



Into Africa

With our new Africa & the Indian Ocean brochure now available, our specialists choose some of their favourite experiences from the region.

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Canoe safari in Mana Pools, Zimbabwe



Baobab, Madagascar



Leopard, Zambia

AFTER SIX MONTHS OF HARD WORK we have just completed our new Africa & Indian Ocean brochure – a huge challenge but great fun. The brochure is a showcase and guide to the wonderful wildlife, experiences and places we've discovered over the years. From tiny tented camps to some splendid beachside hotels, there are firm Audley favourites as well as some new contenders. On the practical side there are detailed maps and suggested itineraries to help you plan your trip.

This year we've particularly enjoyed rediscovering Zimbabwe's national parks, finding a new selection of small affordable guesthouses across Africa and travelling to some of Madagascar's most far flung corners. We asked some of our Africa specialists to pick their favourite camps, excursions and regions from the brochure. This is what they chose.



Watching puku on a game drive in the South Luangwa, Zambia



Victoria kayaking at Pelican Point

Namibia: A kayak trip to the seal colony at Pelican Point

Victoria Saner, Namibia Specialist

A trip to Namibia is incomplete without a morning kayaking excursion with Jean Meintjes off Pelican Point. Having done this a couple of times now, I have to say it's one of my favourite ways to spend a morning.

... it was clear they were not going to give up without a fight

It is totally different to all other experiences in Namibia and it's a great way to get close to about 100 mischievous Cape fur seals. Within minutes of being in the water our kayaks were surrounded by seals of all ages and sizes. One tried to nibble my paddle and as we approached the colony it became obvious that the seals were feeding on a shoal of fish. I have never seen anything quite like it – wherever we looked there were seals jumping and diving through the waves trying to catch their mid-morning snack. Most of the younger pups looked like they needed a few more fishing lessons as they spent most of their time swimming round in circles splashing each other. The more competitive of the group fancied a few races and took on our kayak. The faster we rowed

the quicker they swam and it was clear they were not going to give up without a fight! After a couple of hours on the water we clambered out of our waterproofs and were greeted by warm coffee and delicious sandwiches – a rewarding end to a very memorable morning.

A thirteen day self-drive trip to Namibia including a morning kayaking at Pelican Point costs from £2,850 per person including international flights. For more information call Victoria, Katie or Kirsty on 01993 838 525.



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View from Ambola

Madagascar: Ambola & Tsimanampetsota National Park

Zoe Siu, Madagascar Specialist

In the remote southwest of Madagascar is a tiny village called Ambola. It is far from easy to reach, perhaps the reason why so few people go there and it remains small, sleepy and totally idyllic. To reach Ambola you first have to get to Tulear, either a flight from Tana or a fabulous two-week drive through national parks, paddy fields, villages and Malagasy towns. At Tulear, a zebu (a type of ox) cart will take you to a boat which will bring you to the fishing village of Anakao. Here you will clamber aboard a 4x4 for a three-hour journey along a rutted track past baobabs and alluaudia.

As soon as you arrive you see why the morning's journey was worth it. Ambola is a small and typically Malagasy coastal village. It sits at the end of a magnificent stretch of white sand gently shelving into turquoise waters. Fisherman sail past in their pirogues (dug out canoes) and the only sound is that of the wind across the water. There is one small hotel in the village, Hotel Ambola, which has seven simple rooms and a lovely open-sided restaurant that looks out over the lagoon. Here you can very happily while away some time reading a book and watching the fishermen.

Snorkelling trips are easily arranged or you could just lie on the warm sand and snooze.

Once you have lounged on the beach for a few days you might like a trip to the nearby Tsimanampetsota National Park. Fascinating but rarely visited, you could easily have the park to yourself and can spot flamingos and an endemic species of blind fish as you explore the soda lake. Walks will reveal magnificent baobab trees as well as one of the most striking dry and spiny forests in the country.

We're running a sixteen day group tour to Madagascar in September 2011 which includes three days at Ambola and a trip to Tsimanampetsota National Park. This costs £3,485 per person. For more information please call Zoe, Alexandra or Victoria on 01993 838 585.



