are taller and more spread out here than at Perinet making it easier to spot some of the many colourful and unusual birds such as the scaly ground roller, the pitta-like ground roller and the breasted coua. You will take your picnic lunch by the beautiful Rianasoa Waterfall, one of several gorgeous waterfalls in Mantadia Park, and then hike back to the vehicle to return to your lodge.

DAY 5 - ANTANANARIVO TO TSINGY DE BEMARAHA

There is an early start this morning in preparation for driving back to Ivato International Airport's private terminal for your short charter flight to Tsingy de Bemaraha. You will be met at Amborondia airstrip by your Aventura Representative for a 4x4 ride to your next hotel, the Le Soleil des Tsingy.

The Tsingy de Bemaraha is a place like no other and is the only single-site UNESCO World Heritage Site in Madagascar. Tsingy is the local word for the other-worldly limestone forest which makes this area so distinctive. Huge areas of rock have been eroded over time both horizontally and vertically leaving countless sharp peaks, narrow sunken canyons and forests making a surreal landscape with an ecosystem all of its own. It is home to eleven kinds of lemur and more than a hundred bird species. On top of that there are fifteen varieties of bat, twenty-two different amphibians and numerous reptiles. This is the largest Tsingy forest on earth and some of the limestone pinnacles are more than two and a half thousand feet tall. You will have the opportunity for a good look round this amazing location after lunch. There are two options here for walkers, the Tantely circuit which is approximately two kilometres long and lasts about an hour or the Andadoany forest trail which is more physically demanding but certainly worth the effort to see such fine views.

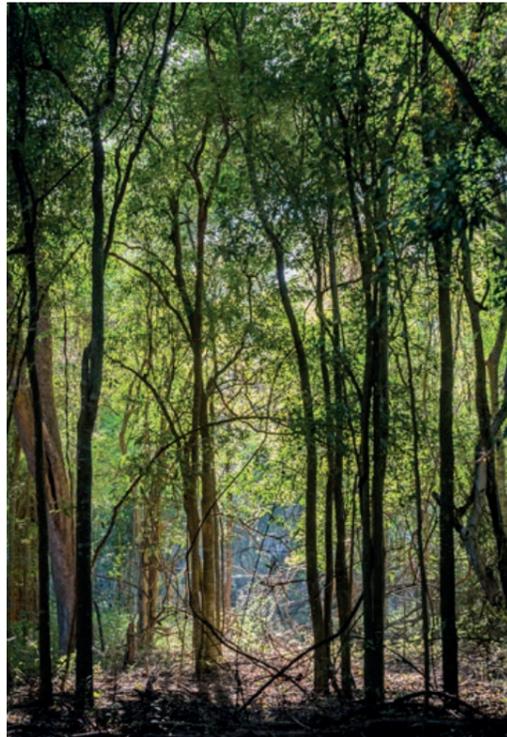
DAY 6 - TSINGY

After breakfast it's time for a full day of adventure on the Grand Tsingy, the part of the park where the peaks are routinely fifty or a hundred metres high. Walk on tiptoe over the razor-sharp roof of the Tsingy, over the high rope bridge and wind your way through scattered areas of dry deciduous forest. Exploring this wild and unfamiliar landscape with its kaleidoscope of creatures and plants brings home precisely why Madagascar is sometimes known as the "eighth continent."

DAY 7 - TSINGY – MORONDAVA

This morning there is a choice of fascinating excursions; you may decide to return to spend more time marvelling at the tsingy or take a trip by dugout canoe to Manambolo gorge to see the tombs of the Vazimba tribe in the cave walls above the river. There is much debate about who the Vazimba were. Traditionally it has been held that they were the first settlers on Madagascar, originating from Indonesia and small of stature, possibly even pygmies. However recent genetic research has raised doubts about this and their tribal story remains shrouded in mystery.

