

One-Country Wonders

Go-to guides for the country of your choice



BELIZE

Chaa Creek Lodge and Expeditions

Highlights: Hiking and biking among Maya ruins, river canoeing through rain forest (chaacreek.com)



COSTA RICA

Costa Rica Expeditions

Highlights: Mountain biking Arenal Volcano, hiking Monteverde cloud forests, kayaking jungle creeks (costaricaexpeditions.com)



ECUADOR

Ecoventura

Highlights: Island-hopping in the Galápagos, canoeing to rain forest villages, diving with hammerheads (ecoventura.com)



MONGOLIA

Nomadic Expeditions

Highlights: Camel trekking in the Gobi desert, horseback riding the Mongolian steppe (nomadicexpeditions.com)



NEW ZEALAND

Active New Zealand

Highlights: Cycling to Milford Sound, snorkeling with fur seals, hiking the Routeburn Track (activenewzealand.com)



PERU

Inkaterra

Highlights: Hiking to Machu Picchu, canoeing an Amazon tributary, trekking to Andean villages (inkaterra.com)



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Paria Springs Eco Community

Highlights: Mountain biking peaks that slope to the Caribbean, river kayaking past kingfishers (pariasprings.com)



VENEZUELA

Natoura Travel and Adventure Tours

Highlights: Trekking to Angel Falls, snorkeling the Los Roques Archipelago, paragliding in the Andes (natoura.com)



Safari

Mark Thornton Safaris

99 97 97 99 96.7 97.7

This small Tanzania-only outfitter caps its clientele at 100 a year and delivers unparalleled intimacy on its Serengeti bush treks—all of which are led by a team of Maasai warriors and Thornton himself. His trips are part luxury camping, part ecology course, and part raw adventure.

Signature Trip: "Serengeti-Tarangire Walking Safari," Tanzania, 12 days, \$5,995; thorntonsafaris.com

Wilderness Safaris

97 98 96 89 98.3 95.7

When two former South African guides started Wilderness Safaris back in 1983, their focus was conservation through tourism, and the company still emphasizes conservation first and foremost. The fact that its remote high-end lodges in southern Africa have won more than a dozen major travel awards is a bonus.

Signature Trip: "The Great Wilderness Journey," Botswana, 11 days, \$6,780; wilderness-safaris.com

Conservation Corporation Africa

95 93 96 88 98.3 94.1

CC Africa's 40-plus camps and lodges in East and southern Africa launched a new era of safari style in the 1990s: chic, luxurious, and laid-back, with some of the closest wildlife encounters on the continent. And ecotourism isn't just a side project—the operator has generated millions for wildlife conservation.

Signature Trip: "Treasures of Tanzania," eight days, \$4,518; ccafrica.com

Gamewatchers Safaris

89 93 98 94 93.3 93.5

Private wilderness camps in key habitats near Mount Kenya and the Masai Mara give guests exclusive access to wildlife conservancies where no other tour vehicles are permitted. Gamewatchers also offers Kenya's only sea kayaking safaris in the remote Lamu archipelago.

Signature Trip: "Grand Kenya Safari," 12 days, \$6,775; porini.com

Micato Safaris

92 90 96 90 93.3 92.3

Micato means luxury—private tent expeditions with a personal staff, your choice of Africa's top safari lodges, champagne bush breakfasts. Its trip menu includes several airborne safaris, which allow clients to spend more time viewing game and less time traveling between parks.

Signature Trip: "Micato Grand Safari," Kenya and Tanzania, 15 days, \$14,870; micato.com

Explore, Inc.

