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UP CLOSE TO NATURE

Sand Rivers Selous is situated on the banks of the Rufji River. Eight open-fronted thatched cottages are designed to give guests panoramic views of the Selous game reserve, as well as allowing the sounds of hippos bellowing to be heard. Huge honeymoon-sized beds sit on a cream stone platform, with a wooden deck in front overlooking the flowing river



A river runs through it

Sand Rivers Selous

ESTABLISHED by well-known walking safari pioneer Richard Bonham, Sand Rivers Selous was Nomad Tanzania's first venture. Beautifully situated on the banks of the Rufji River, the lodge is unique in providing a high level of luxury while maintaining its close connection to the wildlife, which makes this place so alluring.

Eight open-fronted thatched cottages are designed to give guests panoramic views of the Selous game reserve, as well as allowing the sounds of hippos trumpeting to travel into your dwelling. Huge honeymoon-sized beds sit on a cream stone platform, with a wooden deck in front overlooking the flowing river. As it's next to a reservoir, water here is plentiful, so no need to feel guilty about having that second waterfall-style shower of the day, accompanied by the songs of nearby birds.

Our cheerful guide, Ernest, whose laughter rumbling through the jungle is nearly as deafening as the hippos, knows a thing or two about the game reserve and its inhabitants, as a member of the region's Gogo tribe. He sells us on the idea of a river safari, and in the early morning we hop onto a steel, flat-bottomed boat to experience a day in the life of the amphibious kind.

From the low-sitting boat, we are at eye-level with a bloat of hippos protecting their skin, submerged entirely under the cool water, with only their bulbous heads peeping out. Languid crocodiles lie still against the sand banks before sliding clumsily into the river for a swim, eroding the sand bank as they slide down. Bird lovers will rejoice at the scenes of pink-back pelicans, goliath herons, young African fish eagles and laughing doves.

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A spot of fishing before heading back to camp – on the rocks of the river – while casting a nervous eye at looming crocodiles – pays off with a healthy golden catfish which is later cooked on the barbecue for our final dinner under the stars.

Daily SIA flights to Johannesburg

SINGAPORE Airlines flies daily to Johannesburg (www.singaporeair.com). Lightfoot Travel is a Singapore-based luxury tour operator specialising in tailor-made holidays, honeymoons and short breaks (www.lightfoottravel.com).

Designed for the modern business traveller in mind, the Maslow Hotel (right) is located in the heart of Sandton's financial district in Johannesburg. The hotel prides itself on its state-of-the-art facilities, including innovative IT technologies.

The rooms create a stylish environment in which to relax, work and even entertain, with mini-apartment features and big bathrooms complete with sunken bathtubs and the added touch of Molten Brown body products. Load up on pre-flight food fuel at the Lacuna Bistro, where their friendly staff are on hand to fill you up. For more information visit <http://www.suninternational.com/maslow>

