

NATURAL WONDERS OF THE SEYCHELLES & EAST AFRICA Including Aldabra

October 18 - 29, 2025



Aboard the New Expedition Cruise Ship *DIANA*

Dear Friends of the Cornell Lab,

I am thrilled to invite you to join my wife Molly and me on a truly epic expedition, covering some 1,500 miles across the western Indian Ocean from the Seychelles to East Africa. This trip is a dream come true – we'll experience both extraordinary biodiversity and rich cultural heritage shaped by explorers and traders from every corner of the world.

Beginning at Mahé, the main island in the Seychelles, we work our way south and west toward the African coast, exploring the 1,000-mile-long Seychelles Archipelago along the way. Farquhar, Cosmoledo, Aldabra, and Assumption— these are true “tropical paradise” islands, filled with flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world. We'll encounter renowned nesting grounds for sea turtles and a host of seabirds. (My favorite will be the White Tern, regarded by many as the world's most elegant bird.) We'll experience stunningly beautiful beaches (hopefully encountering the unique Crab Plover) and coral reefs teeming with fish and ideally suited for swimming and snorkeling. A highpoint of our voyage will be the UNESCO Heritage Site of Aldabra – home of the famous Aldabra Giant Tortoise and in the words of Sir David Attenborough, “one of the wonders of the world.”

Following Aldabra, we set course toward Tanzania and Kenya. At Zanzibar we learn about the history and culture of the Swahili Coast, plus we have a chance to visit the rich Jozani-Chwaka National Park. On Pemba Island we will explore and bird in the lush Ngezi Forest. Then on to Lamu in Kenya, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home of the oldest Swahili settlement in East Africa.

Our vessel for this amazing journey will be the Swan Hellenic *Diana*, a state-of-the-art, new-generation expedition cruise ship, launched in early 2023. Accommodating a maximum of just 192 guests in beautifully appointed staterooms and balcony suites, *Diana* features several lounges, a restaurant, outdoor cafe, spa, library and beauty salon, along with the latest safety and environmentally-friendly technology.

I cannot tell you how eagerly I look forward to this trip. I hope you will consider making room in your fall 2025 schedule to accompany me. Throughout the voyage we'll have fun engaging in a series of lectures and discussions – about birds, biodiversity, evolution, and the extraordinary cultural history of this amazing part of the world.

Please look over the brochure and begin making plans to join me on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore the *Natural Wonders of the Seychelles and East Africa*.



John W. Fitzpatrick
Emeritus Director, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

HOST AND LECTURER

John "Fitz" Fitzpatrick is an ornithologist and watercolor artist born in 1951 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He received his



B.A. *magna cum laude* from Harvard University (1974) and his Ph.D. from Princeton University (1978). During 1978 - 1989 he was Curator of Birds and Chairman of Zoology at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, studying ecology of South American birds, when he led

numerous expeditions to eastern Peru including discovery of 7 bird species new to science.

In 1988 - 1995 he was Executive Director of Archbold Biological Station, a private ecological institute in central Florida that manages over 20,000 acres including pristine native habitat and a working cattle ranch. At Archbold, Fitzpatrick leads a 50+ year collaborative study of ecology, behavior, genomics, and conservation of the endangered Florida Scrub-Jay.

As Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology (1995-2021), Fitz oversaw development of the Lab into a world-renowned center for ornithology, bioacoustics, conservation media, conservation biology, and citizen science. He has authored more than 160 scientific papers, and co-authored four books including a leading college-level ornithology textbook. Together with colleagues at the Cornell Lab, Fitzpatrick co-invented *eBird*, now the world's largest citizen-science project and a global standard for ecological monitoring, and fostered development of *Merlin*, today's leading mobile app for identifying birds by sight or sound. He also established *Birds of the World* as the premier online encyclopedia of the world's 11,000+ bird species, and *Bird Academy*, an online portal for lifetime learners interested in birds and natural history.

Fitzpatrick's honors in science and conservation include awards from the American Ornithological Society, The Nature Conservancy, Linnean Society of New York, National Audubon Society, and Princeton University. He has served as President of the American Ornithological Society (2000 – 2002), Board of Governors of The Nature Conservancy (1995-2006), Trustee of the National Audubon Society (1995 – 2001), and on three U. S. Endangered Species Recovery Teams. In 2020 he was elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Fitzpatrick lives with his wife, Molly, on a forested hillside in Ithaca, NY and winters near the Atlantic Coast in Vero Beach, FL.

