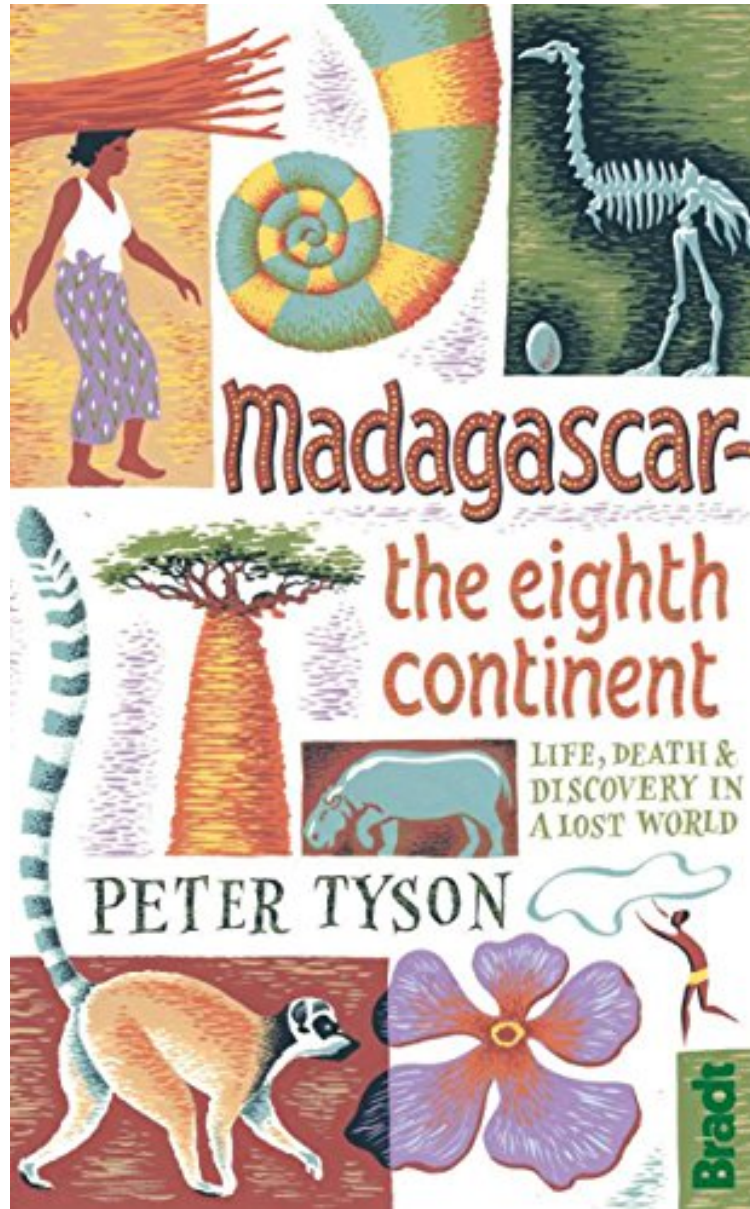


[Free] Madagascar: The Eighth Continent (Bradt Travel Guides)

Madagascar: The Eighth Continent (Bradt Travel Guides)

Peter Tyson

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Peter Tyson : Madagascar: The Eighth Continent (Bradt Travel Guides) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Madagascar: The Eighth Continent (Bradt Travel Guides):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A good in depth introduction for travelers to Madagascar By SelfdocI read this book after we had been to Madagascar and I wish I'd read it before the trip. It offers a more in depth look at

some of the active research in Madagascar looking into the origins of the country, the human population, the animal populations, the lemur research of Pat Wright to name a few topics. It is well written and an easy read. This is not a typical tourist guide. Rather, it touches on details one would never find in those guides. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Travel Prep By phyllisChose this book in preparation for a trip there. Great intro to the island's history, geography, flora fauna. Not good for lodging selections or particular tours, but that info is available online these days. Highly recommend! 13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. truly excellent natural history and travel book By Tim F. Martin This is a truly great book, very well written, well researched, and a joy to read. Tyson shows us a virtual continent that is largely unknown to the rest of the world, home to bizarre wildlife found nowhere else on earth and enigmas that still confound researchers. Tyson addresses many issues relating to Madagascar. Why are so many plants and animals unique to Madagascar? Why did they speciate so wildly? How did they get there to begin with? Describing in detail the extinct megafauna of Madagascar - giant lemurs, giant tortoises, pygmy hippos, and the mighty elephant bird - he addresses issues of how they lived, research relating to them, and how they became extinct - if all of them are indeed extinct, as some may still exist in unexplored corners of the giant island. Tyson also addresses the history of the island, from its original settlement apparently around the time of Christ to the present day. The origin of the Malagasy people is still a mystery, and Tyson explores Indonesian, African, and Arabian (as well as later European) influxes and influences on the island, not only in terms of history and archeology but also religion, culture, society, psychology, and how the people of the island make a living. The Malagasy are a fascinating blend of Indonesian, African, and Arabian peoples, showing diverse traits from these cultures and providing a continual mystery to researchers. Tyson closes the book with a detailed and comprehensive look at the effort to save the last wild areas of Madagascar. Showing how a new national park is working, he shows that much has been accomplished on the island, but much remains to be done, and the preservation effort is fraught with peril. If conservationists are to save the unique chameleons, geckos, tenrecs, lemurs, serpent eagles, and other wildlife of Madagascar, as well as its unique flora, Tyson shows how they must address basic issues of human dignity, the economy, land rights, and basic education as well. A truly great book, a wonderful introduction to Madagascar that I just can't recommend highly enough!

