# APPIC OF Travel Magazine



Uganda: "The Pearl of Africa" hosts ATA 39th World Congress Profiles of other African Countries Includes the "Creat Red Island" of Madagascar most unusual eco-tourism destination on earth



## Uganda says many happy



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#### **By Jerry Bird**

Before adding our personal comments, lets set the stage by having the host country speak by itself.

I am Uganda, The "Pearl of Africa", Land of Beauty that holds great hope in the many avenues of travel, tourism and hospitality. Proud again to be the host country of Africa Travel Association 39th Annual Congress in Kampala, my country is a land-locked country which lies across the Equator and borders, Sudanon the North, Kenya to the east, Tanzania, Rwanda on the south, and Democratic Republic of Congo to the west.

It's an astonishingly beautiful country, full of vibrant colours, confident, courteous and indomitable people.Perched on the northern shore of Lake Victoria, Uganda is marketing itself as the ultimate ecodestination. Mountain gorillas represent perhaps the most powerful eco-image of all.

I am unique, my country when it comes to natural beauty has many national parks: Bwindi impenetrable National Park, Kibale Kibale National Park, Kidepo Valley National Park, Lake Mburo National Park, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Mount Elgon National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, Queen Elisabeth National Park, Rwenzori Mountains National Park and Semuliki National Park. The wildlife add to the beauty of my country an it is a great place to have exciting safaris activities with exotic bird species, white Colobus monkey and blue monkey. My waterfalls and lakes are the perfect tourists destinations, within Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, there are 4 different areas when you can track the mountain gorilla, and they include Buhoma, Ruhija, Rushaga and Nkuringo. Each of these areas has specialized accommodation close to the tracking area. With its ten national parks, Murchison Falls National Park, the largest of all National Game Park is the ideal for discovering the african rich in fauna, the hippos bucks and the monster crocs of the Nile. The highest point is Mount Stanley located in the Rwenzori "Mountains of the Moon". Undoubtedly Uganda will amaze you with diversity of its landscapes, and wherever you go, you will witness outstanding panoramas that only Africa can offer you.



A former British protectorate, I became independent in 1962. As tourism Minister H.E. Maria Mutagamba, stated concerning my promising future "Thanks to her landscape and wildlife, cultural diversity and the political stability, Uganda is a "Pearl of Africa", the Hollywood darling with "African Queen film". The congress is holding at a time when tourism

is ranked among the top 20 world tourist destination noting that Uganda has succeeded in securing major position among tourist destination in Africa and will become emerging destination. It is a country with huge tourism potential which is still undiscovered.

#### **MY ETHNIC ROOTS**

Many Americans know about Uganda, thanks to Philip Briggs, Ernest Hemingway, Walter Baumgartel and Paul Joynson-Hicks stories about Uganda. My population is over 22 million which includes five major groups: the Bantu Nilotics, Madi-Muro, Highland Nilotics and Milo-Hermits. The majority of the Pygmy people in Uganda



## returns to the "Pearl of Africa"

belong to the Batwa people, the Basua or Bambuti in Semliki Valley, all of them live harmoniously in mixed communities freely exercising their religions and cultural traditions.

My people are widely recognized for their genuine friendliness and hospitality. While English is the official language, there are 3 major indigenous language families, Bantu and Nilotic. Swahili and Luganda are also widely spoken.

Christanity is widespread in Uganda. Nearly one third of the populace follows traditional religions. There are also several Muslim sects. Uganda was reorganized from 10 provinces into 33 districts and Kampala is the political capital with a population of 1,660.000 people, built close to the shores of Lake Victoria and the source of Nile River.

#### **MY ECONOMY**

Uganda is predominantly based on Agriculture, which accounts for about 44% of its GDP, employing over 80% of the work force. Coffee accounts for the bulk of export revenues. Food crop production is the most important economic activity. Major exports are coffee, cotton, tobacco, cereals, oilseeds, orchids, nuts, sericulture (silk) and tea. Oil revenues and taxes will become a larger source of government funding as oil comes on line in the next few years.

#### **MY INDUSTRIES**

The most important sectors are the process-

ing of agricultural products, the manufacture of light consumer goods and textiles, and the production of beverages, electricity and cement. Production of sawn wood, timber processing for export, fish farming.

Uganda has large under-exploited mineral deposits of gold, oil, high grade tin, salt, cobalt, kaolin, iron-ore, glass sand phosphates (fertilizer) pharmaceuticals and fabrication ceramics.

A discovery of petroleum wells in the Lake Albert Region has enhanced the sector's joie de vivre. There are also significant quantities of clay and gypsum and to be a major supplier of hydro-electric power.

#### **MY RICH HERITAGE**

Two of Uganda's National parks are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Rwenzori mountains National Park and the tombs of Buganda Kings. Cultural sites such as Kasubi Tombs, Uganda Museum and Namugongo martyrs shrines have attracted both local and international tourists. The 3 UNESCO heritage sites found in the Pearl, hopefully it will awaken your curiosity and make encourage you to visit these places the next time you visit my country.

For more information visit: http://www.visituganda.com/http://www.ugandawildlife.org



Speke Resort Munyonyo, Uganda









UGANDA'S NATURE AND RESORTS ARE A PROUD EXAMPLE OF ECOTOURISM IN ACTION



1. Photos: Queen Elisabeth National Park 2. Tomb of Buganda Kings 3. Uganda Gorilla 4. Hon. Maria Mutagamba with UWA Team. 5. Uganda Lodge. 6. Pygmies Baganda Tribe 7. Murchison Falls 8. Tree climbing Lion of Ishasha, Queen Elisabeth National Park



### UGANDA HOST ATA DELEGATES AND WORLD JOURNALISTS WITH AN EXCITING ARRAY OF BUSINESS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



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During le Congress, delegates explored wide range of Topics: Focus on Destination Uganda, The Pearl of Africa, focus on Media, 2014 Africa Tourism Monitor Launch, keynote address CBS news, Global Tourism Trends & Outlook, Marketing African Destinations, Building Brands through Social Media & Content Marketing, Focus on digital & Experience Marketing in Africa, Spotlight on Romance Travel in Africa, Spotlight on Diaspora Engagement, Bearing Witness to Tragedy, PR & Crisis Management Tools, Sports & Mega Events Tourism, Empowering Communities, The Power of Storytelling, Focus on Family travel, Accelerating Destinations, Nature & Wildlife Protection, Tour operators roundtable, tourism Investment Forum, Presentation on Tourism Investment Climate in Africa, Spotlight on Tourism Facilitation, Effects of Ebola on West africa Tourism, Africa Hotel Development, Expansion & Marketing, Africa Air Access: Opportunities & Challenges, Partnerships with Airlines serving Africa. African Culinary Experience presentation, Educators Forum, Tourism: A Gateway to Growth & Investment, ATA Young Professionals Program.

