



Insider's
Guide to
**Family
Safaris**



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Table of Contents



Start Here: How to Choose the Right Family Safari

01 – Pg 6

Different Types of Safari Lodges (and what “family-friendly” really means)

02 – Pg 13

Safari Planning Essentials for Families (Tips that prevent stress)

03 - Pg 23

Malaria-Free vs Classic Safari Areas (and how to think about risk)

04 – Pg 26

Main Family Safari Destinations (Quick Guide)

05 – Pg 45

Family Safaris by Age (Younger kids, older kids, teens)

06 – Pg 52

Private Safari Houses & Multi-Generational Safaris

Next Steps: [Page 56](#) - A Simple Plan (and how we can help)

Insider's Guide to Family Safaris



As a mother of three, I'm all for introducing children to the wonder of African wildlife. The bush is a natural classroom for learning about the cycles of nature, predator hierarchies and the fascinating ways animals adapt to their environment. A family safari in Africa could well become your **best family trip ever**. But it does require a little thought to decide what will work best for **your family**.

Imagine this... you're five years old and 1½ hours into a game drive. It was really fun at first and you loved seeing the elephant, and the baby zebra. But now the ranger just keeps talking and talking... and you haven't a clue what he's saying. You're hungry. You're getting hot. And you really, really need the loo. But Mum says you can't stop because we're looking for a pride of lions spotted nearby... somewhere. You're bored and you want to go home RIGHT NOW!

No one wants unhappy children on safari, especially when you've travelled all the way to Africa for the experience. That's why choosing the **right safari destination, lodge and travel style** for your family is so important. In this guide we share some of the key things to consider when planning a family safari — along with practical tips that can make the difference between a good trip and a truly memorable one.

How to Choose the Right Family Safari

The best family safaris succeed because three key elements are chosen carefully: the right destination, the right lodge, and the right style of safari for your children's ages and interests.

Many lodges welcome families, but only some are geared toward children, with junior ranger programmes, activity rooms, & flexible game drives. Others are designed primarily for serious wildlife enthusiasts with stricter age limits.

Similarly, some destinations offer a wide range of family-friendly lodges and activities, while others are more remote and adventurous.

Another factor is the age and personality of your children. Younger kids may benefit from shorter game drives and more structured activities, while older children & teenagers often thrive in more adventurous safari environments.



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Planning the right safari experience

Travel logistics also play an important role. Some safari areas are easy to reach with short transfers, while others require small charter flights or longer drives to reach more remote wilderness areas.

For example, many families with younger children prefer safari areas that are **malaria-free and easy to reach**, while families with older children may enjoy the sense of adventure that comes with travelling to more remote safari destinations.

In this guide, we explore some key things to consider when planning a family safari — from the **different types of safari lodges** to the **destinations** that tend to work best for families.

Our aim is to help you find the safari experience that suits **your family's travel style, interests and comfort levels**.

Different Types of Safari Lodges



Broadly speaking, safari lodges for families fall into 4 categories:

Classic Safari Lodges & Camps

Family-Friendly Lodges

Family-Friendly Lodges focused on Younger Kids

Exclusive Use Safari Houses & Villas



Family Lodge Comparison Table

Safari Lodge Type	Best For	Key Advantages	Possible Downsides
Classic Safari Lodges** (which takes kids)	Families with older children/teens who can amuse themselves	Prime locations; Excellent guiding; Much more choice; Focus is on the safari itself	No child-focused facilities; board games may be it!
Family-Friendly Safari Lodges	Families with kids 6-12 years	Additional activities: Junior rangers, Activity rooms, Staff for kids	May feel less 'wild' than classic camps; could be louder; may spend less time with your kids
Lodges for Younger Kids	Families with kids under 6	Structured kids activities; Child-minding; Shorter drives; May allow 4-5 years on game drives with other families	Wildlife experience less intense; may spend less time with your kids
Private Safari Houses/Exclusive Use	Multi-Gen Families/two families wanting privacy	Exclusive use; private guide & vehicle; flexible safari schedule	May be higher in cost depending on utilization

** Many will allow children onto game drives from 6 upwards, but make no other major family concessions.



Classic Safari Lodges & Camps

You may decide to opt for a traditional game lodge. These lodges are often located in prime wildlife areas and focus strongly on the safari experience itself.

Classic safari lodges typically welcome kids to stay from 6 years upwards ,(8 years in some destinations). But they make no major concessions to kids other than a few board games.

In some cases, accommodation is based on two-man tented or chalets, so it's important that either your children are comfortable sleeping by themselves. Or you're happy to split to share one adult with one child.

These lodges are perfect if you like to hang out together as a family. Or if your kids are used to amusing themselves.

Family-Friendly Safari Lodges

Family friendly lodges are similar to classic lodges, but they've geared themselves more towards kids. They still usually restrict game drives to children over 6 years old. (Very young children do not really 'get' the idea of sitting down quietly in a vehicle for several hours.)

But the lodge will offer additional wildlife-related and educational activities for kids back at the lodge.

This varies but could be a Junior Rangers programme (complete with certificate), an indoor activity room, play area or Ranger-led safari activities after breakfast. E.g. identifying spore (tracks), foraging for feathers and porcupine quills, making plaster casts of animal tracks. They usually have family rooms or even two-bedroom family units.

