

Seeing wildlife up close and personal and in their own habitat is hard to beat. Add wonderful scenery and it's a memorable experience. African safari vacations have become very popular and there are numerous companies that provide packages designed to bring a bit of adventure under expert supervision. Accommodation is usually in lodges and camps, equipped with hot showers. Meals and barbecues are prepared by the company cook.

Kenya is one of the main destinations for this type of vacation and a beach holiday could be combined with an African safari. The country has 40 National Parks and game reserves. One of the most spectacular is the Kimana Game Sanctuary, which is located at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro. Rich rain forest is the terrain at the Mount Kenya National Park and stretching plains dominate the Masai Mara. Guides drive parties in 4x4 vehicles or in open back trucks. Sometimes, they travel in mini buses. For an aerial view of the landscape, there are fly/drive packages, using small, light aircraft. Kenya brings opportunities to see leopards, gazelle, crocodiles, giraffes, zebra, lions and hippos.

South Africa is another beautiful country, teeming with wild animals. An African safari here offers a great variety of landscape, including wetlands, semi-desert, open grassland and old forest. The Phinda region is popular and can be explored on foot, by vehicle or light aircraft. Some parties are taken by boat on the waterways. Wildlife sighted here is likely to be lions, rhinos, elephants, buffalo and leopard. The Madikwe Game Reserve contains leopards, elephants and packs of hyenas and wild dogs.

For a truly unique experience, there are companies that organise an African safari to Uganda and Rwanda. Uganda has a population of lowland gorillas and chimpanzees. There is also game in the savannahs of the Queen Elizabeth National Park and the chance to see elephants, giraffes, antelope and birds.

To see the gorillas in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest or at the Mgahinga Volcanoes, parties are taken on foot through the tropical rainforest, which is home to many different species of birds. The Murchisson Falls National Park can be reached by boat on the River Nile. The waterfall is impressive and the animals in the area include warthogs, zebras and baboons. Rwanda is famous for its mountain gorillas and there is said to be 350 of them in the tree lined slopes of the Parc National des Volcans. The Uganda and Rwanda region, with its volcanoes, falls, lakes and forests is a treasured area and offers the best chance of seeing gorillas in their natural surroundings.