

TRAVEL ESSENCE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 7 • JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2021

FROSTING ON SAFARI
WITH JESSICA GOWER

8 Reasons why
Ghana should be your
next gateway to Africa

THINKING
SEYCHELLES?
The H-Resort Beau
Vallon Beach beckons

INSIDE LEPOGO
LODGES LAPALALA

AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS FOUNDER AND CEO

BEKS NDLOVU:

REINCARNATING THE FANTASY
OF "OLD UNTOUCHED AFRICA"



TRAVEL MAGAZINE
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MAGAZINE

Culture • Lifestyle • Taste-Making





On The Cover:
AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS
FOUNDER AND CEO
BEKS NDLOVU

Editorial

Yvonne C. Mtengwa

Editor-in-Chief

info@travelessencemag.com

Daphine Mabhiza

Content Director

daphinemabhiza@gmail.com

Marketing & Promotions

Louisa Conrad Choruma

Market Engagement Director

louiconrad@yahoo.co.uk

Creative Direction


Yissue Group

info@yissuegroup.com


GENERAL ENQUIRIES


info@travelessencemag.com

www.travelessencemag.com

 @Travelessencemagazine

 @TravelEssenceM

 @TravelEssenceMag

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“The eye never forgets what the heart has seen.”
 – AFRICAN PROVERB

It's a delicate balance between celebrating having made it into the New Year, while navigating the tensions of what is seemingly a continuation of that which has just now ended. 2020 was arguably the most difficult year of our time, and as we come to the close of the first month of 2021, it is safe to say that we still find ourselves bewildered at the circumstances that surround us. The global pandemic is pillaging our lands, and for the first time, the rumble is truly felt across the continent. But we are to choose to hold onto hope. Our team remains committed to bringing to the front of mind of our readers the wonderment that is Mother Africa. You see, no one can tell the story of the continent better than its children – and we are those children. We also understand having worked in the travel and tourism industry for more than three decades between us, what goes into creating the ultimate guest experience, leveraging the vast canvas of natural splendor we call home. We salute industry players for their passion and dedication, as they too work to nurse the industry back to health under challenging circumstances.

As we look ahead, we draw strength from the resilience of our people, many of whom are experiencing the resurgence of national lockdowns and border closures to curb the spread of COVID-19. Safety is paramount, and we all have a role to play in fostering it, regardless of our current location or destination through travel. Equally, spreading a message of goodwill in the knowledge that every adverse circumstance does come to an end, is in fact our fuel. We look forward to bringing you more

Africa travel inspiration with each upcoming Issue.

What's new this year? Travel Essence Getaways are now live, which are our bespoke trips to singular or multi-country destinations across the continent at varied intervals during the year. Great for families looking for an escape to Africa's great outdoors or friends needing an adventure together, we invite you to check out some of our first itineraries across the continent, keeping in mind that they rely on market activity in light of prevailing conditions. You've read loads about the cool places to visit, hotels and lodges to stay at and the people on the ready to welcome you. Now, through our remarkable tour operator and hospitality friends, we are pleased to offer life-changing packages that will undoubtedly make this year one to remember as you travel with us.

May the year that lies ahead bring you blessings and opportunities, and may your dreams come true! A special thank you goes out to all our friends in the industry for your heartwarming feedback and contributions to the work we do in promoting your great works, and to our readers from across the world who are taking time out to read our carefully curated content on the best of our mother continent. 

My warmest regards,

Gyovonne C. Mtengwa



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Contents

ISSUE 7 | JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2021

Cover Story

08 | African Bush Camps Founder and CEO Beks Ndlovu on reincarnating the fantasy of “Old untouched Africa”

Taste-makers

16 | Spotlight on Beatrice Kimath
From humble beginnings to birthing Kilibeyond Safaris.

20 | Rutendo Mutsamwira on building a Vegan lifestyle brand in Zimbabwe



Culinary Escapades

26 | The road to “frosting on Safari” with Jessica Gower Pastry Chef and Entrepreneur
Jessica Gower chronicles her passionate journey to launching her own safari inspired baking business.

30 | Meet Chef Nompumelelo Mqwebu: From the Kitchen to publishing an award-winning Cookbook



34 | Mr B’s Gourmet Emporium : Baking outside the box in the New Year



Adventures In Wild Africa

38 | Inside Lepogo Lodges at South Africa’s Lapalala Wilderness Reserve
A distinctive African wilderness experience.

42 | Why not a stately stay at Singita Castleton?

46 | Thinking Seychelles? The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach beckons
Tranquil, boutique and culturally connected, the resort offers guests a chance to create memories worth sharing in this enchanted paradise.

54 | The Morukuru Family invitation to Madikwe Game Reserve
With exquisite luxury camps and distinctive bush manors to choose from, you’ll be spoilt for choice when hosted by the Morukuru Family.

60 | A Deep Dive At Chinhoyi Caves – What’s on offer?



The Wanderlust Within

66 | An intimately stylish escape at Upendo Zanzibar

72 | What's not to love about Ghana!?

8 reasons why you should visit the gem of West Africa.

78 | A day spent at The Green Pools of Mutorashanga

By Takudzwa Chitsike



Africa To The World

82 | Anisa Ismail on 30+ countries explored as an African woman - and still counting!

84 | Aimee Kenemo on growing the African print brand Lupitawax

By Louisa Choruma

AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS FOUNDER
AND CEO *Beks Ndlovu* ON
REINCARNATING THE FANTASY
OF “OLD UNTOUCHED AFRICA”



African Bush Camps (ABC) is a 100% owner-run, African-based safari company designed to delight adventure travelers with authentic safari experiences amid untamed wilderness across Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Operations are always focused on the guests, with 15 luxury tented bush camps and lodges, offering seamless safari experiences with internal flights, food, drinks, and activities included. African Bush Camps promotes and influences travel to Africa on a global scale while operating with a strong focus on conservation, and an environmentally sustainable footprint that celebrates the culture of communities in the areas in which it operates.

Travel Essence Magazine caught up with the Founder and CEO of African Bush Camps, and here's what he had to share about his journey...

1. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT BEKS NDLOVU. WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT GETS YOU EXCITED TO WAKE UP EACH MORNING?

I started African Bush Camps in 2006, after having worked in the field as a professional safari guide (Beks Safaris). I was born and raised in the village of Lupane on the outskirts of Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. From the start of operations, my mission has always been to operate a portfolio of luxury tented camps and lodges that reincarnate the fantasy of 'Old Untouched Africa.' It has always been about awarding guests to our part of the world an authentic and adventurous, professional guide-led experience, and so we do this by offering bespoke safaris that can only be found in the bush.

What gets me up in the morning? The possibility of travel and knowing that I may soon be visiting more of our camps. Thankfully, I have had the opportunity to do so as we have seen more lenient lockdown regulations in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

2. YOU WERE BORN AND RAISED IN THE VILLAGE OF LUPANE, NOT TOO FAR OFF FROM HWANGE NATIONAL PARK? HOW DID THIS INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL SAFARI GUIDE WHEN PERHAPS OTHERS WOULD HAVE VENTURED OFF IN PURSUIT OF THE BIG CITY DREAM?

In drought years when I was growing up elephants and lions would venture into our garden and this sparked a wild curiosity with wildlife and why people were pouring into the national park. I then started doing volunteer work in safari camps during my school holidays, which demonstrated to me that



learning doesn't always necessarily need to be between four walls; it can be out in nature. So as soon as I left school, I jumped at the first opportunity to work in the field as a trainee guide.

I had the opportunity to travel across the world later in my career, and I knew earlier on, that in order to take that step on my own, I needed to start from the ground up, work hard, continue wanting to learn, persevere and remain excited about the different turns my career would take.

3. TELL US ABOUT THE MOMENT YOU DECIDED YOU WANTED TO FORM AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS? WAS YOURS AN "AHA!" MOMENT OR SOMETHING YOU SORT OF KNEW YOU WANTED TO DO EARLY ON?

I started Beks Safaris and from there, my dream grew into something bigger, into what is now known as African Bush Camps. The best way to summarise my experiences is that it has been a gradual journey, and a lifetime's worth of investment.

Being a guide was something that has always been part of my DNA, after a childhood encounter with elephants that had wandered into our village left me yearning for more adventures similar to what I had experienced on that morning. I was about 10 years old, and a drought in that year saw wild animals wandering into our village from the nearby Hwange National Park to eat the little produce we were growing for subsistence. When this would happen, we would be forced to bang pots and pans in a bid to scare animals away with the loud clanging of metal. On this occasion, when the elephants – 15





of them in total – did leave, the adventurer in me followed them. A mother elephant turned around as if it were to charge, and as a young frightened little boy, my natural instinct was to run! I'll never forget the adrenaline rush, but more so, the innate desire to learn more about what I have come to observe to be gentle giants. Such experiences stay with you, and for me, this particular encounter formed a strong foundation towards what would become my career has a guide.

4. DID YOU EVER IMAGINE AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS WOULD GROW TO THE HEIGHTS IT HAS AS AN ACCLAIMED LUXURY SAFARI COMPANY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA? WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE YOUR SUCCESSES TO?

Like I said earlier, it really has been a gradual journey, and one I have learnt to grow with. Success doesn't happen overnight and really does require that one works hard and is dedicated to their craft. I am thankful for the people who have come across my path, from friends to colleagues and partners. I have a solid team who continues to inno-

vate and adapt to circumstances that are not always within our grips, with the COVID-19 global pandemic being one such challenge that has forced us to really look at new ways to navigate the current space that we all find ourselves as hospitality and tourism operators.

5. NOW LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE PRODUCT. WHAT CAN GUESTS EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY STAY AT ONE OF AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS' LODGES AND CAMPS? WHAT IS YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION?

I have always wanted to bring guests closer to the authentic and wild African experience. For us, it's not only about the accommodation and luxury elements of a safari. We have always wanted to forge meaningful interactions among people: our guests and our communities, our staff, and guides. Most of our guides are from the regions they guide in. It is their love for the bush, endless passion for keeping nature intact and their knowledge that makes them great at what they do. Our team are true custodians of wildlife and make a stay with ABC something that is worth cherishing for the rest of your life.

6. FROM THE PORTFOLIO - DOES BEKS HAVE ANY FAVOURITES AND IF SO WHICH ONES?

It is difficult to highlight one camp. It's like being asked which one of your children is your favourite. I would

say that with the upcoming opening of our newest camp, Khwai Leadwood in the Khwai Community in Botswana, I have been curious to visit the location. Since the lockdown, I have not travelled much, and I have put a lot into the camp's design. It would be a privilege to be able to witness the finished product and I look forward to doing just that soon (the camp is due to open in April 2021).

Somalisa camp in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe was the first camp I established. It captures the true heart of what makes ABC special and I will always have a soft spot for it.

Our camps in Mana Pools National Park, Nyamatusi, Kanga and Zambezi Expeditions, are located in the heart of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Situated in the northern region of Zimbabwe, on the southern banks of the Zambezi River, Mana Pools National Park will leave you breathless with its beauty. A paradise for walking and canoeing safaris, Mana Pools is a wildlife-rich, biodiverse wonderland that always amazes me when I visit the landscape.

7. WE UNDERSTAND YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE IMPACT WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES YOU OPERATE. TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE ABC FOUNDATION, THE WORK BEING CARRIED OUT AND HOW ONE CAN GET INVOLVED?

The African Bush Camps Foundation is a nonprofit organisation focused on conservation, education, and empowerment for the communities that surround the company's camp locations. Launched in 2006, the Founda-



tion operates through a multi-faceted partnership with the company where at least 2,5 percent of ABC's revenue goes towards the Foundation annually. All donations go directly to community-based development projects initiated by the Foundation. Since opening, the Foundation has spearheaded 72 community projects across Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia; over 40 of those projects are currently in operation under the Foundation's wing.

We have been lucky to be supported by platforms that are easy for potential supporters to get involved. We have partnered with a fundraising platform called Global Giving which highlights our COVID-19 priority projects: <https://www.globalgiving.org/donate/68391/african-bush-camps-foundation/>

8. WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE CONSERVATION DISCOURSE AS IT RELATES TO AFRICA'S WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THE ROLE HUMANITY HAS IN CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION?

Conservation is a necessity for the survival




of tourism, and vice versa. It lends itself to a cyclical rhythm that beats from the heart of nature conservation and wildlife protection. Less wildlife and less fauna and flora lead to less environmental tourist attractions and little for us as tourism operators to offer. There is an educational element involved here. Our Foundation has – and continues – to work among community members to help them understand the importance of nature preservation, and how they can benefit from having a higher regard for predators that may disturb their residences, respect wildlife, and help us protect the animals for the sake of keeping tourism intact.

9. BEKS' FAVOURITE 3 COUNTRIES TO VISIT IN AFRICA?

Mozambique, Rwanda, and Uganda. These countries' wildlife areas are beautifully unscathed.

10. WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON AFRICA'S TRAVEL AND TOURISM KEY LEARNINGS IN COVID-19 TIMES. WHAT SHOULD OPERATORS BE LOOKING AT TO ENSURE THAT THE COMPLEXITIES OF COVID-19 DON'T IMPACT THE GUEST EXPERIENCE YOU WORK SO HARD TO CREATE?

There is a time where we must put our differences and competitive spirit aside and work together and learn from each other. And at other times, we can continue to focus on what distinguishes us as safari operators. This accounts for associated companies that help us remain on track and keep our guests' wellness intact.

We are lucky to be able to operate in environments that allow for privacy, one-on-one consulting, and vast landscapes which idealise social distancing protocols. COVID-19 has taught us to rely on each other, learn from each other's skills, be it from within your company and otherwise. Tourism is an important vehicle for economic growth and job creation. COVID-19 has underlined this importance and as we move into a COVID-19 conscience travel era, it is important that we remain humble and curious about what we learn and share with our guests to help protect their wellness and safety. 





TASTE-MAKERS |



Spotlight on BEATRICE KIMATH

From humble beginnings to birthing Kilibeyond Safaris

Beatrice Kimath is a young, Tanzanian travel entrepreneur, whose business provides tourists with unforgettable memories of the safari experiences and so much that the East African nation has to offer. Born and raised in the Kilimanjaro region, Beatrice grew up with a love for the beauty of nature and wildlife. With her backyard as inspiration, her love for her untainted environment later inspired the birth of Kilibeyond Safaris, a tour company that offers packages to visit the various tourists spots in Tanzania, including the adventure that comes with a climb up Mount Kilimanjaro. To date, Kilibeyond Safaris has brought many tourists to

the country from Europe and other markets, and she marvels at how her passion for showcasing Tanzania through her eyes has turned into a growing business.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF. WHO IS BEATRICE?

