



How NOT to choose an African Safari

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How NOT to choose an African Safari

1) Don't just choose a standard safari package from a brochure or newspaper advert

You are already going about things the right way, by searching on the internet, rather than visiting a brochure-based travel agent, or responding to one of those fixed departure date “10 days on safari in Kenya for under £1000, including flights” adverts that appear in the Sunday colour supplements. Don't be tempted by offers like the above. As the Sunday Times itself once pointed out: “you'll drive in a convoy of overstuffed mini-vans, eating poor food in dreary dining halls, sleeping in characterless compounds that feel more like Basildon than the bush”.



Game Viewing by Minivan

Group tours such as this may be comparatively cheap, but usually offer very poor value for money – their organisers have large marketing costs to cover, and they will have become adept at pruning all unnecessary costs (their ‘unnecessary cost’ being the quality of your holiday enjoyment).

An African safari is such an individual event that it can only really be chosen with the help of a dedicated Africa specialist, with a detailed personal knowledge of your proposed destination. There are many such specialists to be found on the internet – you just have to choose which one to use. The problem that you will find is that there is just so much information to digest and choose between – which country to visit, when to go, where to stay, how much to pay, who to book with – that it begins to look an impossible task to decide.

One thing to bear in mind is that – to a first approximation – it doesn't matter where you go, or when you go, or who with. After all, the primary objective of an African safari is to view (and usually photograph) big and little game, birds etc, and you will achieve this virtually by choosing at random. However the difference between a good safari and a great safari – that you will remember for the rest of your days – lies in the detail. Thus, it **does** matter which country you choose to visit, and when you choose to go, how much you pay and so on.

In preparing this guide, AfricaAway makes no secret of the fact that we hope that you will choose us to design your own safari for you. We don't pretend to have expertise in every possible destination and itinerary (although many tour operators do make such a claim), but we do believe that in those areas in which we do have a particular expertise you will not find a more professional company with whom to deal. Our job is to provide you with a truly memorable safari experience – without paying the earth for it.

In describing the various mistakes that you should try to avoid making in choosing your safari, we will also explain how AfricaAway handles the issues concerned. Incidentally, most of the photographs that accompany this report were taken by AfricaAway personnel – we have all actually been there and experienced what there is to see.



2) Don't believe everything that you read

Most quality newspapers contain regular travel supplements, particularly at the weekends. Often you will read an article by some journalist or other, describing the delights of various African (and other) destinations. These articles are largely meaningless. They invariably contain blandly enthusiastic descriptions of the locations visited, but with never a word of criticism. This is understandable, since the writers concerned are often freelance, travelling for free at the expense of the tour operator or camp owners whose product they are writing so enthusiastically about. Let's face it: if they didn't do this then they wouldn't be invited out on any more freebies, would they?



Game viewing in style

But, although they may well give some useful factual information, although nothing that couldn't be obtained elsewhere, they focus solely on the plus features of the destination concerned, never describing any of the minus features, which are crucial to your being able to decide whether or not you want to visit. Thus, for example, if there aren't any lions, elephant or other highly desirable wildlife in the location being described, they won't warn you of this, but merely avoid mentioning this aspect. We ourselves simply can't work like this: we would rather lose a booking than be responsible for sending guests on a trip that we know just isn't going to work for them. We believe that we have a duty to tell it like it is, at whatever cost to us.



Isaac, a Zambian park ranger

The classic example is a recent article on Kenya which went on at length about the attractions of the iconic Maasai Mara. So well-known is this latter destination that it comes close to the top of many people's wish-lists, fuelled by reviews like this. But the truth is that it has become totally ruined by tourism, with over 4000 bed-spaces serving a quite small park. In high season it resembles the M25 motorway, with upwards of a couple of dozen vehicles (of the closed minibus, rather than open-topped land cruiser, variety) surrounding each and every big cat sighting.

The game itself is about as wild as that in a UK safari park, and the guide quality is poor compared with elsewhere. Regrettably, visiting the Mara has become a very unrewarding activity, but how many other people have you ever experienced telling you the real truth about this?

