

Orchids in The Wild

The OCA goes to MADAGASCAR!

September 17-Oct 6, 2019

Tour led by Madagascar Orchid Experts
Johan and Clare Hermans



One of the most incredible places on earth, Madagascar is THE diversity hotspot with a very high proportion of endemic flora and fauna, including about 950 orchid species.

The tour starts with a meet up in the capital, Antananarivo (Tana). Flights arrive here from Paris, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Mauritius or Nairobi. The itinerary first takes us on the famous Route National 7 towards Tulear, travelling through the picturesque Highlands, via the vast Ranomafana rainforest reserve and ending at the Isalo massif with its amazing rock formations and dry forest. We will return the same route but seeing different habitats. This is followed by two extensive stays in a couple of Eastern forest reserves, rich in orchids and lemurs. Participants should see many different lemurs, chameleons, weird and wonderful insects and a good number of orchids in flower.



WHY WE GO IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER?



September and beginning of October are at the very end of the dry season when everything comes to life, the lemurs start having babies and orchids begin to bloom. Most importantly it enables easier travel and offers pleasant drier weather.

Flowering times depend on several factors but we have seen orchids in flower at this time of year from the following genera:

Aerangis, *Aeranthes*, *Angraecum*, *Benthamia*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Cheirostylis*, *Cymbidiella*, *Cynorkis*, *Eulophia*, *Gastrorchis*, *Jumellea*, *Oeonia* and *Polystachya*. With some

luck we may see *Eulophiella roempleriana* in flower, now one of the rarest of Madagascan orchids. Some of the succulents will also be in flower in the South. Unlike other parts of the world orchids in Madagascar are few and far between so travelling to find them is essential.

This trip will explore Madagascar in relative luxury, with several 4WD vehicles, a driver/guide for each and accommodation in comfortable lodges or hotels with private facilities.



Note that due to limitations in both accommodations and the four wheel drive vehicles, the total number of participants **will be limited to 12**. Due to the demanding physical requirements of the trip, all participants should be in good health and physical condition. **The OCA reserves the right to limit participants due to health or fitness reasons.** Since there is a very limited number of spaces, interested participants should send their deposits to the OCA as soon as possible to reserve a spot on the tour.

PROPOSED ITINERARY (SUBJECT TO SOME MINOR CHANGES)

Day 1 Arrive in the capital Antananarivo. Overnight at the five star Carlton Hotel in Antananarivo.

Day 2 Drive to Ambositra, a Highland town specialising in wood carving. Overnight in Ambositra.

Day 3 Drive to Ranomafana with roadside orchids stops including *Cynorkis lowiana*. Overnight at Setam Lodge, overlooking the forest.

Day 4 Walk in Ranomafana National Park, home to 12 species of lemur including Red Fronted Brown lemur and Milne-Edwards Sifaka the most commonly seen, numerous endemic birds and several terrestrial and epiphytic orchids. Nightwalk to see nocturnal lemurs and chameleons. Overnight at Setam Lodge.

Day 5 Walk in different part of Ranomafana National Park, visit to private reserve. Overnight at Setam Lodge.

PROPOSED ITINERARY CONTINUED

Day 6 Drive to Tsaranoro in the foothills of the Andringitra Massif, stopping at Ambalavao the centre for Antaimoro paper-making. Overnight Tsara camp.

Day 7 Morning walk in Tsaranoro, home of the Ringtail Lemurs. Drive to Ranohira. Overnight Le Jardin du Roy, within the Isalo sandstone mountains.

Day 8 Exploring Isalo National Park, spectacular rock formations with succulent plants including flowering *Pachypodiums* and *Eulophia*. Overnight Le Jardin du Roy.

Day 9 Day trip to Sakaraha to visit Zombitse National Park, at the junction of the western and southern vegetation zones where *Aerangis stylosa* and other orchids may be in flower. On the way see the Sapphire town of Ilakaka and the iconic *Bismarckia* Palms. Overnight Le Jardin du Roy.

Day 10 Drive to Fianarantsoa, the second main city of the Highlands. Overnight Fianarantsoa.

Day 11 Drive to Antsirabe. Overnight in Couleur Cafe Hotel.

Day 12 Drive to Andasibe with stops for roadside orchids and the Mandraka 'Madagascar Exotic' to see reptiles and invertebrates including Chameleons. Overnight Eulophiella Lodge with its own private reserve.

Day 13 Visit Iaroka Reserve to see Eastern forest fauna and flora, including *Eulophiella roempleriana* hopefully in flower and one of the few remaining plants in the area. Overnight Eulophiella Lodge.



Day 14 Visit Vohimana Reserve, part of which is a *Pandanus* forest, then drive on to the nearby Vakona Lodge. Night Walk. Overnight Vakona Lodge at the edge of the forest.

