



CALL OF THE WILD

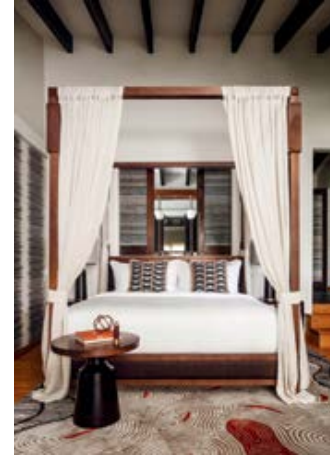
With the goal of drawing Middle Eastern tourists to the plains of Africa, sustainable travel entrepreneur Deborah Calmeyer has partnered with Emirates to launch a daring new luxury safari. The price? \$125,000



Clockwise: A boat cruise on the Zambezi; the Okavango Delta; Deborah Calmeyer

We want our trips to be life-changing, because if I can get you engaged in really caring about Africa, then you might support some of the causes we really need your help with, because we have to rely on the private sector," says Deborah Calmeyer. "We can't rely on governments in Africa because conservation is way down the list. You've got food, housing, medicine, a million things that are much more of a priority. And, honestly, the biggest mistake we can make is thinking that somebody else will save our wildlife. It's not true. It's up to us."

It takes only a few minutes of talking to Calmeyer, the chief executive and founder of Roar Africa, to realise just how deep her love for Africa runs. Brought up on a farm in Zimbabwe, she has spent the past 16 years championing every facet of the continent. From conservation



Clockwise from left: A bedroom at One&Only Nyungwe House; sunset at Singita Kwitonda Lodge, Rwanda

and the preservation of wildlife, to female empowerment and sustainable travel, Calmeyer has dedicated her professional career to the preservation and support of the people, animals and environment of her extraordinary homeland.

Now this commitment to sustainable travel is being put to what many would consider the ultimate test. The inaugural Roar Africa Emirates Executive Private Jet Safari is to take place this August, with a 12-day itinerary taking in Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls, the Okavango Delta in Botswana, Kenya's Great Migration, and the world's last wild mountain gorillas in the forests of Rwanda. It's what Calmeyer describes as the "holy grail of Africa", with 10 guests travelling on an Emirates A319 Executive Private Jet and enjoying exclusive use of every property throughout their trip. The cost? An eye-watering \$125,000 per person.

How do you justify such an expense? Well, guests get the unbridled luxury and adventure that Roar Africa is renowned for, but with the additional knowledge that they are effectively acting as agents of change. This may sound impossible given the environmental impact of flying on a customised A319 Executive Private Jet, but the entire trip will be carbon neutral thanks to the funding of a handful of projects. These include the installation of 69 solar panels in villages in Rwanda, the planting of 1,300 trees and access to fresh water for 3,000 people in Kenya, and the protection of a rhino calf through Rhinos Without Borders in Botswana.

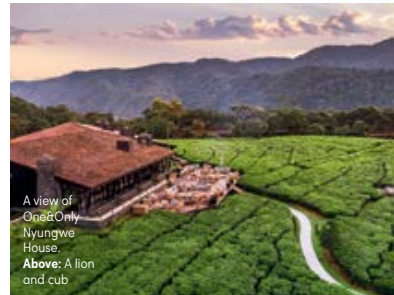
"I was pretty terrified about doing this because we're a conservation company and how does one do this kind of thing?" says Calmeyer. "But private jet travel is not going to go away, it's only going to increase, so how do we show people how to do this right? How's that possible?"

To find the answer, Calmeyer partnered with the Dutch data intelligence platform Proof of Impact, which helps companies transform impact data into positive outcomes. "They put the science behind studying the entire trip," she explains. "So not just the long haul flight emissions, but the small flights, the helicopters, the Land Rovers, the game drives, the human waste, and they came up with a number. We multiplied that by one-and-a-half and paid that money out to offset all the carbon emissions. But I also had a further requirement that I wanted that money to go to projects on the ground along the flightpath we are covering. And I'm very proud to be able to at least have done that."

So far eight of the 10 places have been taken for this year's trip, with five already reserved for next year. Given the philanthropic element, it's relatively easy to understand why, despite the price tag, with the trip especially designed to help preserve and support Africa's wildlife, wild spaces and communities.

"I feel like it's a trip of such extraordinary significance at this moment in time," says Calmeyer. "It is a trip about sustainability and conservation. It's about people falling in love and experiencing Africa in a way that they can contribute to caring for it and becoming advocates for the wild and helping us protect it." All of which enables Calmeyer and Roar Africa to concentrate on the company's wider and deeper mission. "If I don't get the heartstrings and I don't engage with that human being then I've missed another advocate for our wildlife. And that wildlife is shrinking at a rate you cannot imagine. The travel now, and the kind of people that come; it's more important than ever that they get what we're doing and what's at stake here." roarfric.com

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A view of One&Only Nyungwe House. Above: A lion and cub

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