I am Beatrice Kimathi, a 26-year-old Tanzanian born and raised in Kilimanjaro. I am the owner of Kilibeyond Safaris and I have always had a love of travel and the travel business. I grew up with my mum and despite our financial struggles as a child, my childhood was great.

WHAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD LIKE, AND DID IT HAVE ANY IMPACT ON YOUR DECISION TO GET INTO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY?

I grew up with my mum and despite our financial struggles as a child, I truly carry fond memories of my upbringing. My life did later change after some years, when someone showed up in our lives and began to support my family financially. I was then moved to a private school to get a better education. I received opportunities that I would never have gotten, and so much has been afforded to me thanks to my benefactor. I am grateful for the role he has taken in supporting me from my earlier years to date.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO ENTER THE TOUR INDUSTRY AND START KILIBEYOND SAFARIS?

I Studied Wildlife Management and Tourism and would travel to all the amazing



places of Tanzania such as Serengeti and Ngorongoro and many more, which deepened the love for African travel in me. I also had the opportunity to travel to Europe and study, where I met different types of people. I wanted to show the world the beauty of my homeland. After Europe, I came back home and started Kilibeyond Safaris.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT FOR KILIBEYOND SAFARIS IN YOUR JOURNEY AS A TOUR OPERATOR?

During my time in Vienna where I was studying my German course, I met a couple on the plane and connected with them and they were interested in going on safari to Tanzania. They agreed to let me organize their trip, which I had to do all the way from Vienna. It was very stressful operating everything from abroad. But it was a success, and the couple had a great time.

Another great memory was when I went on safari with a group of 12 people. I had just started this business and it was not easy. It was a long trip and one of our cars broke down.

Thankfully, my clients were patient and encouraging. They still enjoyed the trip and even booked another trip to Tanzania with more friends.

WHAT MAKES KILIBEYOND SAFARIS UNIQUE IN AN INDUSTRY WITH MANY TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOUR OPERATORS?

KiliBeyond is operated by a young female which is rare to find in a tour company as it is a male dominated industry. Not only is it run by a female, but it is also operated by females. I believe in giving women more opportunities to work and to give back to their communities, proving that women can do just as good a job as men, if not better. Secondly, the Director of Kilibeyond Safaris is more exposed in the industry internationally and is well versed in wildlife. He also speaks German and therefore connects with people in Europe especially Germany, who then become our valued customers. Not all people who run tour companies know about the industry and wildlife. I know each part of the job and I am able to make sure everything runs smoothly.

WHAT IS THE MOST POPULAR PACKAGE THAT CLIENTS BOOK?

The most popular safari package that clients book is safaris to Serengeti, Tarangire and Ngorongoro, which are in the northern part of Tanzania. These locations are home to over two million animals; from zebras to gazelles and of course the Serengeti is famous for its wildebeest annual migration. These areas are also more popular mainly because they are quite accessible. The roads make accessing national parks and wildlife areas quite convenient and there are several options for good accommodation. Our package is usually for three to four days and our guests always come back with amazing stories and even better pictures.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATION IN TANZANIA?

I've travelled to some really great places in the country with my job however, my favorite travel destination is Southern Tanzania.






In Mahale and Tanganyika you can find chimpanzees! The place is so breath-taking, and you simply won't want to leave. Unfortunately, it's quite remote and difficult to get to, but if you are willing to take on the challenge, the trip will be well worth the trouble. This place is really very beautiful.

HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES IN TANZANIA?

Covid-19 has affected Tanzania's travel landscape much like it has done so with the rest of the world, as 20% of the income in the country comes from Tourism. This means many people are struggling to survive, with operators and suppliers in the agriculture industry and many other businesses also heavily affected because they too rely on tourism. We hope that with the issuing of the vaccine, the virus will be controlled, and people will begin travelling again. Although Tanzania did not close its borders, strict measures have been taken to ensure that we the citizens, as well as the guests we welcome within our borders, protect ourselves from the virus.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TRAVELLERS TO KNOW ABOUT TANZANIA? WHAT MAKES TANZANIA A UNIQUE TRAVEL DESTINATION WHEN PITTED AGAINST OTHER DESTINATIONS ON THE CONTINENT?

I think I would be viewed as biased by saying Tanzania is the best travel destination in the world, but as a native, there is really no place like home. It is a peaceful place. Tanzania has the most visited national park in the world - the Serengeti, where you will find the migration of animals as they cross the border and move in an almost melodic manner. Tanzania is home to so many unique experiences that encompass adventure with mountain climbing and trekking ranking highly on the list of part activities tourists can experience. Let's not forget that it is the home of the great Mount Kilimanjaro! Visiting Tanzania will always be one of the best choices you will ever make when visiting Africa, and it awaits your visit with a warm welcome! 



Rutendo Mutsamwira
ON BUILDING A VEGAN
LIFESTYLE BRAND
IN ZIMBABWE

Because the world is celebrating Veganuary, meet the media personality, spoken word poet and author, now taking on a new challenge as the Founder and Owner of The Hearty Vegan.

1. RUTENDO MUTSAMWIRA.

WHO IS SHE AND WHAT FUELS HER FIRE?

The short version is that I am a legacy oriented Queen, pursuing purpose and meaningful impact in and for Zimbabwe for the now and for the generations that shall come. What fuels my fire? My love for people and my unwavering belief in Zimbabwe and her wealth.

2. RUTENDO IS WELL KNOWN AS A MEDIA PERSONALITY, SPOKEN WORD POET AND CREATIVE, AUTHOR - TO NAME A FEW HATS YOU WEAR. LAST YEAR WITNESSED YOU STEP INTO A NEW TURF BY LAUNCHING A CULINARY BRAND - THE HEARTY VEGAN ZW. TALK TO US ABOUT WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO TAKE THIS LEAP OF FAITH?

The global pandemic saw many “Covid-preneurs” launch products and services to fill the gaps and in Zimbabwe in particular, we saw the emergence of many home-based catering businesses mushroom as restaurants were either closed or unable to meet the demand of the whole population being shut in at home. My journey started on the 19th of April 2020 when I baked my first triple layer vegan cake, which we have now perfected as our signature dark chocolate and cranberry cake. On that day, I posted a series of photographs and videos of the cake and as a joke, I captioned my posts “DM for orders”. Long story short, a friend made an inquiry on the cake and that evening after delivering some cake and savoury treat samples to family and friends, I landed my first paying customers, who enlisted my services to cook their meatless meals weekly.

With millions throughout the world losing their employment and financial security because of the pandemic, I started asking myself difficult questions including what I needed to do to ensure that I had a source of income I could fall back on should conditions change with my work in radio. I felt a strong urge to pursue my newly found passion and so after much prayer, I mustered the courage to resign and embark onto my culinary entrepreneurial adventure. After serving my notice period, The Hearty Vegan was officially formed on May 1st, 2020.

3. HOW HAS THE BRAND BEEN RECEIVED IN A MARKET THAT IS WIDELY VIEWED AS ONE THAT'S BIG ON MEAT CONSUMPTION?

Surprisingly, we cater to more vegans than I thought we would! While the

Zimbabwean market is big on meat consumption, there has been a gradual increase in people becoming more intentional about their food choices for health and wellness reasons. More and more people are being diagnosed with conditions which stem from ill-informed nutritional choices or an unhealthy overindulgence of meat and other foodstuffs. Another advantage we have capitalized on is that a sizable part of the market goes for a series of faith-based fasts, like the Daniel Fast and we are their go to for healthy, plant-based alternatives.

We have also noticed that more and more Zimbabweans have become experimental in what and where they choose to eat, and we foresee an increase in people adopting a more plant-based lifestyle. I would also like to add that before us, the likes of Chef Cola from African Vegan on a Budget, vegan retail store and cake bakers Vegan Vibes have played such an important role to pave the way in educating and informing the market on the importance and benefits of a plant-based lifestyle both for your body and the environment.

4. AS A BUDDING CULINARY ENTREPRENEUR, NAME THREE THINGS THAT HAVE CHALLENGED YOU GREATLY SINCE LAUNCHING HEARTY VEGAN TO DATE?

Firstly, sourcing some of our ingredients like our plant-based milks which are imported from South Africa. While they



are available to purchase locally, the prices are considerably high which affects the final cost of our meals.

Secondly, our equipment. When we started, we had the bare minimum in terms of equipment as I assumed, we would slowly and organically grow, not knowing we would take off as well as we did. As a result, I had to remove some menu items as they were taking up far too many pots and hob space. Being on lockdown has also hindered how quickly we can receive our stock and equipment imported outside of Zimbabwe.

Lastly and commonplace for most business owners in their start-up phase - burn out. Apart from the odd large family gathering where I would cook for about 30 people at intervals, I had never spent hours on end in the kitchen prepping, cooking, packaging and then sorting out the back end administration for orders while also attending to customer enquiries simultaneously.

When the first lockdown started and

even still today as we continue recurring lockdowns to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic within our community, our staffing has been compromised as we did not want to risk having staff on site with the surge in infections. This now means I find myself doing the bulk of the prep, cooking, packaging, and dispatching deliveries myself. I learnt the hard way the importance of setting daily order limits to ensure I would not burn out.

5. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE LESSONS YOU ARE LEARNING ON PLANT-BASED EATING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FRESH PRODUCE SOURCING.

The fresher the produce, the better it tastes and looks. When we don't have a pre-existing booked order, we purchase our vegetables first thing in the morning to ensure their freshness. We also grow some of our own ingredients and this is import-

ant to ensure healthy, organic produce for our customers. As we expand our supply - chain, we try our best to partner with the increasing number of small - scale urban farmers within our community to source fresh produce with each season.

6. LET'S TALK A LITTLE ABOUT RUTENDO THE ADVENTURER. WHAT ARE YOUR TOP 5 DESTINATIONS IN AFRICA TO EXPERIENCE AND WHY?

I've literally only been to six African countries so I can't exactly confirm if they make the tops, but I will share my experiences in each.

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania was sticky, stinging, humid hot but I absolutely loved the views, food, and music. I took part in Swahili Fashion Week which was held at the Sea Cliff Hotel and the view and ambience were breath-taking. I discovered my favourite snack from Tanzania - ubuyu or



baobab candy. They are dyed red baobab seeds that have been boiled and coated in a heady mix of sugar, salt, black pepper, cardamom, and vanilla. They are absolutely delicious and everyone who visits Tanzania must try some!

Maputo, Mozambique for its street art markets. Well, to be fair, I only went to one because I was on a short trip, but I loved how they had so many different art works by locals at a reasonable price.

Nairobi, Kenya only because I met one of my favourite musicians Sinach in that city! I don't think I managed to explore it enough to get a sense of its vibrancy. I do remember though, that the people were also very friendly and welcoming.

Accra, Ghana for their different and flavourful varieties of food and how friendly the people are. I tried so many dishes without breaking my purse while I was there.

Jozini, South Africa I experienced rural Jozini a couple of years back when I accompanied my friend to her grandmother's ekhaya eJozini. Jozini is a settlement in Umkhanyakude District Municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South

Africa. Jozini is a small town on the main route to Mozambique, and it is close to the Jozini or Pongolapoort Dam. I particularly loved how slow the pace is and how clean it was. I also really loved the fresh fried fish her uncle caught for us at a nearby stream. Lake Jozini is so beautiful too!

Cape Town, South Africa because there is so much variety in terms of food, entertainment, and recreational experiences. When I used to party quite a bit, I loved how Long Street provided so many different musical and beverage options. I also loved meeting so many different people from the world in such a laid back, care-free city.

7. IF YOU COULD VISIT ANY AFRICAN COUNTRY FOR A VEGAN CULINARY EXPERIENCE, WHERE WOULD THIS BE AND WHY?

Morocco! I love its vibrancy and diversity due its Berber, Arabian and European cultural influences. Can you imagine how flavourful their dishes are with all those rich spices and dishes they are known for? I have so many things I want to taste, buy, and experience! I look forward to tasting a true Moroccan vegetable Tagine and buying my own tagine for our restaurant! One of our latest menu additions is a Moroccan inspired couscous prayer bowl!

8. YOUR BUSINESS IS ZIMBABWE-BASED. WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS WHO ARE SEEKING TO LAUNCH A BUSINESS IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT MAY BE DEEMED CHALLENGING.

I think the most important thing is establishing your why more than anything else. Once your why is clear or clearer, it will help pull you through the difficult challenges and learning opportunities which present themselves at every turn. I also think it is important to integrate your business with your purpose (if you have discovered what this is, if not, keep asking why).

The Hearty Vegan is an extension of who I am, what I believe and love, and I think a lot of the time, young people strug-

gle when the passion element of their business fizzles out after experiencing various setbacks or challenges. Again, I will revert to the importance of establishing your why. Our mission as The Hearty Vegan is to inspire and encourage individuals to be more intentional about stewarding their health and the environment. This guides every decision we make from the ingredients we use to the packaging we incorporate and its cost on both the body and the environment.

I think every nation has its own set of unique challenges and Zimbabwe is no exception. I do think it's a fertile place to take as many risks as possible on yourself over and over again. What I love about being here is that there is room for you to start something and build your way up despite the challenges. You are also forced to think on your feet and in your sleep here; all great preparation and case studies for Zimbabwe we shall become as we continue to transition as a nation.

Another thing is, it's important to invest in your personal development with whatever tools and resources available to you be it online, through books or mentorship. Your mental health should be your top priority because when your mind is unwell, it impacts every other aspect of your life and business eventually. A strong support system and accountability team also helps.

9. WHERE DO YOU SEE HEARTY VEGAN IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

Some of my future goals for The Hearty Vegan over the next few years include growing our market share and becoming the lifestyle brand of choice in Zimbabwe. I'm also excited about the prospect of opening our own restaurant where patrons can fully immerse themselves in a truly hearty vegan experience. While our core business is making healthy, plant-based meals and cakes, we curate tailored experiences for our private clients in their homes and organizations which encompasses food, music, wellness, and wine. We call this, The Hearty Vegan Experience. We do this in partnership with other service providers and vendors and look at introducing

this to more people as we scale up our operations. I would also like to impart the knowledge, experience, and lessons of the importance of body and environmental stewardship through a plant-based lifestyle across numerous platforms. Definitely look out for our recipe books, cooking lessons and our own television cooking show.

