

SPECTACULAR SAFARIS

*Heed the call of the wild
with a new Web site that will help you
find the perfect African adventure*

By Michelle White

Asafari promises rare and unforgettable thrills: Spy the early stirrings of lions, gazelles and elephants on a game drive at dawn. Capture the rare black rhino on camera, or the thundering waters of Victoria Falls. Take in dazzling sunsets and vast stretches of rippling grasslands, and at the end of the day, retreat to comfortable accommodations — perhaps an upscale, tented camp under star-studded African skies.

On an escorted safari, knowledgeable guides who know the land and the wildlife ensure that guests get the most out of their experience. Accommodations, sightseeing, game treks, ground transportation and most meals are wrapped into one price that is paid up front, so you don't have to worry about incurring significant additional costs during your vacation.

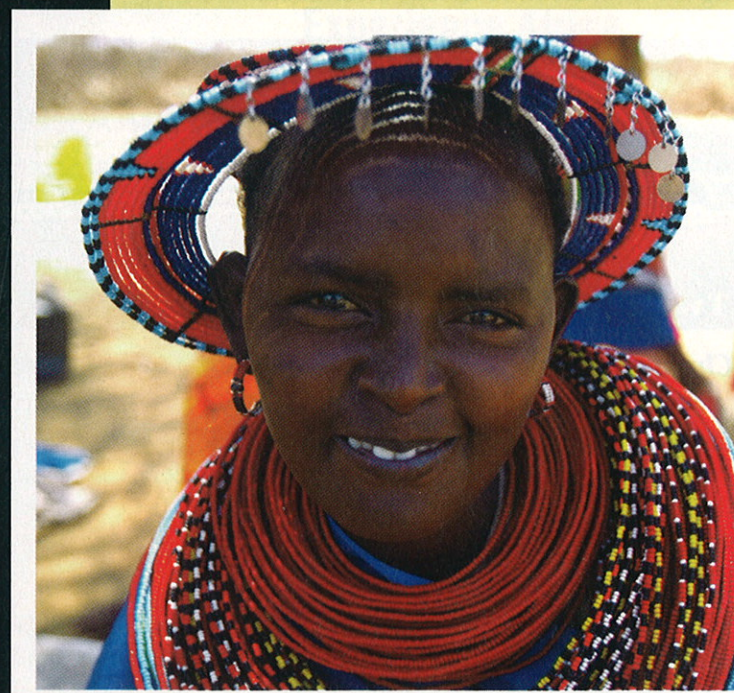
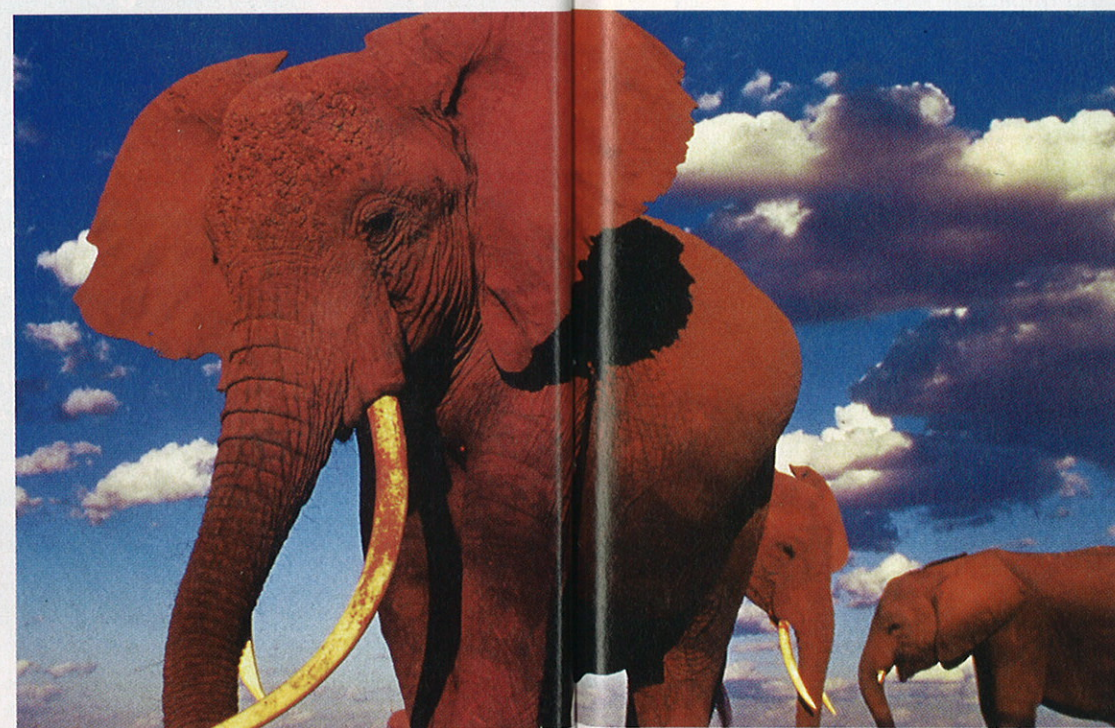
Houston-based travel agency Vacations To Go, a leading seller of cruises, escorted tours and tropical resorts, recently launched its safari division, AfricaSafari.com. The Web site features a comprehensive selection of safaris from 10 of the world's most respected tour operators. Itineraries are offered in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and

Zambia. Site visitors can read about the vacation attractions of each country and look for itineraries with the amenities and activities that suit their interests and budget. The "Africa Safari Search" tool on the site lets users customize a search according to country, tour operator, departure dates and trip length.