There is actually a way around the problem, by staying in one of the Conservancies surrounding the Mara itself, where the game is just as plentiful, but where the number of potential visitors is markedly restricted to just those few camps that are situated here. And from here, if you wish, you can still spend a day in the Mara itself (although you probably won't want to repeat the experience).

An additional bonus while staying in the Conservancies is the opportunity to undertake a walking safari - which is not allowed in the Mara itself.



3) Don't choose the wrong country to visit

Let's face it – there are many African countries that you wouldn't even want to visit on a map! However for game viewing the principal destinations that you are likely to consider are (in alphabetical order) Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Let's start with Zimbabwe. Tour Operators promoting this country will tell you that, despite the ravages brought about by Robert Mugabe's lunatic internal policies, the game viewing/safari side of the country remains unimpaired. But why take the huge risk that the most of the game has already disappeared, to feed a starving population, together with the substantial personal risk due to internal unrest, when there are other destinations that already offered at least as good a safari experience, even before the current troubles developed.

Kenya is one of the two traditional safari destinations (South Africa is the other), but, although it is still possible to take an excellent safari here, much of the country's tourism has been spoiled by over-commercialism. In particular you should avoid cheap-looking tours that may involve little more than long (mainly non-game) drives, cooped up in a minibus, and staying in 200-bed lodges, rather than in intimate camps.



An African village

Tanzania, too, is an excellent safari destination, especially if you would like to be able to view an event such as the annual wildebeest migration in a very different context to its occurrence in Kenya (although this doesn't simply take place to order, and, to put it mildly, you will not be as alone in your game viewing experience as the wildlife documentaries that you have seen might suggest). However the key to visiting Tanzania is to choose one of its lesser-known areas, such as Ruaha or The Selous, which still contain an abundance of wildlife, but with comparatively few other tourists.

One of the major drawbacks to Kenya - and, to a lesser extent, Tanzania - is that many camps, and indeed most internal tours, still use minibuses of the type illustrated in the first section with which to conduct their game viewing, within which passengers may even have to wait their turn to stand up to look out of the pop-up roof space, which in itself is quite a dire experience so far as game viewing is concerned. On the other hand, the sort of open land cruiser illustrated in the previous section, not only gives infinitely better actual viewing, and sometimes, as you can see, much closer contact with some exciting wildlife, but will probably also have a suspension much better suited to the bush tracks that will be encountered should you venture off-road.

Botswana is a great place to visit, with its wide range of habitats from the Okavango Delta to the Chobe National Park. However it tends to be quite expensive, focusing more on exclusivity than on availability, and internal air travel (road travel is difficult) necessarily adds quite substantially to this cost. In addition you may not wish to sympathise with a government that appears to be dedicated to wiping out the few remaining bushmen to satisfy its tourist industry.



Namibia, again, is a superb destination, with a habitat that cannot be found elsewhere in Africa. However the first time safari visitor will probably get more from a more conventional destination, leaving Namibia for a future visit, when the desire to see big game in huge quantities has been sated.



A beach resort on Lake Malawi

Malawi is an interesting destination, containing as it does beachside locations to rival those of Kenya and Tanzania (on Lake Malawi) in addition to spectacular scenery and an increasingly diverse amount of big game and other wildlife.

Malawi probably isn't the place to go for your first safari, when abundant game viewing is the usual objective, but it is well worth considering for a future, and different, visit to this little-known region of Africa.

South Africa stands alone. It probably has the world's most luxurious safari lodges, often with superb golf thrown in (although of course at a price). It also has other attractions, such as the Cape, the Wine and Garden routes, and the Zulu battlegrounds. As a country it is also of course the most advanced in Africa, with a well-developed infrastructure of roads and air routes, although for many people these very features mean that they do not regard it as the 'Real Africa'.

That leaves Zambia, and we make no apology for stating that, for us at least, it is the safari destination of choice on *all* grounds (and since Zambia is also Africa's fastest growing safari destination, obviously we are not alone in holding this view). Most importantly, the game viewing here is as good as, or better than, anywhere else in the world (as an article in *The Independent* newspaper pointed out recently: in Kenya there are four visitors to every lion, whereas in Zambia there are four lions to every visitor!).

