



Promotional feature



Discover the real heart of Africa

Sam Sellers, founder of Take Me To Africa, offers her take on creating the best way to explore her perfect destination... with new friends

What do you do when your pals have all settled down and you haven't got the travel bug out of your system? Set up a travel company introducing like-minded individuals to the continent you love, just like Sam Sellers has done with **Take Me To Africa**.

Sam (pictured, top right) was smitten with Africa from a young age. When she was six, her family moved to Phalaborwa, a small bush town on the edge of Kruger National Park. Her early days were a sunny montage of 'game drives' in a clapped-out car with no air-con. Her family moved back to the UK a few years later, but a flame had been lit.

Not surprisingly, travelling – and Africa – became a passion for life. An overland truck tour through Southern Africa confirmed Sam was smitten. After 15 years on the corporate ladder, she decided to follow her dream, saying goodbye to life in the city in order to set up Take Me To Africa.

The goal was to create a company that provided group travel at its very best. "I wanted people to experience the Africa I love with the friends they haven't met yet," she laughs, "with the best itineraries, good food,

great accommodation. Oh, and a price that won't completely break the bank."

Making sure the groups were made up of like-minded people at a similar stage in life was key. "I've met some of my favourite people while travelling," she says. "But I've also been in the opposite situation. Those you travel with can often make or break a trip."

To that end, Take Me To Africa divides its groups into ages 30–50 and 50+, and limit the group size of 8–12 people. It works well. "I love the fact our clients make lifelong friends on our trips," says Sam. "Most stay in touch long after the tour has ended."

Under African skies

As for destinations, there was always only going to be one choice for Sam. "Africa burrows into your soul and changes the way you see things." Itineraries are designed by Take Me To Africa to ensure guests see the very best of Africa in the time they have there, and the company uses 'best in class' local partners to deliver a range of included activities, so you can just book, turn up and enjoy.

"Take our *Ultimate African Taster* tour," says Sam. "It starts in the awesome Victoria Falls (on the border of Zimbabwe and Zambia) and Botswana's Chobe National Park, before heading to South Africa's Greater Kruger where we stay in a private reserve and experience open-vehicle safaris with a ranger and a tracker. Then it's on to Stellenbosch for fantastic wines and Cape Town for a bit of big-city luxury."

Sam has also noticed how quickly Africa relaxes, rejuvenates and reinvigorates the travellers who come on her tours.

"People have told me they switch off from the rat race quicker than on any other holiday they have been on," she says. "They make decisions about the things they want and need in order to be happy, without realising they had even thought about it."

"I love the way Africa has that effect."



For more information, visit www.takemetoafrica.co.uk