

Alternative **AFRICA**



**RAINBOW
TOURS**



Boasting some of the world's last untouched wildernesses, miles of craggy coastline and unspoilt beaches, iconic creatures of every shape and size, and, of course, a reputation as the undisputed home of wildlife safaris, Africa is nothing short of magical.

At Rainbow Tours, Africa is part of our genetic make-up. It's in our DNA. Our roots ran deeply through South Africa where our very first tours took place, anchoring us to the continent, before we unfurled our branches and flourished throughout the savannah in Kenya, rose up through the impenetrable forests of Uganda, meandered the winding waterways of Botswana, and headed north into Ethiopia. Our seeds have even travelled on the wind to settle on Africa's offshore islands, from Madagascar and Réunion to São Tomé and Príncipe, and St Helena.

Ever since Rainbow Tours began in 1997, we've been pioneering unforgettable, sustainable travels throughout Africa, ensuring that we're world-class experts in what we do. And, with so much to offer visitors, we know there's so much more to Africa than game drives: which brings us to this booklet.

In your hands, you're holding our ultimate selection of truly alternative, once-in-a-lifetime Africa experiences. From helping researchers track lions in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park to witnessing a traditional Bull-Jumping Ceremony in Ethiopia, flick through the pages and you'll find far more than a safari holiday.

Speak to an Africa Specialist today on **020 7666 1360** or visit our website **rainbowtours.co.uk** to begin planning your alternative experience.

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 GROUP TOUR

TRACK LIONS IN UGANDA

- Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda

Travelling responsibly involves ensuring your impact on the environment and host communities is as minimal as possible. In Uganda, the Uganda Carnivore/Lion Monitoring Programme gives you the opportunity to take it one step further and get involved with their conservation projects. Join a research vehicle in Queen Elizabeth National Park and help monitor the park's carnivores via radio-telemetry, observing the lions' movements into 'conflict hot zones', where they are likely to encounter people or livestock. Learn how this data helps form recommendations for the best management of carnivores within the national park, impacts conflict mitigation efforts, supports wildlife rescue and relocation operations, and aids community-based conservation drives. Spend a day with the programme on our Ultimate Uganda & Rwanda Wildlife Tour.

Take Me There

Our 15-day Ultimate Rwanda & Uganda Small Group Tour costs from £6840pp

Departs 6 Sep 2019



 GROUP TOUR

MEET THE LEMURS OF MADAGASCAR

- Madagascar

For many visitors to Madagascar, lemurs are the number one attraction. Endemic to Madagascar and found naturally nowhere else in the world, these characteristic primates have evolved to be totally unique, with the island now home to over 100 species and subspecies. Icons include the ring-tailed, red-ruffed, Indri, Aye-aye and Verreaux's Sifaka. Despite Madagascar being a diverse country with a multitude of differing environments, with so many types of lemur, there's at least one or two to be found no matter where you travel. Our Madagascar Discovery Group Tours take you through some of the lesser-visited regions and conservancies to experience Madagascar's lemurs, as well as endemic birds, reptiles and baobab trees, in their natural environment.

Take Me There

Our 16-day Madagascar Discovery Group Tour costs from £4450pp

Various departures Sep – Oct



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RIDE ON THE ROVOS RAIL

- *South Africa*

Since its first departure from Pretoria in 1989, the family-owned Rovos Rail has cultivated a glowing reputation as Africa's plushiest luxury train journey provider. Reconditioned wood-panelled coaches play host to five-star interiors and fine dining, affording you the opportunity to step into a bygone era, enjoying the romance and old-world charm of life on board as the locomotive gently carts you across the plains of Southern Africa. Enjoy the spectacular scenery from your cabin, or watch out for wildlife from the observation car on our Rail, River & Waterfall Safari, which spends three nights aboard the Rovos Rail, travelling from Pretoria to Victoria Falls, through Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park.

✈ Take Me There

Our 11-day Rail, River & Waterfall Safari costs from £4595pp

Various departures year-round



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TAKE A HOT AIR BALLOON RIDE OVER THE MASAI MARA

- *Masai Mara, Kenya*

There's only one way to truly appreciate the scale of the Masai Mara, where vast swathes of scrub and grassland endlessly unfurl in all directions, punctuated by trees, meandered by rivers and traversed by huge numbers of animals. Take to the skies in a hot air balloon as the morning sun's rays begin to creep over the horizon, quickly caressing the landscape and signalling to its residents that a new day has dawned; this is a safari experience like no other. From your bird's eye perspective, watch as the rugged plains begin to stir with movement as creatures big and small, including herds of elephant and prides of lion, begin their journey to the watering hole or embark on the day's first hunt before the midday temperatures soar.

