



LUXE LIST 2026

A new era of luxury travel in Africa



Beagle Expeditions, Botswana



WELCOME

Luxury means different things to different people.

For us, it's not about fancy hotel lobbies or premium Champagne, it's about connection: connection to nature, to people, and to purpose.

The Encompass Africa Luxe List 2026 celebrates the luxury of this special type of connection. Each camp and lodge featured here reflects a shift we're seeing and feeling across Africa: smaller camps and lodges, stronger communities, and sustainability at the heart of everything.

These are the places that remind us why we do what we do. They're not just beautiful stays. They are part of something bigger – protecting wildlife, uplifting local people, and honouring the wild spaces that inspire us all.

We hope this guide helps you dream, plan, and travel with purpose. Because when you choose meaning over excess, you don't just see Africa, you become part of its story.

Happy reading!

Jonathon & Danica Wilson
Founders | Specialists
Encompass Africa

Coot Club, South Africa

A wide-angle photograph of three elephants wading through a shallow, blue river. The elephants are dark grey and are partially submerged in the water, which is surrounded by lush green grass and reeds. The scene is set in a natural, wild environment with a clear sky.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Defined by contrast

This spectacular region is defined by contrast: the stillness of desert dunes, the rhythm of floodplains, the hum of untouched forest.

Across Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique, a new generation of camps is reimagining what luxury means – grounded in purpose, shaped by place, and alive with authenticity.

This is travel that treads lightly and feels deeply. From the watery wilderness of the Okavango Delta and the raw grandeur of Namibia's Kaokoland, to the walking safaris of

North Luangwa in Zambia and the reborn landscapes of Gorongosa in Mozambique, every camp tells a story of renewal and respect.

Across the sea, there are now camps on Madagascar's remote northeast coast that echo this same spirit. Here, under ancient canopies of trees you'll feel a sacred connection to nature and to history.

Together, these places in Southern Africa remind us that luxury is not a thing to be built, but a way to belong: to the land and to its people.



Beagle Expeditions, Okavango Delta Botswana

*"Wilderness gave us knowledge. Wilderness made us human. We came from here."
– Boyd Norton, photographer*

"This intimate camp invites guests to slow down, listen, and truly connect".



a Ker and Downey property

MAXA

OKAVANGO DELTA | BOTSWANA

Tucked along the edge of the Okavango Delta's seasonal floodplains, Maxa captures the essence of wilderness refined. With only five tents, one designed for families, this intimate camp invites guests to slow down, listen, and truly connect.

Days unfold through exploration: drifting past water lilies on silent channels, tracking wildlife across rich floodplains, and learning from the people who call this delta home.

Evenings settle into stillness, broken only by the calls of the wild, the crackle of campfires and stories from your guides.

Here, luxury lies not in what surrounds you, but in how deeply you connect to nature, to knowledge, to the locals who provide the most rewarding service and, of course, to yourself. Maxa is a quiet celebration of balance: small in footprint, immense in meaning.

"This under-canvas sanctuary is deeply respectful of its fragile environment."



HOANIB ELEPHANT CAMP

KAOKOLAND | NAMIBIA

Where rugged mountains give way to sweeping desert, Hoanib Elephant Camp stands as a quiet tribute to resilience. Here, desert-adapted elephants trace ancient riverbeds in search of water, their survival a daily story of strength and grace.

Opening in May 2026, this under-canvas sanctuary is deeply respectful of its fragile environment and blends seamlessly into the landscape. Solar-powered and sustainably built, it offers comfort without compromise. Ten spacious tents feature rammed-earth walls and canvas roofs designed to keep the desert heat and cold at bay.

Days are spent tracking the elusive giants of the Hoanib and meeting the proud Himba people. Further afield, the haunting Skeleton Coast beckons. And as night falls, the sky becomes a canopy of glittering stars, crisp and impossibly clear.

Remote, raw and wild, this is luxury, as shaped by the desert itself.

"This is walking safari country at its finest."

KUTANDALA CAMP

NORTH LUANGWA | ZAMBIA



Sitting on the banks of the Mwaleshi River, Kutandala Camp embodies the essence of wild Zambia: untamed, unfiltered, and profoundly alive.

This is walking safari country at its finest, where every step brings you closer to the land and its rhythms.

North Luangwa is one of Africa's last true wildernesses, home to the highest density of elephants in Zambia and the only stronghold of wild-roaming black rhino. Here, there are no crowds, no distractions... just the humbling privilege of being part of something ancient and enduring.