10. WHAT'S NEXT FOR RUTENDO THE CULINARY ENTREPRENEUR THIS YEAR?

Well, firstly it's to do my best to remain healthy and COVID-19 free to make it through the rest of this year! Other than that, this year is focussed on growing the business, continuous learning and upskilling to ensure we develop the best meal alternatives and experiences for our existing and future customers. Definitely more recipe development and strategic partnerships with other service providers to cross pollinate our different strengths and spheres of influence. 🌱



Follow The Hearty Vegan on

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CULINARY ESCAPADES





The road to *"Frosting on Safari"* with Jessica Gower

Pastry Chef and Entrepreneur Jessica Gower chronicles her passionate journey to launching her own safari inspired baking business.

“My Career as a pastry chef started from a young age. I used to love having my own make-believe cooking show in my mom’s kitchen and would describe to the “viewers” what I was doing and what I was making, just like the shows on TV. My mother is a great baker in her own right and runs a successful cake business in South Africa so I can safely say she has been a great inspiration on my culinary journey
- JESSICA GOWER, OWNER – FROSTING ON SAFARI

Before finishing school, Jessica had already started learning how to become a chef at Sondela Academy on part-time basis. Shortly thereafter she then moved to Johannesburg, where she enrolled at the Food and Beverage Institute: School of Pastry. The goal in Jessica’s words, was to explore and refine her love for pastry.

“During that year I did in-house training at the Michelangelo. After completing my programme, I moved to Durban to the 1000 Hills Chef school where I completed my final year of studies. A highlight during my time there was when I won a culinary internship only offered to 1 chef per department per year in the entire country. I couldn’t believe that I had been selected for the remarkable opportunity to jet off to Naples, Florida, all the way in America, for a 6-month internship at the Ritz-Carlton as a pastry chef. That was the time when my passion for pastry really bloomed.

“When I returned from the USA, I moved to Cape town, where I was involved in several high-end catering events like the “Table of Peace” and “Unity in Cape Town” – both of which were hosted on the top of Table Mountain. I enjoyed the privilege of working in several high-end restaurants as the Head Pastry and Dessert Chef, all the while baking delicious cakes for friends and family. It was in Cape Town where I met my now husband, AJ and our



journey together saw us moving to the stunningly beautiful Okavango Delta, where we both worked in luxury bush camps for several years,” says Jessica.

FROSTING ON SAFARI IS BORN...

As fortune would have it, Jessica and AJ got an exciting opportunity to move to AJ’s home country; Zimbabwe. It was here that they opened a small B&B, which became a moment of pivoting for Jessica, as she really immersed herself in the local cake decorating scene and began promoting her business as “Frosting on Safari”. The name came about as inspired by Jessica baking cakes for guests in the camps in Botswana as well as Victoria Falls - a tourist border town widely known for its abundance of safari opportunities. The name was a hit and the orders started to come through.



“It took me a while to establish myself in the town but now that I have, I am the go-to person for cakes! Victoria Falls is a stunning place to get married and I absolutely love doing wedding cakes too! Did I mention I have an obsession with flowers!? Everyday I prep my sugar room for a days’ worth of decorating and creating. I go and pick whatever fresh flowers are in my garden, get the indie music going and start working. Most of the small intricate items I make take hours to piece together but the final product is so beautiful I sometimes don’t want to give them away!” Jessica cites with enthusiasm.

But working and living in Victoria falls isn’t always easy. Jessica has had to contend with a multitude of challenges like wild animals, extremely hot temperatures in Zimbabwe’s Western region, and of course unreliable electricity supply! And yes, you read it right, wild animals!

“There have been several times when I have been baking some delicious cupcakes for a big birthday party only to come back to the baking room to find a baboon with 3 cupcakes shoved into his cheeks with 3 more in his hand as he jumps out the window! Everything manages to get a taste of my cakes including the mongoose family who come through the garden almost every day. When I hear them, I must quickly run and shut the doors or risk having my house ransacked by a family of 30 mongoose, looking

for all the sugary bits that fall on the floor,” Jessica narrates.

During summer, the temperatures can reach up to 48 Degrees Celsius! What it means is a constant dance between Jessica’s chest freezer to give the cakes a brief shock of cooler temperatures and the decorating table. Everything melts at that temperature so when someone orders a cake, her delivery time must be quick!

LOOKING AHEAD FOR FROSTING ON SAFARI

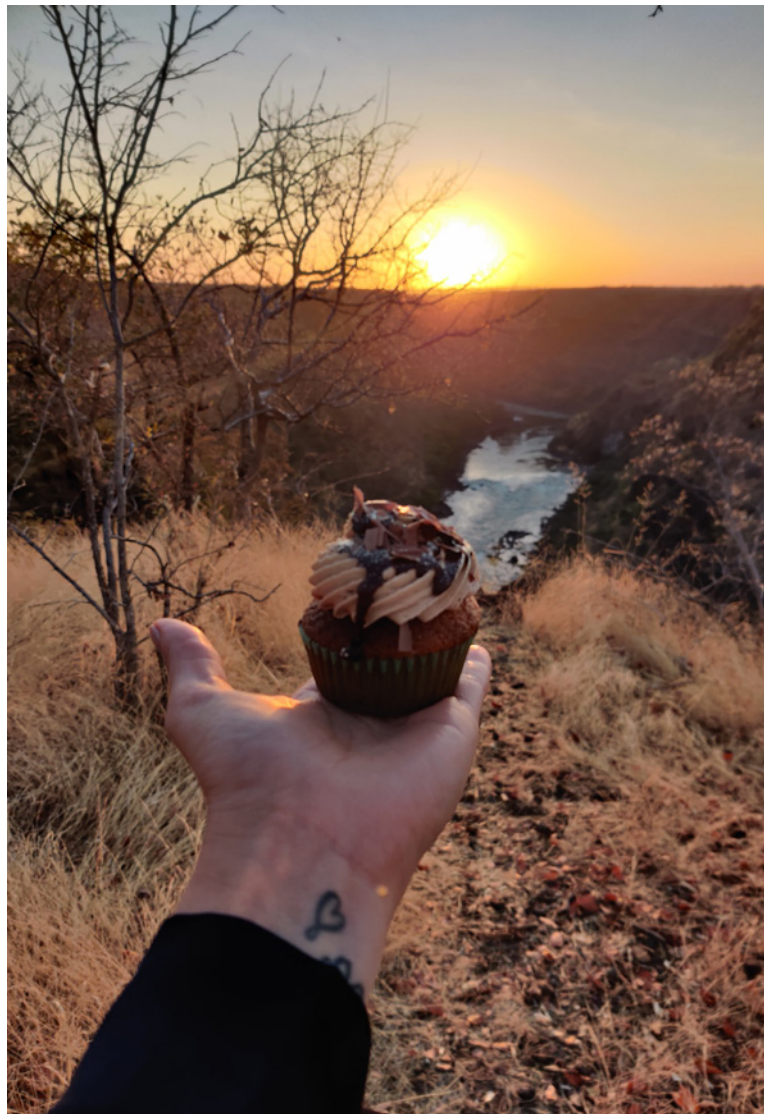
Jessica hopes that in 2021, Frosting on Safari will evolve into a successful private catering business, leveraging the growth she has already started to witness as she prepares sunset snacks for cruise boats. She enjoys taking advantage of the beautiful sunset on the Zambezi as tourists to Victoria Falls enjoy sundowners onboard river boats. She also hopes to provide catering for private guests in luxury homes that she and her husband rent out to high-end tourists, finding young, aspiring chefs with the same passion she carries to work and grow with, giving them the same excitement and zeal has led to her success as a Chef to date.

“Most of my inspiration comes from the beauty of nature around us,” says Jessica. “Living in Victoria Falls has made it easy to make safari themed cakes, simply because the environment is a fitting ode to the beauty of nature and wildlife. I love making the small lions, hippos, and giraffes on the cake, and the best part of my job is the reveal; to see a bride’s tears well up or hear the excited scream of a toddler is really the best part of it all,” she adds.

While Jessica shares that she hasn’t travelled to many places in Africa yet, she does hope for the opportunity to experience more of what the continent has to offer.

“My absolute favorite places must be Cape Town for its incredible beauty and food, The Okavango Delta in Botswana for its amazing wildlife and Gonarezou National Park in Zimbabwe for its beautiful landscape and wildlife,” Jessica shares.

“The amount of wedding and birthdays keep me rather busy but when we get the chance, we always go for a drive into the Zambezi National park and have a picnic along the river. We are so lucky to live in this part of the world, and so we take every opportunity to enjoy it.”





Meet Chef
Nompumelelo
Mqwebu:

FROM THE KITCHEN
TO PUBLISHING AN
AWARD-WINNING
COOKBOOK

South African Chef and author, Nompumelelo Mqwebu, has created a name for herself through her culinary talent and now cookbook, which was named the “2018 World’s Best Self-Published Cookbook” by the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards. The Gourmand World Cook Awards is an international competition that awards and recognizes the authors of the best food and beverage cookbooks, and so for Chef Nompumelelo, achieving this incredible milestone remains one of her most satisfying accomplishments.

Born in North Coast of KwaZulu Natal, Nompumelelo grew up in uMlazi Township and Margate. Despite growing up during the painful chaos of apartheid the 1980s, she recounts how her childhood was quite pleasant. As a little girl that was raised with great cooks, it is no wonder she would grow up to be a culinary master with a heart for creating innovative dishes that quench the palates of those she serves up meals for.

Travel Essence Magazine caught up with Chef Nompumelelo to learn a little more about her passion for cooking, her award-winning cookbook and of course, building herself as a brand in South Africa’s culinary landscape...

1. Chef Nompumelelo, tell us a little about your childhood and what influences inspired you to pursue your goal of becoming a chef?

I grew up with a love for people and the beach and was raised by entrepreneurs all around – from my grandmother to my parents. There was also always an abundance of home-grown good food and excellent cooks. Cooking was just part of life at home with my biggest inspirations being my grandmother and my father. They shaped who I am today, and though they are both late, I am forever grateful for what they instilled in me.

Food was part of many festivities enjoyed at home and through

family visits and the more I was exposed to cooking, the more it fuelled my passion to pursue various avenues within the world of food. I never imagined that my passion for cooking and food would be my passport to travel internationally, let alone compete and win against the best in the world.

2. What inspired your cookbook?

This is typically a challenging industry to be in and one that involves long hours and high pressure. I believe that in order to succeed you need to be passionate and love what you are doing. My inspiration has come in many forms and the fact that the African food scenery was simply not changing just kept reinforcing and encouraging me daily that I needed to go on this journey and publish my first-ever cookbook. The more I travelled and saw also



Connect with Chef Nompumelelo Mqwebu
on  @nompumelelomqwebu

reiterated that no matter how cosmopolitan each country or city was, local food was sought after and celebrated by both locals and visitors. To me, we needed to really rediscover our roots for local cuisine and ingredients – particularly in South Africa.

3. What have been your most memorable moments during your journey as a chef?

Birthing my cookbook – Through the eyes of an African Chef – that went on to win, not one but two Gourmand awards for it.

4. What is your favourite dish to make?

No one particular dish, though I look forward to fresh produce as the seasons bless us and I create new dishes or explore old ones further. Cooking game meat in winter when it's in season is also a high in my calendar.

5. What is your idea of comfort food?

Wholesome, tasty food that lingers on in memory. Your grandmother's cooking for example. You remember the feeling you had when you ate it, the scent of the pot cooking. This definitely leaves one with a warm and fuzzy feeling!

6. What have been your biggest takeaways during your journey as a cookbook author? How has it been received by the local and international market?

Being an independent author, who self publishes a cookbook has so many facets to it. My experience was more than just sitting down and thinking up a story. I had to create and write down recipes, test and taste them, do photography, launch the book, look at innovative ways to market the book and so on. It is hard work. The reception both at home and internationally has been so rewarding. It's been a few years and the book presence remains an area of interest and I take that as a compliment.

7. What impact do you hope the cookbook will make on the culinary industry in South Africa and beyond?

I am excited to see that African cuisine is now an area of interest. There's a buzz about our indigenous ingredients and indigenous knowledge systems. More people are researching in order to get closer to writing about the authentic and true culinary history of the continent. The well-deserved respect is being granted to African cuisine and culinary creatives; this truly is an exciting time to be operating in the African culinary space.

8. What does the future hold for you? Any future projects you would like to share with our readers?

Sadly, COVID -19 has thwarted many great plans and now we hold this close to our hearts until we know when we can operate openly again. There will certainly be a lot of intercontinental and diaspora collaborations which arise from my travels and people I have met who share the same passion as me. I look forward to being able to move ahead with the same momentum, if not more, that we had before the COVID-19 era.

9. Are there any lessons that your journey has taught you, that you wish to share with those hoping to be as successful as you?

My journey has certainly not been an easy one and I am so grateful for my family and other key people in my life who have given me the support I needed to achieve this kind of success.

I would also say that having a women tribe is a great asset, as well as making sure you equip yourself in your chosen field. It's important that you do not shy away from challenges even when you feel you're swimming in the deep end. Overcoming our challenges makes the victory that much sweeter. 🙌

Mr B's Gourmet Emporium:

Baking outside the box in the New Year

A culinary whizz in the field of dessert making, Sindiso Bryan Ncube, known to most as Mr B of Mr B's Gourmet Emporium is excited about what the New Year promises for his brand, and his pursuit of experimentation with all things sweet in the kitchen. A big focus for him last year, was what he described as "Three Dimensional desserts and popping flavours". His artistry is undoubtedly a never-ending passion as Mr B continues to build on his element of surprise and adding fun to old time classics. Whether it is a clever play on seasonal fruit presentation or the use of vegetables in his desserts, Mr B's twists to staples do leave tongues wagging at what else he has baking in his kitchen!

What's next for the New Year?

In his characteristic baritone voice, Mr B talks of simplicity being his focus for seasons





MR. B'S LEMON & GINGER TIRAMISU

Looking for something sassy and easy to whip up for your family and guests? This dessert by Mr. B incorporates four components essential for a great dessert - sweet, tart, smooth and a little bit of crunch.

