Africa Tourism Awards

THE BALEARICA · OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

THE OFFICIAL TOP 10

Sunday, 1st November 2026

Hilton London Canary Wharf



Africa Tourism Awards 2026

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JUDGING
Expert judges 40% ·
Balearica Awards College 40% ·
Public vote 20%

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THE OFFICIAL TOP 10

This magazine is the official printed record of the **Africa Tourism Awards 2026** Top 10. It is designed for the gala table, for trade-show distribution and for the desks of investors, tourism boards, airline leaders and media who shape demand for Destination Africa.

Competitive categories list the official shortlist in alphabetical order. Industry Icon, Young Tourism Personality, Women in Tourism Leadership, Special Recognition, Tourism Personality of the Year and Lifetime Achievement are presented as honourees. Winners are revealed on the night of 1 November.

DISTRIBUTION

Awards Gala | International Travel & Tourism Trade Shows | Embassies & High Commissions







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FROM THE AWARDS

A continent worth choosing.

The shortlists show who made it and it also reveals those who have not done so, for whatever reasons. Perhaps they chose to hold back from participation?

West Africa is well represented this year: Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde all appear. Central Africa appears only through Angola, Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe. Some countries do not appear on any shortlist in this edition, among them Senegal, Cameroon, Gabon, the two Congos, Liberia and Malawi.

That is not a verdict on their tourism. As this edition's opening letter says, the gap is about attention, access, narrative and investment. Tourism boards, tour operators, lodges, creators and airports in the missing markets are exactly the new names the Top 10 exists to surface.

If your country or brand is not here, the shortlist is not finished. Nominate next year.



CREDIBILITY

The Balearica

Named for Africa's crowned crane — grace, vigilance, community.

Winners receive the Balearica statuette, designed after the grey crowned crane. The bird is not ornament. It is a brief: stand tall, see far, travel together. The awards process is built the same way — evidence first, then peer judgement, then the public.



40% EXPERT JUDGES

A carefully selected panel of respected industry leaders, tourism professionals, academics, and media experts from across Africa and the African diaspora. Judges assess nominees based on clearly defined criteria such as impact, innovation, sustainability, brand strength, and contribution to African tourism development.

40% AWARDS COLLEGE

The Balearica Awards College is a collective of tourism practitioners, destination marketers, travel writers, and sector specialists who bring deep industry insight and regional balance to the evaluation process. This layer ensures that African context, local realities, and long-term industry value are properly considered in final scoring.

20% PUBLIC VOTE

To promote inclusivity and audience engagement, the public is invited to vote online for shortlisted nominees. Public votes represent 20% of the total score, allowing travelers, consumers, and industry followers to have a voice—while maintaining professional oversight







Shortlisted hospitality and destination entries may be subject to inspection or mystery-guest assessment. Claims require evidence.

London. 1 November.

Hilton London Canary Wharf · 18:00–23:45

MEET THE EXPERT JUDGES

Meet the judges shaping this year's recognition of outstanding achievement in African tourism.



Stella Appenteng
CEO, Apstar Tours



Liz Tapawa
Director of Sales & Marketing,
Hilton Garden Inn Nairobi Airport



Oluwaseyi Adegoke Adeyemo
Publisher, Inside Watch Africa (IWA)



Sithembile Sandla
Senior Manager, Azets



Larch Gauld
Travel Writer, Silver Nomad



Dine Bouraima
CEO, Benin Royal Hotel



Hafsa Gaher
CEO – Halal Travel Network



Shefik Mehmet
Travel Influencer & Photographer



Biubwa Omar
Managing Director - Safari Gateway Ltd



Thomas Armitt
Director of Climate & Biodiversity, Planeterra

Africa Tourism Awards 2026

SECTION 01

Hospitality

Hotels, resorts, lodges, groups, kitchens and attractions that make a stay unforgettable.









Independent Brand Hotel of the Year

Honours a non-chain hotel brand that delivers exceptional hospitality, strong identity and competitive guest experience without relying on an international flag.

