

A TOUCH

OF THE WILD

MAGAZINE

THE BEST OF LIFE IN THE WILD

Bushbaby

A Swiss couple
give up their
home to travel
through Africa

Dogs for Wildlife

Anti Poaching
dogs and training
to conservancies
and National
Parks.

Kibale Primate Park

Uganda

TreeLodge
Bonamanzi's
Finest Lodge



BONAMANZI

January - June 2024

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BONAMANZI



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**ADMIRE THE
BREATH TAKING VIEWS
WITH WHALE WATCHING
BY AIR**



AFRICAN WINGS

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Conservation Dogs
Dogs 4 Wildlife offer highly trained and fully supported Conservation dogs alongside advanced ranger training to reserves, conservancies and National Parks in need across Southern Africa and the world.



With a long term committed view to assisting in the protection and continuation of endangered species, Dogs 4 Wildlife are a highly experienced team of knowledgeable, dedicated animal lovers with a commitment to wildlife conservation. With 13 operational dogs across 4 Southern African countries, our K9's help achieve up to a 75% reduction in poaching numbers.



With over 20 years combined experience, breeding, training and deploying multi purpose operational dogs to numerous applications around the world, with extensive and advanced handler programmes, our training and instruction is second to none.



Dogs 4 Wildlife Kal

Dogs 4 Wildlife Kal has now been gifted to the IFPCP who work in partnership with Project Rhino in the KwaZulu Natal region of South Africa. The IFPCP have a dire task, but are committed and dedicated to conserving wildlife. They cover over 32 Conservancies, Reserves and Parks across KwaZulu Natal, many of which are classified as 'high risk' to their imminent threat of poaching.

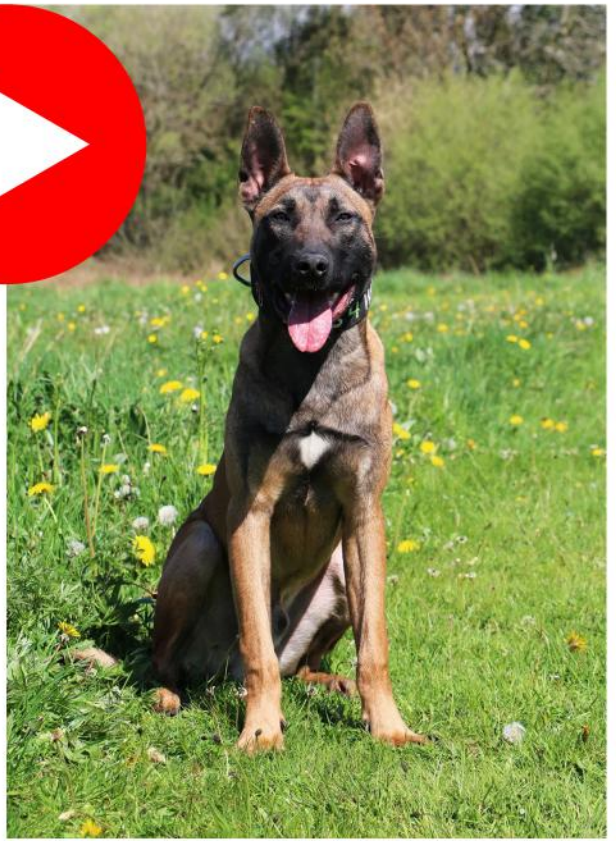
These areas include such reserves as; Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park, Thanda Game Reserve (both are Big 5 areas and over 100,000 hectares between them) and the Zululand Rhino Reserve which includes an rhino orphanage. These areas are vast and the IFPCP are already stretched to provide enough protection for the wildlife contained within each reserve. That is why the inclusion of another dog, Dogs 4 Wildlife Kal is vital to provide additional on the ground capability to further conserve and protect endangered species.



Dogs 4 Wildlife Have So Far Supported The Following Reserves And Conservancies With Our Elite Dogs And Specialised Ranger Training;

The Imire Rhino and Wildlife Conservancy, Zimbabwe
The Save Valley Conservancy, Zimbabwe
Mkomazi National Park, Tanzania
Chuilexi Conservancy, Niassa, Mozambique
Renosterpan Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa
Ditholo Game Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa
IFPCP & Project Rhino, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
Bonamanzi Game Reserve, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa
Mankwe Wildlife Reserve, Rustenburg, South Africa
Gabon Parcs, ANPN K9 Unit, Libreville, Gabon
Akagera National Park, Rwanda

**Jackie Law &
Lucy Saxton
Quinn**



Project Dan 'Dan'

There is an amazing story behind Dogs 4 Wildlife 'Dan'. Around a year ago Dogs 4 Wildlife was contacted by a wonderful women named Caroline Bridle. Caroline saw a social media post on our important work and felt compelled to reach out to us. In 2013, Caroline's son Daniel Bridle, was diagnosed with terminal cancer, just a year later in 2014 Daniel lost his battle and sadly passed away.

Being a huge animal lover, Caroline could not think of a better way to honour her sons memory than having a specialised dog, trained to protect endangered wildlife. When she told us of Daniel's inspiring story, naming one of our dogs in memory of her son was a fitting tribute to the dedication of Caroline and her family in Daniel's memory and future legacy.

So far Caroline's commitment to this project has been awe-inspiring, thanks to her fundraising endeavours Dogs 4 Wildlife 'Dan' is fully sponsored and we feel it only a fitting tribute to find a very special conservancy to place Dan to help protect and conserve endangered wildlife, The Bonamanzi Game Reserve in South Africa.

In loving memory of 'Daniel Bridle'





THIS IS THE STORY OF MANFRED AND MAYA (AND THEIR UNIQUE BUSH BABY)

I met Maya and Manfred in front of the evening bonfire at Bonamanzi. I was captivated by Manfreds beautiful photographs and Maya's story of translates wildlife stories into German for children. To introduce them, they retired early, sold their home in Switzerland and built their Bushbaby, designed to take them across Africa.... Over the next few issues of Touch of the wild, we follow their journey as they zigzag across Africa

Happiness means creating and seizing opportunities

We have both been traveling together for 20 years now and have followed the above motto. We have worked for our happiness, both at work and in our free time, and we still do. Until the end of March 2023, we were involved in working life - Maya since her early retirement in 2020 at least temporarily and Manfred with a reduced workload.

We were and are lucky enough to have children and dogs; they have helped determine and enriched our lives. Maya has three adult sons and a great-granddaughter, Manfred always worked with protection dogs that lived in the family.

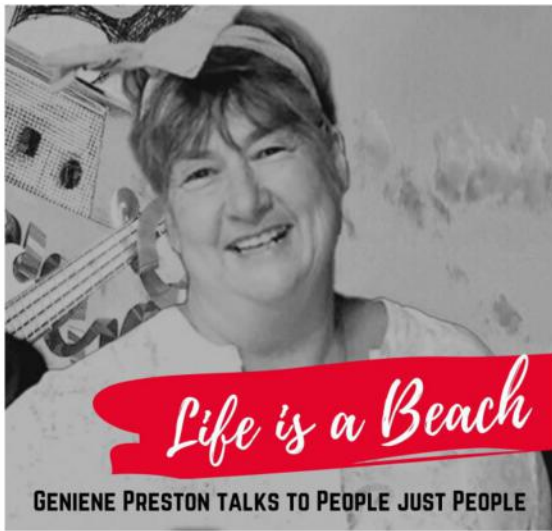
We have traveled together for many years because our curiosity knows no bounds. What started as an organized short trip to an Egyptian resort has now become our everyday life: being out and about, experiencing new things, enjoying the sun, water, earth and wind as well as the culture, food and drink of other countries, with open eyes and ears go through the world. We prefer being alone and wild nature to cities and crowds and love the wildlife that captivates us.



Our countless short trips around the world and different continents as well as our volunteer work in various areas, with people and animals, have ultimately shown us the direction and our skills and favorite activities complement our desire to travel. At the beginning of 2023 we sold our dream homes in the canton of Zug, and since then we have limited ourselves to a few motorized square meters of interior space and the huge garden that every environment offers us. Letting go of our usual home freed our hands to take the wheel and experience the whole world as home. In Bushbaby or the many tourist accommodations that are available everywhere - even at home. Without any rush and with as much time as we want to spend in one place.

Since February 2023 we have been traveling in Southern Africa with Bushbaby, our dream vehicle built for us, renewing beautiful memories and experiencing and exploring new things. Manfred captures this in photos while I write (diary), translate and make sure that my books get distributed to people for a good cause.

**AS TOLD BY MAYA ON THEIR WEBSITE WWW.BUSHBABY.INFO
(CATCH THE INTERVIEW ON YOUTUBE AND PODCAST ICONS BELOW)**



#1

THE CREATION AND BIRTH OF THE BUSHBABY....



I was born in Japan in 2018, as a Toyota pick-up with a two-seater cabin, model GRJ 79. After a stopover in the Middle East, I was brought to the workshop of the company "Extrem Fahrzeug" in Schwenningen, Germany.