✈ Take Me There

Our 8-day Big Cat Masai Mara & Samburu Safari costs from £3725pp

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TRACK WILD MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

- Uganda

Few wildlife experiences surpass coming face-to-face with a family of mountain gorillas in their natural habitat. Listed as Critically Endangered, it is thought that there are just over 1,000 of these magnificent gentle giants remaining – making a wild encounter that much more special. The thick, atmospheric jungle habitats of Uganda and Rwanda offer the world's best gorilla tracking experiences, in which well-managed tourism has helped turn the tables in terms of conservation. Get your hands dirty and aid conservation efforts on our Simply Uganda Gorillas and Game tour: take part in a unique 'habituation experience' programme – allowing for four hours with the gorillas – and learn from park rangers, the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project, and the Conservation Through Public Health Organisation.

✈ Take Me There

Our 10-day Simply Uganda Gorillas and Game tour costs from £4850pp



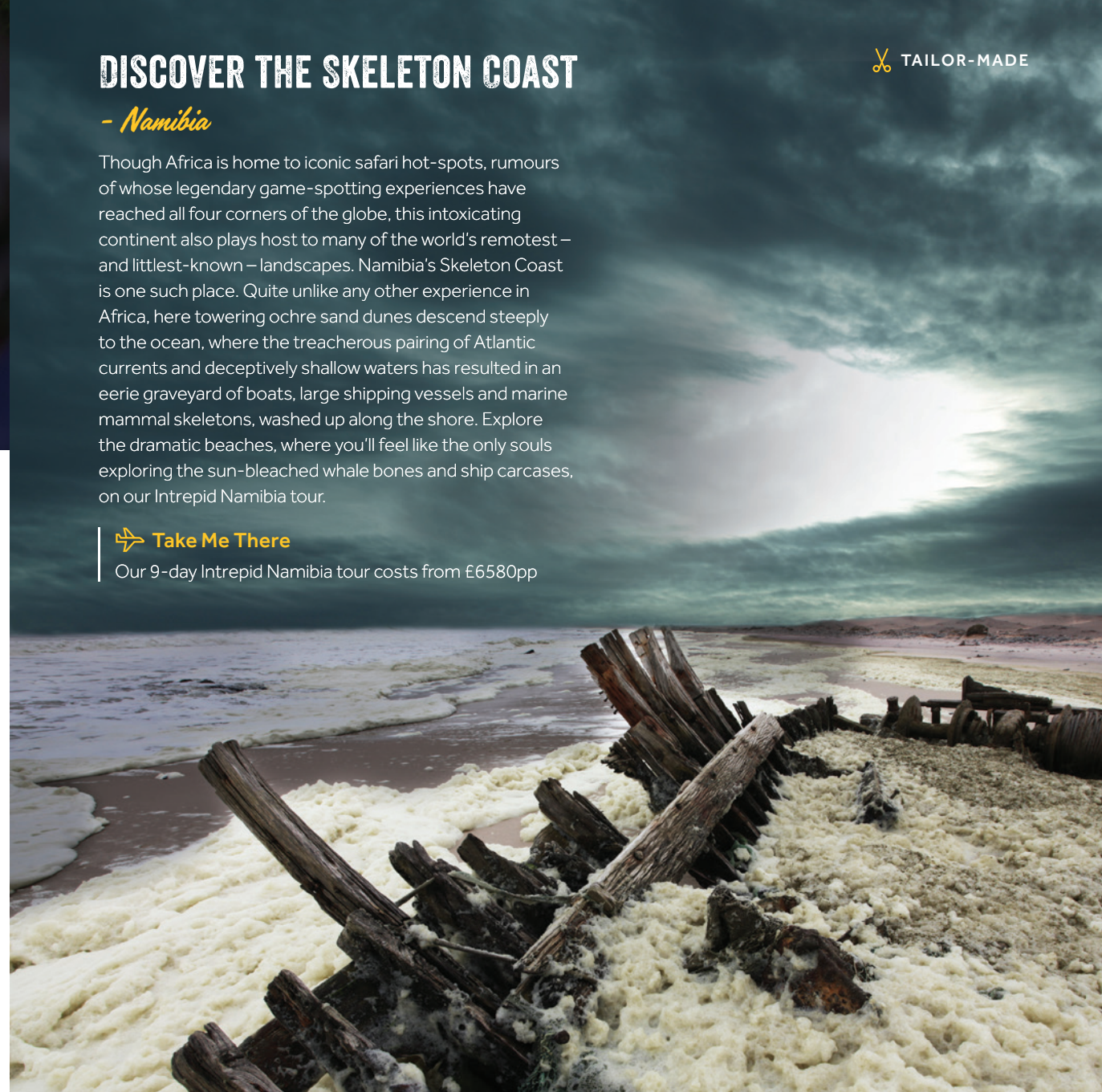
DISCOVER THE SKELETON COAST

- Namibia

Though Africa is home to iconic safari hot-spots, rumours of whose legendary game-spotting experiences have reached all four corners of the globe, this intoxicating continent also plays host to many of the world's remotest – and littlest-known – landscapes. Namibia's Skeleton Coast is one such place. Quite unlike any other experience in Africa, here towering ochre sand dunes descend steeply to the ocean, where the treacherous pairing of Atlantic currents and deceptively shallow waters has resulted in an eerie graveyard of boats, large shipping vessels and marine mammal skeletons, washed up along the shore. Explore the dramatic beaches, where you'll feel like the only souls exploring the sun-bleached whale bones and ship carcasses, on our Intrepid Namibia tour.

✈ Take Me There

Our 9-day Intrepid Namibia tour costs from £6580pp



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SEE THE ETHIOPIAN WOLF

- Sanetti Plateau, Ethiopia

One of Africa's least-travelled destinations provides one of its scarcest wildlife encounters: Ethiopian wolves are the world's rarest canid, with fewer than 500 remaining. Living in close-knit territorial packs, the wolves are sociable and approachable, their red coats standing out from a background of frosty green wilderness. These are Africa's only wolves, and are well-adapted for life on the remote, wild moorlands of the Sanetti Plateau.