"ATA members and supporters have shown that we are truly committed to promoting tourism to Africa as a means to promoting socio-economic development, we know that when we return to our home countries, we will continue to work in partnership with tourism stakeholders in the public and private sectors to promote the industry and inspire others to follow our example." (Photo credit Marie Claire Andrea)

#### Information:

http://www.africatravelassociation.org http://www.africatravelassociation.worldpress.com http://www.visituganda.com



#### By Andrea Papitto

AFRICA TRAVEL ASSOCIATION CONVENES 39th ANNU-AL WORLD CONGRESS IN UGANDA INTERNATIONAL EVENT BRING TOGETHER GLOBAL LEADERS IN HOSPI-TALITY, TOURISM, AND INVESTMENT TO DISCUSS THE INDUSTRY'S MOST PRESSION TOPICS KENYA TO HOST ATA'S 40th ANNUAL WORLD CONGRESS IN FALL 2015 -BRUSSELS AIRLINES OFFICIAL CONGRESS AIRLINE

The Africa Travel Association (ATA), the world's leading travel trade association promoting travel and tourism to Africa, held its 39thAnnual World Congress in Kampala, Uganda from November 11-16, 2014. With the theme "Tourism is Everyone's Business," the congress brought together over 500 international and local delegates from the public and private sector to discuss the most pressing topics to advance the African tourism industry.

The congress was officially opened by H.E. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda. In his remarks, President Museveni urged Ugandan officials to increase promotions and marketing of the country as well as discussed the tourism potential of the nation. In a show of support of the Uganda tourism sector, First Lady of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Janet Museveni, hosted the Congress Patron's Dinner and ATA Awards Ceremony.

The congress was hosted by the Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities under the auspices of Honorable Minister Dr. Maria Mutagamba and supported by the Uganda Tourism Board, local ATA Uganda Chapter, and members of the private sector. Additionally, during the ATA membership meeting Minister Mutagamba was elected to serve as the next president of the association.

Delegates represented over twenty countries including Cameroon, Canada, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Italy, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, the U.S., the U.K., Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

#### **AFRICA TOURISM OUTLOOK IS BRIGHT**

Despite extraordinary times with the Ebola crisis and its far-reaching effects on the industry leading up to the congress, ATA Executive Director Edward Bergman stated, "We must remain strong and united in changing the perceptions of Africa tourism on the global stage." Bergman also commended the Ugandan government for overturning the "Anti Homosexuality Bill," which was hurting the local tourism industry and urged the country to "look forward and focus on tourism as a vital means of economic development, job creation, and peace and understanding."

During the congress, the African Development Bank (AfDB), New York University (NYU) Africa House, and ATA launched the 2nd Edition of the Africa Tourism Monitor. From 2012 to 2013, Africa saw a 5% growth in arrivals with 65.1 million (2013) and \$43.9 billion tourism receipts. The theme of the report was "Leveraging

Africa's Human Capacity for Tourism Development," the report emphasized the crucial role tourism plays in Africa, as it harnesses the potential to increase trade, create socio-cultural linkages, and spur economic and job opportunities.

#### FOCUS ON TOURISM INVESTMENT & GROWTH

ATA's 39th Annual World Congress featured a full-day Tourism Investment Forum where tourism business leaders, industry stakeholders, and investors discussed the latest tourism development and investment trends. The day started with a keynote address by the Eng. Dr. Ajedra Aridru, Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development who presented a range of investment opportunities in Uganda.

In a session on tourism facilitation, representatives from the African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Computer Frontiers, and the Association of Uganda Tour Operators discussed policydevelopment, strengthening intra-Africa partnerships, infrastructure development, visa processing, and creating linkages between the public and private sectors to advance Africa's tourism growth.

Moderated by CNBC and Forbes Africa, the panel on Africa hotel investment and expansion explored opportunities and challenges of development on the continent and attracting customers to a range of hotel types with representatives from Jovago.com, Protea Hotels, Serena Hotels, and W Hospitality Group.

Led by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the "Africa Air Access" panel featured representatives from the continent's leading airlines like Brussels Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Ethiopian Airlines, and South African Airways.

#### **CONGRESS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

H.E. Scott DeLisi, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda, welcomed ATA delegates on behalf the embassy and encouraged the Ugandan government to foster an environment friendly to tourism growth and foreign investment.

World renowned travel journalist Peter Greenberg, Travel Editor for CBS News, delivered a thoughtprovoking keynote address to open the travel trade sessions and also moderated the Tourism Ministers' Roundtable with Ministers from Kenya, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Greenberg emphasized the role government can play in engaging the media.

The congress program included an overview of global tourism trends and outlook by Euromonitor International.

In the session "Marketing African Destinations," tourism boards and representation firms discussed destination branding and creating a competitive edge. The panel was led by the Uganda Tourism Board with panelists from the Kenya Tourism Board, Seychelles Tourism Board, The Bradford Group (representing Tanzania), and Partner Concepts (representing Botswana).

Led by the Association of Uganda Tour Operators, the Tour Operators' Roundtable covered strategies for attracting American travelers, creating partnerships, product development, marketing, and health and safety concerns with front-line U.S. and Ugandan tour operators.

With an emphasis on social media and experiential marketing, E-Tourism Frontiers and RW Social presented trends and tools for destinations and private sector operators to increase exposure and engage with consumers. Additionally, ATA's monthly #Africhat Twitter conversation happened live from Uganda and the congress hashtag trended for the day.