Based on their experiences with rental vehicles with roof tents in southern Africa, Manfred and Maya had already given a lot of thought to what would become of me and communicated this to the experts at Extrem. So they combined their knowledge with the ideas of Manfred and Maya and developed a homely space miracle in which you can live comfortably when the weather demands it and, above all, spend time outdoors easily and comfortably. The first destination should be southern Africa, where in many places you can't buy everything around the corner and therefore need a lot of cooling and storage space. By the way, I was named Bushbaby because these little African animals are small, fast and pretty and can move quickly anywhere - as I am supposed to do in a wide variety of landscapes. And of course because Manfred and Maya love bush babies.





In place of my loading area, a living cabin made of insulated aluminum sandwich was installed, with a roof tent running the entire length over the driver's cabin, a roof window, side windows, a door at the rear and some flaps to make everyday life easier. The cabin width is divided into three parts: kitchen and bench, with the aisle in between. There is a 100 liter water tank, a boiler, an auxiliary heater and lithium batteries that store the solar energy from the three panels so that we can charge and use our devices.

My V6 engine drinks from two tanks that hold 90 and 105 liters of gasoline respectively. I need between 16 to 20 liters per hundred kilometers, of course depending on how I drive and how I drive. Of course, I have four-wheel drive that can be switched on manually, a gear reduction and a differential lock so that I can get through rough terrain. However, my height (2.65m, with roof box approx. 3m) is the biggest obstacle, or at least causes the most fears.

Since everything wasn't technically perfect, the "vehicle upgraders" in Neuheim/Switzerland upgraded and improved it. So today everything works perfectly and a socket allows you to work outside - as we all know, it gets dark very early in southern Africa. On my roof and the former bike rack there are three huge boxes attached to lashing rails in which tents, spare canisters, snorkeling gear and everything that is not used so often is stowed away.

I am particularly proud of my inner life. The cabinets, made of the finest quality wood, have folded doors so that no (or at least very little) dust gets in. A bench hides a huge material box, the batteries and the emergency toilet (portapotti with bag principle). Thanks to an additional open storage space, it not only allows you to sit comfortably but also offers an emergency shelter, just like the floor on which you can make a bed with mats if the roof tent has to remain closed exceptionally for weather or safety reasons. The drawer with two separate refrigerators can be used to freeze or cool according to your needs.

Thanks to cupboards and drawers we can carry a huge amount of household items and clothes, games, books and whatever else we need. A small pull-out table allows you to work or eat inside. Of course, you can also illuminate the living room with numerous lights and there are enough sockets and USB ports.

The bed on a board with a ship's mattress can be lifted up to the tent when the tent is opened, which takes about two minutes and is always the first thing to do in a new place, so that the entire interior offers standing height.

One of the most brilliant things about me are the outside flaps. For example, they make it possible to remove the table and chairs when the tent is unopened, to store workshop equipment for my maintenance or for small breakdowns, and to store the kitchen. This can be accessed both from inside and outside. The two-flame gas stove is attached to the flap on the outside, so that cooking can be done with little effort - connecting the gas hose to the bottle hanging outside.

To improve the comfort and to ensure vital mosquito protection, Manfred and Maya have a mosquito tent with them and a tarp, a fine sheet, can be pulled into a rail on both sides of me so that I can sit under it in the shade.

Manfred and Maya are thrilled to be traveling with me and are very, very proud of me and of the implementation of their ideas!



Part 2 - Their Journey to Africa (Next edition of Touch of the Wild
www.bushbaby.info



www.manfredsuter.com



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Bonamanzi Game Reserve has – once again – been nominated in the category BEST GAME LODGE in the Best of Zululand Readers' Choice Awards 2023/24

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Paint Party

Round up your awesome crew for a creative mission!

We're doing a "Paint for Pups" project, jazzing up a doggy paradise with the coolest colors! If our masterpiece stands out, you'll snag a special two-night stay in a treehouse at Bonamanzi Game Reserve!

When	Saturday 2 March 2024 10AM	Where	Happy Yappers Shelter Type Happy Yappers Shelter on Google maps for direction	Cost	Bring your team, bring a treat for the shelter dogs and if possible bring some paint Refreshments will be served	RSVP	082 852 8570
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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DOGS



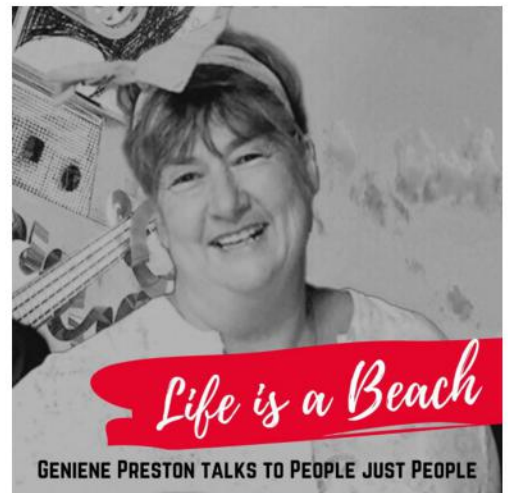
“You're in Kibali National Park, well known for primates. In fact, it's termed as the Primate capital of the world. Due to the fact that it has 13 primate species coexisting together in the same ecosystem, which has not been possible in the entire world, but here we are lucky that they're existing together. And sometimes we find more than four species interacting together, on the same tree, feeding and happily living together.

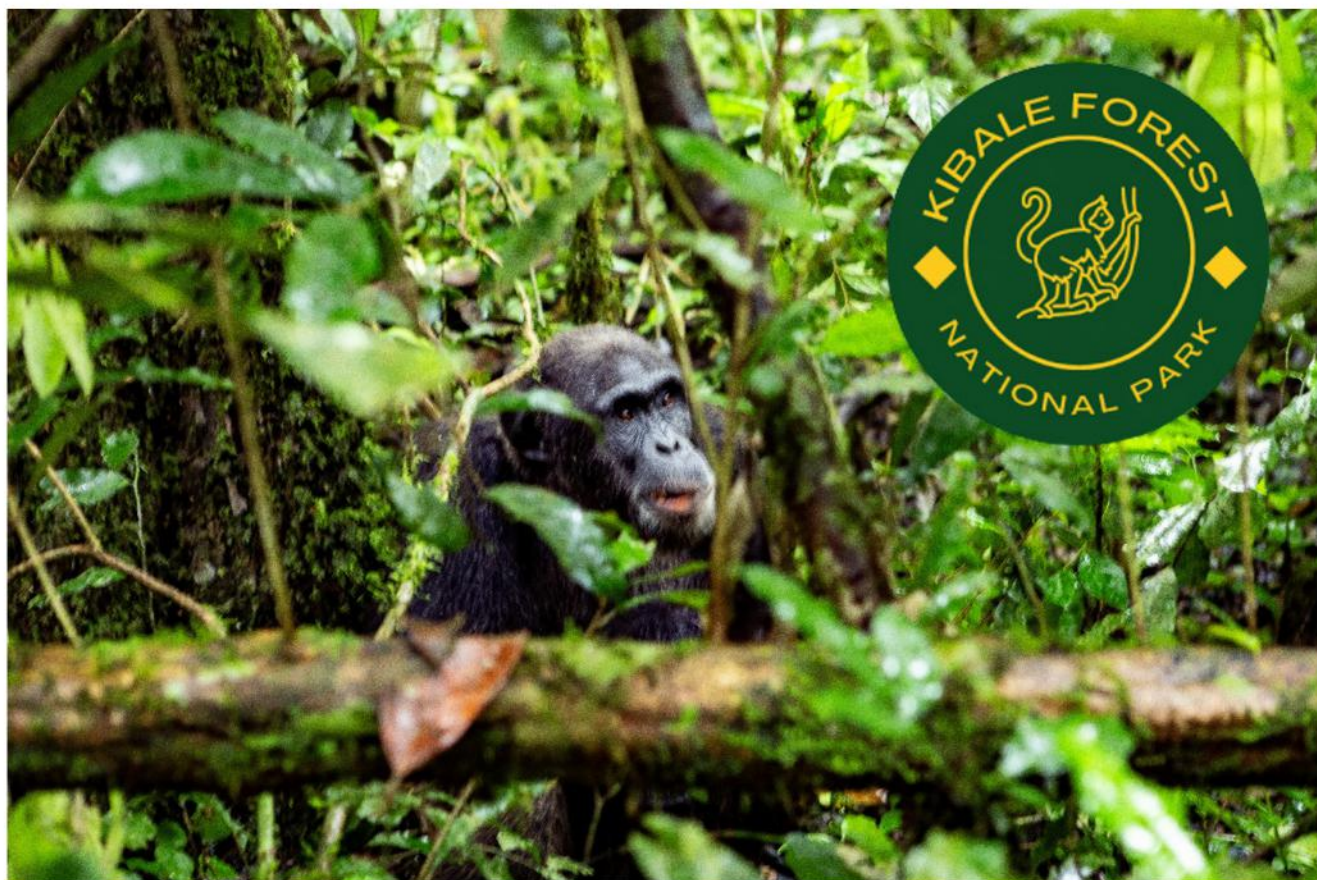
So out of the 13 primate species, we have four which are nocturnal species, the ones active at night. We have nine which are active during daytime. So, just during daytime, we get to see the chimpanzees, basically. I say chimpanzees because when we are working for the chimpanzees, we sometimes get a chance of seeing other monkey species, like the red tailed monkeys, gray or Ugandan cheeked mangabir, low heist monkey, the endemic red corvus monkeys, Black faced velvet monkeys, just to mention a few. But without forgetting the baboons, our ushers that will come, everyone who is coming to the park, kind of your welcome to the primate capital of the world. They are so fascinating. They are seen everywhere, the baboons. From the road, to deep inside the park.