Ingredients:

250ml Coffee (Chilled and to the strength desired)
 3 tbsp Coffee liqueur (Optional)
 250ml Orelly Whip
 200g Condensed milk
 3 tsp Vanilla essence
 2 pkt Lemon Cream Biscuits
 1 pkt Ginger Nut Cookies
 50ml Lemon Juice

Method:

STEP 1

Pour Black Coffee into a shallow dish and set aside. Add the coffee liqueur if desired.

STEP 2

Make the Lemon Condensed Chantilly layer by beating the Orelly whip till double in volume. Mix lemon juice and condensed milk, add mixture to the whipped cream, whisk until thick and smooth.

STEP 3

Crush Ginger Nut Cookies coarsely
 Break the Lemon Cream Biscuits into two pieces and soak in the coffee mixture for a few seconds.
 (Reserve some of each type for final Topping)

Spoon enough Chantilly Cream at the bottom of Bowl. Layer alternately Coffee Soaked Lemon Creams, Chantilly and Ginger nut Crumbs till you get to the top.
 Final layer should be the Sweetened Chantilly.

Sprinkle crushed Lemon Cream and Ginger Nut Crumbs on the top of the last Cream Chantilly layer.

Chill for at least 1 hour before serving.



that lie ahead, citing that his creativity is being spurred on by everyday life and experiences, with his finding some “Aha!” moments through simple things, like going shopping for ingredients.

“I pay attention to what is around me, looking at situations, putting together ideas as I take my time in touring the grocery store aisles! At times I don’t even buy anything, and this of course always draws the attention of the store personnel,” he laughs.

Mr B continues to share how just like any other artist, there are moments when he too experiences a creative block and times when the dishes just do not come out the way they should. “Practice, practice, practice until one attains perfection!”



Connect with Mr. B
across social media on:

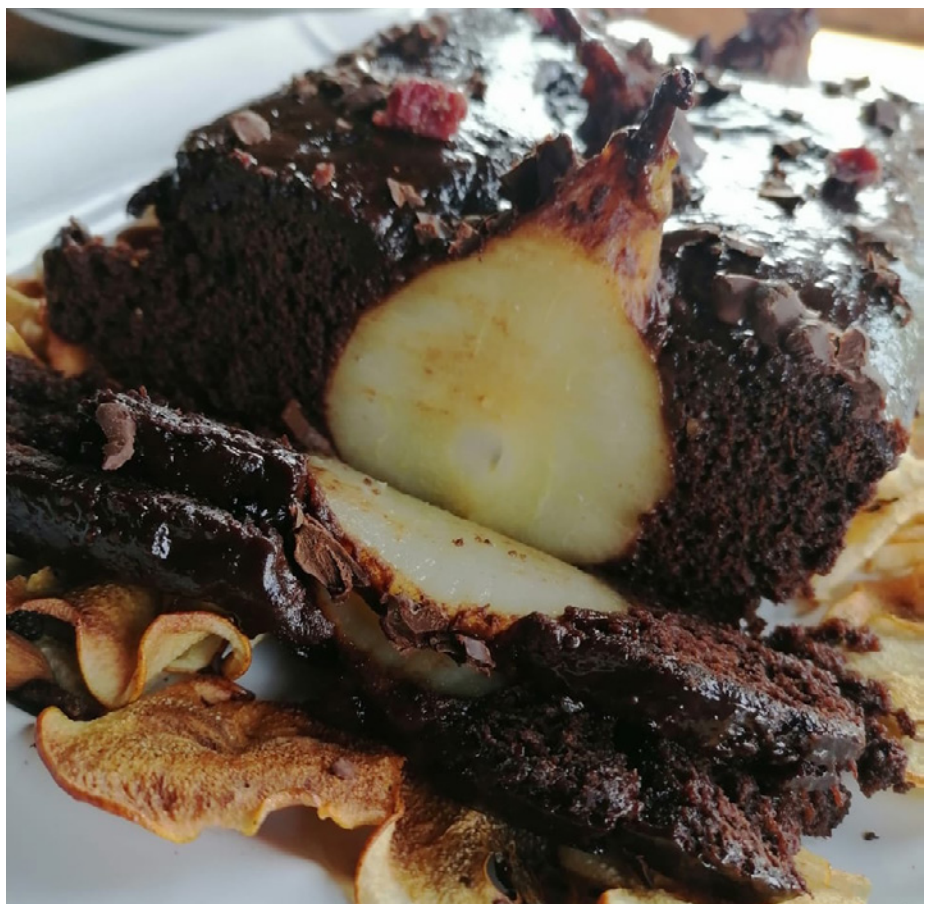
📷 @mr_b_sa
📺 @theRealgourmetb

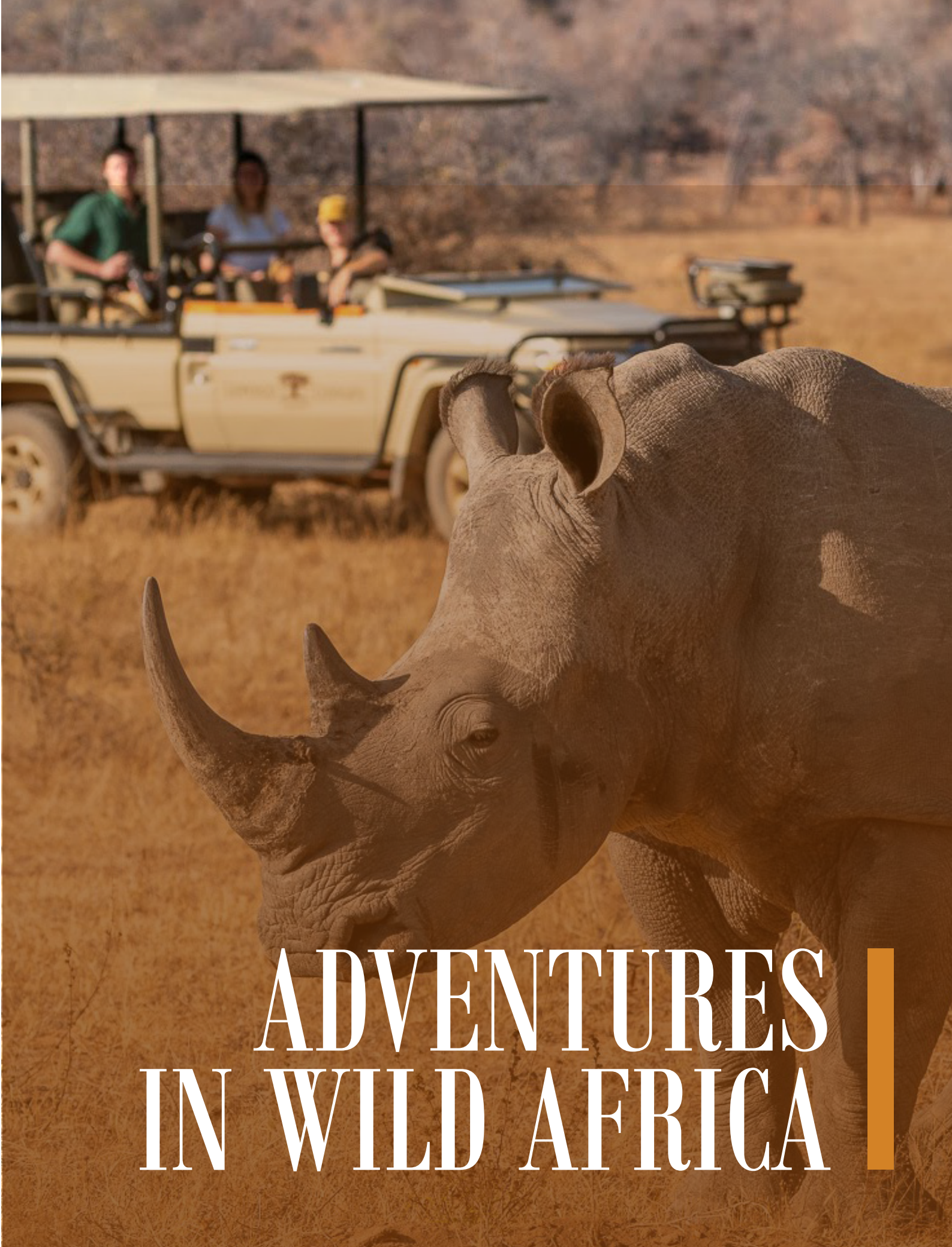
is his mantra, asserting that when the masterpiece emerges as it should, the artist always knows.

In a quest to elevate his experimental prowess as he churns out magic from his oven, Mr B is quick to state that being in an ideal mood has everything to do with his creativity. As is the case with anyone else, on the days he wakes up and feels good, he also feels creative and the ideas flood in. Ideas flow from combinations, texture, and feel, colour, smell, and the vision of the final product!

“For me, music, colour and art. These have synergy, melody, sentiment and meaning to me, and are major influencers to my cooking. My food videos even have accompanying soundtracks that aim to bring the food experience to life. I want for my food presentations to be viewed as distinct works of art, appealing both to the eye and the tastebuds, like portraits waiting to be eaten,” he says.

With a passion for people, training and coaching, Mr B is keen to see himself do more in this space this year, developing work manuals, home centred trainings, and demonstrations for small groups. He believes collaborations go a long way in growing brand visibility and so in 2021, he will be doing more in this space. 🍷





ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA



INSIDE LEPOGO LODGES AT SOUTH AFRICA'S LAPALALA WILDERNESS RESERVE

A distinctive African wilderness experience





With demand for isolated, nature-focused escapes on the rise and an upsurge in group bookings now that families and friends can reunite,

Lepogo Lodges' Noka Camp launches a timely opportunity to connect adventurers and outdoor lovers alike, with the breathtaking beauty of untainted Africa.

Lepogo Lodges, one of Africa's few entirely not-for-profit high-end safari lodges, opened its very first lodge in South Africa's Limpopo Province, Noka Camp, at the closing end of 2019. Just a short air transfer or a three-hour drive from Johannesburg, Lepogo Lodges is set within the 50,000-hectare, malaria-free Lapalala Wilderness Reserve, and home of the spectacular 'big five'.

Family-owned and operated, Lepogo Lodges was developed as part of a life-long dream to create a sustainable conservation legacy in Africa, with 100% of any financial gains made re-invested back into the reserve for the benefit of wildlife, conservation and the local community.

A DISTINCTIVE SOUTH AFRICAN WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

Lepogo Lodges offers a truly extraordinary South African wilderness experience for families, couples and groups of friends alike. Lapalala Wilderness has ensured that there will never be more than three commercial lodges in the 50,000-hectare reserve, delivering the rare combination of accessibility yet extraordinary privacy.

Guests are able to try activities ranging from game-drives and water safaris, to yoga and spa experiences and tours of iron-age settlements and bushman paintings in the cliffs below the lodge. Lepogo also offers 'luxury bush sleep outs' which allow one to follow in the footsteps of the forefathers of Lapalala.

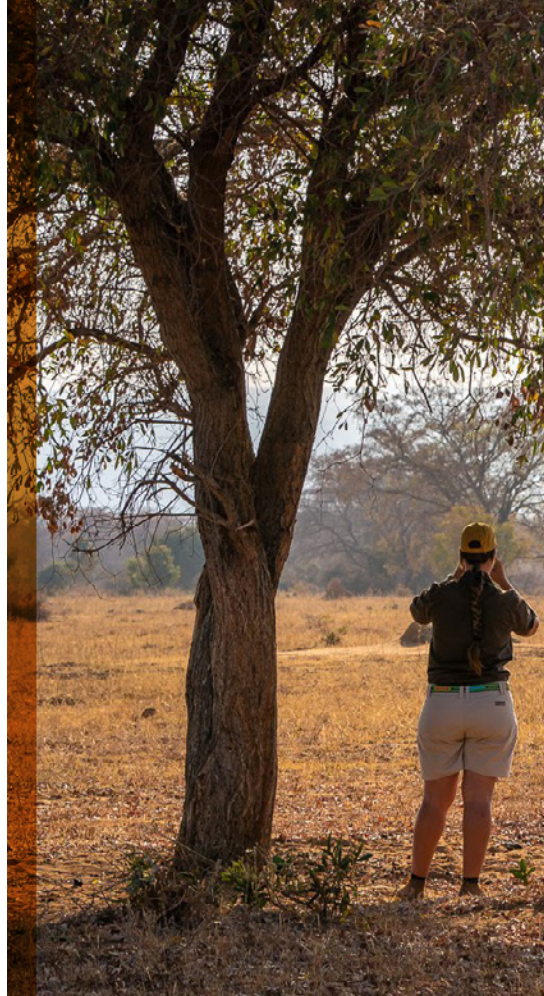
An unparalleled dining experience awaits guests, who are provided ample opportunity to relax and recharge, with a team of world-class chefs headed by the Heston Blumenthal-trained Thapelo Letsogo. Chef Thapelo's creative African-Asian fusion cuisine takes inspiration from the Asian cooking styles found along the Spice route of the African coast and is made with locally sourced and grown ingredients, alongside homemade honey, beer and gin, made onsite at Lepogo.

THE LEPOGO LODGES DESIGN AESTHETIC

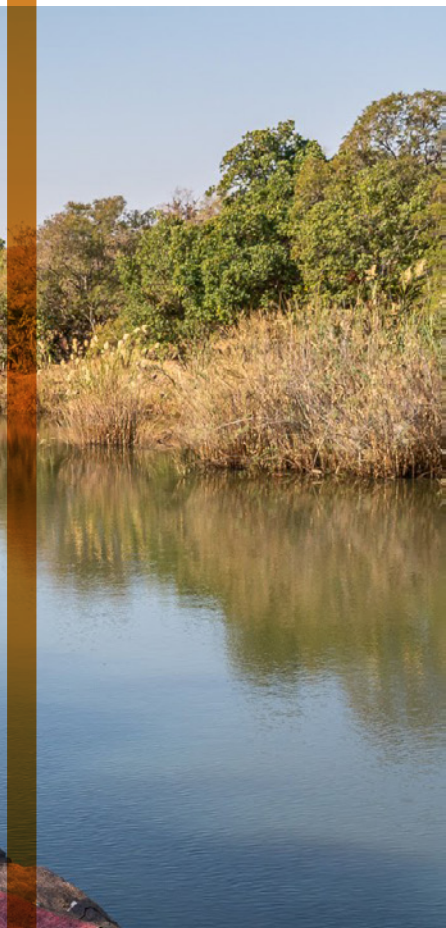
Noka Camp consists of five stilted villas, including one villa especially designed for families. The villas are joined by a main lodge comprised of dining room, bar, lounge area and sprawling outdoor terrace, all perched atop a 100ft cliff overlooking the winding Palala River below and the endless bush ahead. The camp is entirely off-grid, with all energy self-generated by a bespoke, 250m solar walkway.