Day 15 Visit Mantadia National Park, lemurs include Diademed Sifaka, orchids should include, *Angraecum lecomtei*, *Aeranthes schlechteri*, several *Cynorkis* etc. Overnight Vakona Lodge.

Day 16 Visit Mitsinjo &/or Analamazaotra National Park, home of the iconic Indri and 10 other species of lemur and 100 birds and orchids. Visit to Lemur Island. Overnight Vakona Lodge.

Day 17 Drive to Anjozorobe. Overnight Saha Forest Camp within the forest.

Day 18 Walk in Anjozorobe reserve from the Camp, home to 11 lemurs, 80 bird species and orchids. Overnight Saha Forest Camp.

Day 19 Morning walk in Anjozorobe and then drive to Carlton Hotel in Antananarivo. Farewell supper at Grill du Rova.

Day 20 Antananarivo, tour of the city, or other, depending on return flights. To airport for return flights.





Level of Activity and Accommodation

Walks in the reserves generally take 3 to 4 hours on a variety of paths, some slippery and narrow, others easy and flat but some can be climbing and the order of the walks may change. A few treks are more difficult but these will

be optional. In general a good fitness level and open mind will be required.

Car journeys will be a maximum of six to seven hours but most of the time these are followed by a few days in one locality. The roads are very variable in condition and can deteriorate during the February cyclone season so timings can only be approximate.

Travel will be in 4WDs which are essential to access several of the reserves via rough tracks. The vehicles, such as Toyota Land Cruiser, will be functional rather than luxurious. Each vehicle will have a driver/guide; the majority will be English speaking. We are aiming for a maximum of 4 people per vehicle, including the driver/guide and a maximum of 12 participants including Johan and Clare. Local guides generally speak some English.

Average daytime temperatures will range from 77°F in the Highlands to 86°F in Isalo and the evenings can be cool. Some rain can always be expected, especially in the rainforest.

Accommodation will be in comfortable, often chalet style, hotels and camps and porters will be available. Generally you will eat well, the style of the food in most of the hotels is French inspired but Chinese is also

Key Dates

Dec 1, 2018

Deposit (\$500 per person) due. However, due to the limited numbers, to ensure a spot, you are advised to get your deposit in as soon as possible! International travelers, contact Mary for Bank Transfer info.

Feb 1, 2019

Balance of trip costs due. Refund of deposit can not be made after this date

September 17, 2019

Plan to arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar

October 6, 2019

End of tour. Participants may either fly home or continue on own tour.

Point of contact

Mary Gerritsen, OCA tour coordinator
mary@orchidconservationalliance.org

Checks should be made payable to the OCA and mailed to:

Mary Gerritsen
 541 Parrott Drive
 San Mateo, CA 94402

Our Tour Leaders

JOHAN AND CLARE
 HERMANS

Johan and Clare Hermans

have been studying the orchid flora of Madagascar since 1990 and have travelled there extensively during 15 field trips. Johan is an Honorary Research Associate of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and they are both Research Fellows of the University of Vienna. They have written many articles and several books on the orchids of Madagascar, the latest the 'Field Guide to the Orchids of Madagascar' published by Kew.





common. The local diet is rice without much meat. Vegetarians can be catered for but beware, there is likely to be a very limited choice in several of the Hotels.

Please remember that Madagascar is a poor developing country and roads, utilities and other facilities can be challenging. The Island has the full range of tropical diseases, including the occasional outbreak of plague; it is also a high risk malarial area so anti-malarials are strongly advised.

Immunizations and precautions will be required, please check with your physician to determine what you will need. There is a very variable standard of health services so it is best to bring enough of your own normal medications to last the trip.

There are no poisonous snakes on the island but there are a variety of biting insects, leeches and other irritants as part of the Madagascar experience. All

participants are required to have full Medical Travel Insurance including an Evacuation Policy (a minimum of \$50,000 value recommended). A suggested packing list will be sent to participants prior to the trip.

Included:

- Accommodation at all hotels mentioned in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified (basically full board throughout except in Antananarivo).
- Vehicle, driver / guide and gas throughout the tour, with individual 4WD vehicles.
- Taxes, Tolls and Entrance fee and guided walks at all parks/ reserves in the itinerary.

Not included:

- Alcoholic Drinks and beverages
- Tips
- International flights. Participants to make own flight arrangements
- Madagascar Entry visas (currently around 30 Euros per person). Most nationalities can get visa upon entry to the country (airport) but check with your authorities.

This should be a wonderful introduction to Madagascar and its orchids.

If desired, participants can make their own arrangements for pre- or post tour trips to other parts of Madagascar, South Africa and elsewhere.

Tour Costs

Double Occupancy (shared accommodation) \$4000

Single Occupancy \$4500

If you would like to have a room mate to reduce costs please let us know, and we will do our best to accommodate.

To ensure a spot on the tour, submit your \$500 deposit as soon as possible. Due to the transportation and hotel limitations, the number of participants will be strictly limited.