To drive across the plateau, is to drive on Africa's highest-lying road; standing at 4,000 metres above sea level, the plateau is often known as 'The Roof of Africa'. Our Unusual & Endemic Wildlife of Ethiopia tour spends two nights in Bale Mountains National Park, where you'll traverse the plateau seeking out wild encounters with the Ethiopian wolves.

✈ Take Me There

Our 12-day Unusual & Endemic Wildlife of Ethiopia tour costs from £4230pp



HIKE TO LAGOA AMELIA

- São Tomé and Príncipe

Part of an extinct volcanic range sitting on the equator, over 200 kilometres west of the African mainland, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is one of the smallest countries in Africa, consisting of two small archipelagos clustered around two main islands: São Tomé and Príncipe. Little-known, these islands are a paradise of unexplored jungles heaving with wildlife, palm-fringed beaches, crystal-clear waters and a blend of Portuguese-Creole cuisine. Hike through the mountains to reach Lagoa Amélia, a covered lagoon that lies cradled in a volcanic caldera 800m above sea level.

✈ Take Me There

Our 11-day São Tomé and Príncipe tour costs from £2745pp



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KAYAK ON LAKE MALAWI

- Malawi

One for the savvy-traveller, slotted between Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique, Malawi is all too often overlooked. However, affectionately known as the 'Warm Heart of Africa', what this small, landlocked country lacks in size it more than makes up for in charm and its captivating diversity of natural landscapes. Accounting for over 20% of its surface area, Lake Malawi

is an intimidatingly beautiful expanse of water and a playground primed for adventure. Take a kayak out on the glassy surface, stopping to gaze down through the crystal-clear waters to watch the plethora of bright fish below. Deep – reaching up to 2,300 metres in places – calm and boasting superb clarity, these tranquil waters are a haven for divers and snorkelers.

✈ Take Me There

Our 10-day Malawi Safari and Beach tour costs from £4325pp



WALK AMONGST RHINOS

- Phinda Game Reserve, South Africa

The only one of the Big Five currently red-listed as Critically Endangered, the black rhino has experienced a population decline, now numbering around just 4,000 today, after catastrophic commercial poaching for its sought-after horn. With black rhino sightings becoming increasingly rare, there are few places that can match Phinda Game Reserve in South Africa's subtropical KwaZulu-Natal. This 23,000-hectare private reserve – home to all the Big Five – is owned and managed by &Beyond; a luxury lodge collection with a commitment to sustainable travel, conservation and community empowerment. Here guests are offered the chance to track black rhino on foot, following tracks with expert rangers in the quest to sight one of the rare beasts.