Lepogo Lodges worked with award-winning Japanese Architect Yuji Yamazaki on Noka Camp and its five stilted villas, designed to offer the highest level of luxury while bearing the lightest footprint on the surrounding environment. A glass-fronted design for the main lodge and villas maximises the incredible panoramic views seen at every turn, while the entire property has been built on small concrete pads, which ensure that no scars are left on the land. Each villa is complete with heated plunge pool, unique 'sky bed' with glass floor over the ravine, sunken bathtub and underfloor heating – an absolute treat for guest looking to enjoy unsurpassed opulence, comfort and relaxation in the most private of settings.

Lepogo Lodges collaborated with Sarah Ord Interiors on the interior design of Noka Camp. Reputed for her use of colour and eclectic designs, Sarah's vision was to enhance and reflect the natural colours of the reserve. Noka's light-filled interiors were inspired by the vast horizon of turning leaves on the terracotta-coloured cliffs, where the sky meets Africa. Walls disappear through the use of expansive glass panes, with each vista becoming a framed work of art on a grand scale. Sarah has made use of sustainable and South-African products, crafts and textiles wherever possible.



To learn more about Lepogo Lodges, visit www.lepogolodges.com or email info@lepogolodges.com.





Lepogo Lodges when complete in its entirety, will consist of two lodges, with a second property, Melote House, set to open in 2021. Ideal for multi-generational travel, Melote House will be an exclusive-use property sleeping up to 16 guests.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Entirely energy self-sufficient thanks to the property's very own solar walkway, Lepogo Lodges is the first luxury lodge in Africa to offset the carbon emissions from all guests' travel, from the time they leave their home to the moment they return. Guests can also participate in conservation efforts, community outreach, school visits and more.

The owning family of Lepogo Lodges is committed to supporting community projects. For example, the Montebello Design Centre in Cape Town was founded by a close relative as a centre to support the disadvantaged, where students can learn valuable crafting skills and generate income to support their livelihoods. It flourishes today and has produced some remarkable talent, some of which Lepogo is proud to be able to showcase. Lepogo Lodges are also working closely with local communities, who have created bespoke soft accessories for the lodges, toys and clothing for the on-site curio shop and custom amenities including hydrating hair oil made from the fabled Baobab and Moringa trees.

The family is particularly passionate about the conservation of cheetah, pangolin and rhino, having been attracted to Lapalala as one of the leading private rhino sanctuaries in Africa. Lepogo Lodges have funded research and are working with Lapalala to establish the reserve as a centre of excellence for the release of wild captured cheetah in conjunction with The Endangered Wildlife Trust. A pangolin re-introduction programme will also begin in the coming months and the family look forward to supporting and working with the world renowned Lapalala Wilderness School. 🌿



ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • SINGITA CASTLETON



WHY NOT A STATELY STAY AT SINGITA CASTLETON?

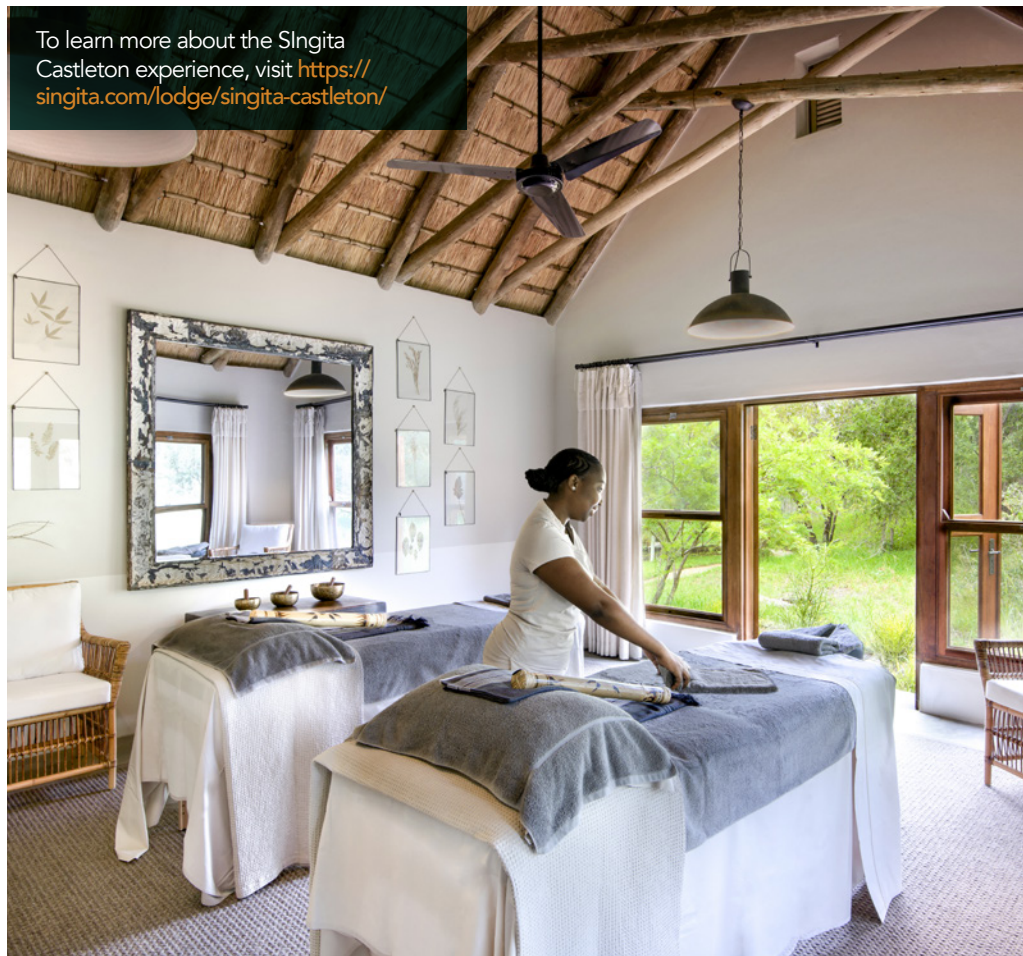


If it's a long stay you are after, a Singita property in South Africa's Sabi Sands Game Reserve is what you need. Singita's individually tailored long-stay packages fulfill the needs of travelers seeking undiluted space and what feels like the ability to still time so you can unwind and restore your most precious connections in spoilt wilderness. With carefully curated itineraries to choose from, and private access to Africa's most sought-after wildlife sanctuaries, Singita Castleton is just one of Singita's gems dotted across the continent of Africa.

Steeped in history and set in the heart of the Sabi Sand Reserve, Singita Castleton is the former home of the grandfather of Singita's Founder, Luke Bailes. This stately African farmhouse overlooks a busy waterhole where game regularly gather to drink, providing a bush experience characterized by an intimate and welcoming warmth, the utmost comfort, unrivalled luxury, and complete exclusivity. A private outdoor boma with uninterrupted views of the surrounding landscape allows for magical fireside dinners under the stars – completing this quintessential safari experience. With its full staff complement, including a Field Guide, chef and host, every preference is catered for and guests have complete freedom to set the pace of their days during their stay.

Where you will stay

Singita Castleton's six double en-suite guest cottages are located a short distance from the main house. Two of the cottages have an inter-leading door, a perfect architectural and functional set-up for families with young children. Because no holiday is complete without a little adventure, relaxation, or bonding time with family over a little fun and play, the property also features tennis and boules courts, a fully equipped fitness centre, yoga pavilion and expansive



To learn more about the Singita Castleton experience, visit <https://singita.com/lodge/singita-castleton/>



swimming pool. Ample lawns are fantastic for a morning or afternoon stroll or even a round of cricket!

An extensive wine cellar boasts the finest in South African vintages, allowing for world-class tasting with Singita's notable sommeliers. The country style kitchen is the heart of the home, serving up sumptuous meals from the Chef for every palate to delight in.


There's plenty to get up to at Singita Castleton

Specially curated onsite activities and guest experiences are part of the offering and of course, the private guide, private host, chef, and full house staff are on hand to ensure that every request is met. From hosting private dinners after experiencing guided bush walks, to enjoying cooking and baking sessions with the onsite chef in Singita Castleton's home-style kitchen, you will not be short of activities to get up to during your stay. The team at this esteemed property is ready to teach on the art of tracking animals in the bush, ancient African bush remedies or even offer budding birders an informal birding course within the vast acreage on which Castleton sits.

Maybe it's more of a little rest and relaxation that you are after. Single and double treatment areas offer up soothing massages for couples and individuals who need a little pampering. You can also enjoy yoga, meditation, and mindfulness sessions – with guided options available and tailor-made no-touch wellness treatments combining soothing and pampering products. Guests are guided to connect with

nature as they revive body, mind and soul and the treatments include sound therapy, aromatherapy, as well as harnessing the nurturing properties of Africa's unique textures and tastes.

A compelling wildlife adventure awaits

A stay at Singita Castleton guarantees sightings of some of Africa's most exciting variety of wildlife, including the much sought after Big 5 and over 300 bird species. Nestled in the most famous of South Africa's private game reserves, meaning the turf is not open to day visitors but only exclusively accessible to guests staying within the luxury lodges and camps in Sabi Sands Game Reserve, when at Castleton, guests will get the chance to spot one of most elusive animals of the Big 5 – the spectacular leopard. With elephants, zebras, lions, hyenas, large herds of buffalo and more to view, the possibilities of encountering fauna in its most uninterrupted ecosystem is undoubtedly a given. 



Thinking Seychelles?

THE H RESORT BEAU VALLON BEACH BECKONS

Tranquil, boutique and culturally connected, the resort offers guests a chance to create memories worth sharing in this enchanted paradise.

Located on Beau Vallon beach which lays northwest on the island of Mahé; a mere 30 minutes' drive from the international airport - The H Resort is a contemporary and chic property, featuring 100 rooms comprising of villas and suites, an award-winning spa and 7 eclectic dining experiences. As your paradise home away from home, the resort offers you the opportunity to enjoy all the modern comforts in this beautiful tropical paradise entwined with elegant décor, sumptuous food, beverages, and spacious luxury to relax in.

Whether it's a fun holiday with the family, a romantic escape, or the start of one, or to even look back and reminisce life with a loved one - The H Resort Beau Vallon

Beach is known for its turquoise ocean views, crystal white beach and lush emerald greenery where you can expect nothing but undisturbed sights, charming creole hospitality and new heights of life & style indulgence.

A spectacular showcase of tropical luxury

The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach offers an unparalleled collection of opulently appointed accommodations, relaxation and recreational spaces that showcase the true heritage of their Seychellois surroundings. The 100 villas and suites redefine paradise - they simply exude stylish opulence, comfort and idyllic bliss. Designed to represent a blend between creole and colonial architecture - the resort is an epitome of tropical luxury. From plush fur-





nishings and mesmerizing backdrops, to the spacious layout and beautiful finishings - all overlooking the tropical gardens leading to the beach.

The beach facing private pool-villas offer an entirely new level of luxury. A unique product available only at this resort in the Beau Vallon beach area - each one occupies a private spot on the beach with direct access to the bay as well as a private pool, pool-deck, cabana, outdoor rain showers, luxury in-room amenities and personal pampering products. Similarly the suites include a comfortable double bed and lounge area with luxurious amenities of comparison. All suites have a choice of private terrace balcony or a terrace that opens out onto the resort gardens, complete with sun loungers. Each villa or suite also features indoor and outdoor daybeds and dining areas; plush sofas, beds and seating areas; pristine bathrooms featuring oversized free-standing bathtubs and rain showers - as well as all the modern technologies such as a large screen LCD and complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi.

With seven eclectic dining experiences in the form of bars and restaurants to choose from – you're spoilt for choice. The resort truly offers a wide selection of dining options.

Culinary Discovery at The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach Seychelles

A world of gastronomic adventure is waiting to be discovered at The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach Seychelles. Open to both guests and now the public, this luxury resort now offers a smorgasbord of restaurants set to capture the imaginations and hearts of the most discerning of diners.

Eden

Nestled between the luscious greenery of the gardens on the property and at the foot of the beach, Eden is a hub of gastronomic experiences. Romantic yet authentic, it serves a delicious selection of Creole inspired dishes with fresh seafood and prime cuts of meat from the BBQ. The restaurant seats up to 50 people and can be hired out, upon request, for intimate wedding receptions and celebrations. The dedicated team of chefs & service staff ensure and cook the meat to your choice while the sommelier enthralls you with their excellent selection of wines.

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Seyshima

Seyshima, derived from 'Sey' for Seychelles and 'Shima' - the Japanese term for island, is a venue that oozes Asian sophistication and is renowned for its mouth-watering selection of Teppanyaki and Sushi. The restaurant is located on the natural lagoon that flows through the resort and true to its name, gives you an island dining experience. The quaint and cosy restaurant can seat up to 25 persons and is perfect for family and couples to dine in. A popular venue for Japanese cuisine on the Mahé, diners can simply enjoy some freshly rolled sushi or can dine a la carte whilst they revel in a Teppan show by the chef.

Vasco's & 1502 Lobby Bar

The resort's main restaurant, which is named after the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, is the perfect spot to enjoy your breakfast or to finish your day with a hearty dinner. Open-aired, bright and contemporary in décor, it offers both indoor and al fresco seating for up to 125 guests. The buffet and live stations feature international and Creole cuisine and offers a daily changing theme for dinner. On dedicated evenings, a variety of traditional dance and live music performances keep you entertained.

1502 was the year in which Vasco da Gama sighted the Seychelles islands. This lobby bar is a quintessential venue and the place to discover your own paradise with their concoctions of delectable cocktails, fine wines and spirits. You can enjoy some shisha on the terrace while you soak in the sunset colors or some sporty bites and beverages while you enjoy the live sports and games or a weekly screening of classic movies.

Trader Vic's Seychelles

Trader Vic's is an internationally renowned restaurant and bar. The founder Victor Jules Bergeron, Jr. opened his first outlet that bore his nick-name Trader Vic and ever since the French-Polynesian bar & restaurant concept has grown by leaps and bounds. Trader Vic's Seychelles as a venue is the life and soul of the Beau Vallon and home to the famous Mai Tai® cocktail – which dates back to 1944.