Of equal importance is that, in contrast to Kenya, South Africa and even Tanzania, Zambia hasn't experienced any problems due to international terrorism, or even due to internal violence: Zambia is above all a truly *peaceful* country, and the Zambian people are the friendliest in the world. When travelling in any foreign country, Africa especially, it is essential to feel that you are safe to do so: the importance of this cannot be over-emphasised.

Above all, Zambia is the 'Real Africa', totally unspoiled and wild. Add Zambia's Victoria Falls, the mighty Zambezi River, and many other marvellous natural phenomena, and you have the perfect safari destination. Most important of all: Zambia has many of the best guides in Africa. In terms of value for money Zambia cannot be bettered.

It will come as no surprise from the above to learn that AfricaAway specialises in Zambia (although we can offer excellent itineraries in all the other safari countries as well). With our intimate knowledge of the country, its National Parks, air routes, customs and quirks, not to mention a personal acquaintance with many more camps and lodges than virtually any other similar operator, we are confident that we can put together the ideal safari experience for you.

AfricaAway are THE Zambian safari specialists.



4) Don't choose the wrong time of year to visit

Periodically we get requests for itineraries that just aren't suitable at the time of year concerned. Now, we can either smile sweetly, and provide what the customer asks for. Or we can try to explain that it isn't really going to work – whereupon the risk is that they may go ahead anyway, booking through somebody else, only discovering too late that we were right after all.

The classic example is Victoria Falls. The amount of water coming over the Falls is dependent on the amount of rainfall occurring hundreds of miles upstream, weeks and weeks previously. From March through to July the Falls are stupendous, and still well worth seeing a month or two either side of this. But, for example, in September or October there may be virtually no water coming over at all (at least on the commonly visited Zambian side – the Zimbabwe side is lower and does attract what water there is).

Yet many tour operators, when asked to add a visit to the Falls onto a conventional game viewing safari in September or October (the best time for game viewing), will gladly oblige – to the visitor's resultant disappointment. Now, call us old fashioned, but we believe that if you visit a waterfall (especially one regarded as one of the seven wonders of the natural world) then you should expect to see water – falling! One tour operator even had the gall to claim that this was the best time to see the Falls (for 'Falls' read 'rocks') since there was no spray to obscure them – true!



Victoria Falls in May



Victoria Falls in October

We have lost count of the number of times that, staying in Livingstone in September or October, we have encountered people on expensive safari trips to, say, Botswana or South Africa, who have flown in for a couple of nights in order to see the Falls, to their total disappointment. Indeed it was this experience that first crystallised our decision that we weren't going to be like other tour operators, too ignorant or uncaring to give their clients what they have paid a lot of money to experience. The problem is in fact solvable, if you know the region intimately, since it is possible to travel onto the Zimbabwean side instead, where the river is lower, and water levels much higher, providing a much better spectacle. Thus, with careful planning it is still possible to construct an itinerary that provides both game viewing and a good view of the Falls, even if neither are at their very best.

Basically, if it's game viewing that you are after then you need to go in the months preceding the rainy season, when the grass is low and the game concentrates around the few water sources available (July to October in Zambia). In contrast, for birding – and especially photography – then the rainy (sometimes known as the 'green' – or more recently, in a flash of marketing 'genius', the 'emerald') season is the best time to visit (January to April in Zambia): the migratory bird species are present in numbers, and the absence of dust makes for much clearer air for photography. Game viewing is still acceptable at this time of year, although the seasonal bush camps don't open until at least early May, and therefore walking safaris cannot be undertaken until then. You also have to recognise that, while you can indeed walk



in Zambia, for example, in, say, October, you will need to restrict this activity to quite early in the day, since the heat can become unbearable later on.