You will be driven to the local airstrip later this morning for the brief flight by private charter to Morondava. Morondava is in the traditional territory of the Sakalava people who are best known for their elaborately sculpted and highly decorated wooden royal tombs. The tombs are covered with images of life and fertility and play an important part in ancestor worship. After lunch you will be taken from your hotel, Palissandre Côte Ouest, for a tour of the city Morondava including a visit to the local market and the Palais du Lambahoany, a famous and generations old cloth shop selling traditional Malagasy clothes. A further short drive takes you to the "Allée des Baobabs" for one of the most spectacular island sunsets. These baobab trees are what remains of the dense tropical forests which once covered much of the island and some are close to three thousand years old.



DAY 8 - MORONDAVA – MANDRARE RIVER CAMP

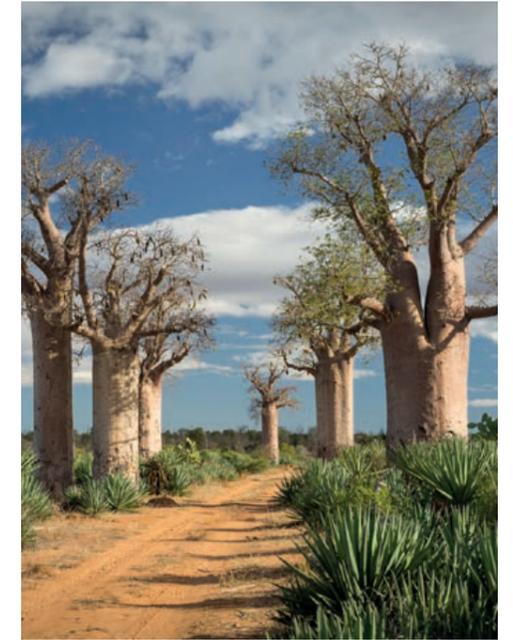
After breakfast you will be driven back to the airport for your private charter flight to Ifatoka where your Aventura Representative will meet you to take you to the Mandrare River Camp. Now is the time to settle into your stunning tent and take in the endlessly fascinating views over the Mandrare River. You will be served a delicious lunch on the river terrace comprising grilled local meats and salads made from fresh Malagasy ingredients. This evening you will go for a night walk in the Forest of Zenavo. Here you can watch the diurnal lemurs bedding down for the night as their nocturnal cousins wake up in this atmospheric, prehistoric spiny forest. At first, you're most likely to see sifakas and sleeping white-foot sportive lemurs. Once the sun has gone down their place is taken by two species of mouse lemur, sleeping birds, chameleons, owls and active sportive lemurs. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.

DAY 9 – MANDRARE RIVER CAMP

After breakfast you will head out to the stunning sacred gallery forest south of the camp. Depending on the depth of the river, you will walk or take a boat across the Mandrare River to reach this largely deciduous forest. Always inquisitive groups of ring-tailed lemurs (the kind upon which King Julian is based in the Disney film, Madagascar) and the always entertaining Verreaux sifaka (the hopping kind of lemur) are not to be missed. You will return to camp for lunch and an afternoon spent relaxing by the pool. In late afternoon, head for a walk through the sacred spiny forest filled with the ancestral tombs of the local Antandroy tribe, as well as an extraordinary array of flora and fauna, unique to the spiny forest. Your Aventura Concierge will bring a local tracker to tell you about Antandroy culture and customs. Your visit is followed by sundowners on the riverbank.

DAY 10 - MANDRARE RIVER CAMP

After a cup of tea or coffee you will head to the Spiny Forest for an early morning walk. Here you can watch the sunlight breaking through the succulent octopus trees. Keep an eye out for some of the many bird species including crested coua, a variety of vangas and the running coua. Then head back to camp for a well-deserved breakfast before visiting the local market or a nearby village to meet the Antandroy people face-to-face. Lunch will be served at the camp followed by a relaxed afternoon watching the life of the river from your tent terrace. In the early evening you will go for a sundowner and dinner among the baobab trees. The sight of the sun being slowly chased from the sky by the moon across the trees to the mountains beyond is never to be forgotten. In the evening the local village may come to perform some of their beautiful traditional dances and songs. Your fabulous bush dinner will be served beneath a five hundred year old baobab tree.