With just a handful of guests at any time, Kutandala keeps luxury honest and understated. There's no noise, no light pollution – just clean air, luminous river light and a sense of remoteness that makes you feel like you're the only people on Earth. After a day on foot, stories are shared by the fire beneath the stars.

Here in this wild corner of Zambia, connection comes first – and conservation is the truest luxury of all.



"It's... proof that when nature and humanity work together, renewal is possible."



MUZIMU LODGE & CHICARI CAMP

GORONGOSA NATIONAL PARK | MOZAMBIQUE

In the heart of Mozambique lies Gorongosa National Park, a place once scarred by conflict, which now stands as one of Africa's greatest conservation success stories. It's a new dawn for eco-tourism in this country.

Here, two distinct camps invite travellers to become part of that story. Muzimu Lodge, serene and soulful, sits high above the floodplains, where the rhythms of the wild dictate the day.

Further south, Chicari Camp offers a deeper immersion in the national park's landscapes and cultures; blending wildlife encounters with meaningful community connection.

Every stay Muzimu Lodge or Chicari Camp contributes directly to Gorongosa's restoration, from protecting endangered species to empowering local people through education, employment, and shared purpose.

This is not just a safari. It's a chance to witness hope in motion: proof that when nature and humanity work together, renewal is possible. Linger longer here, you'll be rewarded.



"Nothing ever becomes real 'til it is experienced." – John Keats

"It's a sanctuary of serenity on the edge of one of Earth's richest ecosystems."

MASOALA FOREST LODGE

MASOALA PENINSULA | MADAGASCAR



Tucked in a quiet cove on Madagascar's northeast coast, Masoala Forest Lodge is where rainforest meets reef, a sanctuary of serenity on the edge of one of Earth's richest ecosystems.

Surrounded by the Masoala National Park and fronting the warm, coral-filled waters of the Tampolo Marine Reserve, it's a place where days unfold in rhythm with nature: kayaking through clear seas, exploring forest trails alive with lemurs and birds, or simply listening to the heartbeat of the wild from your hammock.

Built entirely by Malagasy craftsmen, the lodge celebrates the island's culture as much as its biodiversity. Local artisans, farmers and fishermen are woven into its story, ensuring that every stay directly supports the surrounding community.

In a world of vanishing rainforests, Masoala Forest Lodge stands as a living promise that conservation and culture can coexist, and that true luxury lies in protecting what can never be replaced.



"This is luxury in its most honest form: unhurried, natural, and deeply grounding."



COOT CLUB

WALKER BAY NATURE CONSERVANCY | SOUTH AFRICA

Set between the mountains of Maanschynkop and the wild expanse of Walker Bay, just two hours from Cape Town, Coot Club is a quiet sanctuary for travellers craving a reset. This 464-hectare private reserve sits on the edge of the Klein River Lagoon, one of South Africa's most important estuaries, alive with birdlife, fynbos, and endless calm.

Inspired by traditional boat sheds, the architect-designed villas blend seamlessly into the landscape. Tucked into fynbos for privacy, each one opens to mesmerising views of mountains, water, and a 17-kilometre stretch of untouched sand.

This is a place where you can enjoy simple pleasures that make you feel connected, and quietly restored: things like sunrise walks, sailing or SUPing across the lagoon, bracing swims, barefoot wanderings, lazy braais and campfires shared with family and friends. Adventures also abound – from quad biking and e-bikes, to beach hikes and banana boating.

Coot Club is luxury in its most honest form: unhurried, natural, and deeply grounding. It's a place where true connection can't be designed: it's found in the wild, in the unexpected, and in the stillness between moments.



EAST AFRICA

Where connections run truly deep

East Africa moves with an ancient rhythm, full of grace and quiet strength. It's a region where landscapes shift from desert river valleys to cloud forests; from volcanic plains to coral-fringed islands. Yet across this vastness runs a single thread: connection. Connection to land. To people. To purpose.

Here, the 2026 Luxe List journeys from Ethiopia's Omo River to Rwanda's lakes and Uganda's misty forests, down to Tanzania's volcanic rift, and Kenya's highlands and coast. Each destination reveals a new definition of what luxury: not excess, but essence. Not more, but meaning.

These camps and lodges share a common language: humility, heart, and a profound respect for the places they call home.

