

# Call of the wild



For clients in need of a once-in-a-lifetime trip to look forward to, there's no time like the present to get planning, writes **Laura French**

**T**ravel might be off the table right now, but that doesn't mean clients can't start planning – and booking – those big-ticket trips for the year ahead, perhaps rolling the money they saved by staying home this summer into an even more memorable experience in 2021.

For clients who've always wanted to go on a safari, why not get planning now? We've selected some of the standout trips for 2021 and beyond to help you keep customers feeling inspired and engaged over the coming months.

## BEST FOR...WITNESSING THE WILDEBEEST

Glimpsing the Great Wildebeest Migration through the Serengeti and the Masai Mara is the stuff of lifelong dreams for many, and with capacity filling up fast, clients need to book quickly to secure a spot next year.

There's no shortage of operators offering Serengeti trips to coincide with the spectacle, but for an especially memorable option, suggest Rainbow Tours' eight-day Tanzania Migration Safari, which combines game drives in the copper-hued, baobab-studded Tarangire National Park with exploring the flamingo-dotted Lake Manyara and the Central Serengeti. Here, you'll see wildebeest returning from the Masai Mara, part of the nearly two million wildebeest, zebras and gazelles that make the pilgrimage each year.

**Book it:** From £4,945 per person, including flights from London, domestic flights, transfers, full-board accommodation, safari activities and park fees, based on two sharing between June and October 2021. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

## BEST FOR...GETTING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

For clients after a safari with a difference, Namibia calls. Home to the only desert in the world where lions, elephants and rhinos all live, it's an excellent bet for those who've already done the bigger safari spots, with a diverse landscape spanning dramatic canyons, craggy coastlines and crimson sand dunes, and a varied ecosystem to boot.

Visions of Africa has a 14-day guided tour taking in the highlights, including the parched plains of the desert, the reddish dunes of Sossusvlei, the rugged valleys of the Damaraland highlands and the grasslands of Etosha National Park. Activities include rhino tracking and dolphin spotting, while game drives offer the chance to spot the likes of leopards, cheetahs, kudus, blue wildebeest and Burchell's zebras.

**Book it:** From £5,000 per person based on two sharing, including B&B accommodation, eight dinners, private vehicle with driver/guide, dolphin cruise, park fees and flights. Based on travel between October 20 and December 6, 2021. [visionsof africa.co.uk](http://visionsof africa.co.uk)

## BEST FOR...EXCLUSIVITY

From the swampy waterways of the Okavango Delta to the unspoiled wilderness of Chobe National Park, Botswana is a dream for clients seeking a safari away from the crowds, with boutique lodges and private game reserves offering exceptional wildlife-watching opportunities.

For those after an especially private option, Wilderness Safaris suggests pairing luxury camp Jao – a five-suite, two-villa retreat rebuilt in 2019 in the Okavango – with the ➤



# DESTINATIONS

## AFRICA | SAFARIS



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Elephants at Wilderness Safaris' Jao Camp, Botswana; quiver tree, Namibia; Phinda Private Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal; Zambia  
**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Wildebeest in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania



PICTURE: Shutterstock; Dookphoto; Abercrombie & Kent/Justin Weiler; Crookes and Jackson

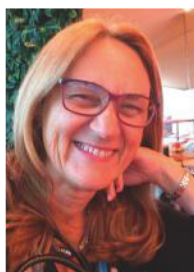
new Little DumaTau, set to open on the Linyanti Reserve in Chobe National Park by the end of the year. Lions, leopards, cheetahs, giraffes, wild dogs, elephants and buffalo all call the reserve home, while a spa, wellness centre and four tented suites (each with outdoor showers, plunge pools and a 'Star Bed') promise an exclusive experience with uninterrupted photo opportunities.

**Book it:** Mahlatini Luxury Travel offers a seven-night all-inclusive itinerary combining Wilderness Safaris' Jao Camp, Little DumaTau and Mombo Camp from £10,150 per person, based on two sharing. Price includes flights from London, all transfers and daily camp activities. [mahlatini.com](http://mahlatini.com)

### BEST FOR...ADVENTURE

Safaris aren't only about game drives, and for clients looking to get a little more adventurous, there are plenty of options. For one of the best, look to the Zambezi, where canoeing trips take visitors to glimpse hippos, elephants, waterbucks and other creatures grazing by the water, and walking safaris add bigger game into the mix. Abercrombie & Kent combines both on a 10-day Classic Zambia itinerary, adding in a visit to the Luangwa Valley, with sunset cruises, night safaris, a sleep-out under the stars and optional helicopter ride over the Victoria Falls among the adventure highlights.

**Book it:** Trips are tailor-made but a 10-day sample itinerary starts at £8,580 per person including accommodation in luxury bush camps and riverside treehouses, with domestic and international flights. [abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://abercrombiekent.co.uk)



### CLAIRE FARLEY managing director, 2by2 Holidays

"Contrary to our initial predictions, we believe Africa will be among the first long-haul destinations to reopen to international travel – a safari in the bushveld offers a perfect socially-distanced holiday. Countries such as Uganda, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia have been virtually untouched by the pandemic, as they closed their borders very early. The two largest destinations, South Africa and Kenya, have both handled the pandemic extremely well and have already introduced stringent Covid protocols.

"In recent weeks, we have seen an increase in enquiries and bookings for both 2021 and 2022. We are also getting more enquiries for private tours and exclusive-use game vehicles. My top tip would be to warn customers that availability for 2021 is already extremely tight, so recommend clients book sooner rather than later, particularly as most operators are currently offering very flexible booking conditions."

### BEST FOR...CONSERVATION INVOLVEMENT

No list would be complete without South Africa, where the KwaZulu-Natal region sees the 'big five' roam the plains, while manta rays, reef sharks and humpback whales frequent the coastline.

It's not only about the viewing opportunities, though; for those interested in learning more about conservation and the local communities who live in this area, suggest andBeyond's Phinda Impact Journey, which combines bird-tagging, rhino notching, wildlife tracking and other ranger activities with culturally immersive experiences organised in a responsible way. Guests can also choose to learn photography skills, step out on walking safaris and sleep under the stars, with private game drives, a dedicated butler and personal chef on hand to add an extra helping of luxury.

**Book it:** From about £6,230 per person for six nights' all-inclusive, based on two sharing at Phinda Zuka Lodge in the Phinda Private Game Reserve, with domestic flights from Johannesburg, game-viewing activities, photography guide and an andBeyond ranger, for selected departures in 2021. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com) **TW**