Most of our family-friendly lodges are like this. As only a few people bring their very young children to Africa.





Family-Friendly Lodges for Younger Kids

Some family-friendly lodges DO cater for younger children with shorter 'Kids drives' on offer (sometimes after breakfast) as well as supervised wildlife-related activities.

Depending on the wildlife area, some may allow younger children (from 4/5 years) on the main game drive. But note that this does affect the chances of getting close to large predators. They will offer early kids suppers, children's menus, baby or child-minding or story telling so parents can have dinner in peace.

Most of these lodges tend to be in non-malarial areas. Accommodation is usually in family rooms, or in two-bedroom suites.

Note: *These lodges tend to want kids to eat earlier than parents, then head off to bed. If you want to be with your children, not all these lodges will be right for you. Please discuss your exact needs with us.*

Private Safari Houses & Villas

Private safari houses are ideal for two families or multi-generational groups who want complete flexibility. With your own guide, vehicle and staff, the safari experience can be tailored entirely around your family.

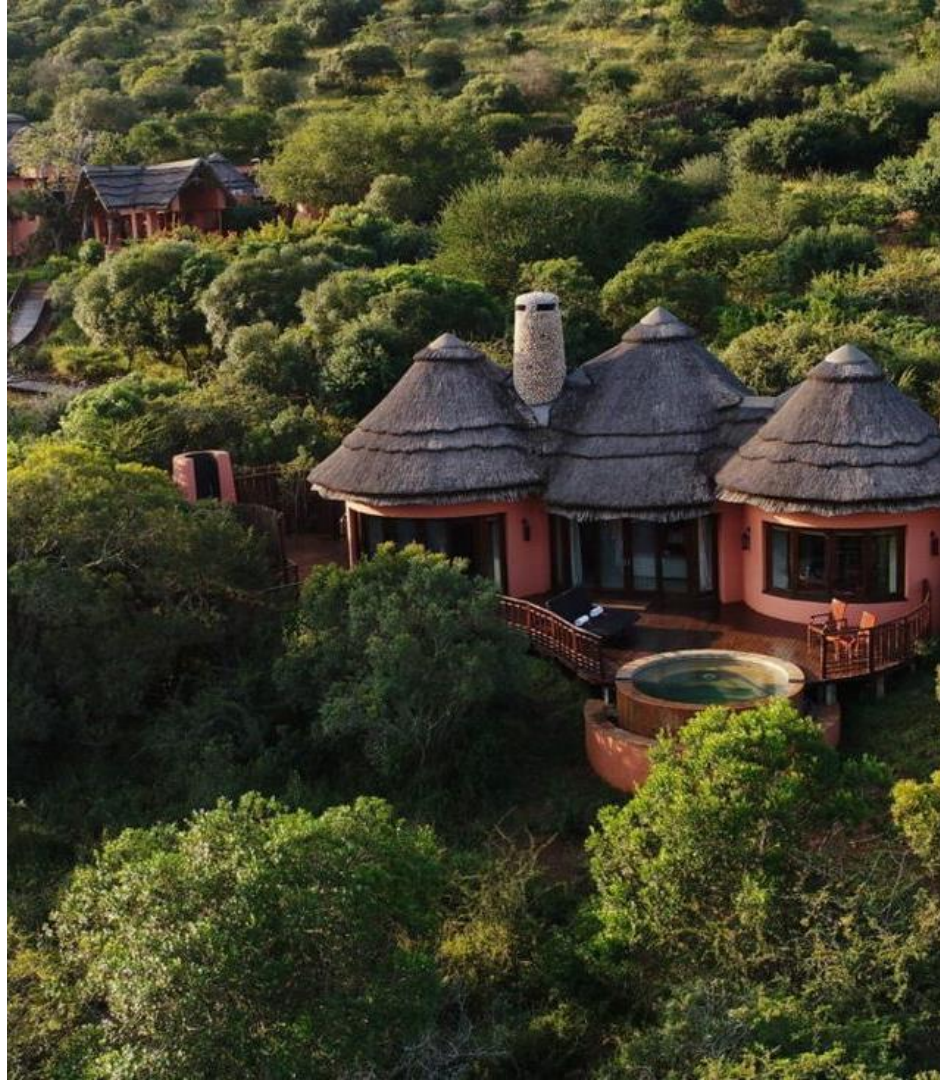
Houses range from 3 bedrooms up to 5 or 6 bedrooms.

Two-bedroom Villas within a Lodge

Some safari lodges have private but adjacent **two-bedroom Villas**, with their own ranger & vehicle.

This allows for many of the *benefits* of a private Safari House, but you are still attached to a safari lodge if you want to mix with others, enjoy a spa treatment or go to the gym.

As they are smaller, they are perfect for individual families. But some can be extended by one or two suites to make a larger family exclusive use option.



