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# travel

*update*

ISSUE 3

**SHARM  
EL SHEIKH**  
Egypt's Red Sea Riviera

**SWAZILAND**  
Ride a bike between  
the zebras

**THAILAND**  
Vibey beaches  
and deserted  
paradise

**WIN WITH  
OLLOCLIP**  
Lenses for your  
iPhone camera

**LET'S MAKE  
MEMORIES!**

20 JOURNEYS YOUR  
CHILD HAS TO TAKE  
BEFORE TURNING 18

**SA'S 1ST  
FREE  
TRAVEL  
MAG**

DISCOVER GIRL POWER WITH THE BUSH BABES

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## EDITOR'S LETTER



There was always plenty of drama on our family vacations. On an overland trip to Tanzania my dad went mental on his malaria meds and assaulted me with a camcorder. (We laugh about that now.) In Mauritius, we got stranded on an island after our catamaran left us behind, and my dad had to pay a duo of drunken fisherman to get us back to the hotel.

There are very few vacations that I remember that wasn't drama free. But that's what happens when you decide to go out and show your children the world. Things won't always run smoothly. But the experiences you will have will remain with you for life.

In our main feature (page 16) that's what we want to encourage you to do. We tried to strike a balance between local and international destinations and hopefully you'll find a few adventures that will help you make some memories.

One of my more boring vacations was driving around in nature reserves, sitting in the backseat of the car while my parents tried to spot a lion or elephant. At Swaziland's Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary (page 28) you get to ride a bike between the animals, sleep in a traditional Swazi hut and ride a horse on the plains. There are no dangerous predators (except for the crocodiles in the dam), which makes this the ideal destination for your kids to explore the wonders of the bush. No fights on the backseat, guaranteed.

We also ask a few tough questions. Would you boycott a country because you don't agree with the decisions of its leaders? We look at the consequences a tourism boycott can create (page 36) for ecosystems and communities on grassroots levels.

Happy travels!  
Carla

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### PUBLISHED BY

Reismier Publications on behalf of Quantex Global Investments (Pty) Ltd t/a Travel Update Magazine.  
Quantex Global Investments (Pty) Ltd t/a Travel Update Magazine.  
Registration Number 2013/164890/07  
Directors M Nadgy, A Nagdy

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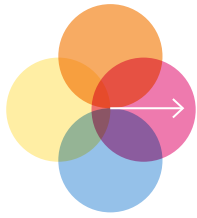
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# The Question

This month we ask some frequent travellers:

## “What was your best family holiday”



I had one of my most memorable moments whilst riding in the Outeniqua Chootjoe during the Knysna Oyster Festival. The wild ride in the train was so exhilarating, that I just had to cry out. Every time when we go to Knysna, my family makes fun of me about that trip of ours.

**JEREMY MOOI**, *digital communication officer*



*Pura Vida* – Pure Life. In Costa Rica this simple phrase is a greeting, a way to wish someone well and a verbal manifestation of this tiny Central American country’s philosophy of

environmental responsibility. Costa Rica is where my daughters and I headed off to and I couldn’t imagine a better place to enjoy an exotic family holiday. Our holiday was not only filled with amazing experiences, but it also gave us a new perspective on life.

**THERESA SZEJWALLO**, *managing director for Trafalgar*



Last year my husband Gwarega and I took a trip to the United States and visited New York. We were amazed by the continuous buzz of New York, which seemed never-ending. Walking on Brooklyn Bridge, seeing the Statue of Liberty, and attending a Motown Live show was mind-blowing. Travel broadens the mind and sharing it with your loved ones makes the experiences so much more rewarding.

**LYNETTE MANGOZHE**, *executive account manager*



I believe travel is one of the best educations you can give your children and my wife and I try to expose our two boys to as many cultures and destinations as our budget will allow. They loved Thailand and experiencing the country’s culture and food. Thai green curry remains one of their favourite dishes.

**NEELS GROENEWALD**, *electrical engineer*



One of my favourite family holiday memories were when we visited the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. My daughter wanted to do a bungee jump, but because she was too young, she had to do a tandem jump, with me strapped in next to her. It was such an exhilarating and special mother-daughter moment and something I would remember forever.

**LUCIA MASHIANE**, *businesswoman*

What is your idea of a perfect romantic holiday? Let us know and you could be the winner of an olloclip cellphone camera lens for your iPhone, worth R999.

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✉ Send an email to [carla@travelupdate.co.za](mailto:carla@travelupdate.co.za)

Submissions chosen for publication may be edited for length and clarity. All submissions becomes the property of Quantex Global Investments and may be published, along with the name and the photo of the individual.



1



**POWER ME UP**

The Lenmar Helix portable power pack is specifically designed to power a new generation of tablets, including the iPad 4 and the iPad Mini. With the Helix, you can charge two cellphones and a tablet simultaneously. **R899** at the iStore, The Gadget Shop and Cellular City.

2



**A BIG SOUND**

Lightweight portability meets big sound with the powerful Braven 705 Speaker. This speaker is certified water resistant so it can be taken virtually anywhere life takes you. With 12 hours of wireless playtime and a built-in 1400 mAh rechargeable lithium-ion battery, this speaker creates an incredible blend of fun and function. Available exclusively at the iStore for **R1699**.

# Gizmos FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Heading to a off-the-grid destination? Take these hardworking gadgets with you.

3



**PINT SIZED PROJECTOR**

The AAXA P3X pico projector offers 70 Lumens of LED brightness and is able to produce an 80" image in dark environments. Barely bigger than a cellphone it comes with a 2 hour onboard lithium-ion battery and 15 000 hours of lamp life. The AAXA P3X lets users spontaneously share photos, videos, or other digital media with friends and colleagues. **R5499**, available at the iStore.

4

**4-IN-1 LENS**

The all-new olloclip for the iPhone 6 & iPhone 6 Plus has 4 advanced-optic lenses, a wide-angle lens, a fisheye lens, and 10x and 15x macro lenses. Their pocket-sized, patented design now works on both front and rear-facing cellphone cameras so you can let your photos and selfies run wild. Available at the iStore, The Gadget Shop, Takealot and Orms for **R999**.



5

**UNDERWATER AGENT**

Designed for adventure, the PowerShot D30 (**R3499**) is ideal for daring adrenaline seekers – capable of shooting underwater action at unrivalled depths as low as 25m1 –

with superior image quality, giving striking natural colours even in low-light conditions. Available at leading retailers.



6

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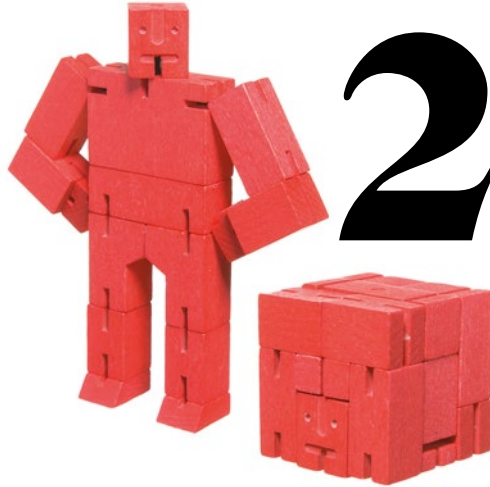


1



**SUN SAFE**

Vichy's Capital Soleil SPF50 milk (R279 for 200 ml) for children combats the harmful effects of the sun's UV rays. It's fragrance and paraben free and the non-greasy texture makes it ideal for families.



2

**FORGET THE RUBIX CUBE**

The Cubebot takes inspiration from the Japanese Shinto Kumi-ki puzzles. It's an unconventional take on the popular toy robot. Cubebots's sturdy hardwood frame can hold dozens of poses while the elastic band muscles and durable wood limbs make it resistant to breakage. (R249 on [superbalist.com](http://superbalist.com))

3

# Kidding AROUND

Spoil your kids with one of these fabulous finds.



**DISNEY MAGIC**

This 45 cm suitcase (R1895) from the Disney Wonder Collection is made with the latest Samsonite innovations to ensure the bags withstand all the rough handling from travelling with a rambunctious youngster.

**BIG APPLE DREAMS**

We love this New York-inspired kids pyjama set (R249,99 from Cotton On). The set features ribbed cuffs and an elastic waistband. Made from 100% cotton, excluding trims.

4



5

**BEANIE BABE**

Keep your head and ears warm as South Africa eases into cooler weather with this Rubi Bear beanie (R119) from Cotton On.



6



**LIGHT ME UP**

This light box lets you print your favourite image, hashtags, quotes or anything else and then light them up! Fits an A4 size paper insert. (799,99 from Typo)



7

**SHOW ME THE WORLD**

Use this wall hanging (R499,99 from Typo) to teach your kids a few geography lessons. It also doubles up as a throw over a bed or couch.



# PORT ELIZABETH

Port Elizabeth is often just a pit stop for travellers or an overnight destination to kickstart your journey to the Garden Route from. Linger a few days longer and explore one of South Africa's most charming cities.

## MUST SEE

Go see the country's tallest flag pole, with South Africa's tallest flag at the **Donkin Reserve**. The memorial is named after P.E.'s founder, Sir Rufane Donkin and features various artworks, an imposing lighthouse and a pyramid memorial dedicated to Donkin's wife, Elizabeth, after whom the city is named. The city's tourism office is located in the old lighthouse and a good place to orientate yourself.

Want to step up on your nature photography skills? **Kragga Kamma**, ([www.kraggakamma.com](http://www.kraggakamma.com)) is a nature reserve that's less than 10 minutes drive from P.E.'s central business district. When you enter the park, it's hard to believe that you're less than 10 minutes away from the city. Here you can spot white rhino, buffalo, giraffes, nyalas, lechwe and several other species.

Hunting is forbidden, and the animals are quite used to vehicles. You'll have a giraffe batting its eyelids or a buffalo staring back at you while you snap away. It's the ideal place to guarantee that Instagram-moment and boast with your wildlife photography skills on social media.

The people that work and volunteer at **Samrec**, ([www.samrec.org.za](http://www.samrec.org.za)) Port Elizabeth's marine bird

rehabilitation and education centre all deserve a medal. Most of them work here for a stipend or volunteer for free, but everyone is passionate about South Africa's marine life.

There is an interactive educational centre where children can learn more about marine life. Do note that Samrec isn't an aquarium, the animals that are kept here are either injured or sick, waiting to be released.

