



“IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO TRAVEL FASTER THAN LIGHT...

and certainly not desirable, as one's hat keeps blowing off.” Like Woody Allen, we prefer our travel slow at Natural High. What's more we've found it's worth paying close attention to where others are heading. Then going in the opposite direction. This month we've got a couple of perfect examples for you.

In March, I took Horatio Clare for the Financial Times to northern Serengeti, to prove how – with a little creativity - it's still possible to have hundreds of square miles of Africa's best known park entirely to your self.

Meanwhile Rod fulfilled a lifetime's dream and set off to experience Virunga National Park in the

Democratic Republic of Congo. Quite apart from the sensational gorilla viewing, not to mention spending the night above the world's largest lava flow on Nyiragongo, he found the safari experience here second to none. He'll be leading some trips to Virunga next year so let us know if you'd like to join him.

We've also got a couple of new safari camps for you, including one in Liuwa Plains, Zambia's wild west, as well as some bedtime reading and a calendar of festivals to tempt you to the Indian Subcontinent.

Let us know when you're ready to make some travel plans (with or without your hat).

Alex

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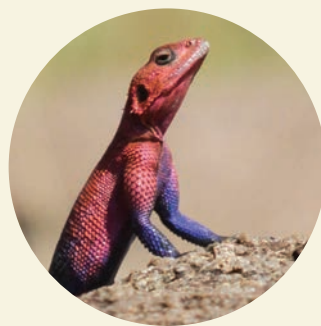
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SERENGETI: THE TRACK LESS BEATEN

MILLIONS OF ANIMALS MIGRATE ACROSS THE REGION EACH YEAR. HORATIO CLARE HEADS IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WITH ALEX EDWARDS.

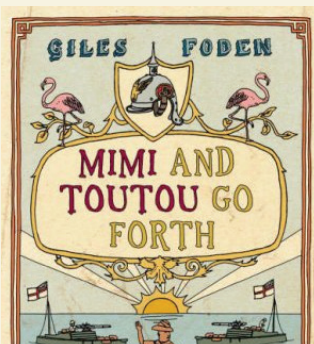
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WE SPECIALISE IN PUTTING OUR CLIENTS IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME, WITH THE RIGHT GUIDE.

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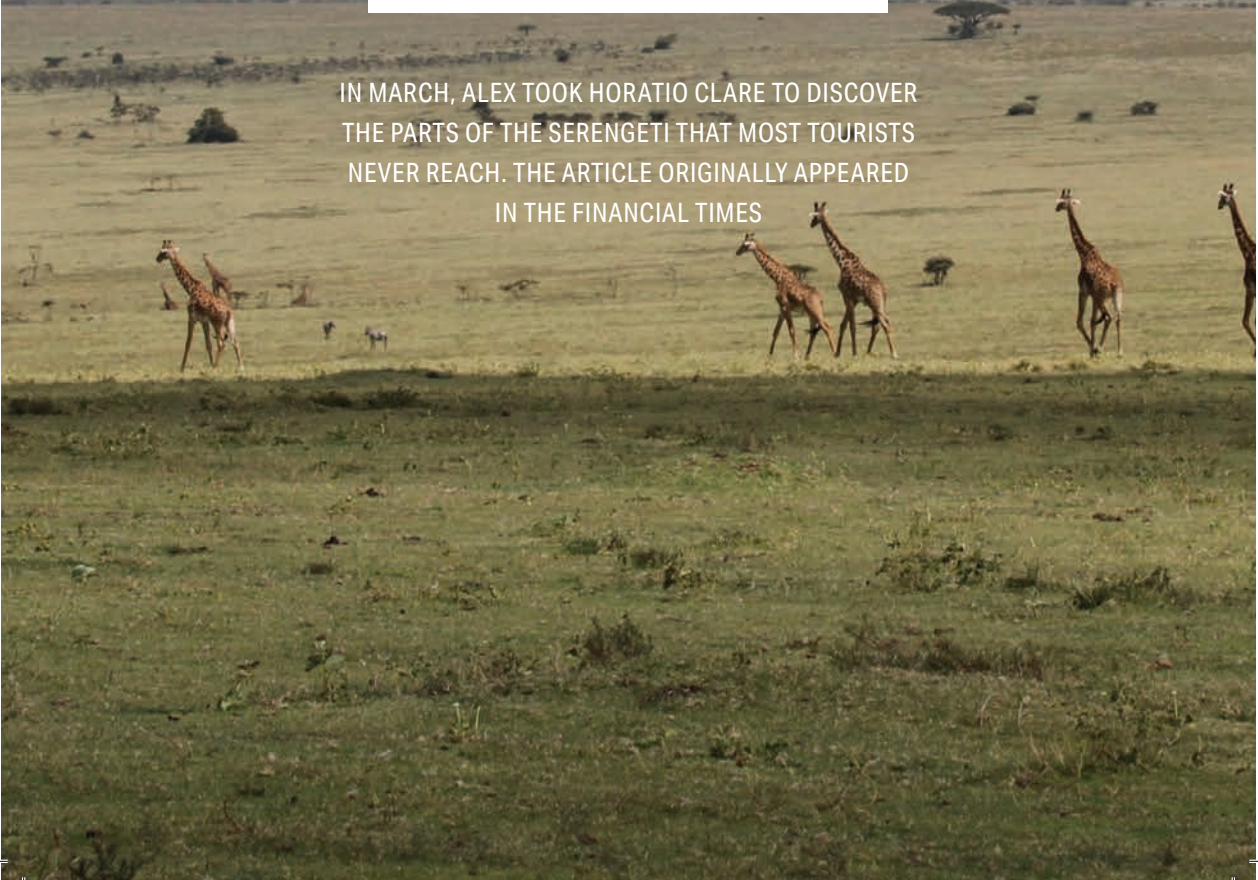
EXPERIENCE INDIA

THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT: A LAND OF UNMATCHED DIVERSITY.

