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EXPLORING EAST AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR: WILDLIFE AND WONDERS

Experience an extraordinary range of habitats and cultures on this exclusive East Africa expedition to five countries, spanning from Cape Town to Tanzania's Dar es Salaam. Delve into the rare botany of South Africa's Western Cape and survey cliffs and caves along the Garden Route. Explore diverse ecosystems in iSimangaliso Wetland Park, and then go on safari to the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Game Reserve in search of the "big five." Venture into South Africa's bush country; cruise Mozambique's extraordinary coast teeming with marine life; photograph playful lemurs, colorful reptiles and the renowned baobab trees of Madagascar; experience the cultures and wildlife of Mayotte in the French Comoros; and immerse yourself in the heady scents and fascinating history of Zanzibar.

DAY 1 Cape Town, South Africa

Affectionately known locally as the "Mother City," Cape Town sits on the rugged coastline with the backdrop of the iconic Table Mountain. Transfer to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront and our hotel: The Table Bay Hotel. Join us this evening for a welcome reception.

DAY 2 Cape Town / Embark Ship

This morning set out for Table Mountain to ride the cable car (weather permitting) to the top. Take in the stunning views of the city and the surrounding Cape Peninsula. Continue on to the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, nestled on the eastern slopes of Table Mountain. Its beautiful gardens showcase both landscaped and natural areas, which earns them the title of "Conservation Gardens." Following a lunch of local specialties, embark National Geographic Explorer. Be out on deck as we sail along the Atlantic coast and round the Cape of Good Hope.

DAY 3 Hermanus

Perched on the rugged South Cape coastline, Hermanus is surrounded by the natural beauty of the sea and towering mountains. Visit the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, renowned for the beauty and diversity of its plant life and walk through the fynbos ("fine bush") in search of flowers and wildlife that includes birds, baboons, and mongooses. Alternatively, choose to explore the town and Saturday market, before heading to the countryside where we visit some of the local vineyards.

DAY 4 Mossel Bay / Knysna

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From Mossel Bay, tour along the coastline to Knysna, gateway to South Africa's Garden Route. Cross the Knysna Lagoon by ferry to explore the private Featherbed Nature Reserve and take a leisurely downhill walk with great views through forest, seeing the steep sandstone cliffs and ancient Khoi Khoi sea caves. There are many bird species and great views across Knysna Lagoon. After a buffet lunch under a canopy of milkwood trees, we return to Mossel Bay and sail.

DAY 5 At Sea

Enjoy National Geographic Explorer's many amenities as we spend the day sailing along the South African coast. Spend time on deck taking in the panoramic views, enjoying talks from our onboard experts, and learning about the amazing wildlife, cultures, and geology that we experience on our journey.

DAY 6 Durban

Durban is South Africa's third-largest city and a multicultural center known for its Indian and Zulu populations. The hinterland is a stronghold of Zulu culture and rich in nature – offering us some interesting experiences. Visit a Zulu village, meet the people of the community, and see a performance of dancing and drumming. At Eshowe, visit the Zululand Historical Museum (Fort Nongqayi) and other places of interest. Alternatively, guests may opt to tour the center of Durban, seeing its Golden Mile, harbor, city hall, and an Indian spice market.

DAY 7 Richards Bay / iSimangaliso Wetland Park / St. Lucia

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park, a World Heritage site, protects remarkable habitats near the coast, including wetlands, savannah, forest, woodlands, beaches, and reefs. The centerpiece is Lake St. Lucia, where we go out by boat in search of large groups of hippos, crocodiles, fish eagles, and much

more. Among the park's habitats are forested dunes and papyrus marshes. We also look for black rhinos in the Eastern Shores Nature Reserve. Spend the night off the ship at a lodge in St. Lucia.

DAY 8 St Lucia / Hluhluwe-iMfolozi / Richards Bay

Early this morning drive to the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park, one of Africa's premier game parks – renowned for wildlife that includes the “big five” (rhinoceros, elephant, lion, leopard, and Cape buffalo), along with giraffe, antelope, cheetah, and outstanding birdlife. White rhinos can be seen here, and there is a chance of spotting black rhinos, too. Take a game-viewing drive in an open four-wheel-drive safari vehicle in this superb habitat. We return to National Geographic Explorer at Richards Bay in the late afternoon.

DAYS 9-10 Maputo, Mozambique / At Sea

Maputo, the capital city of Mozambique, sits on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Known as Lourenço Marques during the colonial era, the city was originally settled by the Portuguese and is full of character and charm. We visit the fortress of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (completed in 1787), the colorful Central Market, the fine Museum of Natural History, Iron House, and the Botanical Garden, as well as Maputo's historic railway station. This evening we set sail across the Mozambique Channel toward Madagascar.

DAY 11 Toliara, Madagascar / Zombitse-Vohibasia National Park

Today we head inland to Zombitse Vohibasia National Park. Located in the southwestern part of Madagascar, the park was originally established in 1997, but the wildlife has been protected since 1962. Madagascar is known for its unique species—both flora and fauna. Trails weave through the forest

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and provide rare opportunities to see many amazing species—rambunctious and noisy lemurs; over 85 species of birds (some, like the Appert's greenbul, are only found in Zombitse); brightly colored chameleons and geckos; and countless colorful butterflies that flutter among the orchid trees. We spend the day exploring the park.