In the spotlight session on Diaspora Engagement, New York State Senator William Perkins and Ogo Sow, ATA International Board Member and Diaspora Affairs Liaison, emphasized how destinations can engage with Diaspora communities to support travel, tourism, and investment. The program also included spotlights on faith-based travel with the New York Abyssinian Baptist Church and romance travel with Bridal Guide. Leading African chef and author Pierre Thiam conducted Uganda market visits and presented the latest African culinary tourism products and trends.

#### **EXPERIENCING THE PEARL OF AFRICA**

During the Uganda Host Country Day delegates experienced the "Pearl of Africa" firsthand by visiting the adventure city of Jinja, the source of the mighty River Nile. The Speaker of Parliament in Uganda, Hon. Rebecca A. Kadaga, welcomed delegates to Jinja. "It's been a blessing and a privilege for us to host you in our country, which is also your home," Kadaga said.

In a gesture towards sustainable tourism and an ATA congress tradition, the Uganda Tourism Board gave each delegate a sapling to plant on the river bank. Each delegate registered their tree and Ugandan hosts encouraged them to return to Uganda in the future to check on the growth of their trees.

Following the tree planting ceremony, delegates encountered an exciting boating regatta and musical performances along the Nile River. Delegates then enjoyed a boat ride to the Jinja Sailing Club where they shared traditional Ugandan cuisine for lunch.

#### LOOKING FORWARD, UPCOMING EVENTS

Two special announcements were made during the congress. Hon. Phyllis Kandie, Kenya Cabinet Secretary, East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, announced that ATA's 40th Annual World Congress will take place in Nairobi, Kenya in the Fall of 2015.

The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, ATA, and Global Strategies for good announced that the City of Atlanta, GA would host ATA's Inaugural Aviation, Transport and Trade Summit from July 13-14, 2015.

#### **CONGRESS SPONSORS**

Brussels Airlines, Official Airline of the 2014 ATA World Congress, organized special discounts for delegates attending the congress in Kampala originating from North America and across Europe. The official congress venue was the Speke Resort Munyonyo, along Lake Victoria. Media sponsors included CNBC Africa, Forbes Africa, and Travel World News.

The media delegation was organized by ATA; in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities; the Uganda Tourism Board; UN World Tourism Organization; local Uganda tour operators A.G.E. Safaris and Pearl of Africa Tours and Travel. Media outlets represented include: AFAR, Bridal Guide, African Diaspora Tourism, Canadian World Traveler, CNBC Africa, Evasion TV (Canada), Focus on Travel News (Turkey), Forbes Africa, L'Agenzia di Viaggi (Italy), Matador Network, National Geographic, The Network Journal, Sherman's Travel, Travel World News, Voice of America (VOA) News, and West Africa Tourism Radio.

http://www.africa-ata.org/events.htm http://www.visituganda.com

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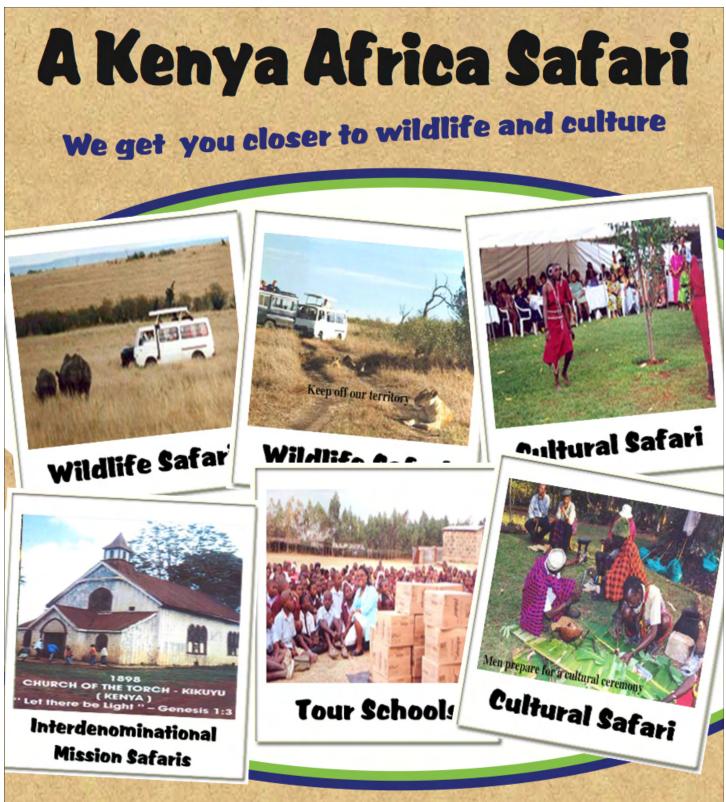
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## Tanzania promotes Treasures of the North, Gems of the South and West



Hon.Lazaro Nyalandu & Edward Bergman

#### By Karen Hoffman

Dear Travel Agents, In this special ATA Congress edition of Africa Travel Magazine, we want to take this opportunity to introduce you to a part of Tanzania few people know National Park, the Selous Game Reserve, Pangani, Tanga and Songea. Even if you have not yet been to Tanzania, most of you are familiar with some of our famous icons and World Heritage sites, Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa, Serengeti National Park, famous for the great wildebeests migration, as well as the Ngorongoro Crater, which is often called the 8th Wonder of the World. But in the south, with fewer tourists, the experience is different, some say even more authentic. Ruaha National Park is now the largest park in East Africa and the second largest national park in all of Africa. The Selous Game Reserve is the largest in the world. Now, as the air connections between North and South expand with Coastal Aviation offering scheduled flights between the Serengeti and Ruaha National Parks since June 2010, and as the choice of accommodation increase in the South, your clients can have a diversified safari experience not forget the opportunities for total relaxation on the miles of white sandy beaches along the Indian Ocean. Marine parks, water sports and world class diving sites are found off the shores of mainland Tanzania, its coastal islands like Mafia, as well as on the exotic spice islands of Zanzibar. The most frequently heard comment from first time visitors to home the memories of the warm hospitality Program, Visit the People, which currently comprises 26 villages in the North, offers visitors a rare opportunity

to meet the local people and participate in a diverse range of daily activities such as cooking, fishing and making handicrafts We look forward to saying Karibuni Tanzania (welcome to Tanzania) to you and your clients.

