



## THE SECRET SIDE OF MADAGASCAR - 15 DAYS FROM NOSY BE TO PORT LOUIS

Innumerable adjectives are used to describe Madagascar, as anyone who travels to this island-continent is inevitably enchanted and filled with wonder. They are most likely drawn to it for its unusual geology that forms majestic landscapes where extraordinary plant life thrives. Baobabs, kalanchoes and the aloes of Madagascar create a veritable botanical paradise for the many species of animals that live here. Over 15 days, aboard Le Dumont-d'Urville, explore the red island during an expedition cruise combining encounters with the local communities, geological discoveries, and the opportunity to observe the native fauna and flora. To the north of Madagascar, from the shores of Nosy Be - whose nickname used to be 'the island of perfumes' \- you will begin your odyssey with a stop to discover the welcoming community of Nosy Komba. In Mahajanga, you will explore Ankarafantsika National Park, home to numerous species of birds and lemurs, before heading to the picturesque and stunning Belo sur Mer. Here, enjoy a first encounter with the Vezo people, who are among the world's last 'sea nomads', and learn more about how they make their dugout canoes, used for trade. Toliara, formerly Tulear, comes into view at the mouth of the Onilahy River. Nearby, the wild expanses of southwestern Madagascar form UNESCO biosphere reserves thanks to their exceptional flora that will delight botany enthusiasts. Along the vast beaches lined with dunes in Sarodrano, you will have the unique privilege of meeting and interacting with a small community of Vezos. You will visit their charming fishing village and sit with them in their authentic dugout canoes with square sails, to learn about their age-old seafaring skills. Out at sea await turquoise waters and the

natural pools of Nosy Ve, an islet of white sand that shelters a large colony of red-tailed tropicbirds. It is now time to discover the fascinating Fort-Dauphin. More commonly called Tolagnaro, it is fascinating for its past marked by colonisation and for its natural environment where exceptional plant life has created a breathtaking decor. After calling at Pointe des Galets on Reunion island, Le Dumont-d'Urville will reach Port Louis in Mauritius, where this unforgettable cruise will come



to an end.

### ITINERARY

Day 1 NOSY BE



Nosy Be (from the Malagasy: Nosy meaning island and Be meaning large), in the Mozambique Channel, is located near the north-eastern coastlines of Madagascar. A former French protectorate, known under the promising name of "the scented island", of volcanic origin, it is located on a maritime route with access to India and Asia. Cosmopolitan, a boulevard of encounters, its mixed-race and multicultural population still remembers its past as a significant trading post. Today, its 321 km<sup>2</sup> enchant lovers of nature and idyllic beaches. Its sumptuous primary forest is home to animals that are endemic to the island as well as surprising flora.

#### Day 2 NOSY KOMBA

During your cruise, your ship will stop in Nosy Komba, otherwise known as "lemur island". Not far from the Madagascar mainland, this volcanic island shaped like a gigantic turtle shell is covered in dense tropical rainforest. This vegetation is home to amusing black lemurs - furry orange-brown and black creatures that are surprisingly agile and call to each other from amongst the trees. The many small beaches and the emerald-coloured water make Nosy Komba a natural gem that only a select few visit.

#### Day 3 MAJUNGA

A lively and cosmopolitan town on the west coast of Madagascar, Majunga, also called Mahajanga, will be a port of call rich in discoveries. The former capital of the Sakalava

kingdom, then a significant interchange due to its prime position between Africa and the Middle East, the city displays an interesting cultural patchwork. Also renowned for its outstanding natural sites, this port of call will provide you with the opportunity to discover Ankarafantsika National Park, home to many endemic animal and plant species, or the Cirque Rouge, immense red sandstone formations classified as national heritage.

#### Day 4 AT SEA

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, depending on the activities offered, or to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

#### Day 5 BELO SUR MER

In the south west of the Menabe Region, in the district of Morondava, you will marvel at the picturesque beauty of Belo sur Mer. This peninsula edged with mangroves alternates fine sandy beaches with rocks plunging into a sea whose shades fall





between deep blue and crystal-clear green. This fishing village is renowned for its dhows, the traditional sailing boats of Madagascar, which are built in situ, in the local artisanal boatyard. The choreography of these vessels coming and going on the beach sets the pace of life in the village, bestowing it with a unique charm.

#### Days 6 - 7 TOLIARA

Located to the south-west of the island of Madagascar, near the mouth of the River Onilahy, Toliara is a port town that opens onto the Mozambique Channel. Inhabited for several centuries, becoming prosperous during the colonial period in the 19th century, Toliara is a cheerful town with unspoilt nature and exceptional flora that will certainly appeal to fans of botany. The Antsokay Arboretum botanical garden with nearly 1,000 Madagascar plant species, 90% of which are endemic, is worth a fragrant and charming detour. Cultural heritage will not be outdone, with the interesting museums of Mahafaly ethnology and the Museum of the Sea.

