

# WILDLIFE

WORLDWIDE



HOLIDAYS WITH 100%  
FINANCIAL PROTECTION



The natural  
choice for  
wildlife holidays

# Welcome

After spending considerable time and effort reflecting, questioning what we do and how we do it, and scrutinising the processes within our office and the systems we use for support, I am delighted to say that we are imbued with a new vigour, undiminished enthusiasm, and greater optimism than ever.

My own determination to continue building on the solid foundation of twenty years of experience in wildlife tourism, since we started from very humble beginnings – to offer what is simply the finest selection of high quality, good value, tailor-made wildlife holidays – remains undaunted, and is very much at the core of all we do.

A physical move to high-tech office premises in the attractive city of Winchester leaves us much better connected to, and more closely integrated with, the outside world, and thus better able to receive visitors.

Our team is leaner, tighter, more widely travelled and more knowledgeable than ever before, allowing us to focus on terrestrial, marine and – along with Dive Worldwide – submarine life without distraction.

In planning this brochure we deliberately set out to whet the appetite, and make no mention of either dates or prices. As the vast majority of trips are tailored to our clients' exact requirements – whether in terms of itinerary, duration, standard of accommodation or price – the itineraries herein serve merely as indications of what is possible. Thereafter, you can refine these suggestions in discussion with one of our experienced consultants to pin down your precise needs and wants, so we can together create the wildlife holiday of your dreams.

However this is only a beginning. As the travel industry – let alone the world! – changes, and new channels of communication come on stream, we plan to make increasing use of our website and of course social media to develop and present new ideas and opportunities.



We sincerely hope you enjoy looking through this brochure, and trust that it will inspire you to travel to see some of the world's remarkable wildlife. Truly exciting times lie ahead...!

**Chris Breen**  
Founder, Wildlife Worldwide



“ I have travelled with Wildlife Worldwide, been to great places, met great people and seen great beasts – and always, I know it’s going to be done right. That’s because they do ethics as well as efficiency. ”

Simon Barnes. Conservationist & author

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## Your Financial Security

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We are an ATOL-bonded tour operator, authorised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Every holiday we sell that includes a flight element is protected under our Air Tour Organisers Licence. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad, and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking



We are a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT), an approved body authorised by the UK Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). Membership signifies that we provide financial protection through a bond for the monies we take in advance bookings. The bond covers the reimbursement of prepayments, the cost of repatriation to the UK from abroad, any refunds due which are agreed but not paid before failure, and any reasonable additional costs of returning to the UK which may be incurred as a result of our failure during the holiday.

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## Contact Us

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# Tailor-made wildlife holidays

*A unique journey of wildlife and discovery designed just for you...*



At Wildlife Worldwide we specialise in tailor-making holidays. This is what we started doing in 1992, and it is what we do now – it has been our philosophy right from the start, when the very first Wildlife Worldwide brochure was produced. A tailor-made holiday gives you the freedom and flexibility to travel how, when and where you want to. You are unconstrained by the wishes of a group, and we will design your holiday together so that you are doing what you want, when you want.

To make this process a little easier, our brochure shows a whole series of trips, each with names, and each with a specified length. These are all 'tailor-made' and they operate without minimum numbers. They are *our* ideas for *your* holidays. We have 'been there and done it' and we know what works on a trip and what doesn't. As a result, many of our travellers choose to 'book their holidays off the page'.

Guide prices for our suggested itineraries can be found on our website. However, all of the trips that we show can be adapted to suit your requirements. We can make them longer or shorter. We can chop bits out of one itinerary and into another. We can combine countries. And in all the countries that we operate, we can design completely different itineraries from scratch.

In a few select locations we offer small group departures. These are clearly marked either on the following pages or on our website.

## What is a tailor-made holiday?

**The joy of a tailor-made itinerary is that your holiday is designed around your requirements and you are not restricted to the set itinerary of a group departure.**

- ▶ Do you like the look of one of our suggested itineraries but would like to stay at alternative accommodation or include a few extra days and extend your holiday?
- ▶ Are you going on holiday to relax rather than spend your time packing and unpacking, moving from one place to the next?
- ▶ Are you celebrating a special occasion – perhaps your honeymoon, a special birthday or an anniversary? Why not enjoy each others company in privacy without being part of a larger group?
- ▶ Are you travelling abroad to stay with friends or family and wishing to add-on a safari, a cruise, or even some self-drive exploration?
- ▶ Maybe you only want to be away for a long weekend, or perhaps you have an extended amount of time to enjoy travelling and would like us to help with part of it?
- ▶ If you have a limited amount of time, group departure dates often don't fit. You may well want a private vehicle, or the very best naturalist the region has to offer.

**If the answer is YES to any of the above, a tailor-made holiday is the perfect solution!**

## How it works

1. Read through our brochure and decide where it is you wish to travel to – the chances are that you already have a pretty good idea!
2. If you like the look of one of suggested itineraries then you can book it 'straight from the page' either by telephoning one of our consultants or by visiting our website ([www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)). Of course, you're also very welcome to come and visit us at our offices in Winchester.
3. If an itinerary doesn't quite fit the bill (perhaps you want to stay in different lodges, or extend your stay, or even visit completely different locations) then contact one of our highly experienced consultants who will discuss your ideas, and design a holiday for you.
4. Once you have made your booking we will confirm your holiday and send you your 'Personal Travel Plan' with advice on climate, clothing, the best field guides and thoughts on photographic equipment. All you need to do is look forward to going away on holiday!
5. Once away you will be exceptionally well looked after. Local guides will accompany you on any pre-arranged sightseeing and game-viewing to ensure you get the most out of your holiday.



# The world is your oyster...

**Our knowledge of worldwide destinations enables us to not only combine areas within a country and countries within a continent, but also to put together trans-continental and round-the-world itineraries. Tailor-making holidays is what we specialise in and the options are only limited by your imagination and of course your budget!**

Here are a few ideas to whet your appetite. These combinations do work, we have organised them before... Worldwide airline schedules and flight routings now make these combinations easier and as trans-continental flight costs continue to fall, they become more and more attractive!

## **Classic Southern Africa**

Combine Cape Town with a visit to the magnificent sand dunes of Sossusvlei in Namibia. Continue to the Okavango Delta in Botswana for some fantastic game-viewing, before relaxing for a few days in Livingstone, Zambia where you also have the opportunity to view the splendid Victoria Falls.

## **South American Experience**

Following a visit to the Amazon and the Pantanal in Brazil, enjoy the Iguazu Falls from the Argentinian side before continuing to the Valdes Peninsula, home to elephant seals, penguins and whales. Revel in the magnificent glacial scenery of Torres del Paine in Chile before experiencing a total contrast in the Atacama Desert.

Round off your holiday with a cruise around the Galápagos Islands.

## **Eastern Promise**

View Tigers in India before travelling to Nepal to spot the elusive and endangered Indian rhinoceros in Chitwan National Park. Continue to Borneo to see orang-utans and fabulous rainforest birdlife before flying to Australia to enjoy a visit to the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest.

## **A Round-the-World Wildlife Dream**

Enjoy an African safari before flying to Australia and driving along the Great Ocean Road to Melbourne. Continue to New Zealand to go whale-watching before embarking on an expedition voyage to Antarctica. Disembark in Argentina and explore the magnificent scenery of Patagonia.



# Sustainable Travel

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**Our goal is to promote responsible travel, support sustainable development, and assist our clients and the organisations we work with around the world to protect fragile environments and sensitive cultures.**

Rather than imposing a rigid policy on our overseas partners, as part of our selection process we endeavour to ensure that they already conform to, or at the very least are working towards, a set of appropriate standards. By aligning their practices within a local context to our own, we can collaborate to make an active and demonstrable commitment to sustainable travel.

Many of our partners are already leaders in this field, and although the specifics of their individual policies may vary considerably, each contains the following key components that are either already in place or in the process of being implemented, and involves actively adopting plans to address the following areas.

## **Environment**

Reduce energy use in general; increase the use of 'clean' energy; implement carbon reduction measures; reduce water consumption; minimise wastage; recycle wherever possible; dispose of waste responsibly; source all materials and produce locally wherever possible.

## **Wildlife & Conservation**

Support and contribute to conservation efforts and initiatives; use fully qualified and professionally trained wildlife guides; assess performance regularly; provide on-going training; enforce strict policies of no contact, no feeding and no disturbance to wildlife; advise clients regarding appropriate conduct.

## **Local Communities**

Develop mutually beneficial relationships with local communities; employ local staff where possible; support sustainable development projects and initiatives; create opportunities for local communities to supply/produce items; inform visitors about social and cultural issues, and advise appropriate conduct.

## **Staff**

Pay a fair wage; issue contracts of employment, and provide fair working conditions and other benefits; adopt a fair and equitable employment policy that does not discriminate on the basis of gender, ethnicity, colour, race or creed; provide training and develop opportunities for career progression; respect elected staff representatives; adhere to clear processes in cases of grievance.



**With proper planning and management tourism can be a powerful force in achieving sustainable development. We attempt to achieve this through our approach to the following issues:**

#### **Itinerary**

While planning a trip, we try to take environmental considerations into account, and actively seek opportunities to create positive and sustainable impacts.

#### **Environment**

We assess all trips with regard to their environmental impact, and attempt to reduce this by minimising wastage, recycling and using environmentally friendly sources of energy and water wherever possible. We issue guidelines designed to raise awareness of how to protect, rather than damage, fragile environments.

#### **Information**

In our travel plans we provide information about responsible wildlife watching. The local guides we employ provide an insight into a country's culture and belief systems.

#### **Local staff**

The vast majority of our trips use local guides and support staff, thereby providing employment and generating incomes in local communities. We develop long-term relationships with local suppliers and work together to develop new products.

#### **Local services**

We work closely with local suppliers, and – where possible – choose locally-owned accommodation. We encourage local enterprise and do our best to ensure that the revenues generated by our stay remain in country.

#### **Partnerships**

We actively seek to develop links with local projects and charities, and endeavour to support these.

In our UK office, we:

- ▶ Monitor energy consumption and actively seek ways of reducing this.
- ▶ Attempt to reduce paper usage by using digital communication wherever possible, and developing our website and electronic literature.
- ▶ Source all paper and consumables from sustainable supplies.
- ▶ Recycle paper, printer and toner cartridges, and offer training on waste reduction.

Our office practices are under constant review. We monitor all initiatives and meet regularly to discuss current practices and new ideas. We recognise that we can do even more, and welcome suggestions as to how we can achieve this aim.



# Europe

If you don't feel like venturing too far afield, there are some great opportunities to enjoy wildlife and nature right on your doorstep in the UK and Europe. Here are a few small group trips to whet your appetite... but keep an eye on our website as we are introducing new ideas all the time.

## The Azores

The Portuguese mid-Atlantic archipelago of the Azores is a haven of calm. These nine lush volcanic islands are still untouched by mass tourism, and the surrounding ocean is home to an exceptional variety of whales and dolphins. In recent years, no fewer than 26 species have been seen around the islands – these commonly include bottlenose, Risso's, common, spotted

and striped dolphins, sperm and pilot whales, plus Cuvier's and Sowerby's beaked whales. Sightings of false killer whales, blue, minke, fin and sei whales are somewhat more rare. Faial, in the central group of islands, makes an excellent base for boat trips, and is worth exploring to see fantastic geological formations caused by volcanic eruption.

## Scotland

The deep indentation of the Moray Firth, on the east coast of Scotland between the Highland capital of Inverness and the peninsula of the so-called Black Isle, is famed for its population of bottlenose dolphins. Due to the extreme coldness of the North Sea, these dolphins are the largest of their kind in the world.

On the north shore of the firth, beside the Black Isle town of Fortrose, Chanonry Point is renowned as the best place in northern Europe to watch dolphins hunting from the shore, due to the deepwater channel that runs close to the headland. Whales such as minke are occasionally sighted on boat trips.

### WHALES AND DOLPHINS IN THE AZORES

SMALL GROUP

From your base in a comfortable hotel in Horta, Faial's capital, you head out to sea most days in the company of a cetacean researcher. Your boat, the catamaran 'Physeter', is the perfect stable platform for watching whales and dolphins. In the evenings your naturalist guide will talk about these cetaceans and explain how your presence contributes to scientific research. On any one tour six to eight species are usually seen, and two free days on land offer opportunities to explore Faial and nearby Pico.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Horta on Faial Island, 9-nights hotel. Welcome dinner **Day 2** Six days (weather permitting) at sea watching whales and dolphins, plus two free shore days to explore Faial and neighbouring Pico **Day 10** Depart for UK

**Departures** Regular fixed dates from May to September

**Group Size** Maximum 12



This trip is endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



### DOLPHINS OF THE MORAY FIRTH

SMALL GROUP

Staying in a charmingly converted old brewery in the historic village of Cromarty, at the tip of the Black Isle, this short weekend break includes two boat trips to see bottlenose dolphins. Other highlights include an entertaining presentation from the WDCS field officer and expert wildlife photographer, plus a full day trip to the WDCS Wildlife Centre at Spey Bay on the estuary's south shore. There are also opportunities for dolphin watching from Chanonry Point and an optional walk to the South Sutor.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Midday pick-up at Inverness airport/station and drive to Cromarty, 3-nights hotel. Afternoon boat trip in Moray Firth, evening presentation **Day 2** Drive to Spey Bay to visit WDCS Wildlife Centre, nature walk **Day 3** Morning boat trip in Moray Firth plus shore-based dolphin watching at Chanonry Point **Day 4** Drop-off at Inverness airport/station around midday *Transport within the UK to and from Inverness is not included.*

**Departures** Regular fixed dates in May, June and September

**Group Size** Maximum 9



This trip is endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects



## Scotland

The Shetland Islands are a paradise for birdwatchers, and the surrounding seas are one of the best places in the British Isles to see marine mammals. In the UK's largest seabird colonies, a raucous cacophony of the calls of tens of thousands of gannets, puffins, guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes, fulmars and skuas fills the air.

Coastal inlets are home to otters as well as common and grey seals, and dolphins, harbour porpoises and whales are regularly seen. If lucky, you may even see orcas hunting close inshore, a school of white-sided dolphins chasing a shoal of fish or perhaps a minke whale.

## Finland

One of Europe's last remaining wildernesses – a mosaic of taiga forest, crystalline lakes and ponds, rivers, bog, pine heath and gravel ridges – stretches from northern Finland across the border into Russia. This vast expanse of virtually undisturbed, pristine countryside is a perfect refuge for wildlife, which

explains the presence of some 430 bird species, more than 100,000 moose, and large carnivores that include 200 wolves and around 900 brown bears. There is no better place in Europe to see bears, and former border guard stations have been converted into comfortable accommodation with dedicated photographic hides.

### THE SHETLAND ISLANDS

 SMALL GROUP

The rugged islands of the Shetlands offer fantastic seascapes and an astounding diversity of fauna, flora and marine life. Travelling by minibus with an expert naturalist guide you'll explore from two bases: Sumburgh in the south and Baltasound on Unst – the most northerly populated island of the British Isles. Boat trips and daily wildlife walks reveal the best of RSPB Reserves such as Sumburgh Head and Fetlar, and Hermaness and the Keen of Hamar National Nature Reserves on Unst.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Pick-up at Sumburgh airport, 3-nights hotel. Evening boat trip to Mousa **Day 2** Visit Sumburgh Head, Tingwall Valley and boat trip around Noss **Day 4** Continue via Yell and Fetlar to Baltasound on Unst, 3-nights hotel. Explore Unst **Day 7** Drive via Yell back to Sumburgh, 1-night hotel **Day 8** Drop-off at Sumburgh airport

*Transport within the UK to and from Sumburgh is not included.*

**Departures** Regular fixed dates in May, June and July

**Group Size** Maximum 12



This trip is endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects

### BROWN BEAR EXPLORER

 SMALL GROUP

During a one week stay in the height of summer, the long evenings and early dawns allow incomparable opportunities to watch and photograph the wildlife of the forest. You'll stay at two carefully selected locations equipped with purpose-built hides, where you keep a night vigil with a naturalist guide to see bears, wolverines and wolves lured by carrion. In the day there are nature walks in the vicinity or optional trips further afield. Dedicated smaller hides are available at extra cost for professional photographers.

*Although this is a small group trip, we can also tailor an itinerary to your individual requirements.*

#### Itinerary

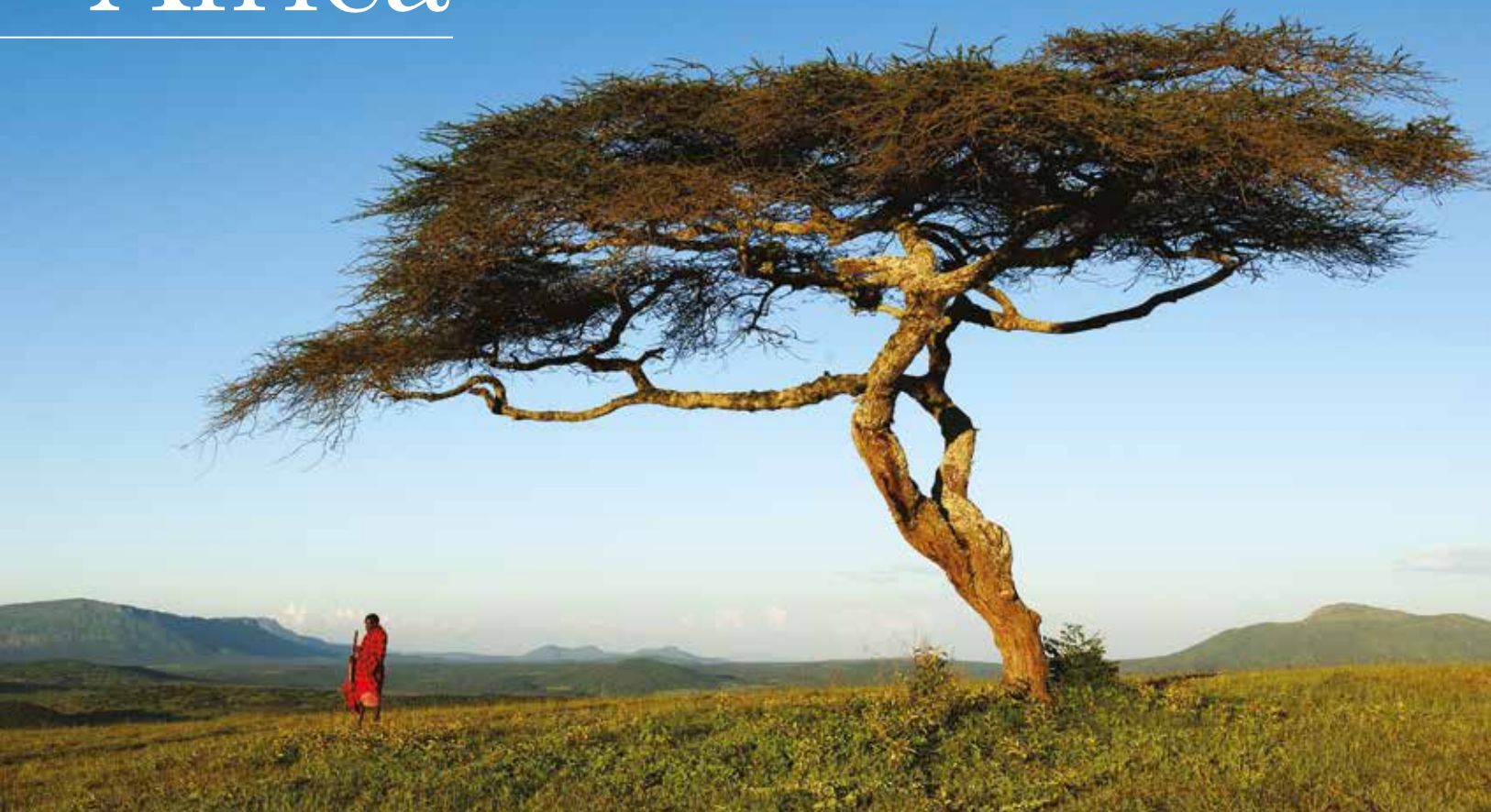
**Day 1** Fly to Kajaani and transfer to Pirttivaara, 4-nights Martinselkonen Wildlife Centre **Day 2** Spend two nights at a forest hide to see brown bears and birdlife **Day 5** Transfer to Viiksimo, 3-nights Boreal Wildlife Centre. Spend two nights at a hide to see wolverines and bears **Day 8** Transfer to Kajaani and fly to UK

*NB: on some dates the itinerary may operate in reverse.*

**Departures** Regular fixed dates in June July and August

**Group Size** Maximum 12

# Africa



## A Typical Day on Safari

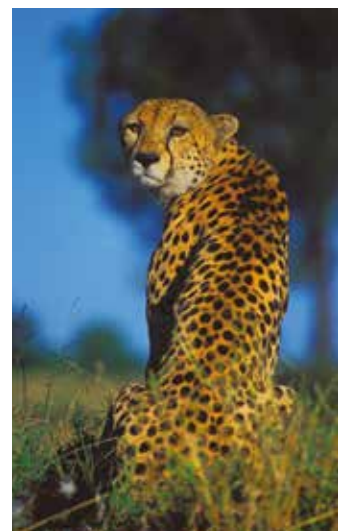
One of the most magical moments in the African bush is that moment before dawn, when the air is still cool, the birds and monkeys quiet and the primal calls of the night predators suggest that they have had a successful night's hunt. You awake eager with anticipation of the day ahead! Although some lodges and camps now cater to those who wish to make a later start, serious wildlife enthusiasts are aware that on safari the early bird catches the worm! For it is now that the bush

is most alive. The birds begin to wake as the first rays of sun hit the tops of the acacia trees, the browsers and grazers are lively before the heat of the day causes them to seek shade, and the predators are still active. It is now that you are most likely to round a corner to find a pride of lions feasting on a carcass, or vultures and hyenas squabbling over the scraps. Leopards and many other nocturnal animals are often still about, later seeking shade and sleep as the sun rises. By mid-morning the heat has risen and

game-viewing becomes harder, with the animals resting up under stands of trees, scrub and rocks. Safari-goers return to camp to do the same – eat, snooze and relax by the pool.

Setting out again you notice the change in the animals as sunset approaches. Cooler air wakes the predators who, hungry once again, begin to prowl, and their prey becomes increasingly anxious as dusk falls. Once again, it is the twilight hours that promise great game-viewing as the

early evening half light confuses prey and aids the predators' keen senses. Most parks do not permit night drives, but many camps and lodges are located in their own private concession areas where you can experience the thrill of the bush at night, hunting for eyes with spotlights and greatly raising the chances of viewing nocturnal hunters. Return to drinks around the campfire where tall tales are told and the day's adventures shared before a hearty meal.





### Tented Camp, Lodge or Hotel?

Your choice of accommodation depends on what sort of safari experience you wish to have. Do you dream of breakfasting under acacia trees with crisp white table linen and silver-service and sleeping under luxurious canvas in true 'Out of Africa' style? If so, then a luxury tented camp is the answer and they are found all over Africa. This level of service comes at a price, but the small scale of these camps and superb levels of attention make this a truly personal, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

If the thought of tents (no matter how luxurious) makes you nervous, then consider a lodge with private cottages. Some of the more commercial reserves offer hotel-style accommodation – notably in Kenya and Tanzania which is often more suitable for families and those on a budget. Namibia also provides budget self-catering accommodation in many

of the parks. But remember a shorter experience in a top lodge can easily surpass a much longer experience in a larger establishment.

### Guides and Vehicles

The single most important aspect of your trip will be the quality of your guide as they will be interpreting the wildlife for you. A good guide should also be able to answer any questions about each animal's habits and life-cycle. The best camps and lodges train up their own guides – with the camps in southern Africa producing some of the world's finest wildlife guides.

Most commonly game-viewing is enjoyed by 4-wheel drive vehicle, but walking safaris are becoming increasingly popular. To walk in the bush is a wonderful experience as you are able to enjoy the wildlife at eye level. It can of course also be an adrenalin inducing experience...

Boat and horseback are also excellent ways to view animals. For some reason animals are less intimidated by humans on horseback. It enables some magnificent encounters, riding through herds of wildlife and the speed of the horse makes it slightly less intimidating than being on foot. Kenya and Botswana offer exceptional riding safaris.

Boating is often overlooked, but enables you to approach animals along the riverbank at close quarters, which is of particular advantage to photographers. Highlights include traditional mokoros in the Okavango Delta, and wildlife cruises on the Zambezi and Chobe Rivers.

Self-drive safaris are possible in southern Africa, notably in Namibia where the infrastructure is good, but most visitors will choose to combine this with guided safaris in the parks or

reserves in order to take advantage of local knowledge and experience.

### Safaris tailor-made for you

Everyone has their own expectations and requirements which is why we work *with you* to tailor-make your own personal safaris. For some, this will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, others will 'catch the bug' and return again and again. Some will want exclusivity and privacy, some will prefer to share their adventures with others. Safaris come in all shapes and sizes!

The following pages outline some of Africa's top wildlife destinations and a handful of the top lodges and tented camps to get you started, but there are many more and if you want something different just ask.

SEE OUR WEBSITE  
FOR DATES AND PRICES





# Southern Africa

Southern Africa offers a huge diversity of landscapes and some of the best wildlife viewing in the world.

Zambia's Luangwa Valley, where intimate luxury camps are one of the continent's best-kept secrets, offers the best walking safaris in Africa. Along with plentiful plains game, sightings of leopard and wild dog are particularly good.

Malawi, with its beautiful lake and upland areas, is often overlooked, but its peaceful national parks offer excellent birding and wildlife-viewing.

It makes a great destination if you are looking for something different.

In Botswana, private concessions offer exclusive safaris into the world-famous Okavango Delta and Savuti. By mixing 'wet' and 'dry' camps you can experience the full diversity of the region, and a fly-in safari enables you to make the most of your time.

Zimbabwe, now in the throes of recovery, overflows with natural splendour, from the iconic Victoria Falls to the ancient ruins of Great Zimbabwe.

Hwange is one of the continent's largest and most prolific national parks.

Along its course from the Caprivi Strip in Namibia to Zambia, on its way to the Indian Ocean, the mighty Zambezi and its tributaries provide fantastic wildlife sightings – especially in the dry season. Riverside camps offer boat rides and canoeing in addition to vehicle and walking safaris.

By contrast, Namibia's dramatic desert landscapes present a unique perspective in which many species,

including the desert elephant and gemsbok, survive in an environment with virtually no rainfall.

Offshore, the enormous island of Madagascar is in a league of its own. Separated from the mainland for millennia, its flora and fauna has developed in isolation. Its unique wildlife continues to fascinate visitors.

No wildlife enthusiast should miss the opportunity to open the treasure trove of Southern Africa, and get to know its remarkable wildlife.



**Climate**

South of the equator the climate is mainly tropical, with summer rains falling between November and March. Heat and humidity build throughout the dry season, peaking in late October. The onset of the rains brings relief, and during the ensuing 'green' season it is still possible to view wildlife despite the occasional downpour that clears the air. At this time food is abundant – many young are born, and the birdlife is excellent. In the highlands, temperatures are more moderate than in the low-lying grassland areas. In the desert region along the west coast and in the Kalahari it is hot during the day, but in winter (June to August) temperatures plummet at night and the early mornings are surprisingly chilly.





# Zambia

Zambia is the place we know best. It is where ‘we grew up’, and the place that draws us back time and time again. Wildlife Worldwide’s Founder, Chris Breen, lived and worked here, and ran walking safaris from two beautiful bush camps in the heart of the Luangwa Valley. It is against the standards of accommodation and guiding in Zambia that we compare everything else we offer around the world.

Zambia is a country with warm, welcoming people and smiling faces. It also has fantastic accommodation and good transport links. However it is

Zambia’s staggering diversity that makes it our number one destination. From the verdant plains and first class trails of Luangwa, to Kafue’s tree-climbing lions and canoeing on the Lower Zambezi, this is ‘safari par excellence’. And in some places, you won’t see another tourist. It’s the way they safari in Zambia that makes it so special.

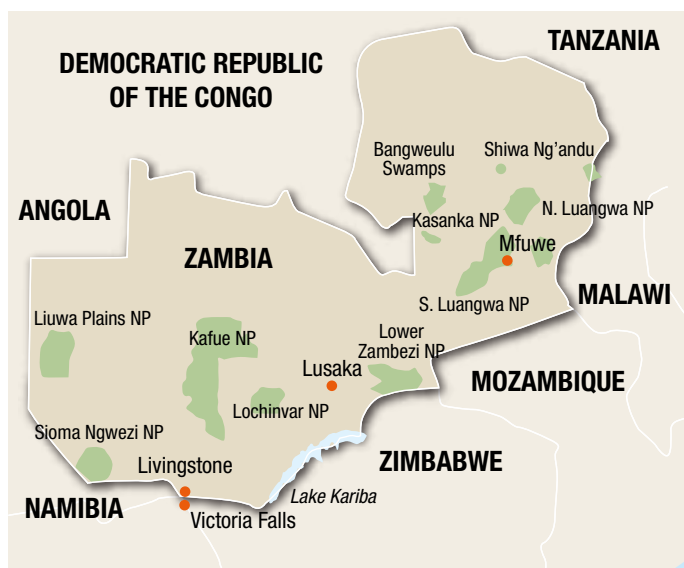
Try it, the next few pages have lots of interesting suggestions, the result of our years of experience. In fact, we know that if you travel to Zambia, you’ll want to return again and again, as so many of our safari-goers do.

## Key species

- ▶ Four-toed elephant shrew
- ▶ Blue monkey
- ▶ Pangolin
- ▶ Leopard
- ▶ African wild dog
- ▶ Burchell’s zebra
- ▶ Thornicroft’s giraffe
- ▶ Lichtenstein’s hartebeest
- ▶ Yellow-backed duiker

## Some geography

Zambia’s principal national parks, South Luangwa and its more remote partner, North Luangwa, stand at the eastern end of the country, along the low-lying valley of the Luangwa River. North-west of the Luangwa lie two interesting but less accessible areas,



the Bangweulu Wetlands and Kasanka; both offer excellent birdwatching, while Kasanka’s major spectacle is the annual arrival of huge numbers of fruitbats in November.

In Central Zambia the main attraction is the largest national park, Kafue, which occupies an elevated area along the Kafue river. It is excellent for wildlife, particularly on the Busanga Plains at its

## Diary notes

- ▶ May: Best time to see shoebills in Bangweulu Wetlands
- ▶ May-Nov: Dry season – the easiest time to travel
- ▶ Jun-Aug: Coolest time of year for walking in Luangwa
- ▶ Sep-Oct: Carmine bee-eaters nest in the banks of the Luangwa River
- ▶ Nov: Blue wildebeest gather in Liuwa Plain
- ▶ Nov-Dec: Straw coloured fruitbats congregate in Kasanka in their millions
- ▶ Dec-Mar: The green season – the best time for birding!

northern end. Here too is Lusaka, the country’s capital, conveniently served by British Airways, Southern African Airways, Kenya Airways and KLM.



Of a clutch of several smaller national parks, Liuwa Plain on the western border with Namibia is of particular note, being remote, rarely visited and outstanding for the safari connoisseur.

The southern border along the Zambezi River is a magnet to wildlife in the dry season. The area is dominated by the mecca of Victoria Falls and nearby Livingstone, Africa's adventure activity capital and further east the wonderful Lower Zambezi National Park lies facing Mana Pools in Zimbabwe.

### Getting around

Zambia's parks are quite widely spread, and the roads between them are often poor, so many of our trips involve flying from one area to another by light aircraft. Some of these flights are scheduled, but the further you get off the beaten track, the more likely you are to need a chartered flight.

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



### RIVERS & RAINBOWS

TAILOR-MADE ✦

The ultimate green season safari begins once the rains have freshened everything up! It's rarely possible to travel by boat along the Luangwa River as it is invariably full of crocodiles, hippos and fallen trees. However, between February and April the water is high enough to permit boat safaris – which provide a totally different view of this wildlife paradise. The vibrancy of the vegetation and the colours of the birdlife has to be seen to be believed! And the lower prices that apply at this time of year make it a very attractive option!

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Mfuwe and transfer to South Luangwa National Park, 7-nights split between two or three tented camps/lodges  
**Day 3** Vehicle, boat and foot safaris in South Luangwa National Park  
**Day 9** Depart Mfuwe **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, from late January to mid-April only

### LEOPARDS OF LUANGWA

TAILOR-MADE ✦

This is our single most popular safari – we've been selling it for years and it's just as popular now as when we first introduced it! In the Luangwa Valley, you'll take early morning, afternoon and night drives with an expert naturalist guide and magnificent walking safaris for which the valley is justifiably famous. We combine a lodge with a stay in a selection of superb satellite camps, set along dry river beds and in perfectly wild locations. Each camp is uniquely situated, with excellent game-viewing and stunning views of the valley.

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Lusaka **Day 2** Arrive Mfuwe. Transfer to South Luangwa National Park, 8-nights. No two days are the same! **Day 9** Fly to Lusaka, 1-night **Day 10** Depart for UK (arrive same day)

**Departures** Daily, May to November



Once in camp, you can take advantage of organised activities including game drives, night drives, walking safaris, and boat safaris on the Kafue and Lower Zambezi rivers – accompanied by some of Africa’s most knowledgeable and experienced guides. There is generally an early morning and a late afternoon outing, with ample time to relax in between. Walking with a guide and armed ranger is an exhilarating experience, you don’t need to be particularly fit – it’s all about seeing wildlife in the bush.

### The Luangwa Valley

Luangwa is one of the finest places in Africa to enjoy a safari. The Luangwa has two key national parks, each of which is described below. There are many excellent properties in the valley, we hand pick the camps we work with and know them well. All have en-suite

facilities, superb guides, great food and wonderful views; most offer game-drives in four-wheel drive vehicles, both day and night, and walking safaris. Read through our descriptions and call us to chat through the options...

### South Luangwa National Park

This is the jewel of Zambia’s national parks and consists of 9,050 square kilometres of unspoilt African wilderness. Its eastern boundary is the meandering Luangwa River, whose regular changes of course create scenic oxbow lagoons. Set amongst beautiful riverine vegetation of evergreen mahogany and ebony trees, the lagoons and grazing lawns that surround them are a magnet to wildlife. Expect to encounter numerous large animals including elephant, buffalo, hippo, Thornicroft’s giraffe, lion, crocodile, warthog, puku, Crawshay’s zebra, Cookson’s

wildebeest and eland which are all common, and Luangwa has probably the world’s highest naturally occurring population of leopard.

For birdwatchers, Luangwa could hardly be better: the sun-scorched riverbanks play host to vast colonies of carmine bee-eaters which, together with lovebirds and kingfishers, lend a splash of vivid colour to this beautiful destination.

### North Luangwa National Park

Separated from its southern cousin by the Mnyamadzi Corridor, North Luangwa is a virtually unexplored wilderness with no permanent lodges – just two or three seasonally operated bush camps. Its 6,000 square kilometres support a

substantial wildlife population, with good numbers of lion, leopard and elephant. It combines really well with South Luangwa (it’s generally accessed by light aircraft from the south), and the emphasis here is on vehicle-free walking safaris. The tranquility is overwhelming...

### Lower Zambezi

For many years this was a forgotten wilderness. It covers an exceptionally beautiful 4,000 square kilometres with a backdrop of the steeply rising Zambezi Escarpment, its most characteristic feature being the eponymous Zambezi River. Elephant, lion, cheetah, leopard and huge herds of Cape buffalo all reside here and it is well known for wild dog.

## LUANGWA VALLEY AND LOWER ZAMBEZI

TAILOR-MADE

Another of our highly popular safaris to the Luangwa Valley, this time in combination with the delights of the Lower Zambezi – which makes an excellent contrast. The Luangwa Valley is all about walking and driving to see the region’s varied animal and birdlife, whereas boat trips on the Lower Zambezi add yet another dimension to watching wildlife, with elephant and huge herds of buffalo along the riverbank. Experienced and knowledgeable guides enrich the experience by pointing out minute details and interpreting the complex world of the African bush.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Lusaka and fly to Mfuwe. Transfer to South Luangwa National Park, 5-nights split between two or three tented camps. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 7** Fly to Lower Zambezi, 4-nights tented camp. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris **Day 11** Depart Lower Zambezi **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, June to September

## CLASSIC LUANGWA WALKING

TAILOR-MADE

### Highlights

Zambia is famous for its walking safaris – and this is where they began. This classic, small group safari along the Mupamadzi river, a tributary of the Luangwa, offers the quintessential bush experience. Walk-in tents with beds and bed linen, a shared bush shower and two bush toilets are set up by experienced staff who cater for your every need. Each of the three sites is unique, and there’s plenty of time to relax and enjoy the surroundings. If you’re daunted by the prospect of walking, try it just once – the distances are short, the pace relaxed, the stops frequent, and the wildlife simply unforgettable. You will never want to travel any other way!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Lusaka and fly to Mfuwe. Transfer to South Luangwa National Park, 2-nights, Nkwali. Vehicle safaris **Day 4** Walking in South Luangwa National Park, 5-nights mobile camping **Day 9** Transfer to Tena Tena or Nsefu camp, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 12** Depart Mfuwe **Day 13** Arrive UK

**Departures** Late June to September

**Group Size** 6



However the Zambezi is best known for its boating safaris. Tranquil yet exciting, these trips through waters such as the Chifungulu Channel are an excellent way to appreciate the river. You can go out on motorboats and birdwatch or fish, or head out in a canoe!

### Kasanka

One of the smallest parks in Zambia, Kasanka is unique by being privately run. The habitat is a varied mix of miombo woodland, riverine forest, evergreen swamp forest and papyrus swamps. It also has lakes, lagoons, plains, dambos and marshes. The wildlife concentrations aren't high, but the specialist species here include sitatunga, Lichtenstein's hartebeest, sable, grysbok, yellow-backed duiker and blue monkey. The birdlife is exceptional, nearly 400 species have been recorded, including the rare Pel's fishing owl, wattled crane and Ross' lourie.

Kasanka is a particularly good place to visit between March and June when the rains will have stopped but the towering cumulo-nimbus clouds, lush greenery and fairly high water level make for superb photographic opportunities.

### Bangweulu

This vast, watery wilderness about 55 kilometres north-east of Kasanka is a destination for the connoisseur. Endemic black lechwe congregate here in herds of up to 10,000 strong. Elephant, tsessebe, reedbuck, oribi and sitatunga have also adapted to this area, and can be found in large numbers. The area's birdlife is prolific particularly at the end of the rains. One of the best rewards for visitors is the possibility of sighting the increasingly rare shoebill between March and August.

If you drive between Kasanka and Bangweulu, you'll pass Chief Chitambo's village. David Livingstone's heart was buried here, and you can visit the beautifully-preserved memorial to one of our greatest explorers.

### Shiwa Ng'andu

In 1911, a young British officer, Stewart Gore-Brown, was sent to determine the border between Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. He fell in love with the area and in 1914 returned to purchase a vast 4,500 hectare estate near a lake which he named Shiwa Ng'andu. Here is Kapishya, an exquisite hot spring surrounded by tropical vegetation and tall raffia palms. Chiusa Falls are nearby, and a 3-hour walk leads to Nachipala Bareback Hill, whose summit offers a magnificent view of the lake. A 2-night stay here makes a perfect combination with Kasanka or Bangweulu.

## SHOEBILLS, LECHWE & LUANGWA

TAILOR-MADE ✦

If you are a connoisseur who yearns for untouched wilderness, this is the safari! The Bangweulu wetland holds a spectacular wildlife secret: over 30,000 black lechwe and the most visible, highly endangered, shoebill. On your quest to spot this remarkable bird, you may also see elephant, lion, giraffe and many other species. Kasanka famously has over 400 bird species, as well as both tsessebe and sitatunga. Concluding in the magnificent Luangwa Valley creates a memorable wildlife experience – with a chance to see wild dog and explore the lush valley landscape.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Lusaka and fly to Mfuwe, 1-night Nkwali. Vehicle safari **Day 3** Fly to Bangweulu Swamp, 2-nights Shoebill Camp. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris **Day 5** Fly to Kasanka, 2-nights Wasa Camp. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris **Day 7** Fly to Mfuwe and transfer to South Luangwa National Park, 3 nights Nkwali. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 10** Depart Mfuwe **Day 11** Arrive UK

**Departures** Early to late May only





### Lochinvar National Park

This wetland, located between Lusaka and Livingstone, is worth a visit if you want to experience a different aspect of Zambia. Home to some 30,000 Kafue lechwe, it is one of the few places to see Chaplin's barbet – Zambia's only endemic bird. Over 400 species have been recorded here, so it is a paradise for birdwatchers. It also contains some 2,000 blue wildebeest, 700 Burchell's zebra, greater kudu, bushbuck, oribi, reedbuck, common waterbuck, hippo and side-striped jackal. You can explore the wetland with its endless vistas on foot, by vehicle and, at certain times of year, boat.

### Kafue National Park

Covering some 22,500 square kilometres, Kafue is one of the world's largest national parks. Much of it

consists of woodland, opening out at intervals onto wide, grassy dambos grazed by Defassa waterbuck, sable, hartebeest, blue wildebeest, Cape buffalo and Burchell's zebra. The northern section is dominated by the vast, rolling Busanga Plain, fed by the Lufupa River system, which recedes in the dry season, stranding large herds of hippo in shallow pools. Kafue's richest wildlife area attracts a diverse range of antelope including red lechwe. This profusion of game attracts numerous lion, leopard and cheetah.

Several airstrips now make Kafue more accessible, and thus an attractive add-on to the Luangwa Valley, Lower Zambezi or Victoria Falls. Although various camps and lodges have opened, Kafue is still far from commercial

and offers traditional game-viewing reminiscent of the times of the great African explorers. The emphasis is on the wilderness experience, so all camps blend into their surroundings and offer both day and night drives (some offer walks too), while those on the river also offer boat and canoe trips, and fishing. Kafue makes a great first-time safari because of the huge range of animals, while experienced safari-goers will appreciate the absence of crowds in this virtually untouched area.

### Liuwa Plain National Park

Lying in the far west, close to the Angolan border, this remote grassland

is a pristine wilderness. Although it is not easy to reach, your reward is a chance to watch Africa's second largest wildebeest migration (of many thousands of animals), which mingled with zebra, arrive from across the border with the onset of the rains at the end of October. Other antelope include oribi, red lechwe, steinbok, tsessebe, duiker and roan, and their main predators are jackal, serval, wildcat, wild dog and lion. Wooded areas make for excellent birding, especially during the rains when huge flocks of birds migrate south and in May and June the plains are a carpet of wildflowers.

### KAFUE'S RIVERS AND PLAINS

**SMALL GROUP**

This safari uses a four-wheel-drive vehicle with top guides to explore a real wildlife haven. Kafue's major arteries – the Kafue and Lufupa Rivers – present diverse habitats of riverine forest, miombo woodland, acacia and palm-strewn floodplain, dambos and, ultimately, the Busanga plains. These harbour a huge diversity of species: from leopard and wild dog in the woodland to lion and cheetah on the plain, Defassa waterbuck and yellow baboon in the riverine forest to lechwe and oribi on the grasslands. Game drives and nature walks depict the best of Kafue in an adventure reminiscent of the times of the great African explorers.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Lusaka and fly by light aircraft to central Kafue National Park, 3-nights Lufupa Bush Camp. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 5** Drive to north-western Kafue, 2-nights Musanza Bush Camp. Vehicle and foot safaris **Days 7** Drive to Busanga Plains, 2-nights Busanga Bush Camp. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 9** Fly to Busanga airstrip, then on to Lusaka and home

**Departures** Early June to late October

**Group Size** 8

### LIUWA PLAIN ADVENTURE

**SMALL GROUP**

This flat wilderness with vast skies in Zambia's far west is remote, and travel is tough but rewarding! Wildebeest migrate in herds of up to a thousand at a time, mixed with zebra and sometimes tsessebe, between the western edge and the centre. Birdlife is spectacular: large groups of crowned crane mingle with wattled crane, Denham's and white-bellied bustard are common, and secretary birds stalk the plain. The diversity and number of waders and water birds is staggering, and in December many migrant birds join the residents on their way through. Abundant plains game attracts predators such as hyena, large packs of wild dog, cheetah and the occasional lion.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Lusaka, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Kalabo airstrip, Liuwa Plain National Park, 4 or 5-nights (depending on departure date) tented Camp. Explore Liuwa Plain National Park by vehicle and on foot **Day 7** Boat to Mongu and fly to Lusaka, or fly from Kalabo to Lusaka. Depart Lusaka **Day 8** Arrive UK

Alternatively, why not extend your safari by flying to the Luangwa Valley, Livingstone or the Lower Zambezi in Zambia, or perhaps heading into Zimbabwe, Botswana or Namibia.

**Departures** Early May to early June and late Nov to early Dec

**Group Size** 6



## Livingstone, Victoria Falls

The Zambian side was always considered to be the 'poorer cousin' by comparison with the views of the river and the falls from Zimbabwe. No longer however. In recent years the Zambian authorities have made enormous efforts to develop the trails and walkways around the falls, and the various viewpoints. These are now every bit as good as those on the Zimbabwe side, indeed many people consider them to be considerably better. The private sector has also engaged in developing a wide variety of accommodation on the Zambian side and along the Zambezi River, ranging from the luxurious to the rustic. A huge range of activities is on offer from Livingstone. See pages 20-21 for further details about Victoria Falls.



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Mchenja Bush Camp, South Luangwa National Park

Set in a stand of ebony trees, this stylish and luxurious camp overlooks the Luangwa River in an impossibly picturesque location. Each of the five spacious tents stands on a polished wooden deck under a thatched roof, and has an en-suite bathroom and outside shower. The thatched central building has the dining area, comfortable seating, a small bar, and a plunge pool. A stay here can be combined with its sister camps (Luwi, Nsolo and Kakuli) to create a varied circuit in an area rich in wildlife. Activities consist of day and night drives and the speciality – walking safaris.



### Tena Tena, South Luangwa National Park

One of the most stunning sites in the Luangwa Valley, this remote, small camp stands in a grove of mahogany trees on a wide sweep of river. Five impeccably designed safari tents, with either a double or twin beds, are richly furnished with rugs and hand-carved furniture; each has a small dressing room and an open-air en-suite bathroom with a hot shower, toilet and washbasin. The central area has a lovely open-sided dining room and bar. Morning, evening and night drives and walking safaris are all on offer, and this camp can easily be combined with its sister camps Nkwali, Luangwa Bush Camp and Nsefu.



### Chiawa, Lower Zambezi National Park

This luxurious, family-owned camp in a grove of mahogany trees beside the Zambezi blends effortlessly with its surroundings. A thatched lounge/bar area with an upstairs deck has exquisite river views, and meals are taken al fresco. Nine roomy tents with thatched roof, wooden floor and verandah offer unexpected comfort, indoor and outdoor showers and a bath. While setting the highest standard in bush-luxury, the camp still manages to retain a rustic and unpretentious feel. With a motorised pontoon and Canadian canoes the photographic opportunities are exceptional.



### Busanga Bush Camp, Kafue National Park

Nesting in an island of fig trees in the middle of an extensive plain, this classic camp consists of four comfortable tented rooms that accommodate eight people. The lounge area is under canvas, looking out at the plains with views of wildlife all around. Most meals are taken in the open air, with dinner under the shady canopy of a majestic tree. Sunrise and sunset are spectacular here, particularly in winter when the mist, created as the floodplain dries up, burns off in the heat of the morning sun. Activities include day and night drives, walks and specialist birdwatching.

# Victoria Falls

## Victoria Falls – Crossroads of Africa

Victoria Falls hardly needs an introduction. Frequently named as one of the world's top three waterfalls, this is where the Zambezi River tumbles over the edge of a geological fault in a terrifying torrent of water and spray, sweeping away everything in its path. The views of Mosi-oa-Tunya (The Smoke that Thunders) are equally spectacular from Zambia or Zimbabwe, but are perhaps best seen from the air! Around the falls, walkways lead to various viewpoints where rainbows gleam through gaps in the dripping rainforest and occasional torrents of water are blown across the path.





In the dry season from June to October, the flow of water shrinks to one section of the towering rock face, and you can walk across the rocks on the Zambian side to marvel at the roaring spectacle. During the green season from November to May, the water level is increasing, and in March and April, the water is at its highest and you are guaranteed a soaking!

Upstream, the river and its many tributaries provide life-giving water to create a wildlife haven. This attracts vast numbers of elephant which take advantage of the permanent water, joined by huge herds of Cape buffalo and other grazers, plus hungry lion that have developed a taste – and a talent – for catching them. Hippo wallow in the inlets and shallows, forming an uneasy truce with lurking crocodiles.

This wildlife is active all year round, and the birdlife is also superb with over 450 recorded species – including rarities such as Pel’s fishing owl, Bradfield’s hornbill, African finfoot, Schalow’s turaco, half-collared kingfisher and the seasonally numerous African skimmer and rock pratincole. From December to March large numbers of migrant birds are present, and many resident species ‘morph’ from their dry season colours into the stunning yellows, reds, oranges and blacks of their breeding plumage.

This huge area cuts across man-made boundaries and encompasses the Zimbabwe side of the falls, Livingstone in Zambia, and the Caprivi Strip in north-eastern Namibia, as well as parts of northern Botswana and southern Angola. Safari circuits can easily

incorporate highlights such as the Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls, Chobe National Park and the Kalahari Desert. Some of Africa’s top lodges are located here, in what is fast becoming one of its best areas to see wildlife.

In addition to the attractions of the surrounding area, Victoria Falls is perfectly placed at the crossroads of southern Africa and is easy to add as a pre- or post-tour extension to many other African destinations. Why not consider combining it with Kafue National Park in western Zambia, the lower Zambezi or the Luangwa Valley – the options are virtually endless.

The towns of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and Livingstone in Zambia, are located on either side of the falls. The two countries which ‘share’ the

falls are linked by a spectacular iron bridge suspended 100 metres above the raging waters. Two national parks protect the area’s wildlife, on the Zambian side (and upstream from the falls) is Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, a small park with a chequered history but a good range of wildlife. On the Zimbabwean side, Zambezi National Park also has excellent wildlife.

On this page you will see some of our favourite lodges and itineraries in the Victoria Falls area. All the properties listed offer visits to the falls, river trips and excursions. The area is a centre for outdoor activities – everything from game drives to extreme adventure sports and of course, flight-seeing over the falls by light aircraft, helicopter and even microlight!

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Tongabezi, Victoria Falls

A luxury riverside lodge with a swimming pool in a romantic location on a sweeping bend in the Zambezi. Five cottages and five spacious, open-fronted houses are located next to the water with private views across the Zambezi. Each is unique in its design and eclectic furnishings, and comes with a personal valet. Game drives, boat trips and walks are all possible.