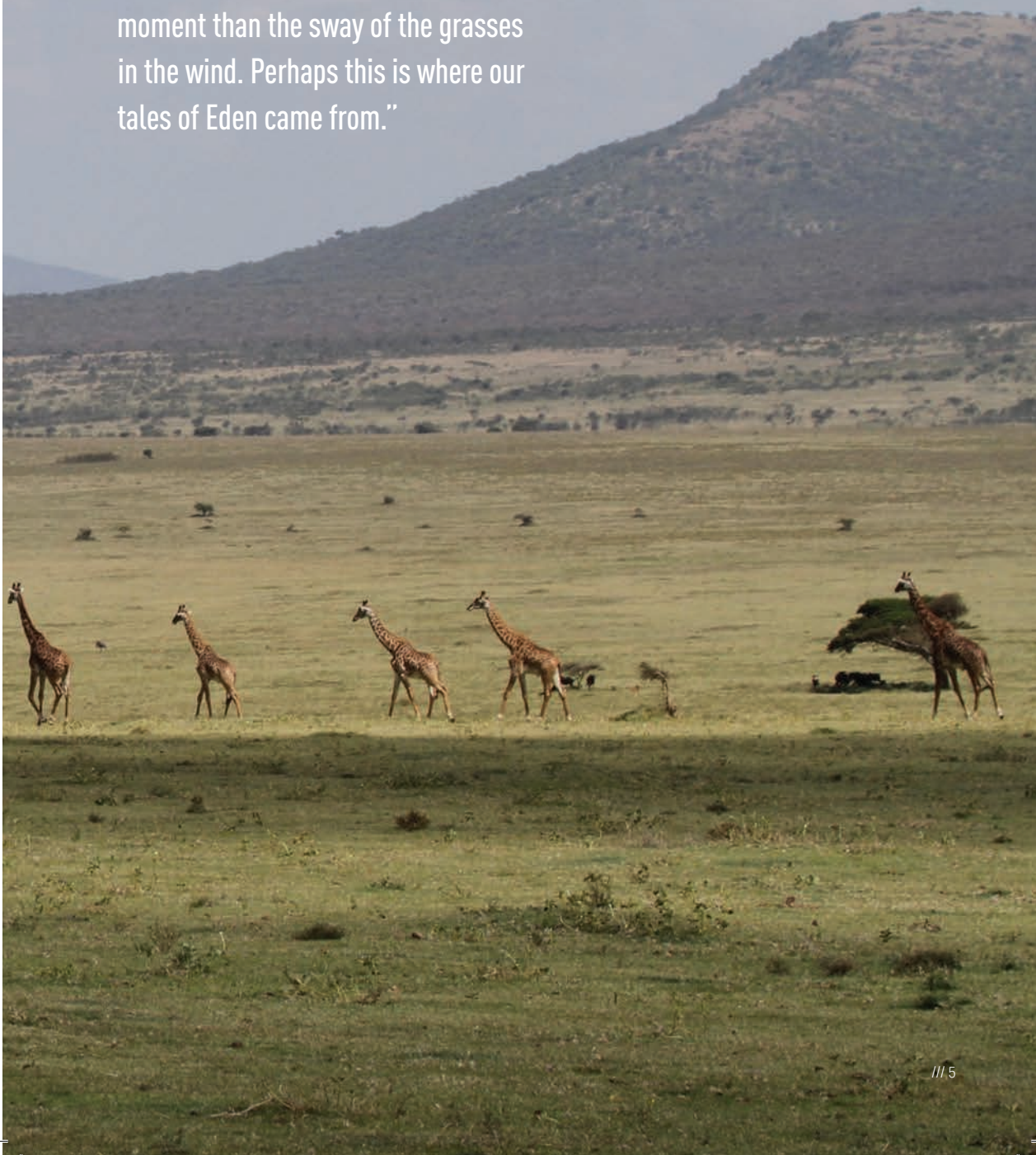
FINANCIAL TIMES

SERENGETI: THE TRACK LESS BEATEN

IN MARCH, ALEX TOOK HORATIO CLARE TO DISCOVER
THE PARTS OF THE SERENGETI THAT MOST TOURISTS
NEVER REACH. THE ARTICLE ORIGINALLY APPEARED
IN THE FINANCIAL TIMES



“We were as small as songbirds here,
our lives and stories of no more
moment than the sway of the grasses
in the wind. Perhaps this is where our
tales of Eden came from.”



“We drove north to Piaya, our vehicle a tiny human speck in an ocean of undulating horizons, as though we were the first to see the granite kopjes and the plains, so rich in animals: pronking gazelle, jumping with all four feet, and zebra resting their chins on each other’s backs. Thunderstorms marched the plain behind us. Perhaps only the Galápagos give a similar sense of a world lingering at its beginning.”





The plains are the ideal habitat for cheetah.



Surrounded by wildebeest and their young in Southern Serengeti.



Rüppell's Griffon Vulture.