## TREASURES OF THE NORTH, GEMS OF THE SOUTH

Tanzania, the largest country in East Africa, is focused on wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism, with approximately 28 % of the land protected by the Government. It boasts 15 National Parks and 32 game reserves. It is the home of the tallest mountain in Africa, the legendary Mt. Kilimanjaro; The Serengeti, named in October, 2006, the New 7th Wonder of the World by USA Today and Good Morning America; the world acclaimed Ngorongoro Crater, often called the 8th Wonder of the World; Olduvai Gorge, the cradle of mankind: game reserve; Ruaha, now the second largest National Park in Africa; the spice islands of Zanzibar; and seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Most important for visitors, the Tanzanian people are warm and friendly, speak English, which together with Kiswahili, are the two official languages; and the country is an oasis of peace and stability with a democratically elected and stable government.

#### TREASURES OF THE NORTH

Tanzania is most famous for the icons of what is known as the Northern Circuit. Arusha, the Safari capital of Tanzania, is the jumping off point for the North. International flights to Arusha fly into Kilimanjaro Airport, most domestic and safari flights are from Arusha Airport.

#### **Ngorongoro Crater**

A visit to the world renowned Ngorongoro Crater is an integral part of any first time Safari to Tanzania. But too often it is just an overnight, where visitors only come to see the Ngorongoro Crater, which in fact is only one of eight craters, and miss the excitement and diversity of the entire Ngorongoro Conservation Area. There is so much to experience beyond the Ngorongoro Crater that we encourage visitors to incorporate at least two or three night stays in the NCA. It is one of the World's most unique ecosystems because it is the only conservation area where man and wildlife co-exist in harmony and one of the reasons that NCA was accorded the status of a

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World Heritage Sites and listed as one of the International Biosphere Reserve by the UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Reserve Program. Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa. The ultimate in adventure travel, scaling the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro is a heavy challenge, more from the rigors of altitude than the actual difficulty of the hike itself. The climb, which takes on average five days, takes hikers through thick forests and alpine grasslands, desolate rockface and brilliant white glaciers.

#### Serengeti National Park

Serengeti National Park is easily Tanzania's largest and most famous park because of the annual animal migration of over one million and a half white bearded wildebeest and zebras; it has 5,700 square miles of protected area. Large prides of lions laze easily in the long grasses, plentiful families of elephants feed on acacia bark and trump to each other across the plains, and giraffes, gazelles, monkeys, eland, and the whole range of African wildlife is in awe-inspiring numbers. One of the highlights of the Serengeti National Park is the opportunity to take a hot-air balloon safari, organized by Serengeti Balloon Safaris. The journey takes off flying low over the plains as the sun comes up and turns the grasslands from blue to gold. After landing, guests have a champagne breakfast complete with crystal glasses and white linen tablecloths in the middle of the African bush, as zebra and antelope graze nearby.

#### **GEMS OF THE SOUTH**

Southern Circuit! The sheer vastness of southern Tanzania, still undiscovered by many, makes for some spectacular game viewing and opportunities off the beaten track. Dar es Salaam, the commercial capital of Tanzania, is the jumping off point for the South. Ruaha National Park Ruaha, which boasts 10,000 elephants, the largest population of any East African national park, protects a vast tract of the rugged semi-arid bush country that characterizes central Tanzania. Its lifeblood is the Great Ruaha River which courses along the Eastern boundary of the park. A fine network of game-viewing roads follows follows the Great Ruaha and its seasonal tributaries, where, during the dry season, impala, waterbuck and other antelopes risk their life for a sip of life sustaining water. The risk is considerable with prides of 20 plus lions lording over the savannah, the cheetahs that stalk the open grassland and the leopards that lurk in tangled riverside thickets. Ruaha is also home to over 450 bird species and now includes the Ihefu Wetland, the natural water reservoir for the Great Ruaha River.

#### **The Selous Game Reserve**

The Selous Game Reserve is Africa's largest game reserve and covers more than 5% of Tanzania's total area. Its rivers, hills, and plains are home to roaming elephant populations, the area's famous wild dogs, an some of the last black rhino left in the region. Due to its natural diversity and untouched state, the Selous Game Reserve was proclaimed a World Heritage Site in 1988 and today continues to live up to its esteemed status. The Selous offer tourists the added attractions of boating safaris on the Rufiji River and walking safaris.

#### Katavi National Park

Isolated, untrammelled and seldom visited, Katavi is a true wilderness, providing the few intrepid souls who make it there with a thrilling taste of Africa as it must have been a century ago. Tanzania's third largest national park, it lies in the remote southwest of the country, within a truncated arm of the Rift Valley that terminates in the shallow, brooding expanse of Lake Rukwa.

#### Saadani National Park

Saadani is where the beach meets the bush. Located on the Indian Ocean beachfront, it is the only marine/bush national park in East Africa. The beach possesses all the attributes that make Tanzania's tropical coastline and islands so popular with sun-worshippers. Yet it is also the





one place where those idle hours of sunbathing might be interrupted by an elephant strolling past, or a lion coming to drink at the nearby waterhole! About a three hour drive from Dar es Salaam, it is also a popular day trip from beach resorts scattered along Tanzania's northern coast.

#### **Mbeya Region**

The city of Mbeya, near the Zambi deep in the southern an border highlands, is the major agriculturla capital in the country's south-west region. The Mbeya mountain range lies to the north, and the Poroto mountain range lies to the south-east. Lake Nyasa, that serves as a boundary for Tanzania and Malawi, is among the leading tourist attractions in the southern highlands. The 800-metre deep lake and shoreline offer pristine beaches for water sports and sun bathing. The lake is the third largest body of water bordering Tanzania, 500 kilometres long and 50 kilometres wide. From the Lake Nyasa Shores, are the Uporoto Ranges, Kipengere and Livingstone mountain ranges and the Rift Valley features; all of which the Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB) and the Tourism Division in the ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism have identified for development and marketing. At the Chimala and Matamba escarpments, a road with 52 hair-pin bends (sharp corners) has been constructed and a thrilling, panoramic and breathtaking offers drive as it snakes through nine kilometers of spectacular waterfalls.