#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Al Moudira Hotel	Egypt
02	Citi Residence Ikoyi	Nigeria
03	Delaire Graff Lodges & Spa	South Africa
04	Ellerman House	South Africa
05	La Mamounia	Morocco
06	Pax Manor Muthaiga	Kenya
07	Royal Mansour	Morocco
08	The Envoy Abuja	Nigeria
09	The Nest Kigali	Rwanda
10	Villa Monticello	Ghana

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Luxury Hotel of the Year

Recognises an exceptional luxury property delivering high-touch service, refined design, premium amenities and distinctive African hospitality.





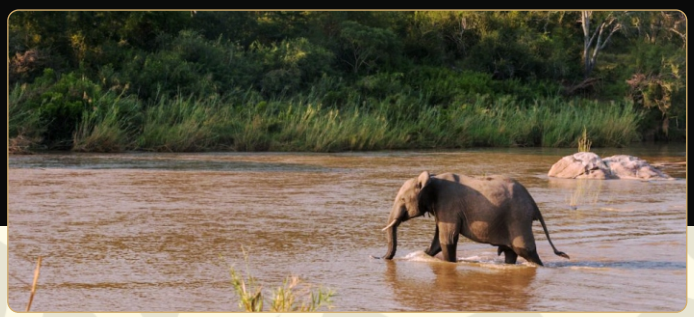
#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Anantara Bazaruto Island Resort	Mozambique
02	Azura Benguerra Island	Mozambique
03	Ethiopian Skylight Hotel	Ethiopia
04	Kasbah Tamadot	Morocco
05	La Mamounia	Morocco
06	North Island Seychelles	Seychelles
07	One&Only Cape Town	South Africa
08	Royal Livingstone Victoria Falls Zambia Hotel by Anantara	Zambia
09	Royal Mansour Marrakech	Morocco
10	The Oberoi Mauritius	Mauritius

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Safari Lodge of the Year

Celebrates a safari lodge offering outstanding wildlife access, guiding, conservation values, comfort and sense of place.





#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Chebera Elephant Paw Lodge	Ethiopia
02	Esiweni Safari Lodge	South Africa
03	Jabulani Safari Lodge	South Africa
04	Kruger Shalati	South Africa
05	Nkuringo Gorilla Lodge	Uganda
06	One&Only Gorilla's Nest	Rwanda
07	Singita Sasakwa Lodge	Tanzania
08	The Royal Malewane	South Africa
09	Xigera Safari Lodge	Botswana
10	Zannier Sonop	Namibia

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Hotel Group of the Year

Recognises a hotel group with strong portfolio performance, brand growth, service culture and contribution to African hospitality.





#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Accor	Africa Portfolio
02	CityBlue Hotels	Africa Portfolio
03	Hilton	Africa Portfolio
04	IHG Hotels & Resorts	Africa Portfolio
05	Jaz Hotel Group	Africa Portfolio
06	Marriott International	Africa Portfolio
07	ONOMO Hotels	Africa Portfolio
08	Radisson Hotel Group	Africa Portfolio
09	Serena Hotels	Africa Portfolio
10	Southern Sun	Africa Portfolio

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Restaurant of the Year

Honours a restaurant that delivers exceptional cuisine, service, atmosphere and contribution to African dining culture.



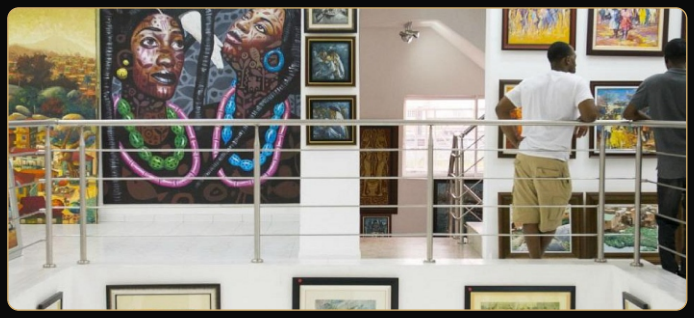


#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Cultiva Farmlands	Kenya
02	FYN Cape Town	South Africa
03	Khufu's	Egypt
04	La Colombe	South Africa
05	La Grande Table Marocaine	Morocco
06	Le Golfe	Tunisia
07	NOK by Alara	Nigeria
08	PIER Cape Town	South Africa
09	Salsify at the Roundhouse	South Africa
10	Table 3 Casablanca	Morocco

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Tourism Attraction of the Year

Recognises a visitor attraction that creates a memorable, well-managed and marketable tourism experience.