Similar considerations apply to riverine activities, such as fishing or canoeing – there is a good time and a less good time (although with careful planning there is rarely a bad time). International flights cost more in July and August (for obvious reasons), but these are still the prime visitor months, leading to a certain amount of congestion in the more popular areas.

It is AfricaAway's job to ensure that you either visit Africa at the best time for the activity of your choice, or at least are forewarned as to its limitations. To summarise, in the case of Zambia:

- *For pure game viewing July to October is the very best time, with June and November also good.*
- *For walking, June to September are good months.*
- *For Victoria Falls April to July should ensure a spectacular view.*

Thus June or July isn't at all a bad compromise if you want to do all three.

5) Don't pay too much for your accommodation

Most of the 'safari lodge' accommodation offered in sub-Saharan Africa is priced in the range \$500 to \$1000 per person per night – which is not cheap! Very few tour operators will offer you accommodation priced any lower than this (they do, after all, make more commission the more you pay!). However there is, of course, an entire spectrum of accommodation available, with the cheapest end coming in as low as \$250 per person per night (for lodge/chalet accommodation), with camping and backpacker facilities even cheaper still.

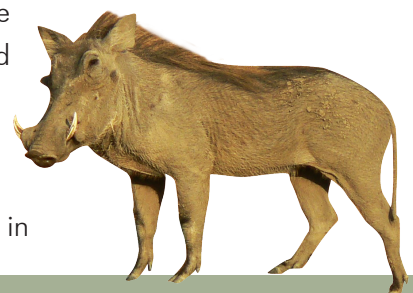


Top end luxury lodge

It is a useful rule of thumb in life that "you get what you pay for", and to some extent that is true here too. However, with care, it is still possible to find places that offer exceptional value for money, being priced towards the lower end of the range, yet with little reduction in the quality of the experience that they have to offer.

For a start it is important to recognise that, once you are out of camp, the experience is virtually the same for everybody – it's the same National Park and the same wildlife – which is what you came to see in the first place. The wildlife has no knowledge of where you slept last night!

The more expensive accommodation will usually have larger and more luxuriously appointed rooms. However we are not talking here about the difference between a boarding house and a 5* hotel – much of the charm of the accommodation offered is that it is basic, rustic, 'African', rather than air-conditioned and carpeted, and hence there is actually little to choose between the top end lodges and (some of) the cheaper ones. True, you may not get free shampoo etc, or leaves and flowers left artistically on your bedspread in



the latter, but these are touches, not basic necessities. In fact if you truly want to experience the 'real' Africa, then top-end luxury is not the answer. One guest at an expensive Kenyan safari lodge recently commented in a travel magazine on her return that it was "so luxurious that you forget that you're in the wilderness", quite oblivious to the fact that she actually wasn't!

Basically what the more up-market lodges offer is 'exclusivity' – there may be as few as 6-8 people sharing the camp with you. This is almost always true of the more remote bush camps used mainly for walking safaris, although this number can rise to 20+ in some of the main lodges. However even here the ratio of staff to guests may be quite a lot higher than in their cheaper counterparts, with specially employed hosts and hostesses looking after your every need. Game drives, too, may be restricted to, say, four people, sharing a double bank of seats, rather than, say, nine people, sharing a triple bank. At meals all guests will dine together at a table set under the stars, laid with a freshly laundered tablecloth. Often surprise entertainments such as a champagne picnic in the middle of a game drive, or, more simply, brunch in the bush, may be provided.

In the cheaper places there will probably be a restaurant instead. However this can be a real advantage, since, unlike in most upmarket lodges, you will have a choice of a dozen or so dishes – from snacks up to main meals, each individually prepared to order, and therefore you can eat what you want, when you want and with whom you want: often the food is quite superb, since it is being cooked individually to your own personal order. The other guests at such places may also be more (or less) to your liking than those at the top end lodges.



Why then are such places so cheap, if what they have to offer is so good? The answer lies partly in the fact that they have to compete on price since they are not on most tour operators' lists. Mainly the answer lies in the fact that many began life as camping sites and backpacker locations, having more recently upgraded and added safari huts and the like. As we have said, their accommodation standards, and the facilities provided, can rival those of their more expensive rivals, but their pricing structure remains rooted in their backpacking origins. The campers and overlanders are still there, but mostly keep to themselves, and the exclusivity offered by the top end lodges may not prove to be all that much of an advantage after all.