After visiting Samrec, which is located in the **Cape Recife Nature Reserve**, ask Alan Fogarty of Alan Tours ([info@alantours](mailto:info@alantours), 0723584634) to show you around. Alan is the Google of Port Elizabeth, ask him anything about the ecology and history of the Bay and he'll answer your questions.

Walk among the thousand-year-old middens of the Khoi-strandlopers that lived in the area and study the fossils of an ammonite.

The best part of the day is sunset at the Cape Recife-lighthouse, when the sun-dappled dunes and golden light provide some great photo opportunities.

## MUST DO

Head on to the **Sunday River** and board one of Les Kingsma's ferries ([www.addocruises.co.za](http://www.addocruises.co.za)). Few things are as relaxing as sitting back and watching the river scenes on the river's banks. Birdwatchers should bring a pair of binoculars, the bird life is varied and you will surely spot a few herons, cormorants and kingfishers.

The ferry also stops next to the imposing Colchester dune belt, a must-see when visiting P.E. It's one of the smallest deserts in the world and offers a beautiful view over the Indian Ocean and the rolling dunes. ■

## TOP TIP

According to Port Elizabeth local Jonker Fourie, **Barnacles in Beachview** (Elizabeth Road, Seaview, 041 378 2058) is one of the best places in the Bay to enjoy some seafood. The restaurant and deck has a panoramic view over the Indian Ocean and if you're lucky, you might even see some dolphins frolicking in the surf. Try an appetizer of fresh oysters. Their fish and chips and calamari and chips are served in generous portions and offer value for money.





# SHARM EL SHEIKH

Warm waters, historical tours, desert safaris and amazing marine life. These are just a few reasons why the resort town of Sharm El Sheikh is one of Egypt's most popular tourist attractions.

## MUST SEE

The **Red Sea** is one of the best diving sites in the world, with year-round visibility and more than a thousand species of fish and marine life. If there is one destination that's worth getting your PADI Open Water Diving course for, this is it. Visibility can range up to 200 meters, letting you spot marine life like sea turtles, steely eyed barracudas, and curious rays.

**Ras Mohamed National Park** is a favourite among divers. Beneath the crystal-clear water you'll find coral reefs teeming with life. Slightly further offshore you might spot dolphins, including Risso's Dolphin. The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt is one of the oldest religions in the world. It was founded by St. Mark the Evangelist in Egypt in the year 61 A.D. If you want to know more about this religion, visit the **Heavenly Cathedral Coptic Church**.

Built in the beginning of the 21st century, this is one of Egypt's most impressive Coptic churches. The interiors are covered with magnificent frescoes and murals depicting scenes from the Bible that were hand-painted by two Egyptian artists and their understudies.

For some great people watching,

escape from your resort and head to **Terrazzina Beach**. This lovely beach is lined with Mediterranean restaurants and cool, hip bars. Get a tan, swim in the clear waters by day and enjoy the lively atmosphere at night.

This is also the only beach in the area that is designated for water sports. Some of the water-based activities include waterskiing and wakeboarding.

If you can't make it to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, swing past the **King Tut Museum**, located in the basement of the Genena City Mall in Na'ama Bay. It showcases over 130 replicas of original artefacts exhibited at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo. Explore the museum for relics of Tutankhamun's tomb, jewellery, and gold masks, as well as sculptures and pictures recreated by the Ministry of State for Antiquities.

## MUST DO

The Sinai desert is at its most enchanting during sunrise. Make the best of this time of day and book a **quad bike excursion** that leaves before dawn. Ride across the dunes at sunrise when the amazing colours of the desert are revealed in all its glory. Most tours also include tea and light snacks, served under a Bedouin tent in the desert.

Looking for a bargain? Hail a taxi or local bus to the **Sharm Old Town**, in front of Sharm El Sheikh's harbour. This is a different experience for travellers staying in the touristy Na'ama Bay area. You'll find plenty of cafes in Sharm's Old Town, along with souvenir stalls, spices, fruit and fresh produce markets to browse. It is a great place to go shopping and soak up the atmosphere.

It's also popular with locals. ■

## TOP TIP

For the best views of a Red Sea sunset, you can't beat **Farsha Café**, located within the El Faraa'na Hotel. The ambiance is truly magical, with alfresco seating on plush pillows. The cafe offers an assortment of flavoured shisha pipes that you can enjoy along with freshly prepared cocktails and light snacks. If you're looking for an Arabian Night experience, with romantic candlelight, oriental carpets and Bedouin tents, you will find it here.



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[rotana.com](http://rotana.com)

# Aaaand relax...

*For one of Egypt's finest holidays head to Grand Rotana.  
You'll find watersports, fine dining and a great spa*



You'll live like a king at this five-star hotel in Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh. Surrounded by palm trees, the Grand Rotana Resort and Spa overlooks the Red Sea and even has a private section of beach for its guests.

Make the most of the coastline with diving, snorkelling and windsurfing. Or, if you prefer to admire the clear blue waters rather than dive in, the hotel also has an impressive 3,600m<sup>2</sup> swimming pool for the kids to splash about in, and an open-air Jacuzzi infinity pool, with views over the ocean and the nearby Tiran island.

The hotel's *raison d'être* is its world-class restaurants, which serve delicious dishes



inspired by cuisine from Egypt, Italy and the Far East. Dig into fresh pizzas while you dine al fresco at Mezzaluna Italian restaurant, or try the exciting range of Chinese, Indian, Thai and Arabic dishes at Silk Road. For a taste of home, Duke's English Pub serves classic English dishes with a contemporary twist. The all-inclusive option means the kids can scoff ice cream while you relax by the pool.

Inside, the hotel has a mix of rooms, suites and elegant royal villas, the latter of which, if you really want to go all out, come with a private pool – perfect for families.

To top off your vacation in style, spend a day at Zen. The Thai-style spa has nine



treatment rooms and plenty of different face and body therapies to try that you'll be able to have a different one every day. The spa is known for its dedication to privacy and highly trained staff, so book in for a facial, body wrap, hydrotherapy or massage. Signature treatments at Zen include the Thai Herbal Massage and Queen Cleopatra treatment. After a day in the spa you could earn brownie points with your other half by organising a special candlelit dinner in one of the private beach cabanas.

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## FROM 'WHAT IF' TO 'WHOOPSY-DAISY' AND EVERYWHERE IN-BETWEEN

There's a lot that can go wrong on your perfect trip. Misplaced luggage, a stolen passport or catching an exotic virus can seriously derail your well-planned holiday or business trip – if you're not prepared. With Regent's wide range of travel insurance products suited to your specific budget, age group and destination, your travelling risks are handled by our team of experts. Which means that you can enjoy the experience of travelling without a care in the world – no matter where you're going.

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# 5 REASONS WHY EVERY TRAVELLER SHOULD BUY TRAVEL INSURANCE

When you travel, you are in a relaxed mode and more prone to letting your guard down. This is when disaster strikes. Travel insurance provides peace of mind when things go wrong.

## UNEXPECTED MEDICAL EXPENSES

Falling ill or becoming injured while on holiday or on a business trip could disrupt your journey and be highly inconvenient. More worrying is the medical costs, that can ruin you financially, if things go really bad. "If your illness or injury is serious and requires hospitalisation and treatment, depending on where you are, this could cost from a few thousand rand to a few hundred thousand rand," warns Louise Cockcroft of the Regent Insurance group. "Not only does the travel insurance pay for these expenses, but you and your family are provided ongoing assistance and support by Regent's claims assistance company Europ Assistance South Africa."

## UNEXPECTED EVENT

Cancellation cover provides cover for pre-paid travel expenses. "Life can be unpredictable and you might have to cancel your trip due to illness or injury, a traumatic event, retrenchment, unexpected terrorist

incidents and strikes or loss of travel documents," Louise says. Last minute cancellations can be very costly as you might not recover all of your expenses. This is where your travel insurance can step in and assist.



## THEFT OR DAMAGE TO LUGGAGE

Not seeing your customised designer luggage on the luggage carousel? Your luggage and personal items can be lost or damaged through an

airline carrier or while you are going about your travels. Travel insurance provides compensation to replace the lost or damaged items.

## FLIGHT DELAYS

Flights are often delayed but long delays could mean sitting around an airport for many hours. Travel insurance provides a benefit which provides a small allowance for purchase of necessary items while you wait for your flight. This could be from food and beverage to items of clothing or toiletries or a night's accommodation, should the airline not provide this.

## BAGGAGE DELAYS

When you get to your international destination and find that your bags have not arrived, don't let that sinking feeling in your stomach get you down. "The Baggage Delay benefit on a travel insurance policy provides a small allowance for you to get necessary items you need while you wait for your bags to arrive," says Louise. ■

## THE MILLION RAND SCENARIO

In 2013 Rob\* and his wife Helen\* visited Costa Rica. During their journey Rob was admitted into hospital, after he fell ill. Their worst fears were confirmed, Rob was diagnosed with dengue fever, a tropical disease caused by infected mosquitos. He also contracted meningitis and suffered a kidney failure. While in hospital Rob also had two strokes and required a CAT scan and further treatment. In the meantime, Helen's visa expired and alternative routes had to be arranged to allow her and her husband to return back to South Africa. The return flight had to be taken in eight hour intervals as recommended by their medical doctor. Rob almost spend a month in a hospital in Costa Rica and if they hadn't taken out medical insurance, their medical bills would have been close to R1 million. In the end, Regent Insurance paid out a claim for R950 000, which saved Rob and Helen from a financial fiasco. For more information on travel insurance, visit [www.regentinsurance.co.za](http://www.regentinsurance.co.za) or call 0861 900 801.



Everlasting memories with your family are made when travelling, says Theresa Swezjallo. Make them something worth remembering by booking a guided holiday.

It was during a Costa Rican Family Experience with my two daughters when I realised just how effective a journey can be in making memories and strengthening family relationships.

In those eight days we had so many precious moments together. We watched turtles lay their eggs on the beach, and spend two days in Tortuguero National Park, marveling at sloths, toucans and howler monkeys.

We grew closer as a family, taking inspiration from the Costa Rican's philosophy of *Pura Vida* or pure life.

During this trip I realised how a holiday can bring a family closer, or lead to conflict and stress.

Organising a family trip on your own is stressful enough. You need to cater to everyone's whims, needs and interests.

Taking a guided holiday with

Trafalgar took the stress out of planning our holiday, especially with a lesser known destination such as Costa Rica.