#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Grand Egyptian Museum	Egypt
02	Jardin Majorelle	Morocco
03	Lion & Safari Park	South Africa
04	Nike Art Gallery	Nigeria
05	Robben Island Museum	South Africa
06	Table Mountain & Aerial Cableway	South Africa
07	The Great Wildebeest Migration	Tanzania
08	V&A Waterfront	South Africa
09	Victoria Falls (Mosi-oa-Tunya)	Zimbabwe
10	Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art	Nigeria

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DELICACY

Come *Hungry.*

A continent on a plate: food is one of the most memorable ways to meet a place.



Taste the story

From market stalls and family kitchens to contemporary restaurants, African food



JOLLOF RICE

Jollof Rice is the undisputed crown jewel of West African cuisine, sparked by a legendary, friendly rivalry over who makes the best version. This vibrant, one-pot dish features long-grain rice simmered to perfection in a smoky, rich reduction of blended tomatoes, red bell peppers, onions, and scotch bonnets. Seasoned with curry powder, thyme, and bay leaves, it is often cooked over fire to yield a deeply aromatic, spicy profile and a prized crispy bottom layer. Celebrated at weddings and parties, it is the ultimate symbol of joy, community, and culinary pride.

THIÉBOUDIENNE

Thiéboudienne (or Ceebu Jën) is the legendary national dish of Senegal, celebrated across West Africa as a culinary masterpiece. This vibrant, single-pot feast features firm white fish stuffed with a spicy herb paste (rof), simmered alongside cassava, carrots, and eggplant in a rich, broken-rice tomato broth. The rice absorbs the deep, savory seafood and vegetable flavors, resulting in a perfectly textured dish crowned with a crispy caramelized bottom crust (xoon).





TAGINE

This food is the soul of Moroccan cuisine, referring to both a slow-cooked, aromatic stew and the iconic conical clay pot it is simmered in. The unique lid traps steam, returning condensed moisture to the dish to keep meat—like lamb, chicken, or beef—incredibly tender. Infused with a harmonious blend of warming spices like saffron, cumin, and ginger, it often balances savory notes with sweet bursts of dried fruits, olives, and nuts. Traditionally served hot with crusty bread, it is a communal masterpiece of complex, comforting flavor.

INJERA & DORO WAT

Injera & Doro Wat is the crown jewel of Ethiopian cuisine, serving as the ultimate communal feast. Doro Wat is a rich, fiery chicken stew slow-cooked with deeply caramelized onions, complex berbere spice, and hard-boiled eggs. This aromatic stew is poured over injera, a soft, spongy, tangy flatbread made from ancient teff grain. Eaten completely with your hands, the bread serves as both your utensil and a delicious sponge that soaks up every drop of the intense, savory gravy.





BUNNY CHOW

Bunny Chow is a legendary South African street food staple consisting of a hollowed-out loaf of white bread overflowing with rich, aromatic lamb, beef, or sugar bean curry. Originating from Durban's Indian community, the bread acts as both the serving bowl and a sponge for the intensely spiced gravy. Best eaten with your hands, this hearty, comforting dish is a unique culinary icon that delivers an unforgettable explosion of flavor in every bite.



NYAMA CHOMA

Grilled meat is enjoyed in social settings across parts of East Africa. Nyama Choma, translating to "roasted meat" in Swahili, is East Africa's ultimate culinary and social tradition. This iconic dish features bone-in goat or beef slowly grilled over open charcoal until smoky and tender, seasoned simply with salt to let the natural flavors shine. It is traditionally served chopped into bite-sized pieces alongside kachumbari (tangy tomato-onion salad) and ugali for a classic communal feast.

MATOKE

A beloved banana-based dish in Uganda and neighbouring food cultures. Matoke (or matooke) is an East African highland cooking banana and a celebrated national dish of Uganda. Unlike sweet dessert bananas, these fruits are harvested green, are highly starchy, and must be cooked before eating. Traditionally, the bananas are peeled, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed for hours until soft and golden before being mashed into a rich, comforting staple. They are commonly served with savory peanut (groundnut) sauce, beef stew, or beans. Because of its cultural importance, the word matoke is often used interchangeably to describe both the fruit itself and the hearty meals made from it.