### Sindabezi, Victoria Falls

If you want total seclusion, try Tongabezi’s sister property a short boat ride away. This stylish and intimate bush lodge consists of just five individual, open-fronted, thatched cottages on a private island in the middle of the Zambezi. The island is surrounded by Victoria Falls National Park with its abundant wildlife: large herds of elephant, a variety of antelope and magnificent birdlife.



### Waterberry Lodge, Victoria Falls

Standing on the Zambian bank of the Zambezi, just 30 minutes from Livingstone, this lodge has wonderful views across to Zimbabwe on the opposite bank. Thatched cottages are set around lovely lawns, and the large terrace, floating sundeck, swimming pool and bar make it an ideal place to relax. The lodge has its own nature trail. This is one of our best value options.



### Islands of Siankaba, Victoria Falls

This classy lodge consists of two forested islands connected by a bridge. One has seven tented chalets with deck and river view, while the neighbouring island has all the central facilities: bar, lounge, dining area and small pool – there’s even a massage suite. Although it’s some 30 kilometres upstream from Victoria Falls, there’s enough going on here to keep you occupied.



# Malawi

Nestling at the southern extremity of the Great Rift Valley, landlocked Malawi is a green, fertile, densely populated country – one of Africa’s most beautiful. Known as the Warm Heart of Africa, it is a green, fertile, populated place, whose people are renowned for their friendliness. Its mountains and plains, forests and rivers, conceal remote lodges and an exceptional array of birds – many of which are rarely found elsewhere.

The country’s predominant natural feature is the huge Lake Malawi, home to numerous gaily-coloured cichlid fish. The lake covers much of the country and its white sandy beaches, clear waters and remote island hideaways rival any in the Indian Ocean. Various resorts offer a full range of water sports, and can be combined with Malawi’s national parks, or the nearby Luangwa Valley in Zambia, to make an unbeatable holiday.

## Key species

- ▶ Yellow-spotted rock hyrax
- ▶ African bush elephant
- ▶ Serval
- ▶ Speckle-throated otter
- ▶ Black rhinoceros
- ▶ Hippopotamus
- ▶ Lichtenstein’s hartebeest
- ▶ Nyala
- ▶ Eland
- ▶ Roan antelope

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jun-Oct: dry season; good black rhino sightings in Majete
- ▶ Aug-Dec: rock pratincole breed in Majete and along Shire River
- ▶ Oct-Jan: miombo woodland birds breed all over Malawi!
- ▶ Nov: Denham’s bustard mating on Vipha and Nyika Plateaux
- ▶ Nov-Apr – hot and wet; good for palearctic and intra-African migrant birds
- ▶ Dec-Feb: orchids bloom on Vipha and Nyika Plateaux

## Some geography

Although one of Africa’s smallest countries, Malawi has a huge variety of topography and scenery. It is divided into three regions: the northern province contains the Nyika Plateau and Vwaza Marsh; Lilongwe, the capital, and Liwonde lie in the central region, while Majete, Mount Mulanje and the Zomba Plateau are in the south. The lakeshore is dotted with resorts – you can choose between easy-to-reach but inevitably busier, or remote and more intimate.

## Getting around

It is easy to get around the central area by vehicle with a driver/guide – the roads are relatively good, the distances short and there’s always something to see. Further afield road conditions are variable and travel is generally slow. As a result, it is common to use light aircraft to get to and from more out of the way locations – which saves a great deal of time. If you’re coming from Zambia to the lake you are more than likely to fly.



## Nyika Plateau National Park

This highland plateau in the north, at around 2,500 metres altitude, is a wild area of open spaces and copious wildlife. Burchell’s zebra, eland, roan, reedbuck, blue duiker, klipspringer and bushpig all roam here, preyed on by leopard. Over 400 bird species have been recorded in the varied habitats: wattled crane, Denham’s bustard and red-winged francolin in the grassland, cinnamon dove,

bar-tailed trogon in the upland forest, while black-backed barbets and red-and-blue sunbirds move through the miombo woodland canopy.

## Vwaza Marsh Game Reserve

This tiny, underrated reserve at the foot of Nyika Plateau makes an interesting contrast. Much of it is flat mopane and miombo woodland, although the eastern side is hilly. Its wetlands are a haven for more than 250 bird species. Raptors such as osprey, fish eagle, palmnut vulture and martial eagle are all present in good numbers, while barred, giant eagle, scops and pearl-spotted owls are seen and heard regularly. Elephant, buffalo, greater kudu, impala and bushpig move freely between here and the Luangwa Valley in neighbouring Zambia.

## Lake Malawi

Some 600 kilometres long by 85 wide and covering nearly one quarter of the country, the lake is fringed by sandy beaches. Some 2,000 species of colourful cichlid fish, many of them endemic, live in its clear waters – so there’s good snorkelling. The northern



shore combines well with Nyika Plateau and feels relatively untouched. The southern shore is more developed, albeit in a low-key way, while the most exclusive lodges are located on the Mozambique side. A few days relaxing here makes a fine addition to a safari in Zambia or Malawi.

### Liwonde National Park

This national park at the southern end of the lake, is a place of quiet lagoons, open savannah and wooded hills. Its focal point is the Shire River, where large herds of elephant, buffalo and hippo are common – along with sable, roan, greater kudu, and Nile crocodiles. Black rhino have been re-introduced. Predators include lion and leopard. The astonishing diversity of birdlife includes white-backed night heron, Pel's fishing owl, Böhm's bee-eater, brown-breasted barbet and Livingstone's fly-catcher. Game drives, boat trips and walking safaris are all possible.

### Majete Game Reserve

Malawi's newest reserve is an atmospheric place with few visitors as yet. It has large numbers of elephant

and buffalo, and black rhino are thriving again. Among the resident antelopes is Africa's northern-most population of nyala. Rock pratincole are seen beside the Shire River, and Pel's fishing owl in the riparian forest, while sightings of Arnot's chat, white-breasted cuckooshrike and racket-tailed rollers will excite birders. The final phase of staggered reintroduction will ensure that Majete is once again a Big Five reserve by the end of 2012.

### Mount Mulanje

Reaching 3,000 metres, this is one of Central Africa's highest mountains. It rises sheer out of the plain in an impressive array of lofty peaks, plateaux, rolling grassland, montane forest and rushing streams. It's a great area for hiking, staying in simple cabins with good food and experienced guides. The vegetation changes dramatically as you climb, and its wildlife includes tiny klipspringer and birds such as black eagle and white-necked raven. Around its base, near the former capital of Blantyre, are the tea estates that were planted in the 1870s.

## BEST OF MALAWI

TAILOR-MADE

This combination of three contrasting elements brings together the best that this welcoming country has to offer. Although not renowned for its wildlife, Malawi nevertheless has a lot to offer. From fascinating Majete Game Reserve, finally restored to its former glory after years of destructive poaching to Liwonde National Park as the country's foremost wildlife attraction. Finally, the beaches of the 'Lake of Stars', Lake Malawi, are an ideal spot to enjoy some restorative relaxation. All three offer more than enough species diversity to keep avid birders fully occupied.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Blantyre (or Arrive Lilongwe. Fly to Nchalo airstrip) and transfer to Majete Wildlife Reserve, 3-nights, Mkulumadzi Lodge. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris in Majete **Day 5** Drive to Liwonde, 3-nights Mvuu Wilderness Lodge. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris **Day 8** Transfer to Lake Malawi, 3-nights Pumulani Lodge. Relax at lake **Day 11** Fly to Lilongwe. Depart Lilongwe **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

### Zomba Plateau

Malawi's most accessible mountain, lies near the former colonial capital of Zomba and the southern tea estates. Consisting of a 1,800 metre high mountain, whose forested slopes are laced with streams, waterfalls and

lakes, Zomba has a unique micro-climate. Its wildlife includes leopard, baboon, giant butterflies, and birds such as long-crested eagle and augur buzzard. The views from the top, which can be reached by road, were once described as 'the best in the British Empire'.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Mvuu Wilderness Lodge & Camp, Liwonde

This upmarket lodge has a lounge, bar and dining area plus eight luxury Hemingway-style tents with en-suite bathroom and private deck, discreetly concealed in thick undergrowth bordering a lagoon just off the Shire River. A short distance away, the somewhat simpler Mvuu Camp has 12 chalets with river views. Both offer game drives, walking safaris and boat trips. A well-sited hide overlooks the river so you can see animals as they come to drink in the heat of the day. The immediate vicinity offers excellent birding.



### Mkulumadzi Lodge, Majete Reserve

The perfect combination of luxury and isolation, eight spacious chalets, each with a deck, sunken bath and outside shower are shaded by giant leadwood and mango trees. This isolated spot on a private concession beside the Shire River offers game drives, walking and boat safaris, plus an opportunity to visit a village to learn about local culture. A comfortable hide overlooking a waterhole provides excellent photographic opportunities. You'll also hear the fascinating tale of Majete's revival as a wildlife reserve.



### Pumulani, Lake Malawi

This exclusive beach property stands on a hillside on a peninsula overlooking the southern end of the lake. Ten stylish, grass-roofed villas blend with their surroundings and incorporate a spacious living area, with sliding doors opening onto a private deck with lake views. You can relax on the private sandy beach or beside the infinity pool, snorkel, dive, sail, kayak, water-ski or fish. A sundowner dhow trip makes a perfect conclusion to any day. Birdwatchers will enjoy their stay as over 300 species have been recorded here.



### Kaya Mawa Lodge, Lake Malawi

Close to the Mozambique shore, tiny Likoma Island is reached by a short flight or by boat. The setting is impossibly romantic: ten thatched cottages are scattered around a rocky promontory beside a crescent of white sand, surrounded by mango and ancient baobab trees. Each has a four-poster bed, en-suite bathroom and terrace with views out over the lake. Most water-sports are on offer here, and mountain bikes and quad bikes are available, but relaxing is the order of the day in these tranquil surroundings.



# Botswana

This huge landlocked country, immortalised in numerous wildlife documentaries, offers some of the world's finest game viewing. In the midst of parched desert and semi-arid lands lies the Okavango Delta, a verdant oasis of sparkling waterways and clear lagoons that teems with life.

Although much of Botswana is wilderness, it boasts some of the world's top safari lodges, so you can see the wildlife moving around unrestricted without compromising on comfort or service. As a result, it almost certainly won't be cheap, but can nevertheless be good value. A visit to Botswana will almost certainly be the trip of a lifetime, but be warned – one visit is rarely enough!

## Key species

- ▶ African bush elephant
- ▶ Cheetah
- ▶ Lion
- ▶ Leopard
- ▶ African wild dog
- ▶ Black rhinoceros
- ▶ Hippopotamus
- ▶ Topi (tsessebe)
- ▶ Sitatunga
- ▶ Puku

## An Overview

Botswana's major asset is the Okavango Delta, in the north of the country, whose perimeter is fringed by private concessions. On its eastern side the oldest protected area, Moremi Game Reserve, is also surrounded by concessions. Here you face a choice between boat trips in wet areas – motorboats in deep water, or dug-out canoes (mokoro) on shallow floodplain (a great way to relax and watch birds!) – and exploring dry areas by 4-wheel drive vehicle, or possibly on foot. To enjoy the widest variety of wildlife and birds it is essential to mix wet and dry areas.



Further north, Chobe National Park extends up to the Zambezi, where Kasane border crossing is the gateway to Livingstone in Zambia and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe – on opposite sides of the river. North-west of Chobe, after years without water, Savuti Channel and Linyanti Swamp have been transformed by rising water levels, and the area is once again a mecca for wildlife. Central Botswana contains the arid Central Kalahari Game Reserve. At one time

the only way to explore was by mobile camping safari, but a sprinkling of permanent lodges inside the reserve, and even more outside its boundary, have changed that. Just north of this reserve, the salt pans of Nxai and Makgadikgadi are both national parks.

## Getting around

Although distances are not great, flying is often the only practical way to move between remote camps. Flying

## Diary notes

- ▶ Dec-Mar: Wildlife heads to the Kalahari Desert which is in bloom!
- ▶ Feb-Apr: Many birds in breeding plumage
- ▶ Mar-Jul: Water rises in Okavango Delta
- ▶ Apr-Oct: Dry season in Okavango Delta – animals move back to permanent water. Prime season for game viewing
- ▶ Jul-Oct: Best time to visit Chobe riverfront, as herds of elephant and buffalo from the interior gather around scarce water
- ▶ Sep-Nov: Carmine bee-eaters nest
- ▶ Nov-May: best time to visit the interior of Chobe NP

minimises the travelling time and you reap the reward of marvellous aerial views. Some areas are suitable for mobile camping safaris, where you drive between campsites carrying all equipment. Nowadays, most mobile safaris offer spacious tents with a surprising level of comfort, often with private facilities and fine cuisine, and staff set up camp.



### What to expect on safari in Botswana

A typical day starts with an early morning snack followed by a wildlife activity; on return, after brunch there is time for a siesta in the hottest part of the day, with another activity in the afternoon and/or evening. Activities vary from place to place – depending on location, ecosystem and water level – but may include walks, drives, night drives, and river trips by traditional dug-out canoe (or its modern equivalent) poled by a native guide, or a conventional motor boat. Transfers between camps are generally by light aircraft after brunch, in the middle of the day, so you arrive at your destination in time for an afternoon activity.

### Private guides and vehicles

The standard of guiding in Botswana is exceptionally high – particularly in the camps and lodges we use. We are often asked if we can arrange a private vehicle and guide – which, of course, we can. However this is not cheap (the cost varies from camp to camp) and must be reserved well in advance. However having a private service can transform an already wonderful trip into something extra special, and is a real bonus if you are a keen photographer – because of the flexibility it allows.

### Private aircraft

Most transfers between camps are done by a light aircraft making a series of hops – the distances are usually quite short. If requested, we can arrange private air transfers – these work particularly well for a small group of people travelling together, or if you wish greater flexibility and privacy, but are expensive.

### Sleep-outs

Some camps offer opportunities to sleep out in the bush. Sleeping out under the stars on an elevated hide is a fabulous way to experience the wilderness. Nothing quite compares to the thrill of hearing the roar of a lion as the glow of the campfire dies, or waking to the African dawn chorus...

### Okavango Delta

This wildlife paradise consists of 1.6 million hectares of glistening waterways in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. Instead of flowing into the ocean, the Okavango River ends at a natural fault line, where it spills onto the Kalahari sand. The

result is a vast tapestry of crystal clear channels, lagoons and small islands that attract a myriad of birds and large concentrations of wildlife.

Almost any outing yields fantastic sightings of birds and wildlife that includes red lechwe, sitatunga,

reedbuck, sable, roan, tsessebe and impala, blue wildebeest, hippo and Nile crocodile. The many camps and lodges that are widely scattered across the Delta and its surrounding private concessions each offer exclusivity.

Most camps and lodges are located in wetland areas that are known for their concentrations of wildlife. The water level of the Delta varies throughout the year. This is reflected in the activities

provided, which may be either water-based or land-based, or – more usually – a mix of both. The highest water levels occur between April and September. To experience the full range of activities we recommend that you stay at a combination of camps in different areas. This allows you to do day and night drives around wooded areas on wooded islands and open plains, as well as walks and water trips in mekoros.

### WINGS OVER BOTSWANA

**TAILOR-MADE**

Flying from camp to camp is one of the most exciting ways to experience northern Botswana's stunning wilderness. There is rarely time to reach any great altitude, so as you fly you invariably get fantastic aerial views of the maze of waterways and great herds of lechwe, sitatunga and elephant, and can photograph them from above. This is one of our perennially popular safaris, and depending on the level of accommodation you require – from the opulent and exclusive to the modest but adequate – we can arrange a similar itinerary at different levels of price.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Jo'burg **Day 2** Arrive Maun. Fly by light aircraft to Linyanti-Savuti 2-nights. Day and night vehicle safaris **Day 4** Fly to Moremi Game Reserve, 3-nights. Mokoro and walking safaris **Day 7** Fly to Okavango Delta, 3-nights. Vehicle and boat safaris **Day 10** Fly to Maun and depart via Jo'burg **Day 11** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

### Extension

Why not extend your stay by a few days to fly to the Central Kalahari to see something of Bushman life and the total contrast of this dry region – particularly from February to April, which is migration time. Alternatively, you could fly to Livingstone for a couple of days relaxing beside Victoria Falls...



### Moremi Game Reserve

Considered to be one of Africa's finest wildlife sanctuaries, Moremi covers a 3,000 square kilometre area of the north-eastern Okavango. Its varied habitats include woodland, floodplain, reedbed and the permanent waters of the Okavango Delta. Wildlife viewing in this unspoilt and stunningly beautiful reserve is by mokoro and on foot, and close encounters are possible with both sitatunga and red lechwe. There are high concentrations of all major plains game and their predators and the excellent birdlife includes Pel's fishing owl.

### Chobe National Park

Chobe borders the upper reaches of the Zambezi River where four countries meet at its confluence with the Chobe River. The unique mosaic of bush, waterway, floodplain and woodland offers exceptional wildlife viewing. The park is home to Africa's largest concentration of elephant, and in the dry season huge herds of buffalo congregate along the fertile floodplain – a phenomenon the lion population is not unaware of! Other species commonly sighted include wild dog, puku, red lechwe, sable and roan antelope, plus huge numbers of hippo, while over 450 bird species have been recorded.

### The Savuti-Linyanti area

The Savuti Marshes, Savuti Channel and Linyanti Concession are often described as one of Africa's best game-viewing areas, with perhaps the densest concentration of wildlife

on the continent. The rich grasslands, papyrus marshlands, lagoons and forests sustain large elephant herds. The life-giving perennial waters that began to flow again in 2008 attract great herds of animals including



## KALAHARI IN BLOOM

TAILOR-MADE 

When the rains reach the Kalahari, the red sands of the parched desert undergo a remarkable transformation as a carpet of wild flowers, grasses and shrubs emerges in a riot of colour. Rising floodwaters in the vast salt pans of the Makgadikgadi signal the arrival of herds of blue wildebeest and Burchell's zebra to browse on the abundant fresh pasture, along with accompanying predators, flocks of flamingos and migratory birds. Finally in the emerald jewel of the Okavango, the world's largest inland delta, life goes on as always.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Jo'burg **Day 2** Arrive Maun; fly to Kalahari Game Reserve, 3-nights. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 5** Fly to Magkadikgadi Pans, 3-nights. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 8** Fly into Okavango Delta, 3-nights. Boat and foot safaris **Day 11** Fly to Maun and depart via Jo'burg **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily from December to April

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTHERN BOTSWANA

 SMALL GROUP

This exciting small group trip explores northern Botswana to see its wildlife, which is continually on the move. The contrasts you encounter range from the open vistas of the Linyanti ecosystem with its deciduous forests – where you visit the resurgent Savute Channel – through the crystal-clear waterways and fertile islands of the Okavango Delta surrounded by the arid Kalahari Desert, to the thundering cascade of Victoria Falls – one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This encompasses northern Botswana's prime wildlife areas, so the photographic opportunities are excellent! The guides are excellent, the vehicles first-rate, and the accommodation is extremely comfortable.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London **Day 2** Arrive Livingstone, 1-night. Visit Victoria Falls **Day 3** Transfer to Kasane; boat trip on Chobe River in Chobe National Park. Drive to Savute, 3-nights mobile tented camp. Vehicle safaris in Linyanti **Day 6** Drive to Khwai Concession Area in north-east Okavango Delta, 3-nights mobile tented camp. Vehicle, mokoro and foot safaris **Day 9** Drive to Xanakaxa, Moremi Game Reserve, 3-nights mobile tented camp. Vehicle, safaris **Day 12** Fly to Maun and head home **Day 13** Arrive UK

**Departures** March to early December

**Group Size** Maximum 9





buffalo, zebra, giraffe and greater kudu that walk well-trodden paths to quench their thirst in the dry season. Cheetah and lion follow in their footsteps, but the area's speciality is undoubtedly wild dog.

### Kalahari Desert

This giant arid region is scored with the beds of dried up rivers and vast salt pans. However, this harsh environment also provides the setting for some of Africa's finest game-viewing. Wildlife here includes gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland, ostrich and cheetah and some 200 species of bird. The Kalahari is best known for the San bushmen, hunter-gatherers whose long history is told in the area's ancient rock

paintings. Although their way of life is under serious threat, they cling to it precariously in a few places.

### Makgadikgadi Pans

The Makgadikgadi, along with nearby Tau Pan, is one of Africa's most important wetland sites. The extensive salt pans remain dry and empty for much of the year, but during the rains are transformed into great sheets of water, which attract vast flocks of flamingos and other migratory birds. This is also the only area in Southern Africa where you can see a migration of tens of thousands of blue wildebeest and Burchell's zebra. Mammal specials here include gemsbok, brown hyena and springbok.

Just to let you know that our trip to Botswana was a wonderful experience with memories that will stay with us forever – and if not, my 3,000 photographs will take care of that!

– AM (London)

## RETURN OF THE RIVERS

TAILOR-MADE

Water levels in the Okavango Delta are at their highest level for some twenty years. This seemingly cyclic natural phenomenon means that after a decade or so without water, the Savuti Channel and the Boteti River are miraculously flowing once again. Waterways that have lain dry for a long period are now providing access to areas that were previously unreachable. And – as ever – wildlife is attracted to the life-giving water and can be seen with ease by both man and predators.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Jo'burg **Day 2** Arrive Maun, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Magadikgadi Pans, 3-nights Leroo Le Tau Camp, Boteti River **Day 6** Fly to Savuti region of Chobe National Park, 3-nights lodge. Mokoro, motorboat and foot safaris **Day 9** Fly to Maun. Depart **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

### Extension

At the end of any safari in Botswana, why not extend your trip by transferring to Victoria Falls for a relaxing two (or more) night stay on the river beside one of the world's greatest natural wonders?

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Duba Plains Camp, Okavango Delta

One of the delta's most remote properties, this small, intimate camp stands on a wooded island on a large private concession. It consists of six roomy tents each with an en suite bathroom, outside shower and verandah with panoramic views of the floodplain. The thatched lounge, dining and bar areas, and pool are also raised on wooden platforms. Activities include day and night drives to see the area's herds of buffalo and lion predators, nature walks and – depending on water levels – boat trips.



### Muchenje Lodge, Chobe National Park

Situated in a quiet area at the western edge of the park, this intimate lodge is two hours drive from Victoria Falls and Livingstone, and only 40 minutes from Kasane border crossing. Accommodation consists of 11 comfortable, pleasantly furnished rooms with en suite facilities on an escarpment with fine views over the Chobe River floodplain. Activities include day and night drives, walking safaris and boat cruises with superb guides. The pleasant pool makes a good spot to relax in the heat of the day.



### Jack's Camp, Kalahari Desert

Located deep in the Kalahari beside the world's largest saltpan, the Magadikgadi Pans, this classic safari camp consists of 10 spacious, stylishly furnished, 1940s-style walk-in tents on private decks in a grove of palm trees. Each tent has a private bathroom with flushing toilet and shower. Activities focus on the desert habitat, and include walking safaris with Bushman trackers. The area is famed for encounters with families of meerkats, and sightings of elusive brown hyena are almost guaranteed.



### Lebala, Kwando Concession

This camp, whose name means 'wide open spaces' in Setswana, stands on a vast plain dotted with palm trees close to the Linyanti Marshes along the boundary between Botswana and Namibia. The untamed location contrasts with the casual, understated elegance and luxury of the accommodation. Eight spacious, custom-built tents have unique mosquito netting walls that allow cooling breezes to flow. Each tent has a private deck with stunning views, an en suite bathroom and luxurious double outside showers.

# Zimbabwe



For several years we stopped offering Zimbabwe, but the country is as beautiful as ever, the wildlife almost as rich and the people as welcoming, although they have seen few visitors in recent years. Many camps and lodges have a distinctly 'new' feel. For anyone who knows Africa, the names Matusadona, Mana Pools and Matobo Hills conjure up images of fantastic wildlife, but which have become over the past few years both remote and little visited.

We are being highly selective about what we offer in Zimbabwe since, in our view, it is essential that those facilities we use provide benefits to the local economy and impoverished communities, and help generate employment at a grass-roots level. At present for obvious reasons, Zimbabwe feels like a brand new destination and has prices to match, but it's unlikely to remain like that for long.

## Key species

- ▶ African elephant
- ▶ Lion
- ▶ Leopard
- ▶ Black rhinoceros
- ▶ Hippopotamus
- ▶ Topi (tsessebe)
- ▶ Suni (antelope)
- ▶ Sharpe's grysbok
- ▶ African buffalo
- ▶ Klipspringer

## Some geography

Many of the country's major wildlife attractions lie along, or close to, the Zambezi River which forms the north-west border with Zambia. These include Victoria Falls, the adjacent Zambezi National Park, and some way further south, right on the border with Botswana, Hwange National Park.

Further along the valley are the national parks of Matusadona and Mana Pools. Zimbabwe's second city, Bulawayo, and the ancient site of Great Zimbabwe lie a long way south, while the country's eastern border is, marked by a set of high mountains known as the eastern highlands.



## Getting around

Most of the parks along the Zambezi are within driving distance of one another, so transfers between them are often done by road, however many remote camps and lodges have their own, or a shared, airstrip so you can save time by flying in.

## Hwange National Park

Lying along the border with Botswana, Zimbabwe's largest park is a haven for over 100 mammal and 400 bird species. Elephant, buffalo, sable, roan, giraffe,

wildebeest, impala and even gemsbok are all present. Of the apex predators, lion, leopard, wild dog and cheetah are regularly seen, along with African wildcat, serval, honey badger, civet and hyena. The diverse landscapes of teak forests, sandveld, ilala palm islands, savannah and acacia woodland make for a rewarding and interesting safari.

## Matusadona National Park

This relatively unknown wilderness bordering Lake Kariba, dates from 1958, when the Kariba Dam flooded

## Diary notes

- ▶ Dec-Mar – hot summer rains
- ▶ Mar-Apr – Victoria Falls at their most impressive with high water
- ▶ Apr-May – best time to travel as warm and dry, and the land is fresh and green
- ▶ Jun-Oct – dry winter; wildlife easy to see as it gathers around waterholes; low water in Vic Falls
- ▶ Aug-Dec – best months for white water rafting as water is low and rapids fast
- ▶ Sep – springtime; flowers coming into bloom

the Zambezi Valley to create a huge man-made lake. Elephant, buffalo, and healthy populations of antelope guarantee the presence of predators such as lion, leopard and cheetah, which are all plentiful, and although increasingly rare, black rhino is a speciality. The birdlife is exceptional due to the varied habitats, and more than 400 species have been recorded here.

## Mana Pools National Park

This UNESCO World Heritage Site beside the languid Zambezi has



## WINGS OVER ZIMBABWE

TAILOR-MADE

On this trip around Zimbabwe you make the most of your time by flying from place to place, staying in comfortable safari lodges and tented camps. From the imposing spectacle of Victoria Falls, you head to the country's most famous national park, Hwange, renowned for its herds of elephant and buffalo. Continuing with spectacular aerial views of Lake Kariba, you explore the watery wilderness of Matudsadona, before continuing to Mana Pools in the Lower Zambezi.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Victoria Falls, 2-nights. Explore Victoria Falls, with time for optional activities **Day 4** Fly to Hwange, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris **Day 6** Fly to Matusadona, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle and boat safaris **Day 8** Fly to Mana Pools, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle, walking and boat safaris **Day 10** Fly to Harare and depart **Day 11** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

fine views towards Zambia's Lower Zambezi National Park and the Rift Valley escarpment. Its riverine woodland and open plains contain a great variety of wildlife, including large numbers of elephant that relish the numerous winterthorn trees. The area is famed as one of southern Africa's best destinations for walking and

canoe safaris, and offers a secluded experience with spectacular views, particularly at sunset, of the river and its wide floodplain.

### Matobo National Park

Established in 1953, this park just south of Bulawayo was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2003. The

## WILD ZIMBABWE

TAILOR-MADE

This safari provides an opportunity to explore Zimbabwe's two principal assets in terms of wildlife, and enjoy game drives, walks and canoe safaris. Your first base is a luxury tented camp at the heart of Hwange National Park – often referred to as “the Land of the Giants” due to the extraordinary number of elephants. In Mana Pools National Park you get a totally different perspective as you spend three days exploring silently along the river by canoe, with water-level views of birds and wildlife, returning each night to a comfortable tented camp. Finally you see another contrasting aspect of Mana Pools as you explore remote Kanga Pan by vehicle and on foot.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK on overnight flight via Jo'burg **Day 2** Arrive Victoria Falls, 1-night **Day 3** Drive to Hwange National Park, 3-nights Somalisa Camp. Vehicle and foot safaris, night drives, game watching **Day 6** Fly by light aircraft to Mana Pools National Park, 3-nights Zambezi Life Styles Camp. Canoeing on Zambezi River **Day 9** Drive to Kanga Pan, 2-nights Kanga Camp. Vehicle and foot safaris in Mana Pools National Park **Day 11** Fly by light aircraft to Victoria Falls and depart for UK **Day 12** Arrive London

**Departures** Daily, June to October

terrain is littered with huge granite boulders piled on top of one another – striking rock formations that permeated the beliefs of the tribes who settled here. Klipspringer, zebra and giraffe are

common here, and black eagles thrive on a diet of rock hyrax. One highly protected area is used to safeguard endangered black and white rhinos, and the grave of Cecil Rhodes is an obvious attraction.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



**Ruckomechi Camp, Mana Pools**

This camp nestles in a grove of acacia and mahogany trees on the western boundary of Mana Pools, a hundred kilometres below Lake Kariba and has wonderful views across the Zambezi to the mountainous escarpment of the Great Rift Valley in Zambia. The ten tented chalets all have en-suite bathrooms. The area is excellent for wildlife, and activities include day and night drives, boat safaris and canoeing.



**The Hide, Hwange**

Situated on a private concession beside the national park, the eight standard and two deluxe tented suites of this established, family-owned safari camp all overlook a waterhole. Its hub is a thatched, two-storey A-frame with the dining and lounge area, and facilities include a plunge pool plus two comfortable hides for wildlife viewing. You may want to experience sleeping out at The Dove's Nest treehouse, but you'll need to book in advance.



**Camp Amalinda, Matobo**

This charming, exclusive camp, located within Matobo National Park just outside Bulawayo, consists of nine thatched rooms tucked away among massive granite boulders at an ancient Bushman site. Its large swimming pool and bar overlook a waterhole. The granite domes and castle kopjes of the surrounding Matobo Hills create a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere that is enhanced by the spa treatments on offer.



**Bumi Hills Safari Lodge, Lake Kariba**

Standing on a hilltop with a commanding vista of Lake Kariba, this elegant lodge makes a wonderful R&R stop. 20 revamped air-conditioned rooms (ten standard and ten premium) all have a lake view and balcony or verandah. The infinity pool is breathtaking, the food excellent, and the welcome warm and friendly. Animals graze along the shore, and activities include game-viewing and watching the legendary Kariba sunset.

# Namibia



This huge country is known for its towering sand dunes and wild, deserted coast. It may lack the abundance of animals found elsewhere, but nevertheless offers some wonderful wildlife hotspots: the gigantic white salt pan of Etosha, and the lush Caprivi Strip for starters. Other highlights include Fish River

Canyon, the red rocky landscapes of Damaraland, the Himba people and the water bird haven of Walvis Bay. For the ultimate wilderness, the Skeleton Coast offers some of Africa's most remote and exclusive luxury camps, and a chance to see the rare desert adapted elephant.

## Key species

- ▶ Dassie rat
- ▶ Desert elephant
- ▶ Heaviside's dolphin
- ▶ Meerkat
- ▶ Brown hyena
- ▶ African wild dog
- ▶ Cape fur seal
- ▶ Hartmann's mountain zebra
- ▶ Damara (Kirk's) dik-dik
- ▶ Gemsbok (oryx)

## Some geography

The jewel in Namibia's crown is the renowned Etosha National Park, in the central north of the country. Also up in the north is the lush panhandle of the Caprivi Strip, which leads along the Okavango river to Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe – but this is a long way from the rest of Namibia unless you're combining it with another country. Along the north-east border with Botswana, Khaudum National Park is once again off the beaten track.

The heartland for most visitors is the fascinating Namib-Naukluft Desert



in the coastal hinterland between the towns of Swakopmund and Lüderitz. This holds some of Africa's most memorable scenery – ranging from mountains, to the famous sand dunes (said to be the highest in the world). To the north, along the Atlantic seaboard, the Skeleton Coast is well

worth a visit but is best seen from the air, while inland mountainous Damaraland is a desert environment with elephant, giraffe and other specially adapted species.

In the very south lies the legendary Fish River Canyon, close to the border

## Diary notes

- ▶ Apr-May: Fresh, green and clear air
- ▶ May-Sep: Fish River Canyon open for hiking
- ▶ Jun-Aug: Dry but cold at night; wildlife around the waterholes!
- ▶ Sep-Oct: Best game viewing
- ▶ Nov-Dec: The first rains break





with South Africa. Namibia's capital, Windhoek is a pleasant, modern city, but generally holds little interest for wildlife enthusiasts and is usually no more than an overnight stop at the start or end of your trip.

### Getting around

Namibia has good roads, and you can reach most places of interest with relative ease. Even if the distances are sometimes daunting, most roads are straight and traffic-free. As a result, many visitors enjoy the flexibility and value of self-drive. Although many roads are unsurfaced, most can be driven in a regular vehicle; however if you want to reach remote regions, you'll need 4-wheel drive.

Alternatively, if you don't want to drive or have limited time, flying is a great way to travel as you maximise your time and benefit from astonishing aerial views that give you a totally different perspective.

You can even do a combination of fly/drive. The final option is joining an organised small group trip – the level of comfort and price depend on whether this is based on lodge accommodation or involves camping.

### Namib-Naukluft Park & Sossusvlei

The Namib Desert is the oldest in the world and, due to the need to adapt to the harsh environment, its wildlife is often unique. Among the larger animals seen here are springbok, gemsbok and ostrich, while aardvark is occasionally sighted at night, along with Cape fox, polecat and aardwolf. With no light pollution and clear night skies virtually guaranteed all year round, the Namib Desert is one of southern Africa's finest areas for stargazing. However the most remarkable sight in the region is at Sossusvlei, where the world's highest sand dunes tower more than 300 metres above the surrounding plain.



### Damaraland

This remote mountainous area of stark arid plains, deep chasms and dramatic red, rocky peaks is dominated by the massive bulk of the Brandberg Mountains. Early morning sea mists that drift inland from the ocean provide sustenance to various desert life forms, and the natural laws of food

and water dictate the movement of the endangered desert elephant, black rhino, gemsbok, greater kudu and springbok. Lion and cheetah move in and out of the area and birders will be keen to have a chance to spot the endemic Monteiro's hornbill, Ruppell's parrot, white-tailed shrike, rockrunner and Herero chat.



### WINGS OVER NAMIBIA

TAILOR-MADE ✚

This is one of the best flying safaris Namibia has to offer, with the finest lodges, a complete 'north and south' experience, superb game-viewing and the best guides everywhere you go. Add to this great food and exceptional photographic opportunities, and this trip is simply unbeatable!

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Windhoek. Fly to NamibRand Nature Reserve, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle and foot safaris, optional balloon flight **Day 4** Fly to Swakopmund, 2-nights hotel. Vehicle safari to fur seal colony at Walvis Bay **Day 6** Fly to Damaraland, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 8** Fly to Western Etosha, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris **Day 10** Fly to Windhoek and depart **Day 11** Arrive UK

NOTE: The Skeleton Coast makes a wonderful contrast to this itinerary. See our Skeleton Coast extension on page 32.

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



### The Skeleton Coast

The Atlantic coast north of Swakopmund is one of the most remote and hauntingly beautiful places on earth. It has everything from soaring dunes and plains to deep canyons, mountains, salt pans, seal colonies and numerous shipwrecks. Freshwater springs permeate the barren sands to create life-sustaining oases. Hartmann's mountain zebra, gemsbok, desert-adapted elephant, Cape fur seals, brown hyena, giraffe and occasionally cheetah are all found in the wild and rugged landscape. There's so much to see, that the traditional regime of morning and afternoon activities is usually abandoned in favour of full day outings to explore the distinctive landscape.

Due to its isolation, the only way to visit is by flying in by light aircraft, which can be added as an extension to any trip in Namibia. Flying at low altitude provides magnificent aerial views of the dramatic coastline and other natural features that give an entirely new and stunning perspective of the country.

### Etosha NP & Ongava Reserve

Etosha is considered by many to be one of the finest game sanctuaries in southern Africa. This enormous park is famous for its vast, dazzling salt pan. The permanent waterholes attract a multitude of wildlife, particularly during the dry winter, including black-faced impala, red hartebeest, Damara dik-dik, eland, and greater kudu,

plus large numbers of elephant, lion and black rhino. The birdlife is also excellent, with more than 300 species. Beside Etosha, Ongava Private Game Reserve offers the attraction of tracking rhino on foot, which is not permitted inside the park.

### The Caprivi Strip

Namibia's north-eastern panhandle is a long, narrow strip of land that stretches along the Okavango almost as far as Victoria Falls. The distance from Windhoek means it's easier to combine a stay here with nearby Botswana or Zambia than with other parts of Namibia. Here the Zambezi's tributaries form a complex system of waterways, islands and riverine forests – protected by parks and wilderness areas. The trans-frontier park, which allows wildlife to move

freely across the area, makes this region a hidden gem. It is as rich in wildlife as more popular areas such as Chobe National Park and the Okavango Delta in Botswana.

### Fish River Canyon

The magnificent canyon of the Fish River is one of nature's great dramatic spectacles – second only in size to the Grand Canyon, yet it receives only a fraction of the visitors. The enormous river gorge meanders for 161 kilometres through the surrounding desert plains, at times reaching depths of over 550 metres. There's great birdwatching here, and short scenic hikes are possible from the smaller nature park, although serious hikers may want to contemplate the 86 kilometre trail which takes five days to complete!

## FACES OF NAMIBIA

SMALL GROUP

This active adventure features all the key areas of this vast country – dunes, desert and plains – plus its iconic wildlife. Staying largely in exclusive accommodation in private reserves, you visit Sossusvlei's soaring dunes, take a boat trip at Swakopmund, explore the desert in Damaraland, and marvel at Etosha's prolific wildlife. Activities include walking, mountain biking, seeing ancient rock engravings at Twyfelfontein, and rhino tracking – along with optional hot air ballooning and horse-riding. All in all, this is the complete Namibian adventure!

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Jo'burg **Day 2** Arrive Windhoek; transfer to Sossusvlei, 2-nights. Day and night vehicle and foot safaris; optional ballooning, quad biking and horse riding **Day 4** Transfer to Swakopmund, 2-nights. Boat trip **Day 6** Transfer to Damaraland, 3-nights. Day and night vehicle and foot safaris, mountain biking, Twyfelfontein rock art **Day 9** Transfer to Ongava Reserve, 2-nights. Day and night vehicle and foot safaris in Ongava Reserve and Etosha National Park **Day 11** Transfer to Windhoek and depart via Jo'burg **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates all year round

## SKELETON COAST EXTENSION

TAILOR-MADE

Namibia's varied topography and wealth of astonishing natural features make it a prime candidate for seeing it from the air. This unique short flying trip, which can be done as an extension to any trip in Namibia, offers breathtaking views of the country from an entirely different perspective while flying at low altitude. Flying also allows you to reach areas in the far north that are too difficult or time-consuming to get to by any other means.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart Windhoek, fly to Swakopmund and Deception Bay, then north along the desolate Skeleton Coast to the Huab Valley, 1-night **Day 2** Explore by vehicle and on foot, then fly north to the Hoarusib Valley in the Kunene region, 1-night **Day 3** Visit a Himba tribal settlement and search for desert elephant, then fly further north to the Kunene River on the Angola border, 1-night **Day 4** Boat trip on the Kunene River then fly south to Windhoek, arriving in the afternoon

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



### Swakopmund

This charming seaside town with its cooler coastal climate comes as a welcome relief after the desert. A bizarre relic from German colonial times, the town is full of traditional cake shops. Local attractions include ancient welwitschias, the oldest plants in the world, in the excellent desert park. The nearby lagoon of Walvis Bay is home to huge colonies of Cape fur seals, a world-renowned sanctuary for 160,000 resident birds, and a twice-yearly feeding station for around 200,000 waders and terns on their migration routes north and south. You can take a boat trip to see the birdlife, the seals and the locally common Heaviside's dolphins.

### The Africat Foundation, Okonjima

Some four hour's drive north of Windhoek, Okonjima is a great place to stop if you don't want to spend time in the capital. We recommend a two night stay here to give an opportunity to visit the fascinating cheetah project, where you will not only learn about the welfare work done here, but also have an opportunity to track cheetahs on foot, and see leopards from game drive vehicles. The surrounding woodland is a birdwatcher's paradise with over 200 species, including rare endemics such as Monteiro's hornbill, Hartlaub's francolin and rockrunner.

### GAME TRAILS SELF-DRIVE

TAILOR-MADE ✦

This is classic self-drive on what has become known as the 'northern circuit'. It offers fantastic game-viewing and photographic opportunities staying in good quality (but not over the top!) accommodation.

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Windhoek, 1-night guesthouse  
**Day 3** Drive to Okonjima, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris  
**Day 5** Drive to Eastern Etosha, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris  
**Day 7** Drive to Western Etosha, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris  
**Day 9** Drive to Damaraland, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. See ancient rock engravings  
**Day 11** Drive to Erongo, 2-nights lodge/tented camp. Vehicle safaris  
**Day 13** Drive to Windhoek and depart  
**Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Wolwedans Dune Camp, NamibRand Nature Reserve

Nestled in the dunes against a backdrop of extraordinary natural beauty this camp makes a perfect base for exploring the awe-inspiring desert. It offers rustic but unique comfort in six tented chalets, each on a wooden deck with a private bathroom. The central lapa comprises a lounge, dining area and open-plan kitchen, while a deck with a fireplace is a great place for a sundowner.



### Ongava Lodge, Etosha National Park

This luxurious property is on one of the largest private reserves in Namibia, on the southern boundary of Etosha. It consists of twelve air-conditioned, brick and thatch chalets with en-suite bathroom, plus a thatched lounge/dining area and a deck for open-air dining overlooking a floodlit waterhole. Its sister camp, Little Ongava, has just three suites, each with a plunge pool – perfect for a group of friends. There is also a tented camp with eight comfortable tents and a small pool.



### Okonjima Main Camp, Otjiwarongo

Okonjima is home to the AfriCat Foundation, one of the world's largest cheetah and leopard rescue-and-release programmes. Sited around the original farmhouse, Main Camp has ten luxury rooms with bush views, and six around the garden, all with en-suite facilities. Nearby Bush Camp has eight chalets, and a fabulous private villa has four rooms – including two private suites, whose king-size beds can be wheeled outside under the stars.



### Serra Cafema, Skeleton Coast, Kunene region

This is perhaps the most remote camp in southern Africa, in the extreme north-west of Namibia – reachable only by light aircraft (three hours flying time from Windhoek). Eight comfortable and spacious tents with a thatched roof and en-suite bathroom are on wooden decks, and look over the rapids of the Kunene River. There is a dining room, bar and swimming pool, and activities focus on vehicle and foot safaris, boat trips on the river, and visits to a nearby Himba village.

# Madagascar



Madagascar is a country quite unlike any other. The world's fourth-largest island is nothing short of 'unique' and 'bizarre'. Along with all that makes it unusual, Madagascar displays great diversity of habitat, with distinct areas of rainforest, deciduous forest, high mountain and desert. But it is the extraordinary array of wildlife that these different habitats support, the majority of which is found nowhere else in the world, that is Madagascar's principal attraction.

Essentially, Madagascar is nothing short of intoxicating – a destination brimming with intrigue and excitement. Its strange and incongruous mix of wildlife and culture combine to produce a fascinatingly different experience. Memories of gentle, friendly people, unusual habitats and curious wildlife will linger long after you leave, and the overriding memory will be one of an island lost in time.

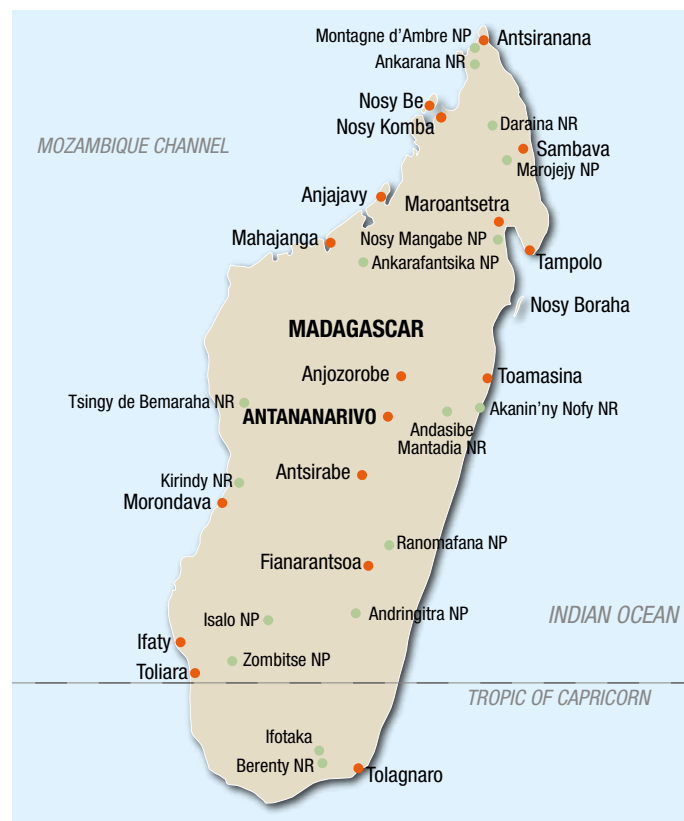
## Key species

- ▶ Indri
- ▶ Sifaka
- ▶ Woolly lemur
- ▶ Ring-tailed lemur
- ▶ Bamboo lemur
- ▶ Mouse lemur
- ▶ Sportive lemur
- ▶ Aye-aye
- ▶ Fosa
- ▶ Humpback whale

## Some geography

Topography and climate divide Madagascar into distinct zones and define its varied habitats. A mountainous spine runs the length of the island from north to south. The capital Antananarivo (generally known as Tana), and the national parks of Ranomafana and Andringitra lie within this central highland zone.

Its steep eastern slopes drop abruptly to a narrow coastal strip and are clad with vestiges of an immense rainforest that once covered them entirely. This is where Andasibe-



Mantadia, Masoala and Marojejy National Parks are all found, along with the islands of Nosy Mangabe, and further south Nosy Boraha (Île Sainte Marie).

To the west a wide dry plain descends gently towards the Mozambique Channel, covered with savannah and deciduous trees. The limestone pinnacles of the two tsingy areas and

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jul-Aug: Humpback whales calve in Antongil Bay
- ▶ Apr-Nov: Best time to travel
- ▶ Jul-Sep: Most likely time to see aye-aye on Nosy Mangabe
- ▶ Sep-Nov: Driest time throughout the island
- ▶ Nov-Apr: Red fody dance on the savannah during breeding season
- ▶ Dec: Start of the wet season

Kirindy Forest Reserve are located on this side of the island.

The mountainous north around Antsirana includes Montagne d'Ambre National Park and a clutch of paradise islands. In contrast the arid south-west of the island consists largely of desert-like spiny forest. This area includes the national parks of Isalo and Zombitse, plus Berenty Private Reserve and Ifotaka Forest Community Reserve.



## Getting around

Travel by road is rewarding, but can be tough. From the capital in the centre of the island 'Route Nationale 7' leads south to Toliara, linking many places of interest – highland paddy fields, Ranomafana, Andringitra's impressive granite mountains and Isalo. If you want a road trip, this is the road – but don't expect easy travelling! East of Tana, Andasibe-Mantadia is easily reached in a few hours by road. Given the distances involved, and the condition of many roads, the domestic air network is useful for longer journeys, although the timings and frequency of flights often necessitate overnights in the hub of Tana en-route to elsewhere.

**For ease of reference, in this section we have divided the island into regions that reflect the predominant type of vegetation or topography.**

## Rainforest:

### Montagne d'Ambre National Park

Located close to the island's northern tip, Madagascar's first national park takes its name from the amber-coloured resin produced by some of its trees. It lies less than an hour by road from Antsiranana (Diego Suarez), the main city of the north. Once there, you'll find a cool green mountain oasis in an otherwise parched landscape, with a well-maintained trail system. Facilities are few, but it's a rewarding place

to explore, particularly as crowned lemurs and Sanford's brown lemurs are frequently seen. Its reptiles include a wonderful array of chameleons, and numerous leaf-tailed geckos.

### Marojeje National Park

Towards the northern end of the rainforest belt, Marojeje contains remote and unexplored areas. It is the best place to look for rare silky sifaka, and no fewer than nine other lemur species are found here. Other notable species include ring-tailed mongoose, helmet vanga, and countless reptiles and frogs. Marojeje is the only place left in the country where you can walk from sea level to a mountain summit through unbroken forest. The view from Marojeje peak (2,132m) is spectacular, but not for the faint-hearted. To get here, you need to fly to Sambava, drive to Manantenina, then walk for two hours!

### Masoala National Park

The Masoala Peninsula supports the largest remaining area of lowland rainforest in Madagascar, and the greatest number of species. The national park occupies 2,300 square kilometres of mountain and valley cloaked in primary forest, which in many places drops down to glorious sandy beaches that fringe the Bay of Antongil, on the western side of the peninsula. This is the last refuge of the red-ruffed lemur and among its numerous reptiles are the panther chameleon and tiny stump-tailed

leaf chameleon. Rare birds such as helmet vanga, Bernier's vanga and the Madagascar serpent eagle, are seen here, while nocturnal forays reveal mouse lemurs, woolly lemurs and possibly even aye-aye!

### Nosy Mangabe

This idyllic island in the Bay of Antongil has excellent wildlife, as well as fine beaches of golden sand. Its steep forested slopes have proved a

safe refuge for aye-ayes that were released there in the 1960s, and have subsequently thrived; however as they are largely a nocturnal species and the island has no accommodation its very difficult to see them. Far easier to see are the large leaf-tailed geckos, black-and-white ruffed lemurs and white-fronted brown lemurs. The island is easily reached by a short boat ride from Maroantsetra or en-route to or from Masoala, and makes a great day out!

## SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS

TAILOR-MADE 

As the name suggests, this road trip takes in the must-see, must-do locations in the southern half of Madagascar, by following Route Nationale 7 south from the capital through the mountainous central highlands to the dry spiny forest. This cross section reveals some of the many different aspects of the island: its unique wildlife and birds, its culture and varied topography. Staying at comfortable accommodation throughout, you also visit Andasibe-Mantadia National Park to see more lemurs and the iconic indri.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Antananarivo and drive to Andasibe-Mantadia, 3-nights hotel. Forest walks to see indri **Day 5** Drive to Antsirabe, 1-night. Visit the capital **Day 6** Drive to Ranomafana, 2-nights. Lemur spotting **Day 8** Drive to Fianarantsoa, 1-night. Visit the Betisleo capital **Day 9** Drive to Isalo, 2-nights. Walks to look for lemurs and birds **Day 11** Drive to Ifaty, 2-nights. Visit the spiny forest **Day 13** Drive to Toliara and fly to Antananarivo, 1-night **Day 14** Depart, arrive UK same day

NOTE: you can extend this trip by flying from Toliara to Fort Dauphin to visit Berenty Private Reserve or Ifotaka Community Forest before returning to Antananarivo.