One of these costs \$340 per night,
while the other costs \$1155 per night.
Can you tell which is which?

Actually a more important factor than exclusivity is probably the standard of guiding, which does tend to be higher at the more expensive locations, although in practice the standard in Zambia is high wherever you go, since the guides are almost universally drawn from local Zambians who have spent their entire lives in the area. However the difference between a good safari and a great one can very much depend on the quality of the guide, and therefore we would encourage clients to err on the more expensive side if their budget will stretch to this. This is not to say that you won't get good guides



at budget locations – one of the very cheapest trains its guides so well that they are regularly ‘poached’ by the more expensive lodges – but it is much more likely that the more you pay the more likely you will be to be better guided, and the better (although not necessarily better value for money) experience you will have.

It would be a mistake to think that all cheaper camps and lodges can rival their more expensive cousins in the way that we have described. However, at AfricaAway we have an intimate knowledge and experience of all the various types of camps and lodges within Zambia, and have used this knowledge to select those few at the cheaper end that still meet our demanding criteria – camps and lodges that most tour operators haven’t even heard of. We can offer these with complete confidence, and with the assurance that we have stayed there ourselves (and indeed will continue to do so, by choice, whenever possible). In this way, by making a suitable mix of the different levels of accommodation on offer in Zambia, we can tailor your safari to virtually any (sensible) budget, with the knowledge that you will have a truly memorable experience. It is much more difficult to find low-priced bush camp accommodation, since the small numbers that can be accommodated here do not normally permit the benefits of scale that enable the budget main camps and lodges to compete so successfully on price. However, we still can achieve this!

AfricaAway also undertakes that the price that you will pay for your accommodation is never more than you would pay if you were to book directly with the camp or lodge concerned, over the internet. Our pricing policy is completely transparent, and each element of your trip is separately priced in your final quotation, and hence able to be verified. In particular, we make it very clear exactly what is included in the price that you are paying - usually all accommodation, meals and safari activities - but sometimes items such as bar bills, laundry, park fees and transfers are not. Our sole source of income is the tour operator commission that we receive – no mark-ups are ever applied, and there are no ‘middleman’ costs. We also coordinate all ground transfers and so on.

6) Don’t choose a tour operator who doesn’t really know the product

We have already discussed how the less well-informed tour operator could send you out at the wrong time of year for what you want to do, or to, for example, an unsuitable or dangerous destination. However the importance of choosing the best tour company goes much deeper than this.

If your chosen tour operator doesn’t really know the country, merely selecting camps and lodges off their



Managing Director Henry Southworth in camp

websites, or via brief acquaintance, then you could end up with an itinerary that just doesn’t really work. For example, we have seen itineraries that involve the guest zigzagging wildly about a National Park, with no attention paid to the natural sequence of moving from one lodge to another, or to providing a carefully chosen range of habitats from which to enjoy the experience provided. We have seen guests booked onto what look like comparatively short road transfers (to avoid paying for more expensive internal flights) but which

would actually involve many hours’ uncomfortable travel on unmade roads, losing a whole day in a most unproductive manner.



Your tour operator should provide you with a detailed itinerary, breaking the cost down lodge by lodge, and should clearly specify if the price is not all-inclusive (some places charge extra for bar bills, park fees or game drives, for example). You should also be told exactly where you are staying, rather than just being given a vague description like “one of the best camps in the so-and-so national park” (in which case you can’t check on or compare prices, and you could end up in whatever lodge still has last minute vacancies – for what will become obvious reasons).

Above all, a **passion** for Africa is essential, if you, too, are to gain the most from this ultimate travel destination. Hopefully you will be able to detect whether this passion is present from the general approach taken by the tour operator you are considering using.