Our travel director, George, had an in-depth knowledge of his country and took us to some amazing places that you wouldn't know about when travelling on your own.

We met some interesting locals as well; a pineapple farmer that produces the only certified organic pineapples in the world.

Trafalgar calls this "Insider Experiences", something that only our guests have access to. It can be a Be My Guest dinner with an Italian family in Tuscany or sending your kids off to a morning of Gladiator School in Rome, where they will learn the basics of sword fighting.

I'm always impressed by how versatile our travel directors are. The

one moment they can be debating complicated politics and economics with the parents, the next they're teaching young children about the Costa Rican ecosystem, on the level of a seven-year-old.

They're great cheerleaders as well. In Arenal, where some of the world's longest ziplines are found it was raining, and we were scheduled for a canopy tour. I almost sat this one out, but our travel director convinced me to participate. I'm so glad I did, zipping past all those ancient trees, surrounded by the misty drizzle of the rainforest remains one of my favourite memories. If I were travelling on my own, I never would have had that experience. ■

*Theresa Swezjallo is the managing director of Trafalgar SA. Follow her on Twitter at @2bee\_t.*

### TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF YOUR FAMILY HOLIDAY

- Your holiday begins the moment you arrive. The travel director will take care of all the intricate logistics that usually complicate a trip.
- Trafalgar caters for fussy eaters, with breakfast daily and delicious cuisine with child-friendly menus. A highlight of our Costa Rica trip was a pizza pool party. The family cooking classes are a highlight for both parents and children, whether it's making authentic paella in Spain or getting tips from an Italian chef on creating the perfect pizza.
- Public transport and young children do not mix; that's why we make sure all of the hotels are well located, with kid-friendly hotels and amenities.
- All Trafalgar guests get whisked to the front of the queue at popular tourist attractions such as the Eiffel Tower, Vatican and Colosseum. This guarantees no nagging and complaining about the speed the queue is moving.
- Keeping an eye on your luggage and your children can be trying for parents. Trafalgar includes portage and hotel tips in their packages, For more information or to book visit [www.trafalgar.com](http://www.trafalgar.com), phone 011 280 8400 or contact your travel agent.

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see the world from the inside

# TAKE YOUR iPhone TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH THE 4-IN-1 OLLOCLIP LENS

Cellphone cameras have revolutionised the photography industry, with the ability to shoot, edit and share your photographs on one device. For many photographers, both amateur and professional, this integrated process has given them the freedom to experiment both within and across photographic styles.

The olloclip brand has made cellphone photography even more exciting, giving both amateur and professional photographers alike the ability to use their iPhones to capture and share what was previously impossible — easily, spontaneously and artistically.

All their products are designed to push the parameters of what's possible in mobile photography.

The olloclip 4-in-1 lens solution fits easily in your pocket and works with all your favourite apps in both photo and video mode. The four

lenses included in the kit are:

- a wide-angle lens,
- a fisheye lens,
- a 10x macro lens and a
- a 15x macro lens.



The pocket-sized, patented design now works on both front and rear-facing cameras so you can let your photos and selfies run wild.

The fisheye and wide-angle lenses offer a larger field of view, perfect for the “Ellen shot” made famous during last year’s Academy Awards for a more expansive selfie with a group of people or a scenic background.

Easily accessible, your olloclip is always ready when that incredible photographic moment arises.

## WIN WITH OLLOCLIP

Five lucky Travel Update readers will each win an olloclip 4-in-1 lens for their iPhone 5 or 6.

To win, send an email with “olloclip” in the subject field to [win@travelupdate.co.za](mailto:win@travelupdate.co.za). Include your name and contact details and the type of iPhone that you own. T&C’s apply. Closing date, 31 May. ■

olloclip products is distributed by Above & Beyond Distributors and can be bought at iStores, The Gadget Shop, Takealot and Orms. Visit [www.above-beyond.co.za](http://www.above-beyond.co.za) for more information.



# WILLOW STREAM SPA REJUVENATES AT FAIRMONT ZIMBALI RESORT

The Fairmont Zimbali Resort is home to the Willow Stream Spa, situated in one of three coastal forest estates in the world.

Each Willow Stream Spa is designed to reflect the beauty and ambiance of its location. At the Fairmont Zimbali Resort, the beauty of South Africa is

brought inside with palettes of rich dark wood, soft gold, and energising shades of orange – reminiscent of the spectacular dawn sunrise. Soft scents of aromatherapy fills the air and senses.

The spa offers a haven to re-energize, relax and rejuvenate. The ten spacious treatment rooms feature soothing décor of sandstone, soft cream, and copper. Crisp white linens with fluffy oversized duvets wrap the beds, while essential oils soothe the senses.

Three of the treatment areas are oversized suites, completely self-contained with a marble steam shower for two, jetted bath to share, and private washroom. Ideal for couples, the suites can be used for massages, or treatments can be mixed and matched. Another treatment area provides a wet room for solo spa goers with a large private shower and spacious jetted soaker for mineral

baths. There is also a specialty suite where bridal or pampering parties can have their makeup, hair and manicures done together.

After a treatment, guests can extend their spa experience and relax in the Great Room. An airy oasis, it has a double-vaulted ceiling with sheer drapes that cascade and circle each chair to provide a dreamy cocoon of privacy. Warm breezes waft through a double set of French doors that open to a secluded terrace with chaise lounges and a private jetted mineral pool with expansive views of the gardens and Indian Ocean. ■

For more information call  
+27 (0)32 538 5067 or  
+27 (0)32 538 5068.

Visit [www.fairmont.com/zimbali-resort/willow-stream](http://www.fairmont.com/zimbali-resort/willow-stream) or send an email to [zim.willowstreamspa@fairmont.com](mailto:zim.willowstreamspa@fairmont.com)



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A luxury safari can take a big chunk out of your holiday budget, but if you know where to look and when to book, you can slash your costs by as much as 80%. We show you how to save money when planning a safari.

# SAVING ON SAFARI

## LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE

Some game lodges' rates are similar to your monthly payment on your mortgage. When they quote in US dollars, a luxury weekend away may seem like a pipe dream. However, if you know where to look, you may get up to 70% discount on a last minute booking.

Quite a few game lodges are willing to reduce their rates if you book on short notice, usually between 7 and 14 days before departure. These promotions are often run mid-week or during the low season, so travellers need to be flexible to take advantage of these specials.

Websites like [www.mtbeds.com](http://www.mtbeds.com) and [www.bushbreaks.co.za](http://www.bushbreaks.co.za) have a large collection of lodges and accommodation in their portfolio. Subscribe to their newsletters to stay abreast of the latest deals.

## SUBSCRIBE TO A LOYALTY PROGRAM

The Wilderness Safaris African Residents Program gives African residents up to 70% discount on selected properties in the Wilderness group's stall. Bed-

nights are unlimited and subject to availability.

Membership costs R5000, offering substantial benefits for members, their families and guests for 2 years, with an option to renew.

The fee is a charitable donation to the Children in the Wilderness, Wilderness Safaris' corporate responsibility program and is tax deductible for South Africans. An 18A certificate will be provided for the full amount.

"I've visited several Wilderness Camps and usually we book two weeks beforehand to qualify for the discount. Every time I got about 70% discount on the original rate," says Carl Lewis, who's been a member since 2012.

To find out more about member benefits see [www.wilderness-residents.co.za](http://www.wilderness-residents.co.za) or email them at [residents@wilderness.co.za](mailto:residents@wilderness.co.za).

## FLAUNT YOUR SADC STATUS

For some of the late-booking specials you have to be a South African or SADC (Southern African Development Community) resident to qualify for the discount. Some

game reserves and lodges are willing to provide special rates to SADC residents, especially during the green season. The idea behind this is to give African residents an opportunity to experience these exclusive properties, while filling beds that would have been empty for the night. This way everyone wins.

## ASK, AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

When making a booking, especially at privately owned properties, always enquire if they are currently running any specials.

Don't be shy to ask for discount when booking in the low season, on short notice, or when paying cash. Some properties, especially the privately owned ones, will not advertise discount, but are willing to give SADC residents that book on short notice a better price. Some establishments also give cash discounts. The Ebola crisis in West Africa has impacted tourism all over Africa and quite a few safari lodges and game reserves are running specials to lure foreign tourists back to the bush. Be on the lookout for these. ■



# GO MAKE SOME MEMORIES

20 BUCKET LIST  
ACTIVITIES YOUR KIDS SHOULD  
DO BEFORE THEY TURN 18



The best family memories are made during holidays and on exciting journeys. Here are twenty things to do with your kids before they get gobbled up by the adult world. Some you can do over a weekend in your own city, others will take some serious saving and planning on your part.



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From icons like Istanbul's Blue Mosque to the intriguing underground city of Sarhatli, this great-value journey covers Turkey's essential wonders with a few surprises along the way. As you traverse diverse lands and cultures, you'll meet local craftspeople like the rug-makers of Cappadocia, who carry on the ancient methods of their trade.

Your trip will be accompanied by Trafalgar's Groups Manager in South Africa, Genevieve Coetzee - *"Istanbul is a city not to be missed, make sure that Trafalgar is on your bucket list"*

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For more information call Genevieve Coetzee on 011 280 8400

[www.trafalgar.com](http://www.trafalgar.com)

\*Terms and Conditions: R22 580 per person sharing in a Twin/Double Room including current flights and taxes from Johannesburg on Emirates. Please note that this price is subject to change based on the availability and the ever changing airport taxes. The above trip is based on a minimum group size of 20 guests. To secure the land booking we require a non-refundable deposit of R2 500 per person, a filled in booking form and a copy of the guests passport. E&OE

# TODDLERS (2-6)



## 1 HAVE A PICNIC

Toddlers love a picnic, even when you're having it in your own backyard. Luckily you don't have to look far for an ideal setting, whether it's a DIY basket of cold chicken and potato salad at one of South Africa's botanical gardens, or a gourmet bag full of goodies at a wine estate. We love the picnics at Solms-Delta Wine Estate outside of Franschhoek. Their picnic basket includes a variety of salads, tikka tandoori chicken wings, and *roosterkoek* with farm fresh butter. The setting is either in a forest or next to the river and dam. Make sure you bring your swimming costume along. Guests are encouraged to splash around in the river on a warm day. Send an e-mail to the Fyndraai restaurant at [restaurant@solms-delta.co.za](mailto:restaurant@solms-delta.co.za) or call 021 874 3937 to make a booking.