[DAYS 12-13 Morondava / At Sea](#)

From Morondava, we drive to the renowned "Avenue of the Baobabs"—a large stand of photogenic *Adansonia grandidieri* trees, and one of the classic sights of Madagascar. These beautiful, endemic trees can grow to 100 feet, and individual specimens may be hundreds of years old. We have plenty of chances to view and photograph them. We also have the opportunity to meet the people who call this region home.

[DAY 14 Mahajanga / Ankarafantsika National Park](#)

From Mahajanga, we drive to Ankarafantsika National Park, a superb deciduous lowland forest. We walk in the forest to look for lemurs including Coquerel's sifakas, along with horned and rhinoceros chameleons, frogs, and the turtles which breed here. Birds include banded kestrels, rufous vangas, and Madagascar fish eagles. Ravelobe Lake has Nile crocodiles and waterbirds. The flora is interesting as well, with a number of native medicinal plants. Upon returning to the ship, we set sail for Mayotte.

[DAYS 15-16 Mayotte, French Comoros / At Sea](#)

Although geographically within the Comoros group of islands, Mayotte is a territory of France. Our visit shows us French colonial architecture, colorful local cultures, and a distinctive style of dress. Learn about the fragrant ylang-ylang tree—originally from southeast Asia and introduced by the

French, the oil is highly prized by perfumers. For those seeking more activity, set off on a hike at Mont Choungi. Along the way, keep an eye out for brown lemurs or possibly the Mayotte sunbird.

[DAY 17 Zanzibar, Tanzania](#)

A tropical paradise, Zanzibar is an exotic mixture of cultures, history, and natural beauty. Known as the Spice Isle, it was a trading mecca on the route from Arabia to Africa. Europeans, Arabs, and Indians were just some who prospered in the lucrative spice trade; their various styles make up the city's architecture. Visit Stone Town, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and experience the more ominous side of the island's history—the slave trade. Following lunch enjoy the nature trails of Jozani Forest as we search for the red colobus monkey, found only on Zanzibar. Also be on the lookout for bushbabies, duiker (antelope) and over 40 species of birds. Back on board raise a toast to this amazing journey during our farewell dinner.

[DAY 18 Dar es Salaam / Disembark Ship](#)

Located on a massive natural harbor, this once-small fishing village has grown into a thriving commercial center and the largest city of Tanzania. Following disembarkation spend the morning exploring this diverse city—a mixture of African, Muslim, and South African influences. Visit the National Museum and House of Culture where the history of Tanzania is showcased. Spend time at Tinga Tinga Market, a vibrant art gallery of the Tinga Tinga style of painting made famous in the 1960s and still celebrating the heritage of Tanzania and Eastern Africa. Following lunch transfer to the airport for flights home.

[Please Note:](#)

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

YOUR SHIP:	National Geographic Explorer
VESSEL TYPE:	Luxury Expedition
LENGTH:	108 meters
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	148 (single & twin cabins)
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	1982 / 2008

National Geographic Explorer is a state-of-the-art expedition ship. It is a fully stabilized, ice-class vessel, enabling it to navigate polar passages while providing exceptional comfort. It carries kayaks and a fleet of Zodiac landing craft. An Undersea Specialist operates a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and sophisticated video equipment, extending access to the underwater world. Public areas : Bistro Bar; Chart Room; Restaurant; Global Gallery; Library, Lounge with full service bar and state-of-the-art facilities for films, slideshows and presentations; Mud Room with lockers for expedition gear, and Observation Lounge. Our "Open Bridge" provides guests an opportunity to meet our Officers and Captain and learn about navigation. Meals : Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menu is international with local flair. Cabins : All cabins face outside with windows or portholes, private facilities and climate controls. Expedition Equipment : Zodiac landing craft, kayaks, Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), hydrophone, SplashCam, underwater video camera, Crow's Nest remote controlled camera, video microscope, snorkeling gear. Special Features : A full-time doctor, Undersea Specialist, LEX Photo Specialist and Video

Chronicler, Internet Cafe and laundry. Wellness : The vessel is staffed by two Wellness Specialists and features a glass enclosed Fitness Center, outdoor stretching area, two LEXspa treatment rooms



and Sauna.

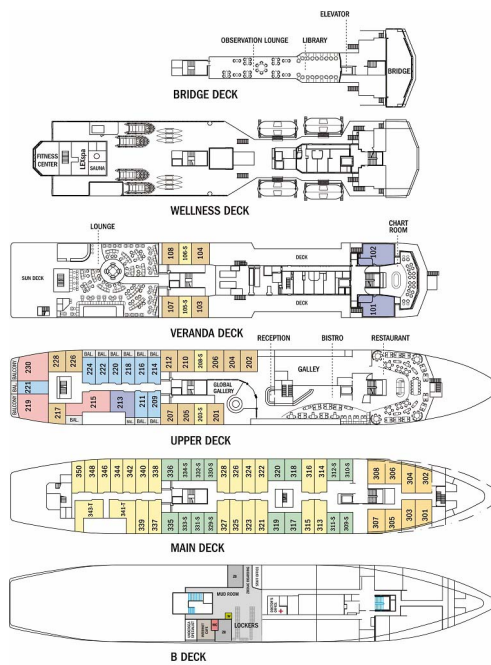
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