A photograph of two giraffes in a savanna landscape. One giraffe is standing upright, looking to the right, while a smaller giraffe is leaning against its neck. The background shows a vast green field under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Safari Planning Essentials for Families

Tips that prevent stress

Tips for Kids on Safari



- 1 Know your family
- 2 Safaris are structured
- 3 Longer stays
- 4 If on a long safari – go for variety
- 4 Malaria-Free vs Classic Areas
- 5 Be realistic about attention spans of young kids
- 6 Private Game Vehicles
- 7 Plenty of Cameras & Binoculars
- 7 Plenty of Cameras & Binoculars

Download our Helpful Family Safari Quiz to help you decide on which area suits your family.

1. Know your Family

Your family on safari will be much the same as your family on any other holiday.

So start by asking what sort of trips you usually enjoy. Adventurous or more laid-back? Do you prefer busy days full of activities, or time alone in beautiful surroundings? And do you enjoy spending time together, or appreciate a little time apart?

- If your children aren't particularly passionate about wildlife, don't book a 10-day safari. A shorter **2-4 night safari** can be a wonderful introduction to African wildlife, especially if combined with other experiences such as Cape Town, Drakensberg Mountains, Garden Route or Victoria Falls.
- How well do your children cope with **long travel days**? Would they enjoy meeting other children at a lodge, or would you prefer a more private family experience?

These small details tell us a great deal about what kind of safari will work best for your family.





2. Safaris are Structured

- A safari - even for a few days - follows a structured rhythm. Days usually revolve around **early morning and late afternoon game drives**, with some relaxation time in between.
- Many children quickly adapt to this routine and & rhythm of safari life. But more energetic or restless kids may find it harder, particularly in the cooler winter months when swimming pools may not be very tempting.
- It helps to choose a **lodge that suits your children's personalities**, or come prepared with a few games, books or activities to fill the quieter moments between game drives.

3. Longer Stays

(At least until they are old enough to pack their own bags)

I speak from experience here. When my children were young, many of my research trips involved staying just one or two nights at each safari lodge. While this can work for research, it's rarely ideal for a family holiday.

In most cases, **three or four nights at each lodge** allows everyone to settle into the rhythm of safari life. Otherwise, you'll find yourself spending too much of *your* precious holiday time **packing and unpacking** rather than enjoying the experience.





4. If on a Long Safari – Mix it up

If you decide on a longer safari, try to include **different activities along the way**. Even with wonderful wildlife sightings, a steady diet of game drives can start to feel a little repetitive - for adults as well as kids.

Choosing lodges that offer alternative activities adds welcome variety. Some lodges offer **boat cruises, walking safaris (older teens only), horse riding or fishing**, which offers a different way to experience the bush.

My own children loved trying a **horse-riding safari, tiger-fishing and even a camel ride in Kenya**. Many lodges in Botswana and Zambia also offer boat cruises, as a refreshing alternative to game drives.

OR **combine safari days with sight-seeing**, in Cape Town or Victoria Falls, to break up the safari routine, allow you all a couple of lie-ins and a change of pace.



5. Be realistic about attention spans of young kids

Parents often want their three- or four-year-old children to experience a game drive, and I completely understand that. And some younger children do cope very well.

However, many children find a **three-hour game drive** quite demanding. In practice, most safari lodges have found that children generally begin to enjoy game drives *consistently* from around **six or seven years old**, with some children only really getting into it from **eight or nine**. (My middle son included!)

If you are travelling with younger children, it helps to choose a **lodge that is geared toward families with younger kids**. Another good option is to try to arrange a private safari vehicle, or take accommodation with a private vehicle. Then you can return to the lodge whenever children start to feel tired, hungry or restless.





6. Private Game Vehicles

For many families, your own **private safari vehicle and guide** sounds ideal. You can move at your own pace, head back earlier, and avoid worrying about whether your children are disturbing other guests.

In South Africa, private vehicles are not always available as they are subject to availability and lodge occupancy. Each lodge has a set number of vehicles allowed by the reserve.

Many safari lodges are skilled at grouping guests together so that families with children are often seated together.

Elsewhere in Southern & East Africa, they are more common, and the safari lodge may even insist on a private vehicle for all families with kids under 12.



7. Plenty of Cameras & Binoculars

The #1 cause of low grade sibling skirmishes? Binoculars.

Photos are an integral part of a safari. Bringing at least two cameras with you, and camera phones. My kids loved taking photos. As they get into their teens, you could find you'll a budding amateur photographer on your hands!

Likewise - for kids to get the most out of their safari -and to maximize family harmony, I recommend bringing as many binoculars as you can.

Ideally you should aim to have binoculars for each family member, or 1 between 2, even if it means borrowing them. They don't all have to be state of the art!





The 5 Biggest Family Safari Planning Mistakes

Fortunately, they are easy to avoid with a little forethought.

1. Choosing the Wrong Lodge for Your Children's Ages
2. Trying to see too much
3. Under-estimating travel times - carefully planning travel days is an important part of creating a relaxed itinerary.
4. Assuming a private vehicle is always available
5. Choosing the wrong destination for the season (and your kids ages/temperaments)



A family of three is sitting on a wooden deck outdoors. In the center, a man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a light-colored safari-style jacket and shorts, is sitting cross-legged and talking to a young boy on his left and a young girl on his right. The boy has short brown hair and is wearing a light-colored jacket and shorts. The girl has long blonde hair and is wearing a blue and white striped sweater and light-colored pants. They are all smiling and appear to be in conversation. In front of them is a small fire burning in a metal fire pit. Several metal pots and a white mug are on the deck. To the right, there is a small wooden table with a white bag on it. The background shows a body of water and trees, suggesting a safari or camp setting.