DAY 11 - MANDRARE RIVER CAMP – ANTANANARIVO

If you're going home today you will fly back to Antananarivo by private charter. Your Aventura representative and driver will help you get to where you need to be for your international flight home. If you choose to extend your stay, you will fly back to Antananarivo by private charter to be met by your Aventura representative who will take you to the Relais des Plateaux which is handy for the airport. Check-in for lunch and then take the afternoon to treat yourself to some pampering in the spa or a dip in the gorgeous swimming pool. If you're itching to get out into the city your concierge will be delighted to point you in the direction of the best things to see and do. Dinner tonight will be at the hotel.



DAY 12 - ANTANANARIVO – MAROANTSETRA

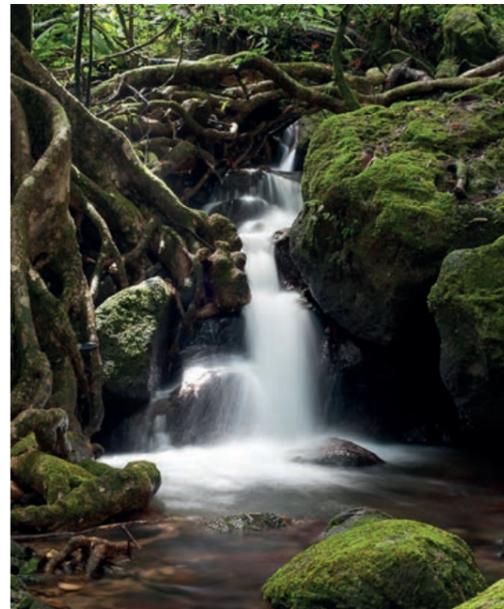
After an early breakfast, it's back to Ivato International Airport for your scheduled charter flight to Maroantsetra in the north-east of the island. The Masoala Peninsula is covered in thick forest and is home to the largest remaining acreage of now protected rainforest in Madagascar. A wealth of rare and often unique species live here, including the red-ruffed lemur which is seen only in Masoala. You will be met on arrival at Maroantsetra Airport and taken to board your boat for the two hour voyage across Antongil Bay to Masoala Forest Lodge. The bay is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and there is a strong possibility that on your journey you will see dolphins and even the humpbacked whales which come here to breed. When you arrive on the wonderful sandy beach you will be given a warm welcome and shown to your thatch and canvas tree house. Once settled in, lunch will be served in the beach house. The afternoon activities include exploring the beaches and coastal forest in the lodge area or enjoying a swim in the sea. Later there will be a guided walk along the coastal path where you may be lucky enough to see white-fronted brown lemurs in the coastal forest. In the evening it will be back to camp for sundowners on the beach before a sumptuous dinner in the beach house.

DAY 13 - MASOALA FOREST LODGE

After a relaxed breakfast on the sea deck there will be a guided walk along the coast and into the primary rainforest in search of the red-ruffed lemurs, dwarf chameleons and the many other extraordinary creatures which make this place their home. This is a fabulous spot for birders. There have been regular sightings of several rare or endangered species including scaly and short-legged ground-rollers and vangas among the hardwoods and soaring tree ferns. A boat will take you back to camp for lunch and a well-earned rest. The afternoon activities could be a snorkel on the nearby coral reefs, rich in diversity, or a guided sea kayak to the look-out rock at the "Secret Cove" for the sun set, with the chance of a close encounter with a bottlenose dolphin or green turtle.

DAY 14 - MASOALA FOREST LODGE

After another relaxed start to your day, depart on a guided walk through the coastal forest, in search of more birds and mammals. Sightings of the incredible scaly and short-legged ground-rollers are regular. Mixed species flocks can contain an incredible diversity of vangas – the islands most celebrated bird family. After a couple of hours walk, take a welcome swim in the crystal clear pools of the Tampolo River at the foot of the forested mountains. Return to camp on a traditional dugout canoe paddling down the shady river. After lunch, enjoy a relaxed afternoon swimming on the private beaches or snorkelling on the coral reefs. In the evening, enjoy a guided nocturnal walk with the intriguing possibility of seeing some of the secretive nocturnal wildlife such as leaf-tailed gecko, mouse lemurs and maybe even the elusive aye-aye.



DAY 15 - MASOALA – MAROANTSETRA – ANTANANARIVO

This morning you head back to Maroantsetra by boat in time for your scheduled charter flight back to Antananarivo. Upon arrival, your Adventura Representative and driver will accompany you to the international terminal for your outbound flight.

