



Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte
Explore Magical Madagascar and the
Spectacular Seychelles Islands:
A Journey Across the World's Most
Unique Ecosystems



August 22nd - September 2nd, 2026

Optional 5-day extension to the Seychelles (September 2-6th, 2026)

All accommodations, all breakfasts, five (5) lunches, and six (6) dinners are included in the cost of the trip.

Stay in one of the only 5-star resorts in Madagascar while you enjoy the infamous Île Sainte-Marie, an island off the East Coast of Madagascar. Additionally, stay in one of the best 5-star resorts while enjoying the island of Mahé, Seychelles.

Prices for the trip and the extension can be found on Page 18.

Due to it being the optimal time to visit Madagascar and the Seychelles Islands, and to limited available lodgings on the islands, we are required to have travelers submit a non-refundable \$3,500 deposit/per person by April 15th.

Full nonrefundable payment is due as soon as possible but the final date is June 1st, 2026.

Space is limited, and deposits are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. We will continue to accept deposits as long as space is available on the trip. Contact Byrd Bergeron at The Travel Byrds for airfare quotes at byrd@travelbyrds.com. We do have a group block available with all fees and taxes included. Info provided on pages 18-19.

Please contact Madison NeeSmith at the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via mneesmit@charlotte.edu or call 704-687-7758 if you have any questions or require additional information about the trip.

Why Travel to Madagascar??

1. One-of-a-Kind Flora and Fauna: Madagascar, the fourth largest island at roughly 2.5 times larger than Great Britain, is one of the world's most unique ecosystems, with more than 85% of its wildlife found nowhere else on Earth! Here, you'll find lemurs, alongside unique predators like the fossa and an exceptional variety of chameleons, frogs, and other reptiles. Witness massive baobab trees and a vast array of endemic plants, including orchids, palms, and the iconic Madagascar periwinkle alongside, the dense, lush rainforests. This mix of long isolation, diverse habitats, and evolutionary history makes Madagascar's biodiversity both globally important and highly vulnerable.

2. Peak Lemur Breeding Season: Traveling in late August and early September, you'll experience the arrival of young baby lemurs in the rainforests. Madagascar is famous for its lemurs, with over 100 species and subspecies found nowhere else on Earth. Our plan is to see as many as possible! In the rainforests of Andasibe–Mantadia, travelers will encounter both diurnal and nocturnal lemur species, from active daytime sightings to guided evening walks that reveal Madagascar's rare and elusive nocturnal wildlife. These immersive experiences, combined with expert guides and small-group access, create intimate, once-in-a-lifetime moments in one of the most biodiverse environments on Earth.

3. Peak Humpback Whale Migration: This journey is thoughtfully designed to showcase Madagascar's most remarkable wildlife at the ideal time of year. Traveling during peak humpback whale season (August through early September), guests will have the opportunity to witness these magnificent creatures breaching and playing just off the shores of Sainte Marie, one of the best locations in the world for close, unforgettable sightings.

4. Rich Culture & Heritage: This journey immerses travelers in Madagascar's vibrant and diverse cultural heritage, shaped by centuries of migration and influence. Originally settled by Indonesian seafarers arriving by outrigger canoes and early East African communities, the island later experienced Portuguese arrival in the late 15th century and subsequent French colonization before gaining independence in the mid-20th century. Travelers will explore the capital of Antananarivo, visit local villages, and enjoy authentic shopping experiences along the way—browsing handcrafted goods, practicing bargaining skills, and discovering unique jewelry and artisan pieces.

5. Distinctive Cuisine & Culinary Experiences: Malagasy cuisine emphasizes fresh, local ingredients and traditional flavors. Guests will enjoy breakfast each morning at their accommodations, five included lunches, and joyous welcome and farewell dinners. From tropical fruits and freshly caught seafood to island spices and local specialties, each meal reflects Madagascar's culinary heritage.