Cover photo: Giant tortoise, Aldabra Islands

For Reservations and Information, Please Call **Thalassa Journeys** at 866-633-3611 or Email reservations@thalassajourneys.com



THE NEW 192-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP *DIANA*



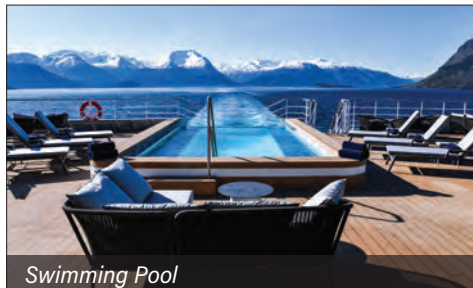
Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Swan Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Observation Lounge

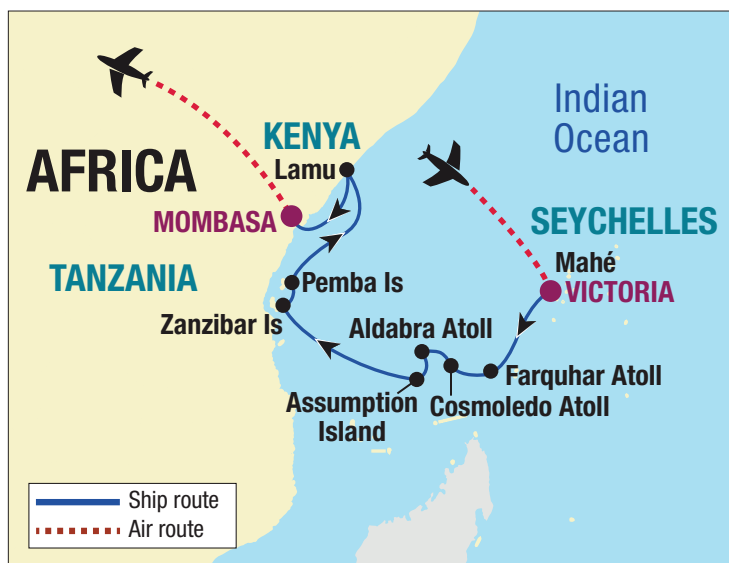
Built in Finland, and launched in April 2023, Swan Hellenic's *Diana* is a new generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 12,100 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 350 passengers, *Diana* will accommodate a maximum of 192 guests in 96 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Diana* is among the world's first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, *Diana* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 135 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Diana* will

carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Diana's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections and other amenities. Of the ship's 96 staterooms, 76 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

ITINERARY



Saturday, October 18, 2025

VICTORIA/MAHÉ/Seychelles

Arrive in Victoria, capital of the Seychelles and the main island of Mahé, and transfer to our hotel. Join fellow travelers this evening for a welcome dinner. (D)

Sunday, October 19

VICTORIA/EMBARK

After breakfast at the hotel, depart on a nature excursion to the island's mountainous interior to explore Morne Seychellois National Park. The park is home to a rich diversity of endemic flora and fauna such as the Seychelles Bulbul, Blue Pigeon, Seychelles Scops Owl, pitcher plants and spectacular panoramic views of the island. Explore the trails with noted ornithologist Perly Constance and after lunch at a local restaurant, transfer to the harbor and embark *Diana*. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 20

AT SEA

Enjoy a day at sea learning from John Fitzpatrick and expert naturalists. Sample the many amenities of *Diana*. (B,L,D)



White Tern © Tony Palliser; Cornell Lab of Ornithology | Macaulay Library

Tuesday, October 21

FARQUHAR ATOLL

The largest and most southerly atoll of the Seychelles, Farquhar is a recognized important birding area. Surrounded by ten islands, the large, shallow lagoon with its network of channels is fringed by powder-white beaches and coconut trees supporting large colonies of Sooty, Roseate, and Black-naped Terns as well as Red-footed Boobies (including its globally rare White-tailed Brown Morph) and with luck, the ghostly elegant White Tern. While gold-dust geckos and coconut crabs favor shallow rock-pools, the saltwater flats team with Napoleon wrasse and several species of grouper making Farquhar a magnet for fly fishing activities. Recent conservation efforts have rescued and released giant tortoises and begun monitoring of nesting green sea turtles. (B,L,D)

