SLEEPING under the stars

A night spent under canvas or open to the night sky with the stars for company is the stuff of dreams. Here we choose just a few of the experiences from across the Audley programmes.

Shakti Luxury Camp, India

The Shakti Luxury Camp offers the vista of a mighty snow-capped Himalayan peak glistening in the moonlight and a night sky packed with sparkling stars. Set in a stunning location in the Himalayan foothills at an altitude of 2,200 metres, daylight views across the Himalayan peaks are equally wonderful. The camp comprises supremely comfortable heated en-suite sleeping tents and a well appointed dining tent. Dining by candlelight, feasting on superb cuisine and delicious wines, stand in awe at the night time views before retiring to the comfort of a bed adorned with duvets and pashmina blankets.

Deborah Giffin
India Specialist: 01869 276 262

Explora Camp, Bolivia

Located in southeast Bolivia, the Salar de Uyuni is the largest salt flat in the world. Explora, one of South America's most innovative hotel groups, have introduced a nine night exploration trip which includes five nights camping on the salt flats. The altitude, crystal clear air and complete lack of light pollution ensure that the stars are at their sparkliest. Campsites include hot and cold water, and the dining is of the high standard of the Explora hotels. The camping is complemented by four nights at the opulent Explora en Atacama hotel in Chile and a night in the scenic town of Iquique.

Nicholas Giles
Bolivia Specialist: 01869 276 235

Loisaba Starbeds, Kenya

The Loisaba Starbeds in Kenya are the ultimate way to sleep under the big African sky in style. Beds are built on high wooden platforms overlooking the wilderness. Each night you climb up to your four poster bed and the sounds of the wild have never seemed so near. You can hear elephants trumpet, the cough of a leopard and the roar of distant lions. Twinkling lanterns and Samburu guards reassure you though and you will sleep well, waking to an African sunrise.

Ariana Grammaticas
Kenya Specialist: 01869 276 288

Lake Khuvsgul Ger Camp, Mongolia

The deep taiga pine forests of Siberia reach down into the northern Mongolian wilderness, thinning as they encounter the first of the Khangai mountain range and the alpine steppe. Here, on the banks of the vast clear Lake Khuvsgul, Khangardi Camp keeps watch over the shoreline. Set back among the pines, the camp accommodates its guests in traditional Mongolian Ger tents, warm, comfortable, and traditionally decorated, with the camp laid out around a central log-cabin restaurant in the Siberian style. The mist drifts down from the surrounding mountains, boats wait to take you across the water to where families of tepee-dwelling 'Reindeer People' live as they always have, and at night the perfectly clear waters reflect a rich tapestry of stars.

David Bannister
Russia Specialist: 01869 276 266

Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

Approximately four hours drive northeast of Bangkok lies Thailand's oldest National Park, Khao Yai. Its broadleaf evergreen and deciduous forests and open grassland are home to macaques, gibbons, elephant, wild pig and numerous birds. One of the most spectacular sights is huge colonies of bats heading out on their night time forays. There is no permanent camp here and your guides set up the simple campsite and prepare dinner before taking you on a night time walk to view the nocturnal residents of the park.

Toby Owen
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Bush Man Swags, Cape Leveque, Australia

The 21st century version of the traditional Australian swag, a foam mattress encased in a canvas cover, is these days rolled out in a mosquito net dome, however, the experience is still the same, minus a few insect bites. At Cape Leveque in the far northern reaches of Western Australia you can watch the sun set before climbing into your swag and the night time cacophony of the Australian bush. For those that need a little more comfort, the nearby luxurious safari tents at Kooljaman Camp offer comfortable beds, your own bathroom and an amazing view.

Michael Codd
Australia Specialist: 01869 276 296

Lion Sands, South Africa

Lion Sands occupies a prime piece of land in the south of the famous Sabi Sands. Whilst their two lodges offer a luxurious way of experiencing the bush, if you want to get a bit closer to nature, try a night on one of their sleep-out decks. This is situated in the canopy of riverine bush, overlooking a dry river bed. A soft bed, draped in a gentle film of white mosquito net evokes the romantic images of classical safaris to Africa. After a meal, eaten on the deck overlooking the river bed, turn down the lamps, switch off the torches, snuggle under your duvet, and listen to the sounds of the African bush.

