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Dear All

At Wildlife Trails we are increasingly conscious of the need for well-priced trips for single and budget conscious travellers. We continue to specialise in tailor-made trips and to pride ourselves on putting together 'unrushed' wildlife tours, however we have been thinking and working hard with our ground agents to come up with some more cost-effective itineraries for Rwanda, India and Brazil that do not compromise on the quality of the wildlife viewing content.

We are launching the first of our scheduled small group departures in 2009 – recognising that travellers often enjoy sharing the experience with like-minded persons and appreciate the benefit of also sharing travel costs. This all becomes increasingly significant when travelling to more adventurous locations further off the beaten tourist track, particularly at a time when our pounds just don't stretch as far as we might like!

Below you will find a gorilla trekking group trip to Rwanda during March (with a second departure in August) and on the trail of India's tigers at Bandhavgarh during February. Beyond this is a 'family friendly' Indian safari itinerary for travel dates between January and May. Finally there is a competitively priced mammal-focused Brazilian itinerary in the North Pantanal for the key June to October period. For more information regarding any of our trips then please don't hesitate to get in touch.

We have not currently fixed the **Rwandan gorilla trek** dates so that if you are amongst the first travelers to commit then we can aim to base this as close to your preferred dates as possible. Although it is possible to visit Rwanda year round, it is important to know that the wetter months are April/ May and November/ December when trekking conditions become much more demanding. Since gorilla tracking is done on foot it may help to know that it can be a little less steep to climb in Rwanda (than Uganda) but depending on the location of the it may mean walking for several hours so reasonable fitness/ balance is required.

Regarding gorilla trek permits, the peak months of August/ September and January to March can sell out months in advance. The itinerary below has one gorilla trek permit included and there is the option to arrange a second trek at an additional cost (\$500pp). Gorilla Trekking in Rwanda is a great choice for people with less time to spend or seeking to limit the amount of road travel involved. We have had clients reliably get equally close to the gorilla groups in both countries, however it is the greater number of forest 'openings' in Rwanda that our more demanding guests enjoy. These broader gaps between trees afford a better chance to get full-body shots versus torsos, viewing the dynamics of the entire group, and less stray vegetation for your camera to focus on. In Rwanda there is also the opportunity to trek for the rare (and elusive) Golden Monkey or take a guided birding walk looking for a number of Albertine Rift endemics. As a possible extension: Nyungwe Forest is Rwanda's answer to Kibale with the chance to look for chimps, primates and birds., equally Akagera National Park is just finding its way back on the tourist trail and has plenty in common with Lake Mburo in Uganda.

Small Group **Rwandan Gorilla Trek at the Parc National des Volcans (5 days)**

Day 1: on arrival at Kigali international airport you will be met by your driver/naturalist who will accompany you for the whole tour. You will then be transferred to the '**Kinigi Guesthouse**' (a journey of approximately 3-4 hours) from where you will commence your Gorilla Trekking; rest of the day free to relax

Day 2: early start to reach the nearby park headquarters and be allocated your trekking group. With a bit of luck you may be assigned to the 'Susa' group (no guarantees) which has nearly 40 Gorillas in the group. It will take

around 1-2 hours to reach the start of the trekking point by car. You are then given the option to hire porters before starting the 2-6 hour trek (obviously this varies depending on the movement of the family). The first part of the trek involves steep terraces before you enter the secondary forest for the final section.

Day 3: option for a second gorilla trek (at additional cost) guided birding walk, golden monkey trek, or to climb to a crater lake

Day 4: morning visit to the Diane Fossey memorial. Later you will return to Kigali, and overnight at the 'Serena Kigali'

Day 5: when appropriate you will be transferred to Kigali international airport to connect with your flight home



High Season Cost per adult: (during August 2009): £1390 per adult (single room supplement: £170pp) (based on up to a maximum of six people, sharing twin rooms throughout includes specialist 4 wheel drive vehicle and naturalist/driver, accommodation, meals, all activities and entrance fees (including 1 Gorilla Permit) as described above.

NB: departures planned during March and August (minimum 4 persons); structure may be altered to accommodate permit availability. Please note that international flights are not included (available from approximately £600-£700 per person).

Bandhavgarh National Park is one of the most famous and well known parks in India, thanks to the many books and films that have been produced about the charismatic tigers that have made Bandhavgarh their home. Like all parks in India, Wildlife Trails tries to get a balance between safaris focused on seeing the resident wildlife and additional activities that will not only add to the visitor's enjoyment, but also take a little pressure away from the core areas where tiger sightings are most common. Such trips include visits to local villages and the Mahout Camp inside the park, where you have the chance to feed and interact with the Park Elephants.

The Bandhavgarh itinerary includes a good length of stay at the park (avoiding the busier weekend days) in order to maximise your chance of quality sightings - it will always however be a matter of luck. February is the last of the cooler months when temperatures are more comfortable for the activities of both humans and tigers; this is also the time that migratory birds swell the local population. By February vegetation will have died back considerably, allowing a clearer view of any wildlife further away from the park tracks.

