



EXPERTS
IN TRAVEL
FOR OVER
80 YEARS

Fodor'sTravel

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO
AFRICAN SAFARIS

WITH SOUTH AFRICA, KENYA, TANZANIA,
BOTSWANA, NAMIBIA, RWANDA, UGANDA,
AND VICTORIA FALLS

GAME PARKS | TOUR OPERATORS | LODGES | GATEWAY CITIES



WHY GO WITH AN OPERATOR?

Booking a vacation yourself online is now very much the norm, and there's a widespread perception that you'll get a more authentic and reasonably priced experience if you do it all yourself.

This approach often works for American or European city visits, but not as frequently for a safari in Africa. You may save money, but you could end up with hassles that outweigh the savings.

An exception is an overland safari, or a self-drive safari in South Africa (*See Planning Your Safari for more about the various types of safaris*). One of the main reasons to book yourself is to choose what you want to do and when, but all of the outfitters we feature offer customized trips.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Do you have only 12 days or less? Africa is huge and infrastructure isn't well developed outside South Africa. Flights from the United States and Europe are long and seldom direct, and if one leg is delayed you can miss your connection and derail your whole itinerary. Just getting to a lodge from an airstrip can be a time-consuming journey, too. A tour operator will know the ins and outs of local travel so you're aware of traveling times in advance, and they'll sort things out if they don't go as planned. They also know the best ways to contact lodges and airlines, which can be challenging due to time differences between countries on the continent and the United States, as well as unreliable phone and Internet.

Safety and surprises. Although the countries you're likely to visit are largely stable and safe, first-time travelers in particular can be anxious about their virgin journey into unknown terrain. Political climates can change quickly, and news can be slow to filter out through traditional news channels. Your operator has contacts on the ground who keep them up-to-date with relevant information. Natural disasters, or even heavier-than-expected rainfall, can make roads dangerous or impassable, and a tour operator can adjust your itinerary accordingly. And they will be accountable if anything goes wrong or if you don't receive the service you paid for.

Specific requests or interests. When you plan a safari, you're presented with multiple countries and infinite options, depending on your budget, the time of year, whether you want to see animals and landscape in a vehicle, on foot, on horseback, or on a boat, and whether you want to stay in a canvas tent or a hotel. You may have dietary or health issues, or want an eco-holiday rather than a butler and private plunge pool. You might want to see three countries in 10 days or just one in a week. A good tour operator will discuss your preferences and tailor an experience that delivers exactly what you want and how you want it, saving you weeks of research. Tour operators also have the kind of overview of an area and its various options that you can't pick up from reading individual reviews of places online.

Details, big and small. Weight allowance on planes, yellow-fever certificates, visas, tipping—these are just some of the easily overlooked details that a good outfitter will tend to. You'll also receive valuable information about local culture and customs.

Choices and prices. Hotels and lodges have two sets of prices—rack rates, which are what the public pays, and a cheaper rate for tour operators. The operator will add their own markup, but you often still pay less, and you'll be aware of all the costs involved up-front, which allows you to budget better. Tour operators will also buffer you against currency fluctuations—the price you'll pay months in advance of a trip will be guaranteed. Also, many lodges don't take bookings directly from the public because they also prefer their clients to go through an operator, so you'll automatically lose out on a lot of good choices.

TYPES OF SAFARI OPERATORS

African tour operator. Usually based in the United States, this type of company specializes in tours and safaris to Africa and works with a safari operator that provides support on the ground. Start dates and itineraries are set for some trips, but customized vacations can almost always be arranged. Travelers can find out the details of these trips through retail travel agents but can also deal directly with the company, usually by talking with them about their preferences on the phone and then receiving a personalized itinerary and quote via email.

African safari operator/ground operator. This type of outfitter is a company in Africa that provides logistical support to a U.S.-based tour operator by seeing to the details of your safari. An operator might charter flights, pick you up at the airport, and take you on game-viewing trips. Some operators own or manage safari lodges. In addition, a safari operator communicates changing trends and developments in the region to tour operators and serves as your on-site contact in cases of illness, injury, or other unexpected situations. For example, Beyond is an African tour operator that uses a ground operator to handle logistics and accommodations. Micato and Wilderness Safaris on the other hand, handle every stage of your trip themselves.