Melissa Hillen
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1 Views from Shakti Luxury Camp

2 Bats at Khao Yai National Park

3 Bush man swags

4 Lion Sands sleep-out decks

5 Lake Khuvsgul Ger Camp

6 Loisaba Starbeds

7 Salar de Uyuni

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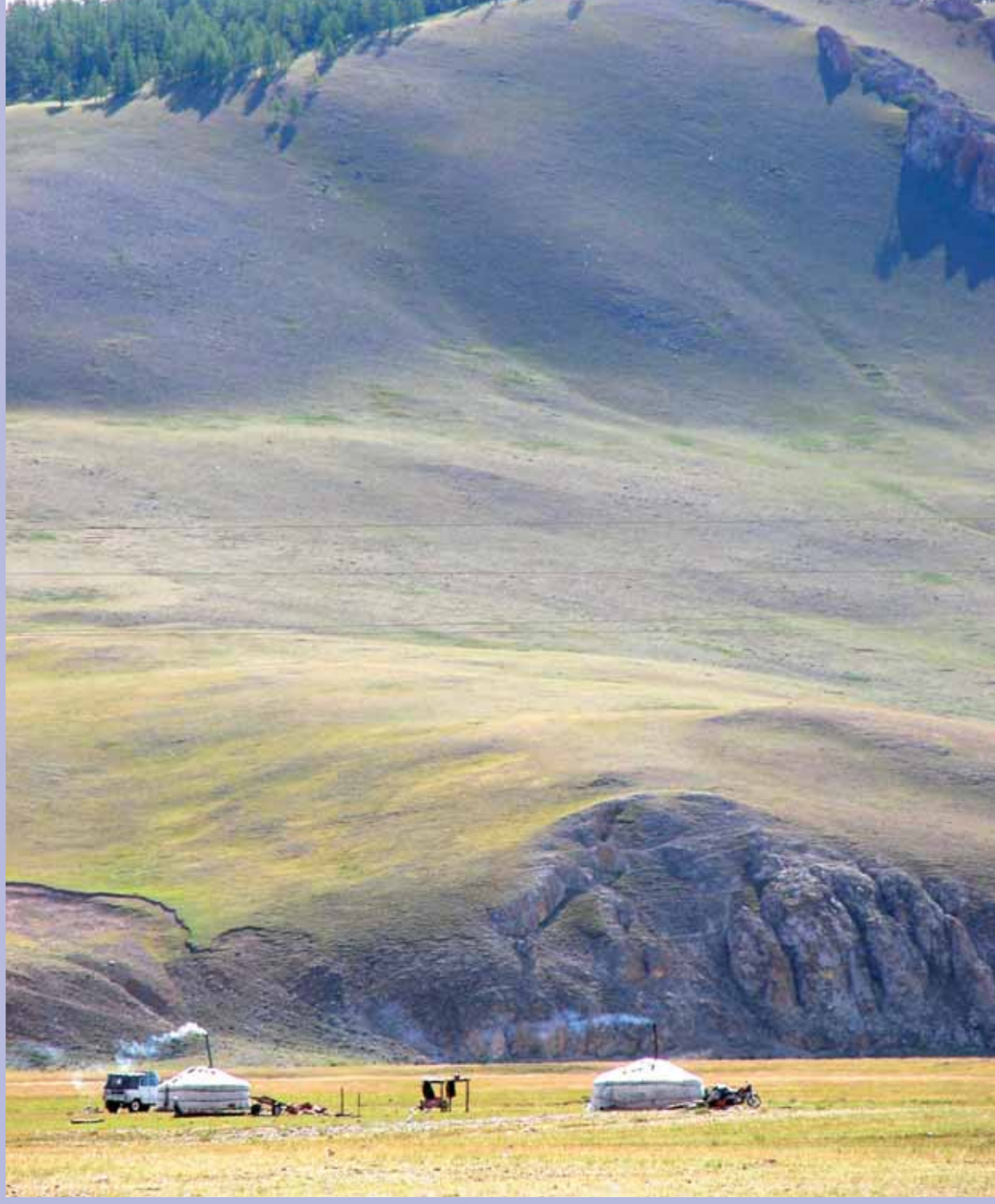

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