### Departures

Throughout the year. (Domestic flights do not operate daily.)



### Andasibe-Mantadia National Park

With its easy access and excellent wildlife, this is arguably Madagascar's premier rainforest reserve. It combines the small Analamazaotra Reserve, close to Andasibe village, with the larger Mantadia to the north. Close views of indri are virtually assured here, where groups of these spectacular lemurs have been habituated. There are also regular sightings of brown lemurs. Mantadia's superb forests have an extensive network of trails which reward explorers with sightings of diademed sifakas, indris, black-and-white ruffed lemurs and grey bamboo lemurs. Frequently seen birds include red-fronted coua, tyla, nuthatch, and blue vanga, and pitta-like ground roller.

### Ranomafana National Park

Established in 1991 to protect the then newly-discovered golden bamboo lemur, Ranomafana is one of the island's most important wildlife sites and amongst its best rainforest reserves. Its pleasant climate, misty forest slopes, spectacular views, picturesque rushing river and huge species diversity make it a deserved favourite. It is one of the best places to see Milne-Edward's sifaka, greater bamboo lemur and red-bellied lemur. Birdwatching is also good, as many rainforest endemics such as pitta-like ground rollers are often seen. Reptiles, frogs and invertebrates are also abundant – including the bizarre giraffe-necked weevil.

### Anjozorobe

Part of a natural corridor that is amongst the last vestiges of forest on the high plateau. It is only about three hours drive from Antananarivo and provides a quieter and easily accessible alternative to Andasibe for those wishing to look for Indris and Diademed Sifakas as well as Brown Lemurs and numerous chameleons.



### Deciduous Forest:

#### Ankarana Reserve

This lost world in the far north, three hours drive from Antsirana, is protected by a natural fortress of razor-sharp rocks. The limestone has been sculpted by wind and rain into dramatic pinnacles, with isolated patches of forest in between. Wildlife flourishes nevertheless: crowned lemur, Sanford's brown lemur, and the elusive fosa. Peculiar birds such as white-breasted mesite, sickle-billed vanga and cuckoo-roller live in the dry forest, as do panther chameleons and exquisitely camouflaged leaf-tailed geckos. There is no accommodation, but two campsites serve as bases for exploring.

### Daraina

A mosaic of rolling hills covered with patches of deciduous and semi-evergreen forest, this is one of the richest and most ecologically sensitive areas in the north, and is due to become a national park at some stage. The principal reason for its importance is the presence of the golden-crowned sifaka, one of the world's rarest primates, which is found here and nowhere else. Other species seen regularly include crowned lemur, Sanford's brown lemur, and occasionally even aye-aye. The only accommodation is a simple campsite.

### Ankarana National Park

The island's best area of remaining deciduous forest lies a couple of hours drive inland from Mahajanga. Centred on Lac Ravelobe, a network of level paths makes seeing wildlife easy. You can see many habituated groups of lemurs, including beautiful Coquerel's sifakas and elusive mongoose lemurs. Rewarding night walks reveal mouse, woolly and sportive lemurs, and birdlife includes white-breasted mesite, Schlegel's asity, rufous vanga and Madagascar fish eagle. A covered, flat-bottomed boat makes an ideal way to watch water birds around the margins of the lake.

### Tsingy de Bemaraha National Park

This largely unexplored area contains huge tracts of limestone that have been eroded into the island's largest and most impressive karst landscape. At the park's southern end, walkways have been constructed to make access easy. The awe-inspiring scenery

is matched by the diversity and abundance of wildlife in the forest – with troupes of white Decken's sifakas, red-fronted brown lemurs, many chameleons and other reptiles. Along the southern boundary, where the Manambolo Rover cuts an impressive gorge, boat trips are an ideal way to see wildlife.

### Kirindy Forest

A couple of hours drive north of Morondava on the east coast, via the famed Avenue of Baobabs, this area of dry forest is rich in wildlife. It is the best place to see curious endemics such as the giant jumping rat, narrow-striped mongoose and the fosa, Madagascar's largest carnivore. It is also good for lemurs. Verreaux's sifakas and red-fronted brown lemurs are often seen, while at night you may see Madame Berthe's mouse lemur – the world's smallest primate! In the summer months reptiles are numerous – Labord's chameleon, which has spectacular rainbow colours, is regularly seen.



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## BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

TAILOR-MADE 

If you yearn for a short but memorable getaway, this trip combines two of the best and most idiosyncratic locations that Madagascar can offer – one in the north and one in the south. Both offer extremely comfortable accommodation, and strike the perfect balance between activity and relaxation, with excellent guides who will help you decipher the complexities of life on the island.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Antananarivo, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Maroansetra and boat transfer to Masoala, 3-nights Masoala Forest Lodge. Walks, canoe trip to explore Masoala National Park **Day 6** Transfer to Maroansetra, fly to Antananarivo, 1-night **Day 7** Fly to Fort Dauphin. Drive to Ifofaka, 3-nights Mandrare River Camp. Walks to explore Ifofaka Community Forest in search of lemurs and birds **Day 10** Transfer to Fort Dauphin and fly to Antananarivo. Depart **Day 11** Arrive UK

### Departures

From late March to end of December. NB: domestic flights do not operate every day

## ANJAJAVY EXTENSION

TAILOR-MADE 

For the ultimate combination of beach and bush, this romantic island offers French flair and panache in splendid isolation. Against a backdrop of sandy beaches and deciduous forest, each morning you wake to the soothing lapping of waves, while lemurs feed in the trees nearby. The adjacent private rainforest has over 1,800 plant species, many of which are endemic, plus Coquerel's sifaka, Cuvier's oplure (a type of iguana), chameleons and birds of paradise, while the coral reef sports a array of colourful fish. You can see rare Madagascar fish eagle, marvel at coastal baobab forest, swim in remote and idyllic bays, visit fishing picturesque villages, or simply relax – the choice is yours... You can add this to any trip in Madagascar.

### L'Hôtel Anjavy, Anjavy

Standing on a remote peninsula on the north-west coast, 25 spacious and beautifully appointed, thatched villas built of local rosewood have a lovely bathroom and wide terrace facing the sea.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly by light aircraft from Antananarivo to Anjavy, 3-nights (minimum stay) L'Hotel Anjavy. **Day 4** Light aircraft flight back to Antananarivo

**Departures** Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday only from Antananarivo

## Zombitse National Park

Lying between Isalo and the town of Toliara, this park is a remnant of transitional forest between the western and southern regions. Despite its isolation and small size, the forest is of particular interest to birdwatchers, as it is home to one of Madagascar's rarest endemics, Appert's greenbul, as well as other species such as giant coua, crested ibis and cuckoo roller. Verreaux's sifakas, red-fronted brown lemurs and sportive lemurs are also seen here. There's no accommodation, so it's best to visit early in the morning, en-route to either Isalo or Toliara.



## Southern Interior:

### Andringitra National Park

Centred around Madagascar's second highest peak, Pic d'Imarivolanitra (which means 'close to the sky'), Andringitra is a unique region of granite and gneiss formations, high altitude vegetation, forest and waterfalls, and offers some of the most scenic and spectacular trekking opportunities in Madagascar. There are impressive wild flower meadows, rare succulent plants and a good chance of seeing Ring-tailed Lemurs as well. The park is about one-and-a-half hours drive from the town of Ambalavao.

## Isalo National Park

Isalo is quite unlike anywhere else in Madagascar. Its particular appeal is in its remarkable landscape of eroded sandstone outcrops, canyons and its rare plants. There are spectacular vistas at every turn – it is a wonderful place for photographers. The valleys are ribbons of green where delicate feather palms and screw pines grow, while endemic succulents such as the bizarre elephant's foot plant flourish on the cliffs and rocks. The deep gorges, where patches of forest thrive, are home to troupes of Verreaux's sifakas, red-fronted brown lemurs and ring-tailed lemurs.

## Southern Spiny Forest:

### Ifofaka Community Forest

This remote tract of community-owned forest is an admirable illustration of an initiative that encourages local communities to manage their natural resources sustainably. The native Tandroy people harvest certain areas of the forest, but leave the rest intact to preserve it for ecotourism, which generates a major source of revenue. The preserved gallery and spiny forest are home to the wildlife that is synonymous with Madagascar's deep south: ring-tailed lemurs, endearing Verreaux's sifakas, and a wide variety of birdlife. No stay would be complete without a visit to Ifofaka village to learn about the complex beliefs and customs of the proud and engaging Tandroy.

### Berenty Private Reserve

Featured in numerous television documentaries, this is perhaps Madagascar's best known reserve. Adjacent to the Mandrare River, this



## ENDANGERED SIFAKAS OF THE NORTH

TAILOR-MADE 

This unique safari takes in two of the best, but least visited, areas of northern Madagascar. Although accommodation here is more rustic than in the south, the reward is getting off the beaten track to see a variety of less common species. These include crowned lemur and Sanford's brown lemur in the green mountains of Montagne d'Ambre, and the silky sifaka of the Marojejy rainforest. The final highlight is a visit to Andasibe-Mantadia to see the iconic indri.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Antananarivo, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Antsiranana and transfer to Montagne d'Ambre, 2-nights. Forest walks **Day 5** Drive to Sambava, 1-night **Day 6** Marojejy National Park, 3-nights camping. Look for lemurs, reptiles, amphibians and birds **Day 9** Drive to Sambava and fly to Antananarivo, 1-night **Day 10** Drive to Andasibe-Mantadia, 3-nights. Forest walks to see indri **Day 13** Drive to Antananarivo and depart **Day 14** Arrive UK

### Departures

From mid-April to end of December. NB: domestic flights do not operate every day

small island of forest surrounded by sisal plantations is privately-owned and run. On early morning walks large troupes of ring-tailed lemurs are often encountered while Verreaux's sifakas leap effortlessly through the canopy. Giant couas peck through the leaf-litter and there are numerous chameleons – if you're good enough to spot them! After dark, nocturnal mouse, and sportive lemurs scurry along the branches and are readily seen, as are very approachable white-browed and Madagascar scops owls.

### Ifaty Spiny Forest

Although as yet unprotected, the spiny forests near Ifaty, north of Toliara, are nevertheless of great interest to birdwatchers and botanists alike. This is the best place to look for two of the island's most threatened birds – the long-tailed ground roller and sub-desert mesite. There is plenty more of interest too, including an wide

diversity of birdlife, and some of the most bizarre flora imaginable – the crazy, waving branches of devilishly-spined octopus trees contrast sharply with the squat, bulbous forms of ancient baobab trees.

### Beaches and Islands:

Although Madagascar's wildlife is its main draw, the island also boasts a lovely coastline and idyllic offshore islands that offer a chance to relax in seclusion and style, while continuing to enjoy the island's biological richness. The pace of life is slower here, and you can experience the friendly, laid-back atmosphere for which Madagascar is renowned.

### Nosy Be

Off the north-west coast, Nosy Be is renowned for the production of ylang-ylang and the heady scent of the blossom fills the air. More developed





for coastal tourism than other areas in Madagascar, the island offers quiet and secluded beaches, lively night life, good wildlife, comfortable accommodation and wonderful cuisine. It's also a major centre for deep-sea fishing and scuba diving.

### Nosy Iranja

Some 50 kilometres south-west of Nosy Be, off the Ampasindava Peninsula, Nosy Iranja becomes two islands at high tide – Iranja Komba and Iranga Kely. At low tide the two are linked by a long white sandbank. These islands provide important breeding

beaches for nesting hawksbill turtles and work is in progress to safeguard and monitor their populations.

### Anjajavy Private Reserve

Located on a peninsula on the remote north-west coast, this private reserve is an oasis for both wildlife and visitors. Many species of lemurs, birds and reptiles can be seen in its deciduous forest, including the lovely Coquerel's sifaka, which is often seen, while along the coast white sandy beaches are punctuated by dramatic limestone outcrops and mangrove-fringed estuaries.

### Nosy Boraha (Île Sainte-Marie)

Close to Madagascar's north-east coast, Nosy Boraha epitomizes all that is good about a tropical island, while avoiding many of the pitfalls. Its miles of beaches are lined with waving palm trees and fringed by turquoise lagoons with distant reefs that protect the shore. Sleepy coastal villages sit comfortably next to discreet beach hotels, and the air is full of the intoxicating scent of cloves. In addition this is a centre for whale-watching between July and September as female humpbacks congregate in the sheltered waters to give birth.

### Nosy Mitsio

Lying 70 kilometres north of Nosy Be, this archipelago can only be reached by boat. The main island of La Grande Mitsio is surrounded by nine smaller ones – Tsara Banjina, with a fringe of white sand lapped by crystal blue waters, is particularly beautiful. The offshore reefs harbour turtles, manta rays and a myriad of colourful fish, and there are colonies of frigatebirds, tropicbirds and brown boobies.

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Masoala Forest Lodge, Masoala

Set next to the beach, this up-market lodge brings comfortable African safari-style camping to Madagascar. Large furnished tents are set on wooden platforms with thatched roofs, en-suite toilets, and showers with hot water. In addition to exploring the forest you can take out kayaks and even snorkel in the nearby marine reserve. In July and August humpback whales come into shore to breed and calve – a spectacular sight to see from a kayak!



### Vakona Forest Lodge, Andasibe-Mantadia

Located between the two parts of the reserve, Vakona offers a high standard of hospitality and accommodation. Set in a natural amphitheatre that echoes with birdsong, its cottages are built on a hillside overlooking a small lake and a swimming pool; the restaurant is renowned for its cuisine. A short walk from the lodge, a private reserve occupies a small island. Four or five habituated lemur species live here, so you'll have good opportunities for close-up photos!



### Mandrare River Camp, Ifotaka Community Forest

African-style safari camping is a new innovation in Madagascar, and Mandrare exemplifies all that is good about the experience. Six spacious and well-appointed tents with private facilities and hot water are at the heart of this intimate camp on the banks of the Mandrare River. Excellent meals are served in the large mess tent in the heart of the bush. The camp employs expert local guides who take immense pride in showing local wildlife, and explaining their complex customs and way of life.



### Hotels Jardin du Roy & Relais de la Reine, Isalo National Park

Nestling sympathetically amongst rocky outcrops on the southern boundary of the park, these French-owned hotels are amongst Madagascar's finest. Local stone has been used to construct buildings that appear almost as extensions of the natural rock. At the Jardin du Roy 15 rooms have en suite facilities and a verandah looking over the surrounding landscape, whereas the Relais de la Reine has 30 rooms with similar facilities. Each hotel has a pool, and offers guided walks in the park.



# East Africa

East Africa conjures up images of endless grassy plains dotted with umbrella-like acacia trees and teeming with wildlife – the classic ‘Out of Africa’ experience. Easy flights from the UK, fabulous national parks and reserves with guaranteed animal sightings and breathtaking scenery combine to make this one of the world’s top wildlife viewing areas. It is consistently popular with first-time visitors and regular

safari-goers alike, yet despite this there are still secrets to be discovered.

The timeless cycle of the wildebeest migration across the plains and Tanzania’s famed Northern Circuit draw many enthusiasts, but this should not deter you from visiting other areas. At other times of the year animal sightings are still fantastic, and visitor numbers appreciably lower.

Apart from the renowned Serengeti in northern Tanzania, and adjoining Masai Mara in southern Kenya, the region has many other spectacular national parks. The Selous, in southern Tanzania, is Africa’s largest protected area. The lakes of the Rift Valley provide wonderful opportunities for bird watching, while Uganda’s Queen Elizabeth National Park also offers excellent wildlife viewing.

You can easily combine any safari in this region with a visit to the magnificent populations of mountain gorillas and chimpanzees, whose final strongholds are found along the borders of Uganda with Rwanda. Many visitors choose to round off their safari by relaxing on one of the beautiful palm-fringed beaches along the coast of the Indian ocean or an off-shore island.



## The Great Migration

The annual migration of millions of white-bearded wildebeest and hundreds of thousands of Burchell's zebra is a wonderful sight to behold. As they follow the seasonal rains to fresh pastures, these animals circulate between Kenya's Masai Mara and the Serengeti region in Tanzania. Visitors can observe this extraordinary natural phenomenon at various times of the year in different places along the way.

Zebra usually lead the way, with gazelles accompanying the herds for short distances. They move by instinct, as nature dictates when to move on. With grazing taking up to sixteen hours each day, the grass plains are stripped bare within a matter of days.

This is a hazardous journey, with lion, leopard, hyena, wild dog, jackal and countless birds of prey constantly on the look out for their next meal, and Nile crocodiles lying in wait at fast-flowing river crossings, such as the Grumeti and the Mara. Rutting occurs along the way, with most births occurring in January and February in the southern region of the Serengeti and the north-western region of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. Although giving birth weakens the migrating animals, less than half a percent of the newborn calves are taken at this time. So, although many a life is lost, millions live on, creating what remains the greatest wildlife spectacle on the planet!



# Kenya



Kenya is renowned as one of the best countries in Africa to see wildlife. Its diversity of habitat, endless beauty and world-class hotels, lodges and tented camps guarantee enduring popularity. The Masai Mara continually receives accolade as one of the world's best wildlife areas, and the Great Rift Valley bisects the country, its floor lined with lakes populated by flamingos and many other birds and animals. However Kenya is also

blessed with beautiful beaches and rich marine life, the lesser-known desert in the north of the country, and the temperate highlands around Mount Kenya. Its location at the heart of East Africa and excellent transport links make it easy to combine with other destinations, notably Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, the Maldives and Madagascar.

## Key species

- ▶ Eastern black-and-white colobus
- ▶ Bushbaby
- ▶ Bat-eared fox
- ▶ Grevy's zebra
- ▶ Rothschild's giraffe
- ▶ Grant's gazelle
- ▶ Gerenuk
- ▶ Lesser kudu
- ▶ Beisa oryx
- ▶ Bohor reedbeek

## Some geography

South of Nairobi, the jewel in Kenya's crown is the Masai Mara, which extends over the border to become the Serengeti in Tanzania. Amboseli is also on the Tanzania border, but further south-east, and to link the two you have to return to Nairobi. Yet further south-east is Mombasa on the Indian Ocean coast. North of the capital the Rift Valley is occupied by a string of lakes (Naivasha, Nakuru, Baringo and Bogoria) to the east of the Aberdares, with the Laikipia Plateau to their north.



## Diary notes

- ▶ All year: Big Cat Diary!
- ▶ Feb-Jun: The 'green season' (most rains fall Apr-May)
- ▶ Jul: The Migration – wildebeest and zebra herds head into the Masai Mara
- ▶ Late Jul: Best time to see flamingoes on Rift Valley lakes
- ▶ Aug-Sep: Butterfly time!
- ▶ Oct: Humpback whales off the coast
- ▶ Late Oct: The Migration – the herds head south into Tanzania

## Getting around

Many of Kenya's protected areas lie within a few hours' drive of each other, so minibus transfers are not too taxing. For longer distances, or to save time, scheduled and chartered flights are useful. In private conservancies, in addition to game drives in 4-wheel drive vehicles, you can do game walks and night drives, neither of which are permitted in national parks, and thus have a more intimate experience.



### Nairobi

Kenya's bustling capital needn't just be a place where you start or end your safari. If you have time to spare, you can visit the Karen Blixen Museum, which preserves the bygone era of the colonial settlers who pioneered coffee production. Also well worth a visit is the Giraffe Centre, for a close-up experience of the rare Rothschild's giraffe, the colourful market and the National Museum. Elephant enthusiasts should also ask us about visiting the Daphne Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage.

### Masai Mara

Kenya's finest wildlife sanctuary is a place of gently rolling grasslands studded with acacia trees. Wild animals wander the ancestral homelands of the Masai, who still tend their livestock here, creating a curious harmony between man and wildlife.

This natural paradise is home to elephant, black rhino and great herds of plains game including Thompson's and Grant's gazelle, zebra, eland and others, which offer rich pickings to predators such as lion, leopard and cheetah, while the rivers contain hippos and countless Nile crocodiles. Some 450 bird species have been recorded here, and you may be lucky enough to see rare mammal species such as bat-eared fox, zorilla and caracal.

In short, the Mara remains one of our favourite destinations. Although between July and October the plains

are filled with migrating herds of wildebeest and zebras, the wildlife viewing is excellent all year round.

### Lake Nakuru National Park

This national park and associated rhino sanctuary lies in the Great Rift Valley. The small, shallow, alkaline lake is known for one of the greatest bird spectacles on earth – a multitude of fuchsia-coloured flamingos that at times seems to turn the lake pink. Over 400 species of birds are resident here, and the surrounding park is famous for its sizeable population of both black and white rhinos. The rare Rothschild's giraffe is present, and the park is also home to buffalo, wild dog, zebra, eland, waterbuck and lion.

### Lake Naivasha

The highest and purest of the Great Rift Valley's lakes offers great birdwatching with more than 400 species having been recorded along its shoreline – from pelican and fish eagle to weavers and warblers. In addition, the lush vegetation supports a variety of animals that include buffalo, antelope, giraffe, warthog and monkey. You will almost certainly catch sight of hippos lazily watching proceedings from the cooling water. You can visit nearby Hell's Gate National Park, with its spectacular canyons, hot springs and wildlife, or Joy Adamson's house on the lakeshore.

## BIG CAT WEEKEND IN THE MARA

TAILOR-MADE

This short, sharp intake of wildlife will leave you refreshed and reinvigorated, and with vivid memories of perhaps the world's finest wildlife sanctuary!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Nairobi. Fly to the Masai Mara, 3-nights at the lodge or tented camp of your choice **Day 3** Safaris by vehicle and on foot **Day 5** Fly to Nairobi and depart **Day 6** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## KENYA ADVENTURE CAMPING

TAILOR-MADE

If the quality of wildlife is more important than luxury accommodation, this remarkable value, one-week safari is just for you. Staying at a private camp in exclusive conservancies near two famous national parks, in a dome tent with a mattress (rather than a bed) and a private bathroom, you'll enjoy many of the facilities of a much more expensive safari lodge: top quality food, good 4-wheel drive vehicles with all window seats and excellent guides for wildlife drives – at a fraction of the price!

*Although this itinerary is tailor made, it does also operate as a small group departure.*

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Nairobi and transfer to Amboseli's Selenkay Conservancy, 3-nights adventure camping **Day 3** Wildlife drives, walk with Masai guide in Selenkay Conservancy and visit Masai village **Day 4** Full day wildlife viewing in Amboseli **Day 5** Transfer to Nairobi; afternoon flight to Masai Mara and drive to Ol Kinyei Conservancy, 3-nights adventure camping **Day 6** Wildlife drives and night drive in Ol Kinyei Conservancy **Day 7** Full day game viewing in Masai Mara Reserve **Day 8** Minibus transfer to Nairobi and depart **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, late Dec-late Mar and mid-Jul-end of Oct



### Laikipia Plateau

This lovely, remote wilderness area lies just north of the equator, some five hours drive (or a short flight) from Nairobi. It is home to greater kudu, reticulated giraffe, impala, elephant, lion, leopard and numerous other antelope and birds; it is also one of the last refuges of the endangered black rhino. However the major draw here is total immersion in the African bush through walking or riding safaris, accompanied by naturalist guides and local Masai. The intensity and solitude of this experience is something not often found elsewhere.

### Samburu National Reserve

This lovely, remote wilderness area lies 325 kilometres north of Nairobi, on the arid fringe of Kenya's extensive desert region. This is the ancestral land of the colourful Samburu people, close relatives of the Masai. The dramatic landscape harbours species rarely found elsewhere, including Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, Beisa oryx, Somali ostrich and vulturine guineafowl. The long-necked gerenuk is also a common resident. The reserve is bisected by the Ewaso Ng'iro River, which attracts large herds of elephant, and a variety of spectacular birds.

## ULTIMATE KENYA SAFARI

TAILOR-MADE

A rich blend of outstanding scenery, memorable wildlife and award-winning properties. From a lovingly restored farmhouse beside Lake Naivasha you can drive, walk or ride among plains game by the lakes of the Rift Valley, then the remote Laikipia Plateau offers a chance to explore by vehicle, on foot or by camel, with stunning views of Mount Kenya. The Masai Mara's acacia-studded grassland provides the finest animal and bird watching, plus an overwhelming sense of space. A kaleidoscope of colour and drama all year round, between July and October it positively teems with the Great Migration. To conclude, the deep blue waters and verdant islands of Lake Victoria are rich in fish and birdlife, and an ideal place to relax in a setting to match any Indian Ocean beach...

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Nairobi, drive (or fly) to Naivasha, 2-nights, Loldia House. Afternoon walk **Day 3** Visit Lake Nakuru National Park **Day 4** Return to Nairobi, fly to Loisaba and transfer to Laikipia, 3-nights, Sabuk Lodge. Explore the northern Laikipia Plateau **Day 7** Fly to Masai Mara, 3-nights, Governors Camp. Morning and afternoon vehicle safaris, plus optional early morning balloon safari **Day 10** Fly to Lake Victoria, 2-nights, Mafangano Island Camp **Day 12** Fly to Nairobi and depart **Day 13** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, year round except Apr-Jun

## WINGS OVER KENYA

TAILOR-MADE

From Amboseli National Park in the lee of Africa's highest peak, snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, to the highlands of the Laikipia Plateau and on to the wide plains of the Masai Mara, this is a fabulous mix of Kenya's finest wildlife areas. Flying from location to location ensures you make the absolute most of your time, and staying in top quality camps with highly experienced guides guarantee the best wildlife sightings possible.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Nairobi. Fly to Amboseli, 2-nights Amboseli National Park, 2-nights tented camp. Vehicle and foot safaris, and night drives **Day 4** Fly to Laikipia Plateau, 2-nights tented camp. Vehicle and foot safaris, and night drives **Day 6** Fly to Masai Mara Reserve, 2-nights tented camp. Vehicle and foot safaris, and night drives **Day 8** Fly to Nairobi and depart **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## MIGRATION SPECIAL

TAILOR-MADE

Each year in late June and July, when the rains in Tanzania's Serengeti are long over and the grassland there has turned to dust, huge herds of zebra and wildebeest make the long trip northward into the Masai Mara in search of fresh grazing. This journey is made more dangerous by the need to cross several rivers en route where hungry crocodiles lie in wait, while the region's big cats are ready to pick off the weak and lame. This astonishing natural phenomenon is a photographer's dream!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Nairobi, and fly by light aircraft to the Masai Mara, 3-nights tented camp beside a river crossing **Day 3** Vehicle safaris to see the migration **Day 5** Vehicle transfer to a private concession adjacent to the Masai Mara, 4-nights tented camp **Day 6** Explore by vehicle and on foot **Day 9** Fly by light aircraft to Nairobi and depart for UK **Day 10** Arrive London

This itinerary can be based at any of several tented camps that are well sited for the river crossing, but one thing is certain – they all fill a long time in advance. So plan ahead and book early!

**Departures** Daily, in migration season



### Meru National Park

This vast, remote, lowland area of arid plains in the north-east is famous as the setting for Joy Adamson's book 'Born Free'. It boasts greater species diversity than some other Kenyan parks, and regular sightings include Somali ostrich, Beisa oryx, gerenuk, Grevy's and common zebra, reticulated giraffe and both greater and lesser kudu, while the predators include lion, leopard and wild dog. Meru is also renowned for its birdlife. The northern boundary of the adjacent smaller Shaba Reserve is the Ewaso Ng'iro River, with doum palms lined banks.

### Amboseli National Park

Just a few hours' drive, or a short flight, south of Nairobi, the snow-capped peak of Mount Kilimanjaro rises above the clouds in neighbouring Tanzania, creating an imposing backdrop for this small park. This highly scenic setting is the classic image of East Africa that many people have. Lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, buffalo, gerenuk, lesser kudu and a host of other plains game make this one of Kenya's most sought-after destinations. In addition to more than 50 mammal species, some 400 bird species have been recorded here.

### Indian Ocean Beach Extension

A few days of relaxation while soaking up the sun and enjoying the warm waters on the glorious sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean coastline, makes an ideal way to unwind at the end of any safari before you fly home. Direct flights to the coast from the Masai Mara, as well as from Nairobi, now make it extremely easy to get there. All you have to do is choose where to go and how long you want to stay...

And if you enjoy scuba diving, why not add a Dive Worldwide short-stay package? If you are a beginner, you can learn to dive in as little as four days, or if you are already a qualified diver you can simply book a stay for however long you like with two included dives per day.

Speak to one of our experienced consultants to hear their up-to-date recommendation.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Rekero, Masai Mara

One of the Mara's premier properties, this seasonal (June to March) eco-camp consists of nine tents overlooking the Talek River, in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem. Ideally situated for the annual migration, when hundreds of thousands of wildebeest zebra move through the Mara from the Serengeti. Each year the camp is broken for a few months so the bush can return to its natural state. The spacious dining area and tents are well-appointed, without being over the top, the welcome makes you feel instantly at home, and the guiding is second to none.



### Amboseli Porini, Amboseli

A small, award-winning safari camp with just nine spacious tents and all the charm and character of a traditional luxury camp of days gone by. The tastefully furnished tents have solar powered electric lighting and en-suite bathrooms. Located in the Amboseli eco-system in the exclusive Selenkay Conservancy, an important dispersal area for wildlife moving out of the national park, it is off the beaten track yet close to the park. Activities include day and night drives in specially-designed safari vehicles, and walks with expert guides.



### Kicheche Laipikia, Laipikia

This small tented camp nestles in a lovely spot beside a forest at the heart of Ol Pejeta Conservancy. Only 30 minutes' drive from Nanyuki airstrip, it also has fine views of Mount Kenya. Six luxurious tents with en-suite bathrooms have verandahs with comfortable chairs facing a waterhole. Meals are generally taken al fresco, though there is a well-furnished lounge and dining tent. A full range of activities includes day and night drives, and walks. A portable satellite dish is used to locate lions collared for a Lion Tracking Programme.



### Elsa's Kopje, Meru

This multiple award-winning luxury lodge, consisting of nine cottages that artfully incorporate natural features and blend into the rocky landscape, stands where George Adamson's camp once stood – made famous by George and Joy's autobiographical account and the film 'Born Free'. There's a central dining area, bar and swimming pool, and activities include game drives, bush walks and visits to the nearby rhino sanctuary. If you seek exclusivity and privacy, the two-bedroomed Elsa's Private House is set apart and has its own private pool.

# Tanzania

Lying just south of the equator, at the heart of East Africa, Tanzania is a safari destination without equal. Its world-class national parks and reserves offer some of the best game viewing in Africa.

But there's more to Tanzania than just safari... the snow-capped peaks of Kilimanjaro, the huge lakes of Victoria and Tanganyika and the beautiful tropical coastline are all part of its attraction. The offshore islands of

Zanzibar, Mafia and Pemba offer idyllic beaches of dazzling white sand, stunning scuba-diving and mysterious ruins. And you can fly out of a safari camp in the morning and be on the shores of the Indian Ocean in time for an afternoon dip.

All in all Tanzania is a winning combination – the perfect destination for a romantic honeymoon, an adventure holiday, or a fantastic safari experience!

## Key species

- ▶ African bush elephant
- ▶ Common chimpanzee
- ▶ Zanzibar galago
- ▶ Zanzibar red colobus
- ▶ Lion
- ▶ African wild dog
- ▶ Blue wildebeest (brindled gnu)
- ▶ Topi (tsessebe)
- ▶ African Buffalo
- ▶ Sable antelope

## Where?

Tanzania is a big country, so we recommend you focus on a single region. The north has two of the world's most famous safari destinations, the Serengeti and adjacent Ngorongoro Crater, plus lesser known Lake Manyara, Tarangire and Arusha National Parks, which are close together to combine in a single trip – the so-called 'Northern Circuit.' But, it can get busy, particularly for the



wildebeest migration. A few airlines fly into Kilimanjaro International Airport, which makes a convenient gateway.

The south has excellent wildlife, which is more thinly spread and due to terrain and vegetation, harder to see. The Selous and Ruaha are remote

and have limited accommodation, but there's a real sense of the wild, and you're unlikely to meet other visitors. Closer to Dar es-Salaam, Mikumi is ideal for a short getaway or a foray into the Udzungwa Mountains to look for primates, while Saadani offers an unusual mix of beach and bush.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jan-Feb: Short dry season; wildebeest and zebra give birth in the Serengeti
- ▶ Apr-May: The long rains
- ▶ Jun: Start of dry season; wildebeest start migrating north into the Masai Mara
- ▶ Aug-Oct: Best time to watch wildlife. Humpback whales off the coast
- ▶ Sep-Mar: Best weather for climbing Kili
- ▶ Nov: Short rains break; all wildebeest return to the Serengeti
- ▶ Dec: Christmas in the bush!

The west is even more remote, and very different. Katavi has excellent big game, while the Mahale Mountains is one of the best places to see chimps in the wild. However the remoteness of the few lodges is reflected in their prices.



### How to get around?

You can visit the northern parks easily by private 4-wheel drive vehicle with a driver/guide. The distances are relatively short and there's lots to see – wildlife, stunning scenery, and the indigenous and colourful Masai people. Although more tiring than flying, driving allows you to see, and understand, the country. You can however, fly into some camps, or use a combination of flying and driving. In the remote south or west, it's more usual to fly into camps and lodges by light aircraft. Each place offers excursions with guides and transport – whether 4-wheel drive vehicles, boats or on foot.

### Serengeti National Park

The Serengeti is one of the world's last great wildlife refuges. This vast grassland supports Africa's greatest concentration of plains game, on a scale unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Equal in size to Northern Ireland, it contains an estimated three million large animals, mainly wildebeest and zebra, most of which take part in a seasonal migration that is one of nature's greatest wonders. Many of these fall prey to the predators, lion, cheetah and leopard, that constantly follow the moving mass.

The Serengeti's vegetation ranges from short and long grass plains in the south, to acacia savannah in the centre, and wooded grassland around the tributaries of the Grumeti and Mara Rivers in the north. The western corridor of wooded highland and extensive plains reaches right to the edge of Lake Victoria. The central Seronera Valley is famed for an abundance of lion and leopard, both of which are easy to spot.

Space in lodges and camps is at a premium during the annual migration and is often booked over a year

ahead. However bear in mind that the Serengeti makes a superb wildlife destination at any time of year as there's always much wildlife to see, and outside the migration you'll have vast areas of wilderness to yourself.

### Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area

This huge volcanic crater is one of the most dramatic settings on the entire continent. It encloses the largest concentration of plains game in Africa some 30,000 animals and the balance between predator and prey is so precise that animals seldom leave. Its swamps, forests and huge soda lake attract thousands of flamingos and other waterfowl. The crater's popularity and convenient location on the Northern Circuit mean you won't be alone, but you can still escape the crowds and the guaranteed sightings far outweigh any negatives!



### Lake Manyara National Park

Mahogany and sausage trees are alive with blue and vervet monkeys; elephants feed on fallen fruit, and bushbuck, baboons and leopard make their homes in the forest. It is a sanctuary for hippo, giraffe, impala, zebra, plus its most famous residents

– the tree-climbing lions. The lake is a magnet for birdlife, and the different species include sizeable flocks of pink flamingos. Often seen as just a stopping off point on the popular Northern Circuit, this small park warrants a visit in its own right.

### Tarangire National Park

Dominated by the Tarangire River, this is one of Africa's best-kept secrets. It has superb wildlife and combines well with the other parks of the Northern Circuit. The river attracts large herds of elephant and the landscape is a rich mix of trees, plains, swamps and rocky outcrops. Elephants sightings are virtually guaranteed and predators including wild dog hunt herds of buffalo, Grant's and Thompson's gazelle, Burchell's zebra, giraffe and warthog. The area is excellent for birds of prey and provides a superb habitat for many other species.

### Arusha National Park

Northern Tanzania's principal town of Arusha lies close to Kilimanjaro International Airport and makes a

convenient start or end to any Northern Circuit. The nearby national park rises to the icy summit of Mount Meru (3,820m), whose lower slopes are covered with lush montane forest; the beautiful Momella Lakes are home to flamingos, ibises, spoonbills, ducks and various waders, while waterbuck and Kirk's dik dik loiter beside the pools. From the rim of Ngurdoto Crater, you can see warthog and buffalo feeding, and monkeys in the forest.

### Kilimanjaro National Park

Africa's highest mountain looms over the town of Moshi. If the challenge of scaling it attracts you, there's a choice of routes. We avoid the busy Marangu route, where climbers stay in basic mountain huts, in preference for camping on the lovely Rongai and Shira routes, for which everything is carried by porters. The best time to make the tough climb to the summit (5,896 metres) is September to March. We can arrange whichever route you wish.

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



## SPIRIT OF THE NORTH

TAILOR-MADE

This excellent value, classic safari takes in all the major highlights of northern Tanzania, with opportunities to see wildlife in several contrasting locations. It makes a perfect introduction for a first-time visitor to Tanzania, or even Africa, but not even the most experienced safari-goer can fail to be excited by the sheer variety and quantity of animals, as well as the exceptional beauty of the locations.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Arusha and drive to Lake Manyara, 1-night. Vehicle safari **Day 3** Drive to Serengeti, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 6** Drive to Ngorongoro Crater, 1-night. Vehicle safaris **Day 7** Drive to Tarangire, 2-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 9** Drive to Arusha and depart **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



### Mikumi National Park

The closest park to Dar-es-Salaam nestles between the Uluguru and Rubeho mountains en-route west. An extension of the Selous ecosystem, its wildlife includes elephant, giraffe, buffalo, Burchell's zebra, sable, eland, Liechtenstein's hartebeest, lion, leopard, spotted hyena, and jackal. Despite its proximity to Dar, you can spend a day without seeing another tourist vehicle. Families of yellow baboon live at the southern end, near Kiboga, hippos are frequently joined by flocks of open-billed storks, and more than 300 species of birds have been recorded.

### Selous Game Reserve

Named after famous 19th century hunter and explorer, Frederick Courtney Selous, this is the largest wildlife sanctuary on the African continent. Its vast tracts of wilderness contain perhaps the greatest concentration of big game left on earth. Only in its northern extremity, in the forest around the Rufiji River, has the Selous suffered the incursion of man, and it is still home to a bewildering array of birds and mammals. This is still the Africa experienced by early explorers – raw and untouched.

### Udzungwa National Park

This is a remnant of the rainforest that stretched along the eastern side of the Rift Valley 165 million years ago, when Madagascar broke off the mainland – similarities exist even now. Six million years ago it was isolated from West Africa's rainforest, so demonstrates a high degree of endemism. 25% of Udzungwa's plants are unique; of ten primates, four are endemic – including hehe red colobus and sanje crested mangabey. Other endemic species include two bushbabies and birds such as rufous-winged sunbird and Udzungwa partridge.

### Ruaha National Park

Tanzania's second largest park is one of its wildest. Only the Ruaha River area has been developed for tourism, but due to its remote location it sees few visitors. Activities centre on the river, which in the dry season is very low, its rock pools swarm with crocs and hippos. The birdlife is amazing, some 450 species have been recorded, and there are large herds of elephant, Cape buffalo and kudu, plus sable and roan antelope. Numerous predators include lion, leopard, cheetah, and increasingly rare wild dog.

### Katavi National Park

One of Tanzania's up and coming attractions is part of the new Western Circuit, due to its unspoiled nature and unique attractions. Katavi's remoteness results in low visitor numbers and is ideal if you like to watch wildlife in peace and solitude. This undiscovered wilderness is awash with plains game including elephant, giraffe, zebra, lion and leopard, and connoisseurs will enjoy seeing sable, roan antelope and puku. The birdwatching is also excellent with more than 400 species.

### Mahale National Park

Also in the west, on the shore of Lake Tanganyika south of Kigoma, this park takes its name from a range of mountains. With more than 700 chimpanzees, Mahale is one of the best places in Africa to see them. A range of mammals inhabits the area, including elephant, giraffe, Cape buffalo and lion. This is also one of Africa's best beach locations – there is superb swimming, snorkelling, sailing and fishing on the vast blue water lake. Charter flights operate to and from Mahale regularly.

### Gombe Stream National Park

Lying just north of Kigoma in western Tanzania, the country's smallest park occupies a mere 52 square kilometres. Despite its tiny size, the park is magnificent and was made world-famous by British researcher Jane Goodall for her work on its primates. In the absence of roads, all game-viewing is done on foot. The main attraction is the habituated chimpanzees, which number around 100, but there are large numbers of olive baboon, red colobus and blue monkeys, and more than 200 bird species.

### Zanzibar, Mafia and Pemba

Few people can resist the prospect of unwinding for a few days at the end of a safari. Zanzibar is just a short hop from the mainland by plane or ferry. Hotels range from the simple to the downright opulent, and there's loads to do and see – historic Stone Town, spice gardens, colonies of colobus monkeys, and the dazzling white sand beaches of the Indian Ocean. The islands of Mafia and Pemba are more off the beaten track, and thus quieter and more laid back.

## BEST OF THE SOUTH

TAILOR-MADE

This is Tanzania at its wildest: rugged and remote parks crossed by wide rivers and inhabited by large numbers of predators, like lion, leopard and cheetah. Tanzania's south provides spectacular game viewing, and is ideal for a discerning wildlife enthusiast seeking a pioneering Africa trip.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Dar-es-Salaam and fly to Selous, 3-nights. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris **Day 5** Fly to Ruaha, 3-nights. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 8** Fly to Dar es-Salaam and depart **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## TANZANIA'S WILD WEST

TAILOR-MADE

Explore two fantastic and contrasting national parks in the remote reaches of Western Tanzania: Katavi, with its rich plains game and predators, and Mahale, possibly the best place in Africa to see chimps in the wild. There's also ample time to relax on the idyllic shores of Lake Tanganyika.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Nairobi **Day 2** Arrive Arusha 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Katavi National Park, 3-nights Katavi Chada, plus 1 night fly camping; vehicle and walking safaris **Day 7** Fly to Mahale, 3-nights Greystoke Mahale; two morning chimp treks in Mahale forest and other activities on Lake Tanganyika **Day 11** Fly to Arusha and depart for UK via Nairobi **Day 12** Arrive London

**Departures** Twice weekly, June to end of February



### Tanzania extension ideas

At the end of your safari, why not extend your trip to make the most of your stay in East Africa? Whether you seek activity in the shape of snorkelling, scuba diving or mountain trekking, or simply want to relax with the sand between your toes, the opportunities are boundless. Choose between the following options:

#### Zanzibar – the spice island

From the historic labyrinth of the island capital, Stone Town, to the palm-fringed beaches, warm waters and pristine coral reefs of the Indian Ocean, this tropical island offers a complete contrast to mainland Tanzania. Only a short flight from Arusha or Dar es-Salaam, it makes an ideal place to unwind for a few days.

Some 50 kilometres further north, the island of Pemba offers excellent diving to see iridescent tropical fish and laid-back ambience, but no beaches, while some 150 kilometres to the south the main attraction of low-key Mafia Island is its unspoilt underwater environment, now a national marine park.

#### Kenya and the Indian Ocean Coast

If you yearn for yet more wildlife, Kenya offers a wide choice of locations ranging from the grassy plains of the Masai Mara (the northern continuation of the Serengeti) to the lakes of the Great Rift Valley, and makes an excellent combination with Tanzania. The coastline either side of Mombasa has long been renowned for its fine selection of beach properties, and makes another agreeable place to languish for a while before returning home.



#### Mount Kilimanjaro

Turn your dream of scaling Africa's highest mountain into a reality! If you have a week to spare we can arrange everything you need – from guides, porters and cooks to camping equipment and park fees. All you need do is choose your route to the 5,896-metre high summit. Although no technical expertise or previous experience is required, you need to be in excellent physical condition to attempt the ascent.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



#### Kirurumu Lodge, Manyara

On the edge of the Rift Valley, with views over Lake Manyara and the valley floor, this property has 27 tented rooms, two honeymoon suites and two family cottages, all with en-suite bathrooms and electricity. Only a couple of hours drive from Arusha, it is conveniently situated for exploring Lake Manyara, Tarangire and the Ngorongoro Crater, and stands at the gateway to Olduvai Gorge and the Serengeti. Activities include ethno-botanical walks with a Masai guide, and mountain biking (on request).



#### Olakira Camp, Serengeti

This classic mobile safari camp consists of eight spacious and comfortable tents, each with a king size bed, en-suite bathroom and private verandah with a stunning view over the Serengeti. To ensure superb wildlife at all times, it tracks the migration and changes location twice a year: from June to November it occupies a site on the bank of the Mara River in the northern Serengeti, then between December and March it is found in a private area in Ndutu, just inside the Ngorongoro Crater Conservancy Area.



#### Selous Safari Camp, Selous

Two camps, with six and seven tents respectively, merge with their surroundings in a palm grove on Lake Nzerakera beside the Rufiji River. Each is autonomous, with its own pool, bar, dining area and kitchen, vehicles, boats, and walking guides. Luxurious, spacious tents have king-size beds, ceiling fan, en-suite bathroom and open-air shower. To ensure privacy they are spaced along the lakeshore on individual raised decks with a large verandah. There are no fences, so the animals can wander freely.



#### Greystoke Mahale, Mahale

Tucked into the forest at the foot of the mountains, six open-fronted bandas look over a white sandy beach onto the turquoise waters of Lake Tanganyika. Each is built from sustainable materials such as wood recovered from old dhows and local palm thatch, and has an en-suite bathroom with a powerful shower and flushing toilet. The main banda on the beach serves as the restaurant, and the bar is on a rocky headland. The focus is a perfect blend of tracking chimpanzees and relaxing.

# Uganda & Rwanda

Uganda and Rwanda differ from other safari destinations, in that each harbours a great variety of mammals and birds which are simply not found elsewhere in either East or Southern Africa. Major tracts of forest are easily accessible here, providing unmatched opportunities to see forest animals, from chimpanzee and golden monkey to the most famous – the mountain gorilla. Seeing gorillas in the wild is simply one of the greatest wildlife experiences in the world!

The link between both countries is gorillas – so we treat Rwanda and Uganda together here. While Rwanda is relatively undeveloped for tourism as yet, and has little infrastructure, Uganda has plenty of conventional game-viewing, for example in Queen Elizabeth National Park and Murchison Falls. These locations are home to many of the large mammals you would expect to see in East Africa's more famous destinations, such as Kenya and Tanzania.

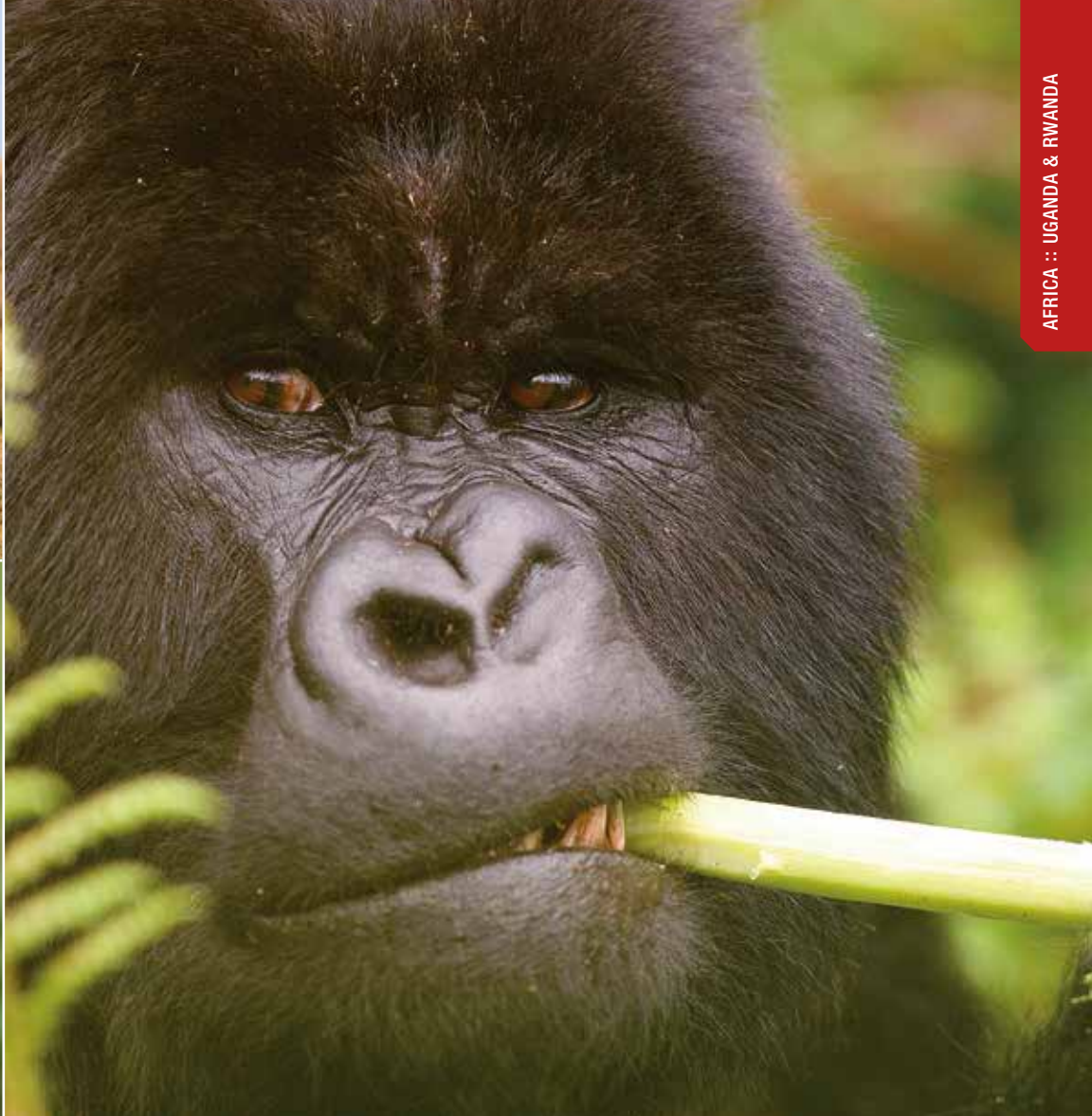
## Key species

- ▶ Mountain gorilla
- ▶ Common chimpanzee
- ▶ Golden monkey
- ▶ L'Hoest's monkey
- ▶ Grey-cheeked mangabey
- ▶ Rothschild's giraffe
- ▶ Uganda kob
- ▶ Defassa waterbuck
- ▶ Oribi
- ▶ Bohor reedbuck



## Diary notes

- ▶ Jan: Short dry season
- ▶ Feb-May: The long rains, but a great time to see animals with their young
- ▶ Mar-Apr: Wet, so gorilla tracking is difficult
- ▶ Apr-May: Gorillas descend to lower altitudes to feed on young bamboo shoots
- ▶ Jun-Aug: Dry season
- ▶ Sep-Dec: The short rains
- ▶ Oct-Nov: Rainy, so gorilla tracking is more difficult
- ▶ Dec: Christmas in the bush



### Some geography

In Rwanda, the Parc National des Volcans is northwest of the capital, Kigali, on the border with Uganda. Mgahinga National Park lies just across the border, and several of Uganda's parks and reserves are located in a line that tracks the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo northwards from here. In close succession these include Bwindi, Queen Elizabeth, Kyambura and Kibale, up to Murchison Falls at the north end of Lake Albert.