From walking alongside tribal elders in the Omo Valley to meeting the gaze of a mountain gorilla in Bwindi, from star-lit savannahs to the stillness of Lamu's tides, this is travel that stirs something deep within us.

East Africa is not just a place to explore; it's a place to remember our place in the world. Because here, connection isn't a comfort, it's a calling.



“Why is it you can never hope to describe the emotion Africa creates?” – Francesca Marciano, author

"It's a rare opportunity to witness human heritage in its purest form."



LALE'S CAMP

LOWER OMO VALLEY | ETHIOPIA

The only one of its kind, Lale's Camp sits on a gentle bend of the Omo River beneath the shade of ancient tamarind trees. Founded more than two decades ago by renowned chief guide and local Kara leader, Lale Biwa, the camp is deeply intertwined with the people and cultures of the Lower Omo Valley.

Here, travellers step into a living tapestry of tradition and time. From this intimate, seven-tent base, guests journey upriver by boat or on foot to meet the Kara, Hamar, Mursi and Nyangatom

– ancient tribes whose stories still shape the rhythm of this faraway land. Encounters unfold naturally, with humility and respect, guided by the people who call this place home.

This is not a safari in the traditional sense. It's a rare opportunity to witness human heritage in its purest and most enduring form: a celebration of connection, coexistence, and cultural preservation.

"Retreat to rooftop star beds, where constellations tell stories as old as the continent itself."

MAGASHI CAMP

AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK | RWANDA



Magashi Camp captures the quiet splendour of Rwanda's only savannah wilderness. Set within Akagera National Park, Central Africa's largest protected wetland, this eight-bed sanctuary offers front-row views of Lake Rwanyakazinga and the rolling Mutumba Mountains beyond.

Designed for just a handful of guests, Magashi's four-bed villa and two twin suites promise rare privacy and perspective. Days unfold on water and land, gliding across mirror-like lakes on a pontoon, casting a line in the shallows, or venturing out on guided drives that reveal lion, leopard, and the return of black rhino.

As night falls, guests retreat to rooftop Star Beds, where constellations tell stories as old as the continent itself.

This is Rwanda at its most radiant – a seamless blend of luxury, conservation and soul. Paired with gorilla trekking at Wilderness Bisate, Magashi completes one of Africa's most powerful journeys: from misty volcanoes to sunlit savannah, connected by purpose and wild beauty.

Here, luxury finds its meaning in protecting the wonder that surrounds it.



“Some places, like Erebero Hills, remind you that nature doesn’t need us, we need her.”



EREBERO HILLS

BWINDI IMPENETRABLE FOREST | UGANDA

Opening in early 2026, Erebero Hills sits on 45 acres of reforested land overlooking the emerald canopy of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to more than half of the world’s remaining mountain gorillas.

Its name, meaning “a place where you can see far,” reflects the vision behind the lodge: to look outward, but also inward. Eight glass-fronted suites cascade down the hillside, each with sweeping forest views, private decks, and an architectural grace that lets nature take the lead. Some places, like Erebero Hills, remind you that nature doesn’t need us, we need her.

At Erebero Hills, guests don’t just witness one of the planet’s most extraordinary species; they become part of a much larger story of renewal, resilience, and reverence for the wild.

Here, luxury is quiet and considered: the warmth of local craftsmanship, the stillness before a gorilla trek, the joy of sharing stories with the Batwa community. Conservation is not an accessory, it’s the foundation. Every stay at this remarkable sanctuary contributes to reforestation, wildlife protection, and community empowerment – a model of conservation-led travel.

"Under the night sky, the Rift Valley becomes a cathedral of stars and silence."



LAKE NATRON CAMP

GREAT RIFT VALLEY | NORTHERN TANZANIA

Framed by volcanic peaks and endless sky, Lake Natron Camp sits at the edge of one of the most dramatic landscapes in Africa: a raw, elemental world where flamingos shimmer pink against soda flats and the active volcano Ol Doinyo Lengai looms over the horizon.

This owner-run, community-driven camp is as genuine as it gets. Born from a deep connection between its custodians, Åke Lindström and Nangini Lukumay, and the local Maasai, the camp embodies a rare balance of adventure and stewardship. This is a place where nature, culture, and conscience converge.

Every element, from recycled materials and removable structures to community employment and education initiatives, reflects a commitment to living lightly and giving back generously.

Days here brim with possibility: trekking to waterfalls, climbing Lengai, walking in the footsteps of early humankind, or simply cooling off in natural spring pools. Under the night sky, the Rift Valley becomes a cathedral of stars and silence – a reminder that the Rift Valley's greatest luxury is its untouched quiet.