## 2 VISIT THE SCI-BONO CENTRE

Want to get your kids interested in maths and science from an early age? Geek is the new cool and if your child is showing potential of becoming the new Elon Musk or Marie Curie, nurture that seed by taking them to the Sci-Bono Centre in Newtown. This award winning centre offers edutaining birthday parties and holiday programmes. Sci-Bono has over 350 interactive exhibits designed to satisfy curious minds of all ages. Kids love the hands-on exhibits, science stage shows and innovative workshops that demonstrate a

variety of scientific and mathematical concepts. Pique their interest at a young age, and maybe maths won't be a headache in the future. [www.sci-bono.com](http://www.sci-bono.com)



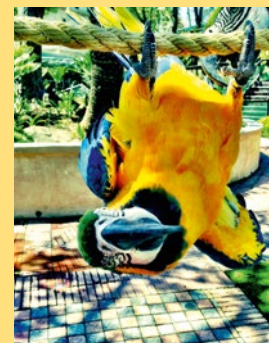
## 3 RELAX ON AN INDIAN OCEAN ISLAND

Some parents are hesitant about taking their toddlers overseas because they're worried that their children will not appreciate the experience. While most people will think twice before taking a four-year-old on a whirlwind trip through Europe, an Indian Ocean resort is the ideal place for toddlers to experience their first vacation abroad. Flights to Mauritius and the Seychelles aren't that long, and the calm, aquamarine waters will keep the kids busy for hours. Lux Hotels, which has resorts in Mauritius, Reunion Island and the Maldives, features a great special. Kids under 12 stay for free between May and September 2015. Visit [www.islandlightholidays.co.za](http://www.islandlightholidays.co.za).

## 4 MONTE CASINO BIRD GARDENS

This bird park in Fourways is a big treat for small children. A highlight is the walk-through aviary, with over 60 species of birds, including scarlet ibises and exotic species of guinea fowl. You will also find reptiles and small mammals, with smaller antelope wandering freely in the undergrowth. Do not miss the Flight of Fantasy bird show, where various birds enchant visitors with unrestrained flight.

The show also has an important conservation message about looking after the environment and vulnerable species. Afterwards, treat them to ice-cream at the outdoor restaurant, Cafe Flamingo, with a jungle gym that overlooks a flamingo pond. If you're lucky, the local pelican might also come and say hi. [www.montecasino.co.za](http://www.montecasino.co.za)





## KIDS (6-10)

5

### HUNT FOR DINOSAURS

Nothing makes a child's eyes light up like a meteorite than showing them the real fossilised remains of a dinosaur. The Karoo used to be the prowling ground for these ancient reptiles, and the best place to go fossil hunting is in the tiny town of Nieu-Bethesda in the Karoo. The Kitching Fossil Exploration Centre is the epicentre of guided dinosaur tours, and a guide will show you complete skeletons fossilised in rock. In a world where species like T-Rexes and Velociraptors are the darlings of the dinosaur world, there is also a centre that teaches children that South Africa had its own breed of dinosaurs, some that were even more ferocious than those in Jurassic Park. The centre is a collaboration between the Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological Research at Wits University, Grahamstown's Albany Museum, and the National Science and Technology Department. E-mail Ian McKay at [ian.mckay@wits.ac.za](mailto:ian.mckay@wits.ac.za) or visit Nieu-Bethesda's tourism website at [www.nieu-bethesda.com](http://www.nieu-bethesda.com).



6

### LEGOLAND MALAYSIA

As the song goes, 'Everything is awesome' at Legoland Malaysia, where almost everything in the park is hands-on. Visitors can push, pedal and program, or steer, squirt and splash their way through a truly interactive experience – and of course there's building with Lego blocks too. The Legoland Park, water park and hotel is in one Lego-themed location. It is a family holiday destination with more than 70 hands-on rides, slides, shows and attractions. The good news is that South Africans do not need a visa to visit Malaysia. Visitors can fly to Singapore and catch the shuttle bus to Johor Bahru, where the park is situated. It's less than an hour's drive from Singapore. [www.legoland.com.my](http://www.legoland.com.my)

7

### GO CAMPING

You don't have to look far to go camping; most cities have lovely camping grounds, not more than two hours' drive from their hubs. Memories are made around camping, whether it's roasting marshmallows over open fires, lying in the tent telling ghost stories (hold back the gory details if the audience is a bit young) or having a braai under starry skies. Kids love the excitement of sleeping in the open, so even if you're not a happy camper, try to brave the bugs and ablution blocks on their behalf. To make sure you're connecting with your family and not your Facebook audience, switch off all your internet access for the weekend and only respond to urgent calls.



8

### VISIT SINGAPORE ZOO

Zoos can be depressing places, but the Singapore Zoo falls within a class of its own. The park has a strong emphasis on conservation; here you won't find depressed animals in small enclosures. If you're travelling with small kids, be sure to visit the Rainforest Kidzworld. This attraction offers a multitude of activities that encourage kids to satisfy their curiosity. Whether they want to have a splashing good time in the watery playground, take a rainforest challenge, or ride a wild animal carousel, there's plenty to see, do and experience. [www.zoo.com.sg](http://www.zoo.com.sg).



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### EXPLORE USHAKA MARINE WORLD

We're lucky to have a world class facility like uShaka Marine World right on our doorstep. Even as an adult it's easy to get transported to another world in the dusky light of the aquarium. uShaka offers some exciting activities for kids as well, from ray feeding to themed birthday parties. The Kids World is a haven for kids from the ages of two to twelve years, designed with jampacked activities and interactive areas. When they have finished staring at the sea creatures they can play on Africa's largest jungle gym and dig their hearts out at Crabby Beach, a giant sandpit full of fun. [www.ushakamarineworld.co.za](http://www.ushakamarineworld.co.za)



**10 HAVE A SWIM IN NATURE**  
 Teach your kids that chlorinated pools and the ocean aren't the end all of swimming experiences. Splashing around in a crystal clear mountain pool or stream can be just as much fun. The Krom River hike in the Limietberg Nature Reserve outside the Paarl has several waterfalls and rock pools where you can catch a refreshing dip. Bring along some goggles and a snorkel - the water is crystal clear and you might catch some interesting aquatic life. If you want to make it a weekend getaway, there is also the Tweede Tol camping site. You can obtain a permit from Cape Nature. [www.capenature.co.za](http://www.capenature.co.za)

## TWEENS (10-13)

**11 TAKE THEM ON SAFARI**  
 Toddlers and young kids may have a short attention span, so the ideal age to take your kid on safari is from ages ten and older. At this age you can also give them prophylactics when visiting an area where malaria occurs. Teach them about the wonders of birdwatching or get them interested in trees. Few things are as exciting as spotting a leopard or lion, but it's also important to teach them that there is more to a safari than ticking off the Big Five as fast as possible. There are options for all pockets, from doing a self-drive safari in the Kruger and staying over at one of the rest camps to living in luxury at an exclusive lodge in a private game reserve.



**12 VISIT DISNEY WORLD**  
 Choosing the appropriate age to visit Disney World can be quite tricky. Too young and they might not get to experience all of the rides; too old and they might end up a bit jaded. The best age to experience Mickey and his friends' magic is ages ten to thirteen. If you're going to splurge on a Disney Experience, may we suggest that you go all out and visit the flagship theme park Disney World in Orlando, Florida. A week may not be enough; the Disney World Orlando consists of five theme parks, two water parks and two entertainment and shopping hubs. Epcot Centre alone will take you two days to explore. A word of warning though, if you've experienced the pixie dust of Walt Disney, no theme park will ever be the same again. <http://holidays.disney.co.za>

**13 EXPLORE ATLANTIS AT THE PALMS**  
 Where do we start? Your kids can spend a whole week at Atlantis at The Palms without being bored. The highlight of the resort is the Aquaventure Park, the number one water park in Africa and the Middle East. Slip and slide through adrenaline pumping waterslides that catapult you through shark-filled lagoons. Mom and Dad can just relax on the private beach surrounded by lush tropical landscapes. The Lost Chambers aquarium will also enchant both parents and their children. Based on the legend of the lost city of Atlantis, the aquarium has several underwater mazes and tunnels to explore this lost civilisation. There are over 20 remarkable marine life exhibits in this Dubai aquarium, including a touch tank and an interactive Aquatheatre show. [www.atlantisthepalm.com](http://www.atlantisthepalm.com)



**14 SHOW THEM THEIR CITY ON AN OPEN BUS**  
 The City Sightseeing buses in Johannesburg and Cape Town are the ideal way for kids to explore their cities. The open top buses are a safe and exciting way to experience the hustle and bustle of downtown Jozi, or the beauty of Cape Town's mountains. They also have a kids club with various special offers. If your child joins the club, they get a special voucher to travel on the bus for free on their birthday, with two of their friends. The bus stops at landmarks such as the Carlton Centre and Gold Reef City in Johannesburg, and at the Table Mountain Cableway and the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town. If you want to show your kids their city, this is the way to do it. [www.citysightseeing.co.za](http://www.citysightseeing.co.za)



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15

## SEND THEM TO SUMMER CAMP

Summer camps in the USA look like a lot of fun. There is the opportunity to make new friends, have wholesome fun in nature, and eat delicious s'mores around the campfire. Sugar Bay Holiday Resort is located in the seaside village of Zinkwazi, on the North Coast of KwaZulu Natal. The resort is open every school holiday, and specialises in hosting children's holiday camps, which are based on the American summer camp model. Set on 16 acres of fun-filled facilities with private access to Zinkwazi lagoon and waterfront, the resort offers endless beaches and all-year-round great weather. They hold six and seven day camps throughout the year, and each camp has a different theme. [www.sugarbay.co.za](http://www.sugarbay.co.za)

## TEENS (13-18)

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## TAKE THEM TO A FOOD MARKET

Hopefully your child has gotten over his fish finger fetish by his early teens and is willing to try something more refined. Organic and artisanal food markets are the ideal places to introduce your kids to the foodie culture. If you're in the Pretoria area, swing by the Hazel Food Market, where the clientele is more Pretoria East housewife than inner city hipster. The vibe is wonderfully unpretentious and reminds you of the food markets of rural France. Sip a smoothie, savour a panini with real Italian sausage, and finish it all off with sweet potato and macadamia nut cupcake. The market opens at 08:00, but be sure to rock up before 09:00, after that it gets extremely busy. Every Saturday from 08:00 -14:00 at the Greenlyn Village Centre. [www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za](http://www.hazelfoodmarket.co.za)