Day 1: Saturday, August 22nd, 2026

Charlotte/Tana

Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport from Charlotte to Antananarivo (Ivato Airport), where you will arrive the next day (overnight flight). **Time-appropriate meals and in-flight services will be provided.**

Day 2: Sunday, August 23rd, 2026

Tana

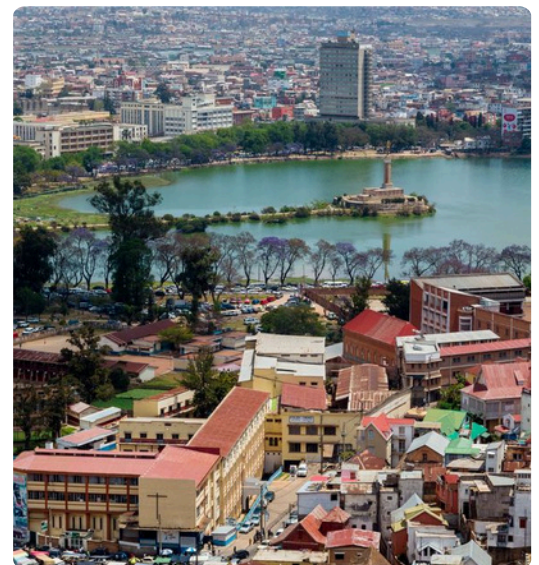
Welcome to Antananarivo (Tana), the capital of Madagascar!

After clearing customs, immigration formalities, and collecting your luggage, please proceed to the ARRIVALS HALL where you will be met by your Tour Manager and transfer as a group to your hotel, **Novotel**, a modern, upscale hotel in the capital offering spacious, contemporary rooms, a full-service spa, and a popular rooftop bar with panoramic city views.

The official name, Antananarivo, comes from Malagasy and means “**City of a Thousand**,” likely referring to a thousand soldiers stationed there by a Merina king when it became a royal stronghold. Because “Antananarivo” is long and tricky for many visitors to pronounce, locals and travelers use the shortened nickname “Tana” in everyday conversation.

Enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure before meeting up with your group for a Welcome Dinner.

- **Welcome dinner Included**
- **Overnight at Novotel**



Breakfast is included at the hotel.

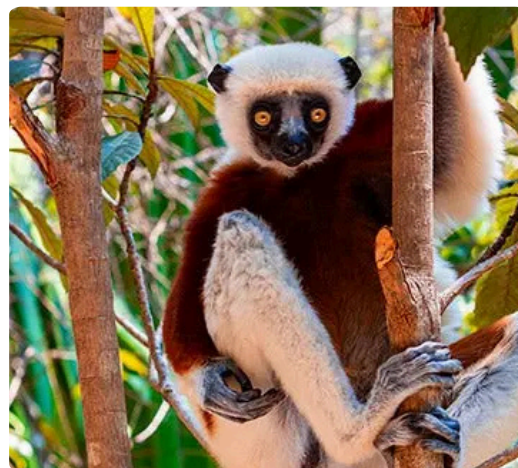
After breakfast, you'll depart to Andasibe on a drive through the green and luxuriant vegetation of the east. Along the way you will see Merina villages in the rocky mountains. The drive will take a total of 5 hours.

On the way to Andasibe, we will stop at the reptile park and visit the **Peyrieras Reserve** in Marozevo, on the way to Andasibe National Park. It offers a wonderful introduction to Madagascar's fauna with its many endemic species.

Peyrieras Reserve (Madagascar Exotic) is a small, privately run reptile and wildlife reserve. It's an easy, educational stop where guests are guided through walk-through enclosures to see an impressive variety of chameleons, geckos, frogs, insects, snakes, and a few lemurs at a very close range. Fun fact: The island is home to half of the world's chameleon species, including the tiny Nosy Hara leaf chameleon.

This is ideal for photography and for getting familiar with Madagascar's unique species before searching for them in the wild. Afterwards, we will have a picnic lunch along the way and then, arrive to Andasibe to relax in the hotel.

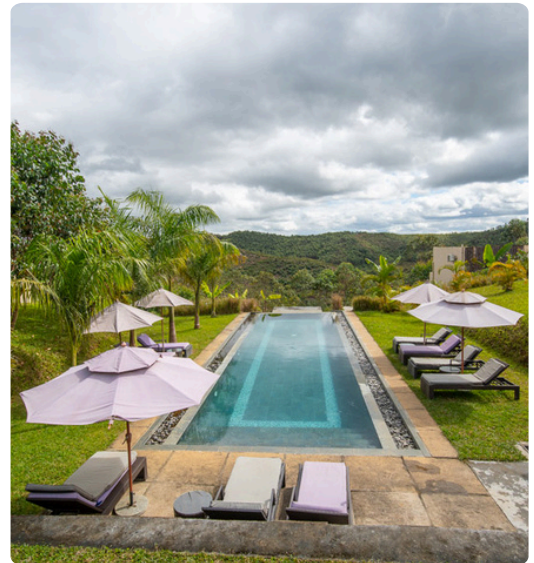
Mantadia Lodge is a contemporary hilltop lodge overlooking the rainforest near Andasibe–Mantadia National Park, designed to give guests sweeping views and easy access to the area's famous lemurs and other wildlife. Its stone bungalows and suites are modern and comfortable, each with a private terrace and large windows so you can wake to mist over the forest and the calls of indri in the distance.