Malaria Free Vs Classic Safari Areas

Malaria-Free Destinations

Should you choose a **malaria-free destination** or travel to one of Africa's **classic safari areas** where malaria precautions are required? There is no single right answer. The best option depends on your family's **comfort level and the ages of your children**.

Check out: Cape, Eastern Cape, Madikwe & the Waterberg

Advantages of Malaria-Free Safaris

- No anti-malaria medication required
- Safari Lodges often geared towards younger kids
- Many lodges offer structured kids' programmes
- Eastern Cape only – easy to combine with Garden Route

Read More: [Malaria Free Game Reserves in South Africa.](#)

Recommendation: Families with kids under 6 years

Note: Northern KwaZulu Natal & Mashatu are classified very low risk malaria





Classic Safari Regions

When people imagine the iconic African safari: vast landscapes, strong wildlife populations and a sense of wilderness, they're often thinking of the **classic safari regions of East and Southern Africa**.

These are typically in malaria-areas so you need to take precautions. For families with **older children or teenagers**, these often provide the most memorable wildlife experiences.

Managing Malaria Risk

In most safari areas the risk is relatively low for travellers who take sensible precautions.

- Take anti-malaria medications
- Use Insect repellent
- Cover up with long sleeves/trousers in the evening

A family of three is sitting on a wooden deck outdoors. In the center, a man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a light-colored safari-style jacket and shorts, is smiling and talking to a young boy on his left. The boy has short brown hair and is wearing a light-colored jacket and shorts. To the right, a young girl with long blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped sweater and light-colored pants, is also smiling and holding a white mug. In front of them, a campfire is burning brightly in a metal fire pit. Several black metal pots and a white mug are on the deck. The background shows a wide river or lake with trees on the far bank under a clear sky. The text "Main Family Safari Destinations" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white serif font.

Main Family Safari Destinations



Main Family Safari Destinations

This section is a snapshot to help you sanity-check your shortlist. If you did our quiz, you can skip this part.

[South Africa](#)

 [Kruger & Private Game Lodges](#)

 [KwaZulu Natal](#)

 [Garden Route & Eastern Cape](#)

 [Madikwe](#)

 [Waterberg](#)

[Kenya](#)

 [Tanzania](#)

 [Namibia](#)

 [Botswana](#)

 [Zambia](#)

 [Malawi](#)

Safari Destination Snapshot

Country	Best For	Key Advantages	Considerations
South Africa	First-time family safaris, younger children	Malaria-free reserves available, excellent infrastructure, wide choice of family lodges. Easy to combine with Cape Town or beaches	Some safari areas feel less remote than classic East African safaris.!
Kenya	Classic safari landscapes and varied activities	Excellent wildlife, migration season in July–Oct, many lodges offer horse riding, camel rides and cultural visits.	No malaria-free safari areas.
Namibia	Adventurous families who enjoy varied landscapes	Incredible scenery, desert landscapes, varied experiences beyond wildlife.	Long driving distances between destinations.
Zambia	Families with older children/Adventurers	Wild, remote safari experience and excellent guiding.	Higher malaria risk and longer travel times.

Safari Destination Snapshot – Cont'd

Country	Best For	Key Advantages	Considerations
Botswana	Families with older children/teens seeking wilderness	Some of Africa's best wildlife areas with low visitor numbers. Remote and pristine landscapes.	Generally higher cost and fewer family-friendly lodges
Tanzania	Iconic wildlife locations and migration safaris	Serengeti and Ngorongoro offer spectacular wildlife. Private vehicles often standard.	Longer game drives and road transfers can be tiring for younger children.
Malawi	Experienced family travellers, older kids	Wild, remote safari experience, combine with beach on Lake Malawi; can combine with South Luangwa in Zambia	Higher malaria risk
Zimbabwe	Families with older children who enjoy adventure	Wild, remote safari experience and excellent guiding.	Higher malaria risk and longer travel times.

South Africa



South Africa is attractive as a 1st-time family safari destination because it's so easy to combine a safari with other family-friendly activities and destinations. Plus it has a good infrastructure with a wide choice of family safari lodges. Finally it's the only African family safari destination which offers malaria-free safaris.

Here's a synopsis on the main safari destinations within South Africa:

 Kruger & Private Game Lodges

 Madikwe – Malaria free

 Waterberg – Malaria-free

 KwaZulu Natal (low risk)

 Garden Route & Eastern Cape – Malaria-free



Though the image of vast open African-plains scattered with baobab and fever trees fits the north of South Africa, the rest of the country offers a unique diversity of captivating landscapes.