Kibale National Park

Interview with Prossie, Ranger Guide at the Kibale Primate Park, Uganda





And, in here we have many individual chimpanzees and not all of them are used to people, but a good number has been habituated or used to people at different levels. Apart from the primate species, we have different bird species, different, species attract different people. We do bird watching locally and internationally.

Among the bird species, we have some endemic, much as the most wanted bird species here is the green breasted peter. Some people, when they see that bird, they're like, they have reached heaven when they're still alive. I wonder how you can reach heaven when you're still alive. Come and meet your heaven in Killarney National Park with a green breasted peter alongside chimpanzees.

We have different, reptile species and amphibians, whereby we have different snake species. On average. 32 different species of snakes have been recorded here, both venomous and non venomous snakes. So as we are walking in the forest, we need to be careful in case of any encounter with a snake. We have to give it space so that we keep peace and harmony with nature.

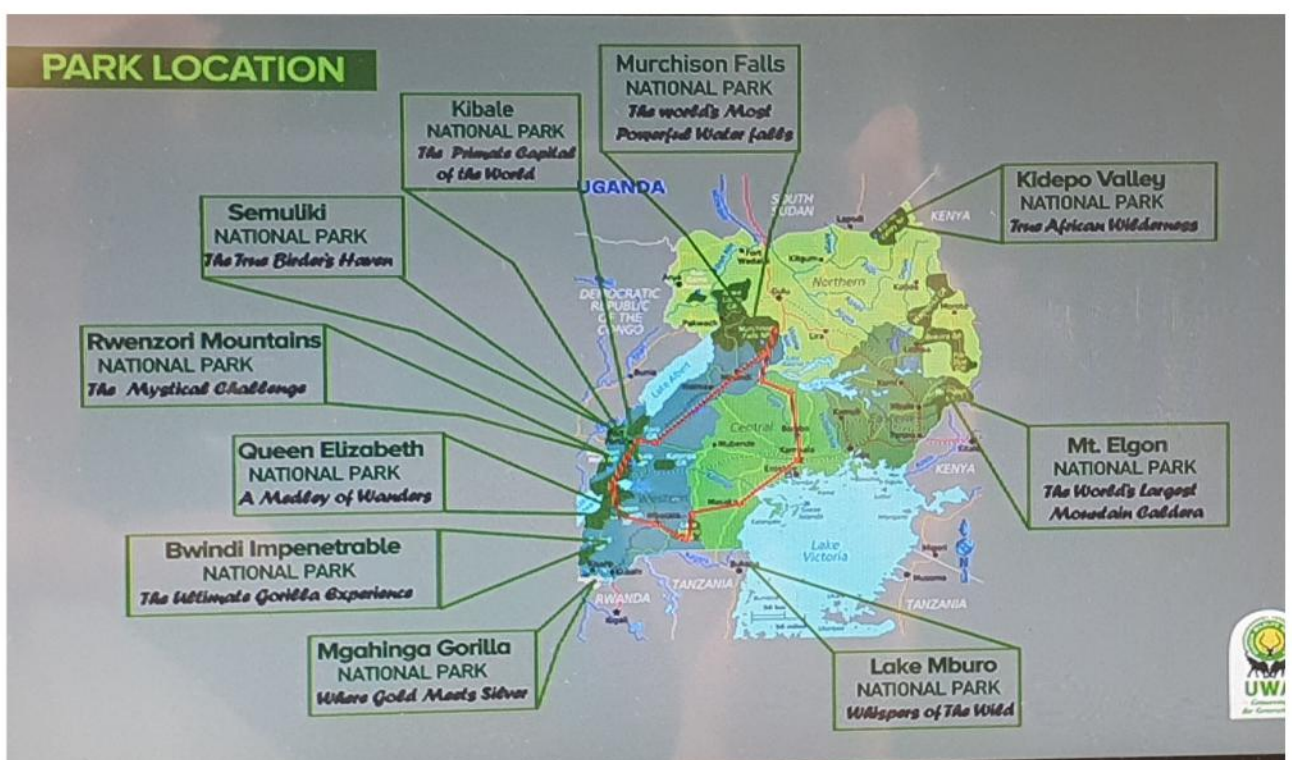
We've got 71 mammal species in the park, both small mammals and bigger mammals, where we have the elephants and buffalos as our biggest mammals in the forest. And sometimes we meet them when we are doing other activities in the forest. We get to see them, though they are hostile, they make us sometimes run up and down.

So guides always go with, guns for protection against elephants. Not to kill them, but scare away. Though not every day we see them, and not every time we see them. We scare shoot them. Sometimes they run away. Sometimes they make us run. So sometimes they wake up on the wrong side of their bed and they want to be by themselves, they don't want to be disturbed at all.

Geniene asked "So as, I see you've also got facilities to enable people who are disabled to go into the forest. When we were doing our talk earlier You pointed out a kind of bed if you like, but it's a basket. An ambulance an ambulance. But it's more to do we, when we say ambulance, we think of an ambulance with lights, but in this case it's a basket Ambulance"

"Yes. It's so, as we are receiving every person here who is interested in seeing chimpanzee, we try to make all the dreams of people come true. Of course, that's nature. But we try our never best to make someone rich. The destination you're going to as far as chimpanzee tracking is concerned. That basket ambulance you've seen transports people out there.

Some people come with difficulties sometimes in breathing, sometimes they won't walk long distances, sometimes people are disabled, but they have a feeling of seeing chimpanzees. So they use that ambulance you've seen there. People live to them. Of course, after paying some. Some money. You go out and meet your dream, you come back happy person.



So it's just being fair and it's not like they're entertaining you. They are in their natural habitat. So you can only look at them for so long. Well, watching them for one hour and going back doesn't necessarily mean that we step out for other people to see them. These are animals who are seen by people on a daily basis.

So we try to regulate time so that they get their free time, they get their privacy, they enjoy themselves. When there is no one to interfere with their life, that's amazing. That's why we strictly give one hour. You either you use one hour. If you get satisfied, we find our elapses. You are free to go back as long as you've seen the chimpanzee, but we need them to remain leaving and happy without the inconvenience of the human being.

The way forward for this, as you've seen, it has no fences. Correct. And we have different animal species. We have people who are neighboring the park, and these animals don't know the boundaries much as they know the boundaries, but they're seeing food in the neighborhood. They have to go there to feed.

Okay. And some animals have become problem ,especially elephants and baboon. They do a lot of destruction. An elephant, if it passes through your garden, most of the people here are herpetologists. Even if it doesn't feed on your crops, but where it stays only with one foot, you really lose much of it.

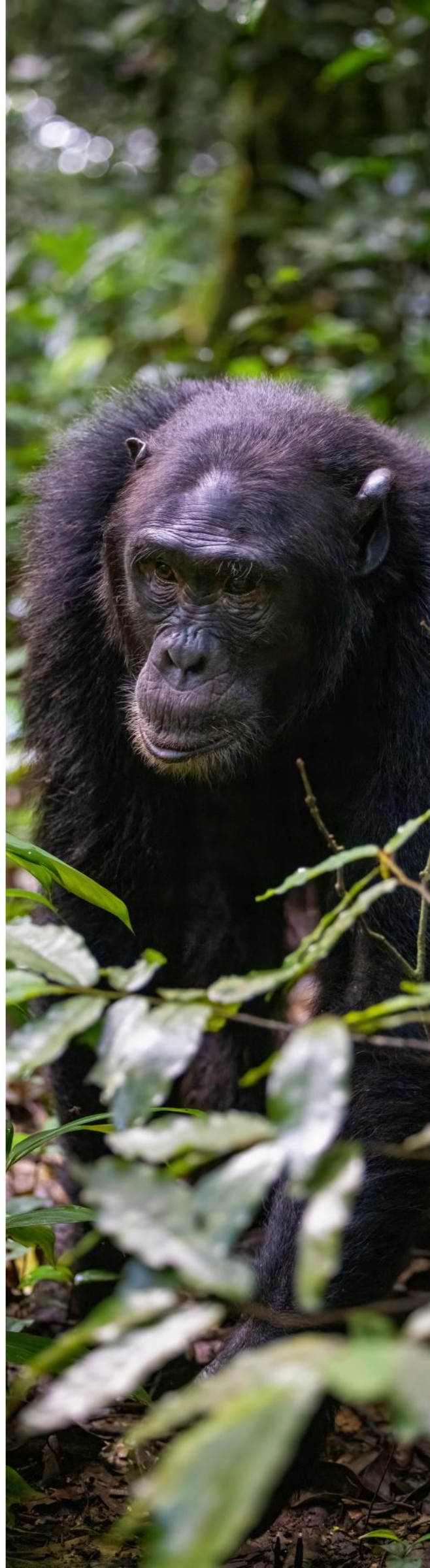
That's just amazing. And I notice also some of the rules around the chimpanzees to keep them safe. Yes. Is being able to wear a mask when you're around them because the same diseases we have. They can catch. I also noticed that you said it doesn't matter how long it takes you to reach a chimp. You can spend plus minus one hour being around them and then and stay eight meters away and then you need to go back because there are others that would also like to see them.