Wednesday, October 22

COSMOLEDO ATOLL

Cosmoledo Atoll is comprised of thirteen uninhabited islands surrounding a circular lagoon with channels, mangroves, white sand flats, dunes and raised coral reefs. This remote and rarely visited group offers an ideal nesting location for rare and endemic species not found elsewhere in the Seychelles. The atoll is home to endemic Sunbirds, Turtle Doves, Cisticola and large populations of Masked and Red-footed Boobies, Sooty Terns, and significant numbers of the distinctive Crab Plover. Green and Hawksbill turtles thrive in the lagoon and nest along its sandy beaches while a network of channels is home to bonefish, milkfish, Indo-Pacific permit, triggerfish, bluefin trevally, and others. (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 23

ALDABRA ATOLL

Today we call at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Aldabra, situated in the very heart of the Seychelles Archipelago. It is one of the last virtually untouched sanctuaries on earth—Sir David Attenborough has called it “one of the wonders of the world”—and home to the world's largest population (over 100,000) of giant tortoises. The vast atoll, comprising four small reef islands separated by narrow passes into an emerald-water lagoon, hosts hundreds of flowering plant and fern species, as well as endemic Aldabra Drongos and Pink Flamingos. With luck we could spot scavenging White-throated Rails, a remarkable, flightless subspecies of a volant rail widespread in Madagascar, and the only flightless bird remaining in the Indian Ocean following centuries of exploitation plus introduction of rats and cats. We spend two days in this remarkable environment, swimming, snorkeling, and simply enjoying being surrounded by the beauty of the largest raised coral reef in the world. (B,L,D)

Friday, October 24

ALDABRA/ASSUMPTION ISLAND

In the early afternoon of our second day in Aldabra, we call briefly at nearby Assumption Island. This tiny (4.5 square miles) islet was nearly destroyed in the early 20th century when its vegetation was cleared to allow for guano mining. But much of Jacques Cousteau's *The Silent World* was filmed on its still robust coral reefs, teeming with life.



Traditional boathouses are typical dwellings in Kenya's Lamu.

Note: Weather permitting, enjoy swimming and snorkeling at all the islands we will visit in the Seychelles. (B,L,D)

Saturday, October 25

AT SEA

Enjoy a day at sea learning from John Fitzpatrick and expert naturalists. Sample the many amenities of *Diana*. (B,L,D)

Sunday, October 26

ZANZIBAR, Tanzania

This morning, join a walking safari in the Jozani-Chwaka National Park (home to more than 200 species of birds) followed by a visit to a local spice farm. Gather for lunch in Stone Town, Zanzibar's historic center, before enjoying a walking tour of its narrow winding streets permeated with the scent of spice and lined with 18th- and 19th-century buildings. A highlight of the tour will be the Old Fort, built by Omanis when they drove out the Portuguese in 1698. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 27

PEMBA ISLAND

Pemba Island, separated from mainland Tanzania by the Pemba Channel, is known for its lush vegetation and extensive clove plantations. In the morning, travel to Ngezi Forest, a tropical reserve



Blue Cabbage Leather Coral, Pemba Island, Tanzania

that is a haven for grazing blue duiker (small antelope), and the Pemba flying fox, and also home to at least 40 species of birds, including the African Fish-eagle, the largest eagle in sub-Saharan Africa with a wing-span of 6.5 feet. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 28

LAMU, Kenya

The Old Town of Lamu, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the oldest and best-preserved Swahili settlement in East Africa. Once an important center of trade, its architecture is a fascinating blend of Bantu, Arab, Persian, Indian, and European motifs. Clusters of ornate, well-preserved buildings built from coral stone and mangrove timber and decorated with intricately carved wooden doors and arcaded facades line the maze of narrow streets. The Lamu Museum offers an excellent introduction to the island's rich history, and the affiliated Lamu Fort, built by Omanis in the early 19th century and used by the British as a prison, is now a library housing one of the best collections of Swahili poetry in Kenya. (B,L,D)