At AfricaAway we are totally committed to Africa in general, and to Zambia in particular. We visit every year or so, constantly checking on existing locations to ensure that standards haven’t changed, and researching new ones (it’s tough work, but somebody has to do it!). If we send you to stay somewhere then we will almost always have stayed there ourselves, and at least have visited, and we will be on first name terms with the owners, hosts, guides and other camp staff. We understand the vagaries of the internal flight system, and know what alternatives can be called upon if things don’t exactly turn out as planned (this is Africa, after all). Finally, unlike many other tour operators and agents, we are an independent, privately-owned company, with no vested interest in working with any particular lodge or camp. Hence we are free to construct your itinerary in a totally impartial and objective manner, choosing only those destinations that we believe will best suit your own personal aspirations.

7) Don’t choose an unrealistic itinerary or restrict yourself to game viewing only

There is a school of thought that if the potential customer comes to you with a planned itinerary, then you sell this to him, even though you yourself know that it really isn’t going to work all that well. Forgive us, but we can’t operate in that way.

For a start, don’t try to cram too much into the time that you have available. We realise that an African safari may be a once in a lifetime trip for many people, but trying to visit too many countries or trying to visit too many camps in the one area, without ever getting to know a particular environment, will diminish,



Walking safari

rather than enhance, the quality of your experience, as you spend most of your precious time in transit, to no purpose. The “Today is Wednesday, so it must be Belgium” approach does not work in Africa.

Sometimes people will ask us to arrange, say, a ten day game viewing (by vehicle) safari, excluding walking or other activities. Sounds wonderful, but it really isn’t ideal. In a country like, for example, Zambia, that is so

extraordinarily rich in game, you will usually have seen everything several times over within three or four days. In one sense you can’t get to see enough elephants, lions, leopards,



or whatever is your own particular fancy, but the reality is that, after bumping along in a 4WD through the bush, or on heavily rutted roads, for several days, the price of achieving a few more sightings can be a high one to pay. At some camps there are game watching hides, for example hippo hides, and a half a day spent here can be at least as interesting as yet another game drive. Game viewing will probably remain the principal target of your visit, but include other activities as well – and then finish off with more game drives, to collect those few last elusive sightings, if necessary.

If you going to go on safari, especially to Zambia, then you should certainly consider combining game viewing with a walking safari. Zambia is, after all, the home of the walking safari. This needn't run for the 6-8 days that a custom-designed walking safari could last, but the experience of taking to your feet in the bush is an unsurpassable one. The walking doesn't have to be hard or long – usually it is at a very leisurely pace, stopping frequently to view small animals, insects and plants, not to mention, quite often, the usual big game as well.

AfricaAway specialises in walking safaris, mainly in Zambia, having devised a number of exciting routes of their own.

Canoeing and fishing safaris are very popular too – especially on the awesome Lower Zambezi, where a backdrop of hippos, elephants and other big game make this an almost surreal experience. More and more people are choosing to cap off their safari by relaxing for a few days on a tropical beach, and there is nowhere better to achieve this than on the idyllic (and remarkably cheap) island of Zanzibar, just off the Tanzanian coast.



Tiger fishing on the Zambezi

However Africa is a magical continent that has so much more to offer than just wildlife and scenery, and a visit here can be as much a cultural experience as a recreational one. Thus, think about taking half a day to visit a local village: you will remember this long after the elephant sightings are a dim memory. Combine this with a visit to the local school: the kids will be delighted by your visit, and you will find it to be immensely rewarding. We can promise you that it won't be like the tourists who recently signed up for a village visit in Cape Town, only to be robbed at gunpoint – that's South Africa for you, not Zambia.

AfricaAway designs its sample itineraries with great care, and will apply equal care in tailoring to your own expectations and aspirations to make a workable itinerary. We will try to incorporate a variety of different habitats, in order to maximise the game viewing opportunities. In staying at different camps and lodges in this way we will ensure that the transfer between each is a game drive in its own right (not a several hours' drive along a boring unmade road in the middle of nowhere). Internal flight costs are high in Africa, and if you are intending to visit more than one location or National Park, then we will endeavour to plan the most efficient itinerary, keeping such costs – and time consumed – to a minimum. We are particularly delighted if we can expose you to activities that lie outside the conventional 'safari' experience – just ask if you are interested in finding out more about the 'Real Africa'.