And there could be a child in the way, there could be an animal or a goat which feeds the family and is now no longer in existence. Exactly. So we are making trenches at the peripheral boundary of the park. Those trenches stop elephants from crossing to the communities. Wow. So, humans have known that we have to maintain those, trenches, either by the community, if we let, because the park is big, 795 square kilometers.

Yes. Rotating around, it's making that trench, maintaining that means you never get one day stopping to walk onto that trench. So, hence also, the local communities also help to reopen and maintain that trench. And, among the other prospects of the park, as we have many communities of chimpanzees, 13 communities or territories of chimpanzees, only five being used to people.

We are planning to habituate more communities, making more chimpanzees get more use. Okay. So that will reduce on the little pressure that these communities are having as we increase on the permits. The more habituated chimpanzees we get, the more permits we get. That means the more people. That will come and visit, absolutely, because it sustains the community.



Exactly. However, much as we are habituating those chimpanzees, we need to let some of them remain wild, typically, without knowing any person. Cause of anything can happen. An outbreak may come up, and it claims most of the use of chimpanzees. So we need to let other individuals remain unused to people. As we have to at some point.

This area is Kibale National Park, well known for chimpanzee tracking. The name Kibale, Kibale itself means a big stone.

Inside the 100 year old Fig tree there's a big stone. There is a big stone in the path. Uganda is having several kingdoms. Okay. And of course we believe in those kings. And kings of ancient times used to live in bushmeat. So people used to come and hunt for the king.

And sometimes the king would come with his men to see where they are hunting from. So there is a big stone in the middle of the path. That's amazing. Where he would come. He comes with his men, he make his tent on to that stone, then his men go in the bush and hunt. They bring meat for him. So that visit they use it to say, literally meaning the king has gone to the stone.

Hence the name Kibali. And being a park, being having different animals. It became Kiwari National Park. So the name is Kiwari, found in the western region”.

www.uga.org (Uganda Wildlife Authority)

[www. UgandaWildlife.org](http://www.UgandaWildlife.org)

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EXPERIENCE THE *Perfect*
BITE!



**The South African Bunny Chow
with Sindy Smith
South African living in Melbourne, Australia
VUVU TELO**

INGREDIENTS

UNITS: US

1 loaf bread, white, unsliced, flat-topped

WHOLE SPICES

- 1 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 3 whole cardamom pods
- ½ teaspoon fennel seed
- ½ teaspoon cumin seed
- ½ cup oil
- 1 onion, chopped

FINE SPICES

- 3 tablespoons garam masala
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander (seeds)
- 1 teaspoon hot ground pepper (like cayenne)
- 2 teaspoons turmeric

THE MEAT

- 2 tomatoes, medium, chopped
- 2 lbs leg of lamb, in cubes (or beef)
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 6 curry leaves
- 2 potatoes, large, in cubes
- cilantro (optional)



DIRECTIONS

Fry all the ingredients listed under "Whole Spices" until the onion is glassy.

Add the list called "Fine Spices". Lingela says: "Stir and fry until the spices stick to the bottom of the pot. If you have a good Teflon-coated pot, go and buy a cheap one first." Now add the tomatoes, and stir until everything sticking to the pot bottom comes loose.

Add the meat, ginger, garlic and curry leaves.

Simmer for half an hour or more, until the meat is almost tender, then add a little water and the potato cubes.

Simmer until meat is tender.

The bread:

It should be the unsliced rectangular loaf with the flat top, known in South Africa as a "Government sandwich loaf". You could cut the bread across into two, three or four even chunks, depending on how hungry the eaters will be.

Whatever you decide, with a sharp knife cut out most of the soft white bread, leaving a thick wall and bottom. Keep the bread you removed. Ladle the curry into the hollows, and then put back on top the bread you removed. You could use this bread to help eat the curry, as "this is ALWAYS eaten with the hands".

(Actually, any kind of curry goes into a bunny chow. It depends on the cook and your tastes!).





BONAMANZI

TREELODGE

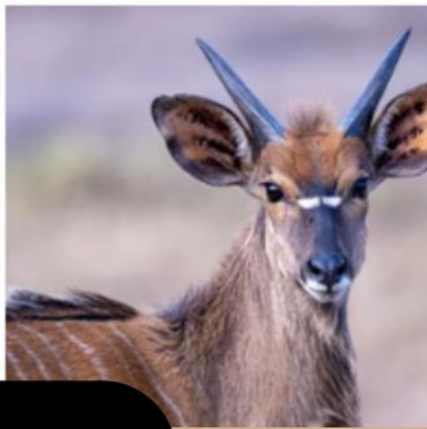
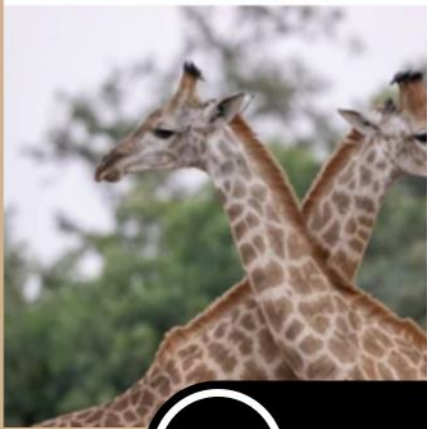


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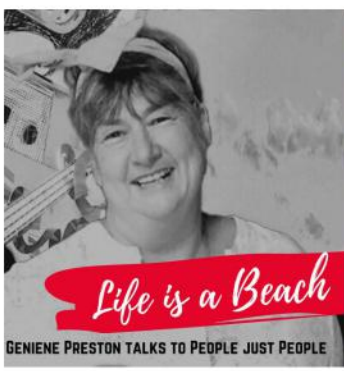
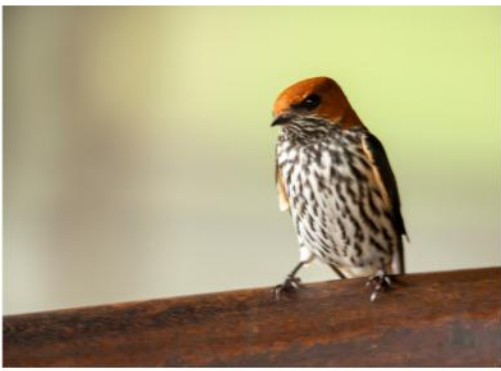
The self-catering Tree Lodge is a wooden structure on stilts, offering three bedrooms interlinked by a boardwalk, the lodge accommodates 6 people. All rooms have either 2 single beds, or can be converted to a King bed, All bedrooms are en-suite and have a small veranda leading off the room. Towels are provided for showering. The rooms are all air conditioned. The lounge, dining, kitchen area are open plan, the lounge leading onto a veranda area overlooking a water hole.

There is a shower, toilet and basin in this section. The Kitchen is equipped with a stove and oven, microwave, fridge, toaster, kettle and cutlery and crockery. The kitchen has its own Reverse Osmosis water filter and we request that guests drink from the filter tap only. Downstairs you have your own private built in braai area. The Lodge has satellite TV, and is private.



The Over 60's (and 2 over 50's)

Zulu Safari Coast
Tour





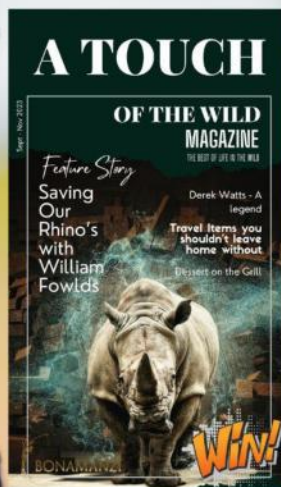
A bunch of mates without kids, decided to do a 10 day trip to the Northern Natal area of Hluhluwe, Sodwana, St Lucia and Richards Bay. And that's something you can do if you are catching a cruise from Durban or on your way home back to Johannesburg after your cruise.



It can be done for 2 days or 2 weeks and we had the best time. We had a mix of self catering and dinner and breakfast at the dining room but the food was so good at Bonamanzi, we often raced back from the other places we were visiting to get back in time for dinner!