The main lodge features a panoramic restaurant and bar, an infinity pool facing the valley, and a small spa offering treatments with locally inspired products, creating a peaceful base between guided walks in the parks. Cuisine combines Malagasy and European influences, and the overall feel is stylish yet relaxed—ideal for travelers who want both immersion in nature and a higher standard of comfort than is typical in this remote region.

Enjoy an independent evening and Dinner.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Picnic lunch included**
- **Independent dinner**
- **Overnight at Mantadia Lodge**



Day 4: Tuesday, August 25th, 2026

Andasibe

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

This morning, you will visit the national park followed by a visit to the Vakona reserve including Lemur Island. Here lemurs are hospitable and you will get the chance to meet some face-to-face!

Andasibe–Mantadia National Park is one of Madagascar’s most accessible and rewarding rainforests. It protects lush, misty evergreen forest rich in tree ferns, orchids, lianas, and mosses, and is famous as the best place to see and hear the indri, the largest living lemur, whose haunting calls echo through the forest at dawn.



The park actually has two main sections: Analamazaotra (often just called Andasibe or Perinet), with well-established trails and easier wildlife viewing, and the wilder Mantadia sector with older, taller forest and fewer visitors. Travelers come for guided day and night walks to look for multiple lemur species, colorful chameleons and frogs, and a huge variety of endemic birds, making it a top wildlife highlight on most Madagascar itineraries.

Next, we will visit lemur Island, also known as Vakona, which is a small private islet near Andasibe where semi-tame lemurs live in a contained, forested setting surrounded by water. Guests usually reach it by a short canoe ride and then walk along easy paths as curious brown, bamboo, and ruffed lemurs jump close by, often approaching people for food and photos—creating a very up-close, interactive experience that feels more like a soft, controlled introduction to lemurs than a true wild encounter.

Once the group returns, enjoy an independent evening and dinner.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Independent dinner**
- **Overnight at Mantadia Lodge**



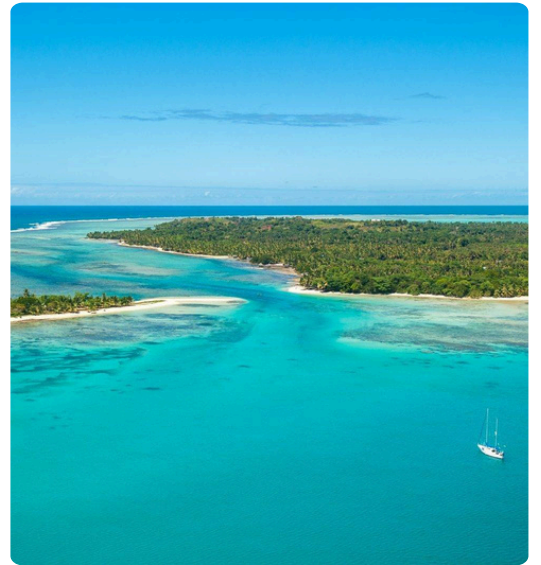
Day 5: Wednesday, August 26th, 2026

Tana/Île Sainte-Marie

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

After breakfast, the group will depart back to Tana.

Then, you will take a domestic flight to the island of Sainte Marie. Exclusive **Île Sainte-Marie** (Nosy Boraha) is a long, narrow tropical island off Madagascar’s northeast coast, known for its palm-fringed white-sand beaches, turquoise lagoons, and relaxed fishing-village atmosphere. Sometimes called the “Garden Island,” it has lush vegetation, small coves, and coral reefs ideal for snorkeling and diving, plus a fascinating pirate history and old colonial churches that give it a quietly romantic, slightly time-capsule feel.



From June to September, it is also one of the best places in Madagascar to see humpback whales on their migration!

Your transfer will meet you at the airport and take you to the luxurious tropical paradise, Voaara.

Voaara is an intimate barefoot-luxury beach lodge, set between 100 acres of lush jungle and over a kilometer of pristine white-sand beach on the island’s northwest coast. It blends rustic natural materials and open-air design with high-end comfort, so guests step straight from their terrace onto the sand and fall asleep to the sound of the Indian Ocean.