African safaris can range from four days to four weeks or more and are classified according to the quality and amenities of the accommodations and dining venues. Vacations To Go offers budget, first-class, deluxe and luxury African safaris. Typically, budget safaris range from \$60 to \$150 per person, per day; first-class safaris range from \$150 to \$250 per person, per day; deluxe safaris range from \$200 to \$500 per person, per day; and luxury safaris range from \$350 to \$700 per person, per day. These per diems do not include airfare.

Exhilarating side excursions such as scuba diving, white-water rafting, hot-air balloon riding and bungee jumping

For many, an African safari is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, a chance for unforgettable close-up views of the wildlife. Participants on G.A.P. Adventure's "Masai Mara Experience" have opportunities to interact with the Samburu people (below).





Stroll with the elephants on Abercrombie & Kent's "Wings Over Botswana," an 11-day adventure.

ABERCROMBIE & KENT

are sometimes offered, usually at an additional cost. Victoria Falls, for example, along the Zambia-Zimbabwe border, is home to the world's second-highest bungee jump.

Here are four examples of itineraries available from AfricaSafari.com, one each from the budget, first-class, deluxe and luxury categories.

G.A.P. Adventures' eight-day "Masai Mara Experience" is a budget safari that showcases the best of Kenya. It was priced from \$695 per person at press time, plus air-

fare. With two nights each at the Samburu Game Reserve and the Masai Mara Game Reserve, travelers will see an amazing variety of wildlife. Samburu is home to many rare animals, including Somali ostriches and reticulated giraffes. Among the forests and plains of Masai Mara roam the "Big Five" — leopards, lions, elephants, rhinos and buffaloes — as well as zebras, impalas and gazelles. This safari also visits Lake Nukuru, famous for its countless pink flamingos perched along the lakeshore. G.A.P. also

provides the opportunity for travelers to interact with the people of local villages. Guests overnight at simple campsites, and guests are expected to help out with the cooking and other camp duties.

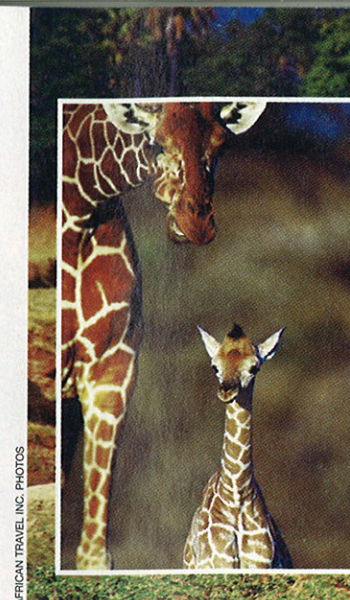
"South Africa" is a first-class safari from 78-year-old Globus, lasting 16 days and priced from \$2,677 at press time, plus airfare. The highlight is Kruger National Park, one of the world's first wildlife conservation areas. Safari guests can explore savannas in search of the "Big Five," giraffes and wildebeests, while hippos and crocodiles may be spotted lounging in riverine areas. About 150 mammal species, 500 bird species and a very diverse landscape ensure abundant opportunities for stunning photographs. Globus also includes a foray into South Africa's wine country to sample the vintages, as well as a short steam train ride along the coast, tours of historic Cape Town and visits to an ostrich farm, a cheetah sanctuary and the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. Travelers stay in first-class hotels and lodges.

African Travel, a deluxe tour operator specializing solely in travel to Africa, offers "The Great Migration" in northern Tanzania, 13 days from \$4,450 at press time, plus

airfare. Spanning 5,700 square miles, Serengeti National Park is an excellent place to view lions, buffaloes, rhinos and more. More than a million wildebeests and zebras migrate annually from the parched Serengeti plains to Masai Mara in neighboring Kenya. An incredible density of wildlife is found in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, which contains the world's largest unbroken caldera, a crater formed from the collapse of an ancient volcano. Safari-goers descend nearly 2,000 feet to reach the abundant wildlife and varied terrain of the crater floor. On this safari, guests reside in well-appointed lodges nestled within scenic landscapes.

Visit www.AfricaSafari.com for a complete list of safari itineraries and rates.

Abercrombie & Kent offers luxury safaris, such as "Wings Over Botswana," priced from \$6,630 at press time, plus air. (While today Abercrombie & Kent travels to more than 100 countries on all seven continents, the company got its start in 1962 as a safari operator in Nairobi, Kenya.) This 11-day adventure takes travelers to the world's largest inland river delta,



AFRICAN TRAVEL INC. PHOTOS

Catch sight of giraffes and learn tracking skills while on safari with African Travel, which specializes in trips to the continent.



the Okavango — an oasis for many predator species — and Chobe National Park, where the elephant population is estimated at 60,000. Guests fly between safari destinations, maximizing game-viewing time.

Guests can also behold the mighty Victoria Falls on a sundowner cruise along the Zambezi River, and immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of Africa while gliding along the Okavango River in dugout canoes called mokoros. Accommodations include well-appointed, luxurious tented

camps and intimate lodges with gourmet dining, en-suite baths and private gardens.

Visitors to AfricaSafari.com can view photos and descriptions of the safari lodgings used by tour operators. The site also features images of African wildlife, people and scenery; maps of safari destinations; and an extensive list of frequently asked questions.

To find a safari to fit your budgets and desires, call a Vacations To Go Africa safari specialist at (800) 291-3346, or visit www.AfricaSafari.com. **V**

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