ACCOMMODATION

PALISSANDRE HÔTEL AND SPA

The Palissandre Hôtel and Spa is the perfect spot from which to explore Antananarivo, the ancient capital of Madagascar, which was already a thriving urban centre before the arrival of European colonists. Set on a hillside the hotel overlooks the busy Avenue of Independence. Palissandre Hôtel is an elegant and comfortable place to stay, combining modern design with a traditional Malagasy welcome and care for guests.

Each of the forty-six en suite rooms showcases the local rosewood known as palissandre from which the hotel takes its name, and bright, colourful textiles making this at once an exotic and elegant place to stay. The hotel restaurant, La Table des Hautes Terres, has an outdoor terrace with spectacular views and combines traditional local cuisine with fine French à la carte menu dining, while Bar L'Amphore offers cocktails and snacks.



MANTADIA LODGE

Set on the edge of the Andasibe National Park, Mantadia Lodge first opened its doors in 2018. A hundred metres up on top of a hill, the lodge enjoys wonderful panoramic views of the forest below. There are twenty-five well-equipped rooms, each with a terrace, indoor living room and reading area together with a wood-burning stove for the cooler season.

The restaurant has large picture windows making the most of the hotel's delightful aspect and a large lunch terrace. There are two massage rooms and an infinity pool overlooking the beautiful valley below.



LE SOLEIL DES TSINGY

The Soleil des Tsingy is a perfect haven of tranquillity set in its own nature reserve in the Tsingy de Bemeraha National Park on Madagascar's west coast. The park has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1990 in recognition of its remarkable and unusual geography, preserved mangrove forests and the incredibly varied range of lemurs and birds living here. At Soleil des Tsingy there are seventeen extremely generously sized bungalows with private bathroom and terrace. Each bungalow also has large picture windows from which to appreciate this romantic setting. The dramatic views of the landscape and the Manalambo River from the large infinity swimming pool must be seen to be believed, especially at sunrise and sunset.



Food at Soleil des Tsingy is served in an enchanting open-air restaurant and provides a creative mix of European and traditional Malagasy cuisines. The private park is home to more than five thousand varieties of tropical trees and plants and a thriving animal ecosystem.

MANDRARE RIVER CAMP

Mandrare River Camp is a group of seven luxury tents amid a forest of tamarind trees, with stunning views over the tranquil waters of the Mandrare River and the sacred mountains beyond. The sounds of nature are broken only by the faraway singing of local tribes' people at sunrise as they draw water from the river. This is the perfect spot to experience the animals and plant life of the spiny forest. The camp location is home to the Antandroy tribe known as the "people of the thorns".

The furniture in each tent is carved with images of local wildlife. Each tent has its own terrace with heating and lighting supplied by onsite solar power. Dining takes place around hand-carved pallisandre tables bathed in lantern light, accompanied by the call of the birds and forest animals.



RELAIS DES PLATEAUX

The Relais des Plateaux Hotel and Spa sits in a lush green area shaded by magnificent trees. Five minutes from the airport and fifteen from the city, it has all the facilities and services a traveller could expect from an international hotel.

With forty-six well-appointed rooms, this is an excellent stop-off point for the next leg of your exciting journey around this extraordinary island. The Ikambo restaurant and bar is named after the favourite bull of the nineteenth century Queen Ranavalona. The M'Aloe fitness centre and spa offers a host of treatments, massages and therapies to suit every taste.



MASOALA FOREST LODGE

The idyllic seclusion and luxury which is Masoala Forest Lodge can only be approached by boat or on foot, nestles in this rainforest-covered peninsula on Madagascar's northeast coast. The lodge has been carefully designed to be as kind to the natural environment around it as it is to its guests. There is room for only fourteen visitors guaranteeing the privacy and tranquillity in your thatch and canvas tree house this incredible location deserves.



From the comfort of the lodge you can explore the wildlife and beauty of this natural paradise with activities including forest walks, snorkelling, kayaking, traditional pirogues and experiencing sustainable life in the rainforest with the local Malagasy community.



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