### Getting around

Driving from Kigali to Parc National des Volcans, or indeed Mgahinga and Bwindi over the border is relatively easy. However the western side of Uganda is a long day's drive from Entebbe/Kampala, so we advise an overnight stop e.g. at Lake Mburo en route. If you want to avoid this journey, consider flying by light aircraft. Otherwise all travel is by 4-wheel drive vehicle, or on foot if you are tracking gorillas.

## Rwanda

### Parc National des Volcans

This 120 square kilometre park is part of the Virunga Conservation Area that straddles the borders of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and contains some 360 increasingly rare mountain gorillas – over half the world's population. Eight family groups are currently habituated. It was here that Dian Fossey carried out pioneering studies of their behaviour over some 20 years. The park is home to 76 mammal species, and activities include nature walks, climbing Visoke volcano, trekking to Karisoke Research Centre, visiting local communities, and observing habituated golden monkeys.

## Uganda

### Mgahinga Gorilla National Park

This corner of Uganda is dominated by three extinct volcanoes, the smallest of which gives its name

to the park, which is part of the Virunga Conservation Area. The main draw here was previously mountain gorilla, however the one habituated group now moves between Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC, so can no longer

be viewed. The area also supports buffalo, elephant, leopard, serval and around 180 species of birds, and it is possible to track a habituated group of golden monkeys.

### A WEEKEND WITH THE APES

TAILOR-MADE 

Many people ask about taking a short overseas trip to see wildlife and this is the one we most often recommend. There's nothing like a quick trip to an utterly different environment to lift the soul and help you relax and unwind. What better way to do this than to immerse yourself in the forests of Rwanda for a weekend to meet a family of gorillas?

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Kigali and transfer to Parc National des Volcans or Bwindi, 3 nights. Track gorillas, golden monkeys, and photography **Day 5** Transfer to Kigali and depart **Day 6** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

NOTE: both our gorilla itinerary suggestions may be enjoyed as tailor-made trips, or more economically as part of a small group on a regular scheduled departure. Contact one of our knowledgeable consultants for details.



### Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

One of Africa’s most extensive belts of primary montane forest, Bwindi has an exceptional range of altitude (1,200-2,800 metres), which ensures a unique flora and fauna. The prime attraction is its mountain gorillas – over 300 live here, and four family groups have been habituated to allow human approach. L’Hoest’s monkey lives in the lower level forest, and the rare golden monkey is occasionally encountered at higher altitudes. Among the bird species you may see are African goshawk, augur buzzard, western bronze-naped pigeon and olive long-tailed cuckoo.

### Queen Elizabeth National Park

Lying between Lakes Edward and George, south of the Ruwenzoris, QE offers Uganda’s best open-country birds and wildlife. Habitats include rolling grassland, tropical forest, volcanic crater lake, papyrus swamp and lakeshore. Ugandan kob roam the plain, giant hogs inhabit the forest, and tree-climbing lions prowl the Ishasha sector. Along the Kazinga Channel you can approach herds of elephant, buffalo and hippo by launch, and see pelicans, herons, storks and African skimmers. In nearby Kyambura Gorge, dense forest harbours chimpanzee, red-tailed and black-and-white colobus monkey, and many forest birds, including black bee-eater.

### Kibale Forest National Park

Lying east of the snow-capped Ruwenzori Mountains, this splendid forest habitat is home to an incredible 11 species of primate including chimpanzee, black-and-white colobus, red colobus, L’ Hoest’s monkey and grey-cheeked mangabey. The birdlife is also outstanding – crowned eagle, African grey parrot, black bee-eater, black-and-white flycatcher and yellow-mantled weaver are all found here. Tracking a noisy chimpanzee family as they move through the forest is a thrilling experience, and the sheer wealth of wildlife will delight keen naturalists. We recommend an overnight stay, as activity is greatest in the early morning and late afternoon.

### Semliki Valley Reserve

Uganda’s oldest protected area is a 500 square kilometre reserve that lies in the Rift Valley. Its diverse range of habitats includes riverine forest, woodland and savannah, which leads to chimpanzees co-existing alongside elephant, Cape buffalo, lion and leopard. The savannah is criss-crossed by shining river valleys and the escarpment that forms the edge of the Western Rift Valley plunges into Lake Albert. The area is rich in birdlife with some 400 recorded species that include specialities such as shoebill, carmine bee-eater, scops and pearl-spotted owl.

## GORILLAS, WILDLIFE & CHIMPS

TAILOR-MADE

The ultimate highlight of this two week safari across the equator is gorilla tracking in Parc National des Volcans (PNV) in Rwanda and Bwindi National Park in Uganda – one permit is included in each location, but there may be an opportunity to purchase another locally. However there is no shortage of other activities such as: visiting Dian Fossey’s grave in PNV, doing nature walks in the forests, climbing volcanoes, taking a boat trip in the Kazinga Channel, doing game drives in Queen Elizabeth National Park. Amazing wildlife includes Ishasha’s tree-climbing lions, chimps in Kyamburu Gorge, plus the golden monkeys of Mgahinga and PNV.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Nairobi **Day 2** Arrive Kigali, Rwanda and transfer to Parc National des Volcans, 3-nights lodge **Day 3** Gorilla tracking (one day) and exploring the surrounding area **Day 5** Drive to Mgahinga National Park, 2-nights lodge. Hiking and explore the forest with Batwa indigenous guides **Day 7** Drive to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, 3-nights lodge. Gorilla tracking (one day) and exploring the surrounding area **Day 10** Drive to Queen Elizabeth National Park, 3-nights lodge. Vehicle and boat safaris in QE2 National Park **Day 11** Drive to Kampala/Entebbe 1-night **Day 12** Depart for UK **Day 13** Arrive London

**Departures** Departures monthly throughout the year





### Murchison Falls National Park

Renowned for its scenic beauty and abundant flora and fauna, this park is bisected by the meandering Victoria Nile. The highlight is the sight of the 50-metre wide river plummeting through a narrow cleft in the rocks with a thunderous roar. A memorable three hour launch trip to the foot of the falls demonstrates the might of the river, and the wildlife along its banks. Drives reveal buffalo, Rothschild's giraffe and many antelope species. Chimpanzees are only one of the six species of primate, and the park's most notable bird is the endangered shoebill.

### Lake Mburo National Park

This a small but nevertheless attractive park consists of rolling hills, grassland and a large papyrus-fringed lake which shoebills occupy, but are seldom seen. Mburo is effectively an extension of the Tanzanian plains, so

has big herds of zebra, impala, eland and other ungulates. The park's 68 species of mammals also include oribi and Bohor reedbeek. There's a good range of birds, and African finfoot and papyrus bushshrike are sighted on a regular basis.

### Ngamba Island

This sanctuary in Lake Victoria, near Entebbe, is home to orphaned chimpanzees that have been rescued from poachers and have no hope of returning to the wild. Here they enjoy the run of the island, safe from harm. On a day visit you can watch the twice-daily feeding sessions and explore the island, which is also home to over 120 species of birds and some 50,000 fruit bats. If you want to learn more about the sanctuary's aims and see more of the chimps, you can stay overnight at the tented camp.



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Virunga Lodge, PN des Volcans, Rwanda

Set on a remote hillside three hours drive from Kigali and one hour from the national park, with breathtaking views of the volcanoes of the Virunga massif and shimmering Lakes Ruhondo and Bulera, this is one of the best places in the area to stay. Eight comfortably furnished cottages built from stone and tiles have large verandahs, solar lighting plus en suite bathrooms with low-flush eco-toilets.



### Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge, Bwindi National Park

In the south of the national park, just a short walk from the start point for tracking the Nkuringo group of gorillas, this luxurious lodge consists of eight stone-built cottages with a living area, bedroom, en suite bathroom, and open fireplace. The attractive central building has a spacious lounge, a library, and a verandah with far-reaching views across the forest to Rwanda and the Virunga Volcanoes. The lodge works closely with the local community.



### Kyambura Gorge Lodge, Kyambura Gorge

Situated on the edge of the Kyambura Gorge and Queen Elizabeth National Park, the lodge has stunning views over the lush savannah of the park, with the peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains in the distance. There are four beautiful bandas nesting into the hillside, each with panoramic views. From the lodge you can go chimp tracking and enjoy game drives or boat trips. There are also guided walks.



### Mihingo Lodge, Lake Mburo National Park

This exclusive retreat beside Lake Mburo National Park consists of ten spacious tented rooms on wooden platforms with thatched roofs. All rooms have fine views. The large central dining area, with an infinity pool below it, is a perfect spot to enjoy stunning views of sunset over the park. Activities include vehicle and foot safaris, plus boat trips on the lake, night drives and horse riding.

# Ethiopia



Africa's oldest independent nation is a mystical land that has never been colonised. Home of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, it has a unique cultural identity and, until Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974, was ruled by a venerable monarchy. A place of natural contrasts, Ethiopia has some of Africa's highest mountains but also some of the world's lowest points below sea level, and one of the greatest numbers of rivers of any country.

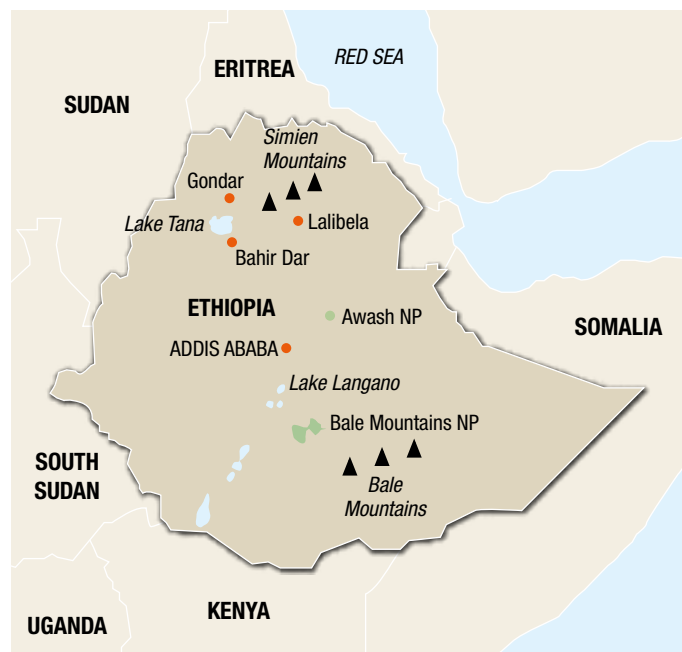
The Great Rift Valley starts here, studded with a string of pretty lakes inhabited by flamingoes. In fact, Ethiopia has a staggering array of wildlife: over 800 species of bird have been recorded, around 30 of which are endemic. Among its 80 or so species of mammals, the most notable are gelada baboon, walia ibex, mountain nyala and the endangered Ethiopian wolf – which survives only in the Simien and Bale Mountains.

## Key species

- ▶ Gelada baboon
- ▶ Ethiopian hare
- ▶ Ethiopian dwarf mongoose
- ▶ Ethiopian wolf
- ▶ African wild ass
- ▶ Beisa oryx
- ▶ Dorcas gazelle
- ▶ Mountain nyala
- ▶ Walia ibex
- ▶ Soemmering's gazelle

## Some geography

Ethiopia's main cultural sites, Axum, Gondar and Lalibela, form a natural circuit in the northern highlands. The country's highest mountain ranges are protected by two national parks, the more scenic of the two being Simien Mountains National Park, near Gondar. The more isolated Bale Mountains National Park, which has more wildlife, lies east of the Rift Valley and its string of lakes, to the south of Addis Ababa.



## Getting around

The distances between places of interest, condition of roads, and existence of a good domestic air network means it is best to fly between major locations in the north. You can then see Ethiopia's extraordinary

landscape from the air. Otherwise 4-wheel drive vehicles are used for getting around, which may involve some long and slow drives, although these are not without interest.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jun-Oct: rainy season, travel to most places is still possible
- ▶ Sep-early Oct: best time to travel – green and wild flowers in bloom everywhere!
- ▶ Nov-Mar: winter – cold in the highlands; resident bird are supplemented by Paelearctic migrants

## Awash National Park

Within a day's drive of the capital, this park consists of dry acacia scrub and savannah in the Rift Valley. Arguably the country's best wildlife reserve, Awash supports larger mammals that have been hunted out elsewhere, though in fewer numbers than in other countries within East Africa. Despite the numerous species recorded here, the scenery and birdlife are the big attraction. The most easily seen species are antelopes such as Beisa oryx, Soemmering's gazelle and Salt's dik-dik. Although not seen frequently, predators include lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena and jackal.



## Gondar

Between 1632 and 1855, this was Ethiopia's capital, and it remains one of the country's richest areas in terms of history, culture and natural beauty. Standing at around 2,500 metres above sea level, the city has both Islamic and Christian influence in its architecture, particularly the castles and palaces in the Royal Enclosure. These were built over a 236-year period by various rulers, the most famous of whom were the Emperor Fasilides and Empress Mentewab. The city is a centre of religious importance for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and contains 44 churches.

## Simien Mountains

This rugged mountain range, a UNESCO World Heritage site, lies in northern Ethiopia, north-east of Gondar. The highland area, whose highest peak reaches 4,543 metres, is one of the few places in Africa to get regular snow. Covering much of the Begemir region, it is a place of dramatic scenery due to the erosion of basalt lava over a 3,000 year period. From a wildlife point of view, the mammals of note here are walia ibex, gelada baboon, caracal, and a handful of Ethiopian wolves. The area is also home to lammergeiers – the largest vulture.

## Lalibela

Located in northern Ethiopia at 2,600 metres above sea level, this town is one of the holiest sites in the country, and a centre of pilgrimage for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. It is famed for its 13 churches, which date from the 12th and 13th centuries, and are hewn from the area's characteristic pink granite. The entire city has a unique architectural style and many buildings are decorated with well-preserved paintings. Lalibela is considered by many to be one of the unofficial wonders of the world.

## Lake Langano, Rift Valley

The area around this naturally red freshwater lake is rich in wildlife – ibex, monkey, baboon and many birds. Two nearby lakes are very different. Lake Abiata is surrounded by gentle grassy slopes and acacia woodland. Its shallow, alkaline waters appear pink due to large numbers of flamingos, along with pelicans and other waterbirds, that feed on algae along the windward shore. Lake Shalla is mysterious and forbidding, ringed by steep cliffs of black rock and with mountain peaks reflected in its deep waters. Nine small islands provide a breeding ground for birds.

## ETHIOPIAN WILDLIFE EXTRAVAGANZA

TAILOR-MADE 

This wonderful introduction to Ethiopia's wildlife offers an opportunity to see not only all the country's highlights, but also a chance to see one of the world's rarest mammals – the Ethiopian wolf in Bale Mountains National Park. Other species highlights include Menelik's bushbuck and mountain nyala.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Addis Ababa, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to Gondar and drive to Simien Mountains, 2-nights, Simien Lodge. Full day excursion to Chenek to see walia ibex **Day 5** Drive to Gondar, 1-night, Goha Hotel. Visit castles **Day 6** Fly to Lalibela, 2-nights, Mountain View Hotel. Visit churches **Day 8** Fly to Addis Ababa and drive to Lake Langano, 1-night, Sabana Beach Resort **Day 9** Drive to Bale Mountains, 2-nights, Dinsho Lodge. Vehicle safari to find Ethiopian wolf **Day 11** Drive to Addis Ababa and depart **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## Bale Mountains National Park

These mountains form an area of high altitude plateau broken by numerous spectacular volcanic plugs and peaks, with lovely alpine lakes and rushing streams that descend through deep rocky gorges on their way to the lowlands. The Sanetti Plateau is home to the world's rarest canid, the Ethiopian wolf. Nearby Harenna Forest is the place

to find bushpig, giant forest hog, grey duiker and occasionally lion and leopard. Menelik's bushbuck, mountain nyala and giant mole-rat, all endemic to the Bale Mountains, can also be seen.

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WEBSITE FOR  
DATES AND PRICES 

## Accommodation ideas



### Simien Lodge, Simien Mountains

This lodge, situated within the national park at over 3,260 metres altitude, is the highest in Africa. Sympathetically constructed in traditional style using local materials, with 20 rooms in thatched tukel roundhouses and two suites, it offers the highest standard of accommodation and food in the area. Gelada baboons are regular visitors.



### Sabana Beach Resort, Lake Langano

A collection of around 25 attractive, cliff-top bungalows with beautiful views across the lake to the distant Arsi Mountains. Individually designed to ensure a relaxing and home-like atmosphere, the bungalows are built from local materials in a simple design. Thatched roofs and large verandahs create an ideal spot to savour the cool afternoon breeze.



### Mountain View Hotel, Lalibela

Located on the edge of the Lasta Mountains, this 30-room hotel has magnificent panoramas and is the ideal spot from which to enjoy the surrounding countryside. The sunsets are particularly stunning. The curious architecture – a series of boxes with acres of windows – uses brick and local stone. The accommodation is basic but adequate.



### Dinsho Lodge, Bale Mountains

This simple but clean self-catering lodge, with a nearby campsite, is surrounded by juniper trees in an area with lots of wildlife. There is a handful of simple local restaurants and shops in Dinsho town.



# Asia

Encompassing such a vast area as it does, Asia offers excellent possibilities to see its varied, interesting and – in many cases – unique wildlife. In a changing world, the combined challenges of rapid population growth, the encroachment of human habitation, the introduction of invasive monocultures, and burgeoning industrial development are faced by all the countries in the region. Nevertheless, a growing awareness of the need to preserve the natural world has led to the establishment of a network of national parks and reserves that offer opportunities to watch wildlife in a protected natural environment.

On the great island of Borneo, the remote jungle waterways and dense rainforests of the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak are home to copious wildlife: orangutans, proboscis monkeys, elephants among others, and a veritable plethora of birdlife.

In India, our ever-popular ‘Tiger Tiger’ itinerary visits the country’s top big cat sanctuaries. Around a century ago, an estimated 40,000 big cats roamed the sub-continent, and although hard data is difficult to come by, it is probable that fewer than 1,400 survive today. This sad state of affairs needs the revenues generated by wildlife tourism

to assist in the conservation of this magnificent creature. However you can also see other endangered animals in the nation’s parks and reserves: the rare Asiatic lion in Sasan Gir, one-horned Asian rhinoceros in Kaziranga, Asiatic wild ass in the Rann of Kutch, and enjoy India’s varied cultural heritage – let alone savour its rich culinary tradition.

To the north, amidst the high peaks of the Himalayas, peace and stability has once again returned to the mountain nation of Nepal. This is great news for trekkers and any animal lover who wishes to experience the thrill of

elephant-back safaris in search of tiger and rhino, and excellent birding with the region’s most outstanding bird guides.

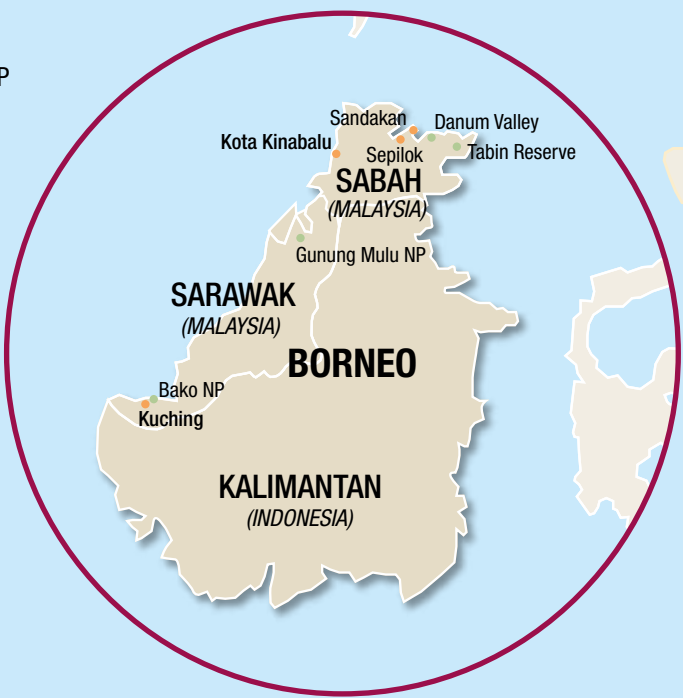
Off the southern tip of the subcontinent, the picturesque, teardrop-shaped island of Sri Lanka, has also recovered from the twin plights of internal strife and natural disaster to resume its rightful place as one of our foremost destinations to see leopard and elephant. Sri Lanka also offers fabulous birding, and the south coast is fast developing an unrivalled reputation as the finest place on earth to see blue whales.



### Climate

Across the Indian subcontinent and, indeed, most of south-east Asia, the annual cycle of life is dictated by the monsoon, which commences around June in the southern regions, sweeping gradually northward to end in September. Above the equator, winter ranges from mild, dry and tropical in the south, to cold and misty on the India's northern plains; further afield, in the north of China, snow and freezing temperatures are common.

Borneo has an equatorial climate, which leads to high humidity and rainfall all year round – although the period from November to March is generally the wettest time of year. The wet season can, in fact, be a good time to see wildlife, and generally viewing is only suspended when the rains interfere with travel and make getting around difficult.



# India



India is an eclectic and sometimes frustrating mix of old and new, traditional and modern. Few places can stir people's emotions to the same degree – you either love it or hate it! However take one of our tailor-made holidays to India, staying at hand-picked hotels, lodges and camps, and you will not only grow to love it, but will want to keep going back to visit even more of

its national parks and fascinating cultural sights. India's wildlife is in a class of its own, and many superb properties are located close to the key nature reserves. The knowledge of our naturalist guides will enhance your trip and ensure an exciting and rewarding experience as you explore.

## Key species

- ▶ Asian elephant
- ▶ Hoolock gibbon
- ▶ Dhole (Indian wild dog)
- ▶ Asiatic lion
- ▶ Leopard
- ▶ Bengal tiger
- ▶ Gangetic river dolphin
- ▶ Asiatic wild ass
- ▶ Indian one-horned rhinoceros
- ▶ Blackbuck

## Some geography

Many of India's tiger reserves are clustered loosely within a few hundred kilometre radius of Delhi, but some, most notably the national parks of the Sundarbans and Kaziranga are located considerably further away in north-east India, while the Rann of Kutch, Velavadar and Sasan Gir national parks lie in the north-west.

Southern India is notable for its elephants and lush waterways that are excellent for birds.

## Getting around

Various domestic airlines serve the main cities within India, and the rail network is also useful. Some trains are extremely fast and comfortable, and it is worth planning at least one overnight journey in a sleeper, for the experience of rail travel in the subcontinent. Another way to get around is by private car with a driver and guide. Within the national parks wildlife drives are done in 4-wheel drive vehicles with local naturalist guides.

## Central India

### Bandhavgarh National Park

The former hunting reserve of the Maharajahs of Rewa lies close to the spot where white tigers were originally discovered. Today it has the highest known density of Bengal tigers in India, meaning that the chance of a sighting over a three day period is virtually guaranteed – over the years our clients have maintained an excellent record! However its rocky hills, grassy swamps and forested valleys are also home to leopard, sloth bear, various deer and





antelopes and wild boar, plus the 250 bird species attracted by the diversity of its ecosystem.

### Kanha National Park

The land Kipling described so vividly in 'The Jungle Book' offers some of India's finest tiger viewing. However the undulating grassland and deciduous forest also supports another 22 species of mammal. These include barasingha (their sole remaining habitat), chital, muntjac, spotted and barking deer, sambar, common langur, rhesus monkey, wild boar, Asiatic jackal, nilgai, four-horned antelope and blackbuck, plus the occasional leopard. More than 200 bird species are found here, and the waterholes make tranquil spots for watching while you absorb the peace of the surrounding jungle.

### Pench National Park

Known for the richness of its flora and fauna, this park provided great inspiration to Rudyard Kipling. Nestling in the Satpuda Hills on the southern boundary of Madhya Pradesh state with Maharashtra, Pench takes its name from the nearby river. The area was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1983 and its 760 square kilometres are home to large herds of gaur (Indian bison), cheetah, sambar, nilgai, sloth bears and dhole (Indian wild dog), and the bird list includes four endangered species of vulture. But, of course, its most famous residents are its tigers!

### Satpura National Park

This protected area is emerging as one of India's most intriguing wildlife destinations. Few travellers venture here as yet, walking safaris are encouraged, and hides have been built in key areas. A few tigers share the meadows, forested plateaux and mountains with prey such as nilgai

and sambar, but it is a better place to see leopard, wild dog, and jackal and Malabar giant squirrel. It is also a haven for birdlife. Although there is less chance of seeing tiger here than in other reserves, the overall experience makes Satpura a worthy addition to any itinerary.

### Corbett National Park

Named after the legendary hunter and naturalist, Jim Corbett, this national park lies at the base of the Himalayan foothills. This location, and the resulting rich variety of habitats are the reasons for its good population of mammals. Rhesus macaque, common langur, golden jackal, wild boar, chital, sambar, muntjac and hog deer are all common and seen regularly, and there is a healthy population of wild Indian elephant. However the park remains most famous for its tigers, which are frequently seen. The birdlife too is exceptional with more than 620 species having been recorded here.

### Bharatpur (Keoladeo Ghana National Park)

Consisting of 29 square kilometres of scrub, grassland and shallow wetland, the former duck-shooting reserve of the Maharajas of Bharatpur became a national park in 1982. It is now recognised as one of the finest waterbird sanctuaries in the world, home to more than 300 species. Highly endangered Siberian cranes fly 5,000 kilometres across the Himalayas to winter here, and other notable species include Pallas's sea eagle, black-necked stork and spotted creeper.

### Ranthambhore National Park

Rajasthan's premier park, the former tiger reserve of the Maharajah of Jaipur, is renowned for its tigers and stunning scenery. The crumbling ruins

## TIGER, TIGER

**TAILOR-MADE**

Our most popular tailor-made itinerary in the subcontinent visits India's finest national parks and offers the best opportunity to see tigers. As with all our itineraries, you can mix and match accommodation and, of course, extend or shorten your stay in any location.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Delhi, 1-night. City tour of Old and New Delhi **Day 3** Fly (or drive) to Nagpur and transfer to Pench, 2-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 5** Drive to Kanha, 4-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 9** Drive to Bandhavgarh, 4-nights. Vehicle safaris **Day 13** Morning in Bandhavgarh, then overnight train to Agra **Day 14** Agra, 1-night. Visit Taj Mahal **Day 15** Train to Delhi, 1-night **Day 16** Depart, arrive UK same day

**Departures** Daily, November to May



of numerous temples and a hilltop fort amidst the rolling hills, dry dhok forest and tranquil lakes evoke all the princely splendour of this famous Rajput state. There are good opportunities to see tigers, and the many other mammals include leopard, sloth bear, rhesus macaque, nilgai, chinkara, wild boar, sambar and chital. However due to its popularity, Ranthambhore is often busy, so bear this in mind when considering it as a destination.

### National Chambal Sanctuary

This beautiful sanctuary was established in 1979 along a 425 kilometre stretch of northern India's Chambal River, just an hour's drive from Agra. Numerous ravines, the product of centuries of soil erosion by flood and rain water, line either bank. Their cliffs and vegetation shelter numerous birds (including Indian skimmer), mammals and reptiles, in particular gharial crocodiles. The river is one of



India's most pristine and is one of the last surviving habitats of Gangetic river dolphin. The sanctuary also protects marsh crocodiles, eight species of turtle, and smooth-coated otters.

## North-west India

### Sasan Gir National Park

Widely known simply as Gir, this large protected area lies well off the beaten track in north-west India's Gujarat Peninsula. Its main aim is to preserve the remaining population of critically endangered Asiatic lion, whose territory once extended as far afield as Persia. The terrain is one of arid, rocky hills separated by deep, well-watered valleys, with beautiful stands of teak, acacia and dhak trees interspersed with grassy plains. As well as some 450 lions, smaller felines are well represented by jungle cat, desert cat and rusty spotted cat, and there is also a healthy population of leopard.

### Panna National Park

One of India's least explored parks, Panna is located in Madyha Pradesh state in central India. The park is home to tiger, leopard, wolf, sloth bear, jungle cat, rusty-spotted cat, desert cat, civet, spotted deer, nilgai, four-horned antelope, and both marsh mugger and gharial crocodiles. Bird lovers take note: over 300 species have been recorded here! We recommend combining a visit to Bandhavgarh with a stop at Panna. Alternatively, to top up your cultural input, you could combine both parks with a visit to nearby Khajuraho's erotic temples, one of India's best known monuments.

### Sundarbans National Park

The world's largest area of impenetrable mangrove forest covers some 10,000 square kilometres of land and water in the Ganges Delta, more than half in India, the rest in Bangladesh. This network of tidal waterways and mudflats is home to

numerous birds that include masked finfoot, mangrove pitta and mangrove whistler, plus crocodiles, turtles, snakes and deer. Its most famous residents, however, are more than 250 tigers, although these are hard to spot due to the terrain. The Sundarbans offer a unique wildlife experience, as game-viewing is done either by boat or from hides.

## North-east India

### Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga, on the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra River in Assam, in north-east India, is regarded as the best location on the subcontinent to see Indian rhinoceros. Home to nearly 80% of the world's population, the park has World Heritage Site status, and is also inhabited by large herds of elephant, wild buffalo, tiger, leopard and bear. Nearby Panabari Forest Reserve is home to the hoolock gibbon, India's only ape. Elephant and jeep safaris are available here and the open terrain makes it possible to see most major species during a two day safari.

### Velavadar National Park

Velavadar is a peaceful sanctuary consisting of 35 square kilometres of savannah in Gujarat state. Set between two rivers and only a few miles inland from the Gulf of Khambhat, the park is home to a couple of thousand endemic blackbuck. In former times these handsome antelopes were protected for hunting trips of the Maharajas of Bhavnagar. Other animals of note include the endangered Indian wolf, fox, jackal, jungle cat and wild boar. Birdlife is also extensive – the houbara bustard, lesser florican, common crane, sarus crane, white stork and white pelican are all present here.

### Little Rann of Kutch

This wildlife sanctuary, one of India's largest, is a vast expanse of saline desert, which in the monsoon becomes a network of islands covered with thorn scrub, surrounded by salt marsh. Known as the last remaining home of the Asiatic wild ass, it is a conservation success story. In the 1960s the population declined to only 800, but has now recovered to over

## INDIA'S BIG FIVE

TAILOR-MADE 

This wide-ranging trip covers a lot of ground, but allows you to see all five of India's big mammal species – Asiatic lion, leopard, tiger, elephant and one-horned rhino – in three lovely but contrasting national parks. You will visit Sasangir in the Rann of Kutch in dusty Gujarat, Kanha in Madhya Pradesh – the area that inspired Kipling, and the UNESCO World Heritage site of Kaziranga in steamy Assam.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Mumbai and fly to Rajkot; transfer to Sasan Gir, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris to see Asiatic lion and leopard **Day 5** Transfer to Rajkot and fly to Mumbai, 1-night **Day 6** Fly to Nagpur and transfer to Kanha, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris to see tiger and leopard **Day 9** Transfer to Nagpur, 1-night **Day 10** Fly to Guwahati and transfer to Kaziranga, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris to see one-horned rhino, tiger and elephant **Day 13** Transfer to Guwahati and depart via Mumbai **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** November to March

## WILDS OF GUJARAT

TAILOR-MADE 

A fascinating introduction to some of north-west India's lesser known wildlife in Mahatma Gandhi's home state, Gujarat. You may see Asiatic lions, wild ass and flamingos as well as endemic blackbuck, and endangered animals, like the India wolf. This is a substantially less trodden route, so you are unlikely to have to share these beautiful reserves with others.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Mumbai and fly to Bhavnagar; transfer to Velavadar, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris to see black buck **Day 5** Drive to Sasan Gir, 4-nights. Vehicle safaris to see Asiatic lion and leopard **Day 9** Drive to Gondal, 1-night **Day 10** Drive to Little Rann of Kutch, 3-nights. Vehicle safaris to see wild ass **Day 13** Drive to Ahmedabad and depart via Mumbai **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** November to May

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES





2,000. Other mammals of interest include chinkara, blackbuck, nilgai, wild boar, jackal and jungle cat. The birdlife is so rich that the area is an official Ramsar site. The best time to visit is between November and mid-March.

## South India

### Eravikulam National Park

This park stands in an elevated position in the Kannan Devan Hills near Munnar hill station. Established to protect an endangered wild goat, the Nilgiri tahr, the area is known for its stark beauty. India's highest peak south of Himalayas, Anamudi (2,695m), stands at the centre of the park, its hillsides covered in rare orchids and wild balsams. From the visitor centre at Rajamalai, vehicles take you to the unique high-elevation grassland to see nilgiri tahr. Other fauna includes Nilgiri langur, leopard, tiger and Indian bison. The park is closed in the early part of the year while the goats are calving.

### Kerala Backwaters

This extensive network of canals and lakes, created by some 44 rivers that drain into the Arabian Sea, is a self-supporting ecosystem that teems with aquatic life. Over 900 kilometres of waterway still provide a means of access for many villages. A night or two aboard a traditionally-built houseboat, with a crew to look after your every need, is a highlight of any trip to Kerala. The elegant craft takes you through villages surrounded by paddy fields and soaring coconut palms. One charm of this style – and pace – of travel is the opportunity to observe rural life without feeling intrusive. The riot of birdlife includes kingfishers, cormorants, woodpeckers, ducks, bee-eaters and raptors.

### Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

High in the Cardamom Hills area of the Western Ghats, some five hours drive from Kochi (Cochin), Periyar is one of the world's most

beautiful wildlife sanctuaries. It has a diverse range of flora and fauna, with 1,800 species of flowering plant, 44 reptiles, 112 butterflies, and a wide range of birds and mammals, including large number of elephants, gaur, wild boar, four species of primate (including the endemic lion-tailed macaque), sloth bear, leopard, dhole, common and clawless otter, and even tiger. One of the most popular activities is a boat ride on Periyar Lake to see herds of wild elephants frolicking in the water.

### Nagarhole National Park

Nagarhole is a mixture of rich green tropical and deciduous forests with rolling hills criss-crossed by streams, rivers, waterfalls and swamps. Formerly a Maharaja's hunting reserve, Nagarhole is now dedicated to saving wildlife, and is considered one of the best places in India to see elephant in the wild. About a thousand elephants are thought to populate the park, and in the hot summer months they

congregate in large herds along the banks of the River Kabini.

### Indira Gandhi National Park

The forested Anamalai Hills, 75 kilometres north of Coimbatore, contain one of Tamil Nadu's most beautiful reserves. Its steep slopes are covered with deciduous jungle and bamboo thicket, where sightings of gaur, elephant and leopard are common. Other wildlife includes tiger, panther, sloth bear, wild boar, wild dog, Nilgiri langur, lion-tailed macaque, sambar, four-horned antelope, chital and pangolin. Birdwatchers will enjoy seeing green pigeon, Tickell's flowerpecker, rufous woodpecker, rose-ringed parakeet, black eagle, racquet-tailed drongo, black-headed oriole, paradise flycatcher, whistling thrush, great Indian, Malabar pied hornbill, fairy bluebird and emerald dove. The best time to visit is from January to February. You can join a game drive in a Forest Department vehicle or walk with a guide.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### King's Lodge, Bandavgarh

This comfortable lodge stands in an eight hectare private estate in the village of Ranchara, just 10 minutes drive from the park gate, surrounded by forested hills. Accommodation consists of ten air-conditioned cottages plus another ten rooms on stilts, each with a modern en-suite bathroom; cottages have a verandah with views over sal forest and grassland. The design incorporates eco-friendly principles and uses local stone and timber. A pleasant dining room, observation tower, and swimming pool complete the facilities, and a naturalist guide is on hand.



### Chambal Safari Lodge, National Chambal Sanctuary

This family-owned heritage property on an extensive wooded estate, surrounded by farmland, formerly provided accommodation for the annual cattle fair. Since its restoration as an eco-lodge, the main building houses two air-conditioned rooms with period furniture, private bathrooms and a verandah. A new guest wing has two lavishly appointed suites with modern amenities, while eight independent twin-bedded cottages in the grounds all have en-suite bathrooms. The plantation supplies the kitchen with organically grown produce.



### Tuli Tiger Corridor, Khana

The fully autonomous luxury extension to Tuli Tiger Resort, in the western region of the park's buffer zone, consists of eight free-standing, air-conditioned rooms with solid walls, canvas roof with a finely embroidered canopy, wooden floor, sumptuous bathroom, verandah and private walled garden. The exclusive property has its own swimming pool, lounge-library with an open fire, dining room and bar, and is perfect for any wildlife enthusiast who enjoys a touch of class! Resident naturalists are on hand to answer questions about local wildlife.



### Forsyth's Lodge, Satpura

An eco-friendly property, built with environmental and community considerations as foremost principles. Small and stylish, the comfortable accommodation consists of 12 air-conditioned cottages with an en-suite bathroom and verandah; all are designed and constructed in local style primarily from mud and decorated by local villagers! Facilities include a central building with a dining room, a first floor lounge and bar with a terrace with mountain views, plus swimming pool. The exceptionally attentive staff is supported by in-house naturalist guides.

# Nepal

Sitting at the heart of the Himalayas, overlooked by some of the world's highest mountains, Nepal is one of the most spectacular countries on earth. What makes this mystical mountain kingdom so special is its warm and friendly people, and extraordinary blend of Buddhist and Hindu culture, and the sheer splendour of its scenery.

This is in addition to a remarkably diverse range of habitat, from snow-capped mountains to low lying forests, and as a consequence, an exceptional variety of birds and mammals. Over 850 bird species are found in Nepal, and among its larger mammals number Bengal tiger, leopard, Indian rhinoceros, Asian elephant, water buffalo, gaur, three species of bear, deer, and antelope.

## Key species

- ▶ Asian elephant
- ▶ Grey langur
- ▶ Leopard
- ▶ Bengal tiger
- ▶ Snow leopard
- ▶ Red panda
- ▶ Himalayan (Asiatic) black bear
- ▶ Indian one-horned rhinoceros
- ▶ Swamp deer (barasingha)
- ▶ Pygmy hog

## Some geography

Nepal's principal wildlife destinations are spread out. The national park of Koshi Tappu lies 500 kilometres east of the capital, whereas Chitwan is in the south, some six hour's drive from Kathmandu. However the most isolated park, Bardia, lies in the far west of the country. There are several other national parks whose focus is principally on topographical, such as the high altitude park of Sagarmatha.

## Getting around

Due to the nature of the terrain, travel by road can be arduous. However



most major population centres are connected by the domestic air network, which makes things easier. Chitwan, Koshi Tappu and Bardia can be reached by flying to Bharatpur or Meghauli, Biratnagar, or Nepalgunj respectively. Even then it can take a surprisingly long time to drive into the parks, where safaris are conducted by jeep, boat, elephant or on foot, depending on the location.

## Kathmandu

As a wildlife enthusiast, you may stop only briefly in the capital en-route to Nepal's national parks, but the Kathmandu Valley has unmissable sights that are rich in colour and atmosphere and are an essential preliminary to understanding

Nepalese culture. The old city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is an eclectic warren of palaces, courtyards and temples. On the outskirts the hilltop Buddhist temple complex of Swayambunath has fine views of snow-covered mountains, while within an hour's drive away forested slopes of Phulchoki offer excellent birding, with a chance to see Nepal's only endemic, the spiny babbler.

## Chitwan National Park

Nepal's foremost national park lies in the sub-tropical lowlands of the Terai. The former royal hunting reserve consists of sal forest and riverine jungle on the floodplain of three rivers, and contains a greater variety of wildlife than any other area in

the country. There are over 350 bird species, as well as many mammals, reptiles and numerous insects. It is one of the last refuges of Indian rhinoceros and Bengal tiger. The rhino population is estimated at around 400, second only to Kaziranga in India. Other threatened species include leopard, wild dog, sloth bear and gaur.

## Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve

Nepal's premier birding destination, with 280 recorded bird species, consists of the floodplain of Saptakoshi, the largest of Nepal's rivers, close to the border with India. The 175 square kilometres of the reserve contain a broad expanse of open water created by a dam which, together with a patchwork of marsh, lagoon, sandbank, mudflat and arable land,

## Diary notes

- ▶ Oct-Mar: best time for birding
- ▶ Feb-Mar: good time to travel
- ▶ Mar-May: rhododendrons in bloom
- ▶ Late Jun-Sep: monsoon!
- ▶ Oct-Nov: good time to travel



creates one of North Asia's finest wetland habitats that attracts many migrant birds. It is also home to wild buffalo and blue bull, while the river contains Gangetic dolphin – all overlooked by the world's fifth highest peak, Makalu (8,463 metres).

### Pokhara

Nepal's second city is a centre for adventure activities, ranging from trekking to hang gliding. An enchanting place of remarkable natural beauty, it nestles in a tranquil valley on the shore of Phewa Tal. Rising behind it is a line of magnificent Himalayan peaks, dominated by the fish-tail summit of Machhapuchhre at 6,977 metres. Because of its low elevation, Pokhara feels almost tropical, and lush forest and a wide diversity of flowers all thrive here. The area has many different trekking and walking routes to suit all abilities, which offer exquisite views of some of the world's highest summits.

### Bardia National Park

This remote national park was created in the 1980s in the western Terai, with the aim of protecting Bengal tiger and their prey in an important lowland ecosystem. Later, Indian rhinoceros were introduced from Chitwan, and a large area of surrounding forest and private land was designated as a buffer zone. Other endangered animals here include Asian elephant, swamp deer, blackbuck, gharial crocodile, marsh mugger and Gangetic river dolphin. Bardia may be hard to reach, but the reward is a real wilderness experience, where elephant safaris will get you well off the beaten track.



## NEPAL WILDLIFE

TAILOR-MADE 

A two-week trip that visits a trio of national parks in the low lying Terai region, along the border with Nepal's southern neighbour, India. Despite the twin incursions of farming and industry, large areas of the Terai were set aside to protect wildlife and remain some of the best locations in the entire subcontinent to see wildlife and birdlife. Among the highlights you may catch a sight of are tiger, rhino and elephant, deer a-plenty, Gangetic river dolphins and birds, birds, birds!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London **Day 2** Arrive Kathmandu, 2-nights. City tour and birding on Phulchoki **Day 4** Drive or fly to Pokhara, 2-nights. Sightseeing and cultural visits **Day 6** Drive to Chitwan, 3-nights. Vehicle, elephant-back and foot safaris to Bengal tiger and one-horned rhino **Day 9** Drive to Lumbini, 1-night **Day 10** Drive to Bardia, 2-nights. Vehicle safaris to see Bengal tiger and elephant **Day 12** Fly to Kathmandu, 1-night **Day 13** Depart Kathmandu, arrive UK

**Koshi Tappu extension:** Keen birders can add a visit to Koshi Tappu in the Eastern Terai to any Nepalese itinerary to see its impressive birdlife.

**Day 1** Fly to Biratnagar and transfer to Koshi Tappu, 3-nights Koshi Camp. Vehicle, boat and foot safaris to see Gangetic river dolphins and birds **Day 4** Transfer back to Biratnagar and fly to Kathmandu

**Departures** Daily, October to May

## Accommodation ideas



**Tiger Tops Lodge,**  
Chitwan

Nepal's original wildlife lodge is still at the forefront of ecotourism. Its famed treerhouses and bungalows, built from sustainable materials, contain 20 rooms with en-suite bathroom, solar-powered lighting, ceiling fan and hot water – the ultimate in luxury in a fantastic natural setting. A large, open-roofed dining area and bar is built around an open fire, and expert naturalist guides lead elephant, jeep and boat safaris.



**Koshi Camp,**  
Koshi Tappu

This venerable tented camp, first established in 1993, is centrally located at the eastern edge of the reserve, in an area well-known for its diversity of birdlife, with several waterholes nearby. Accommodation consists of 12 spacious traditional safari tents, with a large dining tent and bar and a staff that includes two expert local naturalist guides who specialise in birding and are renowned throughout Nepal.



**Tiger Tops Karnali Camp,**  
Bardia

Standing on a bank of the Karnali River surrounded by lush forest, the only camp inside the park offers comfortable accommodation in 12 spacious tents with en-suite bathrooms. Kerosene lamps provide light as there is no electricity. A thatched central building contains the restaurant and bar, and the camp uses its own inflatable raft for river trips to see birdlife and the rare Gangetic dolphin.



# Sri Lanka



This stunningly beautiful tropical island, shaped like a teardrop, lies in the Indian Ocean at the southern tip of the sub-continent. Its golden beaches, national parks and reserves, and spectacular mountain scenery make for a whole range of diverse habitats, enhanced by the romantic ruined forts and cities of ancient dynasties.

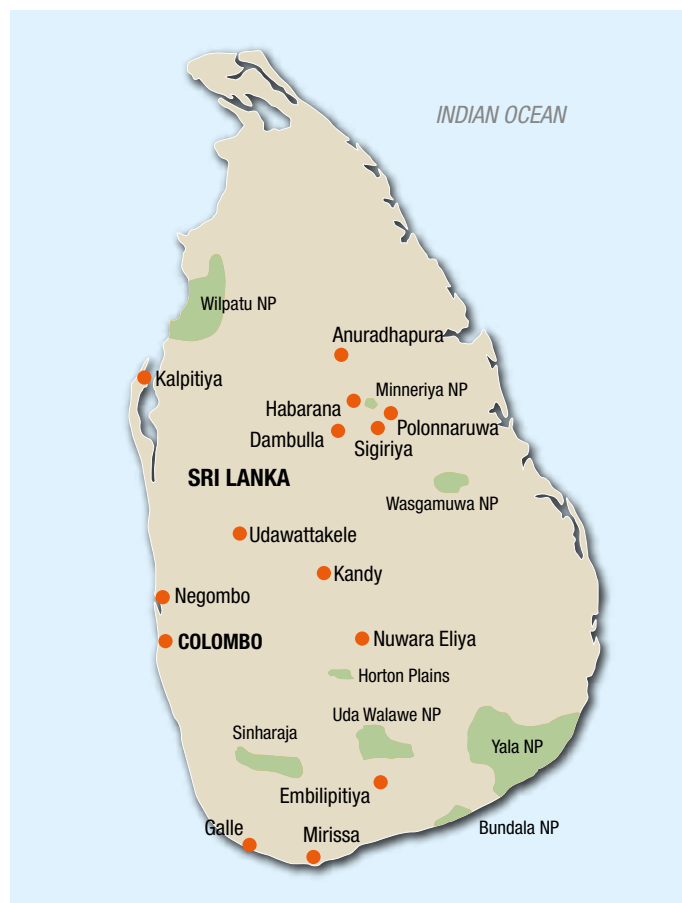
Its isolated position has endowed it with some unique features, in particular its enormous leopard population, large herds of elephant and numerous endemic bird species. The island is a renowned paradise for birdwatchers.

## Key species

- ▶ Sri Lankan elephant
- ▶ Purple-faced langur
- ▶ Blue whale
- ▶ Humpback whale
- ▶ Spinner dolphin
- ▶ Sri Lankan leopard
- ▶ Sri Lankan golden jackal
- ▶ Sloth bear
- ▶ Sri Lankan sambar deer
- ▶ Sri Lankan muntjac (barking deer)

## Some geography

Sri Lanka's national parks are spread all over the island. Udawattakele and Horton Plains are near Kandy and Nuwara Eliya respectively, in the centre. Yala, Uda Walawe, Bundala Lewaya and Kalametiya, on the other hand, lie in the south, relatively close to the coast, where Mirissa is the centre for whale watching. Sinharaja Rainforest is the most difficult to reach,



## Diary notes

- ▶ May-Aug: rain in the south-west
- ▶ Jul-Aug: Kandy Perahera Festival
- ▶ Nov-Apr: Blue-whale watching from Mirissa
- ▶ Dec-Mar: best time to visit hill country

while Minneriya is conveniently located in the triangle close to the major cultural sites of Polonnaruwa, Dambulla and Sigiriya.

## Getting around

Within Sri Lanka, apart from boat trips to see whales and dolphins, if you're travelling on a tailor-made itinerary all transport will be by private car or minibus with a driver/guide. Although the distances are not particularly great, the roads are not always good and travel can be slow. Excursions into national parks are done by 4-wheel drive vehicles with a local naturalist guide.



### Kandy & Udawattakele Rainforest Reserve

This charming lakeside city, former capital of the Kandyan Kingdom, boasts a wealth of historical and cultural treasures, and is a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists who visit the Temple of the Tooth. Surrounded by rolling hills, lush valleys, rivers, lakes and waterfalls, its forests are home to the endemic Sri Lanka hanging parrot and Layard's parakeet. The nearby Paradiniya Botanical Gardens is home to 4,000 plant species of which 300 are orchids. Udawattakele Rainforest Reserve is inhabited by deer, jackals, porcupines and civets. The forest is a haven for birdlife, and you may encounter one of the recurrent bird waves that are a feature of tropical forests.

### Nuwara Eliya & Horton Plains

This once popular British hill station in the heart of tea country is now a quaint and charming resort. The cooler climate due to its elevation make for startlingly different birdlife, and various interesting species include two endemics: the yellow-eared bulbul and the Sri Lanka hill white-eye. At nearby Horton Plains, Sri Lanka's highest plateau terminates at the sheer precipice of World's End with a drop of 1,050 metres to the plains

below. This is the perfect environment for a distinctive flora with many wild orchids, colourful butterflies, and many rare highland birds that include almost all the country's endemics.

### Yala National Park

Sri Lanka's oldest wildlife reserve is famous for one of the world's highest densities of leopard – and some of its largest and most visible individuals. On morning and evening safaris you may also see elephant, sloth bear, sambar, chital, wild boar, striped-necked, brown and ruddy mongoose, black-naped hare, marsh mugger crocodile and several civet species. Birding highlights include the southern sirkeer, blue-faced malkoha, yellow-wattled lapwing, rufous-winged bush lark, thick-billed flower-pecker, purple sunbird, little minivet, white-rumped shama and rare black-necked stork.

