

Karibu Kenya

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Photos: Andrew Nightingale

When Tamara Britten decided to combine her experience working in Kenya's tourism industry with her MA in Creative Writing and produce a guidebook to the country, she had no idea the project would take over two years, and would lead her to the most remote and little visited parts of this diverse country.

Taking off around Kenya in her sturdy land cruiser, accompanied by her trusty laptop, Tamara visited mountains, deserts, beaches, towns, national parks and game reserves searching out accommodation facilities, from boutique resorts to exotic safari camps, and from budget cottages to quirky bandas. Getting directions from locals, following rickety signs and driving down tracks little used, she found places unmapped and undocumented – many of which had no website or online presence.

Interested not only in the rooms, facilities and activities of a hotel, Tamara spoke to locals about the place's history, folk tales and legends. She discussed eco-policies, rating awards and staff training with the managers; she inspected the rooms, the grounds and even the kitchen of each place; and she checked out the activities, events and adventure sports at each.

The result of this was the Karibu Kenya Accommodation Guide. The book documents not only the essentials – each hotel's website, email, telephone number, location, rates, number of rooms, style of restaurant, nearest airstrip and payment options –, it also features a photo, a detailed description and unusual anecdotes about every place.

With professional photographs, detailed maps, write-ups on Kenya's history, geography, peoples, festivals and infrastructure – and colour coded for ease of use – the guidebook is an invaluable tool for both tourists and citizens of Kenya.

The guidebook was immediately recognised by Kenya's tourism industry. The Kenya Tourist Board (KTB), the Kenya Tourism Federation (KTF) and the Kenya Professional Safari Guide Association (KPSGA) all endorsed Karibu Kenya Accommodation Guide – and the Kenya Tourist Board bought a copy for every delegate attending the World Travel Awards in Nairobi.

Tamara next created the luxury holiday bookings platform – www.karibukenya.co.uk – voted Kenya's best online luxury accommodation booking agent.

Building on Tamara's detailed knowledge of Kenya, and in collaboration with award-winning Gamewatchers Safaris, Karibu Kenya offers personally designed holidays in Kenya. Gamewatchers Safaris have around 30 years' experience in the Kenyan tourism industry. They were at the forefront of the establishment of the conservancy concept that links tourism to conservation. The collection of camps owned by Gamewatchers Safaris are all certified by Ecotourism Kenya, and all their safari guides are qualified by the Kenya Professional Safari Guide Association.

The Karibu Kenya team are keenly eco-friendly, and prefer to take their clients to camps that reduce their eco-footprint and conservancies that protect the environment. They support tourism operations that work to conserve wildlife, the environment and local communities, believing strongly that all three need to work in tandem to protect the ecosystem.

Karibu Kenya's knowledgeable travel consultants respond to every enquiry personally, discuss the clients' accommodation and activity preferences, and inform them of any relevant specials. They then help the client design their ideal holiday and book the entire package for them. The team is on hand throughout the clients' holiday, making sure that the trip runs seamlessly and the client has the holiday of a lifetime.

In 2018, Tamara opened sister company Exclusive Ethiopia – www.exclusiveethiopia.com – providing a quality tourism service in Ethiopia. Co-founder of Exclusive Ethiopia, Mulugeta Ababu, is registered with the Ethiopian Government's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. He was a founding member of the Addis Ababa Tour Guides Association, an organisation that works to ensure professionalism in the business, and served as its first chairman. With two diplomas from Lion Ethiopia – one in Tour Guiding and Tour Operation and the other in Ethiopian History – Mulugeta is highly knowledgeable about all facets of Ethiopia. He also studied to be a deacon in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, making him a font of information about the monasteries and rock-hewn churches that Ethiopia is so famous for.

Both Karibu Kenya and Exclusive Ethiopia offer personally designed holidays to discerning clients, and are committed to providing every client with the exact holiday they're dreaming of.

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