✈ Take Me There

9-day Zululand Safari & Mozambique tour costs from £4295pp



TAKE A HELICOPTER RIDE OVER A VOLCANO

- *Piton de la Fournaise, Réunion*

Hidden between wildlife powerhouse Madagascar and beach holiday icon Mauritius, this petite French island remains unknown to many travellers but, what it might lack in both size and reputation, this tiny speck in the Indian Ocean makes up for in its huge potential for adventure. Discerning travellers are rewarded with dramatic volcanic scenery, where one of the world's most active volcanoes,

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the Piton de la Fournaise, continues to leak molten lava year-round. To best appreciate Réunion's unique geology and soak up the scenery, take to the skies in a helicopter for a flight over the lunar crater rim landscape, devoid of vegetation but sporting striking burnt umber, smoky topaz and jet black natural shades. As the rest of the island is also carpeted in lush vegetation, with forests hiding gushing waterfalls and fringing idyllic beaches, you'll be able to experience parts of the island inaccessible by road.

✈️ Take Me There

Our 13-day Réunion Touring & Beach tour costs from £2695pp



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WATCH A BULL-JUMPING CEREMONY

- *Southern Ethiopia*

There are few places left in the world you can enjoy front-row seats to a traditional ceremony rarely ever experienced by outsider eyes – especially where you're also the only foreign visitors in attendance. In Southern Ethiopia, the Omo people are slowly allowing 'faranji' (tourists) a glimpse into their still largely-traditional lifestyle. Here Hamar families initiate adolescent males ready to become a man with an extraordinary rite of passage: when a boy feels he is ready he must, to an audience of his fellow tribesmen, leap naked onto the back of a bull and run across the backs of a cattle herd. Around him, men chant whilst women dance, sing and blow horn trumpets. Though the dates of these ceremonies aren't guaranteed, our Southern Ethiopia Tour introduces you to the communities in the South Omo region.

✈️ Take Me There

Our 13-day Southern Ethiopia tour costs from £3595pp



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COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH ELEPHANTS ON A HORSEBACK SAFARI

- Okavango Delta, Botswana

In Botswana you're guaranteed an incredible wildlife experience. Visitor numbers are capped, lodges and conservancies are managed responsibly, and tourist interactions are carefully designed with conservation in mind. With wildlife abundant and free-roaming across protected landscapes, safaris here are the stuff that memories are made of, and they don't get more intimate than exploring the Okavango Delta on horseback. Trading the traditional safari steed – a hardy 4WD – for four legs and a saddle, explore this watery inland region of interlocking streams and islands, riding alongside elephant, hippo and buffalo on our Okavango Horse Riding Safari.

✂ Take Me There

Our 7-day Okavango Horse Riding costs from £4120pp



SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

- South Luangwa National Park, Zambia


Whoever said that wildlife encounters had to stop with the sunset? In Zambia's South Luangwa National Park, the nights can be just as memorable as the days. Set up camp on the white sand riverbed of the Luwi River, a dry and tree-free expanse during the dry season, offering uninterrupted skyward views for campers ready for an authentic, wild overnight experience. Sleeping in a double bed under a transparent netting, your private canopy lets in the flickers of the campfire, twinkling starlight from the inky blue skies above - and keeps bugs out for a comfortable night. Tucked up for the evening, you'll be serenaded to sleep by a soundtrack of the wild animals scuttling, rustling and rummaging, and awoken by the calls of the wild as the sun rises.

✂ Take Me There

Our 9-day Rivers & Rainbows in the South Luangwa Zambia tour costs from £4570pp





 GROUP TOUR

ATTEND TIMKET FESTIVAL

- Ethiopia

The colourful Ethiopian Orthodox celebration of Epiphany, celebrated on the 19th of January each year and known widely as Timket Festival, is nothing short of a spectacle. With its origins stretching back to biblical times, this is Ethiopia's most important – and exuberant – annual event. The night before festivities begin, priests take the Tabots from the church to a consecrated pool or river. In the early hours, crowds carry flaming oil lamps to Mass to watch as, at the break of dawn, the priest extinguishes a candle burning on a high pole with a ceremonial cross. This signals the beginning of three days of festivities and is greeted by a cacophony of bells and trumpets and clouds of incense. Experience the celebrations first-hand in the capital, Addis Ababa on our Timket Small Group Tour.