Guests can be as active or laid-back as they like, with snorkeling on the house reef, paddleboarding, yoga, biking, diving, whale-watching, and “castaway” beach picnics all available.



- **All meals and non alcoholic drinks are covered while at Voara**
- **Domestic Flights Included**
- **Overnight Voara (3 Nights)**

**Day 6-7: Thursday-Friday,
August 27-28th, 2026**

Île Sainte-Marie

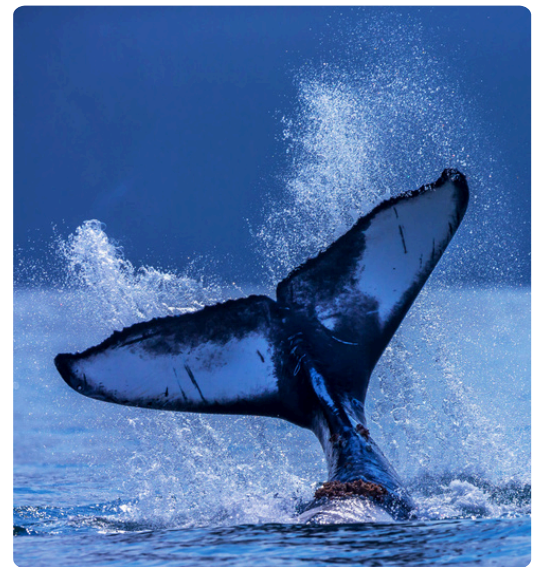
We will spend two full days enjoying the resort. All of your meals and non-alcohol beverages are available during this time as well as many complimentary activities listed below.

The resort will provide guides for the activities so if several of you want to book a paid activity in advance, just let us know!

Complimentary activities offered:

- **Snorkeling:** Explore the vibrant marine life of our house reef in crystal-clear waters
- **Yoga:** Enhance your physical, mental, and spiritual health
- **Standup Paddle:** Enjoy standup paddle boarding in calm, clear waters
- **Surfing:** Direct access next to our main beach. Perfect for beginners to learn
- **Mountain Biking:** Explore the island's scenic trails with our mountain bike
- **Outdoor Cinema:** Lay back, relax and catch a flick under the stars in our outdoor cinema
- **Stargazing:** Experience stargazing from our exclusive bird's nest perch
- **Hiking:** Explore the amazing nature and beaches surrounding the resort

*Additionally activities available at the resort



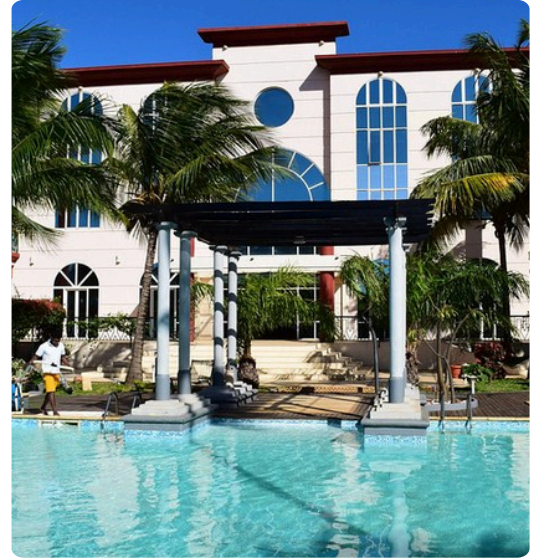
Day 8: Saturday, August 29th, 2026

**Île Sainte-Marie/
Antsiranana**

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

After breakfast, you will depart Île Sainte-Marie for Antsiranana. You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel to check-in.

Le Grand Hôtel Diego is a centrally located hotel set in a prominent former colonial-style building, right in the town's commercial heart. It has the feel of a business-friendly city hotel with resort touches, thanks to a large outdoor pool, surrounding garden terrace, and a full-service spa offering massages and beauty treatments.



- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Independent dinner**
- **Domestic flights included**
- **Overnight at Grand Hotel**

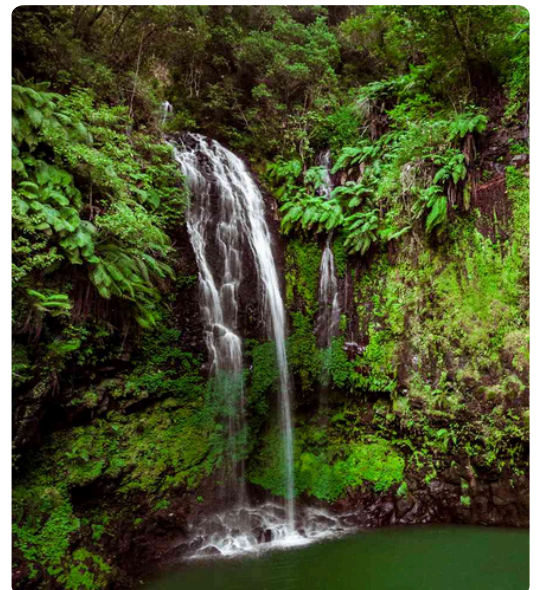
Day 9: Sunday, August 30th, 2026

Antsiranana

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Today, we will visit Amber Mountain National Park and Tsingy Rouge to experience some truly otherworldly landscapes.

Amber Mountain National Park (Montagne d'Ambre) is a cool, misty rainforest oasis in Madagascar's far north, set on a volcanic massif rising above the surrounding dry plains. The park is known for its lush evergreen forest, fern-lined trails, crater lakes, and a series of beautiful waterfalls, all fed by regular rainfall that also supplies water to nearby Diego Suarez.



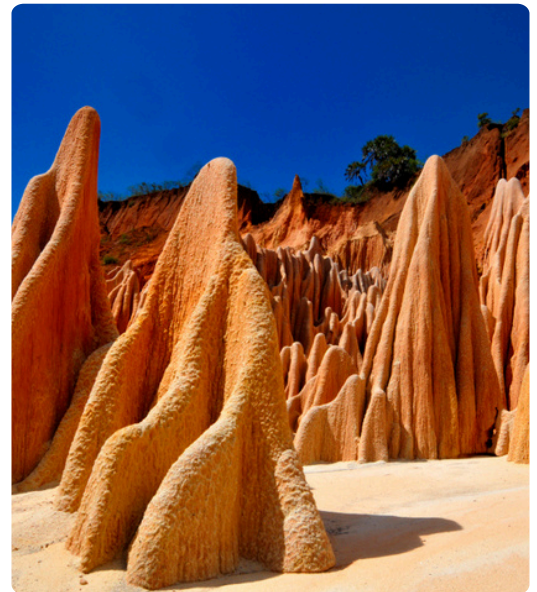
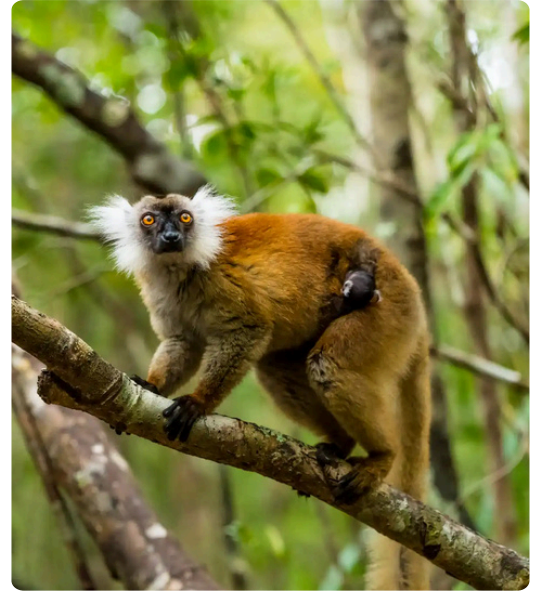
It is one of Madagascar's oldest national parks and a hotspot for endemic wildlife, with multiple lemur species (including crowned and Sanford's brown lemurs), tiny leaf-tailed geckos, chameleons such as the miniature Brookesia, frogs, and a rich birdlife. Many bird species found in Madagascar are not found anywhere else in the world including the Madagascar Fish Eagle and the Madagascar Pochard, a critically endangered diving duck, rediscovered in 2006 after being thought extinct!

Well-maintained walking circuits of varying lengths make it accessible to most travelers, offering rewarding guided hikes where you can combine scenery—lakes, viewpoints, waterfalls—with close-up encounters with the park's unique flora and fauna.

After stopping for an independent lunch, we will visit Tsingy Rouge (Red Tsingy), which is a striking red-and-orange "forest" of eroded sandstone and laterite spires in northern Madagascar, a couple of hours' drive from Diego Suarez. The formations were carved over time by rain, wind, and the Irodo River, creating fragile, cathedral-like pinnacles and gullies that glow different shades of red in the changing light; visitors follow marked paths down into a natural amphitheater of these sculpted shapes, making it a highly photogenic half-day excursion often combined with nearby Amber Mountain or Ankarana.