[Read more about South Africa](#)



Kruger & Private Game Reserves



- The Kruger National Park and the surrounding private concessions offer some of the best game-viewing in South Africa.
- It's a seasonal malarial area, so there is a much lower risk in dry, winter months.
- A huge variety of lodges at different price points, many with family programmes etc. So it really helps to have an experienced safari consultant to advise you on which lodge will suit **your** family best.
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge, Londolozi Varty or Founders Camp, Simbavati River Lodge, Jabulani Safari. Mala Mala Main Camp & Ngala Safari Lodge.
- There's also plenty of 2-bedroom to larger 5-bedroom exclusive use Bush Villas for larger family parties.



The Greater Kruger is the ultimate safari destination for many of our guests. The park itself is vast and encompasses many diverse biospheres. This ensures a diversity of wildlife as well as an unsurpassed concentration of wildlife.

[Read more about the Kruger HERE](#)



Eastern Cape & Garden Route (Malaria-free)



- The most accessible malaria-free safari region with easy links to Cape Town, Whale Coast
- Easy to mix safari & other activities – beach, soft adventure, sight seeing, family-friendly activities
- Very scenic terrain, but rarely has a sense of remoteness & “African bush’ - with some notable exceptions
- Eastern Cape offers stronger game-viewing but Garden Route/Karoo options such as **Sanbona Gondwana** & Gondwana Game Reserve offer easy accessibility
- Many lodges have strong children's programmes, with a focus on younger children
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges in Eastern Cape** : Shamwari Riverdene, Kwandwe Ecca, Lalibela Marks Camp, Kariega Main Lodge, Amakhala Hlosi Lodge



[Read more about the Garden Route](#)

[Read more about the Eastern Cape](#)



Madikwe (Malaria free)



- More remote area in terms of distance but a variety of lodges to suit all tastes
- Many lodges have children's programmes, and geared to younger kids as well as older
- Good game viewing (perhaps 2nd only to Greater Kruger)
- Considerations: Remote and relatively difficult to access (flights ideally or long road transfer)
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Tuningi Safari Lodge, Morukuru (Safari Houses), Lelapa at Madikwe Safari Lodge, Impodimo



Madikwe is the most accessible of game reserves. It is a 4+ hour drive from Johannesburg, but you can fly in and out (1 hour).

Why not combine a Madikwe safari with a Pilanesberg or Marakele National Park in the same broad area?

[Read more about Madikwe](#)



Waterberg & Welgevonden (Malaria free)



- Malaria-free and an easy driving distance (2½ to 3 hours) from Johannesburg/Pretoria.
- Moderately good game-viewing –but not as good as Kruger/Madikwe
- Specialist safari interests: great for horse-riding safaris
- Plenty of private safari houses offering exclusive use for one family party
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Mdondoro Safari Lodge, Marataba Safari Lodge, Ant's Hill (horse-riding)



The Waterberg is known for its luxurious and romantic game lodges as well as several family friendly safari options. The Waterberg safari options include Welgevonden Private Game Reserve and Marakele.

[Read more about the Waterberg area](#)



Kwa-Zulu Natal



- One of our favourite areas of South Africa – offering easy bush & beach combinations, as well as other family-friendly options such as Drakensberg Mountain family resorts, Natal battlefields, Isimangaliso wetlands
- Very low malaria (i.e. WHO doesn't recommend anti-malaria tablets)
- Strong sense of African bush, but still fairly accessible
- Some lodges offer variety of activities: boating, fishing, as well as game drives
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Phinda Mountain Lodge, Thanda Safari Lodge, Rhino Ridge Safari Lodge



The private game reserves and lodges of KwaZulu Natal are not as well known as those in the Kruger Park. But definitely worth considering, especially if you want to follow your safari with a beach holiday.

[Read more about Kwa-Zulu Natal](#)



Sample Family Safaris – Road Trips

Selection of three road trips, ideal for flexible family safaris



Relaxing Rascals - SA

13 Nights

- Explore **Cape Town, Winelands, Route 62**, and the **Garden Route** at your own pace
- Enjoy a malaria-free family safari at **Sanbona Gondwana** Family
- Stay in spacious family villas and suites throughout
- Combine beach, wildlife, and Winelands in one seamless journey
- Fully customizable to suit your family's interests and travel rhythm

Water Babies - SA

13 Nights

- Family-friendly self-drive from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape incl **Cape Town, De Hoop** Nature Reserve & **Garden Route**
- Malaria-free safari at **Lalibela Mark's Camp**
- Explore coastlines, winelands, forests, and wildlife all in one trip
- Spacious family accommodation throughout
- Fully flexible and customizable itinerary

Namibia Discovery - Namibia

12 nights

- Affordable self-drive safari ideal for first-time visitors
- Covers the highlights of **Etosha, Damaraland, Swakopmund, Sossusvlei & the Kalahari**
- Optional southern extension to Luderitz & Fish River Canyon (16 nights)
- Stay in characterful lodges and guesthouses; will adapt for families
- Easy to tailor with extra nights or stops (e.g. Okonjima Wildlife Reserve)

Family Safari Destinations:

Kenya, Namibia
Malawi, Zambia &
Tanzania



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Namibia



- Namibia is a unique family destination – it will suit some adventurous families perfectly, others not so much!
- Lots of variety: (wildlife, dunes, deserts, mountains, coast) as a destination, great sense of remoteness, mainly non-malarial with a small/medium risk in the north.
- **Considerations:** Its size means long driving times (or expensive charter flights), so think of your children's travelling abilities!
- Great range of lodges to suit your budget and preferred comfort levels. Some lodges are on Namibian farms so that your kids can get a sense of farming life in Namibia.
- It can be very hot, often over 40°C (104°F), so choose a time that suits your heat temperament.
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Onguma Forest Lodge, Mushara Bush Camp & Lodge, Camp Kipwe



Namibia offers an exhilarating and varied safari experience. From the vast Etosha salt pan, to the shimmering dunes of Sossusvlei and the Namib Desert, to the waterways of the Caprivi

[Read more about Namibia](#)



Kenya



- Kenya offers probably the easiest destination for Family Safaris, after South Africa.
- Great game-viewing in the Masai Mara as well as Laikipia, Amboseli and Samburu.
- Northern Hemisphere Summer holidays coincide with the wildebeest migration in Kenya (July-Aug).
- It's fairly easy to get around with good network of flights.
- Variety of activities at many Laikipia lodges including game drives, horse-riding, camel rides, cultural Masai or Samburu village visits.
- Kenya is home of the Safari House concept: so plenty of Exclusive use private villas with own guide/Vehicle
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Cottars 1920s Safari Camp; Loisaba Tented Camp, Lewa Safari Camp



Kenya is arguably the classic safari destination in Africa. There is nowhere to compare with a Kenya luxury safari for its diversity of landscapes, eco-systems and wildlife. It is a timeless combination of tropical beaches and renowned wildlife

Sample: [Kenya Family Safari Tour](#)



Zambia



- Zambia is an excellent safari destination for families: diverse safari destinations, lots of varied activities eg boating, tiger-fishing, canoeing (for teens) as well as the drama of Victoria Falls
- Considerations: it's a higher-risk malaria area.
- Perfect for families with older children who are happy with longer flights and transfer times. ideal for families who like to 'do their own thing' and are explorers at heart.
- Offers several Safari Houses which can be taken on an exclusive use basis.
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Sausage Tree Lodge, Potato Tree Lodge, Baines River Camp, Chichele Lodge, Robin's House at Nkwali, Luangwa Safari House (exclusive use)



A Zambia safari offers the essence of Africa with some of the finest wildlife experiences in Africa. It also delivers one of its greatest rivers: the Zambezi. Zambian game reserves are truly wild and remote.

[Read more about Zambia](#)



Tanzania & Zanzibar



- One of Africa's premier wildlife safari destinations, with iconic wildlife settings such as the Great Rift Valley, Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti
- Most families can have their own dedicated 4x4 vehicle and safari guide, rather than shared game drives (the norm in Southern Africa.)
- It's perfect for fairly 'self-sufficient' families with older kids who don't need much extra entertaining.
- Considerations: Relatively easy to travel around. But longish road transfers and full day game drives on the menu.
- A few days at the beach on Zanzibar is an easy addition and well worth it from some R&R.
- Spending time with the local Masai is enlightening for children of all ages.



A Tanzania safari offers abundant wildlife in world famous locations such as the Ngorongoro Crater and the Serengeti.

[Read more about Tanzania & Zanzibar](#)



Botswana



- Botswana is a great option for family safaris with older children ... as long as the budget allows!
- One of the best game-viewing destinations in Africa
- Although the safari camps feel very remote, there are seamless light charter flights between them
- Although a malarial area, most of Botswana is fairly low risk as there are so few people in the safari areas.
- As a whole, Botswana is ideal for families who don't need organised activities.
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges:** Chobe Game Lodge, Machaba and Little Machaba Camps, Camp Moremi, Footsteps Camp, or Camp Kalahari (in the Makgadigadi Salt Pans)



Botswana is one of Africa's last pristine lands and offers its visitors beautiful scenery and prolific big game in equal measure. From the watery paradise of the Okavango Delta, to the majestic baobab trees of the Kalahari, it is a gem.

[Read more about Botswana](#)



Malawi



- Malawi has lots to offer families looking for a remote, yet varied, destination.
- You sense that you're far from modern life, and yet the flights and road connections are pretty easy.
- Lake Malawi, Nyika Plateau, the tea plantations and the Game Reserves offer a safari holiday with plenty of variety, especially for older kids.
- Very easy to combine Zambia and Malawi with a direct flight to South Luangwa in Zambia.
- **Favourite Safari Camps:** Mkulumadzi Camp, Kuthengo Camp, Kaya Mawa (Lake Malawi), Pumulani Lodge (Lake Malawi)



If you enjoy combining safari with some relaxation on the beach and if you like to meet the local people in an uncontrived way, then a Malawi holiday could be perfect for you.

[Read more about Malawi](#)



Sample Family Safaris – Southern Africa

We don't offer sample Family safaris in every destination as we design each safari around you



Ultimate Botswana Family Safari

8 Nights

- Explore three iconic Botswana ecosystems (**Moremi, the Okavango Delta and Chobe**) in one seamless family safari
- Stay at intimate, family-friendly luxury safari camps
- **Private safari vehicle** & guide included for flexibility
- Engaging family activities and cultural experiences alongside game drives
- Exceptional **wildlife viewing**
- Plenty of opportunities to customize to suit your family

Zambia Family Safari

9 Nights

- Family-friendly safari visiting **South Luangwa, Lower Zambezi & Victoria Falls.**
- Lodges and camps chosen for their child-friendly atmosphere.
- Activities include game drives, river cruises, and gentle explorations.
- Options to upgrade to **private safari houses for larger families.**
- Tailor-made extensions or an extra night at Victoria Falls if time.