### Bundala Lewaya & Kalametiya Reserves

This Ramsar site, along with neighbouring Kalametiya, is the south coast's major wetland area. Home to almost all Sri Lanka's resident water birds, the area attracts countless migrants between November and March. Highlights include greater flamingo, lesser adjutant and painted stork. Other common species are marsh sandpiper,

## SRI LANKA'S WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS

TAILOR-MADE

With some fabulous parks and reserves, great birdwatching, and exceptionally knowledgeable guides, Sri Lanka is a perfect destination for lovers of wildlife. This itinerary takes in several parks, where you can spot leopard, elephant and a myriad of bird species, including some endemics.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Colombo and drive to Kandy, 2-nights.

Visit Temple of the Tooth and Millennium Elephant Foundation

**Day 4** Drive to Nuwara Eliya, 3-nights. Visit Udawattakale Forest, Horton

Plains for endemic birds and butterflies, Victoria Park and Hakgala

Botanical Gardens **Day 7** Drive to Yala, 3-nights. Visit Ravana Ella

waterfall, plus vehicle and foot safaris **Day 10** Drive to Hambantota,

2-nights. Visit Bundala/Kalametiya **Day 12** Drive to Rathnapura, 3-nights.

Visit Udawalawe and Sinharaja Rainforest **Day 15** Drive to Negombo ,

1-night **Day 16** Depart; arrive UK same day

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

intermediate and great egrets, brown-capped babbler, Asian openbill, Eurasian spoonbill, black-winged stilt, golden plover, little stint and curlew sandpiper. Mammals such as elephant, chital, grey langur, water monitor and crocodile are seen regularly.

### Udawalawe National Park

Walawe Reservoir and Udawalawe National Park comprise an area of open plains and hills in south-west Sri Lanka

at the foot of the Kaltota Escarpment. The park is good for elephants with herds of 50 to 60 individuals regularly seen as well as sambar, chital and wild boar. Dry zone birdlife includes grey-headed fish eagle, black-shouldered kite, changeable hawk eagle, crested serpent eagle, white-bellied sea eagle, shikra, common kestrel, brown fish owl and western marsh harrier. Game drives in open-top jeeps are accompanied by local wildlife guides.



### Sinharaja Rainforest

If you have time, a visit here is a must! The country's sole remaining primary lowland tropical rainforest is home to some 139 varieties of Sri Lanka's 830 endemic trees. It's one of the few places where you can see blue-faced leaf monkey, Sri Lanka hanging parrot, and the wonderful diversity of butterflies which includes the spectacular blue morpho and bird-wings. Much of the birdlife is endemic, including four eagles: rufous-bellied, crested serpent, black and mountain hawk eagle. Another highlight is the frequent mixed species bird waves!

### Minneriya National Park

This national park is famous for its elephants, particularly between June and September, when a herd of more than 300 gathers on the receding shores of the Minneriya Tank – an awesome spectacle! The island's main cultural sites are nearby. Polonnaruwa's palaces and shrines are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, home to troupes of monkeys, while Dambulla's cave temples house a spectacular series of frescoes. The great citadel at Sigiriya is all that remains of a great civilisation, and the surrounding tanks are home to many waterbirds.

### SRI LANKA WILDLIFE AND CULTURE

TAILOR-MADE 

Sri Lanka is extremely rich in culture, as well as wildlife. This itinerary includes some highlights of both aspects, with included safaris at three national parks, Yala, Udawalawe and Bundala, which are home to leopards, elephants and (in season) leatherback turtles. Visits to some of Sri Lanka's cultural sights offer a fascinating insight into the teardrop isle's rich historical tapestry.

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Colombo and drive to Habarana, 2-nights. Visit Polonnaruwa and Sigiriya **Day 4** Kandy, 1-night. Visit Dambulla Caves and the Temple of the Tooth **Day 5** Yala, 2-nights. Vehicle and foot safaris **Day 7** Embilipitiya, 2-nights. Visit Bundala and Udawalawe **Day 9** Drive to Colombo, 1-night **Day 10** Depart; arrive UK same day

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

### BLUE WHALES & DOLPHINS

 SMALL GROUP

The balmy waters around Sri Lanka are home to a wealth of cetacean life. On the northwest coast you venture out by small boat in search of spinner dolphins, which are seen in huge numbers off Kalpitiya, along with increasingly frequent sightings of whales. In contrast, the deep waters off Dondra Point on the south coast are possibly the best place in the world to see blue whales and sperm whales. However Sri Lanka has much more to offer than marine life, and this trip includes ample time to see the famed elephants of Uda Walawe National Park and Yala National Park's leopards.

#### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Colombo; transfer to Kalpitiya, 3-nights. Early morning boat trips to watch spinner dolphins and whales; afternoons free **Day 5** Transfer to Uda Walawe, 1-night hotel. Jeep safari in to Uda Walawe National Park to see elephant **Day 7** Drive to Tissamaharama, 1 night. Jeep safari in Yala National Park to see leopard **Day 8** Morning jeep safari in Yala, then transfer to Mirissa **Day 9** 4 x morning whale watching boat trips, afternoons free **Day 13** Transfer to Colombo, 1-night **Day 14** Depart Colombo, arrive UK

**Departures** Fixed dates in December and March

**Group size** Maximum 12



This trip is endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects.





### Whale watching in Sri Lanka

Over the last few years Sri Lanka has developed a considerable reputation as a place to see whales – particularly from Mirissa on the south coast, and to a lesser degree Trincomalee on the east coast. Between December and April there is around a 90% chance of seeing a blue whale on a boat trip from Mirissa – which makes it one of the foremost places in the world to see this denizen of the deep! Sperm whales are also seen regularly between February and mid-April.

On the north-west side of the island, Kalpitiya is well-known for sightings of spinner dolphins. Due to the deepwater channel that runs close to the peninsula, whales are often seen too! Birdwatchers note: Kalpitiya is also one of the best places in South Asia to see four pelagic species: Persian shearwater, wedge-tailed shearwater, brown noddy and pomarine skua!

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Chaaya Wild, Yala

This resort-style hotel borders the national park beside miles of golden Indian Ocean beach. Accommodation is in 68 spacious, air-conditioned, rustic-chic jungle chalets and eight beach chalets, all with en-suite bathroom, modern amenities and verandah. There is a pool and an observation deck with panoramic vistas across the surrounding scrub forest, beach and rocky outcrops (often frequented by leopards). Birders can see 215 species in the vicinity, and naturalist guides lead excursions to spot Yala's famous leopards.



### Galway Forest Lodge, Nuwara Eliya

A pleasant hideaway, in a quiet location surrounded by tea plantations, a couple of kilometres outside the town beside the Forest Lodge Nature Reserve – a fantastic location for birders and nature enthusiasts. Its 52 old-fashioned rooms in three different categories all have en-suite bathrooms and heating – it can be surprisingly cool at this elevation. There are restaurants, a bar and billiard room, and loads of olde worlde charm. The lodge is overlooked by Sri Lanka's highest mountain, Mount Pidurutalagala.



### Blue Magpie Lodge, Sinharaja

Standing at the road-end just a few minutes' drive from the park offices, this lodge has 12 basic but comfortable rooms with en-suite bathrooms with hot water. The power supply can be intermittent, but the lodge has its own generator. The restaurant serves first class Sri Lankan food and the nearby river is a perfect spot for a refreshing dip after a forest trek. Birders will enjoy the opportunity to see more than 20 endemic species in the surrounding forest – particularly in the early morning. The local guides and park wardens are extremely knowledgeable.



### Centauria Hotel, Udawalawe

This simple, somewhat old-fashioned hotel lies on the edge of Chandrika Reservoir, just south of the national park. The main wing has 42 rooms, and four lakeside cottages each contain two rooms, most of which are air-conditioned, with en-suite showers and lake-facing balconies. There's also a swimming pool, café-bar and Ayurvedic centre. The hotel operates excursions into the park in 4-wheel drive vehicles with naturalist guides to see the 250-strong elephant population, plus red-faced malkoha and other birds.

# Borneo



The island of Borneo has long fed the imagination of both naturalists and travellers alike. The Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak boast a remarkable diversity of habitat that supports an intriguing array of species – mammals, lizards, snakes, frogs that ‘fly’, fish that ‘walk’, monkeys that ‘dive’, plants that eat insects, and flowers the size of dustbin lids.

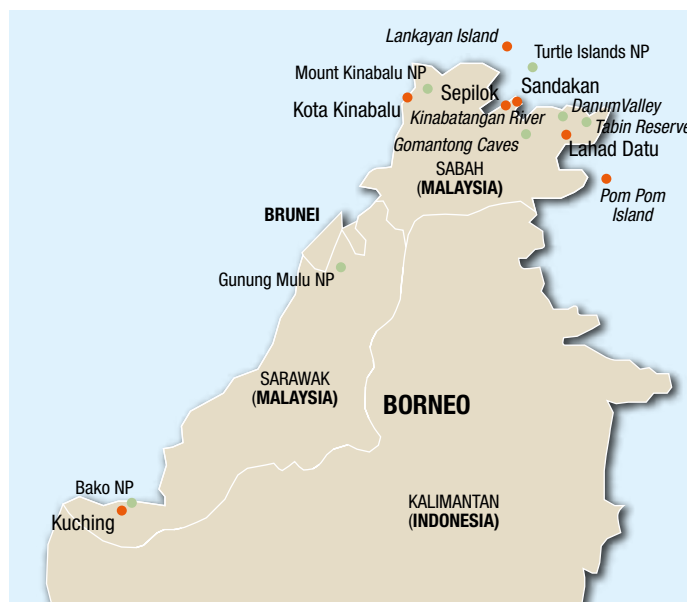
Borneo is a biodiversity hotspot for the Indo-Malayan region, and the world: ten hectares of rainforest here contain more tree species than occur in all of North America. There are more bird species than in Europe, and as many mammals as live on the island continent of Australia. Yet Borneo’s parks and reserves are easy to reach and boast excellent facilities – making it easy to experience its natural wonders.

## Key species

- ▶ Western tarsier
- ▶ Proboscis monkey
- ▶ Muller’s Bornean gibbon
- ▶ Orang-utan
- ▶ Pangolin
- ▶ Malay sun bear
- ▶ Clouded leopard
- ▶ Flat-headed cat
- ▶ Bornean pygmy elephant
- ▶ Sumatran rhino

## Some geography

Mount Kinabalu is situated close to Sabah’s state capital, Kota Kinabalu, where as Sepilok’s orang-utans and the Gomantong Caves lie close to Sandakan on the opposite coast from where the Kinabatangan River lies a few hours inland. The wildlife rich Danum Valley Conservation Area is also near the east coast, but some way south of Sandakan. In the neighbouring state of Sarawak, further down the north-west coast of Borneo, Bako



National Park lies close to the capital, Kuching, whereas the Mulu Cave system is in the north, close to the border with Brunei.

## Getting around

From Kota Kinabalu, the easiest way to reach Sandakan is by a short domestic flight; similarly the Danum

Valley is only a one hour flight from the capital. In the interior most travel is by riverboat, with minibus or 4 wheel drive vehicle transfers where necessary. The domestic air network also connects Kota Kinabalu with Kuching and Mulu, and travel into the interior of Sarawak is by domestic flight, river and road.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Mar/Apr: dry season starts
- ▶ Apr-Oct: green turtles lay eggs
- ▶ Jul-Aug: driest months
- ▶ Late Oct: wet season starts in Sabah
- ▶ Early Dec: wet season starts in Sarawak

## Kinabalu National Park

Mount Kinabalu at 4,095 metres looms above the coastal lowlands of northern Borneo. The national park is easily reached from Sabah’s capital, Kota Kinabalu and harbours remarkable botanical diversity – with as many as 6,000 plant species. These include more than 1,000 species of orchid, and more than one third of the island’s pitcher plants.

There are also more than 600 species of butterflies and 320 species of birds. This astonishing diversity is greatest on the lower slopes, whereas more endemic species are found at higher altitude.



## Sabah

### Sepilok Forest Reserve & Orang-utan Sanctuary

Sepilok Orang-utan Sanctuary, around 30 minutes by road from Sandakan, is renowned for its work in rehabilitating orphaned orang-utans. You can meet these charismatic apes at the twice-daily feeding sessions in the forest, where individuals not yet fully capable of self-sufficiency return for a free meal. However, set amongst 43 square kilometres of primary lowland rainforest, the reserve has much more to offer. The forest boardwalks make exploring easy, the birdwatching is superb and there is a tremendous variety of snakes and frogs to see.

### Turtle Islands Marine Park

The tiny island of Selingan, some 40 kilometres off Sabah's north-east coast, is a major turtle breeding site. Throughout the year, but particularly between April and October, large numbers of green-turtles (and to a lesser extent hawksbills) come ashore at night to dig nests in the sand. Wardens patrol the beaches and collect the eggs, which are incubated in enclosures free from the risk of predation. If you stay overnight, you can watch turtles excavating their nests by torchlight and laying a clutch of eggs, and see hatchlings being released into the sea.

## SABAH WILDLIFE SPECIAL

TAILOR-MADE 

A two-week trip that visits the best places to see Sabah's wildlife: Mount Kinabalu, Sepilok Orang-utan Sanctuary, the Kinabatangan River, and the wonderful Borneo Rainforest Lodge in the Danum Valley – one of our favourites! Sabah offers a first-class wildlife experience, with the added benefits of good infrastructure, ease of access and top quality accommodation.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London **Day 2** Arrive Kota Kinabalu, 1-night **Day 3** Drive to Kinabalu National Park, 1-night **Day 4** Drive to Kota Kinabalu, 1-night **Day 5** Fly to Sandakan and drive to Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary, 1-night **Day 6** Boat along Kinabatangan River, 3-nights **Day 9** Drive to Lahad Datu and on to Danum Valley, 4-nights **Day 13** Transfer to Lahad Datu and depart **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



## SARAWAK AND SABAH ADVENTURE

TAILOR-MADE 

A comprehensive look at the interior of Sarawak and Sabah, exploring remote rivers and dense jungle in search of wildlife. Along the way you'll see Peninsular Malaysia's top eco-destinations and visit different habitats on foot and by boat. Among the highlights are a visit to the Iban headhunter tribe of Batang Ai, the underground caves in Mulu National Park, and seeing orang-utan in Sepilok Reserve and hornbills in Tabin Wildlife Reserve.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London **Day 2** Arrive Kuching, 1-night **Day 3** Drive to Bako, 2-nights. Visit Bako National Park **Day 5** Drive to Kuching, 1-night. Visit Semenggok Orang Utan Sanctuary **Day 6** Fly to Gunung Mulu, 2-nights. Visit Mulu Caves **Day 8** Fly to Kota Kinabalu and on to Sandakan. Transfer to Sepilok Orang-utan Sanctuary, 2-nights **Day 10** Boat along Kinabatangan River, 2-nights **Day 12** Drive to Lahad Datu and on to Tabin Wildlife Reserve, 2-nights **Day 14** Drive to Lahad Datu and fly to Kota Kinabalu. Depart **Day 15** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary

The Kinabatangan River snakes through Sabah's lowlands for 560 kilometres to reach the Sulu Sea. Along its length a mosaic of riparian forest, oxbow lakes, nipah swamp and mangroves supports orang-utan, proboscis monkey and pygmy elephant, while a vast array of birdlife includes several species of hornbill. From Sandakan a four-hour boat trip leads inland to Sukau, where a trip by small boat on a quiet tributary through the tangled rainforest reveals its splendid wildlife, much of which has grown surprisingly tolerant of human presence.

## Gomantong Caves & Forest Reserve

Sabah's largest cave system is home to many thousands of bats, plus cave swiftlets, whose nests are sustainably harvested three times a year for the Chinese soup trade. The collectors live here permanently to protect their valuable commodity and go to extraordinary lengths to gather their

harvest. A boardwalk inside the most accessible cave makes exploring easy and in the surrounding forest macaques, langurs and orang-utans are regularly seen. Easily reached by road, the caves are usually visited en-route to or from Sukau.

## Tabin Wildlife Reserve

Created in 1984, this reserve occupies more than 122,500 hectares of a peninsula 50 kilometres east of Lahad Datu, surrounded by oil-palm plantations. The lowland forest contains many animals, some of which are highly endangered – including Sabah's three largest mammals: the Borneo pygmy elephant, Sumatran rhinoceros and banteng or tembadu (wild cattle), plus various ungulates. Seven of Sabah's eight primates occur here, albeit only small numbers of orang-utan and proboscis monkey. The largest predator is the clouded leopard, but there are several smaller carnivores. More than 260 bird species include all eight of Sabah's hornbills.





### Danum Valley

This river valley, arguably Borneo's premier wildlife location, boasts all ten of Sabah's primate species, plus Asian elephant, banteng, Sumatran rhino, clouded leopard, marbled and flat-headed cats and Malay sun bear. Common species include bearded pig, mouse-deer, endemic Bornean yellow and red muntjacs, and sambar. Early morning is the best time to enjoy the canopy walkway and watch hornbills, barbets and broadbills, plus the endemic Bornean bristlehead. Danum Valley offers maybe the best chance to see orang-utan in the wild, especially when the durian trees are in fruit – while a night safari offers a window into the secretive world of Borneo's nocturnal creatures.



### Sarawak

#### Bako National Park

Only 40 kilometres from Sarawak's capital, Kuching, Bako offers an intoxicating mix of coastal scenery, teeming rainforest and abundant wildlife. Sarawak's premier wildlife location is one of the best places in Borneo to see proboscis monkey, which are regularly encountered in the forest – often right beside the raised boardwalk. Other monkeys seen include long-tailed macaque and silvered langur, while on night walks colugo, slow loris and mouse deer are regular sightings. With such a variety of habitats, the park's flora is correspondingly rich and diverse.

### Gunung Mulu National Park

Sarawak's largest national park is dominated by three mountains – Mulu, Api and Benarat – and surrounded by rainforest. However its major claim to fame is one of the world's largest limestone cave systems. The scale is bewildering, and at dusk in excess of three million bats pour out of Deer Cave like a giant plume of black smoke it is one of the world's great natural spectacles. The wildlife is diverse: 75 species of mammals, over 260 species of birds, 170 species of wild orchid and 10 species of pitcher plant.



### Island extensions

The seas off the coast of Sabah are littered with tropical islands, many of which offer excellent snorkelling and diving. This makes a great way to unwind at the end of your trip.

Among our favourites is tiny jewel-like Lankayan Island in the Sulu Sea, a one and a half hour boat ride from Sandakan, and part of an immense Marine Protected Area. Otherwise unpopulated, this tranquil, untouched piece of paradise is fringed by a beach of white sand and offers simple but elegant accommodation in 23 spacious, wooden seafront chalets.

Another favourite is Pom Pom Island, a 45 minute boat ride from the coast in the Celebes Sea, further south. Like Lankayan, it is a nesting site for green and hawksbill turtles and has a resident marine biologist who can enhance your understanding of the rich and colourful undersea world.

For more information speak to one of our knowledgeable consultants.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



#### Kinabatangan Riverside Lodge, Kinabatangan River

Located two hours by boat from Sandakan (though it can be reached by vehicle), this lodge of chalets connected by walkways, a bird observation tower and an open sundeck facing the river, makes a convenient base to see wildlife. Nearby is a jungle trail where red leaf monkey and wild orang-utan are often seen. The lodge emphasises conservation: all rubbish is transported out of the area, and an electric boat is used to minimise noise and air pollution.



#### Borneo Rainforest Lodge, Danum Valley

In the heart of the valley on a bank of the Danum River, facing a swathe of pristine forest, this lodge has one of the finest vistas you could wish for. Comfortable chalets with balconies are built on stilts and connected by raised boardwalks. Surrounded by trails, it has a spectacular 300 metre long canopy walkway, with viewing platforms up to 26 metres high – a fantastic way to view wildlife from a different angle!



#### Sepilok Nature Lodge, Sepilok

This simple lodge, situated close to the park entrance, offers spacious and comfortable accommodation and good food. The well-appointed, air-conditioned wooden chalets with en-suite bathrooms are set in extensive gardens and connected by boardwalks to the main building. The restaurant overlooks a lake surrounded by virgin rainforest. The location is convenient for visiting the nearby Orang-utan Sanctuary.



#### Tabin Wildlife Resort, Tabin Reserve

Ten timber bungalows with en-suite bathroom, ceiling fan and private balcony overlook the Lipad River, with another ten higher up the hillside. All are linked by boardwalks to the central complex. Activities include jungle walks on trails of differing degrees of difficulty, and a visit to a mineral-rich mud volcano. Rare and endemic birds are attracted to the abundance of food plants, and the combination of low canopy and good light makes them easy to see.

# Canada & Alaska



North America contains some of the world's greatest untamed lands – from the vast expanse of northern tundra known as the Canadian Shield, to the soaring peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and from the great Alaskan wilderness in the west, to the island of Newfoundland in the Saint Lawrence estuary off the east coast.

On the west coast, the annual salmon run draws huge numbers of bears and, as a result, is the best place in the world to view these impressive creatures. Off the coast, nutrient-rich

waters attract whales and dolphins, and the shores around Vancouver Island in British Columbia are one of the best places in the world to see orca. Meanwhile, in the mountains and valleys of the interior, moose, wolf, caribou, bald eagle, elk, bighorn sheep and beaver can all be found.

The Rocky Mountains, which extend over 4,800 kilometres from British Columbia to New Mexico in the south-western USA, reaching heights of around 4,000 metres, offer unbeatable mountain scenery – particularly

between Banff and Jasper. The Rockies are an important habitat for many species. If you choose a self-drive option, we can help construct your perfect itinerary. Alternatively, just sit back and enjoy the spectacular ride aboard the world-famous Rocky Mountaineer train.

South of the border in the USA, the world's first national park Yellowstone, created in 1872, is famous for its wildlife and geothermal features, most notably the geyser of Old Faithful. As the largest and best known protected

area in the continental United States, its wildlife includes grizzly bears, wolf, and free-ranging herds of bison and elk.

Churchill, on Hudson Bay in Canada's Manitoba Province, is the one place you are guaranteed to see polar bears, as they migrate north in October and November. Places aboard the special tundra vehicles are strictly limited, so book early if you do not want to be disappointed!



### Bears in Focus

Bears live in Canada and Alaska! Of course they live in many other locations too, but the mere mention of Canada and Alaska conjures up images of wild places and bears fishing for salmon. There is something very special about bears. Found all over the world, these magnificent

beasts are celebrated in myth and legend, and occupy a unique place in our consciousness. North America is home to three of the eight species of bear: black, brown (or grizzly), and polar bear. Its vast wildernesses are their last remaining stronghold, and undoubtedly offer the best bear watching in the world.

### Where are the best places to see bears?

Having operated bear watching holidays for much of the last two decades, we know all the best spots to see them. British Columbia, on Canada's west coast, is by far the best area to see black and brown bears, while Churchill in Manitoba province is the self-proclaimed 'Polar Bear Capital of the World'. The USA's northern-most state, Alaska, also offers excellent opportunities to watch bears.

Bear watching is a highly seasonal activity and depends on some of nature's other wonders. Summer is the best time to see brown and black bears, particularly during the late summer salmon run. At this time of year these normally shy creatures are too busy gorging themselves with fish to be bothered by human presence.

For polar bears, October and November are when large numbers congregate near Churchill to await the formation of the sea ice, so they can head out to the ice floes to hunt seals. This time of year offers classic scenes with bears in a snowy winter environment. In the Nanuk area however, July to September is an excellent time to see polar bears in their summer feeding

grounds – a complete contrast! And, as luck would have it, some lodges are located in the best places to see not only bears, but also birds, whales and other marine mammals.

### How does a bear watching trip work?

We can organise a dedicated bear watching holiday at one (or more) hand-picked lodges, or we can add a stay at one of these lodges to any itinerary in Canada or Alaska. Each lodge arranges outings by boat or on foot (as and when appropriate) along with an experienced naturalist guide, or has hides specifically designed for bear watching.

It's even possible to combine watching brown and black bears in British Columbia with watching polar bears in Churchill, although the window of opportunity for this is extremely short, and limited to late October and very early November only.



### Climate

Eastern and Central Canada, the Rockies and Alaska, are characterised by long, cold winters. The short spring, summer and autumn seasons bring fabulous wildlife viewing as birds and mammals concentrate on eating, breeding and preparing for the next harsh winter. Although warm during the day, temperatures can plummet at night even in summer, and snow can fall at any time of year. In contrast, the coast of Vancouver Island and British Columbia is moderate year round, with high rainfall and warm summers.



#### May

- ▶ The peak time to see grey whale off Vancouver Island's west coast, as they head north to their summer feeding grounds
- ▶ Brown bear congregate north of Vancouver for the first time in the year to feed on succulents or fish for salmon
- ▶ Bears in mountain areas emerge from hibernation and forage throughout the summer. Early summer is the best time to spot them, as they move to higher slopes as the season progresses
- ▶ The first whales start to appear off the Newfoundland coastline

#### June

- ▶ Salmon return from the ocean to spawn in Alaska's freshwater creeks, where ravenous black and brown bear wait to feed on them
- ▶ Towards the end of the month the annual capelin run starts in coastal

waters off Newfoundland – the vast numbers of these small fish are a major source of food for whales and seabirds

#### July

- ▶ The islet-dotted waters of British Columbia's coast are the best place in the world to see orca. Although some pods remain all year round, visiting migrants stay only until early September
- ▶ From now until September is the best time to see polar bears in their summer feeding grounds

#### August

- ▶ North of Vancouver brown bear congregate for the second time – to fish for salmon
- ▶ Eastern Canada's Bay of Fundy is home to northern right, minke, humpback and fin whale from now to the end of September
- ▶ In August and September blue

whales visit the Gulf of St Lawrence, and trips with research vessels run at this time

#### October

- ▶ Polar bear gather in Churchill on the west coast of Hudson Bay, and pass through until November



# Canada



Canada contains some of the world's greatest untamed lands. Its beautiful wilderness is home to three of the eight species of bear – black, brown (or grizzly), and polar bear. These vast areas are the bears' last stronghold, and Canada is undoubtedly the best place on the planet to see them. Off Canada's west coast, the nutrient-rich waters around the islands of British Columbia attract whales and dolphins a-plenty.

Over the next pages, you'll find a selection of itineraries based on our favourite routes through Canada – from classic self-drive trips to trips designed to show you the best of the country's marine and terrestrial wildlife, and some of the best stand-alone lodges. With our advice, you'll have the best wildlife watching holiday imaginable!

## Key species

- ▶ Humpback whale
- ▶ Grey whale
- ▶ Dall's porpoise
- ▶ Pacific white-sided dolphin
- ▶ Orca (killer whale)
- ▶ Cougar
- ▶ American black bear
- ▶ Brown (grizzly) bear
- ▶ Polar bear
- ▶ Stellar's sealion

## Some geography

Canada is one of the largest countries in the world, so it makes sense to focus on a single region on any one trip. Most of our trips operate in one of four distinct areas: British Columbia on the west coast, the Rockies in the centre-west, around the town of Churchill in Northern Manitoba, and the island of Newfoundland, off the east coast. British Columbia alone is a huge area, much of which is wilderness – but it offers excellent opportunities to see Canada's iconic wildlife: bears, whales and bald eagles.

## Getting around

Roads and signage are good, and there's no language problem, so self-drive is a realistic option; however distances are huge – so you may prefer to fly between regions. To get to the islands along the coast of British Columbia you will need to take a ferry from the mainland, but to reach the most isolated spots, you have to take a float plane. One of the best ways to see British Columbia's wildlife is by small boat – a comfortable twin-masted ketch is best to view this magnificent region in comfort with top naturalists.

## Vancouver

BC's largest city stands in an exquisite coastal setting against a backdrop of lofty tree-covered peaks. There is plenty to do and see in this lively, multi-cultural centre: lush Stanley Park, with the Capilano Suspension Bridge, is a great place to explore on foot or by bike. Or take a trip across to Granville Island to look at the tempting array of produce on offer at the local market. The city has excellent restaurants, bars and coffee shops, and the downtown area around Robson Street is great for shopping.

## Vancouver Island

The healthy black bear population and whale-watching opportunities make Vancouver Island a great destination for wildlife enthusiasts. Tofino and Pacific Rim National Park are the main places to visit. Here you can walk along wild beaches and through dense forests where black bears are common while boat trips provide excellent opportunities to see impressive numbers of grey whales that spend their summer offshore.

Separated from the mainland by a long strait, the island's west coast overlooks the Pacific Ocean, while mountains reaching 2,195 metres rise on the drier, rolling east coast from the wet and rugged western shore. With many lakes and rivers, the interior is heavily forested with the towering conifers that epitomise the BC coast. The fauna is similar to the mainland, with brown bears being a notable exception. However the island is home to most of Canada's Roosevelt elk population, and has two endemic species – the Vancouver Island marmot and the Vancouver Island wolf – along with North America's most concentrated cougar population.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Early May-late June: summer! Explosion of wildlife!
- ▶ May: grey whale off Vancouver Island
- ▶ Late June-early July: the capelin run off Newfoundland
- ▶ July: bears move into the forest to feed on berries
- ▶ July-early Sep: Johnstone Strait – the best place to see orca
- ▶ Mid-Aug-mid-Oct: the salmon run – bears fishing!
- ▶ Early Oct-mid-Nov: polar bears gather near Churchill on Hudson Bay

Sea otters, which were hunted almost to extinction by fur traders in the 1800s were successfully reintroduced to the west coast from Alaska.

## Telegraph Cove and Quadra Island

At the northern tip of Vancouver Island, Telegraph Cove is famous for the awesome orcas that congregate each summer in nearby Johnstone Strait, which separates it from the mainland. Remote Quadra Island is one of the



wildest and most beautiful of the Northern Gulf Islands, which provide a scenic backdrop for watching pods of resident orcas. Black bears roam the beaches, while sealions bask on rocky islets, making this a perfect tranquil spot to spend a few days alone with nature.

### The Great Bear Rainforest

The Great Bear Rainforest extends up much of BC's forested coastline. Tiny Bella Coola, at the head of an inlet, is the gateway to Tweedsmuir Provincial Park, a hidden gem in BC's remote interior. Known as the Great Bear Rainforest, the area's forests,

mountains and valleys offer sanctuary to large numbers of grizzlies, black bear, cougar, deer, beaver and wolf. It's a special place: no other mainland location offers such intimate wildlife encounters amidst breathtaking natural splendour. You can watch bears on foot or while drifting serenely downriver – which makes for great photography.

### Princess Royal Island

Isolated for thousands of years, this amazing wilderness off the BC coast is one of the most pristine areas left on earth – at the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest. In summer its wildlife is prolific – June to August

are exceptional months for sighting humpback whale, orca, Dall's porpoise and Pacific white-sided dolphin. A full programme of boat excursions provides an ideal opportunity to learn about these marine creatures, as the lodge here has forged a close relationship with whale researchers based nearby.

### Glendale Cove, Knight Inlet

In the wild and pristine Pacific Northwest, a few select travellers can enjoy the incomparable thrill of encounters with North America's most impressive wildlife: massive brown bears, soaring bald eagles and large pods of orcas. This untouched wilderness 70 kilometres north of the remote settlement of Campbell River offers unrivalled opportunities to watch and photograph wildlife.

Your adventure starts with a flight from Vancouver to Campbell River, where you stay overnight before the

30-minute morning floatplane flight over the Johnstone Strait to Knight Inlet Lodge at Glendale Cove. This former logging camp accommodates a maximum of 30 guests in floating wooden cabins, most of which have their own lounge area with a wood-burning stove. Each cedar-panelled bedroom has its own private bathroom, and the public areas include a rustic dining hall and lounge. You can stay for anything from two to seven nights – but we recommend a minimum of three nights to fully appreciate the wildlife, which includes black bear, wolf otter, pine martin and mink.



## VANCOUVER ISLAND SELF-DRIVE

TAILOR-MADE

Vancouver Island is a microcosm of British Columbia with mountains, dense forests and desolate beaches. Its size and shape, good highways, lack of language barrier, and the friendly Canadian welcome all conspire to make it an ideal place to explore by hire car, equipped with a comprehensive Welcome Pack. Travelling at your own pace ensures you get the most of the wilderness interior. Wildlife excursions to watch grey whales and orcas, and see black bears are included in key locations, but there's even more you can do...

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK, arrive Vancouver, 1-night **Day 2** Fly (or ferry) to Victoria on Vancouver Island, 2-nights. Collect hire car; whale watching boat trip **Day 4** Drive to Tofino on west coast, 3-nights. Bear watching trip and whale watching boat trip **Day 7** Drive to Campbell River on east coast, 1-night **Day 8** Drive to Port Hardy on north coast, 3-nights. Bear watching and whale watching trips **Day 11** Drive to Campbell River and return hire car; fly to Vancouver and depart for UK **Day 12** Arrive London

This itinerary can be customised to include a side trip to stay at one of the bear lodges, to see grizzly bears. Alternatively, rather than flying back to Vancouver, you can take the ferry from Comox to Powell River on the mainland, and drive back down the coast over two days.

**Departures** Daily, May to October

## THE BEAR ESSENTIALS

TAILOR-MADE

A short stay at a bear lodge allows you to focus on seeing British Columbia's largest carnivore – the brown or grizzly bear – without distraction. Most lodges are situated in remote locations that can only be reached by floatplane, which guarantees a real wilderness experience and there may well be opportunities to see black bears and spirit bears too. During the short summer season of plenty, when the bears first forage for food along the shoreline, then feast on salmon from the rivers, they can be seen from boats and dedicated platform hides that offer truly fantastic photographic opportunities.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Vancouver, 1-night **Day 3** Fly to your chosen lodge, 5-nights. Daily bear watching from boats or platform hides **Day 8** Fly to Vancouver and depart **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, May to mid-October



### Activities at Knight Inlet

Activities at the lodge vary according to the season and animal movements, but include estuary tours, jet boat tours up the Kliniklini River, excursions to the upper reaches of Knight Inlet, and day trips to Thompson Sound and Bond Sound, offering a menu of stunning scenery, magnificent wildlife and of course, superb photographic opportunities.

#### Early May to end of June:

An explosion of new life. Grizzlies come down to the estuary close to the lodge, and are frequent visitors to the foreshore. It's not uncommon to see 12 to 15 bears (including mothers

with young cubs) in a single day, plus whales and dolphins in the Johnstone Strait. At this time all wildlife viewing is done by boat.

#### July:

Bears move into the forest to feed on the berry crop, so sightings are less frequent but nevertheless may include mothers and cubs playing, mating rituals on the beach, and sub-adult males sparring.

#### July to October:

Close encounters with orca, porpoise and numerous playful Pacific white-sided dolphin are common. In September you may see humpback whale.

#### Mid-August to mid-October:

The salmon run – millions of fish on their spawning run turn the rivers dark, attracting dozens of grizzly bear who gorge themselves in preparation for the imminent winter freeze. At this time, bald eagles, which are present all year round, are at their best from a photographic point of view – due to their sheer numbers.

### Eastern Canada

#### Newfoundland

Each year large numbers of whales, dolphins and porpoises migrate to the waters around the Newfoundland coast. About 15 species are normally present, either seasonally or year-round. The best known are the humpbacks, that can reach a length of around 17 metres, and arrive from their Caribbean breeding grounds in late spring. Other whales commonly

seen inshore in summer are minke, the smallest species found in the north-west Atlantic, which reach around ten metres. Fin whales, the most widely distributed whale in the north-west Atlantic, reaching 25 metres in length, are frequently sighted.

From May to September other whales appear including orca, sperm and pilot whales. Orcas appear in small numbers; however only male sperm whales, visit Eastern Canada in summer, frequenting the continental slope and offshore waters.

Small fish called capelin are a major element in the diet of Newfoundland's whales. St. Vincent's in St. Mary's Bay is a well-known beach for whale watching during the annual capelin run and only a two hour drive from St. John's, making it easy to reach for anyone on a self-drive tour.

### Spirit Bears

It is on Princess Royal Island that you find the honey coloured Kermode, or spirit, bear. This unusual colouring is due to a double recessive gene. These rare creatures are highly elusive, but the optimum period to see them is from late August to early October. With the experience and local knowledge of native Gitga'at guides, searching for them is an adventure in itself, involving boat trips and visits to viewing platforms beside salmon streams. Patience is likely to be rewarded not only with spirit bears, but black bears fishing for salmon.



## WHALES & MOUNTAINS

TAILOR-MADE ✦

The ultimate self-drive road trip through western Canada includes the celebrated Rocky Mountains and Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island, famed for its whale watching.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK / arrive Calgary. Drive to Banff, 2-nights **Day 3** Drive to Colden, 1-night; visit Northern Lights Wolf Centre **Day 4** Drive Icefields Parkway to Jasper, 2-nights. Explore Jasper area **Day 6** Drive to Clearwater, 1-night **Day 7** Drive to Whistler, 2-nights. Explore Whistler area **Day 9** Drive and ferry to Tofino, on Vancouver Island, 3-nights. Whale watching in Pacific Rim National Park **Day 12** Drive and ferry to Vancouver, 1-night **Day 13** Depart Vancouver **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, May to September



## WHALE STUDY WEEK

 SMALL GROUP

Hang out with humpbacks and get to know these curious acrobatic giants. You can either help with whale research or simply enjoy being in the company of these majestic animals in their northern feeding grounds. 20 species of whale have been sighted in Newfoundland waters, so you can expect the occasional surprise. You do not need to be an expert to enjoy this holiday – just a nature enthusiast who enjoys the company of whales.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK / arrive St. Johns, 5-nights **Day 2** Introductory boat trip to see whales, puffins and other seabirds, plus some land-based whale watching **Day 3** Full day boat trip to watch humpbacks and minke, plus occasional dolphins and fin whales. Listen to vocalizations on a hydrophone **Day 4** Whale watching from land, with possible sightings of seal, caribou and moose; birders will enjoy the seabird colonies **Day 5** Another full day boat trip to watch humpbacks **Day 6** Depart St John's **Day 7** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular, June to August

**Group size** Maximum 20

## NEWFOUNDLAND ADVENTURE

 SMALL GROUP

Experience the world's largest gathering of humpback whales and a range of marine wildlife amidst giant landscapes. Although there is no guarantee, numerous whales generally appear between late June and early August. By late July, seabird colonies start to thin out, but guillemot, puffin, razor-billed auk, gannet, eagle, moose and caribou are still around. June and July is a good time to see icebergs – once again, no guarantee! You can also enjoy local museums, scenic trails, wildflowers, songbirds, flavours and the unforgettable locals – the "Newfies".

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK / arrive St. Johns, 2-nights **Day 2** Boat trip to see whale, dolphin and seabirds **Day 3** Avalon Wilderness Area – see whales, caribou, puffins, terns and seals; continue to St. Brides, 1-night **Day 4** Visit a bird colony to see gannet, Brunnich's guillemot and kittiwake; watch whales from the cliffs (mid-July); look for moose and bear en-route to Trinity/Bonavista/Port Union area, 2-nights **Day 5** Boat trip to see bald eagle and sperm whales; walk to see moose, osprey, songbirds, orchids and shore-birds **Day 6** See more whales and icebergs; visit coastal villages en-route to St. John's, 2-nights **Day 7** Drive to Cape Spear; explore historic St. John's, with another boat trip **Day 8** Depart St John's **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular, June to August

**Group size** Maximum 20

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Tweedsmuir Park Lodge, Tweedsmuir Provincial Park

Dating from the early 1930s, this classic former hunting lodge was completely rebuilt in 1952 to accommodate eco-visitors. The chalets are in a spacious setting with spectacular views. Bears and other wildlife are regularly seen in the grounds, and the lodge organises drift trips down the McKenzie River.



### Great Bear Lodge, Port Hardy

A short floatplane flight north of Port Hardy, this modest floating lodge in the Nekite Valley offers fantastic bear viewing nearby. All five bedrooms have an en-suite toilet, although the showers are shared. There are regular wildlife presentations, plus two bear watching sessions per day; other activities include sea-kayaking and interpretative hikes.



### Wickaninnish Inn, Tofino

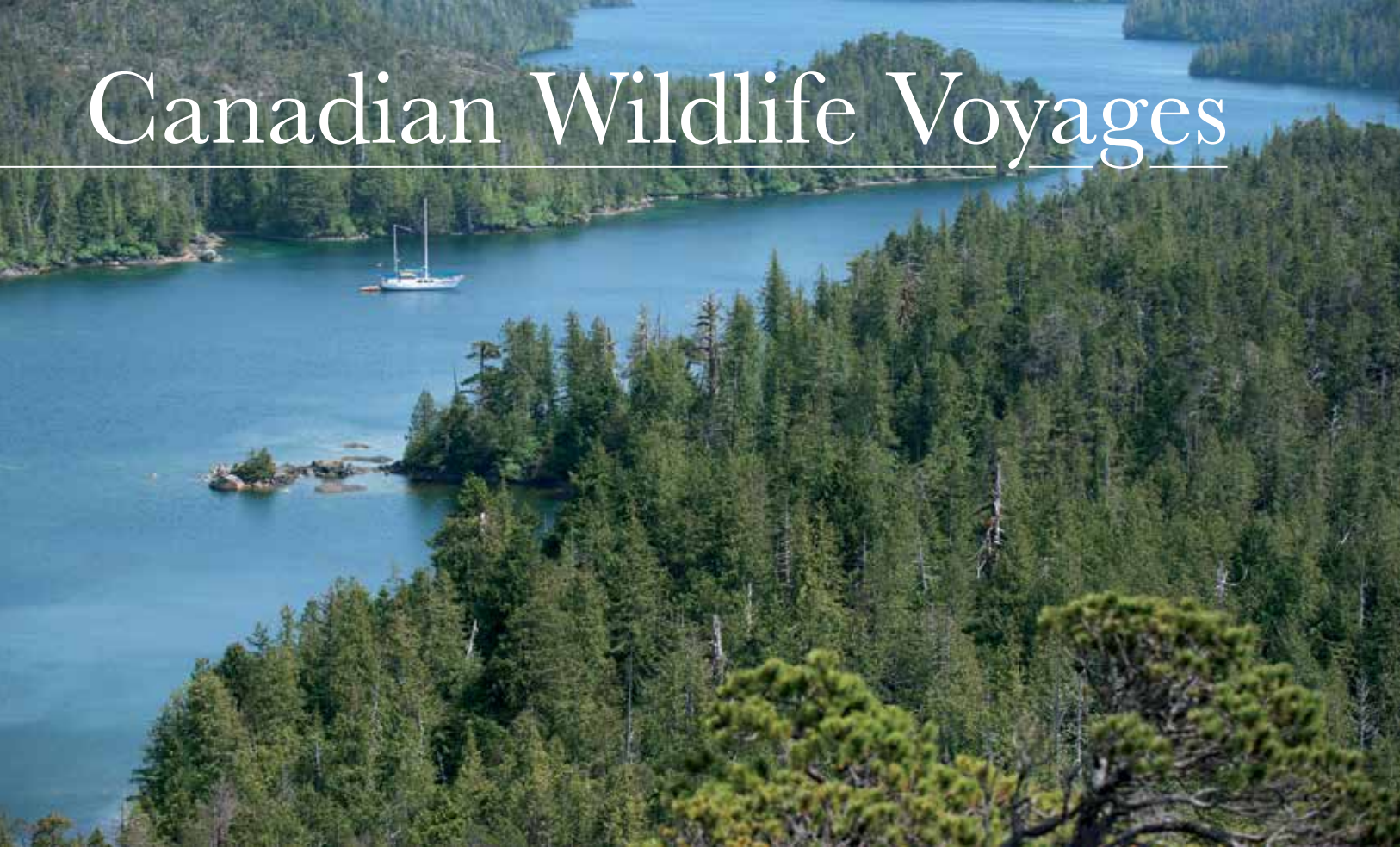
Beautifully located on Chesterman Beach in Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, this relaxing rural retreat is surrounded by forest and sea. The refined restaurant of this 'Relais & Chateaux' property has wide views of the ocean, while its Ancient Cedars Spa has won several awards. Perfect for beachcombing, walking or as a base for whale watching.



### King Pacific Lodge, Princess Royal Island

Exceptionally comfortable rooms with en-suite facilities offer wonderful views of the forest or the ocean. There's a lounge, dining room, sauna, steam room and hot tub, and the spa offers aromatherapy and massage! The trip begins with a charter flight from Vancouver to Bella Bella, followed by a spectacular float plane ride to the lodge.

# Canadian Wildlife Voyages



This wonderful series of trips aboard one of two beautiful boats offers the ultimate way of exploring the British Columbian coast.

The luxurious 31-metre *Island Roamer* and *Island Odyssey* sister ketches used for these trips get you to places larger boats cannot reach – ideal for exploring. Each of the eight cabins have either one double or two single berths, and there are three heads with hot showers, a comfortable saloon, and

a well-equipped galley – gourmet food is prepared by a skilled cook (all meals are included while on board), and wine is served with dinner.

The sheltered deckhouse is a great vantage point for watching wildlife. Each boat has modern navigational aids, safety equipment, zodiac inflatables for shore excursions, and sea-kayaks. Each evening you anchor in a secluded bay with time to enjoy the stunning scenery.

The educational component is balanced with adventure and fun, making this is a truly exceptional way to enjoy the best of British Columbia's wilderness.

A further voyage in the series is offered in south-east Alaska and can be found on page 85.



## ORCAS, BEARS & TOTEMS

 **SMALL GROUP**

Enjoy spotting orcas and watching grizzly bears at Knight Inlet. This breathtaking trip to British Columbia explores the beautiful archipelago off the northern tip of Vancouver Island, and its wildlife. This unique area is quite possibly the best place in the world to watch orcas, but also has a fascinating human dimension – the heritage of the First Nations peoples and their extraordinary carved totem poles.

The entire region is an area of outstanding natural beauty. Each summer, members of the 200-strong resident orca population congregate in Johnstone Strait to forage for salmon and socialise with other orca families. You'll also have a chance to watch grizzly bears on a day trip to Knight Inlet. These magnificent predators converge on the river lowlands to feed on seaweed, crabs and shellfish along the inlet beaches. During the trip you'll also explore beautiful beaches and virgin forests on foot, visit native villages and the fascinating award-winning museum at Alert Bay.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Vancouver, 1-night **Day 2** Fly to Port Hardy, Vancouver Island; transfer to Port McNeill and board boat, 5-nights **Day 3** Explore Johnstone Strait and surrounding inlets; day excursion to watch grizzly bear at Knight Inlet **Day 8** Disembark at Port McNeill, transfer to Port Hardy and fly to Vancouver, 1-night **Day 9** Depart Vancouver **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, June to September

**Group size** Maximum 15



## WHALES & DOLPHINS IN THE HAIDA GWAI

 SMALL GROUP

The Haida Gwaii – or Queen Charlotte Islands – are one of North America’s richest areas in biological and cultural terms. This remote archipelago offers unparalleled opportunities to explore an area of true wilderness. You’ll see outstanding scenery, an abundance of wildlife and ancient Haida villages that showcase the diversity of British Columbia’s coastline.

The shores of Moresby Island contain Gwaii Haanas National Park. This area of immense natural beauty comprises over one hundred islands, forested creeks, rugged headlands, and sheltered channels between towering mountains. Activities include shore excursions, forest walks, wildlife watching and exploring ancient First Nations villages. Blue, sperm, minke, sei, grey, fin, and humpback whales all frequent these waters, and in early summer thousands of Steller’s sealions occupy the beaches. The islands’ rich ecosystem also supports breeding colonies of up to a million seabirds.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Vancouver and transfer to hotel, 1-night **Day 2** Fly to Sandspit, 1-night **Day 3** Visit Haida Heritage Centre on Graham Island, ferry to Moresby Island and board boat, 7-nights **Day 4** Explore Gwaii Haanas National Park **Day 10** Disembark at Moresby Camp, transfer to Sandspit and fly to Vancouver, 1-night **Day 11** Depart Vancouver **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, June to September

**Group size** Maximum 15

## GREAT BEAR RAINFOREST

 SMALL GROUP

Quest to see the legendary all-white spirit bear in the rainforest of British Columbia. British Columbia’s Great Bear Rainforest is a complex maze of forested islands and waterways overlooked by towering mountains – a wilderness alive with wildlife. This small ship adventure visits the largest remaining area of coastal rainforest on the Pacific coast – the domain of ten thousand year old native cultures.

The dense forests are inhabited by black, grizzly and honey-coloured Kermode, or spirit bears, all of which feed on the salmon that fill the rivers each summer. Deep in the coastal mountains, in the Fiordland Conservancy, you’ll see spectacular rock faces and waterfalls, and visit a native village to see a longhouse. While sailing you can expect to see 15-metre-long giants of the deep – humpback whales on their long migration. Each day your on board naturalist guide will lead shore excursions, and there will be time to enjoy the sheltered waters in the vessel’s sea-kayaks.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Vancouver, 1-night. **Day 2** Fly to Bella Bella, 1-night. **Day 3** Board boat, 7-nights. **Day 4** Sail the Central Coast: shore excursion at Gitga’at (Princess Royal Island) Conservancy with a native guide to see black bear and the elusive Spirit bear. **Day 10** Disembark at Bella Bella and fly to Vancouver, 1-night. **Day 11** Depart Vancouver. **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, June to September

**Group size** Maximum 15



Each of these three trips is endorsed by WDCS. The trip price includes a donation to WDCS. A share of the profit from each trip goes directly towards supporting the WDCS’s conservation and protection work around the world

# Polar Bears



The world's largest carnivore is surely the most beautiful of the world's bears. Measuring up to three metres in length and weighing anything up to 680 kilogrammes, an adult male is a powerful, fearless predator with no natural enemies. These expert hunters have an acute sense of smell, and can detect a scent at a distance of over 30 kilometres!

Most people see polar bears in or around Churchill, in the month-long window at the start of the winter when the bears gather in anticipation of the sea freezing over, so they can head out onto the ice floes to hunt seals, their preferred food. The bears instinctively know that the first sea ice forms at Cape Churchill, so congregate here – making it easy to see them in a winter environment.

Here you may see solitary adult males lumbering across the tundra, young males play-fighting, and mothers with young cubs. The interaction at this time of year is fascinating, and your knowledgeable guide will ensure that you see and learn as much as possible.

However it is also possible to watch polar bears in their summer feeding grounds. Summer is a lean time for these bears – their metabolism slows right down and they fast for much of the time, relying on the fat they put on over winter. They scavenge for whatever they can find – a frugal diet of berries, roots,

and bird eggs, plus – if lucky – the occasional caribou or large animal. Climate change has made this time even more difficult, as more of the pack ice melts earlier in the year, and the sea does not start freezing until later – meaning a longer period on land for the bears. However polar bears need ice to hunt, they simply cannot match the agility and speed of a seal in the water, and rely on catching them when they surface to breathe through a hole in the ice, or use stealth to attack one that is hauled out on the ice.

While at sea on the ice floes, polar bears are usually solitary, however on land their behaviour changes and they are sometimes seen with others. Summer is the best time to see mothers with the cubs that were born the previous winter in a snow den, creating some remarkable opportunities for photography.