CAPE MALAY CURRY

A fragrant part of Cape Town's layered culinary heritage. Cape Malay curry is a South African dish from the Cape Malay community, known for its sweet-spiced, aromatic blend of spices such as cinnamon, cardamom, cumin, coriander, turmeric, and often dried fruit like apricots. It typically features chicken, lamb, or mutton cooked gently with tomatoes and a fragrant masala, producing a mildly spicy, richly flavored curry.

Transport & Travel Services

The routes, operators and platforms that turn interest into arrival.



International Airline of the Year

Recognises an airline that connects Africa effectively to global markets while delivering strong service and tourism value.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Air Algérie	Algeria
02	Air Mauritius	Mauritius
03	ASKY Airlines	Togo
04	EgyptAir	Egypt
05	Ethiopian Airlines	Ethiopia
06	Kenya Airways	Kenya
07	Royal Air Maroc	Morocco
08	RwandAir	Rwanda
09	South African Airways	South Africa
10	TAAG Angola Airlines	Angola

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Regional Airline of the Year

Honours an airline strengthening intra-African or regional connectivity and supporting easier travel across neighbouring markets.





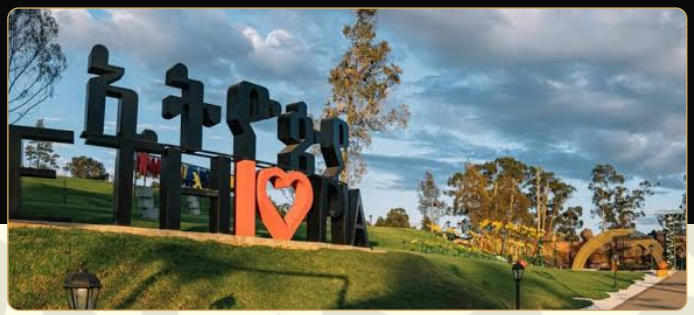
#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Air Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire
02	Air Peace	Nigeria
03	Airlink	South Africa
04	ASKY Airlines	Togo
05	Fastjet Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
06	FlySafair	South Africa
07	LAM Mozambique Airlines	Mozambique
08	Precision Air	Tanzania
09	RwandAir	Rwanda
10	Uganda Airlines	Uganda

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Tour Operator of the Year

Honours a tour operator that brings visitors into African destinations through high-quality, responsible and marketable experiences.





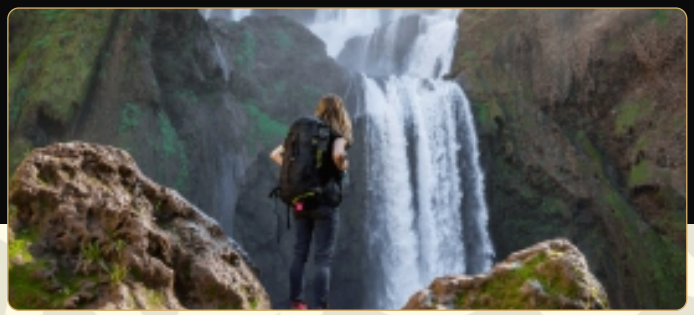
#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Gatsio Safariz	Uganda
02	Golan Tours	Ethiopia
03	Apstar Tours	Ghana
04	Kassumay Tours	Guinea-Bissau
05	Papillon Reizen	Mali
06	Berakha Tours & Travel	Côte d'Ivoire
07	Forward Travel	Australia
08	Explore STP	São Tomé and Príncipe
09	Pollman's Tours & Safaris	Kenya
10	Morocco Discovery	Morocco

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Travel Agency of the Year

Celebrates a travel agency that delivers professional advice, trusted service, strong sales and customer satisfaction.





