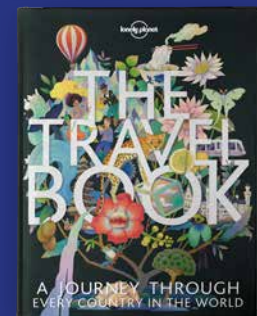


Lonely Planet is the essential travel companion, helping you navigate the globe with first-hand, locally-reported guidance that always puts the traveler first. Lonely Planet's award-winning books, website and social accounts provide inspiration, insights and utility that unlock the wonder of seeing the world and shape memories for life. We bring expert insight that you can trust, wherever you are, along with authenticity and humanity, which governs everything we do.

MORE LONELY PLANET BOOKS TO
HELP YOU PLAN YOUR NEXT TRIP



Lonely Planet's annual bestseller reveals the best in travel for 2026.
This edition spotlights 25 must-visit destinations and
25 must-do experiences – an evolution that reflects
the way travelers encounter the world.



Featuring a mix of emerging travel hot spots, underappreciated or criminally overlooked places, and fresh takes on well-known destinations, every page contains Lonely Planet's signature enthusiasm and worldly expertise.



From food tours to wild camping, vibrant cities and places to pause, expect unexpected ideas for every kind of traveler.

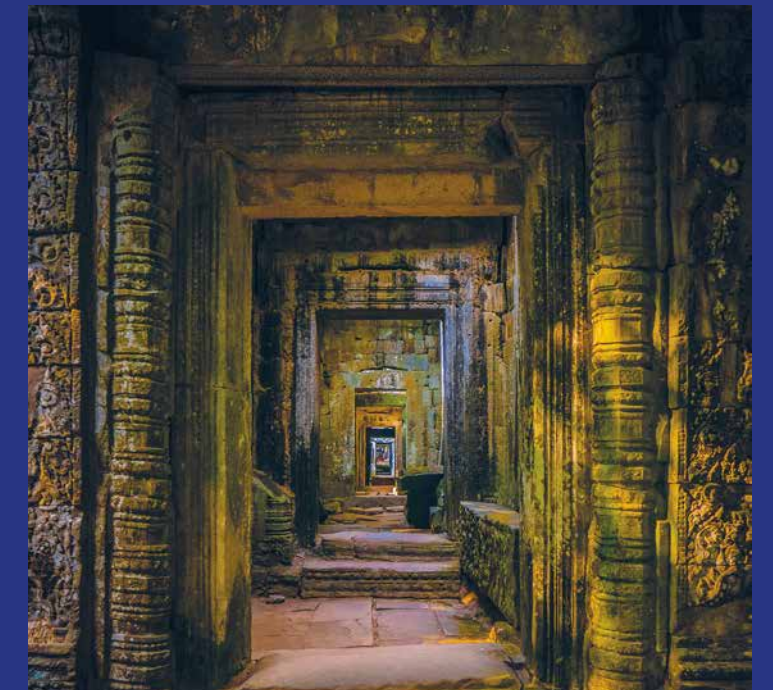


The **50 Best**
Destinations &
Experiences
for the
Year Ahead

BEST TRAVEL IN 2026



Drawing on the knowledge, passion and miles traveled by Lonely Planet's staff, writers and online community, these are our top 50 recommendations for where to travel in 2026.