#### Day 8 SARODRANO

Sarodrano is a small village in the south-west of Madagascar in the province of Atsimo-Andrefana, at the mouth of the Onilahy River. This village of Vezo fishermen possesses the authentic and unspoiled charm of remote places. You will be surprised by the dexterity with which these "nomads of the sea" steer their outrigger canoes to fish, or keep up their ancestral traditions like seaweed cultivation. If the tide allows it, you will also have the possibility of discovering the sacred cave of Sarodrano, a

natural fresh water pool separated from the sea by just 10 metres (33 feet) of rocks.

#### Day 9 NOSY VE

Five kilometres out to sea from the Malagasy village of Anakao, Nosy Ve is an unspoilt paradise of exceptional wild beauty. Located on a two-kilometre (1.2 miles) long coral bank, this island is unique in that it is home to a colony of endemic birds commonly called red-tailed tropicbird. This nature reserve, a nesting site for rare birds, is unique because it is this species' only reproduction site. The duckboards installed on the island will enable you to observe the birds hidden from view under the forest of Madagascar jewel. This Eden dotted with natural pools is also a setting for coral, fish and sea turtles you can discover while snorkelling.

#### Day 10 AT SEA

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#### Day 14 POINTE DES GALETS

#### Day 11 TOLAGNARO (FORT DAUPHIN)

Between its sumptuous landscapes, its legendary mountain ranges and its idyllic beaches, Fort-Dauphin is a kind of paradise on earth. Nestled on the south-east tip of Madagascar, the former fishing village is as fascinating for its rich history, marked by a strong colonial past, as it is for its exceptional natural environment. More commonly known as "Tolagnaro", it shelters spectacular biodiversity with the majestic Pic Saint-Louis as a natural sanctuary. Like a sugar loaf standing 529 metres (1,736 feet) high and overlooking the town, this mountain is home to exceptional flora: ravenalas, raffia palms, orchids and periwinkles all intermingling in a breathtaking setting.

#### Days 12 - 13 AT SEA

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At the end of the 19th century, the construction of the port of Pointe des Galets lasted seven years, with the town called Le Port emerging in its wake. You'll also hear the name "Port-Reunion" used to designate the Pointe des Galets, which is the main port on the island of La Reunion. In fact, it is the only port in France that has five functions: naval base, passenger terminal, commercial port, fishing port and marina. The old town of the Port conjures up the area's rich history, which is connected to transport. Here you'll be able to discover the former house of the Reunion Railway and Port Company (1878), its marine cemetery and its teeming covered market.

#### Day 15 PORT LOUIS

On the north-west coast of Mauritius, discover Port Louis, the country's multicultural capital. Constantly in movement, the city, which was once a port of call on the route to India, is home to many cultural and historic treasures. In addition to the city's market where you will be able to discover all the local flavours and many handicrafts, make sure that you visit Fort Adelaide. Nestling on the heights of Port Louis, this citadel built in the 16th century, classified as a national heritage monument, offers sumptuous views over the surroundings. Not far from there, the Pamplemousse Botanical Garden will reveal to you its countless plant species, coming from all four corners of the world.

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accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. **PUBLIC AREAS** Like Le Boreal and its sisterships, Le Dumont d'Urville has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m<sup>2</sup> reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m<sup>2</sup> boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m<sup>2</sup> main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant

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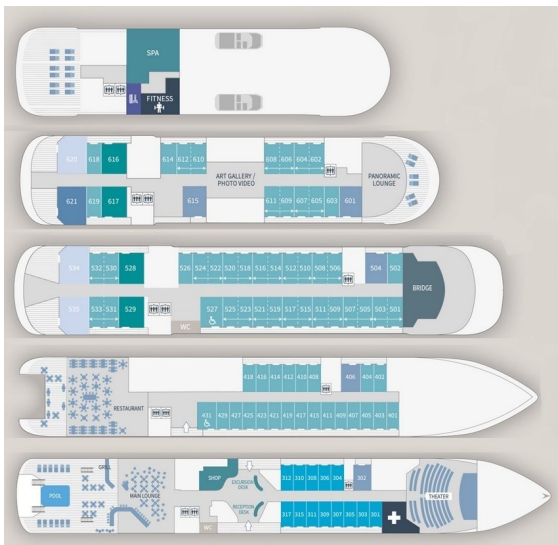
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