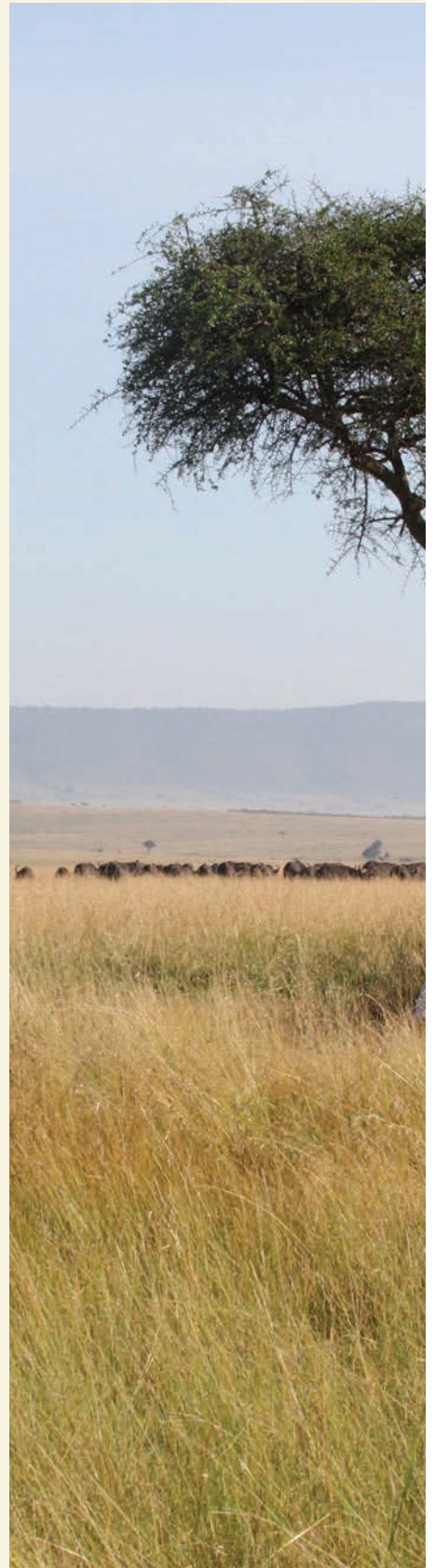
A picture of elegance - Maasai women in Piyaya.

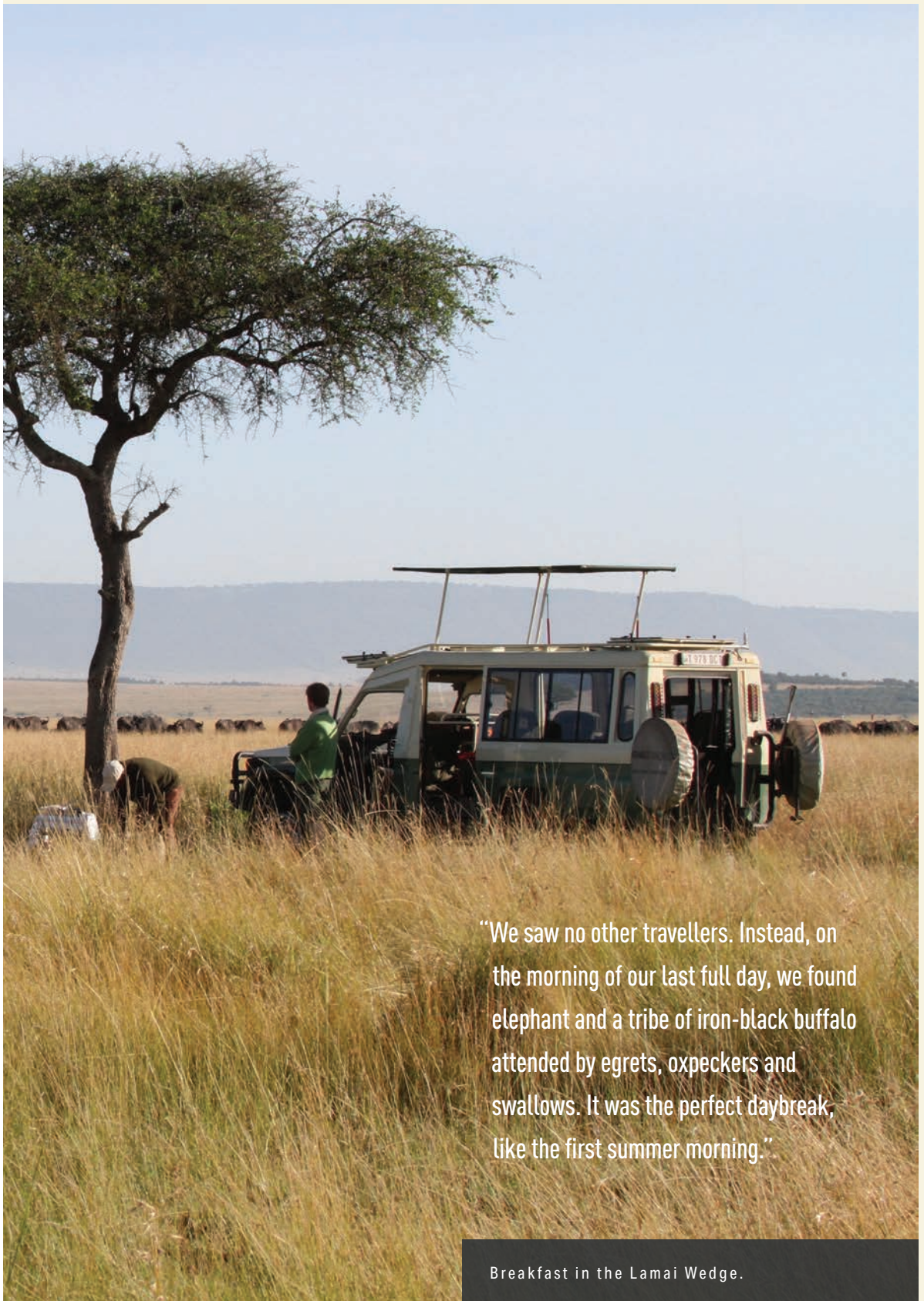


Astonishing air clarity is a feature of this time of year.



Like ships at sea, elephant beneath the Nyamalumbwa Hills.





“We saw no other travellers. Instead, on the morning of our last full day, we found elephant and a tribe of iron-black buffalo attended by egrets, oxpeckers and swallows. It was the perfect daybreak, like the first summer morning.”