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Our 13-day Timket Small Group Tour costs from £3250pp and departs 17 Jan 2019



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DISCOVER THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- Odzala-Kokoua National Park

For travellers looking for a truly memorable, once-in-a-lifetime Africa experience, Congo's Odzala-Kokoua National Park presents an extraordinary allure. The park is part of the world's second largest expanse of tropical rainforest – a Garden of Eden for nature and wildlife enthusiasts – most famous as a home for Western lowland gorilla. Far from the classic western tourism circuits of its more southerly neighbours, the Republic of Congo offers truly off-the-beaten-track explorations, perfect for adventurous travellers keen to experience Africa at its most authentic. Staying at three exclusive lodges, built using locally-sourced materials, explore the forests of Odzala-Kokoua National Park on foot, hiking to meet the three habituated groups of gorillas which call it home.

 Take Me There

Our 11-day Congo Explorer & Gorillas tour costs from £7770pp



EXPERIENCE THE ISLAND OF ST HELENA

- Saint Helena, Atlantic Ocean

Flung far into the Atlantic Ocean 1,200 miles from the western coast of Africa, the forgotten island of St Helena stands alone as one of the remotest islands in the world. Its pristine volcanic peaks, sand dunes and lush green hills make up a rugged paradise that, though covering just 47 square miles, is home to over 400 endemic bird and plant species, as well as boasting waters through which whale sharks journey. Weekly commercial flights, connecting the island to Windhoek, only began operating in 2017, meaning this isolated isle still marks a frontier for pioneering explorers in search of relatively uncharted adventure. Spend 11 days exploring a spot once only accessible by (an infrequent) boat on our Discover Saint Helena tour.

 **Take Me There**

Our 11-day Discover Saint Helena tour costs from £3495pp



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ROAD TRIP FROM CAPE TOWN TO WINDHOEK

- South Africa to Namibia

South Africa, home of the iconic Garden Route, is widely known for its superb self-drive exploration opportunities. However, its northerly neighbour, Namibia, would steal the headlines if only everyone knew about the vast expanses of ochre-red desert, rocky coastlines and pristine nature reserves that are traversed by excellent – and almost totally traffic-free – roadways. When it comes to planning a once-in-a-lifetime road trip, these two make a fearsome combination. Pick up your car in Port Elizabeth and begin following the Garden Route at Knysna Lagoon, a region boasting stunning coastal scenery and waters patrolled by pods of dolphins, before reaching Cape Town. Then head along the rugged west coast through mountains and winelands, passing fields of the famous Namaqualand wild flowers and cross the Namibia border. Pass through Fish River Canyon, explore an abandoned diamond mining ghost town, spend two days traversing the towering orange dunes of Sossusvlei and spy the half-submerged shipwrecks littering the Skeleton Coast before finishing up in Windhoek.

 **Take Me There**

Contact a Rainbow Tours Namibia Specialist for your tailor-made road-trip quote





HELP HUMPBACK WHALE CONSERVATION PROJECTS

- *Île Sainte Marie, Madagascar*

There's more to Madagascar than lemurs – some of the country's most fascinating characters reside offshore, only passing by at certain times of the year. Humpback whales migrate from their low latitude wintering grounds in search of warmer waters in which to calve. Conservation organisation Cétamada has been tracking

the movement of humpbacks in the Sainte Marie Channel on Madagascar's east coast for ten years, where the warm Indian Ocean provides the perfect conditions for giving birth. Travel on our Reef & Rainforest tour during the migratory season to join Cétamada's whale watching excursions from Ile Sainte Marie, when tourists are encouraged to assist in the collection of data for conservation projects – in between watching whales breach and play, of course!



Take Me There

Our 12-day Reef & Rainforest tour costs from £3320pp



TREK WITH CHIMPANZEES

- *Western Tanzania*

From Southern Senegal to Western Tanzania, Africa's last remaining chimpanzees live in the tropical rainforests of what used to be the equatorial forest belt. The Mahale Mountains in Western Tanzania may not be the easiest of locations to reach, but it's precisely this isolation that has kept their montane rainforest habitat intact. Here researchers have been studying chimp behaviours since 1965, so Mahale's habituated chimps are unfazed by humans, making for incredible intimate encounters. Our Western Tanzania Safari & Chimp Trekking tour includes three nights at Greystoke Mahale Camp, where days are spent tracking chimps in the forest on foot. Exploring the forest in a group of just six, local tracking guides share their incredible knowledge of the individual animals and their life stories.



Take Me There

Our 10-day Western Tanzania Safari & Chimp Trekking tour costs from £7995pp



Fly Direct to Durban, South Africa

Speak to your Rainbow Tours Specialist to book your holiday flying on the Boeing 787 with British Airways.

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