#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Atlas Voyages	Morocco
02	Berakha Tours & Travel	Côte d'Ivoire
03	BTM Travel	Nigeria
04	Finchglow Travels	Nigeria
05	Satguru Travel	Equatorial Guinea
06	Satguru Travel & Tours Namibia	Namibia
07	Satguru Travel Management	Angola
08	Terra Nova Tours	South Africa
09	Twsta Tours & Expeditions	Ethiopia
10	White Sand Travel Consult	Ghana

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Online Travel Agency of the Year

Recognises an OTA or digital travel platform that improves discovery, booking and service for travellers and suppliers.





#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	FlightSite	South Africa
02	FlyIn	Nigeria / Africa
03	Travel.co.za	South Africa
04	Travelbeta	Nigeria
05	TravelDen	Nigeria
06	Travelstart	South Africa / pan-African
07	TravelYalla	Egypt / Middle East–Africa
08	Tripindigo	Tanzania
09	Volz	Nigeria
10	Wakanow	Nigeria / pan-African

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Media

The cameras, sentences and films that decide what the world believes about Africa.





Travel Content Creator of the Year

Celebrates a creator producing engaging, responsible and high-quality travel content that inspires travel to or within Africa.

#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	AbdulWanders	Nigeria
02	Authentic Cyclist	South Africa
03	Collins Nkem	Nigeria
04	Jesse Manuel	Angola
05	Jovenchi.K	Kenya
06	Queen Bethia	Nigeria
07	Tunisianbedouin	Tunisia
08	Wode Maya	Ghana

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Tourism Photographer of the Year

Honours a photographer whose images elevate African tourism through technical excellence, authenticity and storytelling.

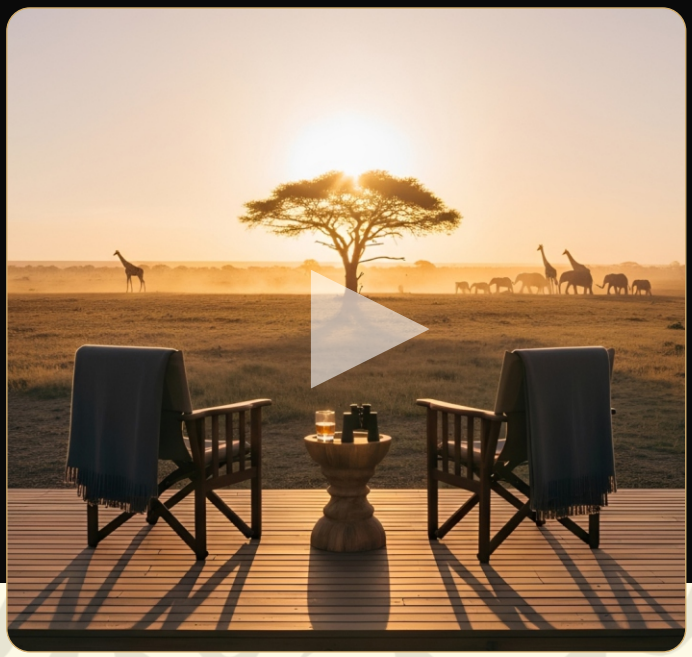


#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Alicia-Rae Light	South Africa
02	Dayo Adedayo	Nigeria
03	Greg du Toit	South Africa / Kenya
04	Jay Roode	South Africa
05	Jesse Manuel	Angola
06	Morkel Erasmus	South Africa
07	Paul Joynson-Hicks	Tanzania / United Kingdom
08	Wim van den Heever	South Africa

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Tourism Video of the Year

Recognises a video production that powerfully promotes an African destination, experience, brand or tourism story.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	andBeyond Suyian Lodge Tour	Kenya
02	Explore Benin, A World of Wonders	Benin
03	GILTEDGE: This is Africa	Africa
04	Madagascar Uncharted: Beyond the Baobabs	Madagascar
05	Mnemba Island | Zanzibar	Tanzania
06	Plains & Peaks of Rwanda	Rwanda
07	South Africa's G20 Signature Story	South Africa
08	The Moments That Matter: Wilderness Bisate Reserve	Rwanda
09	Visit East Africa — Feel the Vibe	East Africa
10	Vivez l'instant T, vivez l'instant Tunisie	Tunisia

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Travel Writer of the Year

Honours a writer whose published work deepens understanding of African tourism and inspires responsible travel.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Harriet Akinyi Owalla	United Kingdom / Kenya
02	Kebba Ansu Manneh	Kenya / The Gambia
03	Kofi Dotse	Ghana
04	Kojo Bentum-Williams	Ghana
05	Michael Turyakira	Uganda
06	Mike Unwin	United Kingdom
07	Sam Kemp	United Kingdom
08	Sue Watt	United Kingdom
09	Tafadzwa Mwanengureni	Zimbabwe
10	Yvonne C Mtengwa	Zimbabwe / South Africa

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Destinations

Countries, cities, coasts, parks, airports and the boards that carry their names.