Breakfast in the Lamai Wedge.



The Lamai wedge - some of the best game viewing in the Serengeti, but almost devoid of tourists between December and May.



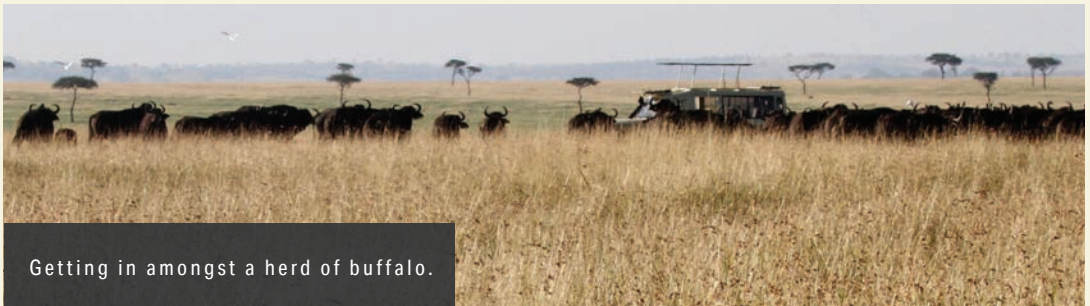
The sitting room at Mkombe's house - a sensational private house in the Northern Serengeti.



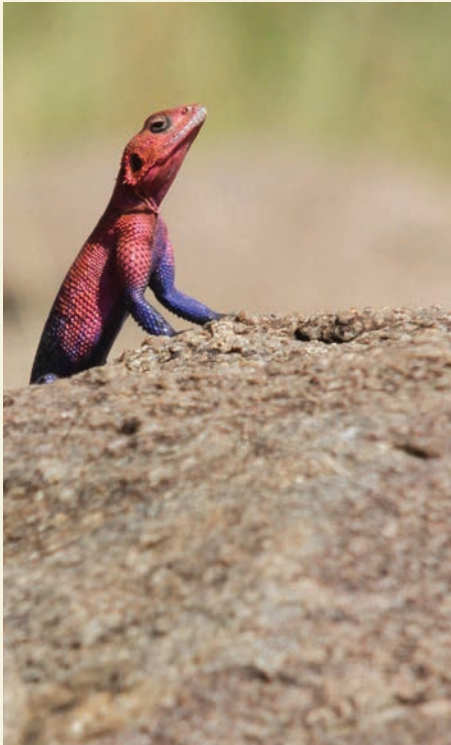
Maasai in Piyaya Village.

SERENGETI SAMPLE TRIP

“Siringet, as the Maasai named it, the place where the land runs on forever,” is famous for the migration of its one and a half million wildebeest.



Getting in amongst a herd of buffalo.



Agama lizard.

THE FINANCIAL TIMES SAMPLE TRIP IN THE SERENGETI

Nomad's camps and guides are amongst the best in the business, so with 2 nights out of the 7 free of charge, this offer represents astonishing value. This trip can be easily extended to include the coast or other areas of Tanzania.

DETAILS

 TANZANIA

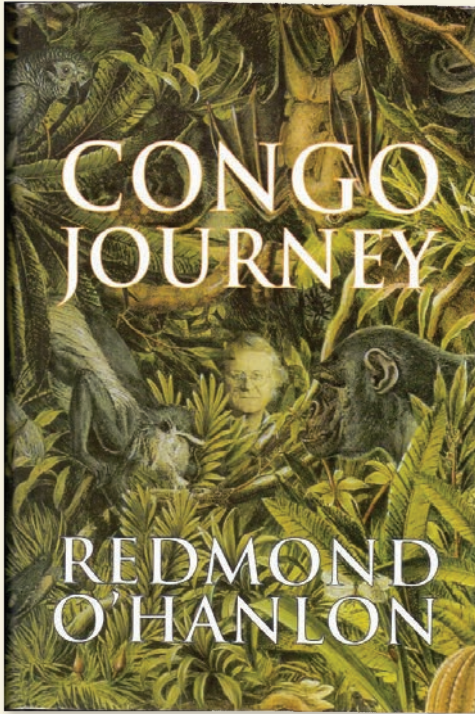
 7 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£4250 PER PERSON

6

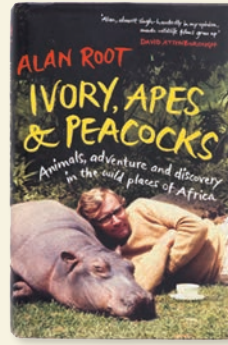
BOOKS TO TAKE YOU TO AFRICA

(WITHOUT LEAVING HOME)