#### Songea

Songea town in Ruvuma region has been declared a historical tourist site in southern highlands of Tanzania. Ruvuma region has been identified for its rich tourist attractions, mainly cultural heritage, historical sites and scenery. Among such attractions are the Matongo Forest Reserve, Luhira Game Reserve, the German Boma, originally built in Songea town in 1902 and the Maji Maji warriors hanging place. Since the end of infamous Maji Maji rebellion in 1906, a festival to commemorate the Maji Maji heroes hung in Songea takes place every February. The new Maji Maji Memorial Museum was inaugurated during the 2010 Songea Festival .

Visit Online: http://www.tanzaniatouristboard.com

**Underwater Hotel in Manta Resort Zanzibar** 



By Habeeb Salloum

### LUXOR THE GREATEST OPEN-AIR MUSEUM IN THE WORLD

What impressed me most in Egypt were the pharaonic monuments. Today's Egyptians still live off the remains of their ancestors. This was the remark made by a Canadian friend when I asked her about the tour she had just made to that ancient land.

Now, after I had ended my exploration of Luxor's aweinspiring conglomeration of monuments, I remembered her words. In this greatest open air museum on earth, one can truly appreciate the Ancient Egyptians' contribution to world civilization. There is no place else on earth where so many ruins are concentrated in this one spot - once named Weset, later changed to Thebes by the Ancient Egyptians.

Homer in his Iliad described Thebes, capital of the Egyptian Empire for a thousand years, as 'the hundred-gate city for which only the grains of sand surpassed the abundance of wealth contained therein'. When the Arabs came in the 7th century A.D., they saw Thebes' mass of huge structures and named it Al-Qusoor (the castles) from which we get Luxor - today a city of some 200,000.

As a testament to their desire for immortality, the Ancient Egyptians were the only people who wrote manuals for the other world. In Luxor and elsewhere, they built for eternity with sandstone and granite. In the spirit of the ever-lasting, their still-standing temples and tombs are a mecca for millions of tourists from the four corners of the globe.

The fear of terrorism, which had kept tourists away for a number of years, has faded as the Egyptian government has gradually taken control of the situation. When I asked Hashim, my driver, bringing me on a desert road from Hurghada, Egypt's top Red Sea resort, to Luxor, whether terrorism is still a problem, he replied: "al-hamdu-Allah (praise be to God), for a long time we have not had one incident against tourists. Al-hamdu-Allah, Egypt welcomes all visitors."

Amid the breathtaking splendour of Luxor's pharaonic monuments where imagination overtakes eyesight, thousands upon thousands of these visitors take a thrilling walk through history. Beneath pillars carved with lotus buds and the papyrus plant, past statues of gods and animals, and climbing down into fantastically decorated tombs, they are never far away from the early Egyptians and their remains.

Pharaonic Thebes, a city of a half million, was divided into two parts: on the East Bank of the Nile, the City of the Living; and on the West Bank, the City of the Dead. The Karnak and Luxor Temples where the gods lived - two of the 10 temples in the area - greet the sunrise on the East Bank; and the sunset on the West Bank throws shadows over the 400 tombs of Queens and Nobles, located in the Valleys of the Kings. The whole site was organized for those alive and for the ones who travelled to the other life.

Guides usually begin their tours on the East Bank at the Karnak Temple complex - to the ancient Egyptians, the most esteemed of places. Covering over 40.5 ha (100 acRes) and spanning thirteen centuries, the complex is a massive collection of ruins on which at one time 81,000 people toiled - the largest series of temples ever built in one

place. Dedicated to the god Amon-Ra, king of the gods; his consort, Mut; and their son Khonsu, Karnak, is a holy city of colossal statues, hypostyles halls, obelisks, pylons and shrines.

Past the two gigantic statues of Ramses II, who sired 100 daughters and 65 sons and was the only pharaoh who declared himself a god while still living, one enters the pantheon between two huge pylons. Inside, a 300 ton statue of Ramses II, later usurped by King Pinedjem, stands guard at the entrance to the huge hypostyle passageway. The hall's colossal 134 columns, 23 m (75 ft) high, have capitals in the form of the lotus plant - atop of each can stand 50 people.

Beyond are many other halls and statues, a sacred lake and three grand obelisks, the ones remaining from the seven that once graced this house of the gods - the other four are in Istanbul, London, New York and Rome.

As we walked out of this awe-inspiring pantheon, the words of our guide, Muhiyadeen, had a ring of truth when he remarked, "In my opinion Karnak should have been the first among the 'Seven Wonders of the World'."

After a tour of this most massive of ruins on earth, for an unique experience, one should take in the 'Sound and Light' show held within the temple. As the visitor moves between the massive columns, voices seemingly from the world of the past relate the history of Thebes. Throughout the presentation, one feels the grandeur of a civilization which in the mist of time created such a structure.

The Luxor Temple, 3 km (2 mi) away from Karnak, was once joined to that pantheon by an avenue of ram-headed sphinxes - many of which still remain. However, only a modest section of this passageway has been excavated. The remainder remains under homes and mosques, waiting to be uncovered.

It took 200 years to build the Luxor Temple - a much smaller version of its older twin. In pharaonic times, every year in late August, the marriage of the gods Amon and Mut was celebrated for 15 days. The sacred boat of Amon-Ra, followed by those of Mut and Khonsu, were carried between the sphinxes with music and dancing from his home in Karnak to the Luxor Temple, then returned a few days later, amid much merrymaking.

Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. expanded the Luxor Temple and later the Christians turned it into a church. By the 12th century, it was a pile of ruins covered by sand. In 1130 A.D., the oldest mosque in Luxor, Abu al-Hajjaj, was built on land covering the top of its lotus capitals. After an adjoining portion of the temple was excavated, the mosque appears to be suspended high above the temple floor.

From the East Bank, we crossed the Nile to the City of the Dead where our guide had planned for us visits to a number of pharaonic tombs and temples. The most important site in this barren burial spot is the 'Valley of the Kings' - the necropolis of the great Egyptian sovereigns where some 64 of Egypt's pharaohs had their palatial resting places hewed into the sheer rock.