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Donna Piccini tracking lion in Kenya

Kenya: Lion tracking from Kicheche Laikipia Camp

Donna Piccini, Kenya Specialist

The Laikipia region is one of my favourite areas in Kenya, it is rich with game and the scenery is simply stunning. I visited in June of this year and spent a few nights at the Kicheche Camp in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy where I got involved in the lion tracking programme. Predator numbers are monitored throughout Kenya and many of the female lions in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy have been fitted with radio transmitters.

... their camouflage was so good we realised we had already driven past them ...

Very naively, I thought this would make the lions easy to find. I set out with Andy, the camp's host, to track some of these magnificent creatures. Teamwork is the key to this activity and as Andy drove the 4x4 I used the headset and antenna to try and pinpoint the lions' exact location. Two hours later we had narrowed the signal to one particular area of thick bush. Despite the lions wearing radio collars, their camouflage was so good we realised we had already driven past them at least twice.

Finding the lions using radio tracking was extremely hard work. The signal can be difficult to decipher and they can be hidden in inaccessible areas of the bush. However, with that said there is nothing more rewarding than following the radio signal to your first glimpse of golden fur. We were lucky, our radio-collared lion was with her pride and as the sun set we enjoyed watching the pride become more active. As the lions strolled off into the evening, we finished our drinks and returned to Kicheche Camp for a well deserved supper.

A ten day trip to Kenya, including three nights at Kicheche Laikipia and lion tracking, costs from £3,210 per person including international flights. For more information please contact Donna or the other members of the Kenya team on 01993 838 510.



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Fleur de Lys

Seychelles: Fleur de Lys

Russell Pilkington, Seychelles Specialist

As you would expect the Seychelles has its fair share of luxury five-star hotels but if you scratch the surface a little you'll find some lovely little locally-run properties. They're packed with Creole charm and character and won't cost the earth. My favourite is Fleur de Lys, a collection of simple Creole-style cottages on the island of La Digue. Each cottage has a large veranda and is set in pretty gardens alive with tropical birds and flowers. The cottages are equipped with a small kitchen where you can have fun creating some of your own Creole dishes. There are also a handful of small locally-run restaurants within easy reach, which is pretty unusual for the Seychelles. Here you'll find exceptionally fresh food just plucked from the crystal clear waters that surround the island.

La Digue is approximately 30 minutes from the larger island of Praslin by boat. The island is beautiful; it's the Seychelles you see on postcards and calendars and the Seychelles you imagine on cold winter mornings in the UK.

To explore the island you have three options, walking, ox cart or, by far the most popular option,

bicycle (apart for three taxi's, cars are not permitted). I have cycled around the island many times, I love the really relaxed atmosphere it offers, it's a reasonable size and exploring is great fun. Going to the far side of the island to the deserted beaches is well worth the effort, it gets you far away from the day trippers and there is a simple beach shack to enjoy a well-earned cold drink.

Fleur de Lys offers the simple life for a few days, which in my opinion is the best way to experience this fantastic little island.

An eleven day trip to the Seychelles with three nights at Fleur de Lys costs from £2,300 per person including international flights. For more information please call Russell, Katie or Victoria on 01993 838 515.



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Fly-camping in the Selous Game Reserve

Tanzania: Fly-camping in the Selous Game Reserve

Katie Fewkes, Tanzania Specialist

I thought I knew what the Selous Game Reserve was all about but on my last visit a two-day fly-camping trip from Selous Safari Camp proved me entirely wrong. Fly-camping in the Selous is a real back-to-basics experience.

... a hippo that seemed to be bristling for a fight ...

You spend your days exploring the reserve on foot, stopping to learn about everything from a breeding herd of elephant to a whistling thorn bush or tiny dragonfly. The highlight of my first day's walk was spotting a breeding pair of civets, which are usually nocturnal. By approaching gently on foot, we managed to get a fantastic sighting which would have been impossible from a vehicle.

On arrival at our 'fly' camp (named after their fly-by-night nature, not because you find a swarm of flies!) we were greeted by smiling camp crew who had gone ahead to set up the tents. My accommodation was a simple mattress on a dry riverbed, surrounded by a dome of mosquito netting with a cosy duvet to snuggle beneath.

Outside my tent was a canvas washbasin filled with warm water ready for my arrival.

