



THE TROPICAL NORTH OF MADAGASCAR

REMOTE VILLAGES AND UNTOUCHED SANDY BEACHES STRETCH AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE. SAIL ALONGSIDE TRADITIONAL DHOW SAILBOATS AND DISCOVER THE UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY OF THIS SPECIAL ISLAND.

Sitting off the southeast coast of Africa is Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, and one of the great sailing locations. The island evolved in isolation, separated from mainland Africa—it's famed for its largely endemic array of wildlife and biodiversity. Nosy Be is a small archipelago located along the northwest coast of Madagascar and by far the most popular sailing destination in the country. While world cruisers get to set their eyes on a diverse landscape dotted with archipelagos and a rich agricultural land, it is the mix of culture and nature that brings this itinerary to life.

In Madagascar, you will find rural populations scattered throughout its lush coastline and densely forested inland regions living a life based on principles of sustainability. Economically speaking, Madagascar is a poor country with an estimated 75 percent of the country's population living on less than two dollars per day. However, a sailing itinerary along the coast offers very different perspectives. The standard of living is less associated with monetary income, and more reliant on self-sufficiency, exchanging local goods rather than using imported products. The coastal communities appear to hold a greater value on communal gains than individual wealth. For those of us living modern lives, sailing to these small communities is an eye-opening experience, and a principle reason to plan a sailing itinerary along this coast.

Madagascar's geological history is unique and interesting—splitting off from mainland Africa before early humans inhabited this part of the world, so evolution of the ecosystem happened here without human influence. Archeologists believe that the first people arrived by outrigger sailing canoes—an early form of the *Dhow* sailboat that's traditional of the Sunda Islands—and settled in Madagascar between 200 BC and 500 AD. They would have discovered a wilderness unlike any other on Earth, lush and untouched. Since then, Madagascar has experienced waves of migration with sailors exploring from South Asia, East Africans arriving on the island, and more recent Portuguese, French, and British mariners arriving from the north—each having an impact on the island's culture. The diversity of the island reflects these many influences.