After your excursion, you will arrive back at the hotel for an independent evening.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Lunch included**
- **Independent dinner**
- **Overnight at Grand Hotel**



Day 10: Monday, August 31st, 2026

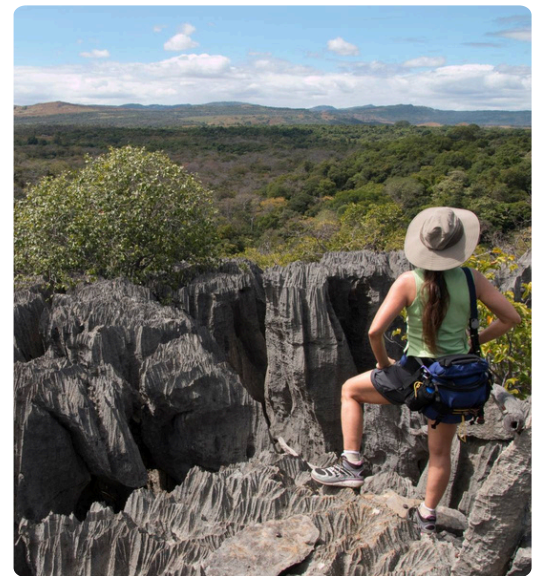
Antsiranana

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Today, you will enjoy an early morning as we travel to **Ankarana**, about 4 hours from Joffre. Here, you will discover the beauty of the National park. Afterwards, the group will return back to the hotel for an independent evening of shopping, exploring, and wonderful food!

Ankarana National Park (Ankarana Special Reserve) in northern Madagascar is a dramatic limestone karst landscape of sharp grey tsingy pinnacles, deep canyons, caves, and underground rivers, lying just off the RN6 between Diego Suarez and Ambilobe. Dense dry forest and canyon forest cloak the massif, sheltering rich wildlife including around 10 species of lemur (notably crowned lemurs), fossas, dozens of reptiles and amphibians, bats in the caves, and many endemic birds, while trails and suspension bridges lead visitors across the tsingy, into bat-filled grottos, and to hidden green pools for some of Madagascar's most adventurous hiking.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Lunch included**
- **Independent dinner**
- **Overnight at Grand Hotel**



Day 11: Tuesday, September 1st, 2026

Tana

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport back to Antananarivo (Tana). You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel where you previously stayed, Novotel.

Check-in at your hotel.



If you didn't get to enjoy their full-service spa, popular rooftop bar, or panoramic city views, this is the perfect time.

The group will have a wonderful farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Farewell dinner included**
- **Domestic flight included**
- **Overnight at Novotel**



Day 12: Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026

Tana

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport to head home!

Optional 5-Day Extension to the Seychelles Islands

Why Travel to the Seychelles??

1. Unique Biodiversity: The islands' extraordinary ecosystems shine at sites like **Vallée de Mai, a UNESCO-listed palm forest** harboring the rare coco de mer tree and endemic species such as Seychelles black parrots and chameleons. Easy trails through ancient, lush forests provide intimate wildlife encounters in a living evolutionary relic unmatched elsewhere.

2. Thriving Marine Life: Seychelles' coral reefs burst with vibrant sea creatures including turtles, rays, and colorful fish, ideal for snorkeling, diving, and kayaking around granite outcrops. PADI centers and protected marine parks make it a top destination for underwater exploration amid crystal-clear Indian Ocean waters.

3. Culture and Cuisine: The Seychelles boasts a vibrant culture shaped by diverse influences. Moutya, a traditional dance with African roots, stands alongside the lively rhythms of Sega. Seychellois cuisine blends African, French, Indian, and Chinese flavors, with dishes like Ladob and shark curry. Society is largely matriarchal, with women playing a central role in family and community life, and a strong emphasis on togetherness seen in gatherings and celebrations. These elements offer a glimpse into the harmonious blend of traditions that define the islands' identity.

4. Stunning Beaches: Seychelles boasts some of the world's most breathtaking beaches, where powdery white sands meet turquoise lagoons framed by dramatic granite boulders. These pristine shores offer calm, reef-sheltered waters perfect for swimming and snorkeling, delivering an idyllic tropical escape that blends luxury with raw natural beauty.

