

FAMILY HOLIDAYS

CREATURE COMFORTS FOR ALL THE FAMILY



By Adrienne Pielou. Published in *Condé Nast Traveller* September 2013.



CHONGWE RIVER HOUSE, ZAMBIA

PLAY SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON IN THE LOWER ZAMBEZI

A gingerbread-style safari house set on the riverbank under a canopy of winterthorn acacias, Chongwe River House is very Swiss Family Robinson, with open-sided rooms, furniture carved from tree trunks and gloriously higgledy-piggledy walls made of branches. The four bedrooms have big bouncy beds and are lined with hessian drapes embroidered with cowrie shells and pieces of horn. Bathrooms are sublime, with waterfall showers and freestanding baths overlooking the bush.

Days whirl by in a flurry: go angling on the Zambezi and watch your little ones whoop with excitement as they catch tiger fish, which leap out of the water like Rottweilers. Pack teenagers off kayaking or on a water safari down the Chongwe Channel, then cool off in the pool while hippos graze on the nearby lawn and elephants swagger past.

The food (butternut squash soup, beef fillet in peppercorn sauce, mango coconut crumble) is fantastic, and you can design your own menu with the chef, who's brilliant at coping with pernickety young tastebuds. Top off the evenings with a night drive: the phenomenally experienced head guide Chris knows every inch of the bush, so you can creep through the grass tracking leopards. This is a place that will get Africa right under the skin of young ones and leave them tingling.

African Explorations (+44 1367 850566; www.africanexplorations.com) offers five nights at Chongwe House, full board, including game activities and domestic flights from Lusaka, from £2,209 per person