Here, the first vault we visited was that of Ramses IV, the largest in the entire Valley and once used as a Christian church. Among other magnificent decorations, the tomb features scenes from the 'Book of the Dead', 'Book of the Gates' and 'Book of Caves'.

A short distance away, we stopped at the famous Tomb of Tutankhamen - the only grave discovered with all its treasures. It was uncovered in November 1922 by the Englishmen Lord Carnarvan and Howard Carter. Today, his small tomb is empty except for the sarcophagus and the deteriorated mummy. Its 4,000 piece rich contents are exhibited in the Egyptian Museum of Antiquity in Cairo.

From the grave of this boy-king, we explored the Tomb of Ramses III, a warrior king who defeated a coalition of 'sea nations' and Libyans. Noted for the frescos in its walls depicting life in ancient Egypt from the playing of music to the use of perfumes, it is a very impressive burial chamber.

After visiting the Tomb of Ramses I - the best preserved in the Valley of the Kings - we left for the Valley of the Queens. Here, we stopped at the Temple of Hatshepsut or Deir al-Bahari (Convent of the North) built by Queen Hatshepsut 1501 - 1481 B.C.), the most renowned of all the Ancient Egyptian queens and the only woman to govern Egypt as a pharaoh. She ruled the country for 20 years and built the sanctuary in honour of her father, Thothmes, and herself. Consecrated to the goddess Hathor, she called it 'Splendour of Splendours'. Later, it was converted into a Christian convent and thanks to this, the Temple has been well-preserved.

Leaving this imposing shrine, carved into a stone mountain side, we drove to the Colossi of Memnon. These two huge statues, the only remains of the Temple of Amenophis III, became a legend in Greek mythology.

At these deteriorating statues where pharaonic and Greek gods became intermixed, we ended our tour of the City of the Dead - the most important necropolis in human history. It is a spot that has kept alive for thousands of years the history of the pharaohs and their amazing achievements - a place that should be a must on any visitor's itinerary.

The optimal time to travel to Pharaonic Thebes and its necropolis is in November. Annually, on the 21st of this month, for four days, a national celebration, featuring dancing, music and acrobatic feats, is held in honour of King Tutankhamen.

During this fun-filled period, a visitor can live for a time in the era of the fabulous pharaohs who created 'the mother of all civilizations'.

#### About the Author

Habeeb Salloum is a freelance writer, author and member of Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC). He has travelled extensively to most parts of the world and has written comprehensively about topical items, tourism and the cuisines of the countries through which he has journeyed. (habeeb.salloum@sympatico.ca)



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I am Angola ...





















I am Angola, a land that holds great promise in the many avenues of trade, tourism and hospitality - growth industries destined to employ and involve an increasing number of my citizens as time marches on. I greet you and invite you to explore all corners of the land, where you will meet a cross section of my people whose warmth and friendship will remain in your hearts and minds for lifetime. Photos courtesy of Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Infotur of Angola. For more information, visit: http://www.angola.org

#### WELCOME! TO MADAGASCAR "THE GREAT RED ISLAND"

We are hoping that the following outline of Madagascar's attractions will put you in the mood to explore the world's top biodiversity hotspot a place that must be saved for future generations to enjoy. We thought how wonderful, it would be to play a vital role in this amazing flora and fauna found nowhere else on earth. Eco-tourism is a powerful force that helps conservation if you do visit Madagascar for a Safari, you will help save it. So whether you'd like an adventure holiday or just prefer to relax on the warm sand of the pristine Nose Be Beach, "the scented Island" before taking a dip in the crystal clear waters that surround you. Everything you've dreamt of when it comes to a beach paradise, awaits you on the Magical Island of Madagascar!



What a wonderful world! A unique echo-ecotourism destination in the World that I will treasure all my life. Being cut off from Africa by the Indian Ocean, Madagascar endemic and rich flora and fauna have evolved independently making it the Galapagos of Africa. A paradise for adventure and discovery, yet still virtually undiscovered! Taking its origin in Austronesian, Bantu and European civilizations, eighteen tribes constitute the Malagasy population, speaking the same language, its historical monuments tradition & ceremonies, handicrafts are all witness to this diversity. Few places on earth offer such an intense kaleidoscope of nature. Located in the Indian Ocean, 4000 km off the eastern coast of Africa, Madagascar is the world's four largest island, one and half as big as Japan, about the size of Texas, that is home to unique et remarkable species of fauna and flora which is matched by epic landscapes of an incredible diversity. Rainforest to desert is just 300 km. It is the world's top biodiversity hotspot, with the vast majority of its flora and fauna found nowhere else on earth. Most iconic are its adorable lemurs, which exists in almost a hundred different varieties leaping through the trees in search of fruit and leaves. Andasibe is the only place in the world that you can witness the largest of all lemurs - the livable teddy ear-shaped indri - singing his haunting song. 90% of these species are endemic to Madagascar. Species of lemurs, birds, insects, reptiles, amphibians and turtles can be found there in huge variety, There is no doubt that the unique wildlife is the biggest draw for tourists coming here.

Madagascar is unique. One of the biggest surprises is when you are just about to land: look out and you will think you are over Asia - rice paddies everywhere! I love french influence on the country's gastronomy; with cacao, vanilla and every fruit known to the world growing in profusion in Madagascar, the food is what take most by surprise. The other surprise in particular with regard to visitors who have been on African Safari is that there is nothing dangerous at all. You are able to walk around with a flashlight at night without dangerous animals following you! it is a goal delight being so safe in the forests, especially for kids.

What about idyllic beaches which will prove hard to resist? You can also go sailing to explore nearby islands or board a whalewatching boat to admire humpbacks breaching - one of nature's most majestic spectacles. With 5000 km of coastlines, Madagascar offers "Robinson Crusoe" style holidays, it has numerous bays, creeks, lagoons and beaches for beach activities. There are also numerous activities available such as fishing, diving, sailing and whale watching which has growing adepts. There is



also un wide range of ecosystems that shelter an extraordinary flora. The vegetation can take unexpected shape such as the umbrella pine pachypodium. Baobabs, Orchids, Aloe and Medicinal plants.