8) Don't try to book at the last minute (possibly hoping for a late discount)



We live in a world of LastMinute.com, and other late booking discount deals. However this approach just doesn't work with an African safari. True, camps may not be fully booked, and might willingly cut such deals. However the cost of international flights usually rises inexorably as the departure date approaches, more than cancelling out the saving on cheaper accommodation, whilst the vital communicating internal flights may already be fully booked. Equally important, you need time to plan your medical jabs and so on: these may need to be started on a month or two before you travel. It's good, too, to have plenty of time to research your trip – reading up about the sightings to be expected, etc.

If you are really determined to try to save money in this way then the only way in which it could work would be to get all flights booked up well ahead of time, and then take pot luck on which camps might still have availability left at the last minute. Although AfricaAway is well placed to negotiate this for you, if cost cutting is your main criterion, you would be better advised booking well ahead at one of the lower priced camps that we recommend: these truly represent amazing value for money.

9) Don't travel with the wrong expectations

Africa is a magical country, but one that is totally different from what you will be familiar with. Go there with an open mind. Don't restrict yourself to the (actually quite) artificial world of the safari lodge – there is much more to Africa than mere game viewing. Try to meet the local people – you will be amazed by their friendliness (in Zambia, anyway). Don't try to do and see everything in one brief visit – savour the experience. The pace of life in Africa is quite slow – adapt to this. Not everything always goes to plan – this is Africa (but then nor does it always go to plan travelling in Europe or the USA, for example). There is a saying 'AWA' – Africa Wins Again! You can't push it; you have to go with the flow.



Landing on bush strip

bush camp with only a mosquito net between you and the ravenous (!) wildlife outside may not be an experience that you yourself could relish.

Again, you need to consider which activities are suited to you. Flying by light aircraft into a remote bush strip is a truly exciting experience – but it's not for everybody. If it's not for you then you do need to let us know, and we can then design your trip around this. At the same time, don't be tempted to avoid internal flight costs by choosing lengthy road transfers instead. These can be extremely uncomfortable experiences, which cost you more in lost time than you save on the flight. Similarly, sleeping in a rustic



Although we can avoid having you share your safari experience with a bunch of other tourists crammed into the same minibus, we can't guarantee that you will meet up with a Robert Redford look-alike in an Out of Africa scenario either. But do tell us what your aspirations are, and AfricaAway will do its best to meet them.

Finally a 'Do' – Do brush up on your survival skills! (This part is not entirely serious)

Africa (like Europe, the USA, and everywhere else in the world) can be a dangerous place if you don't know what you're doing. In actual fact you are probably much, much safer in Africa than would be a native African suddenly transplanted into the middle of London or New York.

On hearing that one of our guests was to visit Zambia on safari, a friend of his warned that he would need to be careful. Seeking further illumination, the guest enquired in what way exactly. "Well, because of snakes and things", came the answer. The guest opined that there were slightly more dangerous things than that to worry about. "Such as?" enquired his friend. The guest thought about buffalo, hippo, elephant and so on, but finally settled on lions. "What, do they allow them in there?" exclaimed his friend.



Not all wildlife is dangerous!

Get fit before you arrive – so you can run fast if necessary. The story goes about the middle-aged couple who emerge from their hut to be faced with a hungry looking lion. "Run", yells the husband. "But we can't run faster than a lion", moans the wife. "I don't have to run faster than a lion", he replies, "I only have to run faster than you!" However, rest assured, this is not actually a likely scenario, although any camp set in the bush is quite likely to have big game passing through from time to time – elephants especially – which is why the camp staff are permanently on the lookout for this on your behalf.

AfricaAway actually supplies all its guests with a guide to safe behaviour in camp and in the bush, and all our camp guides are specially trained to put their guests' safety before their own.

Good Luck! We want you to have a great trip - whoever you choose to book through!

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