Tourism Board of the Year

Honours a tourism board that demonstrates strategic leadership, effective marketing and tangible progress in destination competitiveness.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Benin Tourism	Benin
02	Egyptian Tourism Authority	Egypt
03	Kenya Tourism Board	Kenya
04	Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority	Mauritius
05	Moroccan National Tourist Office (ONMT)	Morocco
06	Namibia Tourism Board	Namibia
07	National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
08	Rwanda Development Board	Rwanda
09	Seychelles Tourism Board	Seychelles
10	Tourism Ethiopia	Ethiopia

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Country Destination of the Year

Recognises an African country with a compelling tourism offer, strong brand momentum and measurable progress in visitor attraction.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Angola	Angola
02	Benin	Benin
03	Egypt	Egypt
04	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
05	Kenya	Kenya
06	Morocco	Morocco
07	Namibia	Namibia
08	Rwanda	Rwanda
09	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
10	Tanzania	Tanzania

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

City Destination of the Year

Celebrates an African city that offers rich visitor experiences, strong hospitality, culture, events and urban tourism appeal.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Accra	Ghana
02	Addis Ababa	Ethiopia
03	Cairo	Egypt
04	Cape Town	South Africa
05	Casablanca	Morocco
06	Kigali	Rwanda
07	Lagos	Nigeria
08	Lomé	Togo
09	Marrakech	Morocco
10	Nairobi	Kenya

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Beach Destination of the Year

Honours a coastal or island destination that offers exceptional beach experiences with responsible management and visitor appeal.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Agadir	Morocco
02	Bazaruto	Mozambique
03	Cape Town	South Africa
04	Cape Verde	Cabo Verde
05	Diani	Kenya
06	Freetown	Sierra Leone
07	Mauritius	Mauritius
08	Seychelles	Seychelles
09	Sharm el-Sheikh	Egypt
10	Zanzibar	Tanzania

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

The African bucket list

Ten ideas for a lifetime of discovery—spanning nature, culture, cities and coastlines.



WITNESS THE GREAT MIGRATION

Witness the Greatest Shoal on Earth as over two million wildebeest, zebras, and gazelles thunder across the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem in an endless cycle of life and survival. Feel the earth shake beneath your feet and watch in awe as massive herds brave crocodile-infested waters during the iconic Mara River crossings. This spectacular wildlife spectacle is the ultimate, raw pulse of untamed Africa and a mandatory crowning jewel for your travel bucket list.

STAND BEFORE VICTORIA FALLS

Stand before the breathtaking spectacle of Victoria Falls on the Zambia-Zimbabwe border and immerse yourself in the sheer force of Mosi-oa-Tunya—The Smoke That Thunders. Behold the magnificent Zambezi River as it plunges to form the planet's largest sheet of falling water, sending an iconic, sky-high plume of mist visible from miles away. From its vibrant sunrise rainbows to the deep reverberation of its roar, this legendary natural wonder promises a sensory-shaking experience worthy of the ultimate African bucket list.





EXPLORE AN ANCIENT WONDER

Step back in time to explore the monumental heritage of Egypt, where the ancient wonders of the world come to life along the banks of the Nile. Stand in absolute awe before the Great Pyramids of Giza and wander the treasure-filled halls of Cairo's world-class museums, including the spectacular Grand Egyptian Museum. From the towering temples of Luxor to the enigmatic gaze of the Sphinx, uncovering this legendary North African cradle of civilization is a profound, time-traveling journey that deserves a top spot on your African bucket list.

