

Welcome to Africa

Something special about Africa touches the soul; it is a continent of 54 immensely diverse countries that is both deeply troubled and profoundly uplifting.

Natural Beauty

Whether you're a wide-eyed first-timer or a frequent visitor, Africa cannot fail to get under your skin. The canvas upon which the continent's epic story is written is itself astonishing, and reason enough to visit. From the tropical rain forests of Central Africa to the endless rippling dunes and waterless tracts of the Sahara, from the signature savannah of the east to jagged mountains and green-tinged highlands all across the continent, Africa has few peers when it comes to natural beauty.

Wildlife Bonanza

A Noah's Ark of wildlife brings these landscapes to life, with a tangible and sometimes profoundly mysterious presence that adds so much personality to the African wild. So many of the great beasts, including elephants, hippos and lions, call Africa home. Going on safari may be something of a travel cliché, but we're yet to find a traveller who has watched the wildlife world in motion in the Masai Mara, stumbled upon the paradise that is the Ngorongoro Crater, or communed with gorillas in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and has not been reduced to an ecstatic state of childlike wonder.

Ancient Africa

But there's so much more to Africa than nature's considerable bounty. On this continent where human beings first came into existence, customs, traditions and ancient rites tie Africans to generations past and to the collective memory of myriad people. In many rural areas, it can feel as though the modern world might never have happened, and old ways of doing things – with a certain grace and civility, hospitality and a community spirit – survive. Welcome to Old Africa.

New Africa

Even as the past retains its hold over the lives of many Africans, just as many have embraced the future, bringing creativity and sophistication to the continent's cities and urban centres. Sometimes this New Africa is expressed in a restless search for solutions to the continent's problems, or in an eagerness to break free of the restrictive chains of the past. But just as often, modern Africans are taking all that is new and fusing it onto the best of the old. The continent is still prone to all the ills of humanity, but if you come with an open mind it's easy to see how amazing Africa can be.



Why I Love Africa

By Simon Richmond, Author

Some of my most evocative travel memories of Africa – amazing live concerts in the shadow of Table Mountain, the mad circus of Marrakesh's Djemaa el-Fna – are musical ones. Boy, can this continent bang out a beat! Africa's enormously talented musicians pay homage to the traditions of the past at the same time as they push the boundaries of contemporary music. The fruits of their labours provide a constantly evolving playlist to the continent's diversity and an unforgettable soundtrack to your African journey. The results can be stunning and are always unmistakably African.

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