

SOUTH AFRICA, SAFARIS AND SELFIES

The broadcaster **Emma Freud** puts her photography skills to the test in the Kruger National Park

Forgive me, but I was sceptical about this holiday for a number of reasons. It's a tough call to find a destination that pleases all four of my children, aged from 10 to 18, and also does it for their parents, aged 52 and 58. We were planning to visit some Comic Relief projects – and I was apprehensive that the serious side of

Cape Town would make the holiday side feel wrong. Safaris have never held much appeal, either – a seeming lifetime trapped in a jeep, wearing the wrong clothes (as is my eternal failing), being stung by blown sand, and squinting to watch the backside of some unrecognisable animal running away from the car while I try to shield an enthusiastic guide from the unmistakable

noise of small children gagging to go back to the hotel.

So it was with little optimism, but hopes for a less freezing February half-term, that we set off for a week in South Africa. The first three days would be spent exploring Cape Town, the next three on safari in the Kruger Park.

Cape Town is full of contradictions

and complications. There are beaches so beautiful they leave you breathless, yet to get there you drive past harsh, tough townships on a massive scale. You'll find restaurants such as The Test Kitchen (where the chef, Luke Dale-Roberts, could trash Gordon Ramsay in a cook-off) less than a mile from a Township Butcher BBQ, **Continued on Page 2**

DISCOVER SOUTH AFRICA

WELCOME TO DISCOVER

China careens a far-flung and bewildering place to visit – even more so now, as it reverts to a frenetic speed. So there's surely no better way to get under the skin of this ancient country than in the company of our own correspondents. That's why we're offering readers the chance to join the first ever Telegraph Tour to South Africa, with expert insight from our men in Beijing and Shanghai (P5). In search of more traditional holiday relaxation, Anne Lubbertson takes her family to sample some Creole vibes (P6-7), while the singer Katie Melua revisits her childhood in Tbilisi and finds that it's still her kind of town (P10).



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where you choose your own meat from a chiller cabinet, see it cooked over an open fire, then eat it with your fingers. Epic cuisine, full of very many, are brewed next to starchy loaves where monkeys search day and night for plants and fat to make protein just in surplus. The monkey sturgeon the homeless, the pig village next to the remnants of apartheid. It's challenging – but we found ourselves begin to leave soon.

We stayed at the Kensington Place Hotel: eight pretty, contemporary rooms, a big pool, a beautiful, unimpaired view of Kruger and Table Mountain from every window, despite its being five minutes from the coolest shopping street in town. From our base, mild-mannered Alister drove us around, quietly and relevantly explaining the story, place, shape and tone of South Africa, without ever losing the attention of my sons – which is more than their history teachers have managed.

We spent slight money learning how to surf on granite beaches, swimming with penguins (odd) and watching them mate (odd-odd). In the evening we attended a beautiful rock concert in Kirstenbosch National Botanic Garden, where they also had outdoor spaces with pavilions, and dined the list of a witch doctor where the walls were covered in animal prints. Afterwards we spent visiting two Comic Relief projects: a brilliant home school for the children of women living harsh lives in townships managed by crystal mists; then a scheme to rebuild the streets of a shanty town by house, turning it into a place where a community slowly begins to thrive and be proud. There's no way to stress up the contradictions of Cape Town: it is strange, it is affecting, and both sides need to be acknowledged – but we relished our time there.

It was a busy hour flight north to Royal Malawi, a luxury safari lodge in the middle of the Kruger National Park. As we drove to the airport, a 35-minute trip from the lodge, we saw a zebra by the side of the road. "The animal must have been that," said Richard. "To make a good first impression on tourists – eleven." Thirty seconds later, an expert, author or in-depth reviewer of the best hotels, a selection of the best restaurants and a checklist on what to see and do – and avoid – as well as the best of operators to take your trip. telegraph.co.uk/destinations



eight o'clock, but each is a huge, sun-drenched lodge with its own pool. It was delight paid to the horror of Richard, who is our own family health and safety officer (there is a fence between the houses and the bush, so at night you have to call a guard to protect you; if you want to leave your room, he is invited, a herd of zebras were grazing by our door and a family of monkeys played on our balcony. We were asked where to lock the dogs as the six monkeys have kleptomaniac tendencies. As he left, I went out to have a toilet. The monkey roared, and bled me clearly angry, and the dog was lost, so I left the door slightly open. Thirty

Close encounters: Royal Forest spent nights, in a sleep on a sofa after spending the day on the beach and meeting the pump near Cape Town.



the house and taken a banana and our key fob lying dirty in one of the monkey's party tricks.

During our three days there, the monkeys stole some hotel towels, roared, two oranges, a pair of swimming trunks and a brightly coloured copy of *South African Wildlife* (I read *My New Year* novels, which they tore into tiny shreds and left on our breakfast table. A group of them also stared disapprovingly at me for the duration of my early-morning outdoor shower. I will not be taking my clothes off in front of these apes.