.com Lying some 250 miles off the east coast of Africa, Madagascar is the world's fourth-largest island. It is quite unlike the neighboring continent, and, for that matter, quite unlike any other landmass on the planet. Its plant life is almost wholly endemic: eight out of 10 plants there grow naturally only on Madagascar, and it has an entire ecosystem, the spiny desert, that is found nowhere else on earth. Many of its animal species, too, seem to have emerged from some evolutionary track that runs parallel to the rest of the world's; here can be found lemurs that will fit into a human palm, dwarf hippos, giant chameleons, and other rarities. These plants and animals constitute an extraordinary diversity, writes science journalist Peter Tyson in this engaging book, and the island's richness of life has long intrigued scientists, who have proposed several theories to explain it. Those scientists, some of whom Tyson profiles at work in the field, are racing against time to catalog island life before it disappears, for Madagascar's human population is rapidly growing, and with that growth, the island's forests and other habitats are falling. The urgency may abate, Tyson writes, with guarded optimism, now that the island's current president has proposed that all of Madagascar be considered as a United Nations World Heritage Site, which would help provide funds to prevent further loss of habitat and diversity. Though this proposal is controversial, Tyson makes a good case for why it should be taken up--and he shows just how high the stakes are. Throughout his narrative, Tyson mixes scientific reportage with a nicely rendered travelogue that guides readers across the island while outlining key concepts of island biogeography and conservation biology. His book is a worthy companion to David Quammen's *Song of the Dodo*, and valuable reading for anyone concerned with the world environment. --Gregory McNamee From Publishers Weekly Combining travelogue, political discourse, ethnographic analysis and ecological exploration, this unusual book surveys an unusual subject: Madagascar, the world's fourth largest island. Situated only 250 miles off the coast of Africa, Madagascar is biologically unique. Not only does it have a rich animal and plant life, it also houses a huge number of endemic species found nowhere else on earth. Impressed with "the island's singular people. The striking beauty of the landscape. And the wonder of the wildlife," Tyson A online producer of NOVA and a veteran science writer A set out, four years ago, to make sense of the island's natural history. He visited four different scientists there A a herpetologist, a paleoecologist, an archeologist and a primatologist. In this impressive volume, he writes about what he learned on these visits, successfully conveying both the flavor of field research and the biological mysteries of the island nation. Tyson reflects on questions of science (where did all these rare species come from?) as well as on more practical matters (how can a country that's so financially poor save its rich environmental resources?). He also presents engaging historical information and offers an exuberant discussion of the Malagasy language. Because Tyson tends to focus on his personal experiences, and he emphasizes wildlife over human life, the Malagasy people themselves regrettably remain in the background. Otherwise admirable, the book suffers for this absence. Agent, Theresa Park.

Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Madagascar, actually the Earth's fourth-largest island, has the distinction of hosting one of the greatest collections of endemic species, that is, plants and animals that exist nowhere else. It is under extreme ecological peril owing to deforestation and population growth, and scientists and conservationists are anxious to study and preserve as much of Madagascar's unique ecology as possible before it's too late. The island also presents historical mysteries, since there are curious gaps in the archaeological record of the original settlers. To learn more about these issues, science writer Tyson tagged along on the expeditions of specialists in herpetology, paleoecology, archaeology, and primatology. He reports in great (and occasionally repetitive) detail on their research projects, adventures in the field, and scientific and historical background. He finds more questions than answers on his travels and freely admits to being baffled by Malagasy customs and way of life. This ambitious book perhaps tries to cover too much ground, but few other books available introduce readers to this fascinating, unique nation. Recommended for both academic and most public libraries. DBeth Clewis Crim, Prince William P.L., VA
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