5. Unique Destination for Shopping: Amidst the backdrop of lush tropical greenery and cerulean waters, the shopping offers an eclectic mix of colorful local markets, exclusive boutiques, and quaint shops that reflect the islands' multifaceted culture and history. From the vibrant Victoria Market in the nation's capital to the sophisticated Eden Plaza, they have exquisite handicrafts, handmade jewelry, batik clothing, and art installations showcasing Seychellois talent. Specialty items unique to Seychelles, such as the renowned Coco-de-mer nut, make for special souvenirs. Shopping in Seychelles offers a blend of traditional market culture and exclusive boutiques, reflecting the islands' diverse culture and economy. From local artisan crafts to luxury items, the shopping experience caters to a variety of tastes and preferences, offering a window into the soul of the islands.

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport to fly to our next magnificent island experience, Mahé, Seychelles. Your transfer will be waiting upon your arrival to take you to your hotel.

Kempinski Seychelles Resort is a 5-star beachfront retreat set on the white sands of Baie Lazare in southwest Mahé, framed by tropical forested mountains and the turquoise Indian Ocean. Its low-rise, plantation-style buildings and lush gardens create a relaxed yet refined atmosphere.

Guests have direct access to a long, sheltered beach protected by an offshore reef, a large lagoon-style pool, a spa and 24-hour gym, and a wide choice of activities including yoga, hiking trails, tennis, padel, kayaking, diving, and snorkeling. Dining spans casual buffets to fine dining with Creole flavors and seafood at several restaurants and bars. There is also a kids' club and family-friendly facilities available.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Independent Dinner**
- **International flight to the Seychelles included**
- **Overnight at Kempinski Seychelles Resort**



Day 13: Thursday, September 3rd 2026

Mahé, Seychelles

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

The first day on the resort will be spent relaxing and enjoying the resorts many activities. Water-based options include complimentary snorkeling with provided gear, kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and access to a PADI dive center for scuba diving or surfing lessons (fees apply for some). Land pursuits feature two floodlit tennis courts, padel, beach volleyball, hiking trails through tropical forests, cycling, bocce ball, soccer, and daily aquagym sessions in the 50m pool. Wellness activities encompass hilltop yoga and Pilates classes, plus a 24-hour gym and full-service spa with treatments like the Coco de Mer Journey.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Independent Dinner**
- **Overnight at Kempinski Seychelles Resort**



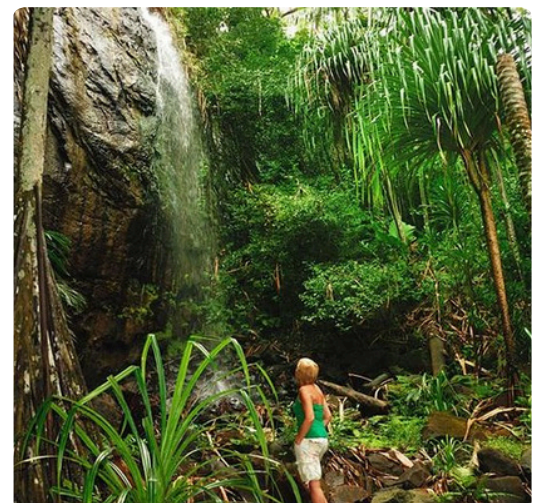
Day 14: Friday, September 4th 2026

Mahé, Seychelles

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Today, we will take a boat to visit **Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve**, an **UNESCO World Heritage** Site preserving one of the last intact prehistoric palm forests.

You'll take a boat to **Praslin Island** and enjoy a guided visit to the reserve. Towering coco de mer palms, bearing the world's largest seeds, dominate the dense canopy alongside five other endemic palm species, pandanus, and broadleaf trees, creating dappled sunlight filtering through fronds in shades of green, red, and brown.



Well-marked trails wind through this 19.5-hectare "Garden of Eden," offering easy walks for spotting rare birds like the Seychelles black parrot, unique reptiles such as chameleons and skinks, and the thrill of discovering fallen double-lobed nuts, all while interpretive signs reveal the site's evolutionary wonders and fragile ecosystem.

The serene atmosphere evokes millions of years of isolation, with no other Indian Ocean island matching this pristine blend of biodiversity and natural beauty.

Afterwards, you will return back for an independent evening and dinner.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Independent Dinner**
- **Overnight at Kempinski Seychelles Resort**



Day 15: Saturday, September 5th 2026

Mahé, Seychelles

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Today we will enjoy our last full day at the resort and wrap up the incredible experience with a farewell dinner with the group.