South Africa Kids in Style

10 nights

- Malaria-free Big Five safari in **Madikwe Game Reserve**
- Explore **Cape Town's** landmarks with private guided touring
- Coastal fun on the **Whale Coast** at Mosaic Lagoon Lodge – kayaking, whale watching
- Family-friendly luxury lodges and apartments throughout
- Easily customized with self-drive in the Cape or upgrade accommodation.

We don't offer sample Family safaris in every destination as we design each safari around you

Family Safaris by Age (Younger kids, older, teens)



Younger Kids: The Tricky Age

Which safari lodge to choose requires slightly more thought when your children are between 3 & 5 years old. Most game lodges don't allow children under 6 years on a game drive as:

- Their attention span tends to be shorter than the typical three hour+ game drive
- They may not be able to sit still/quiet at critical moments, endangering the vehicle
- They may not be able to follow the ranger's instructions easily
- They may not be able to keep quiet

I say it's the 'tricky age' because the child (and the parents) THINK they'll enjoy a game drive. And yet most lodges don't allow it.



Choose Family Lodges geared towards Young Kids

A number of lodges, mainly in the non-malarial areas of South Africa, have embraced this 'tricky age' and welcome younger children. The exact child-friendly approach varies from lodge to lodge.

- Some offer a special kids drive for younger kids. This usually takes place after breakfast and is shorter and more focused on teaching the kids about the Bush than in getting very close to predators.
- Others allow kids from 4/5 years on the main game drive, by sitting different families together, and away from couples
- They often provide child-minding for younger kids when adults are on their game drive/at dinner.
- May have earlier meal times
- Some have private vehicles which allow younger kids to accompany parents (eg Shamwari Riverdene)
- **Favourite Family Safari Lodges with younger age limits:** Lalibela Marks Camp, Sanbona Gondwana Family Lodge, Kambaku Safari Lodge, Mashatu Lodge

Affordable Alternatives: Accessible Game Reserves

Or you can head to a more 'accessible' game reserve. What do we mean by that? These are lodges that generally don't have so many large predators. And the game drives tend to be shorter, about 2 hours. The age limit on the drives can be as low as three years. And there are more children around.

These are usually more affordable and often closer to the main sight-seeing areas. So less time is spent travelling. Kids usually love these lodges, and the lack of predators mean that walks, mountain biking and other activities may be on the menu if you have older children as well. Plus you can test out whether your family enjoys the safari experience

Typical Accessible Safari Lodges: Botlierskop Village lodge, Buffelsdrift (both Garden Route), Bakabung in PIlanesberg

Considerations: These are not proper game reserves offering the Big Five in a wilderness setting

Tip: Perhaps combining one of these lodges with some time at one of the 'Big Five' private game reserves will mean that parents, children and your bank balance are all satisfied.

Older Children

Family Safaris are usually easiest when your kids are 7 years upwards. By this age, the safari planning becomes easier. Generally, if a lodge takes children under 12 then they're allowed to go on the 'adult' game drives from 6 years old. (Occasionally it can be 8-9 years for some lodges)

Lodges try to put families together on a game drive. This may give you more flexibility in game drive lengths. (No guarantee of this). But generally it works well. Your children need to be comfortable spending 3+ hours on a game drive. In our experience most children can do this as it's such an exciting experience for them.

Then you choose the particular lodge on basis of

- Location & quality of game-viewing
- Additional kids activities on offer
- Nature of the Family accommodation
- Possibility of private vehicles on offer





Forewarn your Tech-savvy Kids

We live in a tech age, especially our kids. Kids loved their computers/phones. Yet most safari camps deliberately try to keep this at bay.

And, let's be honest, this is a large part of the attraction for us as parents.

So do tell your kids that there will not be a television in the room. (Though the lodge may have a TV or DVD player tucked away somewhere).

It may not have great internet reception (depending on its location) or deliberately limited reception to key areas.

Variety

Try to include lots of variety both in terms of the activities available at different safari camps.

And ideally in destinations. Are there specific activities that your kids enjoy such as canoeing or horse-riding?

Teenagers often struggle with the early morning game drives and so mixing safari stays with more relaxed beach or country stays helps to keep everyone happy and 'on message'.

[Get in Touch with us if you want to discuss what option is right for your family but you are not at the planning stages yet.](#)





Private Safari Houses & Multi-Gen Safaris



Multi-Generational Safaris

How to make them work

Travelling with grandparents, parents and children together can be one of the **most rewarding safari experiences of all**.

Few travel experiences match the excitement of three generations sharing their first sighting of elephants crossing a river or a pride of lions resting in the shade.

But multi-generational safaris do require a little more planning than a typical safari holiday. The key is ensuring that **everyone can enjoy the experience at their own pace**.