Retail travel agent. In general, a travel agent sells trip packages directly to consumers. In most cases an agent doesn't have a geographical specialty. When called on to arrange a trip to Africa, the travel agent turns to an African tour operator for details.

Outfitter	Location	Tel. no.	Website	Countries Covered
Beyond	South Africa	27/11809-4300 888/882-3742	www.andbeyond.com	All
Abercrombie & Kent	USA	888/611-4711	www.abercrombiekent.com	All
Access2Tanzania	USA	718/715-1353	www.access2tanzania.com	Rwanda, Tanzania
Africa Adventure Company	USA	800/882-9453	www.africa-adventure.com	All
Africa Serendipity	USA	212/288-1714	www.africanserendipity.com	Kenya, Tanzania
African Portfolio	USA	800/700-3677	www.onsafari.com	All
Black Tomato	USA	646/558-3644	www.blacktomato.com	All
Cheli & Peacock	Kenya	254/20/60-4053	www.chelipeacock.com	Kenya
Deeper Africa	USA	888/658-7102	www.deeperafrica.com	Kenya, Tanzania
Doug Macdonald Safaris	Zimbabwe	263/778-219208	www.dougmacsafaris.com	All
Earthlife Expeditions	Tanzania	255/753-891310	www.earthlifeexpeditions.com	All
Eyes on Africa	USA	888/450-9247	www.eyesonafrica.net	All
Extraordinary Journeys	USA	212/226-7331	www.extraordinaryjourneys.com	All
Gamewatchers Safaris	Kenya	877/710-3014	www.porini.com	Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, Zambia
Ker & Downey	USA	800/423-4236	www.kerdowneysafaris.com	All
Micato Safaris	USA	212/545-7111	www.micatosafaris.com	All
Natural Habitat Adventures	USA	800/543-8917	www.nathab.com	All
Nomad Tanzania	Tanzania	255/784-734490	www.nomad-tanzania.com	Tanzania
Premier Tours	USA	800/545-1910	www.premiertours.com	All
ROAR Africa	USA	855/666-7627	www.roarafrica.com	All
Roy Safaris	Tanzania	255/272-502115	www.roysafaris.com	Kenya, Tanzania
Safari Infinity	Tanzania	255/688-285354	www.safari-infinity.com	Tanzania
Wilderness Safaris	South Africa	27-11/807-1800	www.wilderness-safaris.com	South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Travel Beyond	USA	800/ 876-3131	www.travelbeyond.com	All
The Wild Source	USA	720/497-1250	www.thewildsource.com	Tanzania, Botswana

Choosing An Outfitter

Source has a wide range of programs that focus on enriching the lives of local people and conserving wildlife, including the hiring and training of local wildlife biologists, sponsoring students, and improving health clinics—they are the first safari operator to employ Tanzanian wildlife biologists to conduct big cat research. **What they do best:** Wild Source's belief that the direct economic empowerment of African guides through ownership is critical to establishing lasting conservation sets the company apart. ✉ Golden ☎ 720/497-1250 🌐 www.thewildsource.com.

Wilderness Safaris. Wilderness Safaris specializes in creating memorable journeys in some of Africa's most remote and pristine areas, while also helping to ensure the future of the continent's spectacular wildlife. The company operates a wide array of safari camps and lodges, from "seven star" premier accommodation to mobile safaris known as Explorations, to tailor-made itineraries and honeymoon packages. Wilderness has more than 50 lodges and camps, all with different styles, so there is something for everyone. They have a regional office in each country in which they operate, as well as a head office in Gaborone, Botswana, ensuring that their ground operations run very smoothly. **Destinations:** Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe. **Popular packages:** The Great Wilderness Journey, Botswana, 11 days, from \$10,403; Desert Dune Safari, 10 days, from \$5,300. **Philanthropy:** In addition to a 4C's sustainability program (Conservation, Community, Culture, and Commerce), Wilderness has also created two nonprofit programs to further its aims of helping children in Africa: Children in the Wilderness and the Wilderness Wildlife Trust. **What they do best:** Incredible destinations, authentic experiences, and seamless service from start to finish. ✉ 373 Rivonia Blvd., Rivonia ☎ 11/257-5000 🌐 www.wilderness-safaris.com.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED OUTFITTERS

