



Kickstart your marriage memory bank with a honeymoon adventure you'll remember for years

BY ANDRÉ FIORE

The road less TRAVELLED

You've successfully navigated your special day and made your forever vows. Now why not mark the start of a lifetime of memories together with a bucket-list adventure? There's no time like the present to throw caution to the wind and set your souls alight!

CLIMB MOUNT KILIMANJARO

You'll most certainly feel on top of the world as you and your number one mate summit Mount Kilimanjaro. The world's tallest free-standing mountain at 5 895m, and the highest mountain in Africa, a 'quick' trip up is the ultimate addition to any Tanzanian honeymoon. Its majestic peak permanently

covered in snow and its three dormant volcanic cones, Kibo, Mawenzi, and Shira, make for a heady mix.

Your quick trip will take between five and nine days on average, depending on a number of factors such as weather, your state of fitness, acclimatisation and the route you choose. There are seven well-established routes to the summit which vary in degrees of difficulty as well as in type of accommodation (they range from camping only to huts and electricity in some places). Despite the dramatic mountainscapes, rocky formations, beautiful forests and spectacular ridges, climbing Kili is no walk in the park and travellers are advised to research thoroughly, use an established and reputable company, and prepare properly in every way. SA-based company Climbing Kilimanjaro has ticked off over 15 000 successful summit attempts since 1994, and offers hikes up Mt Meru, Mt Kenya, and active volcano Mt Ol Doinyo Lengai. Ultimate Kilimanjaro is also worth a thought.

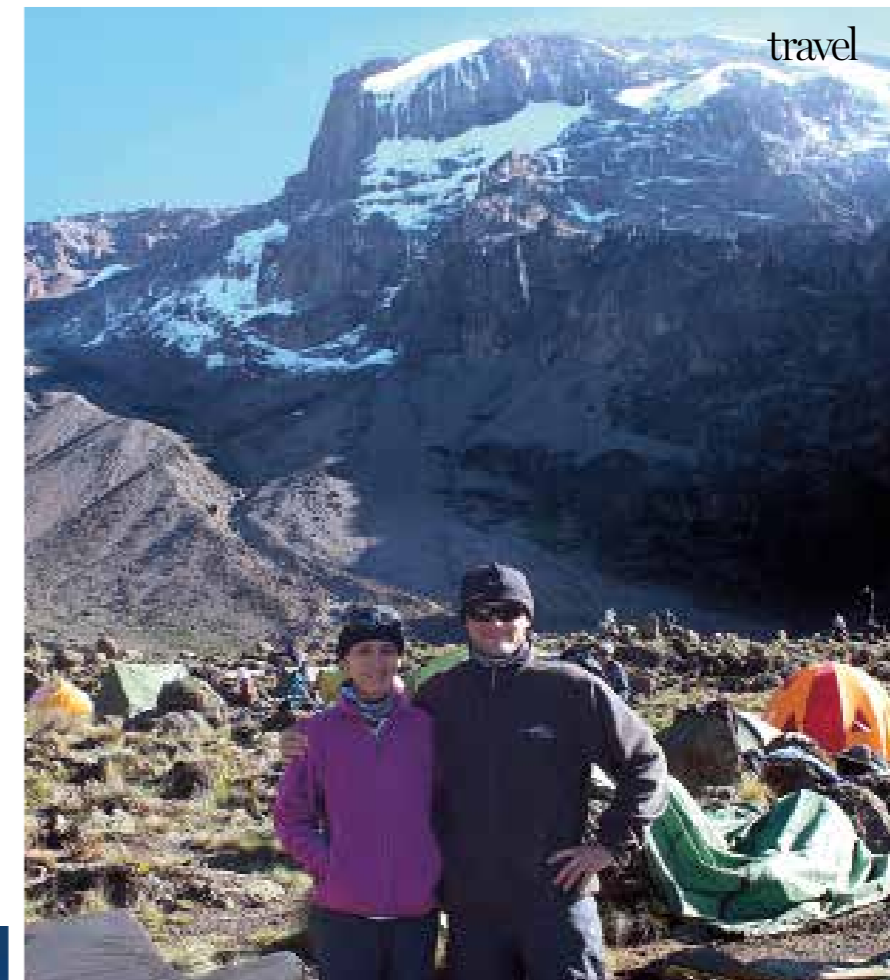


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Situated in the 1 668km² Kilimanjaro National Park, there's plenty to do and see even before you summit. The park consists of five main vegetation zones, the foot slopes characterised by plains and lush forest home to elephant, leopard, buffalo, and many endangered small antelope and primates. On the eastern side of the mountain, Chala Crater Lake is also a must-visit with its deep blue-green waters and surrounding 100m high crater rim.

