

TATLER TRAVEL GUIDE

2016

“101 Most Brilliant and Beautiful Hotels in the World.”



INTO THE WILD 101 BEST HOTELS WINTER

Sher Bagh
RANTHAMBORE, INDIA

Clamber into your open-top Jeep before the sun rises – hot-water bottle on lap, flask of chai stashed alongside – then hurtle along dusty roads, flanked by flame-coloured bushes, in pursuit of the Bengal tiger. She’s elusive, but if you’re going to track her down it will be in the Ranthambore jungle, with its silvery lakes where she drinks, and clumps of trees where she hides. The camp – properly colonial, with flickering citronella lanterns, iced tea in cut-crystal highballs and four-posters swathed in mosquito nets – isn’t new, but the two-tent suites are. Outside one, a hot tub bubbles; the other backs onto a glassy pool, for sinking into as the sun rages overhead. Make tracks to the campfire when night falls, where yogurt-marinated chicken and subergine are cooked over smouldering embers, and cocktails are shaken with gusto – the tigertini is owner Jaisal’s own creation: potent and very drinkable, it leaves no trace of a hangover. **BOOK IT** Abercrombie & Kent (abercrombiekent.co.uk; 01242 547755) offers three nights, full board, from £2,370, including flights and two half-day game drives.

Prime time
February to March, when you are most likely to spot tigers.



Prime time
January. The rains have been, and all is gloriously green.

&Beyond Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge
MOREMI, BOTSWANA

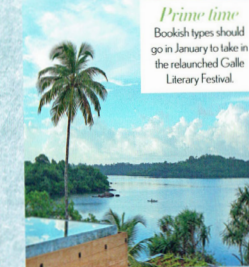
What’s the world’s cutest animal? The pangolin, of course. You’ve got to love those sweet little anteaters, with their weird, shell-like backs. They’re the inspiration behind &Beyond’s latest creation in Botswana, in the Okavango Delta, which has some of the best game-spotting on the continent. Soaring curved beams clad in higgledy-piggledy cedar tiles represent the little chap’s ribs and armoured shell, but there are gaps everywhere, to let in the breeze and take in the views. Twelve thatched rooms sit among wild palms and fig trees, and each has a plunge pool, wood-burning stove and an organic, curvaceous interior. This is architecture to marvel at – and to make you smile. **BOOK IT** Audley Travel (audleytravel.com; 01993 838500) offers four nights, full board, at Sandibe as part of a nine-night trip, from £4,792, including flights and transfers.

Tri

GALLE, SRI LANKA

Rob Drummond adores trees. ‘It was love at first sight,’ says the dishy British owner, pointing to a long-limbed banyan at the centre of his new retreat. Hugging the shores of Lake Koggala, Tri is his six-acre beauty, and something of a love song to all things arboreal. Everything is green, stylish and sustainable. A traditional white-sailed dhoni ferries guests around the lake for picnics on its eight islands and to Rob’s nearby beach club. But you’ll be happy to stay put by Tri’s 21m pool, throw shapes in the treetop yoga shala or chill in the spa that overlooks the greenery. There are all sorts of sleeping options (cinnamon-wood-clad water tower, anyone?), but the best is the lake-facing Tri Villa, angled to make the most of year-round breezes (so no need for pesky air-con). Rob’s wife is Lara Baumann, founder of Quantum Yoga, and her high-profile and very bendy friends are always dropping by, so there are lots of opportunities to ommmm. Or just lounge on your terrace watching the blue-tailed bee-eaters and marvelling at all those trees. **BOOK IT** Ampersand Travel (ampersandtravel.com; 020 7819 9770) offers seven nights, half board, from £1,990, including flights and transfers.

Prime time
Bookish types should go in January to take in the relaunched Galle Literary Festival.



Camp Nomade

ZAKOUMA, CHAD

Google ‘Chad’ and the Foreign Office travel advice is alarming. Yes, there are all sorts of ongoing threats due to tricky borders (the Central African Republic and Libya are both neighbours). But for hardboiled safari-goers who want to explore the next frontier, there is an extraordinary adventure to be had in the Zakouma National Park. Camp Nomade went up in this remote, unique and wildlife-rich region last year. It consists of eight elegant tents, kitted out with painted tin trunks, lanterns, crisp white linen and Libyan rugs. There is nothing else around, save for nomads and an elephant population that is thriving again thanks to an extraordinary conservation story. The result: a trickle of adventurous tourists, here to experience why this kind of work is so vital. **BOOK IT** Passage to Africa (passageafrica.com; 00 27 11 782 9616) offers eight nights, full board, from £6,250, including transfers and all game-viewing activities.

Prime time
You can only come between December and April – Zakouma is under water the rest of the year.