## Winnipeg

More than half the population of Manitoba province lives in the capital city. Due to its location at the confluence of two major rivers that provide access to an extensive network of canoe routes, it was a trading post for First Nations peoples long before the first Europeans arrived. It's now a dynamic, multicultural city, famed for its urban forests and parks, that serves as the gateway to Churchill in northern Manitoba, and the start of our polar bear adventures!

## TUNDRA LODGE ADVENTURE

 SMALL GROUP

This is an extraordinary adventure into the realm of the polar bear! You'll stay in the icy wilderness outside Churchill in the Tundra Lodge. Where else can you watch the sun set over the snow in the home of the polar bear? Daytime excursions in Polar Rover vehicles get you close to these amazing creatures.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London (via Toronto) / arrive Winnipeg 1-night Hotel Fort Garry **Day 2** Fly to Churchill 4-nights Tundra Lodge **Day 6** Fly to Winnipeg 1-night Hotel Fort Garry **Day 7** Depart Winnipeg (via Toronto) **Day 8** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, mid-Oct to mid-Nov only

**Group size** Maximum 29

## CLASSIC POLAR BEARS

 SMALL GROUP

Seeing polar bears in the wild is awe-inspiring. Two daytime outings and one at night get close to these magnificent creatures from the warmth and safety of a specially designed Polar Rover, and maximise the opportunity to see bears. You'll be accompanied by expert local guides who can answer all your questions, and in the company of people who are just as excited about polar bears as you are.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London (via Toronto) / arrive Winnipeg 1-night Hotel Fort Garry **Day 2** Fly to Churchill 3-nights. Polar bear viewing **Day 5** Fly to Winnipeg 1-night Hotel Fort Garry **Day 6** Depart Winnipeg (via Toronto) **Day 7** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, mid-Oct to mid-Nov only

**Group size** Maximum 15



### Churchill

Northern Manitoba is a pristine wilderness with a coastline so remote that it has not changed in thousands of years. The self-proclaimed 'Polar Bear Capital of the World' is the only human settlement where polar bears can be observed in the wild – as it lies right in their migratory path. The bears spend the short summer along Churchill's coastline then, as winter approaches, move towards Cape Churchill, where the sea freezes over first. As soon as the sea ice is thick enough, the bears head north onto the ice floes to spend the winter hunting seals. Tours take place in October and November, the time of their annual migration.

Due to the scarcity of accommodation in this remote outpost we use various hotels, all of which are small, clean and functional, rather than luxurious.

However all offer a hearty welcome, adequate comfort, plus warm rooms with en-suite facilities, and are close to the town centre – so make a good base for your polar bear adventure.

### Polar Rover

Our polar bear trips use specially designed Polar Rovers with on board toilets to head out onto the tundra. Lunch and refreshments are provided on board, so you can spend all day out in the wild and not miss a single opportunity to see bears, Arctic fox, caribou, snowy owl and ptarmigan. With a maximum of 15 to 20 people in comfortable bus seats inside a heated compartment that can take double this number, you'll have plenty of room to watch and photograph bears through the easily opened windows or from the open-air viewing platform.

## POLAR BEAR MOTHERS AND CUBS

SMALL GROUP

The tidal flats and plains of Hudson Bay, where native Cree trappers once traded furs at isolated trading posts, is the setting for a unique summer adventure. These summer feeding grounds for polar bears offer fantastic opportunities to photograph mothers with their cubs, as well as the area's other abundant wildlife: migratory birds, wolves and moose.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London (via Toronto) / arrive Winnipeg, 1-night hotel  
**Day 2** Fly to Gillam, Northern Manitoba and transfer to lodge by light aircraft, 4-nights lodge. Briefing and interpretative walk  
**Day 3** Polar bear activities – explore the area with a naturalist guide  
**Day 6** Transfer to Gillam by light aircraft and fly to Winnipeg, 1-night hotel  
**Day 7** Depart Winnipeg (via Toronto)  
**Day 8** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, August and September only

**Group size** Maximum 12

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Tundra Buggy Lodge, Churchill

Each season this remarkable hotel-on-wheels is positioned on the tundra in the area of highest bear density. Two sleeping cars – with a total of 32 single cabins (upper or a lower berth) with two showers and three toilets – connected to lounge and dining cars offer modest, but more than adequate, fully-heated comfort. Inquisitive bears often approach, and you'll have unparalleled opportunities to watch them through the large windows, or from elevated outside observation decks. This unique location, plus half-day outings in a dedicated Polar Rover, affords some exceptional sightings.



### Nanuk Polar Bear Lodge, Hudson Bay

This new lodge, is in a remote location on the Hudson Bay coast 250 kilometres south-east of Churchill. The accommodation consists of four heated twin cabins with private bathrooms; the main lodge, where excellent food is served, has a cosy fireplace. There is a perimeter fence with a 24-hour security patrol, and viewing towers for watching bears. A full programme of daily activities focus on seeing polar bears, using 4-wheel drive vehicles with naturalist guides.



### Dymond Lake Lodge, Hudson Bay

Just a 15 minute flight north of Churchill, this warm and comfortable, luxury wilderness eco-lodge occupies a strip of land between the lake and the bay. Picture windows and a viewing tower looking over the tundra provide views of the area and its wild inhabitants. Accommodation is in twin or four-bedded rooms with private bathrooms in two cosy cabins. The lodge offers fixed programme stays on a full board basis in late autumn with activities based around polar bears. The food and wine are excellent.



### Seal River Heritage Lodge, Hudson Bay

Strategically sited on the Hudson Bay shoreline, this rustic but comfortable lodge (with fine food and wine) provides an excellent opportunity to see polar bears in the snow. The 30-minute flight from Churchill gives fine views of the winter landscape. You will have exceptional chances to photograph Arctic wildlife at ground level and get a bird's-eye view of the amazing sunsets and sunrises from the viewing towers. Open from late October to late November only for four night stays on fixed dates.



# USA & Alaska

The USA's largest and least populated state is also its finest wilderness area. Alaska offers enormous vistas and vast open spaces filled with snowcapped mountains, glaciers, sparkling fjords and inlets, endless forests and rushing, salmon filled rivers. It is justifiably famous for its bears, which gather at the onset of winter to fatten up on berries, crustaceans and anything else they can find – including salmon in the Brooks River.

Alaska is home to brown (or grizzly) bear, black bear, moose, deer, wolf, lynx and fox. But this wildlife paradise also has amazing marine life with whales, dolphins, seals and otters all seen regularly from either the shore or boats. Birdwatchers are rewarded with more than 470 species, including bald eagles and horned puffins, and rarities such as bluethroat, whiskered auklet and bristle-thighed curlew.

## Key species

- ▶ Lynx
- ▶ Mountain lion
- ▶ Arctic fox
- ▶ Grey wolf
- ▶ Arctic fox
- ▶ American black bear
- ▶ Brown (grizzly) bear
- ▶ Wolverine
- ▶ Moose
- ▶ Caribou

## Some geography

The state capital, Juneau, is in the south-east panhandle, a strip of Alaska sandwiched between Canada and the Pacific Coast, with Glacier Bay directly to the west. Anchorage, in the south central region, is the jumping-off point for the Kenai Peninsula just to the south, and Katmai National Park on the Alaska Peninsula, with Kodiak Island on the other side of the strait. Fairbanks, the gateway to Denali National Park is right in the heart of the interior.

## Getting around

Getting around Alaska is different to any other US state. Despite the good but limited highway network, the combination of big distances and isolated locations means the only feasible access to some spots may be by plane (sometimes floatplane) and/or boat.

Alaska Railroad's trains cross tundra and mountain passes with views of Mount McKinley en-route from

Anchorage to Fairbanks, or follow the coastal route to Seward. You can watch the landscape unfold from the comfort of a warm carriage with panoramic windows and knowledgeable commentary, and will often see bear, wolf and moose.

Otherwise by far the best way to experience Alaska is on foot, in the company of a savvy local guide. So, on any trip you are likely to use various different modes of transport.



### Diary notes

- ▶ Apr: black bears start emerging from dens
- ▶ May: spring bird migration; festivals at Copper River Delta, Cordova and Kachemak Bay, Homer
- ▶ May-Sep: Alaska's summer outdoor season
- ▶ Late-Jul-Sep: the salmon run
- ▶ Oct-Dec: bald eagles gather along Chilkat River
- ▶ Nov – Dall sheep rut; black bears get ready to den

### Anchorage

This major port and rail terminus lies in the coastal lowland beside a fjord,

but extends up the Chugach Mountains – bear and moose are often sighted even in urban areas. The city has excellent birdwatching, particularly at Potter's Marsh, and several fine museums. Over 200 kilometres of trails include the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail along Cook Inlet, with mountain views. The wilderness and parks around the city offer more hiking opportunities – including Chugach State Park, with 50 glaciers, and the famous Portage Glacier.

### Katmai National Park

Katmai has two spectacular attractions – brown bears and volcanoes. Sockeye salmon run the Brooks River in July, and again from late-August to mid-September, at

which times bears can be seen in huge numbers. You can also see them (albeit fewer of them) in early August, as they wander the shoreline feeding on sedge grass and digging for clams. The Valley of 10,000 Smokes is lined with active volcanoes. In 1922 one of the most violent volcanic eruptions in modern times took place, when Novarupta Volcano exploded, destroying all living things.

### Kodiak Island

The largest island in the Gulf of Alaska is rich in brown bears, whales,

seals, sealions and otters. Some researchers see Kodiak bears as a unique sub-species, as they have lived here continuously for around 12,000 years. Generally larger than their mainland relatives, more than 3,000 live in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge which is also an important staging post for seabirds and wintering wildfowl whose combined population exceeds one million. Summer attracts migrant birds to nest and feed on the plentiful supply of food. In all, some 237 bird species have been recorded here.

## BROWN BEARS OF KODIAK AND KATMAI

 SMALL GROUP

Few natural sights are quite as arresting as Alaskan brown bears feeding on summer bounty. The grizzlies of Kodiak Island (the largest in the world) gorge on salmon that swim up the rivers to spawn. This short trip focuses on the renowned bear populations of Kodiak Island and Katmai National Parks, using a private chartered boat to reach out-of-the-way places that most visitors never see. The boat can follow bears as they lope along the shore to fish and dig for clams, and you have a fantastic vantage point while watching from a safe distance.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Anchorage, 1-night **Day 2** Fly to Kodiak Island, 2-nights. Explore Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge by boat **Day 4** Float plane to Kukak Bay and board boat, 3-nights, cabins with upper and lower berths and shared facilities. Explore Katmai National Park and Hallo Bay **Day 7** Return to Kodiak, 1-night **Day 8** Fly to Anchorage and onward to the UK **Day 9** Arrive UK

**Departures** Fixed, from June to August

**Group size** Maximum 6

## WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

TAILOR-MADE 

This comprehensive itinerary visits Alaska's remote and wild national parks, using a variety of transport – car, boat, plane, train and bus. From the spectacular scenery of Kenai Fjords and Wrangell St. Elias National Parks, you cross the Arctic Circle to Gates of Arctic National Park to visit a Nunamiut village. The Alaska Railroad takes you to Denali National Park, where you stay at remote Kantishna area inside the park. Finally you fly into Katmai National Park to see grizzly bears at the famous Brooks Falls.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Anchorage, 2-nights **Day 2** Explore Anchorage **Day 3** Drive scenic highway to Seward, 2-nights **Day 4** Boat into Kenai Fjords National Park **Day 5** Drive Seward Highway to join the Glenn Highway – Glennallen /Copper Center area, 1-night **Day 6** Drive to Chitina, then fly into Wrangell-St. Elias National Park – Kennicott /McCarthy, 2-nights **Day 7** Visit Kennicott, and optional glacier walk **Day 8** Fly to Chitina, then drive Richardson Highway to Fairbanks, 2-nights **Day 9** Excursion by road and plane to Gates of the Arctic National Park, plus the Nunamiut village of Anaktuvuk Pass **Day 10** Alaska Railroad to Denali National Park gate and bus to Kantishna, 2-nights **Day 11** Optional activities in Denali National Park **Day 12** Bus (or optional flight past Mt. McKinley) and train to Anchorage, 1-night **Day 13** Fly to King Salmon, then seaplane to Katmai National Park – Brooks, 2-nights **Day 14** Day in Katmai National Park, then fly to Anchorage, 1-night **Day 15** Depart **Day 16** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, June to September



### Fairbanks

Alaska's largest inland city is in wilderness 500 kilometres north of Anchorage, but just 300 kilometres south of the Arctic Circle. As gateway to Denali National Park it is often used

as an overnight stop en-route to the Arctic wilderness beyond. Its museums house interesting exhibits on Alaska's cultural and natural history and you can shop for native Athabascan and Eskimo crafts. In

summer, daylight lasts forever, and in winter you can dog-sled, watch the spectacular Aurora Borealis, and see life-sized ice sculptures.

of Anchorage. Here, towering glaciers drop into the sea and you can hear the constant cracks and rumblings of calving icebergs. There are excellent opportunities to see humpback whales and orcas, as well as seals, sealions, porpoises, sea otters and a huge colony of puffins. The surrounding park is home to a varied wildlife population that includes bald eagle, mountain goat, moose, bear, wolverine and marmot. Among the many thousands of seabirds that congregate here are kittiwakes, guillemots and gulls.

## ALASKAN BEAR ODYSSEY

TAILOR-MADE 

This tour combines two prime locations for seeing grizzly bears. On the mainland, at Katmai National Park, you'll also see the tempestuous volcanoes of the Avenue of 1,000 Smokes – a fine natural spectacle! Out in the Gulf of Alaska, Kodiak Island's brown bears are among the largest carnivores on earth, but there is also a wealth of smaller wildlife to see too.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Anchorage, 2-nights **Day 3** Fly to King Salmon, then floatplane to Katmai National Park, 3-nights, Brooks Lodge. Guided trips in Katmai National Park and Valley of 10,000 Smokes **Day 6** Floatplane to King Salmon, then fly to Anchorage, 1-night **Day 7** Fly to Kodiak Island, 3-nights, Zachar Bay Lodge. Guided trips to see wildlife **Day 10** Fly to Anchorage, 1-night **Day 11** Depart **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, from June to September

### Denali National Park

One of the world's greatest wildernesses lies around North America's highest peak, Mount McKinley (6,100m), which towers over the tundra. Denali is famed for its wildlife which includes 39 species of mammal and 167 birds. Activity here is dictated by the seasons. In spring many birds return and bears stir from hibernation in readiness for the summer bonanza. By late summer the rivers are awash with salmon heading upstream to spawn and the bears take full advantage. Denali is also home to wolves, moose and caribou, but as the park has only one road, any encounter is likely to be fleeting.

### Kenai Fjords

Day cruises along the fjord depart from Seward, some 160 kilometres south

### Glacier Bay National Park

This coastal wilderness near Juneau has stunning vistas of glaciers, mountains and deep fjords. Each summer humpback whales feed in the channels joined by minke whales, orca and Dall's porpoises. Steller's sealions congregate on rocky islets to bask or mate, and thousands of harbour seals breed and nurture their pups. The park is home to brown and black bears,

wolves, coyotes and marmots. It is not unusual to see moose and bears swimming across the bay, and bears can be seen on the shore turning over rocks to find crustaceans.

River otters are widespread, along with pine marten, mink and weasel, but scarce wolverine are rarely seen. The Alsek River delta is a refuge for lynx, snowshoe hare and beaver, thousands

of seabirds nest on its cliffs and rocky shores, and migrating geese and sea ducks find refuge in the quiet arms of the bay. You can only reach Glacier Bay by floatplane or water.

### Juneau

Alaska's state capital stands on the Gastineau Channel in the panhandle. The only way to get here is by air or water, and its stunning location between

soaring snowcaps and cobalt-blue inlets makes the city a popular stop for summer cruises along the coast. The attractions include Mendenhall Glacier in the Juneau Icefield just above the city. Outdoor enthusiasts come for

opportunities to hike, bike, river raft, kayak and dog-sled, and wildlife fans are drawn by the prospect of seeing whales, seals, sealions, porpoises, otter, bears and eagles.

## YELLOWSTONE: ULTIMATE WOLF & WILDLIFE SAFARI

 SMALL GROUP

This winter safari ventures into Jackson Hole in search of bighorn sheep, bald and golden eagle, coyote, bison, mule deer and moose, and into the National Elk Refuge to photograph the huge herd that winters on the valley floor. Crossing Buffalo Valley and Grand Teton National Park, you enter Yellowstone National Park to explore its silent winter splendor by heated snowcoach, witness Old Faithful geyser erupting in a veil of ice crystals, and see the silver terraces of Mammoth Hot Springs. Two days tracking wolves in remote Lamar Valley, the best place in North America to see them, affords a fantastic opportunity to see these elusive creatures in their natural surroundings.

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK / arrive Jackson, Wyoming, 2-nights **Day 2** Explore Jackson Hole and by horse-drawn sleigh into the National Elk Refuge  
**Day 3** Cross Buffalo Valley and Grand Teton National Park to enter Yellowstone National Park, 1-night **Day 4** Visit geysers and Mammoth Hot Springs en-route to Cooke City, Montana, 2-nights **Day 5** Wolf tracking in Lamar Valley **Day 6** Wolf tracking in Lamar Valley, en-route via Mammoth Hot Springs to Bozeman, Montana, 1-night **Day 7** Depart **Day 8** Arrive UK

NOTE: Some trips operate in reverse direction i.e. Bozeman to Jackson.

**Departures** Fixed, from December to February

**Group size** Maximum 14

## HUMPBACK WHALES IN SOUTH-EAST ALASKA

 SMALL GROUP

This unforgettable voyage aboard the Island Odyssey is packed with natural highlights: the thrill of watching bears gorging on salmon in a rushing river, and sailing along a tranquil fjord to find a majestic glacier spawning icebergs. And, during four days in Frederick Sound, you can look forward to seeing humpback whales bubble-net feeding.

One fifth of the size of the continental USA, Alaska has the world's highest coastal mountain range and over half of its glaciers. Much of the trip takes place within the confines of North America's immense Tongass National Forest. Daily shore excursions let you walk in lovely forests and visit alpine meadows. You'll explore the shoreline for intertidal creatures, and keep a record of the various species of birds, plants and animals seen.

The itinerary is deliberately flexible to make the most of wildlife sightings and favourable weather patterns.

Please refer to page 78-79 for further details of the Island Odyssey

### Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to Seattle, 1-night **Day 2** Fly to Petersburg, Alaska, and board boat, 8-nights **Day 3** Watch humpbacks in Frederick Sound **Day 7** Visit Le Conte Glacier **Day 8** Watch brown and black bears at Anan Bay **Day 9** Visit old Native American settlement at Ketchikan **Day 10** Disembark at Prince Rupert, Canada, fly to Vancouver, 1-night **Day 11** Depart Vancouver **Day 12** Arrive UK

**Departures** Regular dates, June and July

**Group size** Maximum 15



This trip is endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Hallo Bay, Katmai National Park

A lovely, purpose-built, wilderness lodge on the remote Pacific coast with five comfortable cabins, separate showers and a communal lounge-dining area. Expert naturalist guides conduct daily wildlife activities to see the region's brown bears fishing for salmon. Access is by air only from the town of Homer.



### Zachar Bay Lodge, Kodiak Island National Park

Friendly and comfortable accommodation in the heart of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, with 11 rooms, five boats for wildlife activities, and two floatplanes for access. There is great hiking into the surrounding mountains, excellent birdwatching, and a myriad of possibilities to watch wildlife. We recommend a minimum of four nights to do the area justice.



### Kantishna Roadhouse, Denali National Park

One of only three lodges located inside the park, this all-inclusive property was developed from a gold miners' tented camp to a modern resort with cosy cabins. The many guided and self-guided activities on offer include hiking, mountain biking and talks and presentations by resident naturalists, plus gold-panning, flightseeing and trips to see Mount McKinley.



### Glacier Bay Lodge, Glacier Bay

The only accommodation inside the national park, surrounded by rainforest and near a couple of glaciers, this classy lodge has comfortable rooms with private facilities that can accommodate up to four people. Boat excursions, kayaking, hiking and flightseeing are among the activities on offer. Connected to Juneau by high-speed catamaran.



# Latin America

Many aspects of Latin America have changed beyond all recognition since Christopher Columbus arrived at the end of the fifteenth century, however after more than five hundred years of exploration there is still much left to discover. Each year botanists, zoologists and other researchers gain new insights into the region's extensive natural history, which any visitor can experience first hand.

The landscapes of South America encompass as much variety and contrast as you could ever wish for. These include the immense tract of

rainforest that surrounds the world's greatest river, the Amazon, and the complex network of tributaries that extends from Brazil into Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

From the treeless, windswept expanse of Patagonia at the continent's southern tip, the long Pacific seaboard, extends through the dense, temperate forests of southern Chile. Further north the eerie emptiness of the coastal deserts in northern Chile and Peru reaches right to the exuberant tropical vegetation of Ecuador, which then stretches all the way to Central America. Meanwhile the

lofty snow-capped peaks and countless volcanoes of the Andes create a north-south barrier that run almost the entire length of South America.

In Central America, on the other hand, Costa Rica offers the contrasts of tropical rainforest, cloud forest and dry forest, plus pristine white sand beaches against a backdrop of active volcanoes. Among its marine highlights are turtles nesting on the Caribbean coast, and the possibility of seeing humpback whales, which come to breed in the balmy waters off the Pacific coast. Its forests

offer some of the best chances of glimpsing the indolent sloth, and as the land bridge between North and South America, the region's birdlife is particularly outstanding with copious numbers of brightly-coloured hummingbirds, parrots and toucans.

Most of our trips in Latin America are tailor made. Costa Rica even offers the option of self-drive trips, a popular choice for families as you can combine great wildlife with a host of exciting activities such as white-water rafting, mountain biking and horse riding to keep everyone happy!



# Costa Rica



Costa Rica is one of the finest countries in Central America for wildlife, and its world-class parks and reserves offer exceptional biodiversity and enshrine a proud heritage of conservation. On a two week trip you can easily take in all the main wildlife and scenic areas, and the extraordinary variety of topography guarantees a wide range of experiences.

The highlights include watching turtles coming ashore to lay their eggs, howler monkeys swinging through the jungle canopy, toucans and brightly coloured parrots flitting through the forests, plus tiny, colourful tree frogs resting on bright green leaves. We can arrange a fully-escorted private trip, or a self-drive programme, or a combination of the two – depending on your preference.

## Key species

- ▶ Brown-throated three-toed sloth
- ▶ Silky anteater
- ▶ White-headed capuchin monkey
- ▶ Mantled howler monkey
- ▶ Geoffroy's spider monkey
- ▶ Lowland paca
- ▶ Humpback whale
- ▶ Ocelot
- ▶ Baird's tapir
- ▶ Poison dart frog



## Diary notes

- ▶ Jan-Jul: best time to see quetzal at Monteverde
- ▶ Feb-Apr: leatherback turtles lay eggs in Tortuguero NP
- ▶ Jul-Sep: night walks in Tortuguero NP to see green, leatherback and hawksbill turtles
- ▶ Aug: peak time for green and hawksbill turtles to lay eggs
- ▶ Nov-Apr: leatherback turtles in Tamarindo
- ▶ Dec-Jan: humpback & sperm whales along the coast of Corcovado NP

## Some geography

Due to its location in the Central American isthmus, a central chain of mountains many of which are volcanoes, separate the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. National parks and reserves are scattered all over the country – Costa Rica has a higher percentage of protected land than any other nation.

## Getting around

The distances between national parks and reserves are not great, so most transport is by minibus or private car with driver/guide. Occasionally e.g. for Tortuguero, river travel is involved, or to reach outlying locations you can save a lot of time by taking a short domestic flight. The roads are relatively good and there is

comparatively little traffic, so self-drive is feasible – although care is needed on some mountain roads.

## San José

Costa Rica's capital stands in the centre of the country at an elevation of around 1,200 metres, so enjoys a near-perfect average temperature of 21°C year round. As it has the

main international airport, and is the country's transport hub, you will inevitably spend a night or two here at some stage of your trip. The downtown area is small, but there are several interesting museums and parks, plus the Barrio Amón district, where the mansions of several former coffee barons have been restored to their original glory.



### Braulio Carrillo National Park

Just a short drive north-east of San José, this national park preserves a pristine swathe of emerald rainforest full of tropical plants and waterfalls. The highlight is a ride on the famous rainforest aerial tram, from which you can look down into the forest canopy. Over 340 bird species have been recorded here, including Costa Rica's national bird, the resplendent quetzal, plus toucans, trogons and eagles. Its mammals include howler and white-faced monkey, tapir, jaguar, puma, ocelot and paca. Several short trails offer an opportunity to stretch your legs.

### Sarapiquí

This fascinating lowland area along the Sarapiquí River lies just north of Braulio Carrillo, near the Nicaraguan border. It makes a good base for exploring nearby Poás Volcano, and for boat rides, white-water rafting and kayak trips. However the main highlight is a visit to La Selva Biological Station – a major centre for research into tropical ecosystems – in one of Costa Rica's last areas of primary rainforest. The species diversity is astounding, with more than 1,850 plants, 350 trees and 448 birds (i.e. over half Costa Rica's total of 850!), plus 70 species of bat and five of the country's six felines.

### Tortuguero National Park

This is a vast area of untouched rainforest on a remote stretch of Caribbean coast, where beaches, canals, lagoons and wetlands create an extraordinary biodiversity. Activities centre on boat trips through the network of freshwater creeks and lagoons. The park is home to seven species of river turtle, spectacled caiman, southern river otter, spider,

howler and capuchin monkey, three-toed sloth and over 300 species of birds. Green and hawksbill turtles come ashore each night between July and September (peaking in August) to lay their eggs, and leatherback turtles between February and April.

### Cahuita National Park

This small national park on the Caribbean coast consists of tropical lowland forest, black sand beach, and a beautiful reef around the tip of Cahuita Point. The forest shelters various animals, including paca, racoon, northern tamandua, opossum, porcupine and capuchin monkey, while the marshes contain green iguanas, basilisks, giant blue crabs and numerous birds. The reef has an astonishing variety of marine life: sea urchins, moray eel, lobster and shark abound, while the southern beach is a nesting site for several varieties of sea turtle. A snorkel and mask are essential here!

### Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge

South of Cahuita, this stretch of Caribbean coast is one of the finest in the country. The combination of sandy beach, gentle waves, and coral reef close to the surface make it a paradise for nature lovers and underwater enthusiasts. You can see lobster, sponges, sea urchins, sea anemones, crabs, sea cucumbers and shrimp on the reef, but the area is also known for manatees and dolphins, and several species of sea turtle nest here between February and May. Inland, gently-rolling, low, forested hills protect endangered crocodile and tapir, cayman, pacas, keel-billed toucans, and ornate hawk-eagles.

## NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

TAILOR-MADE 

Wildlife abounds on this exceptional trip. You'll discover nesting turtles, monkeys, Costa Rica's prolific birdlife and much more – all amid a tapestry of forests, beaches, lagoons and waterfalls. Exploring by foot, boat and high above the trees on a canopy walkway, you'll visit our favourite places: the waterways of Tortuguero, the cloudforest of Monteverde, the dry forest of Rincon de la Vieja, and the idyllic white-sand beaches of Tamarindo. There is much to marvel at and plenty of opportunity to see Costa Rica's diverse flora and fauna!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK for San Jose, 1-night **Day 2** Drive and boat to Tortuguero, 2-nights. Boat trips in national park **Day 4** Drive to Arenal, 2-nights. See the volcano, bathe in the springs and various optional excursions **Day 6** Drive to Monteverde, 2-nights. Explore the cloudforest in search of resplendent quetzal **Day 8** Drive to Rincon de la Vieja, 2-nights. Walk trails and swim in waterfalls **Day 10** Drive to Tamarindo, 2-nights. Relax on beach and turtle watch (in season) **Day 12** Drive via Carara National Park to San José, 1-night **Day 13** Depart San José **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year





### Volcán Arenal National Park

Until 2010 Arenal was Costa Rica's most active volcano. After lying dormant for several centuries, it started erupting in 1968 and continued almost continuously for over 40 years, making it one of the world's most explosive cones. During this period minor explosions and small lava flows were visible after dark – cloud cover permitting – from the nearby town of La Fortuna. In recent times, however, the volcano has entered a period of quiescence and the once nightly pyrotechnic display has ceased, although you can still hear subterranean rumbles and see the odd ash column. The surrounding national park contains a bizarre landscape of solidified lava flows, lush natural forest and tropical flora and fauna which includes howler monkeys, toucans and over 350 bird species.

### Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve

This and the adjacent Santa Elena Cloud Forest, which straddle the continental divide, are considered among Central America's finest protected areas. Weather from the Caribbean and Pacific create a cloudforest ecosystem that is home to over 100 species of mammal (its five species of cat include jaguar and ocelot), 400 birds (including 30 hummingbirds, three-wattled bellbird, bare-necked umbrellabird, keel-billed toucan, long-tailed manakin, and the famously elusive resplendent quetzal), tens of thousands of insects (including over 5,000 different moths) and 2,500 plants (including 420 varieties of orchid).

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



### Volcán Tenorio National Park

Around the two volcanoes of Tenorio and Montezuma, some 35 kilometres north of Arenal, is an area of primary rainforest and cloud forest that is rich in flora and fauna. Among its many natural features, the best known is one of Costa Rica's most beautiful waterfalls, where the Rio Celeste tumbles some 32 metres into a pool that is an unnatural shade of blue due to the presence of sulphur and precipitating calcium carbonate. Subterranean activity endows the area with several hot springs where you can bathe and relax.

### Rincón de la Vieja National Park

Named after the active volcano at its centre, this park protects the dry forest of the northwest, which is home to some 200 bird species. It receives relatively few visitors, so you can walk its trails, ride horses, or enjoy its hot springs and pools of boiling mud in relative solitude. Although it is close enough to visit on a day trip from Tamarindo, there is enough to warrant staying here for a night or two.

### Tamarindo

The bustling surf capital of Costa Rica's Pacific coast, at the northern end of the Nicoya Peninsula, is blessed with stunning beaches, but also makes a fine base to explore the surrounding rainforest for wildlife. The broad sandy bay is bordered by large estuaries whose extensive mangrove forests are protected reserves. In Marino Las Baulas National Park giant leatherback turtles weighing up to 500 kilogrammes come ashore at night to lay their eggs on the beach; 174 species of bird are protected here and howler and capuchin monkeys swing through trees.

### Gulf of Nicoya

This stunning coastal landscape includes wetland, jagged rocky islands, cliffs and mangroves. The offshore islands protect seabird sanctuaries where visitors are not allowed, however with binoculars you can watch the birds from the shore. Guayabo has the largest of Costa Rica's four known brown pelican nesting sites, and is also home to boobies, frigatebirds and falcons at certain times of year. The area gets comparatively few visitors – a distinct advantage for anyone with a keen interest in wildlife and photography!

### Manuel Antonio National Park

Just south of Quepos, the country's most visited national park covers a rocky peninsula and its hinterland,

plus a large tract of Pacific Ocean. The varied attractions of tropical rainforest, mangroves, glorious sandy beach, crashing surf and copious wildlife – which includes one of Costa Rica's only populations of endangered squirrel monkeys – attracts a lot of visitors. Fortunately, to reduce environmental damage and reduce overcrowding, numbers are strictly controlled. From trails along the rainforest-fringed beach, you can see white-faced capuchin monkeys, pacas, agoutis, iguanas and lizards, while the offshore islands are thronged with seabirds.

### Marino Ballena National Park

Named after the humpback whales that arrive between December and April each year to mate, this

## COAST TO COAST

TAILOR-MADE

Costa Rica's Caribbean and Pacific coastlines are lot more different than you might imagine, and offer a massive contrast to the steamy lowlands and lofty mountains and volcanoes of the interior. Travelling from coast to coast enables you to see and understand the complex mosaic of ecosystems of this extraordinarily rich – in wildlife terms – country. You'll visit some relatively little-visited national parks that protect habitats as diverse as the reefs and coastal rainforest of Cahuita and the unique landscapes around Tenorio Volcano. And your reward at the end is a chance to unwind on the lovely Pacific beaches of Tamarindo.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London; arrive San José, 1 night **Day 2** Drive to Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge, 2-nights. Explore Cahuita National Park on the Caribbean Coast **Day 4** Drive to Savegre, San Gerardo de Dota, 2-nights. Birding in Talamanca Mountains **Day 6** Drive to Sarapiquí, 2-nights. Excursions in the lowland rainforest **Day 8** Drive to Volcán Tenorio National Park, 2-nights. Visit national park **Day 10** Drive to Tamarindo, 2-nights. Relax on beach and turtle watch (in season) **Day 12** Transfer to San José, 1-night **Day 13** Depart San José **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



park extends along a 15 kilometre stretch of beach interspersed with mangroves, and out to sea. Along the quiet stretches of sand, green marine iguanas bask and feed on the algae that grows on the coral. The largest reef on Central America's Pacific Coast forms a crescent necklace, with three small islands known as Las Tres Hermanas (the three sisters). Olive ridley and hawksbill turtles come ashore to lay their eggs between May and November – the largest numbers usually arrive with the waning moon in September. However Marino Ballena is not as closely monitored or regulated as some nesting sites, and you may find yourself alone on the beach. Offshore you can see bottlenose and common dolphins, and the birdlife includes frigate birds, brown footed boobies, pelicans and ibises.

### Corcovado National Park

For a fitting finale to any visit to Costa Rica, take the scenic flight south to the remote beautiful Osa Peninsula, on the Pacific Coast. The crown jewel of a world-renowned national park system, it is a natural paradise with a remarkable species count of 500+ trees, 124 mammals, 375 birds, 117 amphibians and reptiles, and 66 freshwater fish! Tapir, jaguar and scarlet macaw live among the giant trees, along with Baird's tapir, ocelot, margay and jaguar and harpy eagle. Other protected species include howler, spider, squirrel and white-faced capuchin monkeys, great tinamou, silky anteater, poison dart and glass frog, and three species of turtle. You can stay at either a rustic lodge or a tented camp on an idyllic beach amidst tropical splendour, surrounded by wildlife!

### PACIFIC COAST JOURNEY

TAILOR-MADE ✚

This trip reveals the exceptional contrasts between the central region and the Pacific coastline – from Braulio Carrillo National Park and Sarapiquí region to the popular but stunningly scenic Manuel Antonio National Park, a tiny jewel of biodiversity. The grand finale – a stay on the remote but lovely Osa Peninsula in the south, allows you to explore Corcovado National Park – possibly the finest of Costa Rica's many protected areas.

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart London; arrive San José, 1-night **Day 2** Drive via Braulio Carrillo National Park to Sarapiquí, 2-nights. Excursions in the tropical lowland rainforest **Day 4** Drive south to Quepos, 2-nights. Visit Manuel Antonio National Park **Day 6** Fly to Osa Peninsula, 3-nights. Explore Corcovado National Park **Day 9** Fly to San José and depart **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Mawamba Lodge, Tortuguero

The fifty or so basic but comfortable rooms of this beachfront property are well-located on a sand bar between two canals, surrounded by tropical gardens and the sounds of the rainforest. The restaurant serves buffet meals, and your stay includes morning and afternoon boat trips along the canal network with a keen-eyed naturalist guide. You can go early morning birding, walk private nature trails, visit the butterfly farm, kayak on the creeks, walk to the beach or into Tortuguero village, or just relax in hammocks beside the pool and lagoon.



### Hotel Fonda Vela, Monteverde

This charming hotel nestles in landscaped grounds some two kilometres from Monteverde Cloud Forest, surrounded by more than a kilometre of private nature trails. The 40 classy but unpretentious rooms and suites have modern amenities and large windows (suites have a sitting room and private balcony), and the terrace has a view of the distant Gulf of Nicoya. Due to the isolation and peaceful setting, the gardens are ideal for quiet contemplation and watching birds: both parrot and toucan feed in the wild fruit trees, and quetzal are sometimes seen.



### Casa Corcovado, Peninsula de Osa

A remote luxury lodge with colonial-style bungalows set in lovely private grounds in a prime location bordering the national park. Designed by an American naturalist, this exclusive property was constructed with the highest environmental concern. There is no road access – you can only get here by a one and a half hour boat trip through the largest mangrove system of the Pacific coast – which ensures both privacy and tranquillity. Activities include hiking, birding, diving, horse riding and visiting Caño Island Biological Reserve. Closed mid-Sep to mid-Nov.



### Villa Caletas, Nicoya

This luxurious boutique hotel uses French-colonial architecture and the Victorian era homes of wealthy San José residents as its architectural inspiration. It perches in a stunning position at an elevation of some 400 metres amidst rainforest, with an exquisite 180° panorama over the islands of the Gulf of Nicoya and the Pacific. Accommodation consists of 52 gorgeous rooms, suites and individual villas scattered around the extensive hilltop site. The infinity pool has a view to die for, hourly transfers are provided down to the shingle beach under two kilometres away.

# Ecuador



Ecuador, as its name implies, straddles the equator. When combined with the Galápagos Islands, this land of startling contrasts offers wildlife enthusiasts the ultimate holiday with the chance of seeing a vast array of species, many of which are endemic. There are some 1650 bird species alone in an area

the size of the UK. The staggering variety of terrain extends from the lush jungle of the Amazon Basin, across the desert-like páramo and perpetual snow-capped volcanoes of the high Andes, to the rocky marine paradise of the Galápagos archipelago.

## Key species

- ▶ Amazon manatee
- ▶ Southern tamandua
- ▶ Golden-mantled tamarin
- ▶ Venezuelan red howler monkey
- ▶ Blue whale
- ▶ Jaguar
- ▶ Spectacled bear
- ▶ Collared peccary
- ▶ Red brocket deer
- ▶ Opossum



## Some geography

Ecuador is divided into several distinct regions: the high mountains of the Andes, the Amazon basin, known as the Oriente, and the Pacific coastal lowlands, plus of course, the Galápagos archipelago out in the Pacific Ocean.

## Getting around

In the mountains and coastal regions most travel is by road, however the easiest way to reach parts of the Amazon is by a short domestic flight. Thereafter you'll travel by motorised canoe or on foot.

## Quito

Ecuador's capital stands at an altitude of 2,850 metres on the slopes of the active volcano of Pichincha, 25 kilometres south of the equator. Founded in the 16th century on the ruins of an Inca city, Quito's beautiful old town is perhaps the least altered historic centre in Latin America. Most itineraries allow time to explore at the start and/or end of a trip. You can visit the Mitad del Mundo monument on the equator, go horse-riding or whitewater rafting, visit an Indian market, or simply take a city tour.

## Cotopaxi National Park

This ecological sanctuary surrounds one of the world's highest active volcanoes, whose permanent snowcap towers 5,897 metres above the valley 75 kilometres south of Quito. Typical mammals include huge herds of guanaco, red brocket deer, white-tailed deer, Andean fox, Andean puma, and the rare Andean speckled bear is found on the eastern slopes. Birdlife is plentiful too with orange-faced falcon and Andean gull found up to around 4,000 metres, and Andean condor. We highly recommend a day trip from Quito, but for a real treat, why not overnight at a hacienda?

## Mindo Cloud Forest

Two hours drive north-west of Quito, this area of primary forest is considered to be one of the finest birding areas in South America. The varied terrain, which ranges from 1,400 to 4,778 metres in altitude, supports more than 400 species of birds – including many hummingbirds and the elusive Andean cock-of-the-rock. There is a remarkably high number of endemic plants, and

orchids, bromeliads and heliconias grow in abundance. Although you can visit on a day trip from Quito, serious naturalists should consider staying for a couple of nights to explore its trails.

## Mashpi Rainforest Biodiversity Reserve

This 1,000 hectare private reserve, two and a half hours from Quito, is part of a bio-region that stretches along the Pacific slope of the Andes from Panama to northern Peru. Here the profusion of plants and animals creates a rich ecosystem that is recognised as a bio-diversity hotspot. The 500 or so bird species (more than half the total number found in Europe!) include 36 endemics. A two kilometre long, environmentally friendly, aerial tram offers a unique vantage point to see the rainforest canopy. Orchids and bromeliads thrive in the moist conditions, along with butterflies, glass frogs and other amphibians, while larger mammals include monkeys, peccaries and even puma.

## Papallacta & Antisana

A couple of hours east of Quito, Papallacta nestles at the foot of Antisana volcano, Ecuador's fourth highest mountain. Outside the capital the scenery becomes spectacular with rocky peaks and a vast sweep of bleak páramo above the tree line. At Antisanilla you can see an impressive lava flow and a deep canyon where Andean condor are regularly sighted. A profusion of lichens, gentians and orchids surrounds the many lakes and ponds. Birds include black-faced ibis, cinereous cone-bill, Andean teal, Andean lapwing, carunculated caracara and black-winged dove.

## Otavalo

This beautiful area of lakes and mountains, with colourful indigenous communities who produce extraordinary quantities of handicrafts lies approximately two hours drive north of Quito. While it makes a good full day trip, staying overnight in a colonial hacienda allows you to explore the area on foot or horseback, and see small communities with an agricultural way of life that has changed little for hundreds of years. The fertile countryside is surprisingly rich in wildlife – including the magnificent Andean condor.

## Machalilla National Park

This park on the Pacific coast became a Ramsar site in 1990, when recognized as a vital wetland. Roughly one third is ocean, with two large islands, Salango and Isla de la Plata, plus many islets – feeding areas for frigate birds, pelican, waved albatross

and boobies. It contains coral reefs, nearly one third of Ecuador's coastal fisheries, and is a breeding ground for humpback whales. On land the tropical dry forest, fog forest and scrub desert are home to armadillo, black howler monkey, collared peccary, various poison arrow frogs and vipers found only in Ecuador, plus endangered brocket and white-tailed deer, and more than 270 bird species.

## The Ecuadorian Amazon

The vast rainforest east of the Andes, called the Oriente, protects more species of plant and mammal than any area of similar size. Although only a relatively small portion of Amazon basin lies within Ecuador, roughly one third of its biodiversity is found here. One hectare of rainforest contains many varieties of trees (some reaching 40 metres in height) and hundreds of plants.

The forest is home to an astonishing repertoire of wildlife: 15% of the world's bird species, including harpy eagle, blue-and-yellow macaw, cobalt-winged parakeet, oropendolas and tanagers. Among more than 100 species of mammal are three-toed sloth, black-mantled tamarin, nine-banded armadillo, capybara, agouti, coati, tapir, and the enigmatic jaguar.

The rivers, streams and lakes are home to two species of freshwater dolphin, four species of caiman and over 300 species of fish. And that's not to mention the ten species of monkey, 1,000 species of butterfly and innumerable exotic flowers!

Access to the different Amazon regions is via small and unremarkable towns largely developed since the 1970s in the search for oil, such as:

**Coca region:** The workaday town of Coca (Puerto Francisco de Orellana) on the Napo river lies around 1,000 kilometres upstream from its confluence with the main Amazon, but close to pristine primary rainforest. A 30 minute flight avoids the gruelling but spectacular 11 hour bus journey over the Andes from Quito. Your adventure begins at the river port, when you board a motorised canoe for the trip down the Napo into the heart of the rainforest.

**Puyo region:** The largest town in the Oriente and a provincial capital, Puyo, on a tributary of the Pastaza river, is the jumping off point for this region. Around five hours drive from Quito, or two

hours from the town of Baños, it is also served by scheduled flights to Shell/Mera airport, a 30 minute drive away. Most lodges are accessed by a 30-40 minute flight by chartered light aircraft from Shell/Mera.

Once at your chosen lodge you will explore on foot and by boat in the company of a knowledgeable naturalist guide, and learn about the rainforest. Among the birds you may see are harpy eagle, the world's second largest bird of prey, many tiny multi-coloured hummingbirds, as well as parrots and toucans, with their brilliantly-coloured plumage and typically long bills. In addition to a profusion of flowers, many medicinal plants are found in the forest, and on jungle hikes native guides will show you how to identify these and explain, or demonstrate, their various uses.

## ECUADORIAN ODYSSEY

TAILOR-MADE ✦

A journey through Ecuador's varied topography – from volcanoes and snow-capped mountains to green valleys and impressive city sights. You'll also see the best of Ecuador's prolific bird and wildlife, including maybe the Andean condor and elusive jaguar.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK, arrive Quito, 2-nights Hotel Patio Andaluz  
**Day 2** Explore Quito **Day 3** Mindo Cloud Forest, 2-nights Septimo Paraiso Lodge. Birding **Day 5** Quito, 1-night hotel **Day 6** Papallacta, 2-nights Guango Lodge **Day 8** Quito, 1-night Hotel Patio Andaluz **Day 9** Amazon jungle, 3-nights. Explore the rainforest **Day 12** Quito, 1-night **Day 13** Depart Ecuador **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Sacha Jungle Lodge, Amazon (Coca region)

Located in a 2,025 hectare private reserve pristine rainforest, this lodge is reached by a short flight from Quito, followed by a two hour trip by motorised canoe. 26 comfortable cabins with en-suite facilities are constructed from local materials using traditional methods. Excursions are accompanied by an English-speaking naturalist guide and local native guide. A spectacular 275-metre canopy walkway allows a bird's eye view of the rainforest's 587 bird species.



### Napo Wildlife Centre, Amazon (Napo region)

The only lodge in Yasuni National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the largest tract of intact rainforest in Ecuador. Run in conjunction with the local community, this luxury property whose 12 cabañas were designed with comfort in mind is involved in many different conservation projects. The unrivalled natural attractions include two macaw clay licks, 565 bird species, 11 species of monkey, a giant otter family and many other large mammals.



### Mashpi Rainforest Lodge, Mashpi Biodiversity Reserve

Inaugurated in 2012, this stylish, ultra-modern lodge uses the latest sustainable techniques and materials, and is designed to blend with its surroundings. The social areas and 22 minimalist suites have huge picture windows with stunning forest views. Facilities include a well-stocked library, a spa, and naturalist guides who lead nature walks. Interaction with local communities is encouraged and all transport from the reserve entrance to the lodge is by battery-powered buggy.



### Hacienda Zuleta, Angochagua, Otavalo area

This authentic colonial property, which dates from 1691 is still a working farm. The original building houses 15 tastefully furnished rooms, each with a fireplace. The atmosphere is cosy and intimate, and the hospitality superb. There are some 60 kilometres of self-guided trails in the vicinity. One attraction is the Condor Huasi conservation project in the grounds, whose objective is to safeguard the future of the Andean condor and educate local communities as to their importance.

# The Galápagos Islands



This remarkable archipelago lies astride the equator out in the Pacific Ocean, west of the Ecuadorian mainland. Having risen from the seabed as a result of submarine volcanic activity, and never having been connected to another landmass, the islands have a unique biological identity. Millions of years of isolation have given rise to species endemic to the islands through the process of natural selection.

The absence of predators means that Galápagos wildlife shows little fear, and it's possible to get surprisingly close to birds and animals without disturbing them – a dream for any photographer! Due to the ocean's nutrient-rich currents, sealions, seals, dolphins and whales are present throughout the archipelago. The many bird species include the finches that provided the clues that helped Darwin develop his Theory of Evolution.

## Some geography

Lying around one thousand kilometres off the coast of Ecuador, directly west of Guayaquil, the islands cover 45,000 square kilometres, with 220 kilometres between the most northerly and the most southerly point. Each island offers something different, but you can only land at designated sites. See entries for individual islands below.

## Getting around

All flights from the mainland – from Quito via Guayaquil – arrive at either Baltra airport, just north of Santa Cruz island, or San Cristóbal. The only inter-island air connections are by light aircraft, so most travel is by boat. Boats that operate in the Galápagos carry anything from 10 to over 100 passengers, however there are now options to sleep on certain islands and sail to some wildlife sites by small day-boat.

## The Islands

### Fernandina

An active volcano with rugged slopes, unusual lava formations and a huge population of land iguanas. There are



also sealions, marine iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, Galápagos penguins and flightless cormorants.

### Isabela

The volcanic slopes of by far the largest island in the archipelago are home to some 6,000 Galápagos tortoises. There is an interesting uplifted coral reef, and its brackish lagoons are home to egrets, flamingos and white-cheeked pintails. South American fur seals are common

around the coastline, as are Galápagos penguins and iguanas.

### Santiago and Bartolomé

Lava lizards are common, and Santiago is good for birds such as Galápagos dove, Galápagos mockingbird and Galápagos hawk. Land iguanas, Sally Lightfoot crabs, sealions and South American fur seals may also be seen. The smaller island of Bartolomé, famous for the iconic Pinnacle Rock, is home to Galápagos penguins. Turtles

## Key species

- ▶ Galápagos sealion
- ▶ Galápagos fur seal
- ▶ Giant tortoise
- ▶ Galápagos land iguana
- ▶ Marine iguana
- ▶ Galápagos penguin
- ▶ Waved albatross
- ▶ Blue-footed booby
- ▶ Galápagos hawk
- ▶ Darwin's finches

and white-tipped reef sharks may accompany you while snorkelling.

### Genovesa

This island is a breeding ground for South American fur seals and sealions. The cliffs are home to Galápagos storm-petrel, Madeiran storm-petrel, Audubon's shearwater and red-billed tropicbird. Look out for lava gulls too, the rarest gull in the world, and hammerhead sharks, which cruise along the coastline.



### Santa Cruz

The rocky coastline and mangrove-lined inlets are good for sea turtles, sharks and rays. There are also healthy populations of tortoises, land and marine iguanas and birds – eight species of finch live here. The island is home to the Charles Darwin Research Station and Giant Tortoise Breeding Centre. Nearby Seymour supports the largest colony of magnificent frigatebirds, while North Seymour is home to blue-footed boobies, swallow-tailed gulls, sealions and marine iguanas. The tiny island of Baltra is one of the two airports in the islands.

### Floreana

Studded with volcanic cones and with relatively luxuriant vegetation, this island provides nesting areas for tropicbirds, shearwaters and noddies; flamingos live in its lagoon, and there are several sealion colonies. The submerged crater of Devil's Crown is one of the best snorkelling sites in the Galápagos.

### San Cristóbal

Home to frigatebirds, blue-footed boobies and sealions, this was the first island on which Charles Darwin set foot in September 1835. It has one of the islands' two airports, so is likely to be either your point of arrival or departure.

### Española

Magnificent seabird colonies include blue-footed and masked boobies and swallow-tailed gulls. This is also the breeding site for the waved albatross – although the colonies are deserted from January to March.

### Galápagos 2012 onwards

The first tourists arrived in Galápagos in the 1960s. In 2010 almost 175,000 people visited the islands, and the number continues to grow! Currently around 80 boats are licensed operate there, including four which run day tours. Until recently most cruises offered visitors a chance to see the most popular spots in a week or less

– although this resulted in only 20 or so of the total of 70 landing sites being visited. However this approach risked causing irreparable damage to those iconic sites, and so detracted from the overall experience.

The solution, implemented in early 2012, requires vessels to switch from a one-week to a two-week itinerary composed of two different one-week routes. These one-week routes may still be broken down into three and four-day sectors. This will halve the number of visitors at any one site at any time, and provide an opportunity to experience many less well-known or more distant sites – a much more effective and satisfactory way of managing visitors.