Acclimatisation is essential on any honeymoon, whether or not you're heading up the hill, and the Bay Leaf Hotel in the nearby town of Arusha is just the spot. With five gorgeous suites promising luxurious comfort – just the place for a little post-climb pampering – it also prides itself on fine dining with a combination of continental and traditional North Indian Punjabi cuisine, an "intriguing match-made-in-heaven mix".

climbingkilimanjaro.co.za,
tanzaniawildlifesafaris.co.za,
ultimatekilimanjaro.com, bayleafz.com



Photographs: Ultimate Kilimanjaro; Climbing Kilimanjaro

Photographs: Climbing Kilimanjaro

CYCLE THROUGH VIETNAM

Swap your boots for a bike and join 30 million Vietnamese in getting around the local way. There is a veritable plethora of companies offering Vietnamese cycling trips – Active Travel Vietnam gets the thumbs up from us – so choose anything from one to 40 days as you explore this intoxicating land with over 3 000 miles of mesmerising coastline, as well as an inland rich in equally exotic offerings.

They say the organised frenzy of four million motorbikes in Hanoi is a sensation in itself, but for those looking for unique experiences, this is just a taste. Vietnamese travel is extremely kind on the ZAR and offers a wealth of things wild and new.

Take the street food for starters, which ranges from delicate steamed spring rolls to not-so-delicate snake, scorpion, frog, duck tongue and fried bugs.

For those less bold there are the emerald waters of Ha Long Bay scattered

with majestic limestone and dolomite isles, pillars and caves.

Test your cycling power on the spectacular passes and densely forested paths of the national parks, and marvel at the floating markets, busy canals and endless paddy fields of the Mekong Delta.

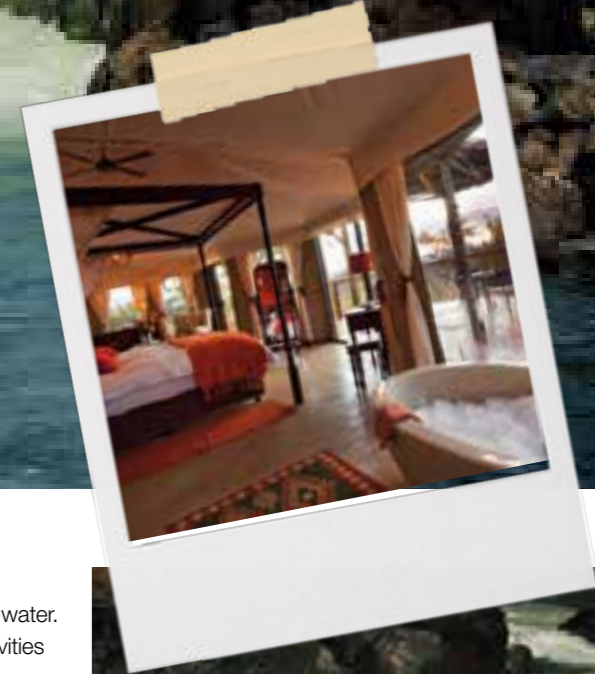
Famed for its tailors, don't miss the streets of Hoi An either, where you can stock up on new threads before heading through the shrimp farms, coconut groves, lagoons, salt flats and fishing villages that lead to the 6km-long Nha Trang beach. Once there, spoil yourselves – it's your honeymoon after all – by checking into the Six Senses Ninh Van Bay.

Accessible only by boat, say goodbye to your saddle as you revel in total luxury, and eat, sleep, snorkel and spa your senses into a state of nirvana.

activetravelvietnam.com, holidayindochina.com, sixsenses.com



Photographs: Six Senses Hotels, Resorts & Spas; Holiday Indochina



RAFT THE ZAMBEZI

Looking for something mad to do? The wildest one-day run in the world may just suit! But this isn't about running on foot – starting at the base of the vast Victoria Falls (one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World), this is river rafting that will literally take your breath away.

Between gorges of basalt rock, thick with vegetation and spectacular to look at, the Zambezi River is over 100m deep at the base of the falls and increases to over 200m in depth by the end of a day-long trip. It offers 22 grade three to five adrenaline-pumping rapids. The tranquil pools in between give you just enough time to get your breath back and enjoy the stunning river scenery.

Like most wild activities, there are safety matters to factor in, so while there are many operators on the river offering single and multi-day trips, do a spot of research and choose one with a good reputation before you commit. Try Bundu Adventures and

Zambezi Rafting to start with.

Wild doesn't have to stop at white water. There are tons of other adventure activities too – helicopter flips, microlight trips, cheetah and lion encounters, or even a dip at the base of the falls.

For a little rest and relaxation – we hope that's part of the honeymoon plan – try The Elephant Camp overlooking the vast gorges that separate Zimbabwe and Zambia. Its sumptuous suites boast private viewing decks, plunge pools, private lounge areas, inside and outside showers, and baths with a spectacular view!

For those looking elsewhere, the grand old dame Victoria Falls Hotel was built in 1904, and with its dramatic views and private pathway to the falls, has been an icon of luxury and elegance for over 110 years.

bunduadventures.com, zambezirrafting.com, theelephantcamp.com, victoriafallshotel.com



Photographs: Ultimate Adventures; The Elephant Camp

DIVE THE WILD COAST

It has been around forever, and with good reason. Umngazi River Bungalows has long been the romantic retreat of swooners and 'mooners alike, but now, boasting a fabulous revamp, there's even more reason to zoom in on this well-loved location.