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## GO SLACKPACKING

Take the moaning and complaining out of a long hike by organising a slackpacking tour for your family. It literally takes the weight off your shoulders and gives you the opportunity to enjoy your surroundings and bond with your family, without being weighed down by a heavy backpack. With slackpacking tours you carry a daypack, while your luggage gets transported from guest house to guest house. The three-day, 26km Fynbos Trail in the Overberg meanders through hidden pockets of indigenous forest alive with birds, to Tolkeinesque landscapes of tumbling waterfalls and streams. Guests are treated to great local cuisine and wonderful hospitality. [www.fynbostrail.co.za](http://www.fynbostrail.co.za)



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## CRUISE THE OCEANS

A cruise not only great value for money, but a fun-filled family experience that can be tailor-made to suit each need. Families can enjoy facilities together, or teens can relish in tailor made activities like relaxing on the deck, around the pool, or take part in a variety of entertainment activities. There are also themed cruises, where your child can indulge his passion for art, music or dance – or even rub shoulders with a celebrity or two along the way. [www.imaginecruising.co.za](http://www.imaginecruising.co.za)



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## DO A CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Do you want your child to learn a new language, meet new people and have a broader outlook on life? Enrolling them as exchange students is a great way to show them a new culture and help them develop independence. The Rotary Youth Exchange is the opportunity of a lifetime for the students who participate each year. It's also an affordable way to show them the world. Local Rotary clubs generously host students and provide room and boarding with a host family and a small monthly stipend. You would be responsible for the round-trip airfare, travel insurance, travel documents and spending money. [www.youthexchange.co.za](http://www.youthexchange.co.za)

20

## VISIT AN ART MUSEUM

Be an art-throb. You don't have to travel halfway around the world to show them the Mona Lisa at the Louvre. Locally we have some great art museums and galleries that host some big names from both the international and local art world. The Johannesburg Art Gallery has a Picasso, while the Iziko South African National Art Gallery in Cape Town holds an assortment of South Africa's art giants. Go show them an Irma Stern, Gerard Sekoto and William Kentridge. [www.iziko.org.za](http://www.iziko.org.za) or <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofJA>

# PARADISE FOUND

Escaping the masses of holiday-goers in Phuket can be a challenge, especially when travelling during peak season.

Carla Lewis-Balden went searching for a bit of peace and quiet.





The brief seemed easy enough. “We want a family beach holiday in Thailand.” Then the challenge came.

I had to organise a holiday for my family of three generations, each with very distinct ideas about what makes a beach holiday great. The grandparents wanted a “bit of action.”

“We’re not old farts that are going to sit next to a pool and do nothing. Book us somewhere vibey.”

My sister wanted something child-friendly for her family, with two kids aged between 3 and 5. “Not Patong” she emphasised, “We do not want to expose the kids to that debauchery.”

My husband and I however were looking for unspoiled wilderness and deserted beaches, quite a hard find if you’re shopping for destinations in the Phang Nga region. With destinations like Phuket and Krabi offering budget travellers great value for money, it attracts visitors from all over the world.

In the end it came down to a “vibey destination that was still unspoiled, as well as kid-friendly.” Oh, and it had to offer everyone value for their money.

If everybody is willing to compromise a bit, finding the perfect Thai destination isn’t that hard. We would spend the first few days on Kamala beach on the Western side of Phuket, known more for its family-friendly atmosphere than its go-go bars. After Kamala we will hop on a speedboat to Ko Ya Noi, a little known but beautiful island, about an hour from Phuket, to get our castaway fix.

As far as Phuket’s beaches go, Kamala ranks at the top. Our first glimpse, coming from the airport was a shimmer of azure through the forest. Kamala is situated in a beautiful bay, with powder white beaches, aquamarine waters and longtail boats bobbing in the shallows. It is the quintessential cliché of the postcard perfect Thai scene.

Our base for the first few days was the Sunwing Kamala Resort, a family friendly property we chose because it’s right on the beach. It also seemed quite popular among Scandinavian and Baltic tourists. I had never seen so many ruddy-faced, flaxen-haired people in my life. Everybody was reading Norwegian crime writer Jo Nesbo next to the pool while keeping an eye on their blond offspring.

If Patong is the party capital of Phuket, Kamala is the more laid back family friendly option. Sunwing also has a kiddies club, complete with Swedish singing mascots, Lolo the giraffe and Bernie the bear. Even though they couldn’t understand a word, my nephews were quite taken with the giraffe and his sidekick.

The grandparents were also chuffed with the Kamala vibe. The streets are lined with quirky little bars and restaurants. The beach lights up at night, with restaurants arranging al fresco seating and lanterns flickering on the beach. Clientele is again mostly couples, families and retirees, with mellow Cafe del Mar music mingling with the gentle lapping of Kamala beach's waves.

The next few days we immersed ourselves into resort life. We slept late, but still got up early enough to have the breakfast buffet. Our days went like this: Swim. Eat. Play. Sleep. Eat again and stroll through Kamala Town. Finish it off with a nightcap. Repeat the next day.

Even though Kamala is one of the more laid back areas of Phuket, it still gets busy during high season. That's why the tiny island of Ko Ya Noi felt like a sanctuary after resort life.

The island is located smack-bang in die middle of the Phang Nga Bay. It's not like the island is a secret. Access is easy; a speedboat takes about an hour from either Krabi or Phuket. Travel Bible *Lonely Planet* rates it as one their favourite Thai islands.

It seems that the secret of Ko Ya Noi's preservation lies in the conservative but friendly population of the island, which is predominantly Muslim. Here you won't find bars advertising happy hour specials or ping pong clubs. It's an innocent paradise where travellers come to experience an untouched part of rural Thailand, not revel and frolic in the neon streets until the early hours of the morning.

The island has also flown under the radar from big developers, the only large property on the island is an eco-spa and lodge.

When driving around the island on a rented scooter, you're transported back to the rural images of old Vietnam movies.

We passed water buffalos wallowing in rice paddies, little wooden homes on stilts and massive palm trees towering over



the landscape.

Even though it was high season, the beaches were mostly deserted. It was a welcome break from the deck chairs that's stacked elbow to elbow in Phuket's bigger resort towns.

We stayed at the Koyao Bay Pavillions, located in the southern part of the island. It's a small, intimate set-up, with only three beach bungalows and three self-catering villas.

The Taara self-catering villas, in which the grandparents

and my sister's family stayed, offered great value for money. The villa is kitted out with a gas stove, fridge, and kitchen utensils. It even had a decent coffee machine. The private swimming pool was a big bonus and ideal for families that like a bit of privacy.

We caught a rickety open taxi to the town, to stock up on some food. There's a small 7-Eleven where you can buy some beer, cool drinks, water and snacks, as well as a French bakery, to stock up on some bread and croissants.

We were concerned that the kids were going to be bored, but they loved the novelty of their own pool and watching the sunbirds zipping between the banana tree's flowers. The beach is great for swimming during high tide, but retracts during low tide. We took long walks on the beaches, played on the homemade swings and explored the little rock pools that



formed during low tide.

One day the resort even organised a braai on the deserted beach, complete with a freshly caught fish and satay sticks over the coals.

Looking at the sun setting over the limestone cliffs of Krabi in the distance, you can't help feeling that you're a part of an unspoiled paradise. Let's hope the big hotels leave it undisturbed for quite a while longer.



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### PHUKET

- When booking a hotel in Phuket, use Google Maps to map out your accommodation's exact location. We specified that we were looking for a resort right on the beach. Many travel agents still suggested hotels that overlooked a beach, with a busy road in front of the hotel. Do your homework, before deciding to base yourself.
- Visit [www.phuket.com](http://www.phuket.com), it is an invaluable resource on where to eat, drink and stay. If you are looking for vibrant nightlife, Kamala might feel a bit laid-back while Patong can be overwhelming for families. The great thing about Phuket is that it caters for all tastes.
- If you're used to Mauritius' resorts, Phuket may come as a bit of a shock. All beaches are public, and you have to rent a sun lounger. We splurged a bit more and hung out at the beach clubs, which offered giant salas to lounge on, unlimited chilled drinking water and fluffy white towels.
- With Thai Airways no longer flying from South Africa, the quickest way to get to Phuket is with Singapore Airlines. Singapore Airlines operates seven flights a week from South Africa, a daily service from Johannesburg and four times weekly from Cape Town (via Johannesburg). [www.singaporeair.com.sg/za](http://www.singaporeair.com.sg/za).
- The best time to visit Phuket is during the cool monsoon season, from December through March, when it isn't so humid, and the cool breezes keep things comfortable. The average temperature is around 24 °C to 32 °C.
- We stayed at the Sunwing Resort Kamala, a fully contained family resort with its own restaurants,

entertainment programs and a host of activities for all ages. The resort is ideal for families. If you're travelling with very small children, book a Happy Baby studio, which comes with amenities like a stroller, cot and high chair. [www.sunwingkamala.com](http://www.sunwingkamala.com)

### KO YA NOI

- The easiest way to get to Ko Ya Noi from Phuket is to take a longtail boat or speedboat from Phuket's Bang Rong Pier, on the north-eastern side of the island. Most hotels and resorts are also willing to organise a transfer, but it can be quite expensive.
- If you are fond of wine, bring your own. The liquor on the island was quite expensive, but the wine came as a shock. A bottle of Laborie Merlot, which costs about R50 back in South Africa was ten times the price at our hotel in Ko Ya Noi.
- If you're thinking about renting a scooter, Ko Ya Noi is the ideal place to do so. Although most of the roads are dirt, the traffic is not as hectic as on the bigger islands. The landscape is also worth it, driving past rubber tree forests, deserted beaches and rice paddies.
- If the island life on Ko Ya Noi gets a little too laid-back for you, enroll in one of Mina's cooking classes. ([www.minas-cooking-classes.com](http://www.minas-cooking-classes.com)). Travellers rate this as one of the best foodie experiences in Thailand.
- The Koyao Bay Pavilions is an intimate beach-front hideaway. The property is ideal for families that dislikes resorts and are looking for privacy and quality time with their families. We recommend the Taara villa, especially when travelling with tweens and teens. [www.koyaobay.com](http://www.koyaobay.com). ■





# SWAZI MAGIC

Mlilwane in Swaziland may be small, but what it lacks in size, it makes up with biodiversity and a range of adventurous activities. Without any dangerous predators, it's an ideal place to bring the family to explore and relax.

