



The
Africa Adventure
Company

Educational Safaris for Families

Congratulations to *“Mark Nolting and The Africa Adventure Company”* for being selected as one of the World’s 125 Top Travel Specialists for the 7th year in a row in *“Conde Nast Traveler”* – listed under Family Safaris



More and more parents and grandparents are taking their children and grandchildren on safari. Seeing nature in all its abundance as a child is an educational experience that cannot be underestimated. As of this writing, our son Miles is 15 years old, and has been on ten safaris; Nicholas is 12 and has been on eight safaris. We have thoroughly enjoyed experiencing Africa through their eyes.



Needless to say, the kids have also had a wonderful time filled with exploration and adventure! In most cases, the best option for families is a private safari with your own vehicle(s) and guide(s).

You may travel at your own pace and choose camps and lodges that offer amenities, like swimming pools, that will provide the kids with some playtime as well as help them burn off some of that endless energy they seem to possess. In addition, visits to local schools and villages can provide insights into how children of their own age live in the countries you are visiting — and will hopefully make them more thankful for what they have!

Most guides, camp and lodge staff love to have children visit, and they go out of their way to make kids and the parents feel welcome. Be sure to plan into your trips some activities that your children enjoy. Many camps and lodges have special children's programs where they are cared for and taken on their own adventures — allowing the parents to go on game drives alone or giving them the opportunity to participate in activities like walking in the bush where young children are not allowed.

On a recent trip our two boys had the time of their lives as they were taken out target practicing and were taught how to drive a land rover! Many of the smaller camps and lodges in Africa have minimum age restrictions (usually ranging from 7 to 16 years of age) while most of the larger camps and lodges have no restrictions at all. Some camps and lodges have minimum age restrictions (12 or 16 years old) for activities offered, such as walks in the bush with professional guides and canoeing. However, if, for instance, your family or group takes over the entire lodge, camp or canoe safari departure, or if you do a private mobile safari, you can, in some instances, get around the minimum age requirements. As some safari camps and lodges cater to a maximum of 6 to 20 guests, taking over a camp may be easier than you think. Just try to book your safari well in advance to ensure availability.



Nature is the great educator and the outdoor classroom is a place that enables young people to discover themselves and their true potential. Nature challenges young minds and is a doorway of discovery through which we should pass on our journey through life. Everyday is filled with fun and fascination in which learning is part of a great new experience. Through participation, our young rangers of the future gain far more than an understanding of their role in managing and conserving Africa's incredible biodiversity. They learn about themselves, other people and other cultures, about building friendships and trust and about survival in the timeless wilderness -a skill that applies equally to today's living.



Traveling with children to Africa is an education and journey that affords them the opportunity to make positive changes happen when they come back to their home community. On a safari there will be time arranged where one can meet with children in African schools or villages, and this incredible cross-pollination of cultures makes an impression for the future. As the children connect with the same common issues of education, sport, art, conserving wildlife and protecting the environment our American children soon realize how fortunate they are in school back in the US. The community service projects that lead from an adventure to Africa have kids raising money to purchase desks in classrooms, grade level books for a whole school, and sponsoring a child through a year at boarding school. Or a donation to sponsor a group of town kids to adventure into the parks themselves to experience a wildlife safari that begins a life changing experience to a commitment of conserving nature through completing high school and college careers .



Many people still confuse ecotourism with nature travel — they are not the same thing. If you and I were to go on a wildlife safari to Africa, and we stayed in a nice lodge, saw lots of interesting animals, enjoyed good food, and took wonderful photographs, we would have had a great nature tour.

But when that same safari is directly supporting the protection of wildlife, engaged in “leave no trace” practices, contributing to the social and economic wellbeing of local villagers, then it is transformed into ecotourism.

In that sense, ecotourism is really a set of principles and practices that, when applied to nature and adventure travel, creates a new opportunity for saving wild places and empowering local people to advance their own lives.

When we take a vacation, our travel choice makes a big difference. By letting tour operators know that we care about the environment when we travel, by following responsible behavior around wildlife in national parks and reserves, and by staying in lodges and camps that are committed to conservation, sourcing locally for their restaurants and handicrafts for gift shops, and employing local people under fair wages and benefits, we are each doing our part to make tourism a powerful opportunity for saving the natural and cultural heritage of our planet.

Taking an ecotourism trip to Africa is an investment in protecting this incredible continent's amazing wildlife for future generations, while having the vacation of a lifetime

