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# Experience the thrill of the wild on a safari holiday



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## Top tips for planning a safari



Planning an African safari can seem daunting at first, but with the right preparation and a clear guide, it can become the adventure of a lifetime. Whether you're worried about vaccinations, travel logistics, or the best safari destinations, or even African safari cost, this guide will help you navigate the process. After experiencing the best South African safari myself, I've compiled all the essential tips you need to plan your own unforgettable trip.

### 1. Decide what you want to see

Do you want to witness the Great Migration? Spot the Big Five? Or experience a water-based safari? Your wildlife goals will help determine the best destination and time of year.

### 2. Choose the right time to go

Wildlife viewing varies by season. For example, dry season (generally June- October) is best for game drives, while the rainy season brings lush landscapes and baby animals but may limit accessibility in some areas.

### 3. Work with a safari expert

Planning can be complex-especially when coordinating flights, transfers, and lodges. An experienced safari planner like myself can create a seamless itinerary and often has insider access to the best lodges and guides.

### 4. Book early

Lodges in popular parks fill up quickly, particularly during the Great Migration or South Africa's winter. Booking 6-12 months in advance is often recommended.

### 5. Think about your travel style

Do you prefer guided group tours, private game drives, or self-driving? Would you rather stay in tented camps or luxury lodges? Tailor your safari to your comfort level and travel preferences.



### 6. Consider health & safety

Whilst a number of Game Reserves in South Africa are malaria free it's important to check if any vaccines are required or recommended. Travel insurance is a must for medical emergencies or unexpected changes.

# Choosing the right safari destination



Africa offers a variety of safari experiences depending on the region you choose. Each destination has its own unique appeal, so consider what kind of wildlife and environment you're most interested in. Here's a breakdown of some of the top safari regions.

## 1. Masai Mara, Kenya

Masai Mara is the place to go if you want to see The Great Migration (July to October). It's also known for big cat sightings and vast open plains. The Masai Mara is world-famous for its role in the Great Migration, where millions of wildebeest, zebras, and gazelles cross the Mara River in a dramatic survival journey. It's also known for its abundance of lions, cheetahs, and leopards.

## 2. Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

The Serengeti is known for year-round wildlife viewing, the Great Migration, and iconic African landscapes. As part of the same ecosystem as the Masai Mara, the Serengeti offers expansive savannahs and exceptional game viewing. The migration moves through here for most of the year, especially during calving season in the southern Serengeti (January-March).

## 3. Kruger National Park, South Africa

Kruger is one of Africa's most established and visitor-friendly parks and is a great place to see the big five. It's easy to access, has excellent infrastructure, and offers a wide variety of safari lodges—from budget to luxury.

## 4. Okavango Delta, Botswana

This is the spot if you're interested in water-based safaris, birdwatching, and remote luxury experiences. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Okavango Delta is a lush, seasonally flooded inland delta that offers a totally different safari experience. Think mokoro (dugout canoe) rides through quiet waterways, abundant birdlife, and exclusive lodges in pristine wilderness.

## 5. Etosha National Park, Namibia

Namibia's known for its unique desert wildlife, salt pans, and self-drive safaris. Etosha's stark, otherworldly landscapes are home to a surprising range of animals, including black rhinos, elephants, and lions. The park's waterholes make wildlife viewing relatively easy, especially during the dry season.

## 6. South Luangwa National Park, Zambia

Known as the birthplace of the walking safari, South Luangwa offers a more rugged and immersive experience. It's a fantastic destination for travellers seeking a quieter, less commercial safari. There are walking safaris, intimate camps, and off-the-beaten-path adventures.



# What to do On an African safari? A typical day



For those new to the safari experience, here's what a typical safari day looks like. Each day is packed with excitement and memorable wildlife encounters.

## 1. Morning & afternoon game drives

Safari days are structured around early morning and late afternoon game drives. You'll wake up around 5.30 am, have a quick coffee, and head out for a 6 am game drive. Although getting up early may not sound appealing, you won't want to miss the amazing wildlife that's most active in the cool morning hours. Missing a drive means missing out!

Each game drive lasts about 3-4 hours, with a coffee or snack break in between. You'll then return to the lodge for breakfast and relaxation before the afternoon game drive begins. In the afternoon, the structure is similar, but instead of coffee, you'll stop for **sundowners** - an African tradition of sipping cocktails while watching the sunset over the plains.

## 2. The role of guides & spotters for animals

Your safari experience will be enhanced by the knowledgeable guides and spotters who accompany you on game drives. They're experts at tracking animals, reading their behaviours, and sharing fascinating facts about the wildlife and ecosystem. They have an impressive ability to spot tracks and decipher which animals have passed through and when. Their insight makes each drive an educational and thrilling adventure.

## 3. Finding the best safari lodges

Safari lodges vary widely in style, cost, and inclusivity. Most lodges offer all-inclusive safari packages that cover accommodation, meals, and game drives. It's important to choose a lodge that gives you the best chance of seeing wildlife, especially the Big Five. Research the lodge's proximity to the airport and the types of wildlife you can expect to see. For those looking



for a more adventurous experience, some lodges offer safari tents for a more immersive stay in the bush. If it's a luxury African safari you're seeking, be sure to check out the higher end resorts.

## 4. What to pack for an African safari

Packing smartly for a safari will make your trip much more comfortable. I found that layering is key - mornings are cold, but by midday, you'll want to strip down to cooler clothes. Neutral colours like khaki are recommended to avoid attracting mosquitoes or animals.

*Here's a quick list of essentials:*

- **Lightweight, neutral-coloured clothing**
- **Hats, scarves & sunglasses for sun protection**
- **Comfortable walking shoes for bush walks**
- **Binoculars for spotting wildlife from a distance**
- **Sunscreen & insect repellent**
- **Medications & a small first-aid kit**

Be mindful of luggage restrictions if you're taking a bush flight. Soft-sided duffle bags are often required for small planes.

## *What is the best time of year for an african safari?*



**The best time of year for an African safari depends on your destination and the wildlife you want to see. Seasons affect not only the weather but also the visibility of wildlife. Keep in mind, the African safari cost will depend on when you travel.**

The Great Migration of wildebeest and zebras in **Kenya's Masai Mara** and **Tanzania's Serengeti** is one of the most spectacular wildlife events on the planet. This typically happens from July to October, making it the best time to visit for those interested in witnessing the migration.

The dry season from June to October is also ideal for spotting wildlife in East Africa, as animals gather around water sources and the vegetation is less dense.

In Southern Africa (including South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia), the dry season runs from May to October and offers great wildlife viewing as animals congregate around water sources. The shoulder seasons of April/May and September/October provide milder weather and fewer tourists.



## *How much does an African safari cost?*



**Prices can vary from £2,500 - £25,000 pp and everything in between. The cost is impacted by a number of factors like time of year, location & accommodation style. You also have the opportunity to do a multi centre trip combining safari's or beach stays. I can work with you to find the right Safari for your budget.**

An African safari is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and with the right planning, it can be stress-free and memorable. Whether you're heading to South Africa's Kruger National Park or Kenya's Masai Mara, careful preparation will ensure you make the most of your trip. From choosing the best destination to packing smartly and arranging transport, every step counts toward creating an unforgettable safari adventure.