We left Johannesburg and travelled along the Pongola road through Piet Retief and although there were many trucks, the potholes that were there before, had on the whole, been fixed. (excuse the pun).



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On arrival we all met up as we had travelled in separate cars and on different days depending on the leave situation but most of us were either retired or self employed.



Bonananzi was as welcoming as always and we met at the bar where Lucky was always waiting to help us with our round of drinks. It was time for South Africa to play Ireland in the group stages of RWC and we dressed for the occasion. Watching rugby in the bush is definitely the way to go and their signal is really good. We spent our days relaxing and took a drive around the property using our bakkie and then we treated ourselves to a game drive so that we could see more of the wide range of animals on the property.



We had the opportunity of spending one day at Sodwana whale watching from the comfort of the bar we found which had a great view of the sea. Its a 15 minute drive and a great way to spend a day. There were other activities in the area but were either full or didn't cater for over 60 age group or pocket.



We spent a day driving through Cape Vidal and saw Giraffe, buffalo and many more animals and birds. Finished off the morning with a stop at the Ski Club in St Lucia and enjoyed a fish basket which we polished off in no time. The view was great, the monkeys were naughty and the cocktails were cold. What more could we want from a day out.



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**See Creepy-Crawly Portraits From the Insect Week
Photography Contest**

**The Royal Entomological Society's Photography
Competition highlights the wonder and diversity
of the six-legged creatures that crawl, swim and
fly across the planet**

Carlyn Kranking

Assistant Editor, Science and Innovation



When turning their lenses toward wildlife, nature photographers often thrill to majestic bison, otherworldly whales and the varied behaviors of birds.

But perhaps not as many look to the smaller, six-legged creatures that crawl, swim and fly—sometimes under cover of darkness—even though their numbers are legion and they inhabit nearly all parts of the globe.

To put a spotlight on insects, the Royal Entomological Society, a United Kingdom-based charity dedicated to insect science, holds a photography contest each year. In connection with its annual Insect Week outreach event, the group recently announced the winners of its most-recent competition.

“It’s wonderful to know that so many individuals have engaged with insects in this way, capturing some incredible moments for their world and showcasing the beauty and diversity of insects,” contest judge Ashleigh Whiffin, entomology curator at the National Museum of Scotland, says in a statement.

Amateur photographers from all over the world are invited to enter the contest, calling attention to the wonders of our planet’s insects at a time when roughly 40 percent of them may be threatened with extinction.

The Royal Entomological Society shared online galleries of all the commended photos in this year’s competition, from both adult and youth photographers. Here’s a selection of ten stunning images recognized by the judges.



Black-thighed cellophane-cuckoo bees sleep holding onto blades of grass. © Luke Chambers, First Place

Gripping onto grasses with their jaws—yet still fast asleep—two black-thighed cellophane-cuckoo bees are the peaceful subjects of the winning image for this year’s contest.

Named for the birds that lay their eggs in other birds’ nests, cuckoo bees also parasitize the nests of other bees. They do not collect pollen or nectar, since they lack some of the specialized body parts for it, such as pollen-carrying hairs. This gives cuckoo bees a shinier and less fuzzy appearance.

Coming across these tranquil creatures was “one of my best encounters to date,” says photographer Luke Chambers in a statement. “Finding any sleeping invertebrate is always brilliant, but two so close together, well that’s like winning the photography lottery.”



Larval caddisflies in an egg sac under a leaf © Tim Jonas, Second Place

Adult caddisflies are moth-like, known for flocking toward light bulbs at night. But for most of their lives, the insects live in water, providing an important food source for fish.

In this image, which took second place in the contest, larval caddisflies have just hatched within a gelatinous egg sac, positioned on a leaf hanging over water. When they are ready, the insects will drop into the water where they live as larvae. In the pupal phase of their lives, they will build aquatic cocoons and undergo metamorphosis, then take to the air as adults.



A cluster of brightly colored male cotton harlequin bugs ©
Nikita Richardson, Behavior Specially Commended

Cotton harlequin bugs, which sport vibrant colors in a captivating pattern, are each less than one inch long. But together, they often form large clusters as an anti-predator adaptation.

“When one bug emits a bad smell as a deterrent for predators, it will trigger the others to do so as well,” says Nikita Richardson, who captured this photo in Australia, in a statement. The bugs pictured here are males, while females tend to be mostly orange.

A brown heath robber fly stares into the camera lens, its compound eyes on display. © Steven Mahy, Portraits Specially Commended

Also known as “assassin flies,” robber flies are notorious for their lethal predatory habits. From its perch on a plant or rock, the fly will watch for an insect passing by, then swoop down and snatch it out of the air. Robber flies use venomous saliva to quickly immobilize and kill their unfortunate prey.

But to photographer Steven Mahy, finding this robber fly was a stroke of luck. “I was looking for butterflies an hour or so before sunset, in an area where I had seen plenty in the daytime,” he says in a statement. “Could not find a single butterfly but then noticed this robber fly.”



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If travel is on your retirement bucket list, try these money-saving tips to maximize your trips.

Budget Travel Tips That All Retirees Should Really Know About

by Tania Saunders

Many people have travel ambitions during retirement, yet the potential cost of globetrotting may keep some from realizing those dreams.

Fear not: Traveling, even internationally, can be done on a budget with some smart planning.

To help you hit all the destinations on your bucket list, here are 15 tips for people hoping to retire – or even retire early – and travel on a budget.

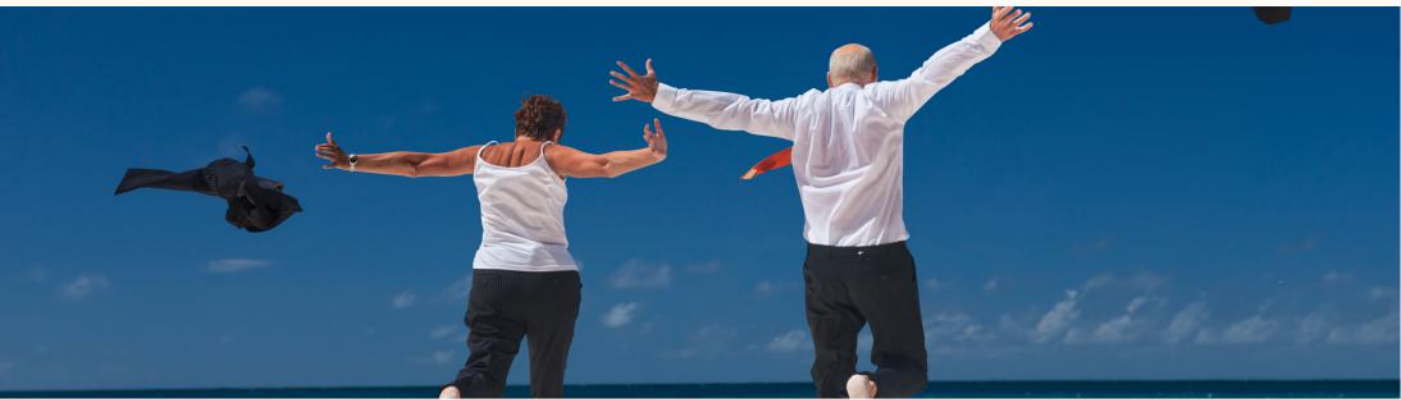
Compare the best travel credit cards for nearly free travel



If you are a retiree, you might be able to keep more money in your bank account by being flexible so you can save on flights and hotels.

This could mean booking a vacation in advance and choosing to leave and return on the dates with the cheapest flights. Or it might mean being open to booking a trip when airfares suddenly plunge or hotels reduce their prices to fill empty rooms.

Get expert advice on making more money - sent straight to your inbox.



Traveling to hot destinations during “shoulder” seasons – when travel demand briefly dips – is a great way to avoid major crowds and save some cash.

For European destinations, the shoulder season is typically spring or fall. Visiting hot spots – such as Paris or Rome – during these seasons is a favorite strategy among travel enthusiasts because the weather is still pleasant and it’s easier to score great deals.

If travel is a priority, cutting back on spending in other areas can make vacations more feasible.

That might mean fewer dinners out or cutting back on things like expensive gift-giving.

Check points and use fly miles or loyalty points. Your money will go further in specific destinations when the U.S. dollar is particularly strong compared to foreign currencies.



For example, if a trip to Japan is on your travel bucket list, you may want to look up exchange rates and plan your trip when the dollar is strong compared to the Japanese yen

Begin monitoring flight prices a few months before your trip. Get familiar with what a typical round-trip costs and regularly monitor the prices.

That way, if a deal pops up, you will recognize it and can jump on it.



Try Housesitting with Nomador as it is completely free and you can travel without worrying about paying for accommodation. House Exchange also works

Beware of foreign-transaction fees
Foreign transaction fees can really add up on international vacations. Check out what sort of fees your credit cards charge.

In some cases, it may be worth it to apply for a credit card with perks like no foreign transaction fees and ATM fee reimbursement.

Savvy travelers can save big by taking advantage of credit card travel rewards. Many credit cards let customers use points to book travel, including flights and hotels.

If you plan to travel by air frequently, it may also be worth it to sign up for a frequent flyer program so you can use miles to pay for future flights.

If two or more travel destinations on your bucket list are relatively close together, you can save big money by combining multiple destinations into one trip.

For example, many tourists visiting Europe will hit two or more countries on the same trip. You can book a “multi-city” flight or a round-trip that flies into one city and out of another



The cost of rental cars can really add up. And while renting a vehicle might still seem convenient, plenty of hot tourist destinations have easy-to-navigate public transportation options. It's also often wise to book accommodations within walking distance of the sites you plan to see.

Find travel buddies - Finding friends who will split travel costs – like hotel rooms, gas, rental cars, groceries, and more – can cut your overall vacation cost significantly. Even planning a trip with just one other travel buddy or couple can lead to major savings

Skip overpriced hotspots
A weekend with the family in Disneyland or at a beachfront condo may seem like a dream. But savvy travelers can save a lot by avoiding hotspots known to overcharge tourists.

If a hotspot is a must-see destination for you, consider being flexible about the dates and seasons you travel so you can take advantage of opportunities to save.

If you're traveling by plane and can fit all your essentials into a carry-on bag, you'll save a lot by not shelling out extra cash to check a bag. Checking just one bag can add \$30 or more to your costs each time you board a plane.



Food prices can add up quickly on vacation, especially if the accommodations you're staying in do not have much of a kitchen.

Doing some grocery shopping – either before leaving or after you arrive at the destination – can help keep spending on food in check.



Rent your home while you travel - If you are dreaming of a long vacation – say, a month or longer – you might be able to earn some passive income to add to your travel budget by renting out your home.

You can rent your home on a travel marketplace, such as Airbnb, or find a short-term tenant.

Bottom line

Retirement is a great time to see the world, but planning long or extravagant vacations on a fixed budget might seem intimidating.

However, with some careful planning, you can build fulfilling travel goals into your retirement budget and eliminate some money stress.

Laura Gesualdi-Gilmore

Laura Gesualdi-Gilmore is a seasoned freelance writer who also teaches writing courses at Rutgers University. She's based in Jersey City and enjoys travel, live music and, of course, spending quality time with her pup.

Pro tip: If you are looking for budget flights, make sure you're not booking a "basic economy" trip that charges extra for carry-on bags – unless you plan to pack extremely light.



TRAVEL WITH KIDS

When travelling abroad with kids, there's a lot to take into account to ensure that both parents and children have a fun time.

To help travellers find out the best family vacation spot, Go2Africa recently conducted a study which analysed over 300 000 4 to 5-star rated family-friendly hotels, attractions and restaurants from Tripadvisor to find which country has the highest percentage relevant places to eat, sleep and enjoy.

They then calculated the percentage of family-friendly places relative to the total number of establishments to determine the best destinations to visit with kids.

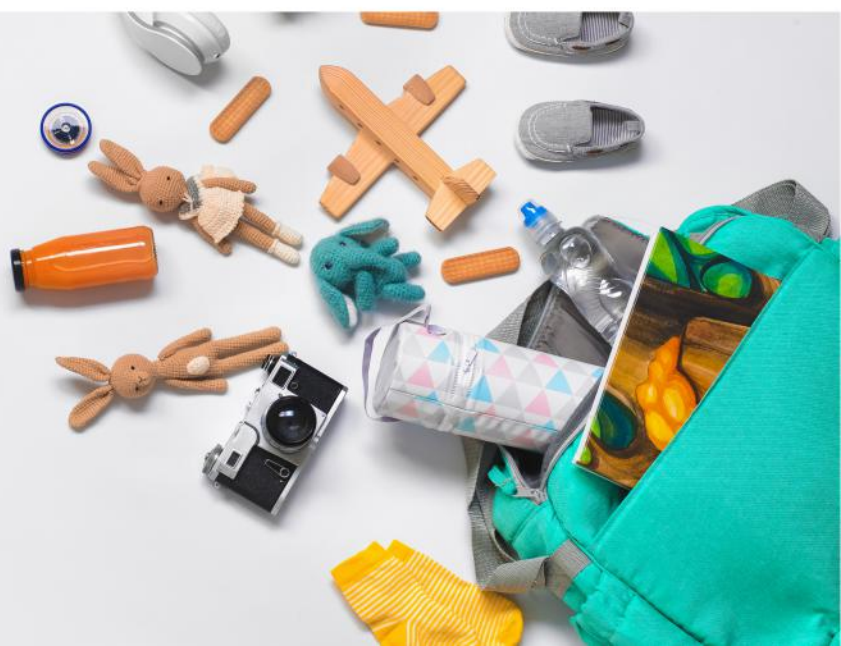
According to their study, South Africa ranked as Africa's third best country for families, with an impressive 21.56% of child-friendly hotels, attractions and restaurants.



Morocco, which ranks second, might seem like an unlikely choice, but its cities, souks, and the Sahara offer uniquely diverse experiences for both kids and parents. Families can explore historic medinas in Marrakech, Fes, and Chefchaouen, where children can marvel at colorful markets, intricate architecture, and lively street performances. Visiting ancient Roman ruins like Volubilis, as well as stunning palaces and gardens, provides a fascinating glimpse into Morocco's rich history and heritage.

South Africa is the third best family vacation destination in Africa, offering everything from action-packed cities, beautiful beaches, relaxing resorts, and notably Big 5 safari parks like Kruger National Park. The country has a well-developed tourism infrastructure and is considered safe for family travel, with plenty of amenities and services catering to the needs of families with children. Whether enjoying vibrant cities like Cape Town, relaxing on stunning beaches, or experiencing thrilling safaris, a South African holiday provides a diverse and memorable trip for families.

Coming in fourth place, Namibia is an excellent destination for families seeking adventure and unique experiences. Families can experience a thrilling Namibian safari in Etosha National Park, home to rare wildlife including elephants, lions, and giraffes, or explore the abundant wetlands of the Caprivi Strip. Many accommodations in Namibia offer kid-friendly programs, swimming pools, numerous activities, and interactive conservation experiences. The country is safe and most regions are malaria-free, making it ideal for family travel.



5-minute photo tips: Capturing skies that create a big impact

By Digital Photographer Contributions from Karolina Konsur
How to create dynamic clouds and handle stormy conditions in summer



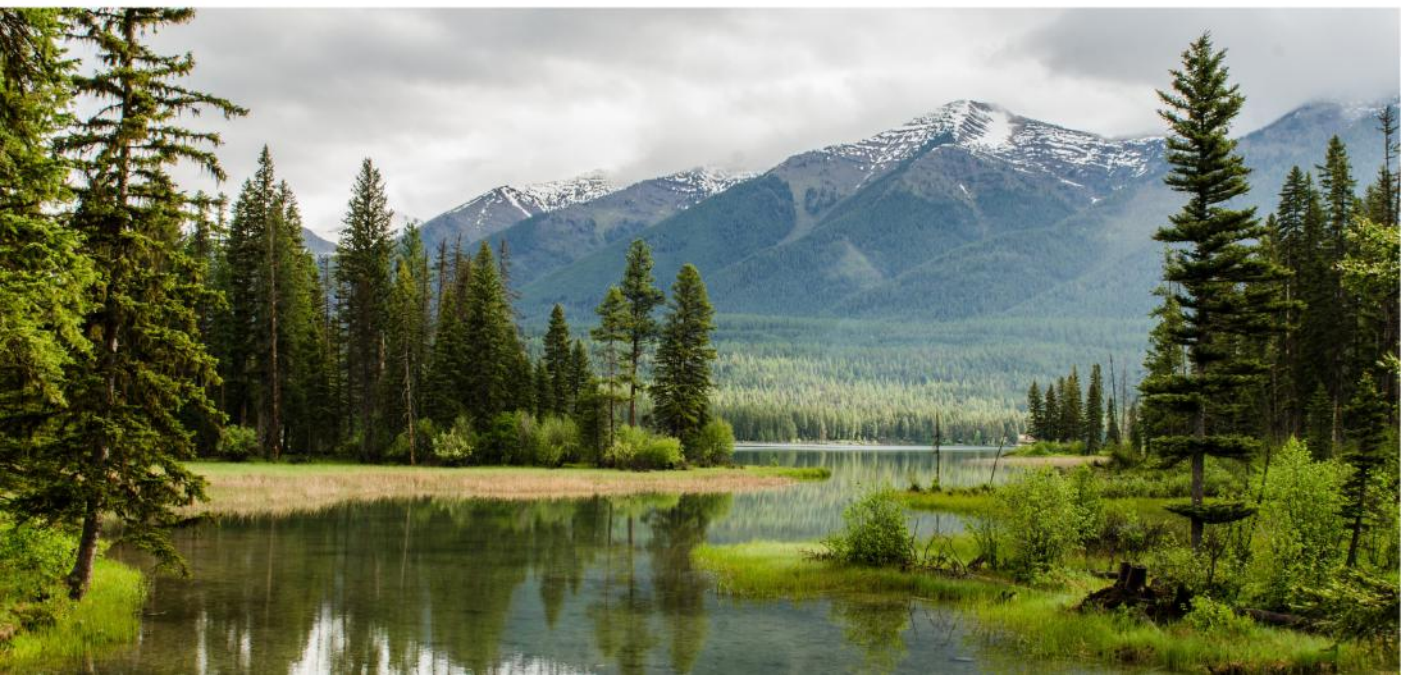
In landscape photography, dynamic skies have a profound impact on composition and viewer engagement, adding an extra layer of interest and drama to the scene. Stormy skies are commonly observed in the summer months, due to the increased heat and humidity during this season, bringing a sense of mystery and intensity.

Of course, monitoring weather forecasts is key to anticipating stormy conditions. To maximize your chances of capturing dynamic clouds and stormy conditions, scout locations known for dramatic skies, such as coastal areas or mountain ranges, where weather patterns are prone to rapid changes.



Rays of light Light breaks through the storm clouds over a vineyard in South Moravia, Czechia (Image credit: Karolina Konsur)

The changing light under dynamic skies amplifies contrasts and alters color temperatures, creating high-contrast scenes with dramatic shifts in hue. As sunlight penetrates the clouds, it spotlights specific elements. Those spotlights are not controllable and may make you readjust the composition to highlight other elements of the scene. This way you visually make the element stand out and directly draw in the viewer's attention. Here, shooting in RAW format rather than JPEG is crucial. RAW files retain more information in both shadows and highlights, allowing for greater flexibility in post-production. This increased dynamic range enables us to preserve intricate details and tones, maximizing the creative possibilities during the editing process.



1. Level it

Shoot your best summer landscapes

(Image credit: Karolina Konsur)

Before capturing your shot, make sure to set up your tripod to avoid any unwanted shake that causes blur. Activate horizontal guidelines in the camera menu to ensure a straight horizon.

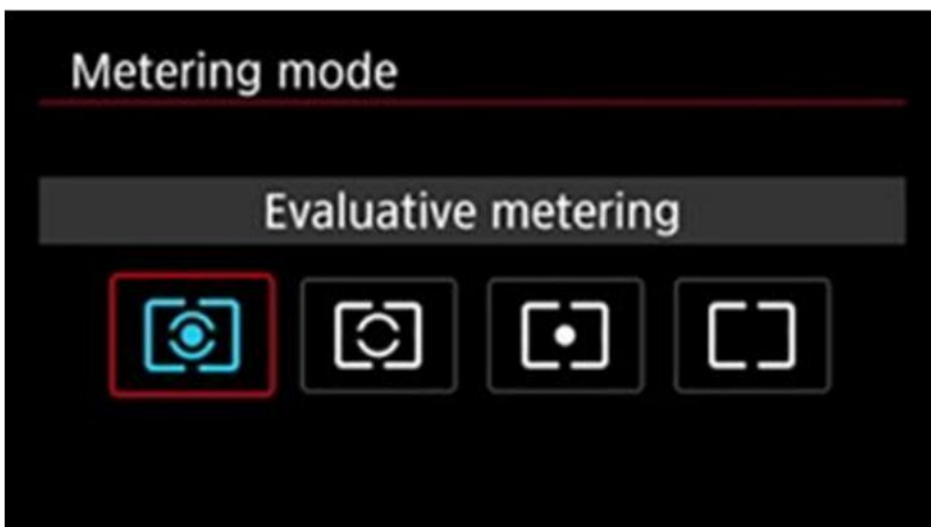


2. Dial in settings

Shoot your best summer landscapes

(Image credit: Karolina Konsur)

Shoot in M mode to gain control. Choose Evaluative metering, which analyses the entire scene to calculate exposure based on factors such as brightness, contrast and colour distribution.

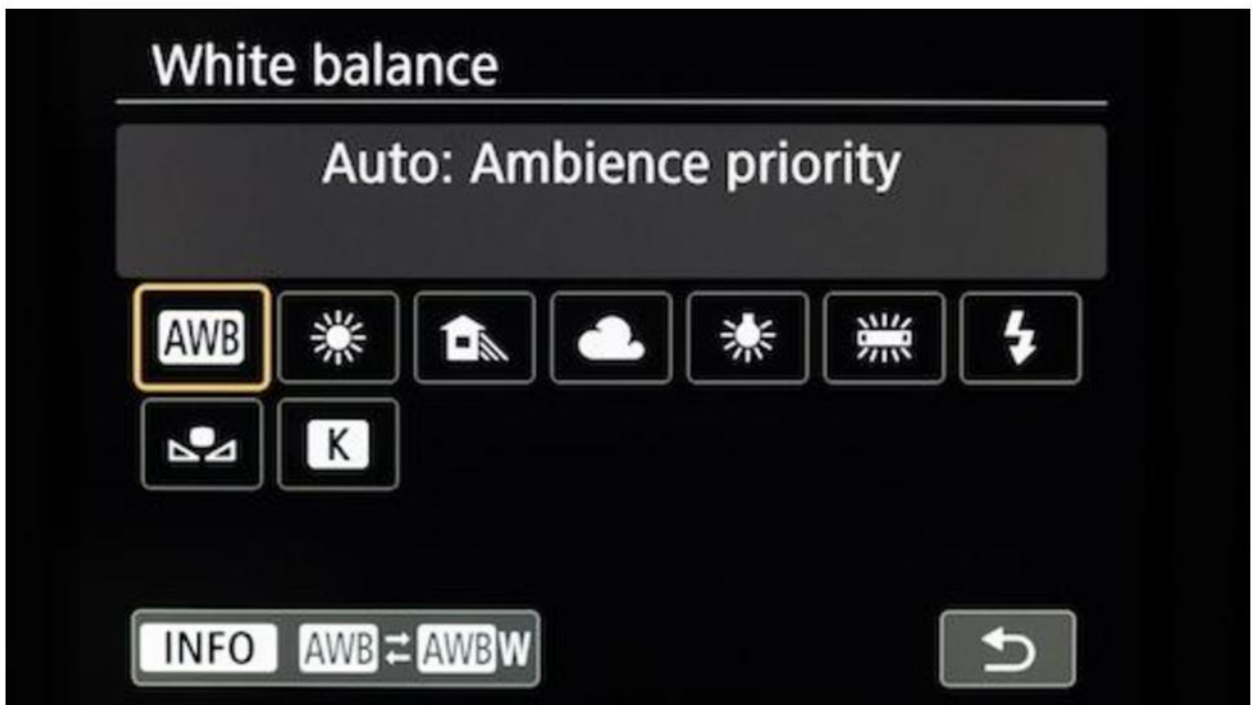


3. Set White Balance

Shoot your best summer landscapes

(Image credit: Karolina Konsur)

Access the camera menu to adjust the White Balance settings and test some presets. Experiment with unconventional WB settings to create a more dramatic and artistic effect in your photos.



“For dramatic summer landscapes, the Canon EF 16-35mm f/4L IS USM lens is ideal. Its wide-angle perspective captures vast skies and the majesty of the surroundings,” says Karolina. “The focal length range provides flexibility in composition, from sweeping views to narrow close-ups, in creating shots. The f/4 aperture provides sufficient light-gathering capability for most outdoor situations, while offering greater depth of field, ensuring sharpness from foreground to background,” she says. “Its optical quality ensures minimal distortion, which is crucial for accurately capturing intricate landscape details and textures.”



ITEMS YOU SHOULDN'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT



PART 1

A Smart Tile tracker you can attach to your luggage, wallet, and keys so you can keep track of them through an app on your smartphone. Seriously though, this thing is ingenious – if your checked bag ever goes missing (*knocks on wood*), just check your phone and it'll tell you exactly where it is. Crisis averted forever.

The starter pack comes with two Mates, one Slim, and one Sticker. The Tile can also make a beeping sound until you find your items.

Promising review: "A must-have. I have these on everything, including my wallet, car, luggage and dog. After being separated from my bag in another country and tracking it down, I swear by these things. Highly recommend." –Izzy Castro

On Takealot for around R650



A teeny tiny wireless portable charger so you can doom scroll, text, and listen to SZA's new album to your ~heart's content~ without having to worry about your phone dying before your flight has even taken off, which IMO is the definition of hellish traveling.

Promising review: "iPhone users rejoice. This was the only portable charger I could find on the market that did not require a lightening adapter to charge an Apple product! I bought this for my fiancé since he spends long days on movie sets. This has been a life saver. It charges fast and you get more than one charge out of it. This would be great for travel, long work days, bad service areas (eats up battery faster), or older phones whose battery isn't that great (this worked on his iPhone 7 and my iPhone XR). It may require you to remove your phone case, but that's an easy accommodation. Highly recommend!" –Kelly Schuetz



On Takealot for around R300

An international travel adapter because the only thing worse than a dead phone is a dead phone whose charger isn't compatible with any of the outlets in the country you're visiting. 😊 This lifesaving compact adapter has a universal input so you can charge four of your devices at once, wherever you are, and breathe a sweet sigh of relief.