I greet you and invite you to explore all corners of this ultimate paradise of the modern world, long considered a mystical "must see" destination. Its isolation has left a pristine culture and wondrous range of wildlife for the determined traveller to experience.

Whatever the result you will be glad you have experienced the wonder and diversity of one of travels long sought after destinations.



By Muguette Goufrani & Jerry Bird

"Life is but a journey - to travel is to live twice."

During my career as a Travel Agent in Tahiti, I have worked for Matson Lines. Later, visiting West Africa on a cruise from Europe along the Gold Coast Ivory Coast, I ended up working there for several years. I lives now in Vancouver, BC, Canada, one of the world's finest ports and Center of the famous Love Boat Cruises to Alaska. Our Publisher and editor Jerry Bird worked aboard the paddle wheeler SS Keno on the fabled Yukon River system. Together we can give you some sound advice based on experience.

#### Inspired to cruise on a floating resort? So why not have the adventure of a lifetime by day and return to the Africa Cruise by Night?

More and more travellers are looking for unique opportunities to embrace new cultures, take in breathtaking scenery, and create memories of a lifetime while traveling to places off the beaten path. With Top Cruises lines sailing all over the world, now is the perfect time to experience exotic destinations such as the Africa's Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean.

Like North American and Caribbean cruises, African cruises use luxurious ocean liners to provide tourist with an unforgettable vacation experience which will offer the convenience of a resort hotel at sea, while their days are spent canvassing this adventurous land with fun-filled activities.

Africa is the largest of the three great southward projections from the largest landmass of the Earth. The climate of Africa ranges from tropical to subarctic on its highest peaks.

Its northern half is primarily desert or arid, while its central and southern areas contain

both savanna plains and very dense jungle rainforest regions. Africa boasts perhaps the world's largest combination of density and 'range of freedom" of wild animal populations and diversity. Cruise holidays to South Africa attract the true adventurer. With its game-rich savannahs, fine vineyards, cosmopolitan cities like Johannesburg & Cape Town and architectural heritage of a great colonial past, the region begs to be explored. Travelling miles across its wilderness, dusty plains and rolling dunes appear on the horizon. For the lucky ones, the "big five" might be spotted grazing in the wild.

On the coast, Cape Town is dramatically framed by Table Mountain. Venture by cable car to the plateau where, on a clear day, there are spectacular views of the city and South African shoreline. Sample fine wine in the tranquil winelands, then explore the country towns, lagoons and forests along the pretty Garden Route. The Wild Coasts boasts isolated beaches, rocky coastline and traditional rural villages. As you cruise into this and every port in this rich land, a whole host of attractions will all vie for your attention. Africa is truly astounding and leaves an imprint on its visitors forever.

#### **Indian Ocean Cruises**

As a holiday destination the Indian Ocean is without doubt one of the few remaining areas in the world that is still relatively uncommercialized and largely unaffected by mass tourism.

The indian ocean cruises range in duration from 4 to 18 nights, with itineraries which not only include the breathtakingly beautiful coral reef encircled Seychelles islands, the fascinating Mascarene islands of Mauritius, with its ever-changing scenery, and the French influenced island of la Reunion, but also Madagacar, the perfumed islands of the comoros and the bustling bazaars of Zanzibar. Each island ha a distinct and unique character of its own.

Unique cruises in the Indian Ocean of varying durations which can be combined with a relaxing stay at an exotic Kenya beach hotel and optional safari adventures in Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa. Ports of call are the Seychelles, Tanzania Islands, the Comoros, Madagascar, South Africa and Mozambique.

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According to Anouk Zijlma, cruising to Africa is becoming an increasingly popular way to travel to Africa and enjoy the sights in comfort.

This article recommends the best cruise liners offering African itineraries; freightercruises offering African destinations and information about renting yachts as well as finding a job as crew.

Popular African cruise itineraries include the Mediterranean in North Africa. the East African coast with stop-offs in Mombasa and Zanzibar; Indian Ocean itineraries which sail to Madagascar and the Seychelles; and Southern Africa with stops in Namibia and South Africa.

Starlight Cruises is based in South Africa and offers cruise itineraries for the South African coast line and beyond. Crystal Cruises: Offer voyages to the African Mediterranean, South Africa and Kenya. Silversea Cruises: Offers cruise to Norther Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa.

Cruising in Africa can take the form a month long public ferry down the Congo River or a luxury felucca up the Nile. Lovely old ferries still ply the Zambezi, Chobe and Senegal rivers, offering travellers a wonderful alternative to long days on dusty roads. Needless to say, cruising in Africa is adventurous and fun.

#### **Recommended African Cruises**

#### **Senegal River Cruise**

The Senegal River forms the border between Senegal and Mauritania and for half a century the "Bou El Mogdad" has steadily sailed these waters. The six day cruise takes you past old French forts, Tukolor,Wolof and Maure villages, and the amazing Parc d'oiseaux de Djoudj, filled with birdlife.

#### Floating Luxury Safari on the Zambezi Queen

Hop on board the ultra luxurious and modern Zambezi Queen and enjoy a lovely cruise on the Chobe River which marks the border between Nambia and Botswana.

#### Nile Cruise on the Royal Cleopatra

The Royal Cleopatra is an excellent bet if you have the budget. It's a traditional

sailboat called a dahabeeya, commonly used by Victorian travellers.

#### Dhow Safari in Mozambique's Quirimbas Archipelago

The Quirimbas Archipelago in northern Mozambique offers up some of most stunning islands in the Indian Ocean. A traditional dhow is your sailing vessel on this adventure and camps are set up every night on a different island. The trip starts at the Ibo Island Lodge.

#### Lake Malawi Cruise on the Ilala II

Lake Malawi is a beautiful fresh water lake . The Ilala is a large ferry that crosses the lake every week (about a 300 mile trip) You can get off at any point, or sail the whole route back to the starting point of Monkey Bay. It's a classic African adventure.

No matter how you choose to spend your Africa cruise adventure, you will be sure to head home with unforgettable memories and insight into this golden land of treasures!