Years ahead of his time, this world renowned restaurant chose to offer Chinese dishes alongside the then-contemporary continental cuisine, creating the original fusion menu decades before it would become a trend. Following the culinary curiosity along the ancient spice route, the founders collected recipes to bring back to Trader Vic's, and this eclectic cuisine reinvented fine dining. Following in these footsteps, each venue is constantly innovating and adding to the menu while the zeal to scour the globe for new





ideas and revolutionising dishes goes on.

The signature restaurant in Seychelles sets a world-standard for tropical sophistication with its eclectic cuisine – enhanced by using a Chinese wood-fired oven. Trader Vic's Chinese Ovens can be traced back to the Han Dynasty. This method of cooking differs from traditional direct fire barbecues and imparts a subtle flavour and helps create a unique dining experience. Each Trader Vic's showcases this style of ancient cooking. You get to savour an exciting menu every month along with the authentic 'Taste the World Cuisine' available all through the year or just enjoy and sip the tropical cocktails curated from international & local favourites. Be it the Mai tai or the Seyhorse, you are guaranteed an amazing time as you relax in the spectacular interior space, or on the terrace overlooking the lagoon while you are entertained by the resident band featuring a Latin-American influence. The restaurant has an exciting atmosphere with the exotic décor, including timeless and authentic artefacts from around the globe and can seat up to 100 guests. It's the perfect venue for corporate parties, wedding reception or simply celebrating life!





Guests can also choose the resort's 'pièce de résistance,' a bespoke, romantic under the moon and stars dining on the beach, coupled with the ambience of the soothing ocean waves. Customised options also include privatised group reservations for beach and/or in-villa barbecues as well as a luxurious in-villa floating pool breakfast.

Nurturing wellness for every guest

Holidays are meant for indulgence, so guests are encouraged to pamper themselves at the award-winning Sesel Spa or try some customised workouts at the Beau Vallon Gym & Yoga Studio to flaunt that beach body. Sesel Spa is a true heaven within a haven - whether it's a results orientated treatment, or just an experience of utter relaxation you're looking for, it is a must, to make it a part of your Seychelles experience.

Explore the healing elements in nature and discover the true essence of being at one with yourself. Named as a tribute to its destination (Sesel is the Creole name for Seychelles), this blissful space features a total of seven treatment rooms including five single rooms and two couples' suites, in addition to a Vichy Hydrotherapy room. 'Sesel Spa' offers a selection of signature treatments that infuse the best of Western and Eastern techniques – all implemented by expert therapists who take a holistic approach to wellness. The luxury relaxation areas offer a tranquil setting for both pre and post massage treatments, so make sure you spend some time there to truly rediscover wellness.

Wellness experiences for the young and young-at-heart

In addition to our fitness and yoga programmes, recreational facilities are dotted throughout the resort with the stunning infinity pool taking centre stage. With ample sun loungers and parasols bordering it, the 24 meter long sapphire blue water invitingly tempts you to submerge. The accompanying







For more information or to make a reservation, please visit www.hresortseychelles.com or follow them on ,  and  @thehresortseychelles.

kids' pool is a safe 0.4 meter in depth. Also on offer is tennis, volleyball, pétanque, table tennis, a giant chessboard, masks, snorkels, paddle boards and kayaks to satisfy all your holiday recreational needs.

It's not only the grown-ups that are spoiled - a world of exploration and fun awaits the little ones at Treetops Kids' Club. Happy kids make for happy parents and this is the main priority. Parents can enjoy peace of mind knowing that their child is well cared for by a team of professional caretakers who arrange fun-filled activities. Suitable for children aged 3 to 12 years, the club is open daily from 9am – 6pm. The resort also offers baby-sitting

services and can prepare baby-food upon prior requests.


Guests can also indulge in our weekly activities that includes a range of paid & complimentary options like transfers to Victoria City, drop-off for the Anse Major Hike, cocktails & conversations with the resort management, a scenic sunset cruise in a glass bottom boat, bi-weekly live-entertainment, Cinema Paradiso, sundowners, and many more seasonal events – there's always something for everyone to enjoy at the resort.

Why not say "I do" at the H Resort Beau Vallon Beach

This intimate, tropical island retreat is the perfect location for a destination wedding or honeymoon. When one thinks of the term 'tropical island', it conjures up thoughts of pristine ivory shorelines, a turquoise ocean, and a backdrop of luscious greenery. This is exactly what you can expect at The H

Resort Beau Vallon Beach – the perfect destination to turn the dream wedding into a beautiful reality.

Couples can choose to say 'I do' either along the beach, in the spectacular garden gazebo or in a number of secluded venues dotted around the resort. In addition to an idyllic backdrop, a customised wedding ceremony can be organized by the team of wedding specialists. From eclectic table designs, tiered wedding cakes and bespoke menus, to entertainment, bamboo ceremony archways and a civil ceremony officer, there's no dream that can't be made into a reality. The H Resort offers a number of packages that can be tailored to ensure that each and every wedding is both perfect and personal.

If you are looking for the ultimate honeymoon escape or just a time away with family, then look no further than The H Resort Beau Vallon Beach. Everything, from the moment you arrive, to the time you reluctantly depart, has been designed with the discerning traveler in mind. 



ADVENTURES IN WILD AFRICA • MADIKWE GAME RESERVE



The Morukuru Family invitation

TO MADIKWE GAME RESERVE



With exquisite luxury camps and distinctive bush manors to choose from, you'll be spoilt for choice when hosted by the Morukuru Family.

A

mong the pioneers of exclusive-use experiences in South Africa, the Morukuru family are well known for their having created exceptional safari camps, the River House which hosts up to 10 people, and of course, the coveted Owner's House that can accommodate a party of 4 – all nestled within the Madikwe Game Reserve. Boasting a brand-new look following a comprehensive refurbishment and upgrade, including stylish new interiors from Fox Browne, and new exterior features such as elevated decking, pools and firepits, there is much one can look forward to when they treat themselves to a stay at one of the Morukuru Family properties.

A carefully planned itinerary will take you to the North West Province of South Africa, for a safari experience that will leave you thinking about when next you will want to come back. Malaria-free which is a huge selling point for safari experience hunters, the Madikwe Game Reserve is South Africa's 5th largest, and one of the lesser-known reserves, yet still offers exceptional game viewing opportunities, replete with mammals including the Big Five and the rare wild dog, along with diverse birdlife and stunning landscapes.

Its savannah landscape, teeming with wildlife and an abundance of flora, is home to Morukuru Owner's House, Morukuru River House and the Morukuru Farm House, popular with families or groups of friends looking for a luxurious encounter with nature in the company of their loved ones. Having undergone a comprehensive refurbishment to elevate an already compelling design aesthetic, the property designs draw inspiration from the endangered African wild dog in terms of its muted and calming palette of raw, natural earthy hues.

A TAILORMADE EXPERIENCE

The 'Morukuru Freedom Concept' is all about tailor making your itinerary off the adage - do "whatever you want, whenever you want". This spells out







the opportunity to ultimately create your unique, unforgettable holiday for the entire family. Whether it's a little sea and sand or a day out in the bush for game viewing at your own pace and choosing, you are sure to indulge in a much-needed escape from the everyday pressures of life. All Morukuru Family houses come with a close-knit staff; a personal Chef and butler, two housekeepers, a host and at Morukuru Family Madikwe, a safari guide and wildlife tracker, who together curate an unsurpassed, bespoke experience.

Stays at Morukuru properties mean that guests also support the Morukuru Goodwill Foundation, an owned initiative that funds conservation efforts and also provides support for the local school. In 2018, the Morukuru Family launched their 'Safaris with a Purpose' package in Madikwe Game Reserve. Highly recommended for families looking for a leisure opportunity packed with multiple educational com-



ponents on wildlife preservation, guests can book a 4 night stay at either the Morukuru Owner's House, Morukuru River House or the Morukuru Farm House to avail this offer.

THE MORUKURU COASTAL HOLIDAY

If it is a Morukuru beach holiday you are after, a flight from Johannesburg to the South West Province and into De Hoop Nature Reserve, will garner you a bush experience, which is cleverly complemented by the beach, at the recently launched exclusive use Morukuru Ocean House. This eco-friendly private ocean house, which can accommodate up to 12 guests at a time, offers four-bedrooms and makes for a perfect, multi-generational beach holiday for the entire family. A real treat is an immersive coastal nature experience that includes whale watching, sand boarding, hiking, and a tour of the majestic Cape Floral Kingdom, deemed one of six Floral Kingdoms of the World.



AN INVITATION ACCOMPANIED BY UNIQUE OFFERS

Guests can take advantage of fantastic savings until 31 March 2021, with spectacular offers up to about 70% off, giving family and friends the opportunity to replenish personal connections together in special places at extraordinary value. With unparalleled camps in the Madikwe Reserve and a beach house in the De Hoop Nature Reserve that offers sweeping panoramic views of the Indian Ocean, you are spoilt for choice when you choose to stay with the Morukuru Family. 🌿

To learn more about the Morukuru Family, visit www.morukuru.com



**A DEEP DIVE
AT CHINHOYI
CAVES - WHAT'S
ON OFFER?**



A family friendly destination within the Zambezi Valley, the Chinhoyi Caves are a monumental tourist location in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West Province. A naturally formed phenomenon, the caves remain a marvel to explore for both the local and international tourists, with the area around the caves only declared a National Park as well as a National Monument in 1957. Later in 1975, the same land was transformed into a Recreational Park in a bid to protect the mesmerizing caves.

Chinhoyi Caves are characteristic of hollows and tunnels composed of dolomite and limestone primarily, which lead one on a descent to the main caves that present a stunningly crystal-clear body of blue water.

This pool within the caves is known as the 'Sleeping Pool' due to its stagnant water, and the Light Pool because of sun's illumination directly onto the clear water.

Unearthing the history

Traditionally the caves are called "Chirorodziva" which means the "Pool of the Fallen." Historically, the name dates back to the 1830s, at a time when the migrating Angoni Tribe waylaid the society residing adjacent to the caves and hurled the bodies into the pool.





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Additionally, this nomenclature is also drawn from Chief Nyamakwere's cruel acts whereby he would throw his rivals into the sacred pool by tying them with a stone so that the body would not emerge above water. Later on, the area was named after headman Chinhoyi, after he killed the notorious Chief Nyamakwere; taking over the chieftainship. With dangerous parts sealed off, Chinhoyi Caves have become a popular stopover and Recreational Park, especially for visitors looking for a day trip outside the nearby urban centers.

Behold, the mystery of the Chinhoyi Caves

A place engrossed with mysteries and myths has proven to be a charm for all tourists. For centuries there existed a fig tree and it was believed by the locals that Zimbabwean ancestors would come to the tree every time they were hungry and clap in some sort of symbolic ritual, with sumptuous meals later served in wooden plates. These occurrences are believed to have transpired before the great hunter Frederick Courteney Selous first documented the splendour of the caves in 1887.

Composed of the Wonder Hole, Sleeping Pool and the Dark Cave, Chinhoyi Caves are to this day, still believed to be sacred. Some say, as is synonymous with African traditional beliefs, spirit mediums visit the place for ancestral worship while also paying homage to the Caves as a site for cultural ceremonies. The average tourist however, visits the Chinhoyi Caves not so much to delve into the history of the rituals said to have been practiced there, but to appreciate the wonder of nature, in this stunning exhibition of dolomite and limestone formations that have surrendered to

earth's natural metamorphic process. The quiet attraction is one that offers an air of mysticism, as much as it is a spectacular showcase of the cave system's formation.

Inside the Chinhoyi Caves

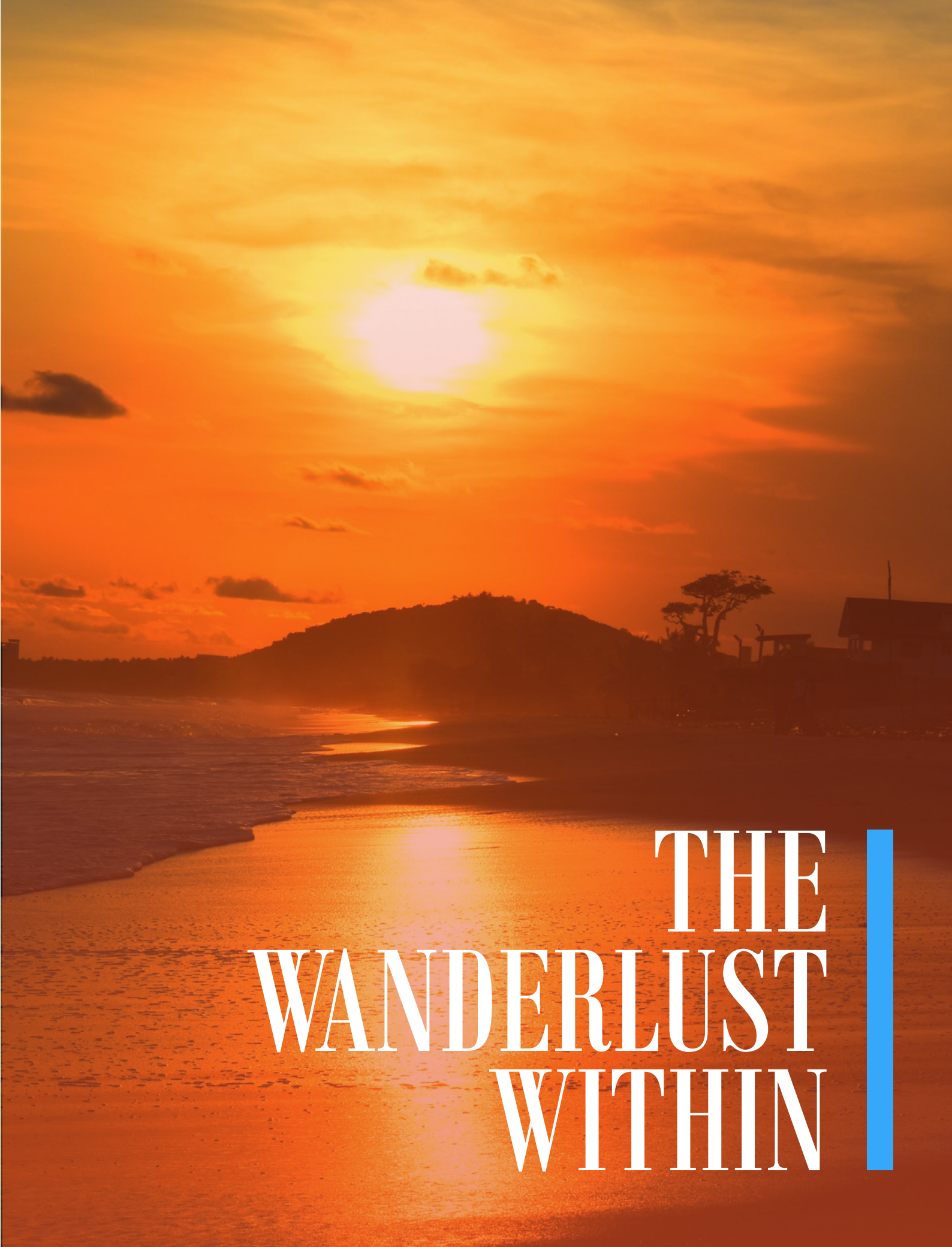
The Wonder Hole is the main feature of the caves. It is a large cavern with a collapsed roof, dropping vertically for 46m to the Sleeping Pool. The Sleeping Pool remains the main attraction of these caves; a marvellous site for both divers and non-divers. The pool is believed to be 91m depending with the season and it is connected to a series of much deeper underground tunnels. It remains a complete fascination to divers as the pool's temperature stays at a constant 22 Degrees Celsius all year round. The Sleeping Pool's warm cobalt blue waters have gained popularity amongst cave divers who have gone as deep as 136m. Its actual depth remains a mystery; adding to the charming nature of this

place. Quiet a place like no other, Chinhoyi Caves is a must visit for the best cave diving experience and scenic views.