A Safari House is taken on an exclusive use basis, so it's only your family staying there. You can choose your own game-viewing rhythm, heading out early one morning and taking it more relaxed another day. And no self-consciousness about an impromptu game of tag on the lawn!

The Right Accommodation: Safari Houses & Exclusive Use Villas

Accommodation plays a particularly important role when several generations are travelling together.

Many families choose **private safari houses or exclusive-use villas**, with their own ranger, staff and private vehicle. This offers several advantages:

- relaxed and flexible schedule for your family
- flexible meal times
- space for children to play without worrying about noise
- privacy for grandparents or early sleeper

Alternatively you may opt for family suites or interleading rooms for younger members, giving grandparents their separate space for some quiet time apart.





Multi-Gen Safari Planning Checklist

Things to Consider when Planning:

- ✓ **Accommodation layout** – Do you want to be all together under one roof or have some individual chalets for privacy
- ✓ **Private safari vehicle** – Can you arrange a private vehicle so you can all be together alone
- ✓ **Mobility and distances** - Are rooms close to the main lodge area for grandparents or those with limited mobility?
- ✓ **Flexible activity schedules** - Can some family members skip a game drive while others go out?
- ✓ **Children's activities** - Are there kids' programmes or guides who enjoy engaging younger travellers?
- ✓ **Medical access** - How close are medical facilities or emergency evacuation services, if this is critical?
- ✓ **Travel pace** - Are travel days manageable for both young children and older travellers?
- ✓ **Dining flexibility** - Can the lodge offer earlier meal times for younger children?

Next Steps





Planning a Family Safari Is More Complex Than It Looks

Every safari lodge has different rules for:

- children's ages
- family room configuration
- game drive policies
- private vehicle availability
- children's activities

Every family safari we design is **tailored to the ages, interests and travel style of each family**. The examples are just a starting point. With so many safari lodges across Africa choosing the right options can be the difference between a good family safari holiday & an unforgettable one.

At Cedarberg Africa, we have over **30 years of experience designing family safaris**, and many of our recommendations come from travelling with our own children.

Let us help you plan the right safari for *your* family.

Contact us to start the conversation.

Or take our **Family Safari Quiz**

Book a Family Safari !

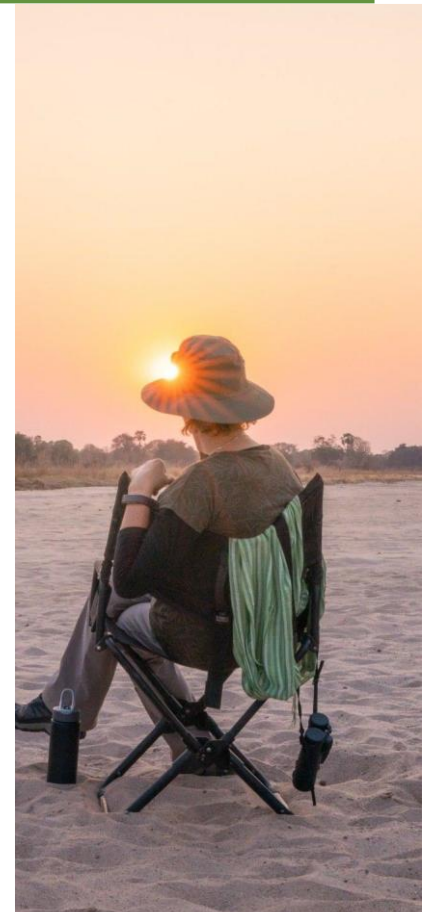


Below I've summarise top tips and we hope to hear from you when you start planning your safari trip.

Our simple planning process:

- 1 Tell us about your family
- 2 Choose your Safari Destination
Complete our Family Safari Quiz
or chat to us
- 3 Speak to one of our Safari
specialists
- 4 Receive a personalised Safari Proposal
- 5 Together we design & refine
Ensure plenty of variety & something
for everyone
- 6 Sit back, relax & anticipate – whilst we
put all the pieces in place

[Get in touch with us](#)



About the Author

Kate Bergh is South Africa's Managing Director of Cedarberg Africa, a specialist safari company that she co-founded with her sister Ginny over 30 years ago. We help people who need assistance & well-informed safari planning.

Kate has lived in South Africa since 1993. She's travelled extensively to the countries marketed by Cedarberg. She especially likes the more remote areas such as Coastal Maputaland, the Makgadikgadi pans and the Lower Zambezi. Her home is in the Cedarberg mountains in the Cape (hence the name of the company) where she enjoys hiking and mountain biking.

She has three children who were used shamelessly, when younger, as guinea pigs to test out the family appeal of various African hotels and safari lodges.



Thank you



This Guide to Family Safaris was created by Cedarberg Africa, a specialist African safari operator.

We'll design an individual safari just for you so that you get the family safari you've always dreamed of. You want to explore, try new things and make memories with your kids. You'll feel confident and excited about your safari trip when you have designed it with us. You won't have wasted precious time or energy. Or missed out on experiences that would be perfect for you.

And you'll know that your trip is giving back to Africa.

*Have questions? Schedule a time to chat or email us at:
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Personal By Design*