

# The best African wildlife holidays for 2019 – whatever your budget



It's time to meet the King of the jungle CREDIT: ISTOCK

By [Brian Jackman](#)

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Whatever your budget, situation or level of ability, there's a wildlife holiday waiting, and for animal magic you can't do much better than Africa...

## 1. Meet Zambia's big game on foot

The Luangwa Valley is where the concept of walking safaris was reinvented, and at Tafika, an idyllic camp on the banks of the Luangwa river, it has been fine-tuned to perfection by John Coppinger, one of [Zambia](#)'s most respected guides. Accompanied by a guide, an armed scout and a tea-bearer, you follow elephant paths and game trails across South Luangwa National Park, staying overnight at exclusive small bush camps (six guests maximum).

*Seven nights, including three at Tafika and four at Chikoko Trails Camps, cost from £4,525 per person*

## 2. Chad's Zakouma national park

Welcome to unknown Africa's last wild secret, a savage wilderness heaving with big game and huge flocks of birds. French-speaking [Chad](#) is the fifth-largest country in [Africa](#) – five times the size of the United Kingdom. Just to fly to Zakouma from N'Djamena, the capital, takes three hours. But you'll have it all to yourself, just like Ennedi in the country's north-eastern corner, a desert region of rock towers and nomadic people.

*Nine days cost from £4,800 per person*



Buffalo on the move at Zakouma national park Credit: Getty

### 3. Elephant magic in north Kenya

Nowhere else in Africa can you get closer to wild elephants or learn more about them than at this exotic eco camp in the Samburu National Reserve. Hardly surprising when you discover its creator is Oria Douglas-Hamilton, whose husband Iain is the world's leading authority on elephant behaviour. It's now run by Saba, Iain's eldest daughter.

*A seven-night safari, including four nights at Elephant Watch Camp and three nights at Samburu Intrepids, costs from £5,000 per person*

### 4. Exclusive Okavango

A bespoke mobile camping safari with Barclay Stenner recalls the golden age of Hemingway's Africa with a generous dash of 21st-century creature comforts thrown in. Living under canvas, cheek by jowl with elephants, leopards, lions and wild dogs, there's no better way to explore [Botswana's](#) incomparable Okavango Delta.



The Okavango Delta - there's nowhere in the world quite like it Credit: Kelly Cheng

*Seven nights cost from £7,000 per person for two sharing, including return flights from London*

### 5. Catch the Great Migration

This tailor-made trip is perfect for first-time safari-goers looking for unparalleled game viewing and all the action of the [Great Migration](#) coupled with a little R&R in Zanzibar at the end. It includes two nights at Ngorongoro and four nights in the

northern Serengeti at Lemala Mara, a great, little mobile camp ideally placed for watching the wildebeest river crossings.

*Eleven nights from £4,503 per person including return flights from the UK.*

## **6. Meet the Lion King in Kenya**

[Kenya](#) is where safaris were born and lions still rule the savannah. Fly from Nairobi to Elsa's Kopje, a five-star lodge in Meru, the park where George and Joy Adamson lived the legend of Elsa, the Born Free lioness. Then move on to Laikipia see the Big Five before a grand finale in the Maasai Mara in the migration season (July until October).



The world's mightiest beast? Credit: iStock

*A 10-night safari costs from £6,600 per person including three nights at Elsa's Kopje, two nights at Lewa Wilderness camp and three nights at Elephant Pepper Camp in the Mara, plus flights.*

## **7. Quintessential Kenya**

From the big cats of the Maasai Mara to the flamingo lakes of the Great Rift Valley, this affordable four-wheel drive safari includes return flights from London Heathrow with Kenya Airways.

*Seven days from £2,279 per person*

## 8. Rent a house in Zambia's bush

Not just any old house! Chongwe River House is an architectural fantasy of thatch and timbers overlooking the lower Zambezi National Park. It comes fully self-contained and staffed with a host and hostess, guide, chef and housekeeping team, allowing you complete freedom to plan your days. Children need to be 12 or over to go on canoe trips or walking safaris, but the staff love to arrange alternative activities for youngsters.



Chongwe River House Credit: Burrad Lucas

*Six nights for a family of four costs from £17,600 (£4,400 per person) excluding international flights.*

## 9. Bush and beach in Tanzania

Watch the children's eyes light up at the sight of elephants, big cats and zebras in the Serengeti and Ngorongoro. Then wash off the dust in the Indian Ocean on Zanzibar's coral sand beaches and take in a turtle conservation project.

*From £3,099 per adult, £2,199 per child including 10 nights' half-board accommodation, six lunches and transfers, but not flights.*

## 10. Meerkats of the Kalahari

Tswalu is South Africa's largest private wildlife reserve. Owned by the Oppenheimer family, it's a wilderness twice the size of Norfolk with just two luxury lodges and a

wealth of rare species. Explore it by private vehicle with your own personal guide and tracker, looking for desert rhinos, black-maned lions, meerkats and sable antelopes.