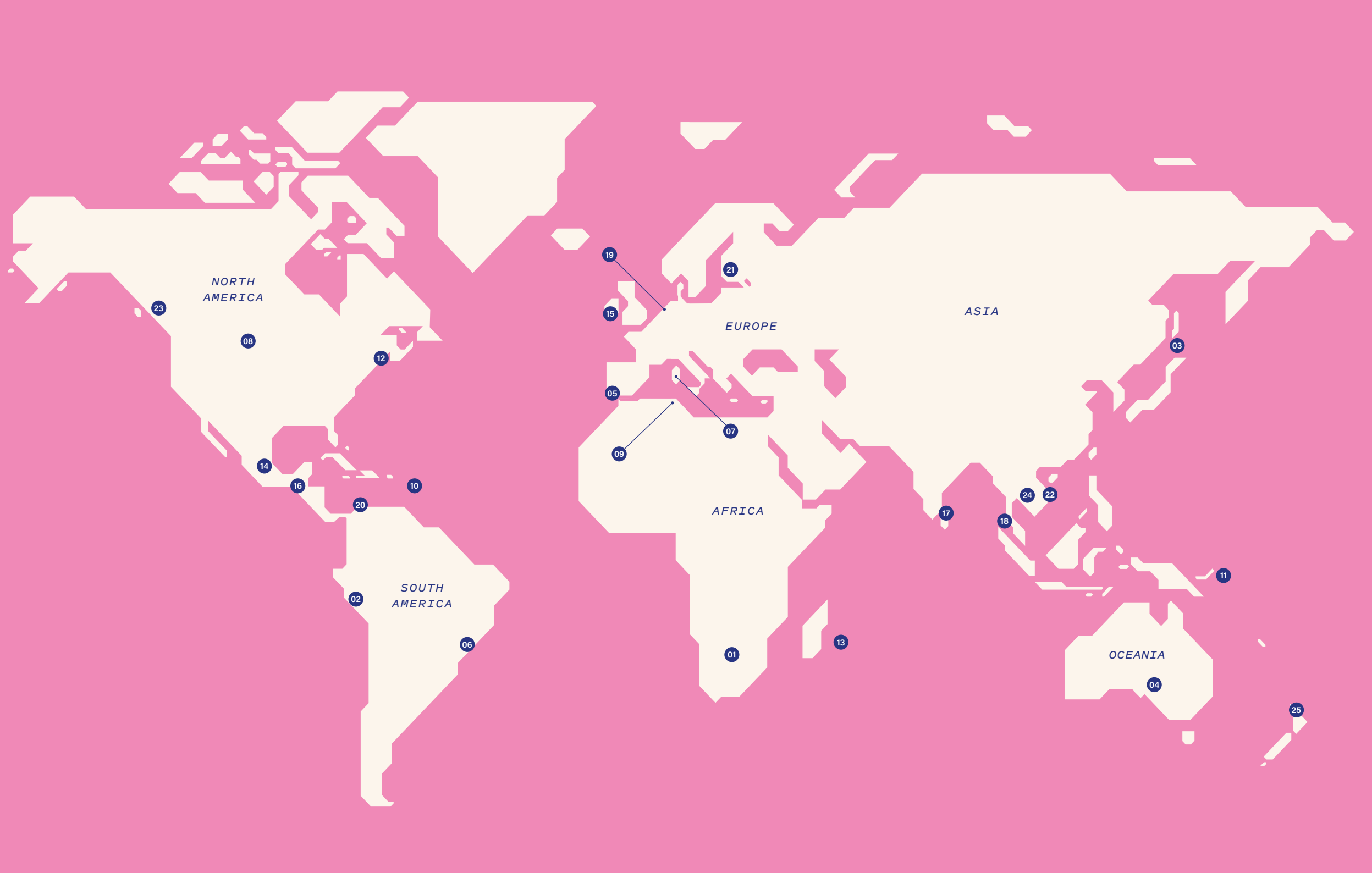


PLACES

- 01 Botswana
- 02 Peru
- 03 Jeju-do, South Korea
- 04 Ikara-Flinders Ranges & Outback, South Australia
- 05 Cádiz, Spain
- 06 Liberdade, São Paulo, Brazil
- 07 Sardinia, Italy
- 08 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, USA
- 09 Tunisia
- 10 Barbados, Caribbean
- 11 Solomon Islands
- 12 Maine, USA
- 13 Réunion
- 14 Mexico City, Mexico
- 15 Tipperary, Ireland
- 16 Quezaltenango (Xela), Guatemala
- 17 Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- 18 Phuket, Thailand
- 19 Utrecht, Netherlands
- 20 Cartagena, Colombia
- 21 Finland
- 22 Quy Nhơn, Vietnam
- 23 British Columbia, Canada
- 24 Siem Reap, Cambodia
- 25 North Island, New Zealand/Aotearoa

EXPERIENCES

- 26 Tajikistan
- 27 Old Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 28 Kruger National Park, South Africa
- 29 Southern France
- 30 Japan
- 31 Namibia
- 32 Iberá Wetlands, Argentina
- 33 Grand Canyon, USA
- 34 Victoria, Australia
- 35 Mekong River, Vietnam & Cambodia
- 36 Bolivia
- 37 Ecuador
- 38 Louisiana, USA
- 39 Kerala, India
- 40 England
- 41 Oregon, USA
- 42 Melbourne, Australia
- 43 The Amazon, Peru
- 44 Grenada, Caribbean
- 45 Batanes Islands, Philippines
- 46 Belgrade, Serbia
- 47 Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, USA
- 48 Azores, Portugal
- 49 Bristol, England
- 50 Wairarapa, New Zealand/Aotearoa