"I never knew of a morning in Africa when I woke up that I was not happy." – Ernest Hemingway

"This is everything a safari should be: simple, soulful, and entirely in tune with the wilderness."



MOON'S CAMP

LOLLDAIGA HILLS | KENYA

In the quiet folds of Kenya's Lollidaiga Hills, sits owner-run Moon's Camp. This is the only safari camp on the conservancy so the beautiful landscape is yours to explore. The owners, Moon and Ed, live onsite with their family, so staying here is like visiting friends. This is everything a safari should be: simple, soulful, and entirely in tune with the wilderness.

Days here are dictated not by schedules, but by the bush itself: a lion sighting might delay breakfast or a herd of elephants might reroute an afternoon walk... and that's exactly the point. Evenings bring stories around the fire pit, accompanied by the sounds of zebra and impala at the nearby waterhole.

For families, a stay at Moon's Camp is a chance to reconnect; for travellers, it's a reminder that the real luxury of safari is space, freedom and belonging. You'll learn about the success of this local community model and how your stay is protecting this wild place.

There's something for everyone – hikes, game drives, Maasai medicinal walks, visits to ancient rock-art caves and self-drive safaris in restored vintage Series Land Rovers with your guide as your co-pilot. You can even take an art class in the bush with the in-camp resident artist, or hop in a helicopter to explore further afield.



"It's really beautiful. It feels like God visits everywhere else but lives in Africa." – Will Smith

"This secluded retreat feels a world away from the bustle of life."

CHUCHUNGI HOUSE

LAMU ISLAND | KENYA



Chuchungi House rests on the peaceful shores of Lamu Island, a narrow coral island lying off Kenya's northern coast. Reached by a mangrove-lined boat journey, this secluded retreat feels a world away from the bustle of life, a place where barefoot simplicity meets quiet sophistication. Time slows down in this UNESCO World Heritage town, and Swahili culture hums softly in the sea breeze.

Chuchungi is an exclusive retreat that's fully serviced, blending coastal tranquillity with Swahili-inspired design and tradition. Its vaulted ceilings, carved doors and ocean-facing verandas invite the outside in, creating a space that feels both deeply calming and quietly alive.

Days move gently at this island retreat: savour mornings of snorkelling or sailing on a traditional dhow, drift into slow afternoons wandering Lamu's labyrinthine laneways, and end with evenings of seafood feasts and unhurried sunsets. Every moment is shaped by the island's generous spirit – sustainable, communal, and full of heart.

Chuchungi House is a reminder that true escape isn't about leaving the world behind, it's about rediscovering what matters most.



Owner-run and proudly independent

"There's a rare feeling of spaciousness, solitude and being truly off-grid."



CHOLE MJINI

CHOLE ISLAND | ZANZIBAR ARCHIPELAGO TANZANIA

On tiny Chole Island, in the heart of Tanzania's Mafia Island Marine Park, Chole Mjini is unlike anywhere else. Built in 1994 as a community-first eco-retreat, it has stayed true to its founding purpose: to live lightly on the land, honour the island's culture, and help the community shape its own future. More than 90 per cent of the team are Chole Island locals, whose knowledge, craft and hospitality bring the place to life.

Treehouses sit quietly among centuries-old baobabs, open to birdsong, sea breezes and the slow rhythm of island life. Days are spent snorkelling over coral gardens, watching turtles hatch at dawn and drifting alongside whale sharks.

There are no cars and no crowds – life here is intentionally pared back. There's a rare feeling of spaciousness, solitude and being truly off-grid. It's the privilege of hearing your own thoughts again, of waking to silence, watching mangrove channels glow gold at sunrise, enjoying lantern-lit dinners beneath the stars, and of going to sleep wrapped in the warm hush of the tropics.

Tourism here funds conservation, supports education, and ensures the island's next generation can flourish. It's another thing that makes Chole Mjini extraordinary – how seamlessly it weaves purpose into every stay.



LET'S GO!

Your journey starts here

Guiding team at Sabi Sabi celebrating!

Africa offers countless ways to experience wonder – and we're here to help you find the ones that speak to you.

We'll design a journey that reflects your pace, your passions and your curiosity.

Your African adventure begins with a simple conversation... from that first chat, and we'll craft something far beyond your wildest imaginings.

Ready to discover Africa? We're here to help!

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