Royal Malawi and its staff were terrific, but what made the experience unique was the teacher-and-mother team that took us out on

game drives, swimming and evening *Boys Don't Cry*, our guide, and *Beauvoir Nyak*, our tracker, have skills handed down from their ancestors and based on their decision of observing animals in the wild. It's a bit like hanging out with *Shantae* (I don't know if you see it's around 12 years old, it's not that old). I have a few things to say about the monkey's new life. I read *My New Year* novels, which they tore into tiny shreds and left on our breakfast table. A group of them also stared disapprovingly at me for the duration of my early-morning outdoor shower. I will not be taking my clothes off in front of these apes.

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"Elephant is the only animal which stops the back of the tree, and that stop was freshly made today. There was one because each of those trunks is of a slightly different size. And look at the leaves – the back of the monkey is showing, and from the ground I can see it's around 12 years old. It's not that old."

She kept her hand on the soft trunk of a leopard, the size of the pool showing that it was a British. He could see that she was missing, and walking, by the distance between the trunks of the front paws and those at the back.

The rear from an African ex-husband told him that something had happened in the clearing to the right

seen half the cast of 'The Lion King'



SEND IN YOUR TRAVEL SELFIES FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A £350 HOLIDAY VOUCHER

What are the odds we do this before the advent of the selfie? Of course we took photographs of people we were visiting; we asked them to photograph us posing in front of, say, the Taj Mahal, the Leaning Tower of Pisa or the Sacred Cow. Some of our best memories are those photos that resulted in just always being really) to achieve the same work ourselves.

But with today's mobile phones, it is much simpler. And as Emma Freud shows here, the selfie can be used creatively: it is now becoming a bit of an art form. With this in mind, we are asking you to winch your own selfie, a series of which will be published in these pages (and online) next week. The one we consider the best of all will win the sum of £350. Daylight holiday voucher. Your selfie. We look forward to the results.

By Neil
details, see
page 8.



Freud's clip depicts her elephant friends in the Kruger National Park (above), not all Emma's attempts at wildlife selfies were successful

Essentials

Africa Travel (020 7843 3188), Africa (travel) (askin), offering seven-night trip similar to the above from £13,800 for a family of four (two adults and two children under the age of 12); the price includes four nights at Sandstone Place, with breakfast, three nights in the two-bedroom, four-star, 40 Royal Palms, and all meals and soft-drinks. See flights with holiday packages and transfers.



of the track – and an eagle high as a cloud too was looking down to where they might soon be unable to see. We followed the area commander (I thought it was Lushington) and the eagle's plan (I thought they always looked like that) and found an impala canyon.

"It was killed this morning by the leopard, we've been following, and the horns were then stopped by bushes – you can tell from the way they look the next morning left for the night. After seeing that impala, she will need a drink."

To find her, we drove to the nearest watering hole – and it was Bennett who saw the leopard first. We followed the trail, and then, seeing another impala with water still dripping from her mouth, was the leopard. Her tail was the African

buffalo on a mountainous hill, which we managed to approach within three yards. Ordered to be silent, we shook in his strength, his pride, might and muscle. Dark, moonlight, I took my first buffalo selfie.

As dusk fell on the African plains (we wanted to write fast), Bennett was on to something. The car slowed, and almost as we heard a grass, faint a snarl. This is something about the roar of a lion his powers through one's body like a prism screen. It is colossal and expensive – a dangerous issue which results as if it had been laid out of the earth. Riches assessed it was a sound effect from the CD player, but it was the King of the Flat. He followed the noise for a mile and found the Big Daddy – 500 and sleep

from a recent kill – screaming his family to him. Deep in the distance they replied and he walked for their arrival. I took another selfie.

We left the lion to his ritual gathering, and Jean drove us to a tiny clearing, near the lodge. As an approach, we could see a wooden and broken and, in the middle, a tent with cushions, rugs and a candle table – it was a bush dinner. We ate the best of the tent (we took bread, bread, steak, lamb liver, watched the night sky and listened to the animals around us). On the day, the tent was the lodge. Bennett suddenly signalled for Jean to stop the car. He was amazed he could see anything. Bennett jumped down, from the car and went over to the branch of a little bush. He picked a leaf and showed it to us. It was a

perfect, key sleeping mechanism that he had spotted in the darkness, camouflaged, against the bush, as we drove past. We checked Bennett is a genius.

On our final morning, one of the children dropped an iPad from the top that he had used to take photos of the animals. It landed on the grass next to the road, and as we weren't allowed to leave the car, Bennett jumped out and went to pick it up. We watched as he walked straight past the technology. He turned and retraced his steps, again walking straight past it. We yelled and eventually he found it. The man who could spot a chameleon in a bush from a moving vehicle at night had neither the need nor the inclination to break a iPad. (I'd never lost mine. That's what I learn on my safari – how to ditch the screen.)