NORTH
AMERICA

EUROPE

ASIA

SOUTH
AMERICA

AFRICA

OCEANIA

BEST IN TRAVEL 2026

The 50 Best Destinations & Experiences
for the Year Ahead

07 Introduction

277 About the authors

282 Photo credits

284 Index

PLACES

15 Botswana	77 Maine, USA
18 Peru	81 Mexico City, Mexico
25 Jeju-do, South Korea	87 Tipperary, Ireland
28 Ikara-Flinders Ranges & Outback, South Australia	93 Quetzaltenango (Xela), Guatemala
32 Cádiz, Spain	96 Jaffna, Sri Lanka
39 Liberdade, São Paolo, Brazil	102 Phuket, Thailand
42 Sardinia, Italy	110 Utrecht, Netherlands
48 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, USA	115 Cartagena, Colombia
52 Réunion	120 Finland
60 Tunisia	124 Quy Nhơn, Vietnam
67 Barbados, Caribbean	128 British Columbia, Canada
70 Solomon Islands	135 Siem Reap, Cambodia
	140 North Island, New Zealand/Aotearoa

151 Hike and wildcamp: Tajikistan	191 Rapid-raft the Colorado River: Grand Canyon, USA	233 Become a citizen scientist: The Amazon, Peru
154 Go on a cultural food tour: Old Dubai, United Arab Emirates	195 Explore the Bathing Trail: Victoria, Australia	238 Party in the Caribbean: Grenada
161 Stay in a train carriage: Kruger National Park, South Africa	198 Cruise the Mekong River: Vietnam & Cambodia	247 See the sights by bike: Batanes Islands, Philippines
164 Visit Eileen Gray's house: Southern France	204 Ride horses in the Andes Mountains: Ecuador	250 Experience the legendary nightlife scene: Belgrade, Serbia
168 Spend the night in a ryokan: Japan	209 Take a Creole trail ride: Louisiana, USA	257 Stay at Hawai'i's Volcano House: Volcanoes National Park, USA
175 Track desert elephants: Namibia	214 Go on a culinary tour: Kerala, India	261 Go whale-watching: Azores, Portugal
178 Look for jaguars in the wetlands: Iberá, Argentina	219 Attend a Premier League game: England	265 Deep-dive into street art: Bristol, England
182 Watch a Flying Cholitas match: Bolivia	225 Visit Willamette Wine Country: Oregon, USA	269 Go stargazing: Wairarapa, New Zealand/Aotearoa
	228 Savor the exciting food scene: Melbourne, Australia	

EXPERIENCES



Mighty peaks frame
a gin-clear glacial
lake in Tajikistan's
trail-laced Fan
Mountains (p151).



INTRODUCTION

At Lonely Planet, if we're not discussing the details of our most recent trip, we're planning our next one.

We live for travel, and spend much of our waking (and sleeping) hours talking, writing, reading and dreaming about it. Every conversation, every meeting and every gathering is filled with takes on our recent vacations, with recommendations flying back and forth between our passionate and expert team members.

As we look ahead to 2026 we find ourselves wondering: 'What is it that makes a great trip? What keeps our travels alive in our memories long after we return home?'

The truth is, it's not always the big, bucket-list travel events that linger. It's the small, often fleeting moments that elevate a trip and make it unforgettable: the delicious aromas that waft over you when walking into a local bakery on your first visit to Paris; the 20 minutes of people-watching you steal on the bus ride from Atocha Station to Museo del Prado in Madrid; the views you earn after hiking the Sintra uplands on your day trip from Lisbon. These are the memories that push a travel experience from good to great, and sustain our desire to do it all over again somewhere else. It's what next year's *Best in Travel* is all about.

Our team of writers and editors have distilled anecdotes just like this into a list of the 50 best places and experiences they've had and would recommend to fellow travel-lovers in 2026.

This year, the possibilities for travel seem bigger than ever before. So the suggestions within these pages reflect the destinations and experiences that our contributors – themselves a group scattered around the globe – are excited to recommend for the coming year and beyond.

There's something here for every type of traveler, whether you've always dreamed of an under-the-radar carnival experience like Grenada's Spicemas, of joining the fanatical chanting crowds at an English Premier League football match, or of biking the Philippines' Batanes Islands. Wildlife-lovers will find the lure of tracking desert elephants in Namibia or the Azores' awesome whale-watching irresistible. And if sleeping in a converted train carriage overlooking lions and other wonderful wildlife in South Africa is for you, we've got you covered.

Some of these destinations may be familiar, while others are just emerging as the hottest spots on the globe. Within these pages you'll find amazing reasons to visit perennial favorites like Phuket, Mexico City or Finland in 2026. Looking for something new? Let our destination experts extol the virtues of the USA's Theodore Roosevelt National Park, or the island jewel of the Indian Ocean, Réunion, or the ubercool Liberdade district of São Paulo in Brazil. In Europe, we take a deep dive into Belgrade's legendary nightlife; if daytime activities are more your thing, there's Bristol's creative and gritty street-art scene to be explored.

