

SAFARI HOLIDAYS

IN BRIEF

SOMAK INTRODUCES A TASTE OF TWO AFRICAS TOUR

Somak has introduced a two-centre holiday combining Egypt and Tanzania for 2000/2001. A Taste of Two Africas visits Cairo and includes a Nile cruise between Luxor and Aswan before six nights on safari in Tanzania. The 16-night trip costs from £1,697, based on two sharing.

THOMAS COOK RENAMES BROCHURE AFTER EXPANSION

Thomas Cook Holidays has renamed its Signature South Africa brochure Africa following expansion into Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. Flying safaris, additional private game reserve properties and Zanzibar beach holidays with safari add-ons feature in the new programme.

A&K ADDS NEW OPTIONS TO SIGNATURES SERIES

Abercrombie and Kent has taken its most popular tailor-made safaris and introduced them to the Tailor-made Journeys brochure under the banner of the Signature Series. The new concept will save agents time by providing the most popular itineraries, ready made. The eight-night Signature Series Wings Over Botswana safari costs from £2,670, based on two sharing for full-board, including flights.

BRITISH AIRWAYS HOLIDAYS OFFERS SHORT SAFARI DEAL

British Airways Holidays has introduced a short safari (three nights) based on flights to Mombasa on Monarch Airlines. The three-night safari, which visits Tsavo West, Amboseli and Taita Hills and can be combined with four nights on the coast, starts from £899 per person. The operator has also introduced an overnight visit from Mombasa to the Mwaluganje Elephant Sanctuary. The cost of the overnight tour is £99 for single occupancy and £124 for a twin.

Although parts of Africa have suffered setbacks, the market for safaris is ever-increasing, with a more varied line-up than ever. *Jane Dunford reports*

DESPITE floods and political unrest in parts of the continent, the lure of the African bush remains strong for UK tourists.

South Africa continues to be the most popular safari destination for many operators but demand for safaris in East Africa, as well as Botswana, is booming.

Abercrombie and Kent head of planning Stuart Douglass Lee said: "East Africa is now the jewel in the crown of safaris."

After taking a dive a few years ago, Kenya is firmly back on track. With reasonably priced products and abundant, varied game, it's ideal for first-time safari goers. The country's exclusive camps and flying safaris appeal to the luxury end of the market too.

Kuoni claims a 35% year-on-year growth in sales, and has expanded its programme for 2001, adding a five-night Rhino Safari with the option of a five-night beach extension.

Neighbouring Tanzania is also increasingly popular with some operators reporting difficulty finding beds.

Cox and Kings has introduced the destination for 2000/2001. Its eight-day Splendours of Tanzania tour visits Arusha, Serengeti and the Ngorongoro Crater with the option of a four-night Zanzibar add-on. Prices start from £2,325, excluding Zanzibar.

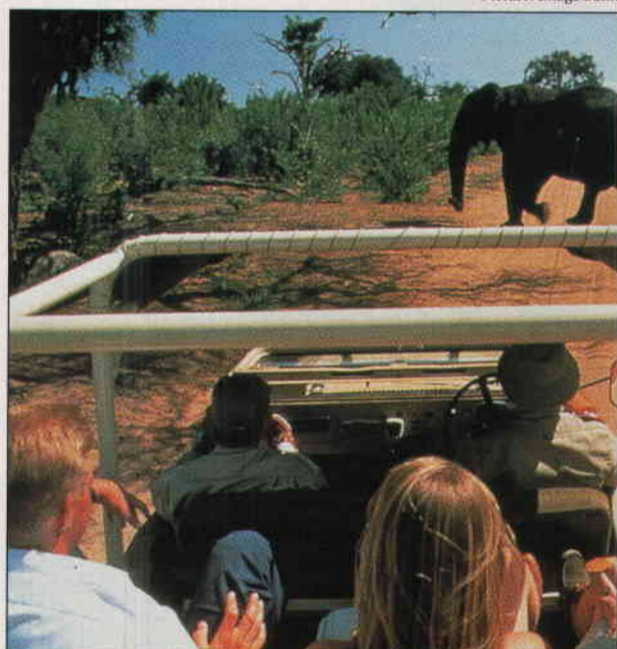
Combining fantastic wildlife, beautiful landscapes, exclusive camps and political stability, Botswana is another success story, especially for the luxury end of the market.

Thomas Cook Holidays has introduced game reserve properties including Sandibe Safari Lodge, Khwai River Lodge, Savute Elephant Camp and Eagle Island, while Bales Worldwide features Botswana for the first time for 2000/2001. A 10-day Okavango Delta tour costs from £2,650.

Among the less traditional safari locations is Namibia, which several operators believe has huge potential, appealing especially to people on their second or third safari. Journeys by Design has introduced a range of options for 2000/2001, including a nine-day flying safari. New to British Airways Holidays' 2000/2001 World-



Picture: Image Bank



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On safari: operators have plenty to celebrate as the safari market booms

wide brochure is the nine-day Classic Namibia tour and the Sossusveli Adventure a five-day tour, available as add-ons from South Africa.

But the unstable political situation in Zimbabwe led to a huge drop in visitors. Somak said year-on-year sales are 75% down and Zambia has suffered a knock-on effect. But most operators remain optimistic and believe a recovery is under way.

Wild Africa product manager Mark Boule said: "Zimbabwe is coming back slowly, we've sent people there recently

and the feedback has been fantastic, it's just a matter of time."

For agents to understand the unique quality of safari holidays, education is essential, say operators. Kuoni has three educationals to Zimbabwe and Kenya planned before the end of this year and will host its annual seminar for around 100 agents in Kenya next June or July.

Outposts, which represents more than 60 camps throughout Africa, arranged 21 fam trips for agents and operators in 2000. Meanwhile Somak plans to take a group of agents to Kenya next May.

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KNOW YOUR SAFARI DESTINATIONS

Find out what the different African countries offer in terms of game viewing, and when to send your clients

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