By Carla Lewis-Balden

It's golden hour in the Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, that magical part of the day that bathes the landscape in a soft glowing light. We're in an open-top Land Rover, rushing up to an outlook point that will give us a beautiful view over Swaziland's Ezulwini Valley. In siSwati it means "Valley of the Heavens" and so far it has been living up to its name.

We drive through eucalyptus forests and navigate past mountain streams, flanked by strange-looking cycads and delicate mountain ferns.

The Swazis have a special word for this time of day: "selibantfu bahle" or "the light that makes everyone look beautiful".

I don't know about people, but it's already doing wonders for the landscape. With every hairpin turn our mouths form "oohs and aahs" and we beg our guide, Stew Hlongwane to stop. He complies, but I can see he's getting impatient. Better things lie ahead, and we're chasing the sunset as well.

When we reach the Nyakato viewpoint, the last rays of light caresses the landscape.

To the right lies Sheba's breasts, two green hills topped with grey nipples of granite. To our left Execution Rock towers over the valley, a granite outpost with a sinister history. Stew tells us Swazis that were suspected of witchcraft or criminal activity were thrown to their deaths from the summit.

However, in the "selibantfu bahle"-light it looks serene and tranquil, revealing nothing of its ominous history.

We crack open an ice cold cider and watch dusk descend over the Ezulwini-valley.

I'm ashamed to say that this was my second visit to Swaziland and my first one as an adult. The first was in primary school, just before the 1994 elections, when you still had to cross borders to have a yank at an one armed bandit. Not that we saw much of Swaziland then, we were plied with sugary soft drinks and spent long summer days next to the pool while the adults gambled, played golf and drank beer.

When I asked my (now well-travelled) parents why they didn't take us to Mlilwane, which is less than half an hours' drive from the Royal Swazi spa, they looked quite sheepish.

"We didn't know about it."

That's the problem with most South Africans, it seems. We drive for hours to our neighbouring countries up north, when something like Mlilwane sits right on our doorstep, less than five hours from Johannesburg.

It's also exceptionally child-friendly, with no dangerous predators (except for crocodiles and hippos in the dam) roaming about and plenty of adventure activities to keep them busy. After visiting Mlilwane,

I felt like I was cheated out of a few fond childhood memories.

I never understood how parents think they can develop a love for nature in their children by driving them around in an air-conditioned car from sighting to sighting.

The best way is to get them right out into nature, without the filter of a car window. The animals in Mlilwane are quite used to humans, and kids get an opportunity to get up, close (but not too personal) with the resident wildlife. The camps are unfenced and herds of zebra and impala regularly wander in and out of the camp. A lone nyala bull skulks about, giving you endless photographic opportunities to snap these usually shy antelope species.

We spent our first night in the traditional beehive huts that offer basic but comfortable en suite accommodation. The huts are woven from thatch and were surprisingly cool and comfortable in Swaziland's summer heat and much larger than they appeared from the outside. When I mentioned this to Stew, he grinned. "They were modified a bit to make them more comfortable for tourists," he admitted.

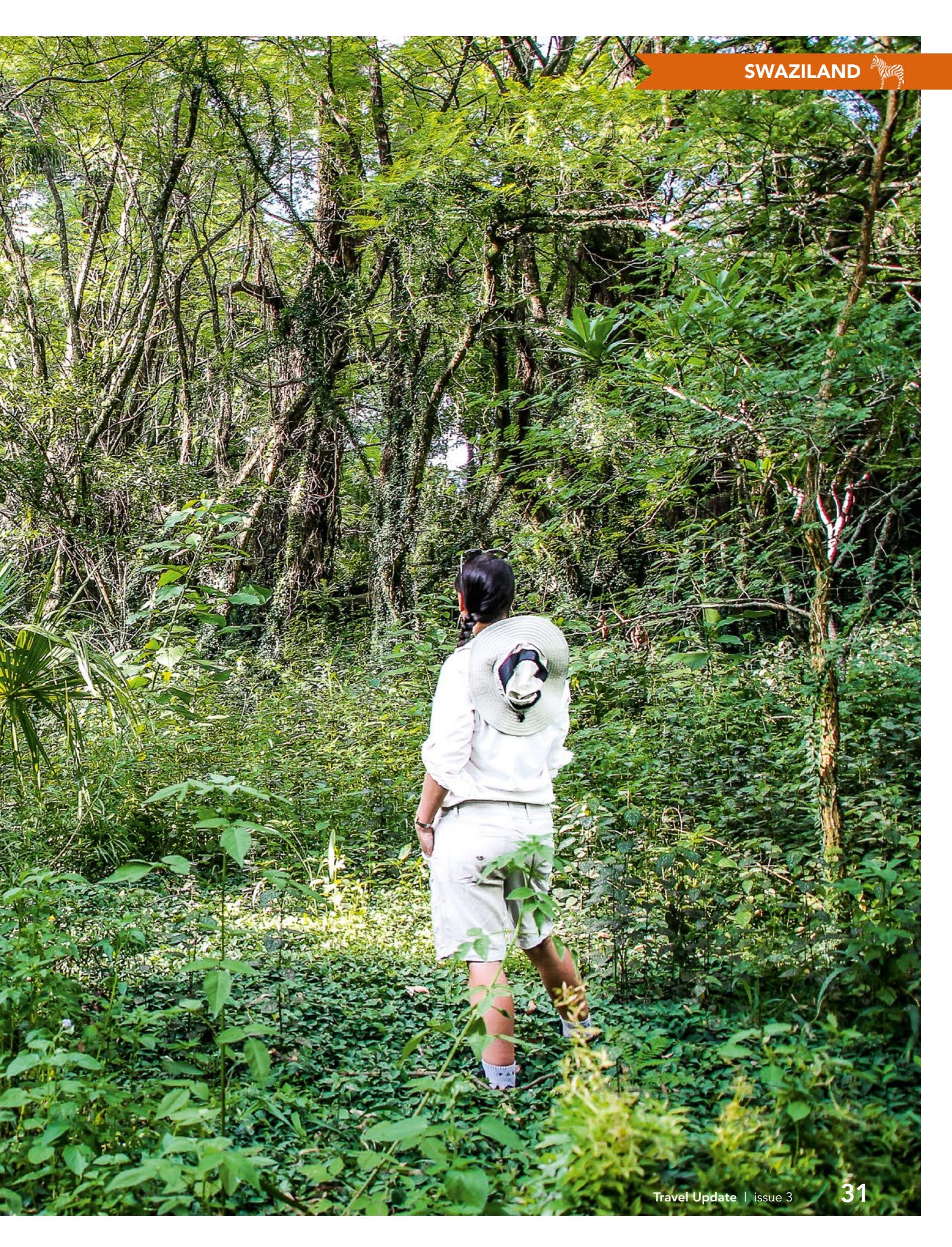
One of the highlights was sitting in front of our hut, watching a herd of zebra grazing between our huts, oblivious to our presence.

That's what Mlilwane's magic is all about.



"We drive for hours to our neighbouring countries up north, when something like Mlilwane sits right on our doorstep, less than five hours from Johannesburg."



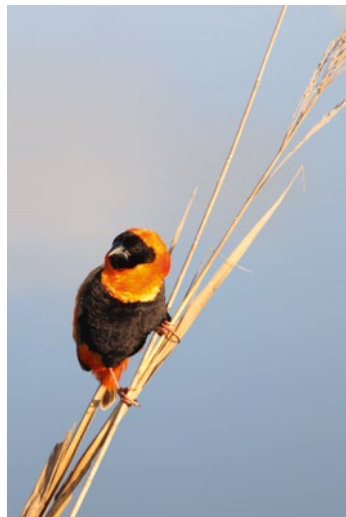




Although Mlilwane does allow “self-drives” in the park, the best way to explore the reserve is to park your car and participate in the numerous adventure activities the park offers.

### CYCLING

Game viewing takes on a new level when you’re cycling past great green plains, dotted with plains game such as blesbuck, zebra, impala and wildebeest. Mlilwane is one of few Southern African game reserves that allows you to explore on a mountain bike, without a guide. Take a detour past the eucalyptus forests or stop at the dam, there’s bound to be some activity. During our bike tour, we came across a flock of white-fronted bee-eaters having a dirt bath in the road. Watching these brightly coloured birds cover themselves with dust is almost like seeing a rainbow frolic between clouds of dust. You can bring your bike at no extra cost. Mlilwane also rents out mountain bikes at their activities desk, but if you take one for longer than an hour, it can become expensive.



### HORSEBACK

I thought safaris on horseback were only for experienced riders. Turns out, the majority of people that mount a horse at the Chubeka Trails has never even sat on one. We signed up for a one-hour trail, which took us over streams and into the savannah. The wild animals are much more relaxed when you

approach them on horseback. They’ll give you a once-over, before returning to feed. Horses aren’t seen as threats and you’ll get the opportunity to get quite close to the game. For more experienced riders there is a half day trip that takes you up to Execution Rock, as well as fully catered one and

two-night excursions. The fully-catered overnight Cave Trail meanders up the slopes of Nyonyane mountain and around the Mantenga Valley. On arrival at the cave just before dark, riders are welcomed by their camp host, who prepared a traditional dinner over the



fire. After all the excitement of the day and dinner, guests drift off in comfortable bed rolls inside the cave. In the morning the camp host prepares a breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast on the open-fire, before returning home. All that you need to bring is an overnight bag. The staff at

Chubeka takes care of the rest.

### HIKING AND BIRDING

If you’re looking to take it easy, a network of self-guided trails can be found at Mlilwane, ranging from a leisurely stroll along the plains where a variety of game is often found. Leave early in the morning, maybe you’ll catch a glimpse of a narina trogon or purple crested turaco. Advanced hikers can try the harder trails leading up to the infamous Rock of Execution.

### RARE GAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Although I regard myself as well travelled in Africa, I saw quite a few species of game for the first time. In the absence of dangerous predators, Mlilwane is the ideal place to spot rare species such as roan antelope, suni, blue duiker and nyala. You also get to see them up close, they are used to humans and don’t go scampering into the thicket. A highlight was spotting a pair of thick-tailed bush babies from up close at Reilly’s Rock, a colonial homestead on the reserve.