*Seven nights from £9,352, excluding flights.*



Well hello there friend Credit: iStock

### **11. Gorillas in your midst**

Capture your own David Attenborough encounters with the [mountain gorillas](#) of Rwanda. Bisate is a luxury lodge set in the amphitheatre of an extinct volcano with stunning views of the Virunga Massif, home to half of the world's mountain gorillas. From here you can set out to track one of 10 groups that live in the Volcanoes National Park.

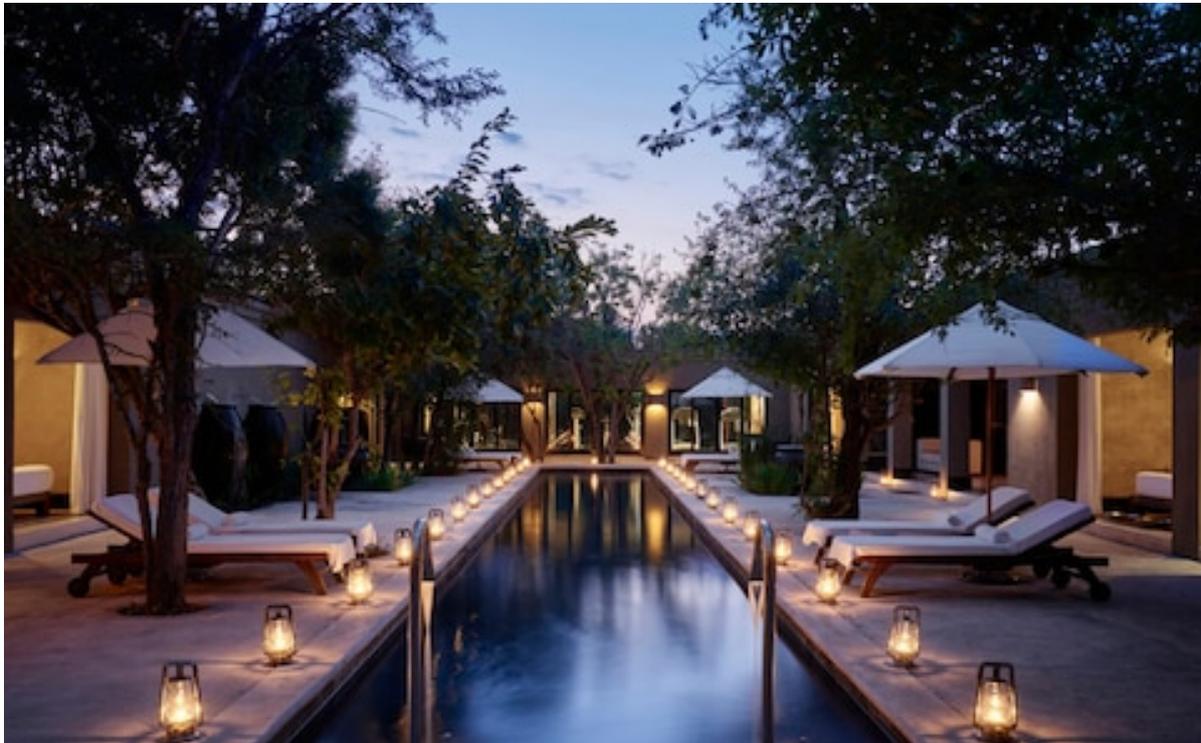
*Three nights at Bisate combined with three nights at Ol Seki costs from £15,950*

### **12. See the Big Five in style**

To immerse oneself in Royal Malewane's colonial splendour is to experience life in the bush at its most outrageously luxurious. Thornybush private game reserve,

adjoining the Kruger National Park, provides the setting, with Africa's most highly qualified guiding team on hand.

*An eight-day trip costs from £8,100 per person including four nights at Royal Malewane and three nights at the Silo, Cape Town's swanky high-end hotel.*



The Royal Malewane takes it up a level

### **13. The best flying safari ever**

Take off from Kilimanjaro Airport in your own private jet for the trip of a lifetime. First stop, the Serengeti with the wildebeest calving season in full swing. Spend three nights here and continue to Brazzaville in the Congo for three nights' trekking in search of western lowland gorillas. Next, to Namibia for three nights in the desert and three nights in the Okavango Delta before flying home from Nairobi. Try not to flinch at the jaw-dropping price...

*Thirteen nights on the ground cost from **£45,220 pp**, based on six people travelling. Price includes private charter flight with pilot guide, private guides and vehicles and exclusive camps.*

### **14. Magical Madagascar**

Having broken away from the African continent 65 million years ago, [Madagascar](#) is a world apart, marooned in the Indian Ocean with unique wildlife. On this 15-day

guided group tour you'll explore rainforests, nature reserves and national parks in search of the lemurs and exquisite chameleons for which the island is renowned.

*From £2,899 (add £365 for single room) including flights*

**Contact - The Explorations Company (01367 850566;  
[explorationscompany.com](http://explorationscompany.com)).**