Promising review: "LOVE this adapter! I travel from time to time internationally and have always used just the 'standard' adapters found in airports. Could not pass up the opportunity to purchase this one after reading the reviews. Exceeded my expectations of what it was capable of. Used on a recent trip to Germany and it handled everything needed – laptop, cell phone (USB ports are so very welcome), alarm clock, dryer, etc. Did not miss a beat on the power provided. And, it is also attractive looking ;-) Thank you for making such a great, dependable product!" –Monkey

Around R1400 from Takealot



A set of Sea Bands that are clinically proven (!) to help reduce nausea related to motion sickness, morning sickness, migraines, or cramps that you are DEFINITELY gonna want on your next trip. These all-natural bbs target an acupressure point on your wrists, so they start working ASAP to spare you from the *profound* discomfort that is feeling like you have to vomit when you still have seven more hours of a road trip to get through.

To use, put them on *both* wrists.

Promising review: "I was skeptical about these but I was quickly all about them when I put them on. I get really motion sick when flying but this really helped even allowing me to read a book on a 4 hour flight.

A unique water-resistant nylon water bottle holder so you can keep your wallet, phone, passport, chargers, hand sanitizer, *and* water bottle easily on hand while you're trekking through security and to your gate without having to tear through your (frankly, frighteningly messy) purse or your stuffed-to-the-brim carry-on. It has an insulated interior that fits bottles up to 40 ounces, a detachable shoulder strap, and four roomy exterior pockets (!) for storing all of your essentials.

I recently bought this from Calpak and it's my new favorite possession. I either carry my Nalgene or my Yeti everywhere (if I'm not drinking water, you can bet I'm guzzling coffee), which is unwieldy in my tote bag, to say the least. I end up carrying the bottles by hand, which, besides being tiring, makes me prone to losing said bottle. Enter the CalPak holder, which has low-key upgraded my life. I don't even carry a tote anymore – I can pack my lipsticks, scrunchies, wallet, keys, phone, earbuds, and sunglasses in the outside pockets with my coffee, water, or tea snug inside. The strap is adjustable so you can wear it crossbody or over your shoulder. This is an investment, but one that has been well worth it for me. I recently brought it to the airport with me for a flight I was taking, and it's made me love this little thing even more. I am easily frazzled in airports and am constantly anxiously digging around in my carry-on for my ID, charger, wallet, and what have you. The Calpak water bottle holder **shined**, keeping everything I needed close and neatly organized in their own compartments, plus my drink close. I will never travel without this again – mark my words.



A chic leather passport case with a protective sleeve for your vaccine card and holders for your other IDs and cards, so all your MVP documents will stay neat, safe, and ready to go – because holding up the security line while you dig through your bag for your documents is no good for anyone.

Passport holders in all different colors that open with a slot for your passport and vaccine card



Henney's Boutique is a California-based small biz that specializes in passport holders.

Get it from Henney's Boutique on Etsy for \$8+ (available in five colors and in a combo pack with a luggage-tag).

A luggage drink caddy so you can keep your coffee (aka the magic elixir that keeps this show on the road) upright and securely attached to your wheeled luggage. Its two roomy pockets also fit snacks, water bottles, your phone, and whatever else you need to take off your hands while you navigate the chaos that is the airport.

Reviewers say it's ideal for a suitcase that can roll on four wheels! If you have a suitcase that has to tilt while it rolls, just be careful if the drinks are open at the top.

Promising review: "This cup holder is perfect! It helps me a lot! Last time I took a plane with a suitcase and a cup of coffee, when it's my turn to check my passport and ticket, the coffee cup fell to the ground and coffee sprinkled. It was a nightmare! This time I bought this cup holder, and it did do me a favor! I don't have to worry about where my cup and phone are! I can free my hands to do other things. I love it so much! Hope you love it too." —Philip

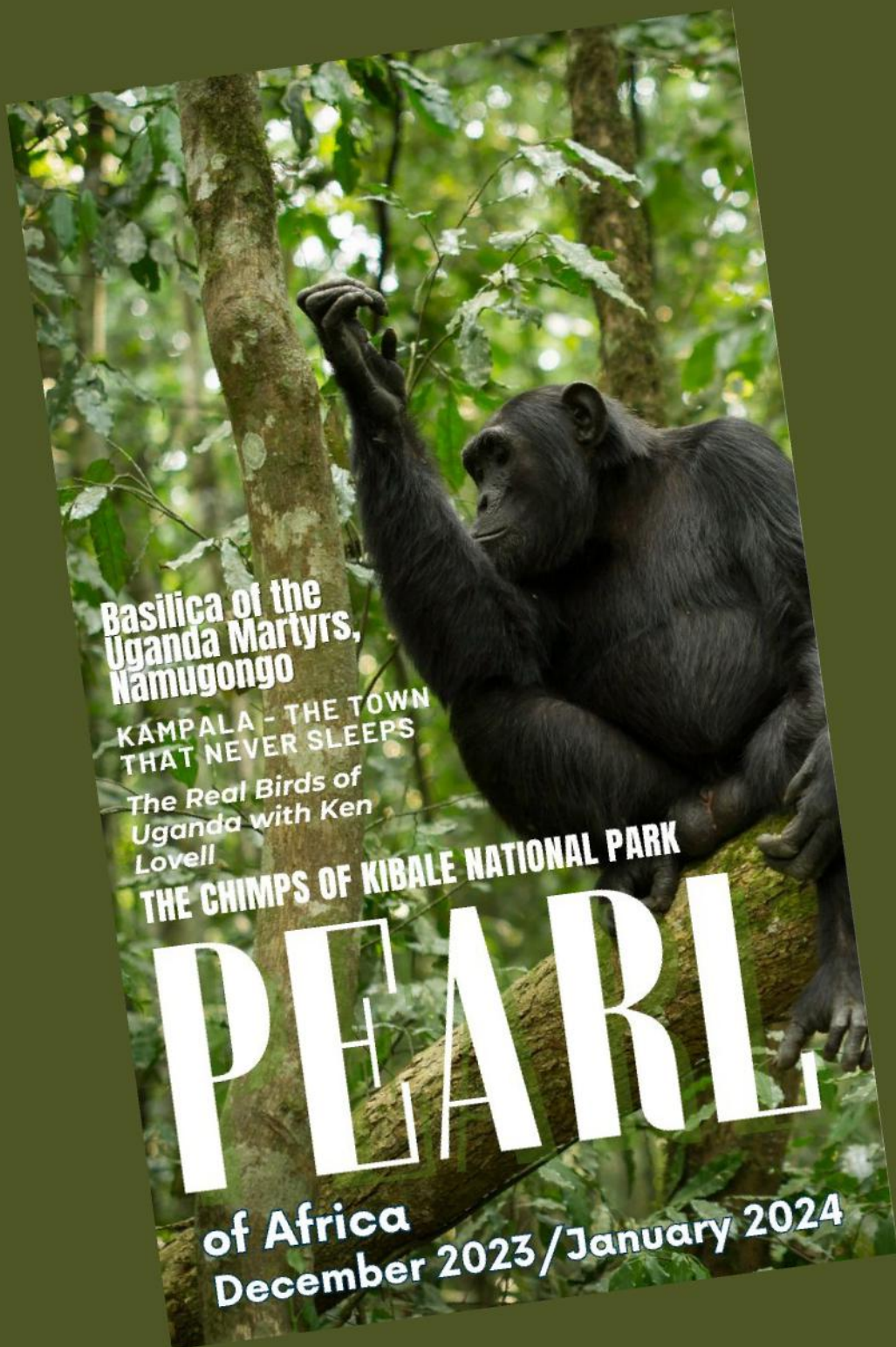


A pair of chic, comfortable compression socks if your feet and legs often swell on long flights, because there's nothing quite like the discomfort of your feet swelling up so much that your shoes no longer fit.

Promising review: "I absolute LOVE these socks!!! Usually when I travel my ankles swell so bad that I have to elevate my feet for an extended period of time for the swelling to go down. However, I just went on a 10-hour flight while wearing these and my ankles and feet were not swollen!! I was absolutely amazed!! I wish I would have bought these sooner!! I would highly recommend these socks!" —Donnesha

Some travel-sized Vaseline that'll keep your hands protected and chap-free from the vampiric dry, moisture-sucking air in planes.

Promising review: "This is the perfect size for travel, and they last forever.



**Basilica of the
Uganda Martyrs,
Namugongo**

**KAMPALA - THE TOWN
THAT NEVER SLEEPS**

**The Real Birds of
Uganda with Ken
Lovell**

THE CHIMPS OF KIBALE NATIONAL PARK

PEARL

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December 2023 / January 2024

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