In the evening, we enjoyed a hearty dinner lit by storm lanterns, drinks around the campfire and some spectacular stargazing. I fell asleep to the sounds of the cicadas and woke the next day to the sun rising behind the doum palms. The adventure continued for a further day, coming across a hippo that seemed to be bristling for a fight; thankfully we were separated by a large pool of water, much to our relief.

A thirteen day trip to the Selous and Zanzibar including four days on safari and two nights fly-camping from Selous Safari Camp starts from £3,980 per person including international flights. For more information please contact Katie, Arista, Alexandra or Russell on 01993 838 545.



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Some of our favourite places to stay

1. Lake Manze Camp, Tanzania

A great camp with a traditional bush camp feel, really nice safari atmosphere and brilliant location, better than some of the much more expensive camps in the Selous.

2. Waterberry Lodge, Zambia

A lovely location on the banks of the Zambezi, friendly staff and great service making it fantastic value for money.

3. Corona Guest Farm, Namibia

Set in the Gamsbeg Mountains, the scenery is spectacular and worth spending a few days here to explore while making sure you sample the delicious food.

4. Shinde Camp, Botswana

Situated on a large palm island in the northern Okavango Delta, Shinde Camp is surrounded by clear waterways bursting with birdlife and plains where game can be found. Mokoro trips here are a highlight as are game drives and walking safaris.

5. Arathusa Safari Lodge, South Africa

One of the best places to see leopard. There is a waterhole in front of the property where hippo often wallow and the lodge has a main pool, bar area and boma.

6. Kizingo, Lamu Island, Kenya

The location right on the beach is beautiful. The rooms are simple but they are clean and comfortable and the friendly owners make it a magical stay!

7. Desert Homestead, Namibia

Lovely location, close to the stunning sand dunes at Sossusvlei, and with their own stables, from which you can enjoy a sunset or sunrise horseride when you're not trekking the dunes. The food is superb, the cottages cosy with great mountain views, and the sunset horseride is a real highlight of a trip here.



Elephant in front of Chindeni Bushcamp, Zambia



Chindeni Camp, South Luangwa

Zambia: Chindeni Camp

Alexandra Matts, Zambia Specialist

If I were to build the perfect place to stay on safari, I would certainly make it a bushcamp in Zambia. Sleeping under canvas is one of the quintessential African experiences and little can beat lying in bed at night listening to lions roar in the darkness. I'd keep my fantasy camp small and ensure that I could see some wildlife from my tent so I didn't miss a single animal sighting. Finally, if I were being especially demanding, I'd place my perfect camp in a wild and unspoilt area where I'd never see another vehicle and the game viewing was unforgettable.

... a young elephant stretching to reach a tasty morsel ...

Welcome to Chindeni Camp, deep in Zambia's South Luangwa National Park. With just four rooms, it's small enough that you get to know everyone in camp. This makes it feel more like wandering into a beautiful home than a hotel. Chindeni has always been lovely but a recent refurbishment means that it is now one of the most stunning options in the Luangwa Valley. It overlooks a small lagoon, which is home to a pod of hippos in the wetter months, and draws thirsty animals in throughout the dry

season. It's the sort of place where it pays to keep a pair of binoculars handy at all times, as the quiet rustling in the trees could be anything from a brightly-coloured bird, to a family of baboons or a young elephant stretching to reach a tasty morsel.

So, it looks as if my fantasy safari camp has already been built and on a recent visit I couldn't think of a thing I would change. And the game viewing? Well, I hardly saw another soul all day and spent a couple of hours watching a family of wild dogs. As any safari geek will tell you, it doesn't get much more perfect than that!

An eleven day trip to the South Luangwa, including four nights at Chindeni Camp, costs from £3,440 per person including international flights, all food and safari activities. For more information please call Alexandra on 01993 838 505.



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The Mana Canoe Trail

Zimbabwe: Mana Canoe Trail

Alexandra Matts, Zambia & Zimbabwe Specialist

The Mana Canoe Trail was once one of the legendary African experiences, ranked alongside a moonlit visit to the Victoria Falls or a sighting of the wildebeest migration. Now visitors from the UK are returning to this corner of Zimbabwe and trips on the Zambezi have risen in popularity, I was determined to go myself.