However this means that all boats operate at least two itineraries, so if there are particular islands that you wish to visit, you should ensure that they are included in the itinerary you choose. That said, such is the nature of wildlife in the Galápagos that you are unlikely to be disappointed wherever and whenever you visit.

Motor yachts tend to be larger and somewhat faster, while motor sailers offer a more traditional, and romantic, way of getting between the islands, although to eliminate the vagaries of wind and current you'll motor for most of the time.

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## WILDLIFE OF ECUADOR AND THE GALÁPAGOS

TAILOR-MADE

This tour combines two of South America's finest wildlife destinations. The Amazon rainforest is a rich paradise, home to an incredible diversity of mammals, birds and fish. From your luxurious eco-lodge in the heart of the jungle you will explore trails and rivers, and discover its colourful and varied wildlife. Moving on to the Galápagos Islands, you board a first-class vessel to sail from island to island in this unique volcanic archipelago to see its prolific birdlife and fearless land and sea-dwelling wildlife from close up.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK; arrive Quito same day, 1-night **Day 2** Fly to Coca, then motorised canoe into the Amazon region, 3-nights. Various rainforest activities: canopy walkway, trail walks and canoe trips to see wildlife **Day 5** Fly to Quito, 1-night **Day 6** Fly to Baltra in the Galápagos for a 4-night cruise visiting a selection of islands **Day 10** Disembark, visit Cerro Colorado tortoise breeding centre, and fly to Guayaquil, 1-night **Day 11** Depart **Day 12** Arrive UK

NOTE: The itinerary may easily be adjusted to extend the Galápagos cruise

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



# The Galápagos Islands Wildlife Calendar



## January

- ▶ On Española adult marine iguanas become brightly coloured
- ▶ Green sea turtles arrive on the beaches to lay their eggs
- ▶ Land iguanas begin their reproductive cycle on Isabela
- ▶ Water and air temperatures rise, remaining warm until June – ideal for snorkelling
- ▶ The rainy season begins and land birds start nesting

## February

- ▶ Greater flamingoes start nesting on Floreana
- ▶ Start of the black-tailed pintail breeding season
- ▶ Nazca boobies on Española end their nesting season
- ▶ Marine iguanas begin nesting on Santa Cruz
- ▶ Water temperature reaches 25°C and remains constant until April
- ▶ The nesting season of the Galápagos dove reaches its peak



## March

- ▶ The rainy season reaches its peak (though rain is still sporadic!) and in the intense tropical sun air temperatures can reach 30°C
- ▶ Marine iguanas nest on Fernandina
- ▶ 21st March, the equinox heralds the arrival of the first waved albatross on Española



## April

- ▶ Waved albatrosses arrive en-masse on Española to start their courtship
- ▶ The giant tortoise hatching season comes to an end
- ▶ Green sea turtle eggs start to hatch
- ▶ Land iguana eggs hatch on Isabela
- ▶ The rains come to an end, although the islands are still green
- ▶ Good visibility for snorkellers

## May

- ▶ North Seymour's blue-footed boobies begin courtship
- ▶ Green sea turtles still hatching at Gardner Bay (Hood), Punta Cormoran (Floreana) and Puerto Egas (Santiago)
- ▶ Marine iguana eggs hatch from their nests on Santa Cruz
- ▶ Waved albatross on Española begin laying eggs
- ▶ Band-rumped storm petrels begin their first nesting period

## June

- ▶ Start of the cool season
- ▶ Giant tortoises migrate from the Santa Cruz high-lands to the lowlands in search of nesting places
- ▶ Beginning of the giant tortoise nesting season
- ▶ The south-east trade winds return, making ocean currents stronger
- ▶ Southern migrants begin their northward journey – Galápagos is an important landfall. Some cetacean species follow a similar migration pattern
- ▶ Humpback whales migrating along the coast of Ecuador reach the Galápagos

## July

- ▶ The seabird colonies are very active (breeding), especially blue-footed boobies on Española. This is a good time to see all four stages of nesting: eggs, chicks, juveniles and sub-adults



- ▶ Flightless cormorants perform beautiful courtship rituals and nest on Fernandina
- ▶ American oystercatchers nest on the beaches of Santiago
- ▶ Lava lizards begin mating rituals, which continue until November
- ▶ One of the best months to see whales and dolphins – especially off the west coast of Isabela

### August

- ▶ Galápagos hawks begin courtship displays on Española and Santiago
- ▶ Nazca boobies and swallow-tailed gulls nest on Genovesa
- ▶ The ocean temperature drops to 18°C
- ▶ Migrant waders begin to arrive, and stay until March
- ▶ Giant tortoises return to the highlands on Santa Cruz
- ▶ The seas are choppy and ocean currents at their strongest
- ▶ Galápagos sealions begin to give birth

### September

- ▶ The coolest time of year with temperatures around 19°C
- ▶ Galápagos penguins are at their most active on Bartolomé
- ▶ Galápagos sealions are very active – females are in season and males constantly barking and fighting
- ▶ Most species of sea bird remain quite active at their nesting sites

### October

- ▶ Lava herons start nest building, and continue until March
- ▶ Galápagos fur seals begin mating

- ▶ Blue-footed boobies raise their chicks on Española and Isabela
- ▶ Giant tortoises are still laying eggs
- ▶ Skies can be overcast – expect garúa (sea mist) everywhere except the western islands, where the mist burns off after a few hours

### November

- ▶ Galápagos sealion pupping continues
- ▶ The breeding season for brown noddies begins
- ▶ Jellyfish are seen – the genus Physalia is commonly seen in the water around Gardner and Tortuga; some are also seen stranded on Flour Beach, Floreana
- ▶ Band-rumped storm petrels begin their second nesting period
- ▶ The seas are calm and south-east trade winds decrease in strength; water temperature rises slowly
- ▶ Generally good weather due to a seasonal transition
- ▶ Excellent visibility for snorkellers

### December

- ▶ Hatching of giant tortoise's eggs begins and lasts until April
- ▶ Green sea turtles begin their mating display
- ▶ The rainy season begins; plants in the dry zone produce leaves and the archipelago becomes noticeably green
- ▶ The first young waved albatrosses fledge

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### Your Galápagos voyage

On the opposite page is a small selection of our favourite Galápagos vessels. Based on our personal experiences, we favour small (10 to 20 passengers) and medium sized (40 to 50 passengers) boats that offer a high level of service.

Boats are classified as Deluxe, First Class and Tourist Class, and all those featured have cabins with an en-suite bathroom (a shower with hot and cold water, and a toilet) plus air-conditioning; some boats are air-conditioned throughout. Cabins may have twin or double beds, or upper and lower berths. All boats have ample deck space to relax and enjoy the sun

and sea air. There's plenty of down time, so take a good book or two... Food on board is good and surprisingly varied – you certainly won't go hungry! With advance notification most special diets can be catered for. Tea, coffee and drinking water are available free of charge around the clock. You sign up for other drinks at the bar, then settle up at the end of the voyage – generally in cash.

Each boat departs on a fixed day of the week, so any other travel must be arranged around this. Some trips are as short as four or five days, however for a more complete overview of the islands and their astonishing wildlife, you should opt for a one week trip.

Much sailing, particularly longer stretches over open sea, is done at night, while you are asleep (a bonus to anyone who is worried about seasickness), and you often wake to the rattle of the anchor going down on reaching a new island. During the day you may sail for a few hours to reach a new landing site.

Depending on its size, each vessel has one or more naturalist guides who accompany all shore visits – generally two per day. These are done by zodiac inflatable and involve either a dry landing, when you step onto a jetty or a wet landing, when you wade ashore through the shallows.

On the islands, to minimise impact on the fragile environment, you follow a marked trail in a small group with your naturalist guide. Your guide will brief you in advance about each landing site and the wildlife you are likely to see.

There's ample opportunity to photograph the birds and animals, and plenty of time to swim and snorkel (from either the beach or your boat) to appreciate the rich undersea life. Some larger boats carry a glass-bottomed boat for this purpose, while others offer a scuba diving option.

All vessels are required to operate a two week itinerary composed of two different one week routes, which may still be broken down into shorter segments. This will halve the number of visitors at a site at any time, and direct visitors to less well-known or more distant sites.

Boats will now operate one trip to the northern and western sector, followed by another trip to the southern and central sector, so if you wish to visit particular islands, ensure they are included in the itinerary you select. That said, such is the extraordinary nature of wildlife in the Galápagos that you are unlikely to be disappointed wherever and wherever you visit!

Please ask for a detailed itinerary for whichever boat interests you.

### Mainland Extensions:

if you would like to spend more time in Quito or elsewhere in Ecuador before your voyage starts or after its end, let us know and we will be happy to arrange this.





### Santa Cruz

This large First Class 72-metre motor cruiser carries 90 passengers in 43 cabins of five different categories on three decks. The vessel is air-conditioned throughout and facilities include a lounge, bar, restaurant, shop, reading room and library, jacuzzi, sun deck and aromatherapy centre. The crew of 52 includes a doctor and six naturalist guides; there are five zodiacs for ship-to-shore transport plus a glass-bottomed boat.



### La Pinta

For the ultimate treat, this Deluxe Class motor yacht is the ideal choice! Its 24 spacious cabins with floor-to-ceiling windows can hold 48 passengers. It has a sitting room, a well-stocked library, lecture area with cinema screen, inside and outside dining areas, and a choice of bars. It's a family-friendly boat, with both triple and interconnecting cabins. It carries a glass-bottomed boat and sea kayaks, and the crew includes four naturalist guides.



### Samba

This compact 24-metre Tourist Superior Class motor sailer accommodates 14 passengers in seven air-conditioned cabins – six with upper and lower berths and a small porthole, plus one double-bedded cabin with panoramic window. Facilities include a saloon, outside dining area and sun deck; there is one naturalist guide. This is our recommendation for a good value trip. With teak decks and lots of polished brass, this boat is oozing with character.



### Isabela II

This medium-sized Deluxe Class 53-metre motor yacht carries 40 passengers in 21 cabins located over two decks. The vessel is air-conditioned throughout, and facilities include a lounge, bar, dining room, shop, reading room and library, jacuzzi and sun deck. The crew of 24 includes three naturalist guides and a doctor; there are three zodiacs for ship-to-shore transport, a glass-bottomed boat, and sea kayaks.



### Beluga

A small but surprisingly spacious and comfortable, First Class Superior, 36-metre motor yacht that carries 16 passengers in eight double or twin cabins (two with bunks). The vessel is air-conditioned throughout, and facilities include a lounge, bar, dining area and plenty of deck space. The crew of ten includes a naturalist guide.



### Sagitta

This graceful and spacious First Class, 36-metre, three-masted steel-hulled motor sailer has a crew of nine, including a naturalist guide. Although equipped with ten air-conditioned cabins on two decks – each with a lower double and upper single berth and a single porthole – she carries only 16 passengers. Facilities include a library, comfortable conference room, dining room and deck salons, plus five separate public areas.



### Cachalote

This Tourist Class, 21-metre, schooner-rigged motor sailer carries 16 passengers in seven cabins, each with single upper and lower berths and a single porthole, plus one double bedded cabin with a large window. The public areas include a bar and dining area, plus ample deck space over three decks. There is air-conditioning throughout. The crew of six includes a naturalist guide.



### M/Y Coral II

This luxury motor yacht carries up to 20 passengers in 11 cabins spread over three decks. Facilities include a cosy restaurant with an adjacent bar and lounge area, plus a plunge pool and a sun deck equipped with loungers. Despite the level of comfort and amenities, the vessel still preserves an adventurous feel, and there is plenty of outdoor deck-space.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Finch Bay Eco Hotel, Santa Cruz Island

At the end of your voyage you may wish to enjoy one of the small hotels on Santa Cruz to soak up some local culture. We highly recommend the Finch Bay Eco Hotel – please ask if you would like us to tailor this into your itinerary.

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# Brazil

Famous for its heady mix of football and samba and Rio's extravagant carnival, the largest country in South America is dominated by the vast basin of the Amazon and its rainforest. More than one hundred national parks and protected areas contain many different habitats – from coastal forest, savannah and mountains to the world's largest wetland, the Pantanal, along with the greatest biodiversity of any country on Earth.

New species are discovered regularly and, in addition to a staggering array of birds, fish, amphibians, insects and reptiles, Brazil's large mammals include jaguar, puma, giant anteater, coati, giant otter, maned wolf, tapir and capybara. Seventy or so species of primate include howler, capuchin and squirrel monkeys. Among the other major natural attractions are the imposing Iguazu Falls and the dazzling white beaches along the Atlantic coast.

## Key species

- ▶ White-fronted capuchin monkey
- ▶ Golden lion tamarin
- ▶ Bald uakari monkey
- ▶ Black howler monkey
- ▶ Crab-eating fox
- ▶ Maned wolf
- ▶ Jaguar
- ▶ Amazonian manatee
- ▶ Brazilian tapir
- ▶ Capybara

## Some geography

At around 80% the size of Europe, the scale of Latin America's largest country is staggering, so almost any internal travel involves huge distances. Just under half of the Amazon River's 6,500 kilometre length lies within Brazil, and its vast basin occupies one third of the surface area. The Amazonian capital, Manaus, is 1,600 kilometres from its mouth, and 2,800 kilometres from Rio! Iguazu Falls, on the southern border, and the Pantanal are respectively 1,200 and 1,600 kilometres from Rio!



## Getting around

Due to Brazil's size, most internal travel involves flying with a domestic airline, and a multi-sector airpass may help to keep costs down. Many flights to smaller cities are 'milk-runs' with multiple stops en-route to their final

destination – which can prove slow and frustrating. Otherwise the minibus or, in jungle or wetland regions, motor boat or canoe is the most common means of transport. In the Pantanal, however, you may use anything from a tractor and trailer to a horse.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jan-Mar: Pantanal floods and mammals seek high ground; riot of colour as flowers bloom
- ▶ Jan-Aug: Amazon high water creates igapó i.e. strange and lovely flooded forest
- ▶ Apr-Jun: Pantanal waters recede, migrants return, reptiles gather and caiman give birth
- ▶ Jul-Sep: Pantanal dry season; birds and reptiles concentrated in and around remaining pools
- ▶ Jun-Oct: Amazon water level drops; beaches exposed
- ▶ Oct-Dec: Pantanal – Rains return, waters rise and migrant birds prepare to depart; a good time to see predators

## The Pantanal

No lover of nature should miss the world's largest and most spectacular wetland. This ecological paradise has a huge concentration of fauna: 124 mammals, including the world's largest jaguars, 177 reptiles, over



1,100 species of butterfly, a myriad of brightly-coloured flowers, and innumerable shoals of fish. This is even more impressive as 95% of the land is privately owned and used primarily for cattle ranching and agriculture. In the wet season, when the Pantanal floods, the water level can rise by up to three metres. There are significant differences between the north and south sides, so we recommend visiting both.

Large mammals include black-capped capuchin, black howler monkey and tapir, while the most famous reptile

is the yellow anaconda. Caiman are abundant – the Pantanal is thought to have the world's largest crocodilian population. There are an estimated half a million capybara, and the Pantanal is one of the best places to see jaguar, giant river otter, coatimundi, crab-eating fox, greater and lesser anteater, giant armadillo, the endangered maned wolf, and marsh deer. The convergence of three migration paths ensures a diverse avian community with 656 species from 66 families including ospreys from Arctic latitudes, woodstorks from the southern pampas, and flycatchers from the Andes all collecting here.

### North Pantanal

Access to the northern Pantanal is via the town of Cuiabá, from where the 'unmade' Transpantaneira highway leads south through the interior to where the largest concentration of wildlife and huge flocks of birds are found. Many lodges are still functioning cattle ranches which offer day and night trips by boat, vehicle, on foot and on horseback, accompanied by local naturalist guides to see some of Brazil's rarest wildlife, such as jaguar and giant otter. You may also see caiman, anaconda, tuiú storks, owls, nightjars, armadillos, foxes and perhaps even maned wolf.

boat and vehicle, on foot and possibly horseback. Conservation projects focus on jaguar and the hyacinth macaw, and although it's impossible to guarantee a jaguar sighting, the chances of seeing one are highest in the dry season! Bonito, on the southern fringe, is a mecca for ecotourism, you can visit grottos with blue lakes, walk trails surrounded by monkeys, and snorkel in rivers with clear waters.

### Chapada dos Guimarães National Park

Surrounded by rainforest, the little-visited savannas (cerrado) of this intriguing tableland lie 62 kilometres north of Cuiabá, at the geographical heart of South America, red sandstone cliffs (chapada) along the edge of the plateau give the landscape its characteristic appearance with canyons, caves and waterfalls. The area

## JUST JAGUARS

TAILOR-MADE 

This innovative itinerary uses a comfortable, modern, air-conditioned riverboat with twin-berth cabins that was originally designed for sports fishing, to explore the maze of channels in Talama Reserve, part of Brazil's famed Pantanal wetland, to seek out jaguars. By sleeping on the river you minimise travelling time and maximise the possibility of seeing these reclusive creatures in their natural habitat. The trip starts with two nights in a well-appointed ecolodge with first-rate wildlife guides at the northern end of the Pantanal to see dry land fauna and the region's phenomenal birdlife.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK, via São Paulo **Day 2** Arrive Cuiabá and transfer to North Pantanal, 2-nights Pousada Araras Ecolodge. Afternoon wildlife activity  
**Day 3** Morning and afternoon wildlife activity **Day 4** Drive to Cáceres and board riverboat, 4-nights on board boat. Afternoon boat trip to search for jaguar **Days 5** Full day river safaris through Talama Reserve in search of jaguar **Day 8** Drive to Cuiabá and depart for UK **Day 9** Arrive London

NOTE: This itinerary can be customised to add extensions down the Transpantaneira access road into the Pantanal, to the tablelands of Chapada dos Guimarães National Park north of Cuiabá, into the Amazon rainforest at Cristalino State Park.

**Departures** Fixed weekly departures, June to November

### South Pantanal

The gateway to the southern Pantanal is Campo Grande, the capital of Mato Grosso do Sul State, from where you head to a lodge to see wildlife by

## BRAZIL'S NATURAL HIGHLIGHTS

TAILOR-MADE 

This comprehensive Brazilian wildlife experience visits three contrasting ecosystems: Amazon rainforest, upland savannah in the Chapada dos Guimarães, and Pantanal wetland to ensure a wide diversity of species. By staying in comfortable, well-priced lodges, and avoiding long internal flights, it presents an affordable way to see Brazil's natural highlights.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Fly to São Paulo (or Rio de Janeiro) and on to Cuiabá, 1-night  
**Day 2** Drive to São José do Rio Claro, 2-nights, Jardim da Amazônia Lodge. Bird watching trail walks in Amazon rainforest Guided boat trips **Day 4** Chapada dos Guimarães, 2-nights, Park EcoLodge. Hiking on the savannah tablelands **Day 6** Northern Pantanal, 3-nights, Araras EcoLodge. Wildlife safaris in the Pantanal by vehicle, boat and on foot  
**Day 9** Depart Cuiabá via São Paulo (or Rio de Janeiro) **Day 10** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, throughout the year



is of enormous ecological importance, and its rich vegetation attracts many hummingbirds. Birders will enjoy searching the scrub for white-eared puffbird, rufous-sided pygmy-tyrant and white-banded and white-rumped tanagers, or shady gallery forest for saffron-billed and pectoral sparrows, fiery-capped manakin and white-backed fire-eye. Of course it is good for mammals too including both jaguar and the elusive maned wolf.

### **Cristalino Private Reserve, Alta Floresta**

This private rainforest reserve on the Cristalino River occupies a region recognized as very important in terms of Amazon biodiversity. Covering an area twice as large as Manhattan, adjacent to the 185,000 hectare Cristalino State Park, it is part of a corridor of protected area that stretches across the Southern Amazon. The high number of species, even by Amazon standards, makes it a great place to see birds, mammals, butterflies and orchids – with large numbers of endemics. It is easily reached from the Northern Pantanal, thereby avoiding the time and cost of a long flight to Manaus, and can be combined with other habitats.

### **The Amazon**

The basin of the world's largest river contains its oldest tropical forest and most diverse ecosystem, with at least 40,000 plant species. The biodiversity is astounding: a single bush may contain more species of ant than the entire British Isles, while one hectare of forest may have more than 480 species of tree. Mammals include the world's largest rodent, the capybara, plus tapir, jaguar, monkeys, deer and otter. The 1,300 or so bird species include

many migrants, while macaws gather in thousand-strong flocks. The largest of its 380 reptiles is the anaconda, while the best known of the 3,000 fish species is the piranha. The lush foliage of the jungle, full of raucous calls and bright colours, hints at greater complexity than we can ever imagine.

There are different ways to experience the Amazon. Around Manaus, 1320 kilometres from the river's mouth, jungle lodges of various levels of comfort offer two, three or four day programmes. These include outings on foot, by boat and by canoe to explore the rainforest with local naturalist and native guides. Generally speaking, the more remote the lodge and the longer you stay, the more likely you are to see wildlife.

However near Manaus, the Amazon is several kilometres wide, and much of the forest is secondary growth, so it is only by getting into narrow creeks and channels that you have a realistic chance of seeing much wildlife. Even then, unlike in Africa there are few large mammals, and due to vegetation, the height of the canopy and low light levels, visibility can be poor and sightings may be fleeting. Nevertheless you'll learn a lot about rainforest ecosystems, and the smaller animals, insects, reptiles, birds and plants are intriguing.

By taking a voyage on an Amazon riverboat, particularly on the Rio Negro, you get even deeper into the rainforest, and thus have greater opportunity to see and understand it, accompanied by a naturalist guide. Why not consider our Voyage to the Heart of the Amazon?

The Amazon basin covers a huge area, so you can avoid the expense and time (it's a long way!) of flying

to Manaus by visiting the southern fringe. The Alta Floresta area and Cristalino Lodge, can combine with the Pantanal enabling you to see two

different and contrasting ecosystems in relative proximity, or even more if you also include the tablelands of the Serra dos Guimaraes.

## **VOYAGE TO THE HEART OF THE AMAZON**

**TAILOR-MADE** ✚

This one-week voyage explores the Amazon's most untouched rainforest, sailing far up the Rio Negro to explore a rarely visited area whose flora and fauna is largely undisturbed. With a naturalist guide you'll visit different habitats by boat and on foot: igapó forest, the strange and lovely seasonally flooded forest where orchids and bromeliads cling to overhanging trees that are home to fishing birds and iguanas; the terre firme, forest whose tall trees with buttressed roots are most people's idea of Amazon rainforest; and the fantastically rich varzea forest, with colourful birds, magnificent trees draped with lianas and carpeted with orchids, and monkeys chattering in the branches.

The Tucano is a traditional Amazon riverboat converted to have nine comfortable cabins with private bathroom and windows, air-conditioned throughout. Certain departures are scheduled for families with children.

### **Suggested Itinerary**

**Day 1** Fly to Rio de Janeiro, 2-nights **Day 2** Rio sightseeing **Day 3** Fly to Manaus, 1-night **Day 4** Board the Tucano, 7-nights. Sail up the Rio Negro through the Anavilhanas Archipelago as far as the Rio Jauaperi, then return downstream to explore Lago Janauari Ecological Park and see the Meeting of the Waters **Day 11** Disembark in Manaus; fly to Rio de Janeiro and depart **Day 12** Arrive UK

**NOTE:** If you don't have a lot of time, but still wish to experience the essence of the Amazon, a shorter four-night river trip aboard the Tucano operates from Manaus on alternate Mondays. Although these do not penetrate the Rio Negro as far as the Rio Jauaperi, you'll still see and learn a lot.

**Departures** Tuesdays twice monthly, throughout the year

## **BRAZIL EXTENSIONS**

If you'd like a relaxing end to your holiday, why not extend your stay with a few days of pure hedonism on an idyllic Brazilian beach either near Salvador, or closer to Rio in Paratí or in Búzios? We can recommend a variety of different hotels or pousadas (inns) to suit all tastes.



### Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve, Tefé

These 57,000 square kilometres of mainly flooded Amazon forest are a Ramsar site designated as a wetland of global importance, and one of the ecological corridors designed to protect Brazil's tropical forests. The native Riberinho people assist with collecting data, in return for being taught how to hunt and fish sustainably. Over 400 bird species include harpy eagle, toucan and hoatzin, 15 species of parrot and many aquatics. White uakari and black squirrel monkey are endemic to the region, which is also home to howler monkey, sloth, coati and collared anteater. Land mammals are uncommon due to the wet season floods but you may see Amazon river dolphin here. A regional airline flies twice weekly from Manaus to Tefé, from where it is a one and a half hour trip by fast launch – but you are guaranteed total immersion in deep Amazon.

### Iguaçu Falls

Brazil's southern border with Argentina lies only two hours flying time from Rio. Here, even the most seasoned traveller cannot fail to be impressed by the 275 separate cataracts that tumble over a 90-metre-high, horseshoe-shaped basalt cliff that is almost five kilometres wide. The falls are higher than Niagara and more impressive than Victoria Falls, and the lush tropical forest of the surrounding national park is home to more than 2,000 species of plants, 400 species of birds and an array of mammals. We highly recommend visiting both the Brazilian and Argentinian sides.

### Rio de Janeiro

The seductively friendly former capital is legendary for its stunning bayside location amidst forested mountains and breathtaking beaches, the most famous of which are Copacabana and

Ipanema. The iconic peaks of Sugar Loaf and Corcovado, with the statue of Christ the Redeemer, are famous worldwide, but the city's lesser-known natural attractions include its botanical gardens and Tijuca National Park, the last remnant of the Atlantic rainforest that once surrounded the city. Here, you can walk forest trails past creeks, caves and waterfalls and see many different species including iguanas and monkeys.

### Salvador do Bahía

This attractive colonial city on the coast of Bahia State was, for a while, Brazil's capital. It reeks of history, and the richness of its architecture reflects its former status, while the faces of its people speak of slavery and its links with Africa. Standing between green hills and broad sandy beaches on the bay of Todos os Santos, it makes a perfect stop for an injection of culture

and relaxation at the end of your trip. Between May and December the nearby beaches are important breeding areas for green, olive ridley, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles.



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Cristalino Jungle Lodge, Alta Floresta

Voted one of the best hotels in Brazil by National Geographic Traveler, this comfortable, environmental award-winning lodge is located in a private forest reserve in the southern Amazon beside Cristalino State Park, with many species found only in this region. It is a good option for birdwatchers due to its 50-metre high observation tower but jaguar sightings are good from this lodge too. Accessible only by boat, the lodge is designed in accordance with sustainable principles.



### Pousada Araras EcoLodge, North Pantanal

This rustic, but sophisticated lodge, open year round, is surrounded by more than 3,000 hectares of private land with a tremendous variety of wildlife. You can see various birds, including hyacinth macaw, from its forest boardwalk, while a nearby tower offers views of flooded wetlands and grassland, perfect for birders. Tapir, marmoset, agouti, opossum and howler monkey are just some of the many animals seen regularly.



### Pousada Xaraés, South Pantanal

This comfortable lodge on a commercial ranch has rooms with private bathroom, air-conditioning and rustic décor in three buildings with a verandah, ceiling fan and hammocks just metres from the Abobral River. Facilities include a sitting and dining room, bar, swimming pool, and games areas. Morning birdsong mixes with the roar of howler monkeys in the trees along the riverbank. Activities include canoe and boat trips, walks, drives and horse riding.



### Uakari Lodge, Mamirauá Reserve, Amazon

Unique accommodation in a remote setting on seven floating wooden structures connected by floating walkway. Ten large and comfortable rooms have en-suite facilities and a private terrace with rainforest view. Designed to minimise its environmental impact, the lodge is staffed by the local community, plus a resident naturalist guide. 3, 4 and 7-night packages offer activities that include river trips, walking rainforest trails and using a hide.

# Chile



On any map of South America the long narrow outline of Chile invariably catches the eye – a geographical anomaly nearly 5,000 kilometres long, but only 150 kilometres wide! It lies on the west coast of South America, trapped between the mountains of the high Andes on one side and the cold waters of the Pacific on the other. The far north holds the world's driest desert, the Atacama, whereas the deep south has the vast cold steppe of Patagonia, topped by glaciers and fringed with deep fjords, and in between are vast areas of temperate forest.

The varied topography and climatic range create an astonishing mosaic of contrasting habitats and ecosystems, populated by a correspondingly diverse range of plants, animals and birds. Of the 30 or so national parks along the length of the country, many are places of immense natural beauty, but often in comparatively remote and inaccessible locations, and with little infrastructure for visitors, but those you can explore are extremely rewarding.

## Key species

- ▶ Chiloe colocolo opossum
- ▶ American beaver
- ▶ Patagonian chinchilla-mouse
- ▶ Magellanic tuco-tuco
- ▶ Austral spotted cat (kolkod)
- ▶ Patagonian fox
- ▶ Patagonian hog-nosed skunk
- ▶ Marine otter
- ▶ Guanaco
- ▶ Vicuña

## Some geography

With the obvious exception of Easter Island, which lies 3,790 kilometres off the mainland, and the Juan Fernandez islands, a mere 650 kilometres from Valparaiso, the rest of Chile's sites of natural and wildlife interest are ranged along its length. This stretches from the Atacama Desert and Lauca National Park in the far north, down to Chilean Patagonia, with the magical peaks of Torres del Paine, the island of Tierra del Fuego and the Magellan Strait, in the deep south.



## Getting around

Chile's geography means the most effective way to travel its 4,300 kilometre length is by air, from the central hub of Santiago to its widely separated regions. In Patagonia and elsewhere most travel is then by minibus or 4-wheel drive vehicle – depending on the terrain and roads. Many places offer excellent walking, and boats are a useful means of travel in the Chilean Lake District and in the 1,600 kilometres of archipelagic Chile down to Cape Horn.

## Diary notes

- ▶ Jan-Feb: high summer and school holidays!
- ▶ Feb-Apr: blue whales off Chiloé Island
- ▶ Late Feb-March: the wind drops at Torres del Paine, and throughout Patagonia
- ▶ May to Oct: best season to visit northern Chile
- ▶ Oct-Mar: southern hemisphere summer; long daylight hours in Patagonia



### Lauca National Park

Along with the adjacent National Vicuña Reserve and Surire salt flat (a Ramsar site), this spectacular northern area of puna (dry, high altitude grassland plain) and giant volcanoes ranges from 3,200 to 6,348 metres in altitude. Temperatures oscillate between -10°C at night and 20°C by day, and rainfall is rare. This harsh environment supports many plants, but few mammals except guanaco, alpaca and vicuña, Andean deer, vizcacha, red fox and armadillo. Puma are present but rarely seen. Crested duck, puna teal, giant coot, silvery grebe, black-crowned night heron, puna ibis, avocet, puna tinamou, Andean goose and the three species of flamingo found in Chile live around the lakes, making this one of the best parks for birding.

### Atacama Desert & the Altiplano

Chile's northern desert comprises virtually lifeless coastal plains dissected by dramatic, deep gorges, while further east this barren landscape changes as it rises through the foothills of the Andes. The altiplano is an impressive expanse of alluvial salt flat edged by snow-capped volcanic peaks, and home to a surprising variety of wildlife. From San Pedro you can visit Laguna Verde in Bolivia. Ringed by volcanoes, the emerald lake is home to flocks of Andean flamingo, ostrich-like rhea, guanaco and vicuña. Andean lapwing, Andean goose, mountain caracara, white-winged cinclodes and red-backed sierra finch can all be seen. Back in Chile an early morning visit to El Tatio geysers is unmissable.



### LAND OF EXTREMES

**TAILOR-MADE** ✦

Explore the unique panoramas and wildlife of Chile on this itinerary which takes in the contrasting lunar landscapes of the Atacama Desert in the north, and the incomparable splendour of the granite peaks of Torres del Paine in Chilean Patagonia in the south. The addition of Lauca National Park (not a usual stop on a Chilean itinerary, but more than worthwhile for any lover of nature and wildlife) to this already rich mix adds the final touch.

#### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Santiago, 2-nights. City tour and explore the capital **Day 4** Fly to Calama and drive to San Pedro de Atacama, 3-nights. Optional excursions to explore the desert, salt flats and geysers by vehicle, foot, bike or horseback **Day 7** Drive to Calama and fly to Arica via Santiago, 1-night **Day 8** Drive to Putre, 1-night. Full day visit to Lauca National Park **Day 9** Drive to Arica and fly to Santiago, 1-night **Day 10** Fly to Punta Arenas and transfer to Torres del Paine National Park, 3-nights, EcoCamp suite domes. Explore Torres del Paine's glaciers and lakes on foot **Day 13** Transfer to Punta Arenas and fly to Santiago, 1-night **Day 14** Depart **Day 15** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, October to April





### The Lake District

Four adjacent national parks, Vicente Pérez Rosales and Puyehue in Chile, plus Nahuel Huapi and Lanín in Argentina, protect this southern region. With snowcapped volcanoes, rushing rivers, tumbling waterfalls,

placid lakes and dense forests, it is a place of immense natural beauty. Among the many interesting trees are various species of nothofagus, ancient species such as araucaria (monkey puzzle tree), and the endangered alerce andino. Most of the 30 mammals are

hard to spot, but include puma, ocelot, a small and reclusive deer, and the chilla, which looks like a small fox.

### Crossing the Andes to Bariloche, Argentina

This classic two-day trip from Puerto Montt or Puerto Varas through the exquisite Lake District skirts Lago Llanquihue past the impressive volcanoes of Osorno and Calbuco to Vicente Perez National Park, where you visit Petrohue Falls. On crossing Lago Todos Los Santos to Peulla, you have the rest of the afternoon to explore. Next day you continue by bus to Argentina, cross the Andes via a low pass, board a boat at Puerto Frias to cross Lago Frias to Puerto Alegre, continue by bus to Puerto Blest for the final leg across Lago Nahuel Huapi to Puerto Pañuelo for the final short drive into San Carlos de Bariloche.

### Chiloé Island

Just south of Puerto Montt, this fertile island lives from farming, fishing and forestry. Arriving here is like stepping back in time – it is interesting from a cultural point of view, and full of lovely rural scenes – although rain and mist are regular events. The west side is a dense swathe of temperate rainforest, where you can find black-necked swan, green-backed firecrown, Patagonian tyrant, ringed kingfisher, silvery grebe and Chilean flamingo. Important colonies of Magellanic and Humboldt penguins live at Puñihuil, and off Quellon, at the southern tip. Blue whales can be sighted in the Gulf of Corcovado between late-January and April.

### Magellanes & Tierra del Fuego

The Chilean portion of Patagonia, which extends across South America's southern tip, is called Magellanes after its Portuguese explorer. On the Pacific side of the barrier created by the Southern Andes, glacial action has excavated a complex coastline of fjords, channels and islands. Between the mainland and Tierra del Fuego, the Strait of Magellan has Chile's first and only marine reserve, Francisco Coloane Marine Park, which is a summer home to humpback plus and occasional sei whales and orca, plus Chilean and Peale's dolphin, South American sealion and southern fur seal. Across the strait, Tierra del Fuego has breeding colonies of penguin, sealion, and numerous albatross.

### Torres del Paine National Park

Chilean Patagonia's premier attraction is a wonderfully scenic mix of craggy peaks, glacial lakes, icefields and green valleys – a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The omnipresent Paine Massif, a magnificent set of rocky spires formed from granite and sedimentary rock, dominates the landscape. Wildlife includes Andean deer, guanaco, puma, skunk and hare, plus a host of birds such as Andean condor, lesser rhea, Chilean flamingo, black-faced ibis, black-necked swan and kelp goose. It is a photographer's paradise: shooting the Cuernos del Paine at first light is a wonderful experience – if the light is right, the base of mountain turns orange while the summits are crowned by dramatic and peculiar lenticular clouds.

## PATAGONIA WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

TAILOR-MADE 

This adventure-packed trip combines marine wildlife with mountains and walking. Travelling by rigid inflatable boat into the Strait of Magellan, you witness the antics of sealions, watch dolphins swimming alongside, visit a Magellanic penguin nesting site, and hopefully see humpback whales breaching in Chile's first ever marine park. To cap this experience, you then spend a few days in the peerless landscapes of Torres del Paine National Park, with a full programme of walks and excursions to get the best out of this magical area.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Santiago, 2-nights. City tour **Day 4** Fly to Punta Arenas, 1-night **Day 5** Drive to Voces Bay and cross by boat to San Isidro, 1-night, Faro San Isidro Inn **Day 6** Boat to Carlos III Island in Francisco Coloane Marine Park, 2-nights, Whalesound Eco-camp. Whale watching boat trips **Day 8** Boat back to mainland and transfer to Punta Arenas, 1-night **Day 9** Drive to Torres del Paine National Park, 4-nights, Ecocamp suite domes. Three days of guided walks and excursions to see wildlife in majestic surroundings **Day 13** Drive to Punta Arenas, 1-night **Day 14** Fly to Santiago and depart **Day 15** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, October to April

### Falkland Islands Extension

The Falkland Islands are famous for their amazing birdlife and marine mammals, which – due to the absence of predators – can usually be approached with ease. These remote, unspoilt and sparsely populated islands are heaven for nature lovers and photographers. LAN Chile fly once a week from Punta Arenas to Port Stanley, the capital, so you can easily add a stay here to your trip to Chile. Please ask for details.



### Easter Island

Rapa Nui, as it is known locally, is a small triangle of volcanic rock in mid-Pacific, around 3,800 kilometres off the Chilean coast, some five hours flying time from Santiago. This island and its enigmatic stone faces have always been the subject of intense curiosity and speculation. Where did the islanders come from? How did they transport the massive moai from their quarry to their current locations? A stay here will include a sunset boat trip as many thousands of seabirds return to their nests on high cliffs, and a visit to some of the 600 moais that cover the island. It is easy to add a visit to Easter Island to any trip to mainland Chile.

### Juan Fernández Archipelago

This archipelago of three principal islands is situated 680-800 kilometres off mainland Chile. The main island of the group, Robinson Crusoe, is reached by a two hour flight from Santiago and can be combined easily with any trip to mainland Chile. The experiences of Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk, who was marooned here between 1704 and 1709, made it famous and inspired Daniel Defoe's eponymous novel. The volcanic island is covered in sub-tropical forest and is of particular interest to botanists as it has around 120 endemic plants, while birders will enjoy trying to spot its three endemic bird species.



### Santiago

Chile's capital is located in the central valley, flanked by the Andes to the east, and the coastal range to the west. It is a lively and dynamic place, with lots to see in the historic downtown area – notably the Presidential Palace of La Moneda, the Plaza de Armas (main square) and the imposing Metropolitan Cathedral. If time permits, we recommend an afternoon trip into the Andes as an introduction to breathtaking mountain scenery and beautiful wild flowers. You may even see your first Andean condor.

### Valparaiso

The main port and one of the oldest cities in Chile, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is only 120 kilometres drive from the capital, sprawled across the hillsides and cliffs around a wide bay. It is a delightful setting. A variety of seabirds including the stunning Inca tern and Humboldt penguins can be seen along the coastline, while inland the renowned wineries of the Casablanca and Colchagua valleys, the centre of Chile's wine production, are a retreat for connoisseurs of good food and fine wines!

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Alto Atacama Hotel , Atacama

To get the most out of the unique desert landscape, you need to stay right in the midst of it. Located in the fertile Catarpe valley, in the shadow of the pre-Columbian ruins of Quito beside the San Pedro river, this luxurious hotel is only three kilometres from town, but seems a whole world away. Silence and rugged mountains surrounds the 32 spacious, comfortable rooms, each of which has a private terrace so you can enjoy the views. We recommend a three or four-night stay to give time to enjoy the various optional activities and explore the area.



### EcoCamp Patagonia, Torres del Paine National Park

Designed to withstand the elements, provide warmth and comfort, and minimise environmental impact, this innovative complex of geodesic dome tents on wooden platforms is a perfect compromise between a hotel and camping. Spacious suites have double or twin beds with duvets, a wood-burning stove and private bathroom; smaller standard domes share bathroom facilities, but come at a lower price. Wooden walkways connect to three bright and airy core domes with the restaurant, bar and communal area. There is a programme of nature and wildlife walks.



### The Singular Patagonia, Puerto Bories

In the late 1800s European pioneers established a thriving industry based on sheep farming, which led to the construction of a cold storage plant in 1915, where millions of sheep were processed and exported as both meat and wool. Saved from ruin, this historic complex has been meticulously transformed into a stunning, award-winning, luxury hotel that blends old and new in a triumph of design, and has been declared a national historic landmark. All 54 spacious rooms and 3 suites have huge picture windows overlooking Last Hope Sound.



### Whalesound Eco-camp, Carlos III Island, Strait of Magellan

Within the marine reserve on Carlos III Island, this tiny eco-camp accommodates only ten people in comfortable twin-bedded double dome tents. The camp is built on wooden decking to avoid erosion and is dedicated to whale research in the Strait of Magellan. The intimacy is enhanced by the pristine scenery of mountain, glacier and forest. It was founded by scientists who discovered that humpback whales return here every summer, so there is plenty of opportunity to watch whales and learn about them from researchers.

# Argentina



Few countries in South America offer such a range of contrasts and such variety of wildlife as Argentina: the wide grasslands of the Pampas, the soaring snowcaps and glacial lakes of the Andes, the bleak steppe of Patagonia, the semi-tropical splendour of the rainforest around Iguazu Falls, the steamy marshlands of Iberá, and the cool forests of Tierra del Fuego.

These varied habitats support an astonishing range of wildlife that includes a number of must-sees: magellanic penguin, southern right whale, orca, elephant seal, Andean condor, guanaco – the daintiest of all the camelids! – and more besides. If you yearn for striking scenery, dramatic vistas and interesting wildlife, you could do a lot worse than take a trip to Argentina.

## Key species

- ▶ Southern three-banded armadillo
- ▶ Mountain viscacha
- ▶ Patagonian mara
- ▶ Argentine tuco-tuco
- ▶ Coypu (nutria)
- ▶ South American fur seal
- ▶ Southern elephant seal
- ▶ Guanaco
- ▶ Vicuña
- ▶ Southern right whale

## Some geography

Patagonia, which occupies the southern third of the country is the premier wildlife area, but its places of interest are widely separated. The Valdés Peninsula lies roughly a thousand kilometres south of Buenos Aires, while Calafate (the base for exploring Glaciares National Park) – is a further 900 kilometres south, and Ushuaia (at southern tip of Tierra del Fuego) is the same distance yet again.



## Diary notes

- ▶ Oct-Apr: Orcas at Valdés Peninsula
- ▶ Sep-Nov: Southern right whales at Valdés
- ▶ Early Dec: Penguins hatch at Punta Tombo
- ▶ May-Aug: southern hemisphere winter!

Along the western border with Chile, the Andes run from Tierra del Fuego all the way north to Bolivia. Northern Argentina contains the southern extent of the Bolivian altiplano, the forested plains of the Chaco, and sub-tropical rainforest along the border with Brazil and Paraguay – including Iguazu Falls and the Iberá Marshes. Around the capital is the agricultural heartland – the flat grassy expanse of the Pampas.





### Getting around

Argentina is a huge country, and its towns and cities are widely spread, so most internal travel involves using domestic airlines to get between the main points of interest. Once there, most transport is by minibus. In each separate location few excursions operate on a private basis, so for at least part of the time you may be with a small group. One novel mode of transport is by overnight bus in a surprisingly comfortable sleeper berth.

### Punta Tombo

This headland, around one hundred kilometres south of Trelew, gateway to the Peninsula Valdés, is the site of the world's largest breeding colony of Magellanic penguin. Over half a million congregate here to breed between September and mid-March. The eggs hatch at the beginning of December, at which point the colony is full of noisy, hungry chicks. The reserve is dedicated to the protection of the Patagonian plateau, home to the Patagonian hare. Kelp gull, flightless steamer duck, black oystercatcher, royal and black-necked cormorant, Antarctic pigeon and giant petrel are all found along the coast.



### Valdes Peninsula

Argentina's foremost wildlife site is a flat peninsula at the northern end of Patagonia, whose coast is lined with sandy beaches and rocky shelves. The beaches are home to prodigious numbers of marine wildlife, including the only colony of elephant seal on the South American mainland at Calheta Valdés, while at Punta Norte, the peninsula's northern tip, orcas are seen. Seal, sealion, and Commerson's dolphin can all be seen offshore. The steppe-like interior is inhabited by guanaco, Patagonian fox, hairy armadillo and lesser rhea. Birdwatching is good all year round.

## WILD PATAGONIA

TAILOR-MADE 

Marvel at the scenic and wildlife highlights of the immense treeless plateau of Patagonia – in both Argentina and Chile! From the lakes and glaciers around Calafate to the stunning peaks and burgeoning wildlife of Torres del Paine, en route to Ushuaia at the southern end of Tierra del Fuego. The best, however, is left till the end – with the astonishing marine life of the Peninsula Valdés.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Buenos Aires, 2-nights. City tour and optional tango show with dinner **Day 4** Fly to Calafate, 2 nights. Excursion to Perito Moreno Glacier **Day 6** Transfer to Torres del Paine National Park (Chile), 2 nights. Optional excursions in Torres del Paine National Park **Day 8** Afternoon drive to Puerto Natales, 1-night **Day 9** Drive to Estancia Rio Verde, 1 night lodge **Day 10** Bird watching and drive via Otway penguin colony to Punta Arenas, 1 night **Day 11** Bus across Magellan Strait to Ushuaia (Argentina), 2-night. Walks in Lapataia National Park and on Redonda Island **Day 13** Fly to Trelew and continue to Puerto Madryn, 3-nights. Explore Valdes Peninsula **Day 16** Fly to Buenos Aires, 1-night **Day 17** Depart **Day 18** Arrive UK

**Extension to Navarino Island (Chile):** **Day 13** Boat across Beagle Channel to Puerto Williams on Navarino Island (Chile); continue to Lakutaia, 3-nights Lakutaia Lodge. Wildlife activities **Day 16** Boat back to Ushuaia, fly to Trelew and continue to Puerto Madryn; 3-nights. Explore Valdes Peninsula **Day 19** Fly to Buenos Aires, 1-night **Day 20** Depart **Day 21** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, October to April

SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR DATES AND PRICES





## Ushuaia & Tierra Del Fuego National Park

Ushuaia, capital of the Argentine province of Tierra del Fuego, Antarctica and the South Atlantic Islands, lies over 3,000 kilometres south of Buenos Aires in a dramatic position overlooking the Beagle Channel. The world's most southerly city is surrounded by the wilderness, lakes and bays of Tierra del Fuego, which provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as horse-riding, trekking, fishing, canoeing and, of course, watching wildlife. Along the coast you may see seals, albatrosses, ducks and petrels. Also present is

the rare chungungo otter, as well as Magellanic woodpecker, black-chested buzzard and austral parakeet.

## El Calafate & Los Glaciares National Park

This small resort on the shore of Lago Argentino is the base for exploring the UNESCO Natural Heritage Site of Los Glaciares National Park. Much of the area is covered by giant icefields that feed the lake and that of nearby Lago Viedma. The five kilometre wide mouth of Perito Moreno Glacier towers 70 metres above the water, creating thunderous noises as massive blocks of

ice break off and crash into the water. You can explore at your own pace, or take boat rides on the lakes. Birdlife includes black-necked swan and black-chested buzzard, and Andean condor. Puma are occasionally seen.

and walkways affords fine views – we recommend visiting the national park on the Brazilian side too. There's a remarkable range of vegetation with orchids growing next to pines, bamboo next to palms, and mosses beside lianas and colourful begonias.

## Iguazu Falls

This magnificent array of 275 separate waterfalls stretches for over three kilometres along the border with neighbouring Brazil. The abundant flora and fauna of the surrounding tropical forest includes some 500 species of butterfly, 400 birds and 2,000 plants. Iguazu ranks alongside Niagara and Victoria Falls as one of the world's great waterfalls. A network of paths

## Yacutinga Rainforest

Some two hours drive from Iguazu Falls is Yacutinga Rainforest – a private reserve whose multi-layered ecosystem is home to countless species of birds, mammals and plants. You'll explore on walking and boat safaris with local naturalist guides. Colourful forest birds, such as toucans, guans, trogons and woodpeckers,

## ARGENTINA'S WILD NORTH

TAILOR-MADE 

A snapshot view of the long-ignored northeast of Argentina with the best of its rich wildlife. This novel itinerary combines the little known but beautiful open spaces of the vast Iberá wetland with the thundering waters of Iguazu Falls – as spectacular a natural attraction as you could wish for – and the dense rainforest of Yacutinga. And of course you can combine any of these already diverse elements with a trip to Patagonia, in the far south...

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Buenos Aires: 1-night hotel. **Day 3** City tour and bird watching at Costanera Sur, overnight bus (with sleeper berth) to Mercedes **Day 4** Arrive Mercedes and transfer to Estancia Rincón del Socorro, 3-nights Hostería Rincón del Socorro. Wildlife activities **Day 7** Drive via Jesuit Missions and Posadas to Iguazu, 2-nights. Visit Iguazu Falls (Argentine side) **Day 9** Transfer to Yacutinga, 3-nights Yacutinga Lodge. Wildlife activities **Day 12** Drive to Iguazu and fly to Buenos Aires, 1-night. Optional tango show with dinner **Day 13** Depart **Day 14** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, September to December and March to April

### Iguazu Falls Extension

You can easily add an extension to Iguazu Falls and Yacutinga Rainforest to **any** trip in Argentina. Simply ask one of our knowledgeable consultants.

## PATAGONIA'S MARINE LIFE

TAILOR-MADE 

Over 1,400 kilometres south of Buenos Aires, Patagonia is famed for its austere beauty and profuse wildlife. The windswept shores of the Valdes Peninsula are home to many marine mammals – notably elephant seals and sea lions, plus Magellanic penguins. Between March and April, however, the focus is orcas – Punta Norte is where they spectacularly snatch sea lion pups from the shallows – while in October and November southern right whales cavort in the sheltered Golfo Nuevo. Further south the village of Bahia Bustamante is on an estancia founded to collect seaweed – here too, is remarkable marine life in the National Marine Park of Patagonia Austral.

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK **Day 2** Arrive Buenos Aires, 1-night. Afternoon city tour **Day 3** Fly to Trelew and transfer to Punta Norte, Peninsula Valdés, 3-nights. Explore Peninsula Valdés **Day 6** Transfer to Puerto Madryn, 1-night **Day 7** Transfer to Bahia Bustamante, 3-nights. Explore the area **Day 9** Transfer to Trelew and fly to Buenos Aires, 1-night **Day 10** Depart Buenos Aires **Day 11** Arrive UK

**Departures** Daily, October to November and March to May



Trip endorsed by WDCS. A share of the profit goes directly to support WDCS conservation projects.



flit through the dappled shadows. The reserve also protects several endangered species such as jaguar, tapir and ocelot, although these elusive creatures are not easy to see. Yacutinga makes a fantastic, relaxing end to any wildlife trip in Argentina.

### Iberá Marshland

This immense wetland in Corrientes province in northern Argentina – nicknamed the Argentine Pantanal – covers an area twice the size of Florida’s Everglades. Accessed via the

town of Mercedes, the maze of islands, lagoons, streams and marshland create a perfect habitat for many birds, mammals and reptiles. Black caiman, boa constrictor and capybara are all common, and sightings of armadillo, turtle, monkeys, deer, anaconda, otter, wildcat and maned wolf are possible. Over 400 species of bird range from the greater rhea (the largest), to various herons, stork, eagle, parrot, snipe, woodpecker, kingfisher, hummingbirds, magpie tanagers and thrushes.



## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Estancia Bahía Bustamante, Pueblo Alguero

Despite its isolation – or maybe because of it – this is a special place, a family property that attracts only those interested in its wildlife. Six comfortable seafront cottages are just a few steps away from the shore, so you fall asleep to the soothing sound of ocean; another five cottages are set 200 metres higher with views of the Patagonian steppe. Attentive resident staff will welcome you and cosset you during your stay. Much of the excellent food is produced locally – including organic produce and algae from the estancia itself.



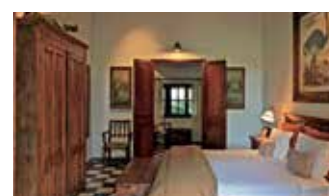
### Eolo Lodge, Lago Argentino

Some 30 minutes drive outside El Calafate en route to Perito Moreno glacier, this deluxe estancia-style lodge is located on a 3,000 hectare estate with fine views over Lago Argentino and the Anita Valley; on a clear day you can see Torres del Paine over the border in Chile. It has 17 modern comfortable and classy rooms, a restaurant, bar, small indoor pool and gym. Activities include wildlife and bird watching, star gazing, walking, mountain biking, and – at additional cost – horse riding, plus excursions to nearby places of interest. A Relais & Chateaux property.



### Yacutinga Rainforest Lodge, Yacutinga Rainforest Reserve

Set in 250,000 hectares of primary sub-tropical rainforest, whose constant warmth and humidity creates the perfect conditions for some 320 bird species, the lodge’s 40 idiosyncratic, comfortable rooms have private facilities and great views. The main building houses a restaurant and bar, while outside there are lush gardens, a pool and a canopy walkway. Built on environmental principles, the lodge employs local people, reintroduces endangered plant species, uses natural resources sustainably, and offers an exciting and stimulating eco-experience.



### Hostería Rincón del Socorro, Esteros del Iberá

This 12,000-hectare former cattle ranch on the edge of the wetlands has been transformed into a private nature reserve. The small eco-lodge consists of the main house with six rooms, a living room, verandah, indoor and outdoor dining areas, and a pool, plus three adjacent bungalows with a living room and small kitchen; all rooms have private bathrooms. Meals are prepared using organic fruit and vegetables and free-range meats, served with good Argentine wines. Wildlife activities include boat trips, nature walks, horse riding and night safaris.

# The Falkland Islands

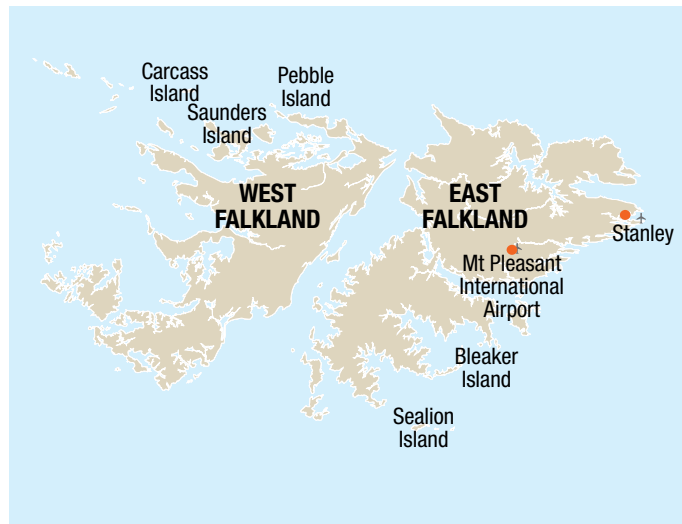


This remote and unspoilt British archipelago in the South Atlantic consists of two main islands, East and West Falkland, plus another 776 smaller islands, most of which are unpopulated. Tall tussock grass lines the sandy beaches, which are home to elephant seal, sealion and fur seal – a delight for nature lovers and photographers.

The islands are also renowned for their birds and marine mammals, and so a veritable paradise for birdwatchers – more than 200 species include seabirds such as black-browed albatross and giant petrel, plus six species of penguin including king, gentoo, rockhopper, Magellanic and macaroni.

## Key species

- ▶ Killer whale (orca)
- ▶ Commerson's dolphin
- ▶ Southern sea lion
- ▶ South American fur seal
- ▶ Southern elephant seal
- ▶ Gentoo penguin
- ▶ Rockhopper penguin
- ▶ Black-browed albatross
- ▶ Southern giant petrel
- ▶ Falkland flightless steamer duck



## Diary notes

- ▶ January: most penguin eggs have hatched by this time
- ▶ March: black-browed albatross chicks fledge on Saunders Island
- ▶ Mid September to late October: elephant seals give birth
- ▶ Early November: fur seals start breeding
- ▶ November and February: best time to see orca off Sealion Island
- ▶ December: sealion breeding starts

## Some geography

The two main islands are separated by the Falkland Sound. Only another 30 or so smaller islands are inhabited, generally by farmers. Wildlife sites and reserves are scattered across the islands.

## Getting around

The government air service (FIGAS) operates a small fleet of aircraft from Stanley to the outlying islands. Outside Stanley most roads are gravel, so a

4-wheel drive vehicle is essential. Walking is inevitably the only way to see some parts of the islands. Boat trips to some wildlife sites operate intermittently, dependent on demand.

## Stanley

The islands' capital is located on East Falkland around a picturesque harbour. 80% of the total population of around 2,500 lives in this small, tidy, historic cathedral town, many of whose wooden buildings have brightly painted

tin roofs. A scattering of red telephone boxes and six pubs give it a distinctly British feel. It's a pleasant place to relax for a few days – exploring the town and visiting nearby attractions. There are several places you can walk to, and local guides offer trips to both wildlife and battlefield sites.

## Carcass Island

Named after the survey vessel on which a young Horatio Nelson served, this island has had only three owners

in a hundred years. As they avoided introducing rats and cats, its wildlife has no predators and are therefore approachable. Known for its colonies of Magellanic and gentoo penguin, it also has striated caracaras, king cormorants, night herons and elephant seals. Take a boat excursion to nearby West Point to see the Devil's Nose, home to 2,000 breeding pairs of black-browed albatross plus 500 pairs of rockhopper penguins, one of the most amazing sights in the Falklands.



### Pebble Island

This 38 kilometre long island is one of the largest in the West Falkland group. The grassy plains, ponds and wetlands on its east side contrast with the moorlands and mountains of the west. Its sandy beaches and rocky cliffs provide shelter to sealions and thousands of penguins. It is the only place in the Falklands where the erect-crested penguin has been seen. In addition to the usual five species. As well as its 42 resident bird species, the island attracts occasional visitors from mainland South America, such as the black-necked swan.



### Sea Lion Island

The most southerly inhabited island, whose spectacular scenery and wildlife feature in many prize-winning photos, is a 40 minute flight from Stanley. It is only eight kilometres long, so easy to explore on your own. Much is covered with tussock grass, creating a perfect habitat for colonies of elephant seal and the inevitable sealions. Orca are sometimes seen offshore, as are leopard seal and the occasional whale. The dazzling white sand beaches, cliffs, freshwater ponds and heathland are home to 47 bird species.



### Bleaker Island

A 30 minute flight from Stanley, off the south-east coast of East Falkland, this isolated, low-lying island with wide sandy bays and sheltered coves is of interest for its large colony of rockhopper penguin, in addition to their Magellanic and gentoo cousins. There is a large group of king cormorants, and striated caracaras are often seen. The many pools are home to large numbers of waterfowl, including white-tufted and silver grebes, and black-necked swans. The island is small and flat, so walking between bird colonies is easy.

### Saunders Island

The second largest island, an hour's flight from Stanley and five kilometres



### Carcass Island Homestay, Carcass Island

Accommodation is in the owner's house which has one double and three twin rooms, all with en-suite bathrooms; meals are taken with the family. Within easy walking distance of the house you will find Magellanic penguins and striated caracaras, elephant seals and a colony of gentoo penguins.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALKLANDS

TAILOR-MADE 

This itinerary gives you a comprehensive overview of the highlights of the Falklands, and takes you to the islands that are open to visitors – we have found over the years that most of our naturalist clients want to visit them all!

### Suggested Itinerary

**Day 1** Depart UK via Santiago **Day 2** Fly to Punta Arenas (Chile), 1-night. **Day 3** Fly to Stanley, 1-night **Day 4** Carcass Island, 2-nights Carcass Settlement. Optional boat trip to West Point **Day 6** Saunders Island, 2-nights Saunders Settlement. Visit The Neck **Day 8** Pebble Island, 2-nights Pebble Island Hotel. Excursion to see sealions, penguins and resident birds **Day 10** Bleaker Island, 2-nights Bleaker Settlement. See rockhopper penguins **Day 12** Sea Lion Island, 3-nights Sea Lion Lodge. See elephant seals **Day 15** Stanley, 2-nights Malvina House Hotel. Day trip to Volunteer Point **Day 17** Fly back to Punta Arenas, 1-night **Day 18** Depart via Santiago **Day 19** Arrive UK

**Departures** Thursdays only, October to March

off West Falkland, is home to a staggering amount of wildlife. Here you can see a colony of 11,000 breeding pairs of black-browed albatross and all five penguin species – including a growing colony of king penguins!

Other species include southern giant petrel, rock shag, king shag and striated caracara. The north of the island consists of two peaks divided by a thin strip of sand known as The Neck, which is one of the best wildlife sites in the Falklands.

## Accommodation ideas

For a full range of accommodation visit [www.wildlifeworldwide.com](http://www.wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Sea Lion Lodge, Sea Lion Island

The only purpose-built tourist lodge in the Falklands archipelago, consists of six twin rooms and one double room with en-suite facilities. The modern accommodation offers a level of comfort and amenity you might not altogether expect in such a remote location.



### Malvina House Hotel, Port Stanley

The premier hotel in Stanley has 36 rooms with en-suite facilities. There is a large bar-lounge area, a spa and sauna, and the original conservatory houses the restaurant, which with a Michelin-starred chef is considered the best in town.



# Expedition Voyages

Expedition voyages are a key part of our programme. There is a trip to suit everyone from the first-timer to the regular cruise traveller.

We know that when you step aboard one of our carefully selected vessels, it is not to soak up the sun and sample the midnight buffet, but to discover the world, reach places inaccessible by any other means, enjoy the company of like-minded travellers and learn about the landscapes, wildlife and cultures of our amazing planet, so these are active trips to engage both body and mind. You'll land on remote beaches and in hidden coves to get close to nature, and explore on foot or by zodiac inflatable.

The vessels we select are just right in terms of size, speed, stability, comfort and (crucially) safety, for exploring remote regions – vessels that are perfect for venturing into the world's wildest areas. They'll move you quickly and efficiently from bay to island to ice-choked channel, and provide a comfortable base at the end of a day's exploring. Whatever your taste, we're confident you will enjoy an excellent blend of experiences and activities, both on and off the water.



## Frequently Asked Questions...

Before you head off on your first expedition voyage, we know you will have a lot of questions – so we thought we would answer some before you even make a booking! This isn't exhaustive by any means, but will help set the scene and give you an insight into how things work. If you would like to know more, just call or email one of our expert consultants.



### Is it a cruise or a voyage?

A bit of both, in fact. The word 'cruise' may conjure up an image of a giant ship disgorging hundreds (if not thousands!) of passengers into a port to rush around on a brief shore excursion, buy souvenirs, and then return to sit by the pool in the sun reading a book! A 'voyage', on the other hand, suggests some degree of hardship – such as Christopher Columbus' voyage to discover America in 1492, or Charles Darwin's voyage with HMS Beagle.

An expedition voyage is different. You'll be on a small ship (those that we work with accommodate anything from around 12 to 100 passengers), so you can meet new people and get to know your fellow passengers. There aren't so many of these that each time you see a face it seems to be a new one!

The vessel will be specially adapted for the conditions you're likely to encounter – either purpose-built or refitted accordingly. Many were scientific research vessels in a former life, and have been refurbished to accommodate passengers.

During your trip there will almost certainly be a programme of illustrated talks and presentations. These cover a range of topics from birds and mammals to geography, history and astronomy, and are given by the team

of guides and experts who play a major role in making your trip special.

### How does it start, and what is it like on board?

Boarding generally takes place in the afternoon to allow you time to arrive. However we always recommend you spend the previous night in a hotel near the port to avoid flight delays – after all, we wouldn't like you to (literally) miss the boat!

After settling in to your cabin, you may be welcomed with a glass of something fizzy and a snack. Once the ship is under way, you'll meet the captain and expedition team. On many vessels you are free to visit the bridge at any time, and can see how the course is plotted and conditions are monitored by the watch-keepers.



### How about the food?

Food on board is both plentiful and delicious, and surprisingly varied. Fresh fruit and vegetables are normally provided throughout the trip. In addition to breakfast, a three-course lunch and dinner are generally prepared. Cake and biscuits are served each afternoon, and tea, coffee and juice are available throughout the day. Some trips may even include all alcoholic drinks in the price. Where feasible, the ship will visit local markets to pick up supplies and regional specialities. Vegetarians and most special diets can be catered for – as long as we know in advance.

### What are the weather and sea conditions going to be like?

Weather and sea conditions are highly variable, and whether you're in the tropics or a polar region there's never any guarantee of good weather. All ships give regular updates on the weather forecast.



### Are the days at sea boring?

Not at all! A lecture programme is usually arranged for sea days, and in the evening there's often a film or a preparatory talk for the next day. Talks generally last around 45 minutes, and there's always time to get out on deck to see whatever wildlife is around – there's invariably something to see. Cruising days offer opportunities to watch birdlife or passing islands, and keen eyes are always scanning the horizon for something of interest. Any sightings of note may be announced over the tannoy system, so you'll never miss out.

### How about the landings?

The main objective of any voyage is to explore – so you'll disembark as often as possible to see and photograph the wildlife, scenery or culture, and learn about it from the expert on-board guides. On arrival at a landing site, you'll have a final briefing while the

zodiacs are being lowered, and then don lifejackets and go ashore in groups of ten to 12 people. You may spend anything from two to four hours ashore – depending on what there is to see.

There are generally at least two landings per day, and the ship may sail on to the second landing site while you have lunch. Landing sites are many and varied, and depend on the voyage that you have selected. You will normally receive more information about these once you've made your booking. However the actual sites visited may change depending on weather and sea conditions – circumstances outside the control of the crew.

Increasingly, there are options to do specialist activities such as kayaking, ski mountaineering, ice diving etc, or perfect your photography skills as part of some trips. These activities are invariably open to a limited number of participants, so are booked on a first-come, first-served basis, and involve payment of a supplement. Not all are suitable for beginners, so you may need to produce a qualification or proof of previous experience before you are accepted; some may require you to bring specialist equipment.

### Do I need to be fit?

You certainly don't need to be super fit, however you should be in good health, as many voyages visit remote locations without sophisticated medical facilities. Most shore excursions involve climbing in and out of a moving zodiac, which calls for a degree of agility, so these voyages may not be suitable if you have mobility issues.



### What special clothing do I need?

Larger vessels that operate in the Arctic or Antarctic carry a supply of rubber boots with thermal inserts that are loaned to passengers for shore landings. A few loan out expedition parkas, or have them available for purchase. In addition, some vessels offer facilities to hire or purchase clothing before you travel.

The temperature on-board ship is invariably high, and the dress code is very casual. However to go ashore or even out on deck, you need to be able to cope with cold and windy conditions. The best way is by layering clothing so you can adjust to the temperature e.g. a thermal base layer plus a thin fleece, a thicker fleece, then a warm, wind and waterproof outer layer such as a parka – or a combination of a down jacket or ski jacket plus a waterproof cagoule. Warm trousers, such as ski trousers, and – if these are not waterproof – waterproof over-trousers, plus a warm hat, gloves and a scarf are all essential.



# Antarctica

Antarctic voyages during the austral summer echo the journeys of the great explorers. Follow in the footsteps of Shackleton, Scott and others as you view some of the world's most exciting wildlife. Vast colonies of penguins, seals and seabirds live in a white wilderness with soaring glaciers, cliffs and icebergs. Humpback, minke, southern right, blue, fin, sei, orca, pilot and sperm whales are all regularly seen in these waters. The smaller vessels we prefer allow more time with the experts while on board, and more time off the ship to explore. For many people, this may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, while others will return to revisit this unique continent.

## Frequently Asked Questions...

### Which trip should I do?

This depends on when you can travel, how long you can be away, your budget and interests.

If time is limited, a Classic Antarctica trip includes some five days sailing along the Antarctic Peninsula.

If that's too long, on a Fly-Cruise you can fly from the mainland of Chile to board your vessel at King George Island in the South Shetlands, then fly back again at the end. This cuts out four days of sailing, and the infamous Drake Passage (see below) — but comes at a price. A few trips offer the compromise of flying one way and sailing the other.



If you have a few days longer, you can choose a trip that ventures further south along the Antarctic Peninsula to cross the Polar Circle, or one that heads into the Weddell Sea on the east side of the peninsula.

With three weeks, you can enjoy the astonishing wildlife of the Falklands and South Georgia en-route to Antarctica, or take a more specialised trip to see a colony of emperor penguins.

The duration and route may vary slightly according to the ship, time of year, and local conditions, but on any voyage you'll see the Antarctic's magnificent landscapes and unique wildlife.

### Where do Antarctic trips leave from?

Most voyages depart from Ushuaia, on the island of Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of Argentina. Standing on the Beagle Channel, with spectacular views across to Chile and the Andes as they reach the sea, it was originally a pioneer town but has increased dramatically in size over the last 20 years — due mainly to the growth in travel to Antarctica.



We strongly advise spending a night here before your voyage departs — to avoid any problems with delayed flights. However if you spend a few days in Ushuaia, you can visit Tierra del Fuego National Park, the nearby glaciers or an historic estancia, or enjoy a boat trip to the islands of the Beagle Channel.

Any trip that involves flying to or from Antarctica will start from Punta Arenas, capital of Chile's most southerly region, on the north side of the Strait of Magellan. This has the only airport that serves the Antarctic.

Either of these start or end points opens up the possibility of extending your trip to visit Patagonia — Calafate and the Parque Nacional de los Glaciares in Argentina, or the incomparable mountains of Torres del Paine in Chile. Depending on where you embark/disembark, you can also break your journey en-route in Buenos Aires or in Santiago.

A few trips start or finish in the Falkland Islands, while longer and more expensive voyages to the less-visited Ross Sea region of Antarctica, generally start from either Hobart in Tasmania, or Lyttelton or Bluff in New Zealand.

### What are the weather and sea conditions like?

This is the most frequently asked question — and there is no easy answer! Both weather and sea conditions are highly variable, and there's no guarantee of good weather — even in the height of summer.

The two day crossing of the Drake Passage from Ushuaia en-route to or from the Antarctic Peninsula is infamous for its roughness — but if you have good sea legs, there's lots of wildlife to see.

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### I've heard a lot about scientific bases in the Antarctic – will I be able to visit one?

Your vessel will make at least one stop at an international scientific base. As researchers show you around, they'll explain how they cope with the weather, and talk about their work. Antarctica has a long history of scientific research, so many bases have interesting museums dedicated to science or exploration.

### Can I swim in Antarctica?

Amazingly, you can – but it's not for the faint-hearted! Many ships stop at Deception Island, where the expedition personnel will dig a pool in the volcanic sand. After a brief dip in the bay (1°C!),

you can warm up in the geothermally-heated waters of the pool (40°C). If you want to try it, don't forget your swimmers!

### What activities are available?

Apart from daily shore excursions – sometimes as many as three or four in a day if conditions permit – some vessels offer activities such as camping, kayaking, snowshoeing, ski trekking, mountaineering and even diving, accompanied by qualified guides. These must be booked in advance on a first-come, first-served basis, as numbers are limited. All necessary equipment is generally provided. Some activities require proof of previous experience.

## Climate

Crossing the Southern Ocean can be easy, and severe storms are infrequent during the southern summer. Although bad weather can occur at any time in the Antarctic Peninsula, the narrow waterways are quite protected. Sunny days are common in Greater Antarctica, and the sun shines even in the sub-Antarctic islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. Although the average summer temperature is near freezing and you should be prepared for cold weather, it's surprising how often it seems almost too warm to wear a parka.

## Diary notes

### October/November – late spring/early summer

- ▶ The landing sites are at their most clean and pristine
- ▶ Pack ice begins to melt and break up
- ▶ Penguin and seabird courtship is at its height
- ▶ Wildflowers bloom in the Falklands and South Georgia
- ▶ Elephant seals establish their breeding territories

### December/January – height of summer

- ▶ Warmest weather and longest daylight
- ▶ Penguin chicks hatch – in the Falklands first and Antarctica last
- ▶ Seal pups are visible in the Falklands and on South Georgia
- ▶ Whale sightings are on the increase

### February/March

- ▶ The end of the Antarctic summer
- ▶ Receding ice allows easier access
- ▶ Best whale sightings – minke and orca are often seen
- ▶ Adult penguins moult; chicks fledge and leave their colony
- ▶ Fur seals are visible on the Antarctic Peninsula
- ▶ Elephant seals haul out onto the beaches and start to moult

## Wildlife *The following list is not exhaustive, but may well whet your appetite!*



### Whales

Minkes are found in the ice floes around the Antarctic Peninsula, while humpback, beaked, fin, sei, southern right and blue whales may be found in the Southern Ocean. Orcas are regularly sighted among the ice floes as far north as the Falkland Islands.



### Birds

Sooty shearwaters and numerous gulls are common around continental South America. Albatrosses, petrels and prions are seen out in the Southern Ocean. The South Georgia pipit can be spotted amid the tussock grass on South Georgia, and a variety of endemic birds may be seen in the Falkland Islands.



### Seals

Weddell seals are the most southerly of the Antarctic seals, and are generally seen near ice. Leopard seals are common around the Antarctic Peninsula, especially near penguin colonies. Crabeater seals are found around pack ice throughout the region. Antarctic fur seal are found mainly near the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia, while elephant seals occur over much of the Southern Ocean.



### Other mammals

Reindeer are found on South Georgia, where they were introduced by sealers and whalers many years ago.



### Penguins

King penguins are seen in massive numbers on South Georgia (there are some in the Falklands too). They breed over a two year cycle, so whenever you travel you'll see all stages of maturation – from eggs being incubated, to scrawny newly-hatched chicks, and bedraggled, moulting sub-adults. There are significant concentrations of macaroni penguins on South Georgia too.



Rockhopper and magallenic penguins are Falklands 'specials', while the Antarctic Peninsula is the place to see chinstrap and gentoo penguins. Adélie penguins breed further south than any other species, and are found all around the continent. If you want to see emperor penguins, choose a trip to the Ross Sea, where the only known rookery on the Antarctic Peninsula is at Snow Hill Island, or join a land-based trip to the remote Weddell Sea coast.

# Classic Antarctica

Incredible voyages aboard comfortable expedition vessels, visiting prime wildlife sites along the Antarctic Peninsula and in the nearby South Shetland islands. A perfect introduction to the Antarctic!



The Antarctic Peninsula is the most accessible part of the white continent, with some of its best wildlife and scenery. All the voyages we feature on our website include as much time as possible to watch wildlife, while still allowing ample opportunity to enjoy the breathtaking scenery of ice-choked waterways, sculpted icebergs, imposing glaciers and rugged mountains along the way.

There are more whales and dolphins here than anywhere else on earth, and as you sail you may be accompanied by a school of boisterous hourglass dolphins, follow a pod of orca as they hunt among the ice floes, or watch humpback whales breaching in front of a wilderness of icebergs.

Your voyage begins and ends in the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia, in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, which nestles between the snow-capped Andes and the Beagle Channel. From

here you set out across the infamous Drake Passage (an experience in itself!), accompanied by albatrosses and other seabirds, watching whales and dolphins along the way.

Your first stop is in the South Shetland Islands where you'll visit vast rookeries of penguins, land on beaches ruled by Antarctic fur seals and watch wallowing elephant seals. One highlight will be sailing into the flooded volcanic caldera of Deception Island, and perhaps even taking a dip in its geo-thermally heated water.

Your on-board team of naturalists and experienced expedition personnel, in coordination with the captain and officers, will attempt an average of two landings each day, though factors such as weather, sea and ice conditions, and not least wildlife behaviour, will influence the programme. They will also keep you entertained with a series of talks and presentations on a range

of topics relating to the Antarctic, from its wildlife, to the great explorers, and the future of the Antarctic.

You sail on southward to the Antarctic Peninsula, where you will have ample time to experience the special magic of this awe-inspiring wilderness. Visit immense rookeries of gentoo, chinstrap and Adélie penguins, and see blue-eyed shags, kelp gulls, Cape petrels, snowy sheathbills and many other birds. You are also likely to see Weddell, crabeater and leopard seals, and may encounter orca, humpback and minke whales at close range.

Depending on the conditions en-route, your voyage may include visits to: Paradise Harbour, filled with a mind-boggling array of icebergs; the Neumayer and Lemaire Channels, beautiful ice-choked waterways overlooked by towering rock faces and spectacular glaciers; Port Lockroy, with

its thriving colonies of penguins and a former British base that now serves as one of the world's most isolated museums; and Petermann Island, with Adélie and gentoo penguins, skuas and blue-eyed shags.

Finally, you head north across the Drake Passage to round Cape Horn and arrive back in Ushuaia.



## ITINERARY

 **SMALL GROUP**

**Day 1** Embark in Ushuaia, Argentina **Day 2** Cross the Drake Passage; talks by naturalists **Day 4** Visit South Shetland Islands – shore excursions by Zodiac inflatable. Continue to the Antarctic Peninsula for fantastic wildlife encounters and awesome scenery **Day 9** Back across the Drake Passage **Day 11** Disembark in Ushuaia

The itinerary shown is typical of a Classic Antarctica voyage. The exact itinerary will depend on your chosen vessel, departure date and weather, sea and ice conditions.

While most departures follow the above itinerary, we reserve the right to change this to ensure a successful trip.

**Duration:** Mostly 11 days – voyage only (if flying one way, 7 days)  
**Activities:** Camping, photography, kayaking, snowshoeing, ski trekking, mountaineering and diving on some trips  
**Departures:** November to March  
**Embark/Disembark:** Ushuaia / Ushuaia (or Punta Arenas / Punta Arenas if flying)

## And for the even more adventurous...

The aim of this voyage is to reach as far south as weather and ice conditions will permit, and cross the Antarctic Circle, a feat that only a few will ever accomplish. The route takes you further down the western side of the Antarctic Peninsula than a Classic Antarctica trip, and you'll feel an added sense of excitement as you push south towards the Circle.

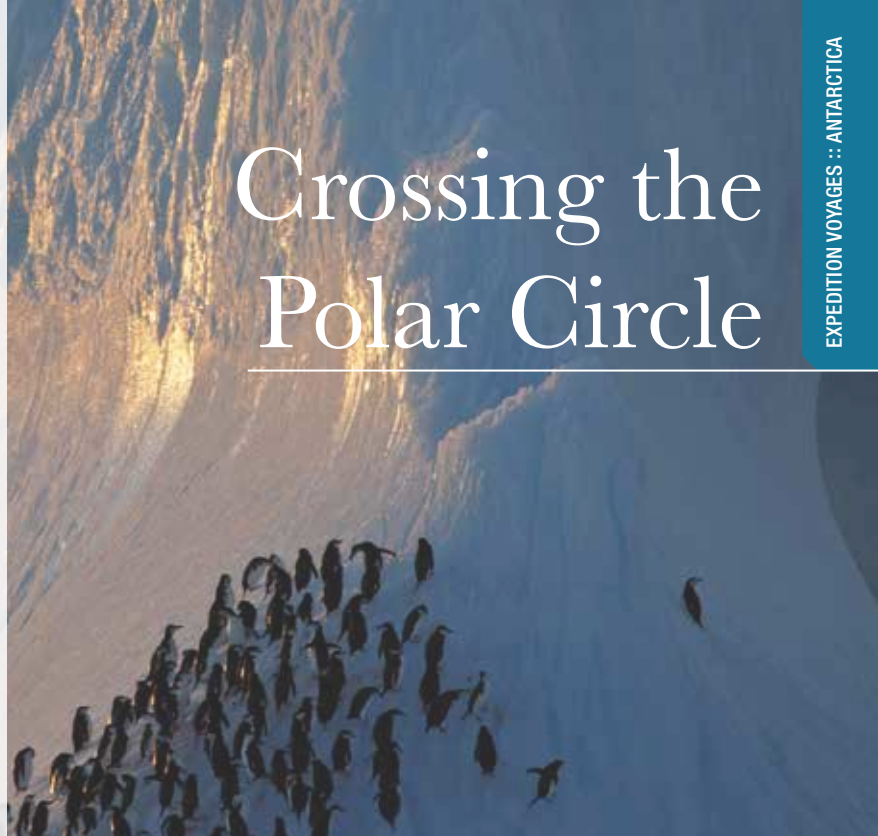
Navigate some of the white continent's most scenic waterways through awe-inspiring terrain, littered with giant icebergs. The steep glacial walls of narrow Lemaire Channel tower above the vessel on both sides, leading to a jigsaw of jewel-like islands that are home to penguin rookeries, whales and elephant seals – a paradise for photographers!

As you cross the Polar Circle at 66° 33' south and enter the rarely visited waters beyond, the temperature drops. You'll attempt a landing on the continent and may visit a research station. There will be time to explore, or you can just sit and watch penguin antics!

Please note this route is dependent on weather, sea and ice conditions. Some departures may sail directly to the Polar Circle exploring the Peninsula on the northward leg of the voyage.

**Duration:** around 12 days – voyage only

**Departures:** late December to March



# Crossing the Polar Circle

## Activities in Antarctica

Some of our trips offer opportunities to engage in other activities (at an additional cost). As the numbers for each activity are generally limited, activities are available on a first-come, first-served basis and must usually be booked in advance. In most cases all the specialist equipment you require is provided.

At least one vessel offers dedicated activity trips where, rather than sailing, the vessel anchors in one spot for a period to maximise the opportunity for the full range of activities. *Please contact us to find out which departures offer this option.*



### Camping

Camping on the Antarctic ice is an unforgettable experience. All equipment is provided, whether you choose to sleep in a tent or a snowhole. All you need is a sense of adventure!



### Snowshoeing

Modern snowshoes are remarkably easy to use and allow you to access areas with deep snow that would otherwise be very difficult to reach. No previous experience required.



### Photography

Some vessels offer dedicated photography workshops which will teach you techniques to take stunning photos in polar conditions, and to manipulate your images digitally to produce the best results.



### Sea-kayaking

Kayakers experience polar waters at their most serene and tranquil, allowing you to get remarkably close to amazing wildlife and towering icebergs.



### Ski trekking

There are no ski-trails in the Antarctic, so if you choose this option you'll be breaking new ground – real exploration!



### Mountaineering

Climbing in Antarctica is an exhilarating experience with ancient rock and challenging ice-covered slopes. All levels of expertise are catered for.



### Ice diving

For experienced divers only. Dive sites vary from shallow ice diving, diving along a wall, from a beach or from a zodiac. Maximum depth around 20 metres. The sunlight and ice formations create a spectrum of colours.



### Note

Certain activities, such as sea-kayaking and mountaineering, require you to demonstrate that you have previous experience; to dive you must show proof of certification.

### Air-sail option



**If you're pushed for time, or a nervous sailor,** a few vessels avoid crossing the Drake Passage in one, or both, directions, by sailing from King George Island in the South Shetlands. This reduces the duration by two, or four, days, but is more expensive due to the logistics involved in flying from the mainland to King George Island and vice versa.

These trips start and end in Punta Arenas, on the Strait of Magellan in Chile, which has the only airport that serves the Antarctic. If you choose a trip that flies only one way, your trip will start in Punta Arenas and end in Ushuaia, or vice versa.

# Great Antarctic Voyage

The ultimate Antarctic experience marries the phenomenal wildlife of the sub-Antarctic islands of the Falklands and South Georgia to the pristine beauty of the Antarctic Peninsula



This comprehensive voyage through the Southern Atlantic explores its most dramatic wilderness areas and visits the region's wildlife hotspots. There is plenty to keep you occupied: sailing days are taken up with lectures on all manner of topics, from bird identification to Antarctic geology, delivered by the expert naturalists and experienced personnel who make up the expedition team. Yet there is still ample time to relax and soak up the atmosphere.



You will receive a warm welcome in the Falkland Islands, where you visit some of the privately-owned outlying islands. Flightless steamer ducks, and magellanic and gentoo penguins are just some of the highlights of Carcass Island, while nearby West Point boasts large colonies of rockhopper penguin. You can often see Peale's and Commerson's dolphins along the coast, or riding the bow wave as you sail the Southern Ocean.

With the odd wandering albatross wheeling overhead as company, you cross the Arctic Convergence to remote, rugged and hauntingly beautiful South Georgia. This sub-Antarctic island has astonishing concentrations of wildlife, and its awesome scenery ranges from impressive mountains and mighty glaciers to deep fjords and low-lying grassland. Renowned as a destination for birdwatchers, South Georgia is an inspiring place with more wildlife than virtually anywhere else on the planet.



Among the many species that breed here are wandering albatross, southern giant petrel and fur seal. A hike over the heavily glaciated terrain to a hilltop affords magnificent views of rookeries of king penguins. The island played a major role in the epic journey of Sir Ernest Shackleton after his ship, the Endurance, sank, and you can visit his grave at the abandoned whaling station of Grytviken.

On arrival at the Antarctic Peninsula, you will explore penguin rookeries, visit a research station, encounter marine mammals in the many channels, and come face-to-face with icebergs. The sightings and encounters vary from trip to trip, and although it is impossible to guarantee exactly what you will see, we are confident that you will not be disappointed on this voyage of a lifetime! Select departures offer optional activities such as camping and kayaking.



## SMALL GROUP

### ITINERARY

**Day 1** Embark in Ushuaia, Argentina **Day 2** At sea **Days 3-4** The Falkland Islands: visit Stanley and outlying islands **Days 5-6** At sea **Days 7-10** South Georgia: a glacier-covered island with stunning landscapes, fantastic wildlife, imposing mountains and a haunting history **Days 11-12** At sea **Days 13-16** Explore the Antarctic Peninsula, a wonderful world of icebergs, mountains and wildlife – a perfect finale to your adventure! **Days 17-18** Cross the infamous Drake Passage **Day 19** Disembark in Ushuaia

The above is typical of an expedition voyage. However, the exact itinerary and duration will depend on your chosen vessel, departure date and local conditions.

While most departures follow the above itinerary, we reserve the right to change this to ensure a successful trip.

<b>Duration:</b>	Around 19 days (voyage only)
<b>Activities:</b>	Camping, kayaking, photography, snowshoeing
<b>Departures:</b>	Nov to March
<b>Embark/Disembark:</b>	Ushuaia – some voyages start and/or end at Stanley, in the Falkland Islands



## Other trips to the Antarctic

As travel to the southernmost region of the world continues to grow, the range of trips is constantly increasing and the focus becoming more specialised.

Here are two of our favourite trips to areas that may appeal to second or third-time Antarctic travellers.

### Weddell Sea

The remote eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula is one of the white continent's hidden gems. A deeply incised, 2,000-kilometre wide bay takes its name from British sailor, James Weddell, who in 1823 reached latitude 74° South while hunting seals. Famed for its huge ice shelves and flat-topped icebergs, the Weddell Sea is the site of an upwelling of cold water from the ocean depths that provides food for any creature hardy enough to withstand the intense cold.

After crossing the Drake Passage from Ushuaia you make landfall at the Antarctic Peninsula and start to explore. On rounding its tip to enter first the Antarctic Sound, and then

the Weddell Sea, the increase in the number of icebergs and quantity of sea ice is striking. As you sail you will learn about Sir Ernest Shackleton's remarkable escape to South Georgia once his ship, the *Endurance*, became trapped in the sea ice.

Wildlife encounters may include Weddell and elephant seals, seabirds, plus an abundance of penguins. Humpbacks feed in the nutrient-rich waters, so there are opportunities to see whales, as well as the Antarctic's largest predator, the solitary leopard seal.

**Duration:** 12 days – voyage only  
**Departures:** Late December to March

### Ross Sea

If you have a hankering to see emperor penguins, the largest species of penguin, which is rarely found outside the High Antarctic, this is the trip. Around one third of the world's population of emperors (maybe as many as 40,000 pairs) breed in the Ross Sea area. Roughly half the world's Adélie penguin live there too, plus large numbers of Antarctic and snow petrel,

while crabeater seal are found on floes at the edge of the pack ice where they can get to open water easily.

Due to Antarctica's geography, the easiest way to visit this region is on a voyage that starts from New Zealand.

**Duration:** 28 days – voyage only  
**Departures:** January to March

## Antarctic extensions

As most Antarctic voyages start from Ushuaia in the south of Argentina, why not make the most of your trip by spending some time on mainland South America to see some of its attractions?

Argentina and its neighbour, Chile, are countries of immense contrasts, with varied experiences that make a fitting addition to any Antarctic voyage. The possibilities are virtually endless – limited only by the time you have at your disposal and your imagination – and you can add any of the following outstanding locations to either the start or the end of your Antarctic voyage...

### Torres del Paine

Why not finish on a high note with a short visit to Chilean Patagonia? Just a couple of hours from Punta Arenas, the exquisite scenery of this national park is dominated by the magnificent jagged granite peaks of the Paine Massif. Prolific wildlife includes Andean deer, guanaco, puma, skunk and hare, plus a host of birds such as Andean condor, lesser rhea, Chilean flamingo, black-faced ibis, black-necked swan, kelp goose and torrent duck. If you enjoy walking, this is a perfect spot to stretch your legs for a few days on the network of trails.

### Península Valdés

On the Argentinean side of the border, you could break your trip back to Buenos Aires to visit the country's foremost protected area. This wildlife reserve is the only place on the mainland of South America where you can see elephant seals, and depending on the time of year, you can also see orca and/or southern right whale.

### Iguazu Falls

Head north from Buenos Aires for a taste of sub-tropical splendour at one of the world's great waterfalls. Iguazu Falls, on the Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay border, is a magnificent three-kilometre long horseshoe of some 275 separate waterfalls. Each side of the river is a national park, with walking trails and lush forest that contains an abundance of flora and fauna, including over 500 species of butterfly, 400 species of bird and 2,000 species of plant.

### Buenos Aires

Alternatively, if you enjoy city culture, take a few days out to explore Argentina's capital, the home of tango and known as the Paris of South America. This atmospheric city has an abundance of museums and art galleries, fine eateries and street cafés to enjoy after the relative privations of your voyage in the South Atlantic.

# The Arctic

The arrival of summer in the northern hemisphere heralds the start of voyages to the Arctic region. This consists of the Arctic Ocean, bordered by the northern extremities of mainland North America and Eurasia, plus outlying islands such as Greenland, Baffin and Wrangel. Whereas the Antarctic is a continent surrounded by a frozen ocean, the Arctic is a frozen ocean surrounded by continents.

The vast area of fjords, jagged peaks, frozen glaciers and icebergs is one of the planet's last pristine regions. Shared between Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway (Svalbard), Russia (Siberia), Sweden and the USA (Alaska), the Arctic is nevertheless home to several million people, many of whom are indigenous.

It is a land of seasonal hibernation, and these fascinating voyages explore

wild regions, whose only inhabitants are those creatures that have adapted to the extreme conditions, such as the island of Spitsbergen (otherwise known by its Norwegian name, Svalbard), while other wider-ranging trips take in Greenland, Iceland and even the North-west Passage. The routes and places visited are constantly evolving, and some ports of embarkation/ disembarkation are remote and not

easy to reach, so may involve a charter flight.

Once you are aboard ship, expert expedition leaders give lectures on all aspects of the areas you visit, and lead daily shore excursions. You'll learn about the hardy races that settled these regions, visit ancient Norse sites and former trapping communities, and see and hear about the culture and history of the Inuit.





## Climate

In the Arctic cool summers are followed by long, very cold winters, and the ice never disappears totally. This extreme climate produces typical scenery of tundra (where, even in the warmest month, the average temperature rarely rises more than a few degrees above 0°C) and permanent ice cap. There is little precipitation – especially in winter when low temperatures prevent the air from holding water vapour. However strong winds whip up fallen snow to create an illusion of continual snowfall.

During the short summer, the snow melts and the land is covered with heathers, mosses and flowers. However below the surface it remains frozen, so meltwater cannot drain and the ground stays waterlogged. Permafrost prevents roots from growing deep which, along with the strong winds, stunts plant growth.

The oceans have a moderating influence, and along the coast temperatures are higher and the snowfall heavier than in the cold, dry interior. The Arctic Ocean remains frozen throughout the year, except along its fringes, although in recent times the area of summer ice has shrunk significantly.

The length of the day varies with the season, and north of the Arctic Circle ranges from constant darkness to round-the-clock daylight (“midnight sun”), but there is little warmth in the sun’s rays due to its low angle above the horizon. Even when sunny, sudden storms with cold winds and snow flurries can occur any time, so you must be prepared for unpredictable changes in weather and dress accordingly.

The most famous natural phenomenon is the Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, whose magical fluorescent effect in the night sky is caused by electrically charged particles driven by solar winds colliding with molecules of oxygen and nitrogen in the upper atmosphere.

## Flora

In the tundra regions vegetation flourishes during the short spring and summer. The further north you go, the more restrictive the environment is for plantlife, and dwarf trees give way to grasses, mosses, lichens, sedges, and some flowering plants. This plant cover gradually thins out as you approach the permanent snow line.

## Wildlife

Around 20 species of land mammals inhabit the Arctic, including polar bear, musk ox, moose, caribou, wolf, fox, lemming and squirrel, and some six species of marine mammal such as walrus, seal, and various whales – the most notable of which is the narwhal. Most are year-round inhabitants that migrate to the region’s southern margins as winter approaches. Although most are present in large numbers, some species, especially the polar bear, are in danger of extinction.

The bird population increases massively each spring with the arrival of migratory birds for the breeding season – these include snow geese, peregrine falcons, snowy owls, and many seabirds. During this brief warm season, when the plants are in bloom, large numbers of insects breed in the tundra marshlands.



# Around Spitsbergen



Spitsbergen means 'jagged peaks' – a name befitting this remarkable land. Opportunities to watch wildlife are exceptional – from the impressive Monaco Glacier, a favourite feeding spot for thousands of kittiwakes, to spectacular cliffs with colonies of more than 200,000 little auks. Opportunistic Arctic foxes patrol in the hope of chicks falling from ledges, while bearded seals cruise the fjords. You may sight beluga or narwhal, and there's always the possibility of the ultimate encounter with a mighty polar bear.

## Highlights

- ▶ See the mighty polar bear – a favourite wildlife encounter
- ▶ Sail through a wonderland of mountain and glacial scenery
- ▶ Spectacular wildlife encounters from the comfort of your vessel
- ▶ A birdwatchers' paradise – from Arctic terns to little auks



Your voyage begins in Longyearbyen, the largest community in Svalbard (the Norwegian name for Spitsbergen), with around 1,800 inhabitants. The first stop is not far away and next morning you board a zodiac for an exhilarating ride along the sculpted front of the 14th of July Glacier. On either flank the green



slopes are peppered with delicate wildflowers, while large numbers of kittiwakes and Brunnich's guillemots nest on the nearby cliffs.

Near the former mining village of Ny Ålesund, now an Arctic research station, birdwatchers will relish visiting the breeding grounds of barnacle, pink-footed geese and Arctic terns. At Moffen Island walrus are often seen hauled out on the shore. If ice conditions permit, the northernmost point of your trip is likely to be Phippsøya at 80° North in the Seven Islands, just 870 kilometres from the geographic North Pole.



## ITINERARY

 **SMALL GROUP**

**Day 1** Embark at Longyearbyen **Days 2-9** The aim is to circumnavigate Spitsbergen. With no open ocean to cross, the sea is often calm even beyond the Arctic Circle. Within the archipelago distances are relatively short, so there is ample time to enjoy the scenery, hike on shore, or cruise in zodiac inflatables. Each spring the returning seals attract polar bears – the chances of sighting one depend on when you travel. At the start of the season, there is a large amount of sea ice, which is great for sightings but may restrict where you can go **Day 10** Disembark at Longyearbyen.

The above is typical of an expedition voyage to Spitsbergen. However, the exact itinerary and duration will depend on your chosen vessel, departure date and local conditions.

<b>Duration:</b>	Around 10 days (voyage only)
<b>Guide:</b>	Expert naturalists and experienced expedition personnel
<b>Departures:</b>	May to October
<b>Embark/Disembark:</b>	Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen

# Spitsbergen, Greenland & Iceland



High above the Arctic Circle lies the remarkable archipelago known in Norwegian as Svalbard. The main island of Spitsbergen has a spectacular coastline: at Hornsund 14 glaciers flow into the sea and seabirds, and bearded and ringed seals are numerous. The wild, rugged and often ice-bound east coast of Greenland provides an excellent habitat for walrus and polar bears. Finally, the volcanic Vestmann Islands, off Iceland's south coast are among the youngest in the world – the result of submarine eruption.

## Highlights

- ▶ See polar bears on sea ice – a wonderful wildlife encounter
- ▶ Sail amid the awe-inspiring scenery of fjords and glaciers
- ▶ Spot walrus lazing around at their haul-out sites
- ▶ Sight musk ox in the world's largest national park

With a few days to explore Spitsbergen, the largest island in Svalbard, you may reach as far as 81° North and visit the walrus sanctuary at Moffen Island, where these tusked creatures are often seen hauled out on shore or swimming in the protected waters. The stunning Monaco Glacier and 14th of July Glacier lie on your route, and there



is an opportunity to land at one of the world's northernmost settlements, the research station at Ny Ålesund.

Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Northeast Greenland National Park is the world's largest. Up to 40% of the world's population of musk ox live near its coastline, so sightings are highly likely. Before leaving Greenland, if the pack ice allows, you will attempt to reach the breathtaking Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord and Scoresbysund, the world's largest fjord. The glaciers that calve here are the birthplace of Greenland's giant icebergs.



## ITINERARY

 SMALL GROUP

**Day 1** Embark at Longyearbyen **Days 2-3** Sail up Spitsbergen's west coast **Days 4-5** Head south-west across the Greenland Sea, watching for seabirds, whales and the pack ice that stretches across the Arctic Ocean to the North Pole **Days 6-10** If conditions permit, attempt to reach Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord and Scoresby Sund on Greenland's west coast **Days 11-12** Explore the east coast of Greenland **Day 13** Cross Denmark Strait, sailing over submarine canyons that enrich the feeding grounds off north-west Iceland **Day 14** Disembark at Keflavik, Iceland

The above is typical of an expedition voyage to Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland. However, exact itinerary/duration will depend on your chosen vessel, departure date and local conditions.

**Duration:** 14 days (voyage only)  
**Guide:** Expert naturalists and experienced expedition personnel  
**Departures:** July and August  
**Embark/Disembark:** Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen / Keflavik, Iceland



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Africa's underwater treasures offer something for everyone. Stunning corals, wrecks and drift dives to the big pelagics such as whale sharks, manta rays and humpback whales. From the relatively untouched and unexplored waters of Mozambique to the more established marine parks of South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya – exploring underwater Africa is an absolute must!



## Borneo

Borneo offers superb golden beaches and one of the richest marine environments in the Indo-Pacific Basin. Just below the glassy surface, magnificent coral reefs fringe the shoreline, while further out you can find groupers, hammerhead sharks, manta rays, and barracudas to name a few. Sipadan Island is famed for its turtles and huge schooling fish.

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# Visas, Vaccinations & Insurance

## Passports & Visas

All British Citizens aged 16 years and over require a ten-year passport for travel abroad, and all those under the age of 16, including infants, require a five-year passport. British passport holders travelling to or via the USA are required to have either a machine-readable or biometric passport.

Your passport should be valid for at least six months after the date of your return to the UK and have at least one blank visa page for each country you plan to enter during your trip. Passengers without the correct documentation may be refused carriage or entry into any country.

A specialist visa agency can provide detailed up-to-date information regarding visa requirements for countries overseas and their embassies within the UK, and assist you to obtain any visa(s) you need, however it is your responsibility to obtain any visa(s) required for your trip prior to travel. The following agencies will be able to help you:

- CIBT Visa Agency – [uk.cibt.com/wildlifeworldwide](http://uk.cibt.com/wildlifeworldwide)
- UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office – [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)
- UK Identity & Passport Service – [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/ips/)
- Directgov – [www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Passports)

**Note:** passport and visa regulations can change at any time, so you should check with the relevant embassy well in advance of travel. It can take some time to obtain a visa, so you are advised to apply in plenty of time.

## Vaccinations

Anyone travelling outside the UK may need to be vaccinated against some of the diseases found in other parts of the world. This can protect you against becoming infected with a range of serious diseases such as yellow fever. You can find out which vaccinations are necessary or recommended for the areas you plan to visit on specialist websites such as:

- NHS Fit for Travel – [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)
- National Travel Health Network and Centre – [www.nathnac.org](http://www.nathnac.org)

Some countries require you to produce an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) before allowing you to enter. Many tropical countries in Africa and South America will not accept travellers arriving from an area where there is yellow fever, unless they can provide proof that they have been vaccinated against it.

If possible, see your GP at least eight weeks before you are due to travel, because some vaccinations need to be given well in advance. Not all vaccinations are available through the NHS - your GP surgery can give details of your local private travel clinic.

## Insurance

Extensive travel insurance is a vital part of your holiday and it is a condition of travelling with us that you have such cover. Please note that we will not send your departure documents until we have received proof that you are covered (i.e. your policy details).

If you have not organised travel insurance yet, or your existing policy is due to expire before departure, we recommend you make the necessary arrangements to ensure your cover, immediately.

There are many travel insurance companies you can be covered with, and we recommend specialist insurance brokers Campbell Irvine, a company who have insured many of our customers, since we began in 1992. Their personal service and thorough knowledge of our product and the travel industry will provide you with the peace of mind, to enjoy your holiday with us without worry. For a quote :

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You don't have to be an experienced diver to enjoy the underwater world. Our expert team will happily advise on your options for snorkelling trips, a Discover Scuba dive or a four day learn to dive course. All of our team are qualified divers and can assist you in choosing the right course and destination for your first diving experience.



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