Rugged coastlines, indigenous forests, crystal waters, an overwhelming sense of peace, the spa with its dazzling views of the water, the lazy afternoons followed by slow river cruises, the famous seafood feasts, two-of-you picnics, island breakfasts, and endless walks on the beach are enough to entice. But when the thrill of adventure calls, what about sharing your comfort zone with a shark?

The nearby Offshore Africa Port St Johns specialises in up close and personal encounters with some of the East coast's larger marine creatures, including great white and bull sharks, humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and mantas, as well as many oceanic bird species. They also offer snorkelling, offshore photographic tours, the sardine run, and ocean and river excursions. (Visitors are reminded that the Wild Coast is 'wild' and all activities are strictly on a conditions-permitting basis.)

Back at the lodge, there's also loads to do; try hiking, trail running, mountain biking, motor boating, kayaking, fishing and birding. Surrender too to the temptations of the spa, which include salt scrubs, mud, coffee and mint wraps, hot stone therapy and deep muscle, Polynesian and stick massages.

For those who are looking for less, however, simply loll with a book – and the love of your life – in a quiet suite just metres from the water's edge.

offshoreportstjohns.com,
umngazi.co.za



KAYAK IN MADAGASCAR

Wash your stress away, keep fit, and explore nature and culture all at the same time. But don't forgo luxury, delectable cuisine and those quiet glasses of honeymoon wine! If that sounds right up your stream, what about heading off on a kayaking adventure in Madagascar? Not only will you get to visit historic cities and quaint villages, but also the rivers, forests, and shoreline of this enticing country.

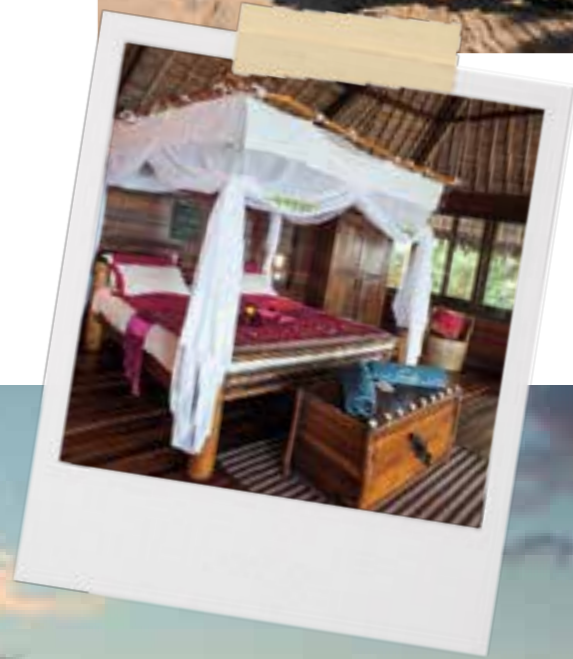
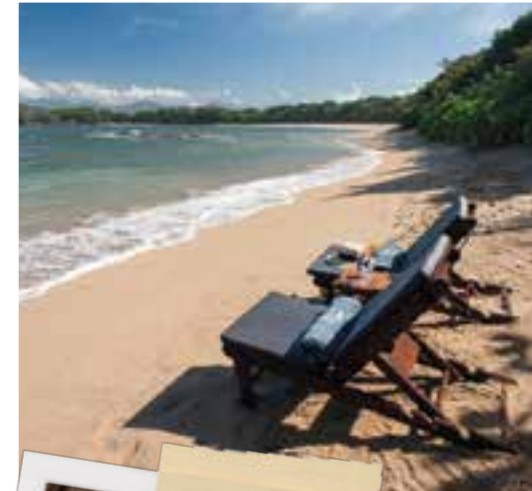
Jenman Safaris offer a number of kayaking adventures that take small groups to special places. Try local markets and visit historic towns as well as pristine rainforests, deserted beaches and private bays. You're promised abundant sightings of curious creatures, a wealth of fabulous flora, and time to explore the beaches, scout for whales and snorkel the crystal waters while viewing the kaleidoscope of corals and tropical fish beneath.

Accommodation alternates between sophisticated nights in boutique hotels

and glamping in style with French-trained chefs, to the decadent luxury of a few days to unwind at Manafiafy Beach and Rainforest Lodge. Situated between the land and sea, the lodge offers a rich variety of sea-, shore- and rainforest-based activities including a whale-watching lookout tower, an open-air massage pavilion, coastal trips and picnic lunches, the nearby fishing village of Manafiafy, traditional palm mat weavers, day and night walks in the rainforest to see lemurs, chameleons and insects, sports fishing, and mangrove boat trips.

You'll also be intoxicated by dinners under the stars with the sand between your toes. As newlyweds, be sure to steal some alone time too; to chat, make plans, and enjoy the equally intoxicating company of your very own, very new, partner for life.

jenmansafaris.com [wi](#)



Photographs: Offshore Africa Port St Johns; Umngazi River Bungalows

Photographs: Jenman Safaris; Manafiafy Beach and Rainforest Lodge