In addition to the traditional scenic cave viewing, the introduction of a lion enclosure adds another activity to diversify the tourism product, offering guests an enhanced tourist experience. The enclosure is home to two beasts; Kenya and Dingani. Further additions are expected in a bid to enhance this blossoming attraction.

On the property, there also is a campsite and caravan sites for adventurers looking for accommodation to turn their visit into an overnight stay. Easily accessible on the first half of the Harare-Kariba highway, the Chinhoyi Caves are just an hour and half out of the capital city Harare. 📍



A vibrant sunset scene over a beach. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the wet sand. In the background, a dark silhouette of a hill and some buildings are visible against the bright sky.

THE WANDERLUST WITHIN





*An intimately
stylish escape at*
UPENDO ZANZIBAR



Upendo Zanzibar is well established as a brand that goes beyond being merely a collection of hotels and

restaurants. With the aim to empower and develop the island while maintaining a heightened degree of authenticity, the Upendo Experience can be described as the best of Zanzibar, living harmoniously with local communities and the environment.

The term “Upendo” means “love” and speaks well of the vision of its owner, Trish Dhanak who shares: “I wanted to create an environment where travelers like myself can experience the best of Zanzibar, whether a guest is looking to escape their everyday reality to relax on an idyllic white sand beach on the South East coast or explore the historic UNESCO heritage city of Stone Town - we aim to make our guests’ stay unforgettable.”

DISCOVER UPENDO BEACH

Located in Michamvi (on southeast coast), on one of the most beautiful secluded and unique tidal beaches in Zanzibar, Upendo Beach is a unique, stylish boutique hotel that delicately combines exclusive private villas with a social restaurant, bar and pool area while advocating sustainability and conservation principles at its center. Guests can expect tailored service within the property’s 3 luxury private villas and 2 further palm thatch Banda rooms. This luxury retreat is perfect for the adventurous, elegant, yet bohemian globetrotter! A barefoot retreat designed to feel like your home away from home, whether a couple, family, group of friends or solo traveler, Upendo Beach villas and suites are sure to make any stay memorable.

THE VIEW RESTAURANT

With everchanging healing blue ocean views, the restaurant at Upendo Beach is named “The View” for reasons that need no imagination. With breathtaking views to whisk one’s mind away, guests can delight themselves in delectable fusion cuisine which carries an array of dishes to satisfy most palates. From fresh caught seafood excellently prepared, to simple





classics with an Upendo twist such as a great steak or well flavoured hearty burger or a well spiced Indian dish as our owner mother makes it - food at Upendo is made with passion. Home-made dishes are prepared mainly with locally grown ingredients, including freshly caught fruits of the sea, seasonal fruit, and vegetables - and not forgetting the also freshly ground and blended spices that this exotic island is well known for.

RETREAT AND RELAX

No idyllic beach escape is ever complete without a little spa indulgence.



Give your body the love and nourishment it deserves by relaxing and recharge Upendo signature spa massages, facials, and treatments. From experiencing a couple massage, perfect to connect and share on a special occasion such as weddings, to enjoying one for anniversaries, birthdays or just because, a designated butler and mobile spa therapist will set up your spa experience as requested, in room, on your deck with sea views or on the rooftop under the African sky. There are really so many options to choose from!

After relaxing on the beach, discovering the culture of Zanzibar from the Upendo property in Stone Town is a must. Guests can inquire about local events or venture out for a full day excursion, a dinner, or a magical sunset from a unique terrace with infinity pool overlooking the rooftops of the main city of Zanzibar. Depending on one's wishes, a private concierge is on hand to organise the truly bespoke experience you are looking for.



SHOPPING AWAITS YOU AT THE DUKA CONCEPT STORE.

Leave with memories to accessorise your perfect island glow by enjoying a little retail therapy inside the Duka Concept Store, which offers curated collection of resort wear, shoes, accessories, home decor, organic beauty products and locally made gifts. All products are unique and ethically produced, handpicked carefully by Trish, the owner, who draws her inspiration from travelling around the world. While guests shouldn't be surprised to find brands from designers from around the globe, with a special focus on products made in Tanzania, shopping in the Duka Concept Store guarantees guests that each collection or item is selected or handmade with love.

A QUICK FLIGHT FROM DUBAI

With a flight less than 6 hours from Dubai to Zanzibar, Upendo Boutique Hotels offer ideal retreats for an unforgettable stay of sheer relaxation, privacy, and comfort, either for a long weekend or a longer stay. Upendo is taking responsible actions to welcome travelers safely in light of the COVID 19 pandemic, and so for guests coming flying in from Dubai, the concierge team at Upendo can arrange for the mandatory COVID-19 testing upon arrival, before heading straight to the hotel. 🇹🇿



To learn more about Upendo properties in Zanzibar as you map out your next trip to the idyllic island off the coast of Tanzania, visit www.upendozanzibar.com or follow the brand on social media Keep in touch @ upendobeach and @upendohouse



What's not to love about Ghana!?



REASONS WHY

YOU SHOULD VISIT THE GEM OF WEST AFRICA

You read the reports and saw the headlines of Ghana's "Year of the Return", an initiative designed to encourage more of the African diaspora to visit Ghana. This gem of West Africa, formerly known as the Gold Coast for its rich gold deposits, to add to its evolving historical and cultural narrative, also welcomes visitors to breathtaking landscapes, heritage monuments, and eclectic markets.

Because you love a good list and we thoroughly enjoy putting these together for you, here's one on why you should explore this gateway to the western part of the continent.

Photo sourced from UnSplash







1 A LAND PROUD OF ITS ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

Ghana's political pride stems from it having been the first sub-Saharan African country to attain independence from British Rule, having done so in 1957 under pan-African visionary and the nation's first President, Kwame Nkrumah. With an incredible story of Ghana's road to independence, it was no wonder that more nations sought to usher in their sovereignty, inspired by a land that celebrates the rich diversity of its people, culture and traditions. Be sure to add a trip to the National Museum of Ghana and the Independence Square in the capital Accra to your itinerary, where you can further immerse themselves in the nation's political and social history.

DISCOVER EPIC MONUMENTS AND TRAILS OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Ghana's iconic castles and forts will take you back into time, as they bring the nation's colonial history to life. Some landmarks are truly impressive, such as the Cape Coast Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is open to the public, showcasing Ghanaian arts and crafts for sale to tourists and residents alike. This historical monument also doubles as the headquarters of Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, meaning that visitors will enjoy an educational immersion during a visit.

Ghana's coastlines are also dotted with other architectural interests, including the Fort Gross Fredericksburg and the Fort Metal Cross, both of which also showcase influences from former European settlers, while other sites like Elmina Castle, Christianborg Castle, and the Kumasi Fort, will give tourists a glimpse of Ghana's harrowing slave trade history.

2



3

Diverse culture and friendly people

Ghana is big on family, community and a celebration of culture and ethnicity. There is great symbolism to the choices of dress, the rich print in which the dress is made, artefacts on display and of course, festivals and traditional ceremonies are in every way a part of Ghanaian life and social beliefs.

A trip to a market in Ghana is an immersion of colour, sound, taste, smell, and touch, with a vibrant mix of products that range from organic indigenous fruits to fashion items that include handmade jewellery, the famed kente cloth, carvings, and pottery items, all of which are symbolic of Ghanaian culture. The activity alone is exhilarating, making for an exciting day of shopping, connecting with stall owners, and haggling for proudly Ghanaian goods.

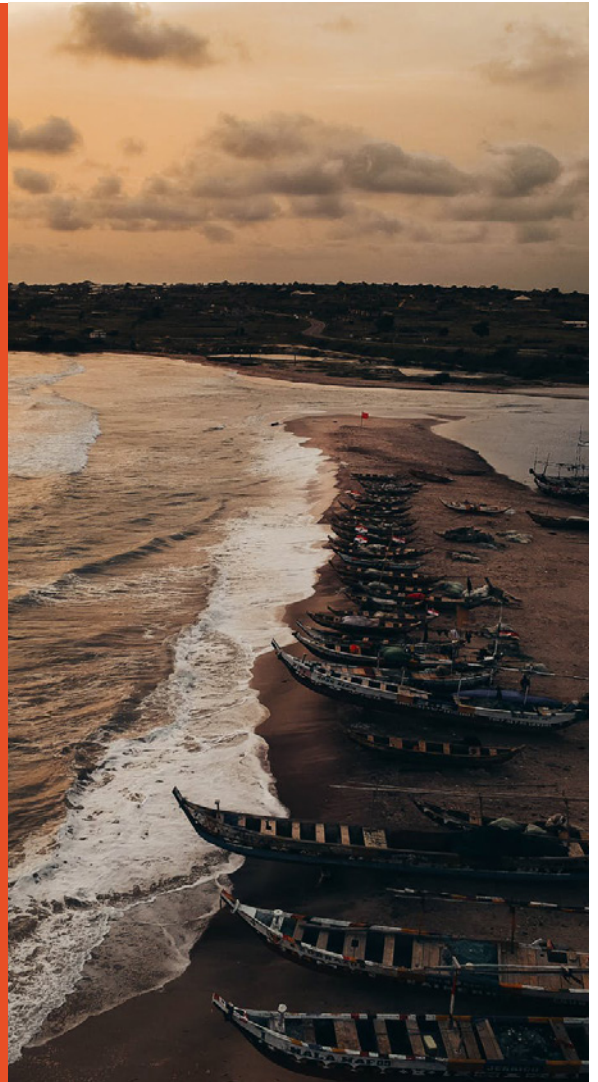


4

SUN AND SAND ALONG GHANA'S COASTLINES

If some sun and sand must be a part of your vacation, then Ghana has much of this to offer. With coastlines stretching over 500 kilometres from the Volta region to the West, there are plenty of beautiful beaches, each with unique features and offering views of the Atlantic that form the perfect backdrop as you sip a refreshing drink from coconuts.

Though most beaches are generally underdeveloped and will not offer you experiences found on some of Africa's prolific beaches on the continent's eastern seaboard, if you are looking for a less commercialized, locally authentic experience, you can enjoy the likes of Ada beach for birdwatching or Cococoloca beach to catch a glimpse of migratory whales. Kokrobite beach is great for tourists who seek a more vibrant, festive scene, Fete beaches connects tourists with nature, while Labadi Beach in Accra is popular among locals and foreigners for its nightlife as people dance the night away with the glow of a bonfire in the background. The Central Region is a popular destination with tourists, due to its history with the slave trade, while La Palm Royal in Accra is a luxurious spot perfect for holidaymakers looking for a more exclusive retreat.





For the love of music and food

Hearty and bursting with flavour, Ghanaian cuisine will satisfy the taste buds of those looking for a truly authentic meal, rich in organic vegetable ingredients such as yams, maize, beans, cassava, plantains, rice and more. From flavourful street food to a sit-down meal at one of the city's famed restaurants, one can indulge in unique freshly made seafood or savoury meat dishes. Ghanaians also know how to party and so if you want to have an unforgettable night out, then party in the city of Accra. With so many clubs and bars, each offering a unique vibe, dance the night away to Afrobeat music and learn the different popular dances that have become a hit with the West African pop-culture scene.



RESTOCK ON YOUR SKINCARE SHEA BUTTER PRODUCTS!

Raw shea butter has been popularised by the rise of women of colour growing their natural hair, as well as the organic skincare revolution. Where best to re-fill your supply of shea butter products, rich in Vitamin A, E, oleic acids, moisturizing and anti-ageing properties than in Ghana, where you can source the best shea butter, said to originate from the northern region of North Ghana. If you too have joined the millions looking at more natural ways to grow their hair or enrich their skin, then your shopping experience while in Ghana should include an array of shea butter products straight from the source!



7

Spectacular tropical experiences and adventure activities

Kakum, Bia and the Mole National Park are three of Ghana’s national parks, boasting exotic animal and birdlife. By visiting these parks, you will have an opportunity to contribute towards the wellbeing of Ghana’s natural ecosystems or experience many community-focused ecotourism

initiatives, such as the butterfly sanctuary of Bobiri, the Tafi-Atome monkey sanctuaries, as well as the Boabeng Fiema, and the hippo natural sanctuary of Wechiau.

With rolling hills of mountains, dense foliage of the tropical forests, waterfalls and caves in the Volta highlands, and uninterrupted coastlines to bask on, tourists can add hiking, canoeing adventures, bird and wildlife viewing to an adventure filled itinerary.



8

IT’S A PEACEFUL COUNTRY!

Need we say more!? Warm, welcoming, and boasting a long-standing stable political landscape, you won’t have to worry much about your safety when visiting Ghana. Because Ghana’s people are proud of their history and heritage, they safeguard the sanctity of their communities dearly, opening their borders to more and more expats who now call Ghana their home today!