These are our personal passions; they may not always be picture-perfect or Instagram-grid-worthy, but they are authentic takes on the places we've been, and where we think you should go next. After all, the reason we buy the tickets, pack our bags and lace up our boots is to root down a little more: to ourselves, to one another, and to entirely new places and people that might offer us fresh eyes on the world. These pages showcase the destinations and experiences that have left a mark – the ones we can't wait to share with the other travelers we meet.

Here's to an inspired year of travel, filled with many small moments that are well worth the miles. Hopefully we'll see you along the way.

–Fionnuala McCarthy



Previous page: The colors of Coyoacán district, Mexico City (p81); Left: Backwater houseboats in Kerala, India's enthralling culinary capital (p214).

BEST

PLACES

- 15 Botswana
- 18 Peru
- 25 Jeju-do, South Korea
- 28 Ikara-Flinders Ranges & Outback, South Australia
- 32 Cádiz, Spain
- 39 Liberdade, São Paulo, Brazil
- 42 Sardinia, Italy
- 48 Theodore Roosevelt National Park, USA
- 52 Réunion
- 60 Tunisia
- 67 Barbados, Caribbean
- 70 Solomon Islands
- 77 Maine, USA

- 81 Mexico City, Mexico
- 87 Tipperary, Ireland
- 93 Quetzaltenango (Xela), Guatemala
- 96 Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- 102 Phuket, Thailand
- 110 Utrecht, Netherlands
- 115 Cartagena, Colombia
- 120 Finland
- 124 Quy Nhon, Vietnam
- 128 British Columbia, Canada
- 135 Siem Reap, Cambodia
- 140 North Island, New Zealand/Aotearoa



The Mediterranean resorts south of Tunisia's capital, Tunis, include centuries-old Sousse (p60).

BOTSWANA



Botswana safaris are deliberately different. Reputable companies, such as &Beyond and Wilderness, operate small camps that aim to minimize visitor impact – and on game drives, this translates to dramatic wildlife sightings that serve as your own personal theatrical event. Off-roading with endlessly expert guides here is an epic adventure, each and every time.

A TRULY SPECTACULAR SAFARI

An abundance of wildlife is the first thing you'll notice after leaving the airport in Maun, which serves as the gateway to the Okavango Delta and Moremi Game Reserve, among other safari regions. Dozens of small planes and helicopters depart Maun (as well as Kasane) for the remote wilderness beyond the country's fifth-largest town.

Although it's possible to go on a safari year-round, April through September is considered the high season. You'll see tons of wildlife no matter what time of year you choose to visit, but in Botswana's north, where the Okavango Delta is located, wildlife may be slightly less abundant during the October-to-November dry season.

The Okavango Delta is often touted as Botswana's must-see attraction – and it is an awesome natural spectacle to be present during the annual flooding of the world's largest inland delta. Water from the Okavango River

Left to right: Under the stars at a Botswana tented safari camp; The Okavango's colorful avian residents include lilac-breasted rollers.





floods down from the Angolan highlands, creating water passages for crocodiles, elephants and hippos. Many of the safaris in this region offer both land- and water-based adventures; a huge part of the appeal is the sheer wonder and beauty of the delta, though there's plenty of game here, too.

BOTSWANA'S UNSUNG TERRITORY

Not often included in 'Best of Botswana' lists – an erroneous oversight – is the Linyanti Reserve. Bordering the lion-roamed landscape of Chobe National Park and located on a concession area leased to the operators by Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the remoteness of this private reserve just adds to its appeal. Bird-watchers and lovers of big game alike will have trouble finding fault; budding landscape photographers will have no shortage of inspiring material. Because it's private, overland vehicles travel off-road as it's the only way around, and game drives – generally two per day, with an early start and a long siesta break in between – do not disappoint. You'll likely see majestic male lions (and hear their mighty roars), and perhaps get close to lionesses and their cubs – plus buffalo, wild dogs, giraffes, elephants, hyenas, impalas and so much more.

Most aficionados agree that the overall safari experience is dependent on a good guide. Wilderness' highly skilled guides, who train up to two years with the company before leading a drive, will teach you about the animals' habits and preferences. Botswana's low-impact, high-value tourism

ethic is evident on game drives where you're unlikely to encounter another vehicle (unless it's from your lodge); the limited number of tents (around 12) at the camps is also a part of the move toward responsible tourism.

–Stacey Lastoe

Clockwise from top left: Botswana's 'Big Five' include African elephants; Expert safari guides lead the way; Okavango Delta residents range from tiny scorpions to prowling leopards.



MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT

Traveling with Wilderness to Mokete – one of the longstanding safari company's newest camps, in the Mababe Depression – is practically guaranteed to include a predatory kill: a lioness catching a water buck or a wild dog snatching a baby buffalo, in the rawest display of the circle of life.