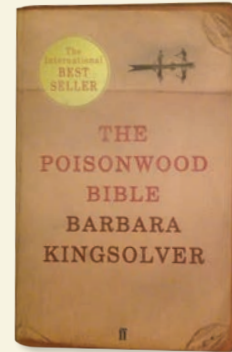
1. CONGO JOURNEY

Redmond O'Hanlon



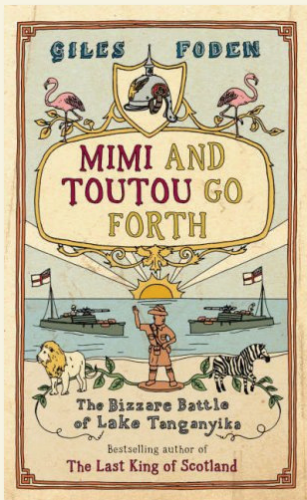
2. IVORY, APES & PEACOCKS

Alan Root



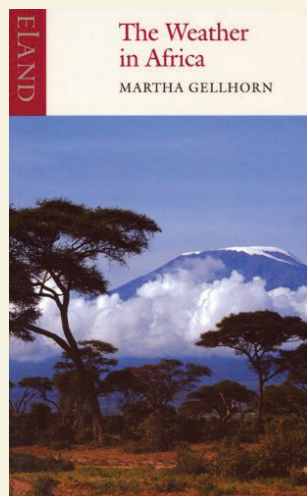
3. THE POISONWOOD BIBLE

Barbara Kingsolver



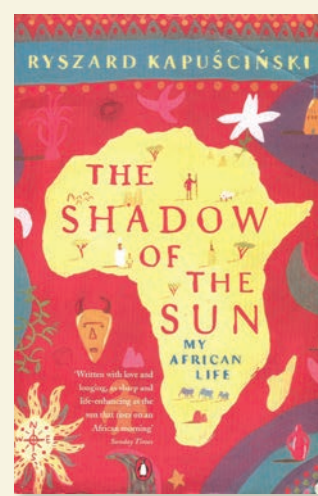
4. MIMI AND TOUTOU GO FORTH

Giles Foden



5. THE WEATHER IN AFRICA

Martha Gellhorn



6. THE SHADOW OF THE SUN

Ryszard Kapuściński



CONGO OUR JOURNEY

WRITTEN BY: ROD TETHER

Virunga remains a stronghold for the highly endangered Mountain Gorillas.

ROD TETHER VISITS THE VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK IN THE CONGO FOR NATURAL HIGH



/// ROD TETHER

“It is now possible to be tracking mountain gorillas in the morning and be amongst hippo, buffalo and elephant in the afternoon.”

Virunga has been at the top of my personal bucket-list for a quarter of a century – and it’s a rare thing indeed that somewhere so long craved-for can meet and exceed expectations. More than anything Virunga feels real, as far from mass-tourism as one can travel – there is nothing contrived here, there does not need to be as the story being told is so compelling it eschews unnecessary elaboration.

Straddling the Nile-Congo watershed there’s nowhere on the planet that gets close to the diversity of the Virunga National Park. At 7,900 sq km it’s fairly modest by African standards, yet it encapsulates glacial peaks, high-altitude forest, open savannah, lowland rainforest, lakes, rivers and marsh.

Virunga has long been associated with birdlife (the park list stands at an astonishing 706) and primates - 23 species occur here including Chimpanzee, Mountain and Eastern Lowland Gorilla. However, with the opening of Lulimbi Tented Camp on the Ishasha River, opposite Uganda’s Queen Elizabeth NP, it is now possible to be tracking mountain gorillas in the morning and be amongst hippo, buffalo and elephant in the afternoon.



Portered trek to the 3470m summit of Nyriagongo - an active stratovolcano.



Extraordinary photographic opportunities among the Gorillas.



Mikeno - park headquarters and base for the Park's conservationists.



We approached, on foot, a herd of 75 elephants who were remarkably relaxed given the area's turbulent recent history.



Spend the night overlooking Nyiragongo, the world's largest lava field.

Our party were Lulimbi's inaugural guests and the game was nothing short of spectacular. We approached, on foot, a herd of 75 elephants who were remarkably relaxed given the area's turbulent recent history. This is plains-game country with birds and mammals that will be familiar to anyone who has spent time on safari in East or Southern Africa.

We spent just over a week in the Park and split our time equally between the Mountain Gorillas – undertaking two consecutive treks to different Silverbacks and their harems; Lulimbi; the park headquarters – where you can witness first-hand the incredible conservation work being done bringing this park back from the brink; climbing Mount Nyiragongo – the world's largest lava lake; and finally a couple of nights R&R on a private island on Lake Kivu. Any one of these places would be worth an expedition on its own merit and to be able to combine them all in one short expedition is, frankly, almost unbelievable.

The challenges facing Virunga – Africa's oldest National Park – are well told; that it is home to a population of the highly endangered Mountain Gorilla that find themselves in one of Africa's least stable regions. What most don't realise is that as a safari experience Virunga holds its own against anywhere I've ever been, this is arguably the most complete safari on offer anywhere - if I could only ever visit one park in Africa it would have to be Virunga.

Natural High is planning trips to the Virunga in the coming months and a week here combines easily with a multitude of safari destinations in the region – from the Serengeti to Luangwa. We'll be releasing dates shortly but in the meantime please contact Rod with any questions or if you would like any further information.

