



NNDEEAFRIKA

THE PLANNING GUIDE · 2026

Your first African safari.

Everything we would tell you on a first phone call, written down — by the two people who plan, and watch over, every journey we sell.

7

SECTIONS

15+

YEARS GUIDING

10

COUNTRIES

24h

REPLY TIME

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A first safari is planned backwards from one decision: the month you can travel. Everything else — the country, the camps, the price — follows from it. We have written this guide the way we actually talk on the phone: plainly, in the order the questions arrive, with the trade-offs left in rather than smoothed over.

Read it in ten minutes. Then send us your dates and we will tell you honestly what they are good for.

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01 When to go

There is no bad month — only the wrong place for the month you have. The shorthand:

JUNE – OCTOBER

The classic dry season everywhere: peak game viewing, Mara river crossings July–September, cloudless skies. Books out furthest ahead.

APRIL – MAY & NOVEMBER

The green seasons: emerald landscapes, the gentlest rates, Africa nearly to yourself. Showers pass in an afternoon.

JANUARY – MARCH

Calving season on the southern Serengeti — half a million newborns and the predators that follow. Superb light, fewer vehicles.

DECEMBER

Festive season: southern Serengeti, Cape Town summer, prime beach weather. Wonderful — and it sells out first.

02 Where to start

Tanzania — the first-timer's classic: Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, and Zanzibar's beaches a short flight away.

Kenya — the Maasai Mara's big cats and the great conservancies; the easiest flights from the US East Coast.

South Africa — Big Five plus Cape Town, superb food and wine, easy logistics, and malaria-free reserves for families with young children.

Botswana — the connoisseur's choice: the Okavango Delta by boat and mokoro. Consider it for trip two — or a very special trip one.

Rwanda — an hour with wild mountain gorillas. Pairs beautifully with Kenya or Tanzania.



THE DESCENT INTO THE NGORONGORO CRATER

How long, and how far ahead

Length: 7–10 nights on the ground is the first-safari sweet spot — two or three camps, never one-night stands. Add 3–4 beach nights if you can; you'll want them.

Lead time: the best small camps hold 8–16 rooms and sell out 9–12 months ahead for peak season. Book 12+ months out for July–October or Christmas; 4–6 months can work for green-season travel. Gorilla permits are strictly limited — the earlier the better.

04 What drives the cost

Every NndeeAfrika journey is tailor-made and quoted privately — but the levers are always the same: **season** (the same camp can differ dramatically between peak and green season), **exclusivity** (private concessions cost more than national-park lodges, and are worth it), **internal flights** (bush planes between camps save whole days), and **camp size** (the smaller, the more personal — and the dearer).

Our promise: one bespoke figure — every lodge named night by night, all internal flights and transfers, park fees and permits, meet & greet at every airport, and a 24/7 line to us while you travel. Optional extras and changes are agreed with you in writing before they are added.

05 Health, visas & practicalities

- Visit a travel clinic 6–8 weeks before departure — they'll advise on vaccinations and malaria prevention for your exact route.
- Entry rules vary — South Africa is visa-free for US citizens, Kenya uses a simple online eTA, Tanzania and Rwanda offer online or on-arrival visas. Rules change, so we send exact, current instructions for your itinerary before you fly.
- Passport: valid 6+ months beyond travel, with 2+ blank pages.
- Travel insurance with medical evacuation cover is essential — we'll tell you what your itinerary needs.

06 Three questions to ask any safari company

"Have you personally stayed where you're sending me?"

"Who exactly manages my trip from inquiry to homecoming — and will I ever be handed off?"

"What happens, specifically, if a flight is missed mid-trip?"

Ask us too — the answers tell you everything about how the journey will feel.

07 Packing, in one paragraph

Soft duffel bag (bush planes refuse hard cases), 33 lbs / 15 kg on most bush flights — sometimes less, so we confirm your exact allowance. Neutral colors; skip bright white, and skip dark blue and black where tsetse flies live, since those colors attract them. Layers for cold mornings and warm afternoons, binoculars for each of you, and half the clothes you think — nearly every camp does laundry within a day. Our full packing list lives at ndeeafrika.com/safari-packing-list.

THE NEXT STEP

Ready when you are.

Tell us how you like to travel at nndeefrika.com/inquiry and one of the two of us — never a call center — will reply within one business day with honest first thoughts. The consultation is complimentary, with no pressure, ever.

USE THIS FIRST AFRICAN SAFARI PLANNING GUIDE AS A
STARTING POINT, THEN TELL US WHERE YOU LANDED.
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