A DAY SPENT AT THE GREEN POOLS OF MUTORASHANGA

Words by Takudzwa Chitsike



Mutorashanga is a mining area on the Western side of my home country, Zimbabwe – and has become quite popular for residents from the capital looking for a day away from the city to enjoy a picnic, barbeque or a cool swim in pristine settings. Travelling down the dusty and potholed road on the way there however, we asked ourselves where we were going and why?

My sister, a friend, my son and I woke up on a Saturday morning and packed a picnic basket, snacks for the drive and cooler boxes with drinks. We had decided earlier in the week to go and see these so-called “Green Pools” that we had heard so much about. The journey was quite entertaining with us chatting away and seeing various sights of interest along the way. We were particularly amazed to see a young man selling puppies to travelers at the toll gate just outside of Harare. As we turned onto the road to Mutorashanga, we marveled at just how beautiful Zimbabwe is and how easily we could just park our car and have a picnic in the open air if we got so lost that we couldn’t find the Green Pools. Upon arrival in Mutorashanga we asked a very polite policeman for directions which he was happy to give. We took a slightly wrong turnoff and were again directed by some very friendly locals.

HOW THE GREEN POOLS CAME TO BE.

When we arrived at the Green Pools, we were greeted by a young man named Kelvin. He told us that he could assist us with a tour there. We quickly realized that this was not a tourist attraction that was regulated and managed by qualified tour guides. We asked Kelvin and he confirmed that they were young locals who had decided to make a living from giving



tours and telling visitors about the history of the Green Pools. We were happy to have him guide us and also to help him with a few dollars. He explained to us that his grandfather who was quite old had given them (his grandchildren) a wealth of history coming from his days as a miner in the area.

It is said that the Green Pools developed when miners hit the water table while mining asbestos. This took place in the 1960s and the pools have been there since. The mine was abandoned and no further excavation took place thereafter. Kelvin also explained that there was one big pool and two smaller ones accessible through walking alongside the mine shafts. I was curious to see the smaller pools, so my sister and I went through the dark shafts, bending through tight crevices to get to the other side. When I saw the steep edges alongside the shaft which made up the pathway to the smaller pools, I reminded myself that I had a young son who still needed his mommy and I was not THAT much of an adventure junky!

Some young people who came behind us and with no guide nor hesitation, went up the steep pathway all the way to the smaller pools. Watching them from a distance they appeared to be having a great time.

We however returned to our friend and my son at the banks of the bigger pool and enjoyed putting our feet in the cool water. We watched as others swam and enjoyed a very festive afternoon braaiing. After taking in this beautiful view we went back up to the car park where Kelvin explained to us that there was a plane that had been sunk into the bigger pool. He explained that people would visit the place to dive and see the airplane as they didn't believe there could possibly be one under there. He also told us that this pool was used by the Marlborough aquatics squad for their training sessions.

With all the beauty we had taken in and the history we had learnt, we ended the worthwhile visit with a nice picnic in the shade, just as we had planned. 🍷



About the Author

TAKUDZWA CHITSIKE is the Founder of Footprints Personal Image Services. She is also the Founder of Dee-Kaw-Zee (Pvt) Limited, a company that manufactures & distributes custom made jewellery and fashion accessories, where she serves as the Creative Director. A lawyer by profession, Takudzwa is a multi-award-winning entrepreneur who currently works for a blue-chip company in Harare Zimbabwe.

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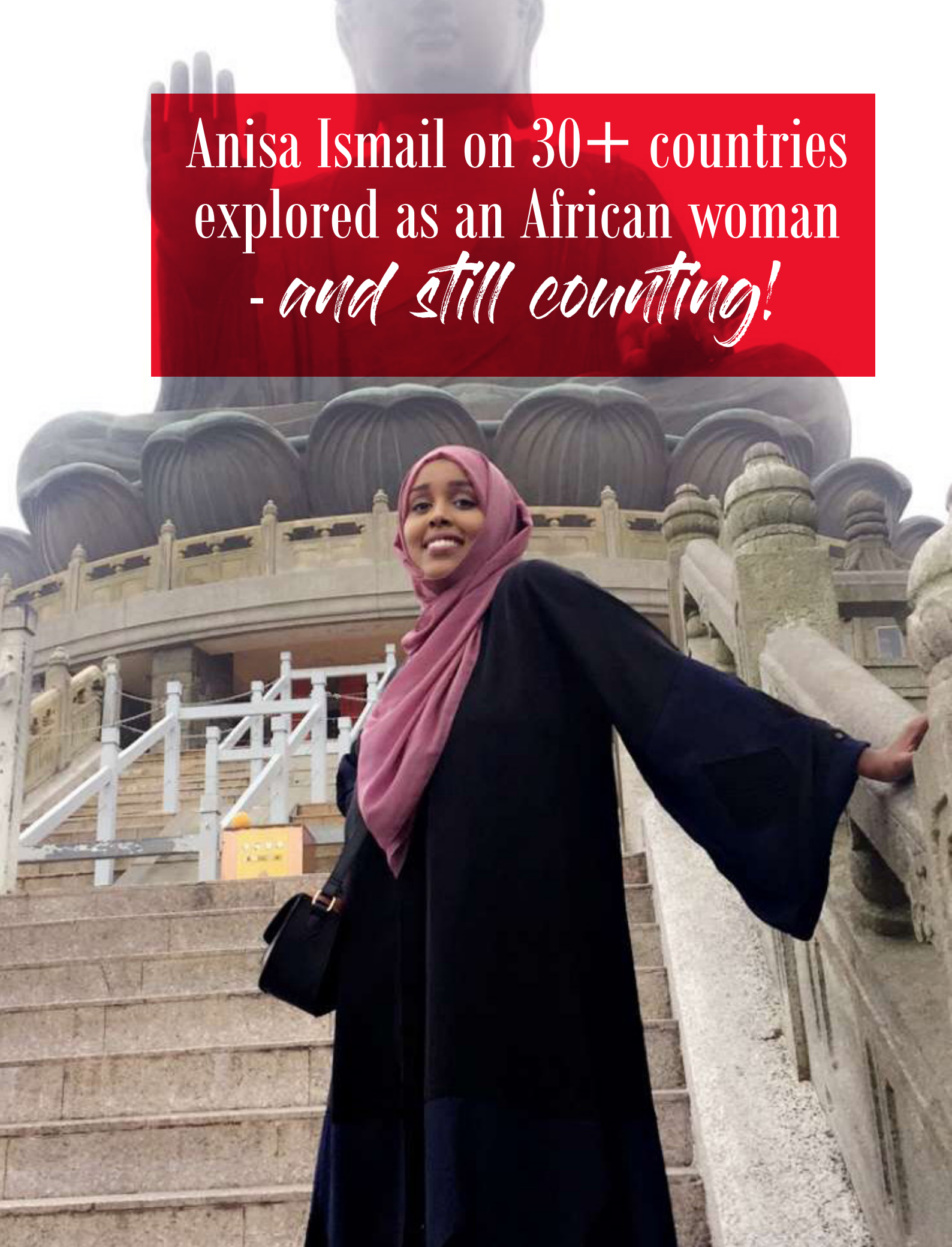
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AFRICA TO THE WORLD

LIPUTAV
Style

Anisa Ismail on 30+ countries
explored as an African woman
- and still counting!



Anisa's parents migrated to the UK, from Somalia, before she was born, but having one look at their childhood home, you would think Africa relocated to the UK with them! From an early age, the Ismail's were deeply submerged in their heritage and East African culture; from the way they dressed, to the food they delved into each day. Culture was ingrained in her family's DNA, so much so, that Anisa's British nationality came as an addition.

"My mother created her own lane; and raising 7 children primarily on her own wasn't an easy feat as one can imagine. She did it with wisdom and class, that of which an African Queen resembled," Anisa recounts. "She started her own business by setting up a retail store in London, where she sold East African & Arab home goods, which she exclusively selected and imported from the MENA region. Her business had its trials, but she succeeded in bringing a piece of home to her very eager customers," Anisa goes on to explain.

Anisa fondly remembers her mother as a keen traveller, crediting her listening to her mom's travelling exploits as the impetus for her growing up to become an avid traveller herself. Spending the school year working and saving awarded her opportunities to then explore different destinations during the summer, venturing off throughout the UK, Europe, and North America. Anisa's mother set a premium on ensuring that her children experienced as much of the world as possible, learning about other cultures and places. It was close to two decades later that she would retire and enjoy the fruits of her labour.

"I made the decision to relocate to the UAE when I turned 20, settling in Abu Dhabi. Till today, I truly believe that all the summers of travelling had set me up with an appetite for discovering the world. Sheltered by my family during most of my travels, this would be the first time, I did something on my own. Being in a location such as the UAE, made it easier to access countries I had never been to," cites Anisa.

"After my huge move, the first destination I travelled to on my own was Hong Kong, and my life would then change forever. Solo travel was not something I was accustomed to, but it wasn't hard to fall in love with the indepen-

dence it brought along," she adds.

As a woman of African origin, Anisa believes that solo travel truly shaped her life, and the way she now views the world.

"After a heart-breaking moment in my life, I spent 10 days alone on a yoga retreat in Bali and being the only woman of colour at the resort, there were a lot of eyes on me, but that was the least of my worries. I fell in love with the adventure and excitement of being in a whole new country, learning about different people and visiting exciting places, that I would never have done so had I not pushed myself to step out of my comfort zone and try something new," says Anisa.


Anisa dispels the myths of solo travel as an African woman, citing that many of them have never been further from the truth, and that people often assume that doing so is a treacherous decision with potentially gruesome outcomes. This is not true by her standards and those of many women of colour across the world, who have chosen to use travel as opportunities for self-discovery.

I've travelled to 30+ countries, more than half of which have been SOLO travel!
— ANISA ISMAIL

"Women of colour are becoming more and more open minded about traveling solo and this is how it should be. The very idea that African women shouldn't travel alone is baseless and often backed by nothing worth listening to. I think it should in fact be encouraged and celebrated moving forward," says Anisa.

She credits living in such a diverse country as the UAE as what has afforded her insight into how positive and inspiring it is to see so many nationalities live harmoniously and meshing so well. In the now 10 years Anisa has lived in Abu Dhabi, she has learned so much about other people and cultures and is inspired to travel to the home countries of some the people she has met based off their honest and creative knowledge.

"I don't get the TripAdvisor review," says Anisa. "I hear about their country first-hand, without anything else adding assumptions and I use that to make an informed decision on whether or not to make a particular destination my next conquest!"

When asked what words she had for fellow African women on why they should consider solo travel, Anisa asserts: "My message to the African Queens reading this message, is to abandon any concerns about solo travel and to truly dive into a new adventure head-first. Try it Sis! There is a whole world out there that is welcoming and waiting for your arrival. Why stifle that dream because of fear?! Who wins in the end if it can't be you? So, do it. Travel the world. Fill up your passport with stamps of airports whose names you can't pronounce. And then come back and tell your girls about it, so they can do the same!" 



Aimee Kenemo on growing the African print brand Lupitawax

Words by Louisa Choruma

“A

nkara, kitenge are all the same fabric, the names are given based on one's location. For example, in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, they call it Kitenge or Kikwebe. In West Africa it is known as Ankara and in the Congo, it is known as Liputa. In Zambia it is referred to as Chitenge and in your home Zimbabwe 'maZambia,' since these fabrics are sourced from your neighboring Zambia!”

These were the opening remarks for Aimee's presentation at a workshop one morning! The ease with which she shared of her love and passion for the proudly African fabric, which boasts intricate yet unique designs, varying textures and bright, was all it took for a friendship to sprout between two lovers of African textiles! Aimee Kenemo is the Founder of Lupitawax, an online store for African textiles that is based in Uganda.

“The unique and elegant standout look of a woman in African traditional attire, especially as I've seen in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo inspired me to create a brand that would be an expression of our unique cultural identity, while making it easy for those in other continents to also access,” says Aimee.

Aimee's passion kept growing stronger as she watched her mum and other women in her community adorn stunning attire made from African print. This ignited a flame to build a brand with the aim of making the world embrace African culture, encouraging



LIPUTAWAX
Style to your roots



people to wear African inspired clothing, the diverse styles in design which come in assortments of bright colour and natural hues.

“I wanted to learn about the origins of this type of material, how it was made, how it was to be handled when washing or pressing, so that I could pass on this information to my clients,” Aimee adds. She believes that in entrepreneurship, it is important to also educate customers on the products they are purchasing, their manufacturing processes and design inspiration so that that same passion for the product can be transferred onto the end user.

“Ultimately we exist to empower those keen in joining the textile business through training, so they can eventually start their very own African business journey in this industry,”

asserts Aimee confidently.

Lupitawax - beyond the online store front

The brand’s business model seeks to update and educate, especially fashion houses from around the globe, about different fabrics and the newest trends in the African textiles industry. Every month the business takes the initiative to engage more fashion business hubs through live online session to see to it that they become familiar with the Lupitawax line of products.

Lupitawax also leverages the power of social media and digital marketing to promote the brand, with a keen focus to offer bespoke solutions for each client that engages with the brand through these media forms. Clients can





LIPUTAWAX
Style to your roots

connect directly with the brand, making requests for their preferred styles through phone calls, direct messaging, face-to-face chats via skype or Zoom calls. New age media and virtual communications allows the Uganda-based brand to connect with audiences in different parts of the world, showcasing products that met individually specific client needs.

“With bases in the United States of America, specifically in Kansas, Texas, and California, as well as in London, our partners are set up in these locations to help distribute our fabric samples to those in need of product knowledge. We have done this so that there is an opportunity for our customers to know how to distinguish the different fabrics, how they are manufactured, the varying designs and this also serves as a platform to inspire our potential business partners keen to also start textile business within Africa,” says Aimee.

Over the years, Lupitawax has grown to work with different stakeholders; from the clothing brands, to fashion houses and agencies, textile retailers and wholesalers. The diversity of Lupitawax offerings enables the company to serve every sector of the fashion industry.

When asked to comment on her brand’s outlook, Aimee chimes in: “Lupitawax’s goal is to see that we grow, becoming visible enough to supply African print materials in as many countries as we can muster a footprint worldwide. We want to be foremost in making it possible for the world to source African material from Uganda, while empowering those interested in our various initiatives with more information on how they too can get involved in the African print revolution.”

When she is not running her fingers over the latest fabric and admiring the colors, patterns and textures of new African designs, Aimee can be found cooking her favorite traditional dish – cassava leaves and rice! A creative with blessed hands, Aimee also has a keen interest in the hair business and plans to open her own salon one day! 🌍

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