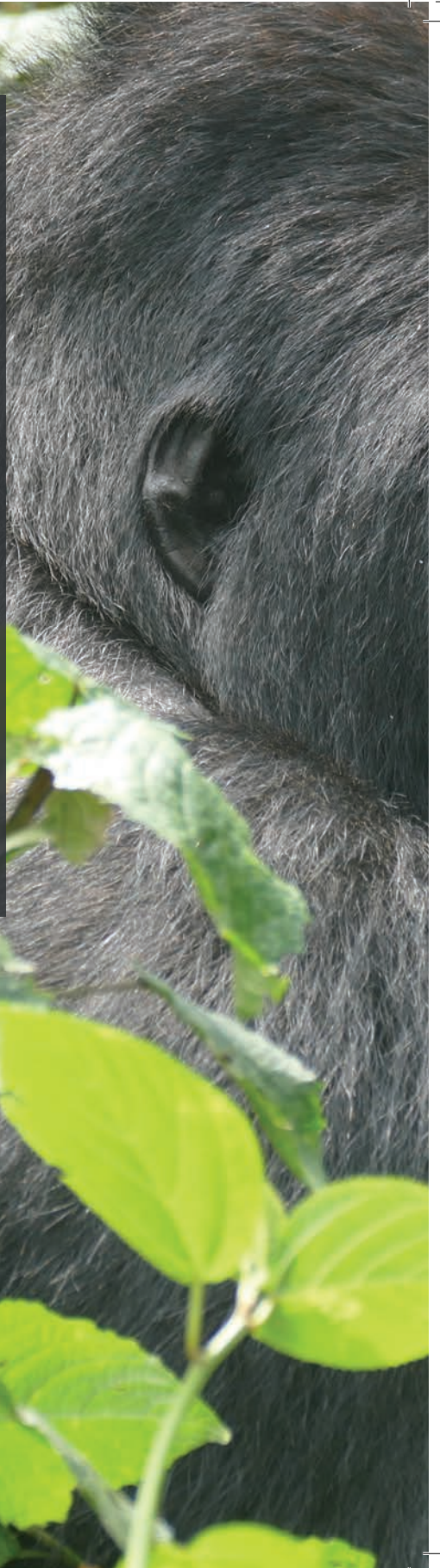


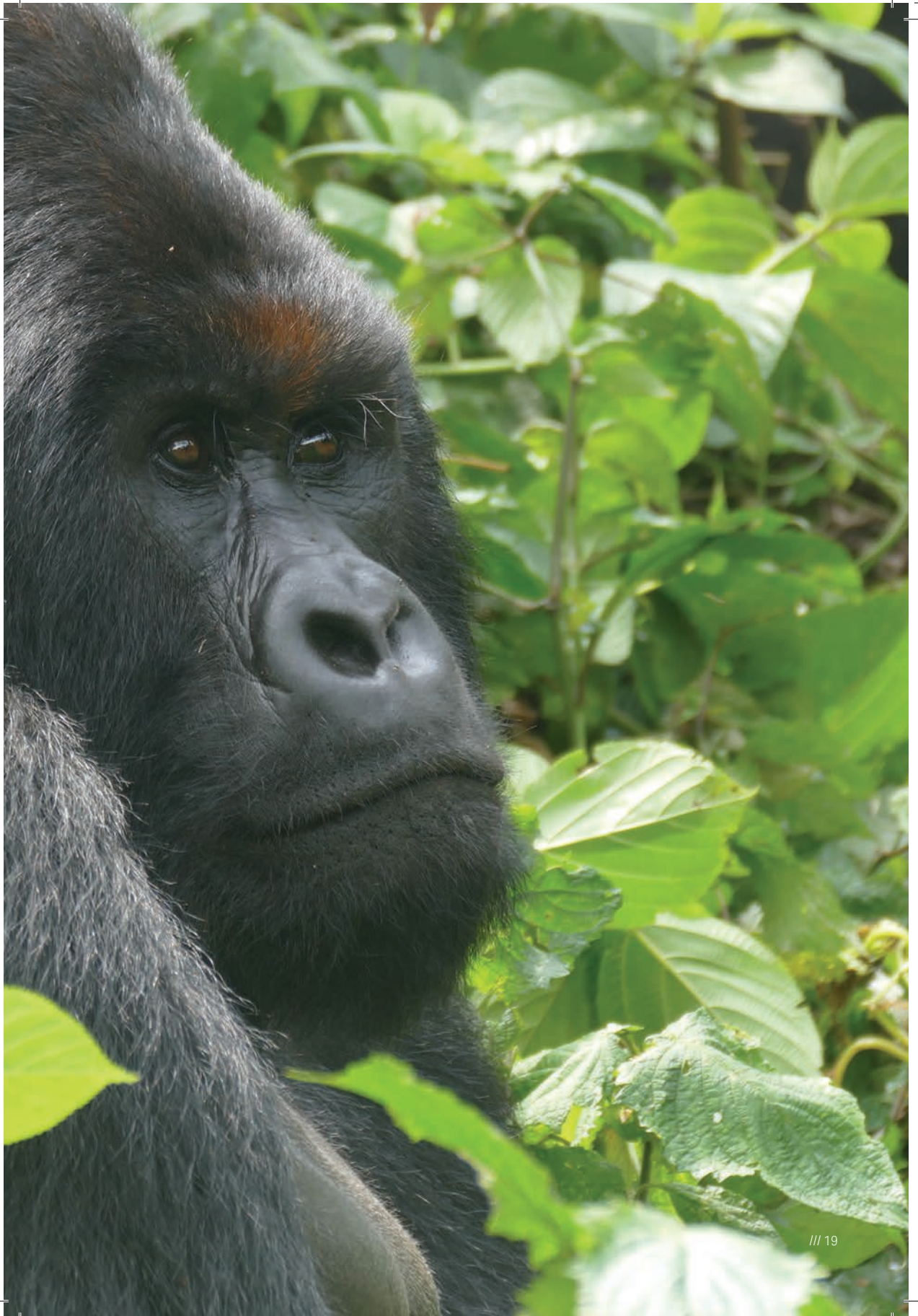
ROD TETHER - AFRICA SPECIALIST

Born in Uganda and guiding since the age of 17, Rod is recognised as one of Africa's leading safari guides. His spiritual home remains Zambia's North Luangwa where he and his wife Guz created and ran the fabulous Kutandala Camp for more than a decade before their children necessitated a move to "civilisation".

Since then he's been leading mobile safaris to far-flung wild parts of Africa.

Rod's a passionate all-round naturalist and now uses his unsurpassed knowledge and huge network of contacts to create the perfect safari. Always seeking out new adventures and destinations to guide in - the current fixation is Zakouma National Park in Chad.





VIRUNGA SAMPLE TRIP

“Virunga has 23 species of primates including Chimpanzee, Mountain and Eastern Lowland Gorilla.



ROD TETHER VISITS THE VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK IN THE CONGO FOR NATURAL HIGH

A week in the Virunga is arguably the most diverse safari experience on offer anywhere - particularly now there is access and accommodation in the central savannah area. Gorilla and Chimpanzee trekking, walking safaris amongst savannah game, sensational birding and ascending an active volcano. Guide-led small group departures.

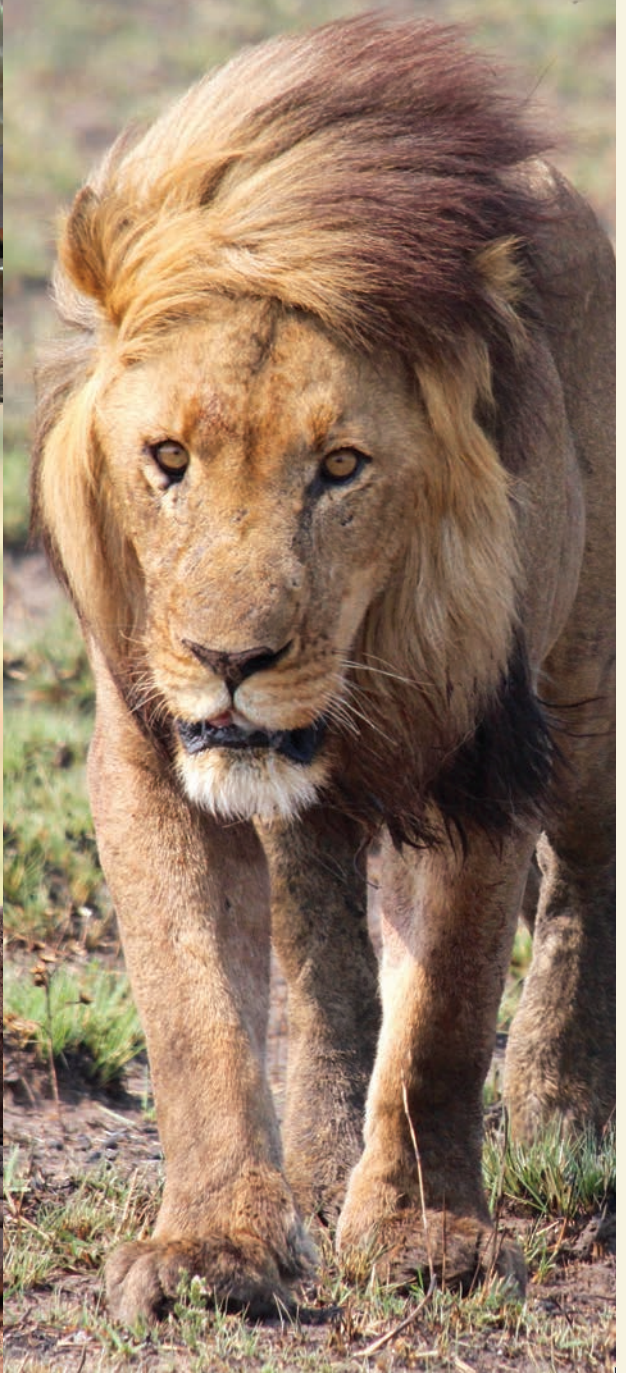
DETAILS

 THE CONGO

 7 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£4500 PER PERSON





GET INVOLVED:



/// TRANQUILISED ELEPHANT

FANCY GETTING INVOLVED WITH CONSERVATION IN AFRICA?

Participate in the annual Big 5 Wildlife Census at Lewa Borana Wildlife Conservancy in Northern Kenya.

For one week commencing March 2nd, guests can be part of the ranger team helping to track, locate and count game species for the annual Big 5 wildlife census - the most important conservation tool in measuring the success of their unending projects. Activities will include tracker dog demonstrations, ranger deployment, and a conservation lecture from Michael Dyer, as well as enjoying the luxuries of three fantastic and high-end African safari lodges: The Emakoko, Lewa Wilderness and Borana.

DETAILS

 KENYA

 6 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY
FROM £3900 PER PERSON



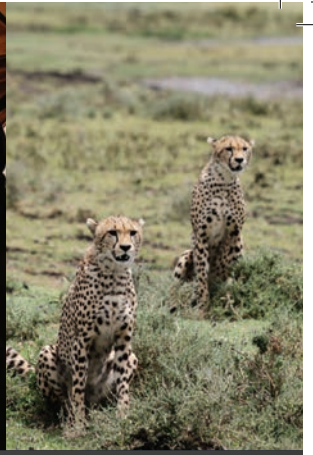
EXPERIENCE AFRICA

From the High Atlas Mountains to the rock-cut churches of Lalibela, the gorillas of Rwanda to the penguins of Boulders Beach, we create awesome journeys that you'll never forget. We specialise in putting our clients in the right place, at the right time, with the right guide. To us, perfection is all in the planning.

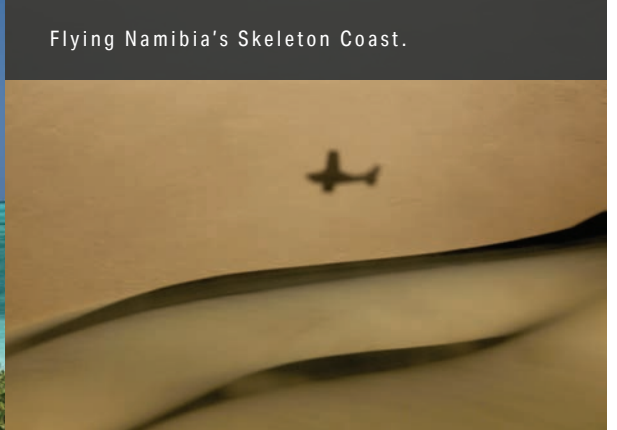
The Drakensberg in Kwazulu Natal.



Camping in the M'goun Valley in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains.



Flying Namibia's Skeleton Coast.



Ibo Island in Mozambique.



Zambia's Kafue by hot air balloon.



Elephant at Murchison Falls, Uganda.

MOROCCO ATLAS MOUNTAINS CAMP

Carried on the backs of mules, your private tented camp in the Atlas Mountains travels ahead of you. Walk into camp at the end of the day and you'll find everything prepared. Tents up, lanterns lit, mint tea on the go.

DETAILS



MOROCCO



4 DAYS



EXPECT TO PAY
FROM £600 PER PERSON



NOMAD'S ENTAMANU NGORONGORO

The opening of Nomad's Entamanu Ngorongoro, perched on the northwestern rim of Ngorongoro Crater with views into the caldera and the Serengeti brings a whole new approach to Ngorongoro. Visit the crater, walk in the highlands with Maasai guides or just soak up the view.

DETAILS



TANZANIA



7 DAYS



EXPECT TO PAY
FROM £4200 PER PERSON

MAM BETI CAMP

Zambia's Liuwa Plains, home to Africa's "other" massive wildebeest migration has always been alluring, but with no permanent camps it's been complicated to visit. As from June next year this will change as Norman Carr Safaris open their new Mambeti Camp, located on the upper Munde stream, a site chosen for its sweeping vistas and complete wildlife immersion.

DETAILS



ZAMBIA



4 DAYS



EXPECT TO PAY
FROM £4000 PER PERSON



EXPERIENCE SOUTHERN AFRICA

“Victoria Falls is a hive of activity and the centre of adrenalin in southern Africa.”



VIC FALLS AND ZAMBEZI

Livingstone, on the Zambian side of the Victoria Falls, allows direct access from South Africa, Kenya and Lusaka. There's a good range of accommodation and a tremendous number of activities - from helicopter rides to rafting, bungee-jumping to birding.

DETAILS

 ZAMBIA

 7 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£1885 PER PERSON

“The less-is-more formula
Natural High advocates
makes complete sense.”



BOTSWANA IN THE GREEN

Botswana in the green season is excellent value and offers great variety from Chobe to the Okavango Delta to the Kalahari Desert. There are a number of small, simple but very comfortable camps that we use where you can expect excellent guiding. And you can begin with a few days at Victoria Falls.



DETAILS



BOTSWANA



12 NIGHTS



EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£3880 PER PERSON





January - Pongal harvest festival in Tamil Nadu.



April - Monks at the Bhumthang festival, Bhutan.



February - Theyyam dancers perform at village shrines in north Kerala.



July - the Hemis festival in remote Ladakh.



October - A traditional swing in Dashain celebrations in Nepal.



November - camels head to Pushkar Camel fair in Rajasthan.

6

FESTIVALS TO VISIT IN INDIA, NEPAL AND BHUTAN



EXPERIENCE INDIA BHUTAN & NEPAL

From the sound of a conch shell horn announcing festivities at a Himalayan temple, to the roar of a tiger in the jungles of Bandhavgarh, the Indian Subcontinent is a land of unmatched diversity. Whether you want to join monks at a remote festival, share stories with a maharaja or hike between villages among spectacular mountain scenery, we'll put you in the right place, at the right time, with the right people for an experience that will stay with you forever.



A village in the foothills of Nepal's Annapurna.



Taksang Monastery, Paro Bhutan.



Decorated elephant in Tamil Nadu.



On the Druk Path, Bhutan.



Bengal Tiger, Bandhavgarh.



TIGERS AND TREKS

“We’d like to see the Taj Mahal and tigers if we are lucky. Open to all your ideas. I guess we’d have about 2 weeks”



Evening at Shergarh in Kanha.



Breakfast on the Banjar River.



One of our favourite owner-run lodges.

TAJ MAHAL AND TIGERS: A SAFARI IN INDIA

April is a great time for a safari when water holes and vegetation are drying up making wildlife easier to spot. Using excellent guides and owner-run lodges all our clients have good tiger sightings.

DETAILS



CENTRAL INDIA



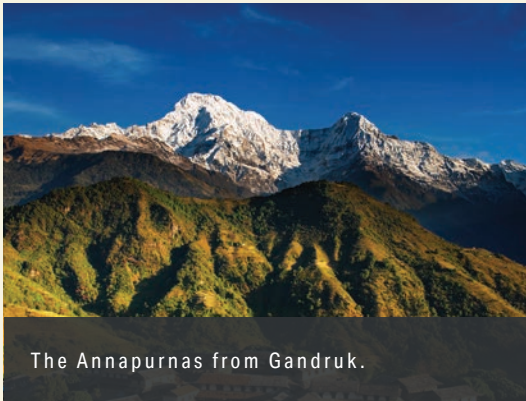
12 NIGHT



EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£2100 PER PERSON



Lunch with a view at Dhulikel.



The Annapurnas from Gandruk.

LUXURY TREK IN THE HIMALAYAS

We recommended travelling in late March, as flowers are coming into bloom, the climate is ideal for walking, days clear and sunny with views of the spectacular mountains.

After a couple of nights in comfort at a wonderful heritage hotel for exploring Kathmandu we suggested travelling overland towards the mountains and the chance for a couple of trek preparation walks around the traditional little hilltop town of Bandipur and lakeside Pokhara.

DETAILS

 NEPAL

 13 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£3000 PER PERSON

BHUTAN FOR FAMILIES

March is a great time to visit Bhutan - sunny days with clear skies give stunning views of the snow-capped Himalayas. Focus on a specific area to reduce long journeys and give more time doing things.

DETAILS

 BHUTAN

 11 NIGHTS

 EXPECT TO PAY FROM
£2975 PER PERSON



Gangtey Goenpa, Phobjika Valley.



Thimpu Monastery in Bhutan.

“Natural High shines rays of adventurous light
into some of the least explored, most exciting
corners of the wider world”

FINANCIAL TIMES



ALEX EDWARDS



CATHERINE RONAN



VANESSA JANION



ANDREA HULME



ROD TETHER



ANNIE GARNETT

**LET OUR EXPERIENCED TEAM
PLAN YOUR JOURNEY**

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