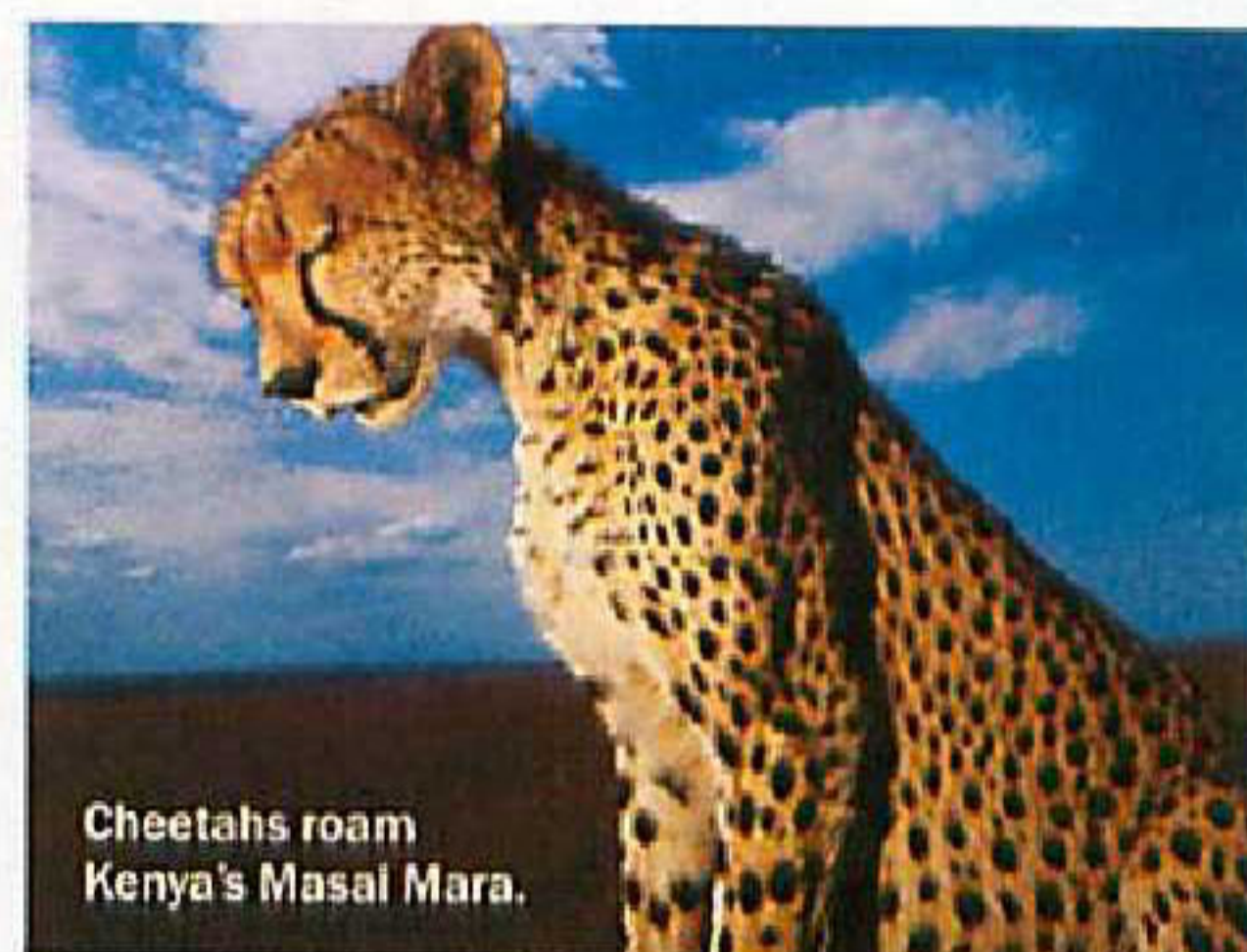
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Explore, Inc., specializes in innovative safaris, from dodging hippos on the Zambezi to tracking gorillas on beaches in Gabon. For a cultural hit, hang with the Berbers in Morocco or trek with the Tuareg of Niger. Signature Trip: "Wild Africa," Botswana and Zambia, 14 days, \$7,200; exploreafrika.net

Africa Adventure Consultants

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When planning your safari with AAC, expect personal contact with husband-and-wife owners Kent and Kelly. During their offbeat adventures in Tanzania, Botswana, and South Africa, you might meet a lion researcher in the field or trek Kilimanjaro's back trails. Signature Trip: "Chimp Adventure," Tanzania, eight days, \$6,540; adventuresinafrica.com



Cheetahs roam Kenya's Masai Mara.

Kensington Tours

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Luxury without the high price tag is the guiding principle on Kensington's East and North Africa tours. The outfitter stays close to guests by operating in-country offices and using its own tented camps and vehicles. Signature Trip: "Game Tracker," Kenya and Tanzania, ten days, \$3,808; kensingtontours.com

Deeper Africa

85 81 91 82 98.3 87.5

This company launched five years ago with trips on the popular Tanzania safari circuit. It has since expanded its portfolio into farther-flung parts of East Africa, including Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, for first-rate primate-spotting. Signature Trip: "Gorilla and Chimpanzee Safari," Uganda and Rwanda, 12 days, \$7,999; deeperafrica.com

African Latitude

78 95 80 90 93.3 87.3

Ever since he trekked the Great Rift Valley 20 years ago, African Latitude's founder has taken his clients off the crowded safari route. Sample national parks in Kenya and Tanzania before heading into lesser known areas to meet village elders and witness ceremonies. Signature Trip: "Loita Hills Trek," Kenya, ten days, \$4,060; africanlatitude.com