Africa Adventure Company. Based in Florida, Africa Adventure Company is renowned for arranging personalized travel with a strong focus on sustainable tourism and eco-conservation. Their experienced staff listen closely to what kind of experience their clients are after and match it with a suitable itinerary according to their budget, from affordable to high-end. Owner Mark Nolting has spent more than 30 years exploring and researching Africa and has written several guidebooks. His partner Alison managed safari camps for many years and now works on developing new safari programs for both repeat and new clients as well organizing community and volunteer programs. They promote camps that are symbiotic with nature and the community, and offer exquisite game viewing with top-notch guides. They also offer add-on tours, such as beach escapes and honeymoon packages. ✉ 2601 E. Oakland Blvd., Suite 600, Fort Lauderdale ☎ 800/882-9453 🌐 www.africanadventure.com.

Africa Serendipity. This New York-based company has excellent Africa-based operators and specializes in Kenya and Tanzania exclusively. Although they offer suggested itineraries, the trip is ultimately custom-designed for the client based on what they want to see and do, their budget, and the time of the year. Clients often combine Kenya and

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projects, such as school libraries and hospitals, which guests are encouraged to visit as part of their trip. ☒ *PO Box 16353, Kimandolo Area, Arusha* ☎ 753/891-310 🌐 www.earthlifeexpeditions.com.

Extraordinary Journeys. Founded and operated by a mother-daughter team who have over half a century of combined safari knowledge, Extraordinary Journeys specializes in creating unique, custom safari experiences to Southern and East Africa. Itineraries mix and match safari camps, lodges, and private villas to create a true sense of being on an exotic adventure, with travel by private plane, 4x4, hot air balloon, horse, and/or camel. The Extraordinary Journeys team has planned well over 4,000 unique safaris, but all bear the hallmarks of first-hand knowledge, personalized service, and social responsibility. ☒ *345 W. 58th St., New York* ☎ 212/226-7331 🌐 www.extraordinaryjourneys.com.

Eyes on Africa. Whether you're a honeymooner, wildlife enthusiast, or photographer, Chicago-based Eyes on Africa will find a trip to match your budget. A wide range of interests and preferences can be catered to, and they have a long list of budget options, too. Along with safaris, they also cover mountainous destinations and beaches. They are becoming well-known for their occasional group photography trips, and have expanded to South America, India, and Sri Lanka in order to service requests from their existing customer base. ☒ *1743 W. Fletcher St., Chicago* ☎ 800/457-9575 🌐 www.eyesonafrica.net.

Ker & Downey. With more than 50 years of experience in the travel industry, Ker & Downey is one of the oldest and most respected safari companies in Africa; they also have an office in Texas. The company utilizes its exclusive camps to provide luxury safari experiences and offers in-house expertise for all destinations as well as excellent on-the-ground service. They work hard to get to know their clients so they can best customize each itinerary. ☒ *6703 Highway Blvd., Katy* ☎ 800/423-4236 🌐 www.kerdowney.com.

Nomad Tanzania. Nomad Tanzania owns and operates a collection of unique camps and privately guided safaris across Tanzania. They also offer an efficient ground-handling (airport pickup and drop-off, on-the-ground support, etc.) and safari-planning service throughout Tanzania and Zanzibar. They have excellent guides on staff and pride themselves on "going the extra mile for their guests." While each trip is fully customized, the website has sample itineraries for inspiration. ☎ 787/595-908 🌐 www.nomad-tanzania.com.

Premier Tours. Although it's based in Philadelphia, Premier Tours is owned and managed by people born and raised in Africa who have organized all kinds of safaris, from basic camping trips to celebrity vacations. CEO Julian Harrison specializes in the development of ecotourism on the continent and is the founding member (and first USA tour operator) of The UN's Environment Program's Initiative on Sustainable Tourism Development. Other team members lead tour groups as naturalist guides, and participate in research projects in various African countries. Beach escapes can be added to safaris. ☒ *1120 South St., Philadelphia* ☎ 800/545-1910 🌐 www.premiertours.com.