WALK A HISTORIC ISLAND

Journey across Table Bay from Cape Town, South Africa, to walk the sacred grounds of Robben Island, a place where history resonates with profound power. Guided by former political prisoners, you will delve into the layered, deeply moving story of this UNESCO World Heritage Site and stand inside the very cell where Nelson Mandela spent decades imprisoned. This poignant pilgrimage offers an unforgettable testament to the triumph of the human spirit over oppression, serving as a soul-stirring highlight for any traveler seeking Africa's truest heritage.





WAKE UP IN THE WILD

Immerse yourself in the raw, untamed melodies of nature in Botswana's Okavango Delta, a pristine wilderness where luxury meets authentic conservation. Embark on a responsible safari led by expert, highly knowledgeable local guides who decode the secrets of the bush, tracking majestic lions, elephants, and leopards while prioritizing eco-friendly practices. Connecting deeply with this thriving wetland ecosystem ensures your travel footprints are light, your impact is meaningful, and your safari memories are profoundly unforgettable.

FIND YOUR ISLAND RHYTHM

Escape to paradise and find your island rhythm along the pristine, sun-drenched coastlines of Zanzibar in Tanzania or the idyllic archipelago of the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. Wander through the historical, spice-scented streets of Zanzibar's Stone Town, or unwind on the world-famous, granite-sculpted beaches of Praslin and La Digue. Blending vibrant East African and Creole cultures with powdery white sands and turquoise waters, these tropical havens offer the ultimate, soul-soothing beach escape on the African continent.





CLIMB TOWARD A SUMMIT

Challenge yourself to conquer the Roof of Africa by embarking on a fully guided trek up Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. With meticulous preparation and the unmatched expertise of local registered guides, you will journey through five distinct eco-zones, ranging from lush tropical rainforests to dramatic arctic alpine deserts. Standing at Uhuru Peak at sunrise, high above the clouds on the continent's highest freestanding mountain, is a profound, life-changing triumph that delivers the ultimate peak of adventure.

SPEND A DAY IN A MEDINA

Lose yourself in the enchanting maze of the historic medina in Marrakech, Morocco, where centuries of vibrant North African culture come alive at every turn. Awaken your senses as you wander past stalls bursting with intricate handcrafted textiles, glittering lanterns, and rich spices, all set against a backdrop of breathtaking Moorish architecture. From watching street performers in the bustling Jemaa el-Fnaa square to savoring aromatic tagines at sunset, a day spent in this captivating imperial city offers an unforgettable immersion into a living fairytale.





MEET A LIVING TRADITION

IConnect with a living tradition by attending a vibrant, locally hosted cultural celebration like the Cure Salée festival in Niger or a sacred Voodoo festival in Ouidah, Benin. Engage respectfully with host communities as they share generational stories through hypnotic music, striking traditional attire, and masterfully preserved craft demonstrations. By participating in these authentic spaces as a mindful visitor, you will forge a profound, deeply moving connection with the enduring spirit and artistic soul of West Africa.

FOLLOW A FOOD TRAIL

Set off on a delicious culinary journey through Lagos, Nigeria, where a thriving food scene serves as the ultimate window into West African culture. Follow a vibrant food trail guided by passionate local cooks to explore bustling street markets overflowing with aromatic spices, fresh seafood, and tropical produce. From savoring the complex, legendary flavors of authentic smoky Jollof Rice and tender Suya skewers to learning the generational secrets behind traditional stews, this rich gastronomic adventure offers an unforgettable, sensory feast for the true culinary explorer.



TRAVEL NOTE

Check seasonal conditions, entry requirements, local guidance and conservation rules before you go. Choose operators that respect communities and wildlife.

Safari Destination of the Year

Recognises an outstanding safari destination with strong wildlife experiences, conservation values and visitor infrastructure.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Chobe National Park	Botswana
02	Etosha National Park	Namibia
03	Hwange National Park	Zimbabwe
04	Kruger National Park	South Africa
05	Masai Mara National Reserve	Kenya
06	Ngorongoro Conservation Area	Tanzania
07	Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve	South Africa
08	Serengeti National Park	Tanzania
09	South Luangwa National Park	Zambia
10	Volcanoes National Park	Rwanda

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Adventure Tourism Destination of the Year