- **Breakfast included**
- **Independent lunch**
- **Dinner included**
- **Overnight at Kempinski Seychelles Resort**

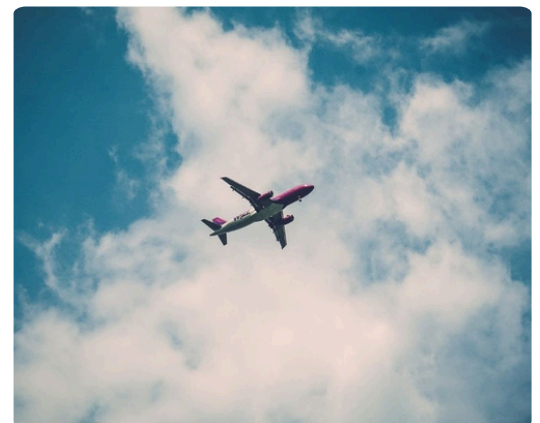


Day 16: Sunday, September 6th 2026

Mahé, Seychelles

Breakfast is included at the hotel.

Transfer to the airport to head home!



LAND-ONLY PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY*

Single occupancy rate available for \$3,010

All accommodations, all breakfasts, five (5) lunches, and six (6) dinners are included in the cost of the trip. All park entrance fees, transfers, private guides, and domestic flights are also included.

Min. 15 Travelers

\$12,455

Min. 20 Travelers

\$11,522

Min. 25 Travelers

\$11,278

SEYCHELLES EXTENSION - PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

Single occupancy rate available for an additional \$1,130

Min. 15 Travelers

\$3,542

Min. 20 Travelers

\$3,205

Min. 25 Travelers

\$2,725

AIR TRAVEL:

For the flights, we have decided to route through JFK using Kenya Airways. This is by far the best travel option available. If you are interested in the below group block flights, Byrd needs to know by **May 1st, 2026**.

- For travelers not choosing the Seychelles Islands extension, the roundtrip flights from Charlotte to Tana, Madagascar and back to Charlotte the fare is **\$1,752** (all fees and taxes included) per person for basic economy.
- For travelers going on the Seychelles Islands extension, the roundtrip basic economy fare from Charlotte to Madagascar and the Seychelles Islands and back to Charlotte is **\$1,703** (all fees and taxes included).

- **Important Notes:**

- **Kenya Airlines is in alliance with Delta Airlines and JetBlue, if you would like to receive miles for the trip. Additionally, travelers can have their miles added to their SkyMile account.**
- **Please note that if you would prefer to take a separate flight from Charlotte, you are welcome to do so, but cutting out the CLT->JFK leg would not save you any money on the flight, in fact it would add cost to your ticket. In addition, you would also need to completely leave the security area at JFK airport, collect your luggage, and re-check your luggage, before going back through security, as you would be on a completely different ticket.**

We have quoted basic economy flights fares for you; However, you are welcome to work through any upgrades, detours or different routes you may wish by emailing byrd@travelbyrds.com. Our travel agent can customize flights to go in early, stay later, fly from other airports, or upgrade to any class you may want.

Finally, you can also purchase travel insurance with complete medical coverage through The Travel Byrds company. Simply email bryd@travelbyrds.com and she will work through the policy options with you.

IMPORTANT TRIP ADDITIONAL INFO:

Travelers must be members in good standing with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte. If you are not a member, please contact mneesmit@charlotte.edu or call 704-687-7758. [Click here](#) for information on WACC memberships. Please note that all WACC memberships at the Family level and below are fully tax-deductible. World Sponsor level memberships and above offer valuable benefits and additional tax deductions.

- **A deposit of \$3,500 per person is required to secure your place on the trip. Since they are first-come, first-served, we will accept deposits until the trip is full by April 15th, 2026. These deposits are nonrefundable after April 15th, 2026.**
- The final full payment is due by June 1st, 2026.
- If you are traveling alone but would like a roommate, please let us know as soon as possible, and we will work on matching you with another traveler.
- Business or First Class air travel is available. If you are interested in an upgrade, please contact Byrd Bergeron (byrd@travelbyrds.com) as soon as possible.
- Please note that a 3.5% processing charge will be added to all payments via American Express, and a 3% processing charge will be added to all other credit card payments due to bank fees. **There is no additional charge if you pay by check.**
- Checks should be mailed to "World Affairs Council of Charlotte, 9201 University City Blvd, CHHS 227, Charlotte, NC 28223."