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

**Getting there:** Mlilwane is about four and a half hours' drive from Johannesburg, via Carolina. We crossed the border at Oshoek and Ngwenya, which took less than twenty minutes on both sides. Bring your passports, car's registration papers and R50 for road tax. South African residents do not need a visa when visiting Swaziland

**Stay here:** If you're travelling with a large family or a group of friends, consider renting Gran Down's self-catering cottage. This self-contained seven sleeper features one double room, one triple room and one twin room, all with en suite facilities and a private braai area. You get a bit of a Karen Blixen, I-had-a-farm-in-Africa-vibe when standing on the porch, gazing over the Ezulwini Valley, G&T in hand. The beehive huts and Lontweni rondavels also offer great value for money

**When to go:** The best time of the year to visit is between April and May and August and September,

when the weather is mild. Mlilwane can get boiling hot in summer (November to February), but this is also the best time to go birding.

**Safety:** Except for hippos and crocodiles in the park, there are no other dangerous game. Although the animals are used to humans, they still remain wild and should always be treated with caution and respect. Never feed any of the animals, be careful when hiking close to the water's edge and never approach an animal from too close, except when accompanied by a trained guide.

**Reservations:** For more information send an email to [reservations@biggameparks.org](mailto:reservations@biggameparks.org) or visit [www.biggameparks.org](http://www.biggameparks.org). You can also call them at +268 2528 3943/4

For more information on Swaziland, visit the Swazi Tourism Authority's website at [www.thekingdomofswaziland.com](http://www.thekingdomofswaziland.com).





The Bush Babes Adventure and Safari Club is renowned for its sense of adventure, but a recent trip to Clarens topped the charts. JD Kritzingler donned some cowboy boots for a line dance, braved the churning white waters of the Ash River and went horseriding with the club.

# SISTERS DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

I was dangling off a thirty-meter drop, trying not to look down. “Relax,” Thys Maritz, owner of the Bergwoning, told me. “Everything is going to be okay.”

I inwardly cursed Leilani Basson, owner of the Bush Babes Adventure and Safari Club, for talking me into abseiling. I usually don’t do heights.

However, as I eased myself off the sandstone cliff, bit by bit, the terror turned into exhilaration. When I got to the bottom, it was amongst a chorus of “well done” and “you rock!” High fives were exchanged between my fellow Babes. That is what the sisterhood of the Bush Babes is all about. Ever since I had joined the club, I raced a bakkie off a dune in the West Coast, went line dancing, and now clambered down a thirty-meter high rock.

The club has forced me to broaden my horizons and challenge my

comfort zones. And along the way I’ve also made some amazing new friends.

## DANCING QUEENS

It was at the end of last year that a convoy of Bush Babes arrived at The Bus Stop, a farm stall with a big red bus on the side of the R712 highway, about 15km from Clarens. We were to spend the weekend at Bergwoning, an adventure farm across the road from The Bus Stop. The farm is situated in a tranquil valley between the beautiful Maloti Mountains and the Golden Gate National Park.

While everyone got settled in and donned their cowboy boots for the line dancing that evening, the weather took a turn for the worst. Within minutes the hot summer day turned cold, miserable and wet. The line dancing had to be moved into the tiny farm stall next to the Red Bus Stop, but in true Bush Babes fashion,

this did not dampen the spirits. We moved the tables and soon the small dance floor was packed with cheerful women following the steps of the professional line dance team, who got the party started..

## HORSES AND RAPIDS

The following morning the wet weather and cold prevailed, but so did the Bush Babes’ appetite for adventure. Nothing was going to put us off the white river rafting on the Ash River. The crystal clear water of the Ash River gets funneled from the Katze Dam - high up in the Maloti Mountains of Lesotho - and flows down the Ash River all the way to the Vaal Dam. It is the only river in the country with a constant high water level, which enables Outrageous Adventures, the river rafting guiding operation in Clarens, to conduct the same level of river rafting on 6-man



rafts right through the year. This means Grade 2 to 4 rapids that make for an exciting day out on the river. The Babes were ready for it!

Although the rain cleared up towards the end of the river rafting, by the time the Babes were back at Bergwoning for their mountain horseback safari, it was drizzling again. No one was put off. Horse riding was part of the adventure weekend, and it had to be done – despite rain or sunshine. The trail meandered through recently burnt veld and between mountains. The drizzle and mist shrouded the landscape in white and gave us all goosebumps.



petrified client into taking the plunge down any cliff. And this is exactly what he did with me and most of the Babes. The last few hesitant Babes were 'forced' off the cliff when a hail storm broke.

After a hearty breakfast at The Bus Stop, and some serious reminiscing and exchanging of photographs of another fabulous Bush Babes weekend, it was time to hit the road back home. ■



## NEXT ADVENTURE

The Bush Babes' next adventure is a full moon horse healing workshop and photography weekend in Curry's Post in the Natal Midlands from 1 to 3 May. The weekend costs R1800 and includes self-catering accommodation in the Old Hotel, the horse healing workshop, full moon labyrinth walk, a waterfall picnic and interaction with the horses on the Sunday morning. Space is limited. For more information or to book, contact Leilani Basson at [leisurebabe@bushbabes.co.za](mailto:leisurebabe@bushbabes.co.za). You can also contact the Bush Babes through their website, [www.bushbabes.co.za](http://www.bushbabes.co.za).

## TOP OF THE WORLD

Sunday morning saw all the Babes hiking up the back of a steep cliff from where the ropes for the thirty meter abseil dangled. I was planning to be a spectator, but before I knew what was happening, I was kitted out in full abseiling gear. Thys has been an abseiling guide for the past thirty years. He can convince the most



## WHO ARE THE BUSH BABES?

The Bush Babes initiative was born in October 2010. Leilani Basson, then a photojournalist for an outdoor and motoring magazine, invited six women on a weekend away for an article on women and adventure. "Most of these ladies have never driven a 4x4," Leilani recalls. "They weren't exactly the adventurous type and have never gone away without their husbands and children. They however all had one thing in common: they wanted to enjoy the outdoors and 4x4 lifestyle, but on their own terms." The initial project showed immense potential and morphed into the Bush Babes Adventure and Safari Club in January in 2012. Bush Babes members can look forward to continuous adventures and fun days with a jam-packed program of 4x4 training weekends, community projects, survival camps and exclusive safaris for women only. For more information call Leilani at 082 779 0602.

# TO BOYCOTT OR NOT TO BOYCOTT?

Travel agents and buyers from all over the world are attending WTM Africa, Africa's largest travel trade show in Africa in April. **Carla Lewis-Balden** urges them to think twice before deciding not to support a country, based on the decisions of its leaders.

**E**arlier this year ZimEye, a Zimbabwean news network reported that a group of 31 travel agents from all over the world were threatening to boycott Zimbabwe, unless they change their environmental policies. The recent news, in which the country is selling elephant calves and sable antelope to zoos in China and the UAE, has made a lot of people angry. Zimbabwe has an image problem in the tourism industry, and I know quite a

few people that's hesitant to visit the country because they do not support the political ideologies of its leaders.

Linda Markovina, travel journalist, documentary filmmaker and TEDx-speaker recalls that she received criticism on social media when she visited Uganda.

People were lambasting her for supporting a country notorious for its draconian laws against the gay and transgender community.

"I would absolutely travel to Uganda again," Linda says.

"Before we pass social judgement on a whole population we must not forget that these same prejudices exist in most of our home countries, some to greater degrees than others.

"There are many Ugandans who are wonderful human beings. Boycotting a country for travel might feel like the right option for you, but personally I feel that problems like this exist throughout the world.

"If I had to stop travelling because of it I would probably have to move to the moon."

## MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

Like Linda, I think imposing a boycott on a country's tourism industry does more harm than good, especially on grassroots level.

Not all citizens support the decisions of their country's leader. If the rest of the world decides not to support South Africa as a destination because they don't approve of our government's policies, a lot of people will be in trouble. It will impact everyone, from the *tannie* with the guest house on the Garden Route, to the waiters and cleaners who work in the hospitality industry. It has a ripple effect on people and their families, with people on grassroots level being the most vulnerable.

"Boycotting a country's tourism industry is a dangerous mechanism to implement about without giving adequate thought to," says Chris Roche, chief marketing officer of Wilderness Safaris, one of Africa's most foremost ecotourism operators.

"Any tourism boycott of Zimbabwe and other African countries would have serious negative consequences for conservation and community. In a modern world of social media and digital activism via petition websites it is far too easy for the uninformed public to call for boycotts and to get support.

"You have to really consider the sense of these and question whether there is any real understanding of the real grassroots impacts of these measures ... impacts that are often in direct opposition to the stated aims of the protest."

## DARKEST DAYS

During the first decade of the 2000s the amount of tourists visiting Zimbabwe more than halved due to political instability. “It led to one of the saddest days of my life,” Ross Kennedy, CEO of Africa Albida Tourism, who owns the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, recalls.

“On one day I retrenched 125 people. Luckily, with tourism picking up in the last few years I could fill those posts again, some with the original staff we retrenched.”

Dave Glynn, chairman of Africa Albida Tourism, concedes that they can’t change people’s moral opinion of Zimbabwe. “We however hope that people will be able to see the positive impact their money has on people that work in the tourism industry. The money which they spend has a huge positive impact on people’s lives.”

Victoria Falls Safari Lodge alone employs more than 300 people. In Zimbabwe, it’s estimated that every employee in the tourism industry has about six dependents they look after. Without tourism as a job creator it will have a massive impact on thousands of people’s lives.

“Tourism can be very important to communities living in remote areas, especially if it is their main source of income,” Linda says.

“If tourism dried up I would imagine that people in those communities would be forced to relocate to more populated areas in order to find a new revenue stream, which could be detrimental if the environment around these communities is sensitive.”

Roche admits that it was a challenge doing business in Zimbabwe in the last decade, due to the political and economic instability.

“We continued to operate our

camps – albeit at far lower rates and occupancies. We did this despite suffering significant financial losses because we wanted to limit the impact of the tourism downturn on both conservation and communities. If you take tourism as an employer and contributor (through taxes, entry

**“IN ZIMBABWE, IT’S ESTIMATED THAT EVERY EMPLOYEE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY HAS ABOUT SIX DEPENDENTS THEY LOOK AFTER.”**

fees, philanthropy and other impacts) away, you can have catastrophic impacts on local communities and as a result, conservation.”