Much to my relief, you certainly don't need to be an Olympic athlete to enjoy the three days of canoeing. The journey begins at a gentle paddle, moving just a few kilometres an hour faster than the river itself. There's plenty of time to enjoy the birds and wildlife that live beside the water. Fish eagles call from high branches, pods of hippo chuckle deeply as you pass by and crocodile slither silently into the water. We never paddled for more than a couple of hours at a time, with stops for tea and biscuits in the morning, and lunch and a snooze later on in the afternoon.

While we spent much of each day on the water, there was also the opportunity to enjoy a short walk in the bush alongside the river. Zimbabwean guides have long had a reputation for being the best in Africa and this is well deserved. Our guide's

descriptions of the trees and birdlife kept us fascinated and we walked close enough to an elephant to see the freckles inside his mouth.

Camp was simple and beautiful, with all of the things that I love, from sunsets over the river to showers under the stars. It's a proper, old-fashioned adventure with none of the fuss and frills of a deluxe camp and all the magic that has visitors returning to Africa again and again.

A nine day trip to Mana Pools, including three nights canoeing, three nights in Rukomechi Camp and one night in Lusaka with international flights costs from £2,600 per person. For more information please call Alexandra or Kirsty on 01993 838 500.



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Travel to Zimbabwe

Many people have reservations about travel to Zimbabwe. We have sent a number of specialists to experience the country first hand. We've travelled into the national parks, the towns and cities and talked to many local Zimbabweans. We've found visitors to be welcomed with open arms – it's a vital source of income for many. Our specialists would be happy to answer any questions you have.



Little Makalolo Camp, Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe

Responsible Travel Update: Kenya



We are now entering our third year of working with The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust. The Trust had been brought to our attention by our friend and former colleague, Ariana Grammaticas, who has returned to Kenya to work for her family's safari business. Their lodges, the Governor's Camps, have long been favourites of the team and are committed to ensuring that the community benefits from tourism. Many guests at Governor's are taken to visit the nearby manyattas, and one, Richard Long, was determined to improve the lot of the Maasai pastoralists

living on the fringes of the Mara Reserve. A visit to the school inspired Richard to found The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust, and the words of the headmaster, "Chalk would be a miracle" have driven its work ever since.

When we first heard of the Trust, it had already done some excellent work at Mara Rianda Primary School, but Richard was keen to reach out to the neighbouring village of Aitong. Here there was no running water, and children had been collecting water from a muddy spring. Our first donation went towards helping to fund the

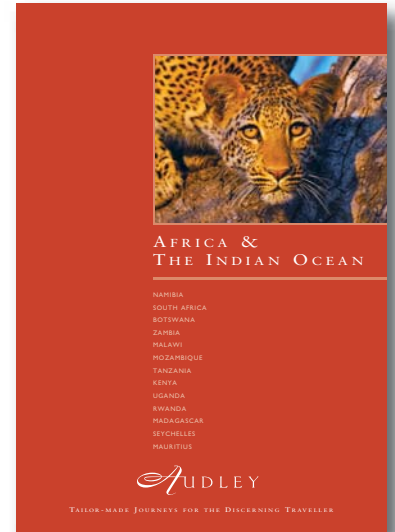
installation of piping and a pump so that the community would have access to clean water. We are delighted to report that after much hard work, and many complications, water is now being pumped over a kilometre from the spring to the village, and the children of Aitong now have clean drinking water.

Once one project finishes, there is always more to be done. Building of a new kitchen and latrines at Mara Rianda School is underway, the trust continues to sponsor children through their education and help in a myriad of ways. Sanitary towels are needed to stop the older girls missing school; often families cannot afford life-changing medicine, and the schools are in great need of equipment. We are proud to continue our association with the Mara Rianda Charitable Trust, and warmly recommend that all of our guests who stay at the Governor's Camps take the opportunity to see for themselves the excellent work that the trust does on the ground.

www.mararianda.com



Aitong school © Richard Long



NEW Africa & the Indian Ocean brochure

The new brochure is out now. For a copy please call our Africa specialists on 01993 838 500 or visit www.audleytravel.com/brochures



Lioness beside the Luangwa River, Zambia



Lion in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya