

African safari accessible at a fair price

Where only wealthy clientele could go, the average abound.

In a recent interview with a leading operator of inexpensive African safaris, one Ken Hieber, of 2Afrika.com, I learned - to begin with - that the African nation of Botswana has suddenly developed new and cheaper lodges capable of servicing low-cost safaris to that nation. Although travel professionals have known for years that Botswana is a superb destination for wildlife safaris, in the limited lodge capacity of that nation and their upscale nature made it impossible to offer such safaris to any but an extremely affluent clientele. Now, according to Hieber, he is able to offer a one-week Botswana safari for slightly less than \$2,000, not including airfare to that nation (bringing the air-included price to a reasonable \$3,000 for such a memorable and all-inclusive adventure).

Hieber also revealed the surprising fact that a number of safari operators are now making frequent use of Turkish Airlines for flying tourists from New York to Nairobi. Though Turkish Airlines is not itself offering the full-scale safari experience, it is offering excellent airfares - as little as \$1,000 round-trip between New York and Nairobi (via Istanbul), including all fees and taxes - to people pursuing a safari in what is perhaps the most popular location for safaris: Kenya and Tanzania, with their Masai Mara, Ngorogoro Crater and Serengeti.

By the way, it used to be that you could pick up an air-and-land package for a one-week African

safari to Kenya for around \$2,000 to \$2,300 per person, including round-trip airfare - and this was available from a number of sources, including Ken Hieber's 2Afrika.com and the Toronto-headquartered Canadian tour operator LionWorldTours.com.

Such prices are no longer available. During just a few months of the year, you can book such a safari from these companies for about \$2,000 per person (not including airfare), to which you'll need to add about \$1,000 for the international air transportation. So \$3,000 is the total minimum, and that price goes up by another \$300-\$600 in the more popular months.



Scenes from an African safari. Wildlife in Botswana can be viewed by the average traveler.

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