Celebrates a destination that offers safe, exciting and marketable adventure experiences rooted in its natural or cultural assets.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Atlas Mountains	Morocco
02	Cape Town	South Africa
03	Drakensberg	South Africa
04	Jinja	Uganda
05	Livingstone	Zambia
06	Mount Kilimanjaro	Tanzania
07	Okavango Delta	Botswana
08	Sharm el-Sheikh	Egypt
09	Swakopmund	Namibia
10	Victoria Falls	Zimbabwe

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Cultural Destination of the Year

Recognises a destination that protects, presents and benefits from culture, heritage, festivals, arts and living traditions responsibly.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Benin	Benin
02	Egypt	Egypt
03	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
04	Ghana	Ghana
05	Kenya	Kenya
06	Morocco	Morocco
07	Nigeria	Nigeria
08	South Africa	South Africa
09	Zanzibar	Tanzania
10	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Airport of the Year

Celebrates an African international airport that offers efficient operations, strong passenger experience and tourism gateway value.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Accra International Airport	Ghana
02	Addis Ababa Bole International	Ethiopia
03	Cairo International	Egypt
04	Cape Town International Airport	South Africa
05	Casablanca Mohammed V International	Morocco
06	Johannesburg O.R. Tambo International	South Africa
07	Kigali International Airport	Rwanda
08	Marrakech Menara Airport	Morocco
09	Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International	Mauritius
10	Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta International	Kenya

Listed as officially shortlisted. Winners are announced at the gala on 1 November 2026.

Responsible Tourism Initiative of the Year

Honours an initiative that demonstrably improves sustainability, inclusion, conservation or community benefit in tourism.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Ecotourism Kenya	Kenya
02	Gorilla Junction Foundation	Uganda
03	Mai Shayi Coffee	Nigeria
04	West Africa Ecotourism Network	West Africa
05	Wildlife ACT	South Africa
06	Wildlife Division — Forestry Commission	Ghana







Destination of the Year — African Diaspora

Recognises a destination that meaningfully connects the African diaspora and the continent through heritage, culture, travel and identity.



#	Nominee	Country / Base
01	Antigua & Barbuda	Antigua and Barbuda
02	Barbados	Barbados
03	Dominica	Dominica
04	Grenada	Grenada
05	Guyana	Guyana
06	Jamaica	Jamaica
07	Saint Kitts & Nevis	Saint Kitts and Nevis
08	Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia
09	The Bahamas	The Bahamas
10	Trinidad & Tobago	Trinidad and Tobago







Honourees of 2026

Africa Tourism Awards 2026

These awards are conferred. They recognise influence, integrity and a body of work that has already changed African tourism.

Industry Icons

Exceptional individuals whose long-standing achievements and influence have shaped African tourism at a high level.



Akwasi Agyeman

— CEO, Africa Center for Hospitality Aviation and Tourism



Gerhard Franken

— CEO, Naledi Hospitality and Consultants



Septi Bukula

— Founder, Rendzo Network



Thomas Noll

— CEO, TN Hotels & More

Young Tourism Personality of the Year

An emerging leader making a visible and promising contribution to African tourism.



Ibrahim Makanjuola

— Convener, TOICE

Women in Tourism Leadership Award

A woman whose leadership, impact and advocacy are advancing African tourism and opening doors for others.



Fatmata Carew

- CEO, National Tourist Board of Sierra Leone

Special Recognition
— Tourism Investment

A major investment or investment-enabling effort that strengthens African tourism growth and long-term capacity.



ANGOLA - Angola



Ethiopian Skylight Hospitality Group - Ethiopia

Special Recognition
— Tourism Innovation

AFRICA TRAVEL EXCHANGE

Africa Travel Exchange

Tourism Personality of the Year

An individual whose achievements during the awards year made a remarkable impact on African tourism.



HE Márcio de Jesus Lopes Daniel

— Minister of Tourism, Angola

Lifetime Achievement Award

Sustained, distinguished service and legacy contribution to African tourism over many years.



Alain St. Ange
— Ambassador at Large
Republic of Seychelles



Craig Rix
— Publisher/ Editor
Gecko Publishing



Be in the room.

Hilton London Canary Wharf

Sunday, 1st November 2026

Celebrating Excellence, Inspiring Tomorrow



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