

# Lion's share

There's a safari tour to suit every kind of client, says Laura French

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**W**hether it's spotting the 'big five' on a game drive, glimpsing a giraffe peeking out above the grasslands or pausing to watch a herd of trumpeting elephants, safaris are high on many bucket lists.

And while they might once have been the preserve of older, wealthier travellers, today they are accessible to a range of clientele, particularly if you opt for an escorted tour, where the costs are clear upfront and there's a guide on hand to help with any practical considerations.

We've matched up tours to suit everyone from budget-conscious backpackers to luxury-loving baby boomers to help you find the right holiday for the right person.

## ▶ BEST FOR BACKPACKERS

Safaris don't have to mean a luxury price tag, so you needn't rule them out for travellers on a budget. Intrepid Travel offers several affordable options, including its Okavango Experience, a 10-day Basix trip through South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe that takes in the highlights of the Okavango Delta, from a mokoro (traditional

canoe) ride on the waterways to a sunrise walk through lush wetlands searching for elephants and Cape buffalo.

It adds a visit to the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, a refuge for black and white rhino; a trip to the Makgadikgadi salt pan, where huge, snow-like plains shelter an array of birdlife; Chobe National Park, home to the highest concentration of elephants in Africa; and Victoria Falls, where guests can glimpse the torrent crashing into the mighty Zambezi below.

Accommodation-wise it's camping all the way (apart from in Johannesburg), so this one's best suited to outdoorsy types after a wilderness adventure that'll save a pound or two.

**Book it:** From £816 per person for a 10-day trip, including most meals, transport, activities and accommodation. Flights extra. [intrepidtravel.com](http://intrepidtravel.com)

## ▶ BEST FOR HIGH-END ADVENTURERS

For more-mature travellers wanting to explore Botswana without slumming it, and Beyond has an alternative, the Classic Explorer Expedition. Guests [→](#)

→ venture off on game drives through Chobe National Park and its Savute area – known for lions, wild dogs, leopards and spotted hyenas – before exploring the Okavango Delta from Nxabega Tented Camp, where they can enjoy private boat cruises, mokoro excursions, catch-and-release fishing and various water and land-based adventures.

They'll stay at andBeyond tented sites along the way, with spacious, en-suite tents featuring real beds, butlers, housekeepers and chefs, plus private guides and a small group size (maximum of six), bridging the gap between back-to-nature experience and fully-serviced comfort.

**Book it:** From £3,340, including accommodation, all meals and drinks (house wines, locally branded spirits and beers), game drives, transfers and entrance fees. [andbeyond.com](http://andbeyond.com)

## ▶ BEST FOR FAMILIES

Children are, in many ways, a prime audience for a safari – they're curious about wildlife and the environment, so it's an ideal introduction to Africa – but many parents are put off by the price and practicalities of what might seem a complex holiday.

Enter the new Kenya Family Wildlife Quest from Exodus Travels, which is specially designed for nine to 12-year-olds, although would suit teens up to 16.

"This is a great introduction to safaris for families, as there is the potential to see all of Africa's most iconic wildlife," says product manager John Penge.



## August trips coincide with the wildebeest migration, one of the greatest wonders of the natural world

"Our August departures also coincide with the wildebeest migration, one of the greatest wonders of the natural world."

The trip starts with a visit to an elephant orphanage in Nairobi, so conservation issues are at the fore from the outset, plus there's a boat safari to spot hippos on Lake Naivasha, and wildlife drives through the iconic Masai Mara.

Family programme manager Tom Wilkinson adds: "Safaris can be full on, so we're offering one that's accessible and a bit less exerting for kids. All the wildlife is there, so the experience will be magical, but we've softened the edges so children can be alert and energised to take in this fantastic experience."

**Book it:** The eight-day tour starts at £2,549 for adults and £1,912 for children, including flights, accommodation, all breakfasts and some other meals, and activities. Camping departures also available. [exodus.co.uk](http://exodus.co.uk)



**LEFT:** Chobe National Park, Botswana

**BELOW:** Lemur in Madagascar

## ▶ BEST FOR SECOND-TIME SAFARI-GOERS

So they've seen the big five, done more early-morning game drives and sunk more sundowners than most – and been blown away by Africa's beautiful landscapes to boot. What could possibly be left to sell to repeat safari-goers?

How about the land of the lemur, aka Madagascar? The island offers different wildlife from mainland Africa, plus things are a tad more basic than in more-established safari destinations, so a group tour can appeal even to experienced travellers.

Derek Schuurman, Rainbow Tours' Madagascar specialist, says: "Wildlife lovers who have already seen the big five on safari and are looking for a

new adventure will find visiting Madagascar on a small-group tour a much more exclusive and intimate experience.

"The many species of lemur are, of course, a highlight of any visit to Madagascar, but visitors can also expect to be wowed by colourful and rare birds, a huge variety of reptiles, and incredible endemic plants too."

**Book it:** Rainbow Tours' 16-day Madagascar Wildlife Discovery Tour starts at £4,520 on a full-board basis, with flights from the UK, domestic flights, park entry permits, transfers, excursions, and guide and driver throughout. Departures in September, October and November. Maximum group size 10. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

## Safaris outside Africa

### Tigers in India

Spotting a tiger stalking the savannah in Ranthambore National Park is up there with the ultimate bucket-list experiences. Great Rail Journeys combines it with the highlights of Rajasthan on its 12-day India's Golden Triangle & Tiger Safari tour.

### Little monkeys in Costa Rica

See sloths and toucans in Tortuguero, trek past an active volcano at Arenal, and spot the difference between howler and squirrel monkeys in Manuel

Antonio National Park – these are just some of the highlights of Trafalgar's family-oriented Monkeys, Jungles and Volcanoes tour.

### Polar bears in Canada

Travel 2 has a seven-night small-group tour to Manitoba, with highlights including a day on a tundra buggy in search of polar bears, beluga whale spotting in the Churchill River estuary, and glimpsing moose, black bears and bison in Riding Mountain National Park.



PICTURE: DANIEL AUSTIN

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