

# JOURNEYS BY DESIGN

JOURNEYS BY DESIGN IS A LUXURY AND FRONTIER AFRICAN SAFARI SPECIALIST, ARRANGING SUSTAINABLE EXPEDITIONS FOR TRAVELLERS WHOSE NEEDS ARE ALWAYS EXCEPTIONAL, BE THAT A SAFARI INTO AREAS RARELY VISITED, A VACATION THAT TAKES IN MOUNTAIN, SAVANNAH AND BEACH, OR A JOURNEY INTO THE MYRIAD WORLD OF AFRICA'S MANY CULTURES. HERE ARE TWO DESTINATIONS THAT ARE THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION TO ALL THAT THIS BEAUTIFUL CONTINENT HAS TO OFFER.



## ETHIOPIA

Lalibela in northern Ethiopia is home to eleven rock-hewn churches carved below ground. Built in the 12th century, apparently after God came to King Lalibela in a vision and ordered him to build the "New Jerusalem," the subterranean monoliths attract tens of thousands of pilgrims and tourists every year.

Set aside a full day to explore the holy sites, including the Church of Saint George, the House of the Saviour of the World and the Ark of the Covenant, guarded fiercely by a virgin monk. Long drives are necessary to explore Ethiopia's ancient treasures and allow opportunities to observe the daily lives of the country's 80 plus tribes. Known as the Camelot of Africa, Gondar is a 30-minute flight north-west from Lalibela, where seven castles and palaces can be explored within the royal enclosure.

A five-hour drive northeast from Gondar is "the roof of Africa." The Simien Mountains are UNESCO-protected and boast Ethiopia's highest peak, the 4,550-metre Ras Dashen. Gelada monkeys and rock-climbing walia ibex can be found here. A 12-hour journey south from the mountains, by air and road, is Lake Langano, the heart of the East Langano Nature Reserve, which attracts an abundance of wildlife.

One of the hottest places on earth, the Danakil Depression gives rise to the Bale Mountains, 250 kilometres south of Lake Langano, where temperatures plunge to well below zero and where the critically endangered Ethiopian wolf roams.

**Nomadic tribes, ancient ways of life and otherworldly landscapes make Ethiopia a destination like no other.**

## ARIJJU

Nestled in the Laikipia valley in central Kenya, Arijju almost vanishes into the hillside after which it is named. The dark blue infinity pool and a bank of solar panels reflecting the African skies, are the only indicators of the building's existence from above.

Completed last year, Arijju is one of five private homes on the 35,000-acre Borana ranch and wildlife reserve, owned by the Dyer family, which is home to a number of endangered rhinos. The owner relished the opportunity to build a property on Borana, in exchange for a substantial annual fee to help fund the Dyers' conservation projects. "I wanted it to be tucked into the ground - a bit like one of those Ethiopian churches, but surrounded by bush, so that the trees, the birds and the animals were all around, while still getting those panoramic views."

Rooms are set around a pretty courtyard, reminiscent of a Moroccan riad. The exterior has been designed by well-known architects, Alex Michaelis and Nick Plewman; the interior by South African designer Maira Koutsoudakis, who has used influences from Asian and European, as well as Kenyan cultures. Rented out exclusively, guests are looked after by 14 staff, a safari guide and a charming general manager-come-chef, whose culinary delights can be sampled after a morning's lion-tracking or rhino watching.

**"What seems to strike the visitor to Arijju," says Koutsoudakis, "is the soulful serenity - as well as the feeling that everything belongs. People say that it feels as though it's been there for ever."**

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