For further information, contact Muguette Goufrani email: airhwy@smartt.com

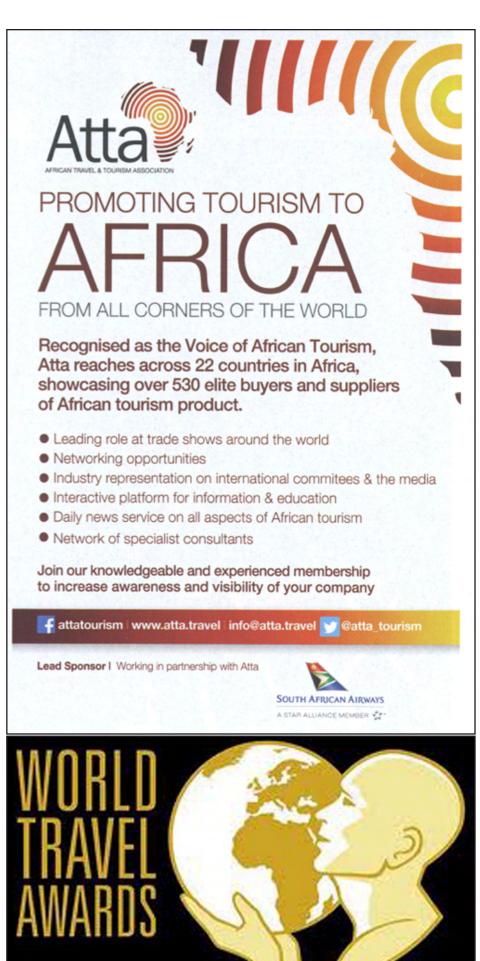


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**Beyond the Destination** 

### Lemurs, Chameleons, and Birds: Meet Madagascar's Endemics



### Madagascar

#### October 19, 2015 • 19 days • Overland Adventure

The Galápagos Islands are known for their endemism—wildlife found no place else on earth has made these stunning islands their home for over hundreds of years. And, if you have already explored these gems of the Pacific, why not consider an equally enchanting destination—Madagascar, the Galápagos of the Indian Ocean. 90% of all forest flora is endemic, and over half of the 250-plus bird species are found nowhere else in the world. Plus, Madagascar is home to 49 different lemur species and 1,000 varieties of orchid! Highlights of visiting this island country include:

- Observing lemurs, the iconic symbol of Madagascar, in their natural habitat.
- Discovering the island's diverse—and largely endemic—flora and fauna.
- Photographing a variety of wildlife including white-browed owls, Verreaux's sifakas, striped mongoose, and myriad colorful chameleons.
- Exploring a variety of habitats during nature walks, nocturnal spotlighting excursions, by boat, and in 4x4 vehicles.

This adventure will be led by long-time Zegrahm leader, Lex Hes. A naturalist and wildlife photographer, Lex has been involved in the world of wildlife for the past 30 years. He has five books to his credit, including The Complete Book of Southern African Mammals, and was previously a guide at the world-famous Londolozi Game Reserve.

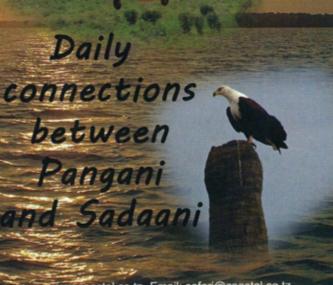


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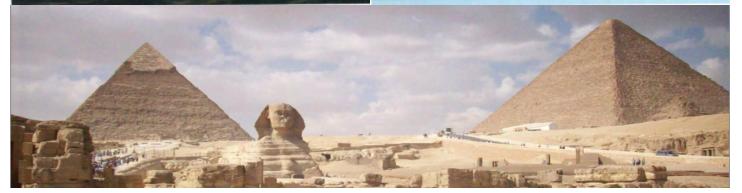


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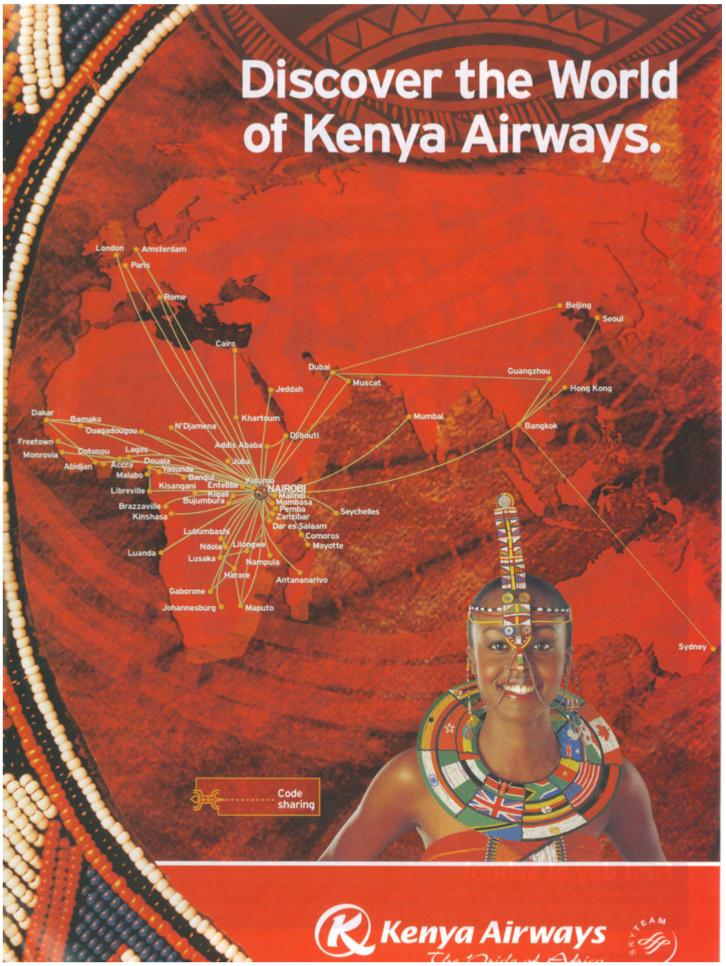
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