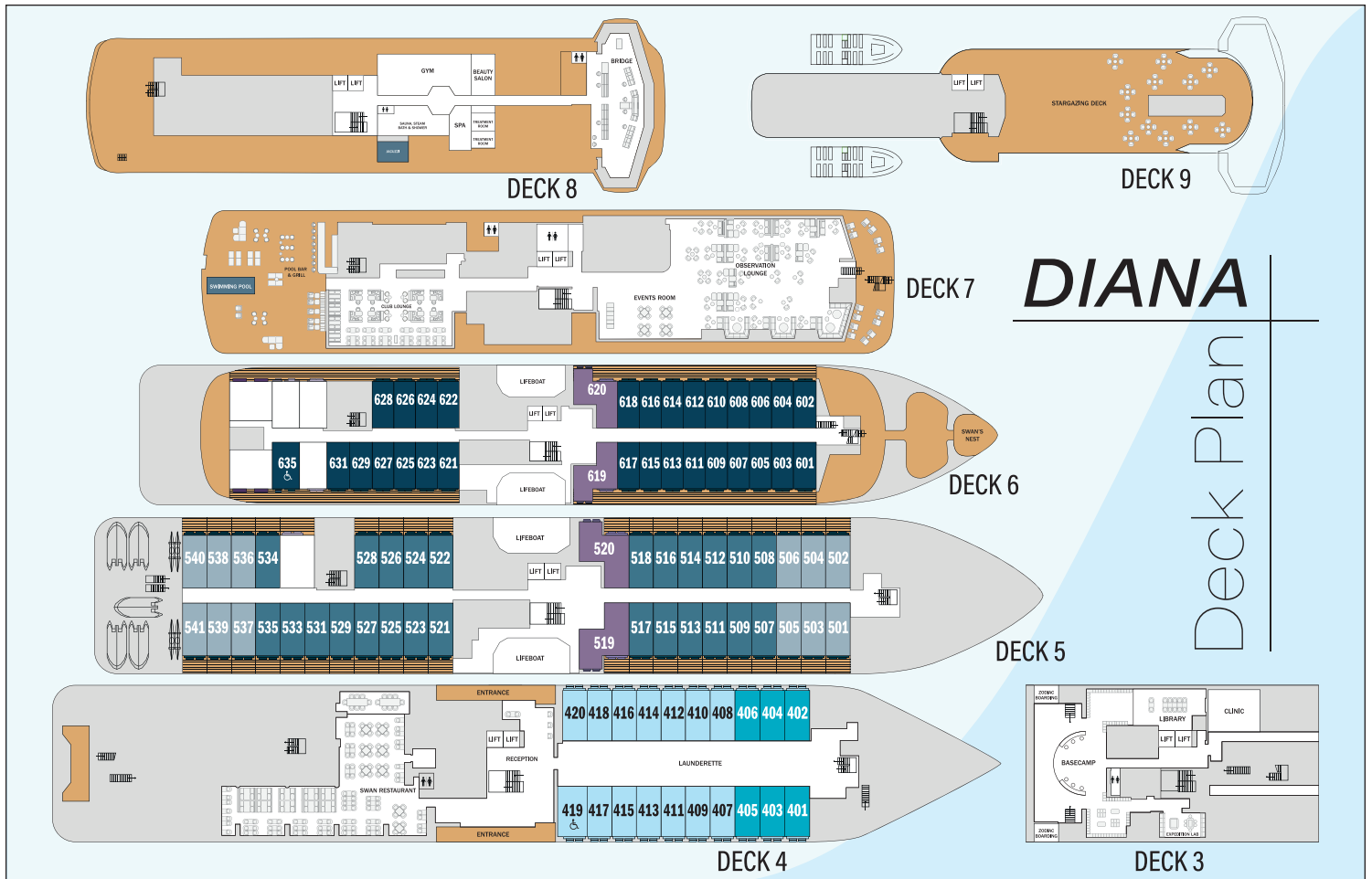
Wednesday, October 29

MOMBASA/DISEMBARK

After breakfast aboard, disembark and transfer to the airport for flights homeward. (B)



Spice market, Zanzibar



All accommodations aboard *Diana* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401–406.	\$ 9,290
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 407–420.	\$ 9,690
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501–506, 536–541.	\$ 11,590
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 507–518, 521–529, 531–535.	\$ 12,190
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601–618, 621–635.	\$ 12,890
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 474 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 519, 520, 619 & 620.	\$ 16,390

FOR SOLO TRAVELERS | A limited number of cabins are available for single travelers at the following supplements:
Category D \$ 3,590; Category C \$ 4,690; Category B \$ 4,990; Category A \$ 5,190.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- One night at a hotel in Victoria, Mahé, breakfast included.
- Welcome dinner in Victoria, and lunch on the day of embarkation.
- Cruise aboard the Swan Hellenic *Diana* as described in the itinerary.
- Airport/hotel/pier transfers and handling of luggage on arrival and departure dates.
- Educational program of lectures and discussions with John Fitzpatrick, and expert expedition staff.
- Complete program of tours and excursions as mentioned in the itinerary with professional English-speaking guides.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Crab Plover © Luke Seitz; Cornell Lab of Ornithology | Macaulay Library



The old town of Zanzibar.



Le Jardin Du Roi spice garden, Victoria, Mahé

GENERAL INFORMATION

FITZ 25D-1018

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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or email: reservations@thalassajourneys.com

Diana in Aldabra Atoll, Seychelles