

SAFARI ETIQUETTE

This is a holiday like no other because you can expect early morning activities, late afternoons and sometimes into the night safaris. So it is important to know what to expect and also the etiquette to ensure your safety and comfort at all times.

The following points are not in any order and certainly don't cover all there is to know, that would require a novel!

Not compulsory

It's important to know that whilst in camp, activities are not compulsory and if you are tired or prefer to relax and watch the wildlife wander around the property you are free to do so. Please simply liaise with camp staff so they know not to wait for you or wake you early!

Shared Safaris

Most safari activities are shared with other guests unless you requested or we have arranged you a private guide and vehicle. When you arrive in camp, you may be able to upgrade to a private guide and vehicle if availability exists. Keep in mind there will be an additional cost which can range anywhere from US\$250 - 800 per day or more if you seek a specific guide.

Babies, toddlers and children under the age of around 5 (this varies per camp and region so please liaise with your specialist) are not usually allowed on shared vehicles due to their behaviour and limited attention spans.

Remember a safari is a social activity, you'll likely be sharing a vehicle with others and then dine together. There is plenty to talk about and plenty of time to talk. But on a game drive or nature walk, please try and keep in mind that animals will be distracted by your voices even when whispering and they will move away when they hear you. If someone is shooting a video, don't start a conversation as they most likely want to document wildlife behaviour not human noises.

If you would rather private dining, please do let us know prior to travel so it can be arranged with each of the properties you are visiting.

No Fences

It is important to know that the majority of properties we utilise in wilderness areas are not fenced therefore animals are free to roam at will. Please do not walk unaccompanied after dark as it can be extremely dangerous. A member of staff will escort you when required so please do not hesitate to request assistance when you wish to move between room and main area.

No Feeding

Wild animals that are fed become problem animals so please kindly refrain from feeding animals.

No Guarantees

Don't expect to see the Big Five on your first day. In fact the Big Five are not resident in all wilderness areas of Africa, so be sure to ask your specialist if the Big Five is essential on your wildlife sightings list. Guides and drivers do their best to find every animal you have on your wishlist (that lives in the area you are visiting) but there is never a guarantee that you will see everything. Wilderness areas are vast, animals are unpredictable and they all wear camouflage! Essentially, make sure you've communicated with your guide about the animals you really want to see so it increases your chances. Also be respectful of other guests who may wish to stop and spend time looking at the animals and birds on their wishlist.

Know it Alls

If you have been on safari before, it's always recommended that you don't go regaling others with your knowledge or supersede the guide when he/she is explaining wildlife behaviours or what you are looking at. When discussing your sightings back in camp, please be respectful of other guests who were in different vehicles because they may not have been so lucky.

No Smoking

Please refrain from smoking during activities. Your guide will be able to make adequate comfort stops if and when required.

Mobiles

If there is mobile reception, please respect the other guests and limit the use of mobile phones to camp. Please do not use your mobile during game drives.

Safety first

Most times, you will be provided a safety briefing before your activities begin. On the odd occasion, it can be forgotten so here are the basics:

- Always listen and follow instruction of your qualified guide, tracker and/or ranger
- Remember you don't want to end up as lunch. So always sit in vehicles and do not stand. This is for your safety. Animals don't distinguish individual people within the vehicle when there is little movement. The moment you move or stand, this separates you from the rest of the vehicle and you are more at risk.
- Never get out of the vehicle unless you are advised it is safe to do so.
- On walking safaris, always stay close and walk single file.

- Most camps and properties are not fenced off. This means wildlife have no physical impediment to enter the area around the lodges and camps. Please therefore be careful walking around and NEVER walk at night unless accompanied by a staff member.
- Venomous snakes and scorpions are located throughout Africa. So please always be cautious by watching your feet as you walk. It's also important to empty your shoes before you put them on.
- Don't wait around camp at night on your own if you have been advised not to do so. Animals have better night vision than you do!

Dress like an onion

Layering clothing is the most sensible way to dress on safari because early mornings and late evenings can get cool in summer and cold in winter. Refer to the packing list for further details and remember it is best not to wear bright colours and patterns.

The Art of Giving

We know many of our guests want to give to those less fortunate. Please don't take sweets for children or gifts for people unless it is part of an organised arrangement or tour because it is creating an expectation that tourists will always give. This then encourages begging and further down the line, harassment, which isn't enjoyable for anyone! Encompass Africa has an entire section for guests available online in the Safari Concierge. It outlines various ways you can contribute respectfully.

Tipping

Whilst never compulsory in Africa, it is certainly part of the experience and how guides, drivers and camp staff supplement their wages. Tips make a big percentage of their salary and we provide guidelines to our guests once booked, available on our Safari Concierge.

At the end of the day, tipping is at your discretion. However should you wish to show your appreciation to the staff, an amount of your choice can either be added to your bill upon departure from each property or placed in the gratuities box (where available). This money is then distributed among all the staff. Alternatively, you may prefer to personally thank those staff members who you feel went the extra mile to ensure that your safari was a memorable experience.

We recommend you travel with small envelopes so the tip can be handed discretely with a personal note of thanks written on it.