“In remote rural areas of Africa ecotourism and conservation are often the only form of gainful employment. The ramifications of removing these are obvious and far reaching.”

In Hwange National Park, Wilderness Safaris runs a feeding scheme for more than 1200 children. When the tourists disappear with their Euros, Dollars and Pounds, this can also disappear.

## THE ANIMAL IMPACT

If you’re not too concerned about the communities, there is also the impact on wildlife and the environment. Victoria Falls Safari Lodge is the main contributor towards the Victoria Falls anti-poaching unit. They also run a “vulture

restaurant” on the lodge’s premises, which allows researchers to collect valuable information on the region’s vulture population.

Wilderness Safaris installed three boreholes in Hwange National Park. When the park was struck by drought a few years ago, many animals’

lives were saved by these boreholes, which are directly funded by tourism.

“Tourism should be about making a positive difference in people’s lives through community buy-in,” Linda says.

When tourism and conservation work together

it can be a game changer for the wildlife and environment, especially in vulnerable eco-systems like Uganda’s forests or where endangered species like the mountain gorillas are involved. If ethical and well run tourism were to disappear, then the

species found there could potentially be opened up to unscrupulous exploitation.

“Well-informed tourists and suppliers are able to make their voice heard by putting their money into tourism that works for a community. They

have the ability to work as regulators for responsible tourism operations.” ■



# TRAVEL NEWS

## STEAM STARS

If the glamour of old steam locomotives gets your heart racing, be sure to visit the Stars of Sandstone festival in the Free State. The annual steam heritage festival takes place from 2-12 April. Wilfred Mole, director of Sandstone Estates, says: "In the past, we attracted mostly international visitors to this event and for the first time we were inundated with South Africans registering for our 2014 festival."

Military vehicles, trek oxen, old tractors, steam lorries, traction engines, locomotives, old buses and cars will take centre stage with the backdrop of the majestic Maloti Mountains of the Lesotho Highlands in the distance. For more information and nearby accommodation contact Joanne West at [joannewest@btinternet.com](mailto:joannewest@btinternet.com) or Babita Hira at [babitan@sandstone.co.za](mailto:babitan@sandstone.co.za) or call +27 11 805 4692/6530. You can also visit the website at [www.sandstone-estates.com](http://www.sandstone-estates.com).



## NO MORE HOLLYWOOD ITALIANO

Fortunato Mazzone, Pretoria's favourite Italian chef and owner of the Ritrovo restaurant has launched a new menu that's strictly Italiano. "Our new menu is authentic Italian. Forget about the usual "Hollywood Italian" dishes like Fettucini, Alfredo and Hawaiian pizzas served in Italian restaurants across South Africa." Fortunato is introducing classic Italian regional dishes like Trippa con Fagioli (tripe with beans), Insalata di Mare (seafood salad), and Costolette di Vitello alla Milanese (veal cutlets, Milanese style). Everything will be prepared



the traditional Italian way and without shortcuts.

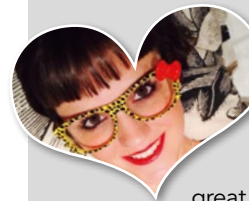
"I use only the best oils, Buffalo Mozzarella and specially grown vegetables," he says.

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Pretoria.

Call +27 12 460 5173 to book. [www.ritrovo.co.za](http://www.ritrovo.co.za)

## BLOGGER WE ❤️

Kate Els, editor of IndiKate sees herself as a self-appointed director of happiness and spreads the love of travel through her blog. As former content editor of Tourism South Africa Kate is passionate about Mzansi. Here you'll get all the inside info about our country's hidden gems. The blog covers a range of topics from travel to running, eating out and great wines, to artists and music she loves. Visit [www.indikate.net](http://www.indikate.net) to experience her blog.





# KNOW THE LINGO “FLASHPACKER”

Boutique backpacking is the new trend for low cost adventures and no, it's not only for students. Travellers are looking for a little bit of luxury, along with good value for money and backpackers and hostels are converting their digs into something more stylish. The days of flophouses and fleapits are thankfully over! Flashpackers travel in style and believe in roughing it in luxury. They actively seek out unique experiences and define luxury as something more than thread count or shower size. The easiest way to spot one? Look out for the person with the dirty designer hiking boots, sporting the newest iPhone.

**95** The minimum percentage a business must reach with their guest satisfaction ratings, before they can reach Gold Trusted Merchant status. Trafalgar ([www.trafalgar.com](http://www.trafalgar.com)) has been awarded Gold Trusted Merchant status from Feefo, the global ratings and reviews provider used by the world's most trusted brands. The company's rating is based on over 7500 independent, unedited guest reviews conducted during 2014. "We believe in total transparency. We want people to see the reality of the amazing experiences we deliver. Feefo offers that window – independent, live, uncurated and unedited guest reviews," says Gavin Tollman, CEO of Trafalgar.



## WTM AFRICA

If you work in the travel industry, make sure to mark 15 to 17 April in your diary. That is when the World Travel Market Africa (WTM Africa) happens in Cape Town. WTM Africa is the leading B2B exhibition for the inbound and outbound African travel and tourism markets. Through its industry networks, global reach and regional focus, WTM Africa creates personal and

business opportunities providing their customers with quality contacts, content and communities. The WTM Portfolio facilitated almost \$7 billion (\$4.2 million) in travel and tourism industry deals in 2014. [www.wtmafrica.com](http://www.wtmafrica.com)

## AFRICA IS A COUNTRY?

Geoffrey Kent, CEO of luxury holiday specialist Abercrombie and Kent suggests that people need to consult an atlas, when it comes to the Ebola outbreak. "The problem with Africa is that it always gets a bad knock for nothing. When the Ebola crisis happened, everybody said it was in Africa and I had to tell them that London is much closer to Nigeria than Cape Town," Kent said in an interview with *Skift*, an online travelling publication. "We were badly impacted for three months. People stopped booking and cancelled trips. There's a lack of geographical knowledge in all of this. We're driven by ridiculous emotions most of the time."

## OYSTERS FOR PAYDAY



Clico Boutique Hotel in Rosebank is offering oysters and bubbly on the last Friday of every month – ideal for month-end Friday happy hour relaxation. This delectable special is on offer at R250, including a platter of six oysters on crushed ice and two glasses of Huis van Chevallerie's delicious choices of sparkling wine – an ideal treat to share with someone special. Contact Clico on +27 (0)11 252 3300, send an email to [info@clicohotel.com](mailto:info@clicohotel.com) or visit the website [www.clicohotel.com](http://www.clicohotel.com). Clico Boutique Hotel is on the corner of Jellicoe and 27 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank.



# HOTEL JEN

This new hotel group encourages BYO minibars and helping yourself to takeaways at the breakfast buffet. **Carla Lewis-Balden** experiences Jen’s hospitality at the Orchardgateway flagship hotel in Singapore.

**L**arge hotels can be generic, intimidating and cold, and sometimes I get the feeling I’m getting milked for all that I’m worth.

On a recent trip to Singapore I stayed at Hotel Jen Orchardgateway. Hotel Jen is a new brand of hotels that was launched in September 2014 and is owned by Asian hotel giant, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. If Shangri-La is the Beyonce powerhouse, then Hotel Jen is Solange, the younger, hipper sister that focuses more on the millennial hipster. The hotel group did extensive market research and came up with everything I’ve ever wanted in a hotel, but the big chains refused to give me.

## BYO MINIBAR

I know all the tricks and the trades of smuggling contraband into the minibar. I have a special bag in which I can smuggle soft drinks and beers because I refuse to pay \$5 for a can of Coke or \$8 for a beer. Jen gave me an empty minibar and directions to the nearest vending machine. The concierge will not give you the evil eye as you stroll through the lobby, with a six-pack of beer in hand. That’s how they roll at Jen.

## TAKE-AWAY BREAKFAST

I like saving money when I travel. Therefore, I’m always trying to smuggle out a croissant or sarmie for lunch in a grotty napkin, while my husband pretends that he doesn’t know me. At Hotel Jen, they give you containers and ask you to take an extra pastry or some fruit for the road. No uppity signs that inform you that the “food is for consumption on the premises only”.

## FREE ACCESS TO PRESS READER

Except for the free lightning fast Wifi, all guests also get complimentary access to Press Reader, an all-you-can-read digital newsstand with thousands of the world’s most popular newspapers and magazines. I was able to read *Beeld* on my iPad and catch up with the latest skinder in *YOU*, all on the latest digital edition.

## POSH AMENITIES

In an era where most hotels give you a conditioning hair and body wash, I was pleasantly surprised by Hotel Jen’s amenities. Except for the conditioner, which most hotels skimp on, I also got a toothbrush and a shaving kit. Every room had two terrycloth robes, something you only find at really fancy five star hotels.

## THE BEST POOL WITH A VIEW

The Marina Bay Sands brags that it has the best view in Singapore, but who wants to be trampled by the masses of tourists, while sipping your Singapore sling? Hotel Jen Orchardgateway’s pool deck is the stuff that travel porn is made off, a panoramic view over Singapore’s skyline, comfortable decks and not a single tour group in sight. ■

- Hotel Jen has branches in Hong-Kong, Singapore, Brisbane, Manila and Penang. For more information or to make a booking, visit [www.hoteljen.com](http://www.hoteljen.com).
- Singapore Airlines operates seven flights a week from South Africa, a daily service from Johannesburg and four times weekly from Cape Town. [www.singaporeair.com.sg/za](http://www.singaporeair.com.sg/za).
- For further information or bookings, please contact Flight Centre on 0877 40 5000 or email [enquiry@flightcentre.co.za](mailto:enquiry@flightcentre.co.za) or visit [www.flightcentre.co.za](http://www.flightcentre.co.za).

*Carla Lewis-Balden was hosted by Hotel Jen and Singapore Airlines.*

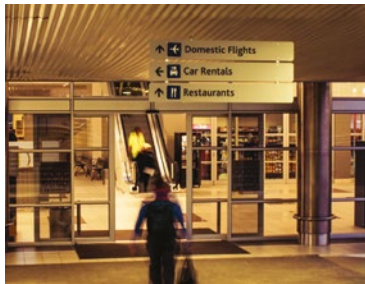
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- Close proximity to **hotels and B&B's** and many tourist attractions
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- Open 24/7



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