

The  
beginner's  
guide to:

# Safari

## Where should I go?

Your choice is primarily between East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) and southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe). East Africa is closer and cheaper to get to and claims Kilimanjaro, the Serengeti and the Great Migration, plus an abundance of bush-and-beach combos, while southern Africa has the Kruger Park, the Kalahari and the Okavango Delta, with walking and self-drive safaris forming a bigger part of the mix. Go to East Africa if you're on a budget or want to add a beach holiday, Botswana and Zambia if you want a more pristine experience, and South Africa for herds of elephants, luxury lodges plus malaria-free trips in the Shamwari, Madikwe or Kwandwe reserves.

## Will it cost me an arm and a leg?

At a first glance, safaris seem expensive compared with other holidays, but the price usually includes park permits (£25-£50 per day), full-board accommodation, transport and the services of professional guides. This is one area where it's not worth surfing for rock-bottom deals — how much is your trip of a lifetime worth? Even the cheapest safari,

where you camp on the ground, sleep in dome tents and travel cramped in a minibus, works out at £100 per day. Double that to around £200, and you get to stay in fully furnished tents with all the fittings of a hotel room, be fed by great cooks, and drive in open-sided 4WDs with excellent guides. It's these details that can make the difference between a good safari and a great one. Plus there are some excellent deals to be had: Cox & Kings (020 7873 5000, [coxandkings.co.uk](http://coxandkings.co.uk)) has a 'Highlights of Tanzania' 10-day trip from £2,495pp, while Explore (01252 883703, [explore.co.uk](http://explore.co.uk)) has a 15-day tour of Botswana, Namibia and Zambia from £2,899pp. Both of these include flights, but if you arrange your own, you can have a week at the Encounter Mara camp in Kenya from £1,279pp with Expert Africa (020 8232 9777, [expertafrica.com](http://expertafrica.com)).

## Isn't it dangerous?

As you're in the realm of wild animals, the potential for a dangerous encounter is always there — but that's why a safari is such a thrilling experience. You'll typically leave for a game drive just after dawn and come back for a late

breakfast, then return to camp for the middle of the day, when the wildlife is inactive, and go out again as the sun sets, returning after nightfall. Animals don't recognise people inside vehicles as threat or prey, and you can safely watch and photograph them from your seat. Some family camps have discreet electric fencing but camps are usually unfenced. They are strict about your movements and employ guards to escort you to your tent. Safari-related deaths are so rare that they always make headlines; recent South African statistics show that you're roughly 500 times more likely to die in a traffic accident than from an animal encounter. Remember, the creature that kills most people in Africa is still the humble mosquito, so start your malaria course before you leave and have the jabs recommended by the operator.

**Dummies' gaffe:** It gets cold in Africa at night (even in summer), so pack some warm clothing. Don't wear anything bright as this alerts the animals and avoid dark blue or black colours because they attract the tsetse fly.  
*John Malathronas* ➤