Small Group Bandhavgarh Wildlife Tour (8 days)

Feb 15 (Sun): on arrival at Delhi international airport (morning assumed) you will be met and transferred to Delhi Railway station (stopping en-route for brunch) to board the overnight sleeper train to Katni (2nd class AC, with packed dinner) departs 15:25

Feb 16: you will be met on arrival at approximately 05:15 and driven to 'Nature Heritage Resort' (a journey of approximately 2-3 hours). Rest of morning free to relax, afternoon jeep safari inside Bandhavgarh National Park

Feb 17: morning jeep/ elephant safari and afternoon jeep safari inside Bandhavgarh NP

Feb 18: morning jeep/ elephant safari and afternoon jeep safari inside Bandhavgarh NP

Feb 19: morning jeep/ elephant safari and afternoon jeep safari inside Bandhavgarh NP

Feb 20: morning jeep safari. After lunch you will be transferred to Katni to board the overnight sleeper train to Delhi (2nd class AC, with packed dinner) departs 17:00

Feb 21 (Sat): on arrival at approximately 07:25 you will be met and transferred to 'The Bajaj Indian Homestay'

Feb 22: when appropriate you will be transferred to Delhi international airport to connect with your flight home in New Delhi (room requested from 11:00). Afternoon at leisure and overnight.



Cost per adult (during February 2010): £725 (single room supplement: £250pp), based on up to a maximum of six people (minimum 2 persons), sharing twin rooms including all accommodation, transfers, jeep safaris and meals as described (elephant safaris are subject to availability). Please note that international flights are not included (available from approximately £350-£450 per person).

In addition we are delighted to have recently become members of AITO (www.aito.co.uk), the Association of Independent Tour Operators. As part of AITO's current family-friendly campaign we have put together 2 suggested itineraries that will remain well-priced during holiday periods and allow a family of four to enjoy some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities India and Canada have to offer. These are based on our own personal experiences travelling with our two young daughters to India in February, and Western Canada in August.

Our first suggested itinerary focuses on **Ranthambhore National Park** in India, using larger rooms with extra beds, use of a swimming pool between safaris, most meals included, and passing on the benefit of 4 of you sharing safari transport. Ranthambhore is by far the most photogenic of all of India's National Parks, not just for the wonderful scenery, 3 beautiful lakes and impressive cliff top fort, but also for the fact that you will have so much more to see in this park than any other location. In an effort to reduce the impact on the fragile core area of the park, we are always looking for additional excursions to explore different areas and connected sanctuaries. A visit to Sawai Man Singh Sanctuary to view the sunset from the cliff tops is one such activity that we organise, and our handpicked team of expert local guides (our extended family!) understand the need to spread the tourism throughout the local region for all to benefit. Extensions could be taken to include the Taj Mahal or the 'pink city' of Jaipur, since Ranthambhore is located close to the 'golden triangle'.

'Family-friendly' **Ranthambhore Wildlife Tour (7 days)**

Day 1: you will be met at Delhi international airport (morning arrival assumed) and your car and driver will remain at your disposal to take you for refreshments until your transfer to Delhi railway station to connect with the afternoon train to Sawai Madhopur, departs 16:55 and arrives at 20:35. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the '**Ranthambhore Regency**' where you will overnight.

Day 2: morning and afternoon jeep safaris in Ranthambhore National Park

Day 3: morning and afternoon jeep safaris inside Ranthambhore National Park, between safaris you will be taken for a guided tour of the cliff-top fort with fantastic views across the park's main lake (may be dry by this time of year)

Day 4: morning excursion to the tribal villages of Devpura where Black Buck Antelope might be spotted in the fields (these are not found inside the park). Afternoon free to visit local communities and/or Wildlife Trails projects in the surrounding villages

Day 5: morning and afternoon jeep safaris inside Ranthambhore National Park

Day 6: morning free for your own activities. Followed by afternoon transfer to Sawai Madhopur railway station to connect with your train (2nd class AC) to Delhi, departs 13:00 and arrives at 19:00. On arrival you will be met and transferred to the '**Bajaj Indian Homestay**' for your overnight accommodation

Day 7: when appropriate you will be transferred to Delhi international airport to connect with your flight home



Total Cost: £1330 (based on 2 adults and 2 children under 16 years of age sharing a family room throughout), includes all transfers, transport, accommodation, meals, excursions and safaris as detailed. Costs valid for travel between in 2009/2010 NOT including Christmas or Holi Festival. Please note that international flights are not included.

The second family itinerary involves a self-drive tour of the **Bella Coola River Valley** in the mountainous interior of British Columbia which is our most popular destination for seeing Grizzly Bears feeding on spawning salmon in late summer and autumn. Whereas in other locations you can feel somewhat detached from the bears and their environment in an elevated viewing stand or hide, here they can be safely viewed on foot or from the comfort of a boat drifting sedately down the river. This means you see them at eye level rather than looking down on them, and the nice thing about being in a driftboat or on foot is that you feel as though you are part of the environment, rather than just passing through it.

Here families benefit from private wildlife excursions and the undivided attention of an expert personal guide, and can enjoy intimate encounters with the Great Northern Bear with no-one else around, save the occasional fly fisherman. This means the guides can tailor the activities to their particular needs, with no pressure to conform to the agenda of a larger group, and wildlife activities cost just 10%-20% more for a family of 4 than they do for 2 adults. The itinerary below includes accommodation on a self catering basis in a self-contained 3 bedroom log cabin in a secluded wilderness setting, which costs about the same as a standard hotel room.

Family Self-Drive Bear Viewing Tour of the [Bella Coola River Valley](#) (9 days)

Day 1: On arrival at Vancouver international airport collect your rental car and drive into downtown Vancouver where you will overnight in a 2 bedroom suite at the '**Carmana Plaza**'.

Day 2: Depart Vancouver in the morning and drive 6-7 hours east and north to Williams Lake in the footsteps of the early Gold Rush settlers, cowboys, and ranchers. Then continue 30 minutes west to the historic pioneer settlement of Riske Creek where you will overnight in 2 rooms at the historic '**Chilcotin Lodge**'.

Day 3: Depart Riske Creek after breakfast and drive 4½ hours further west to the Bella Coola River Valley in the mountainous interior of British Columbia where you will overnight in a well equipped **3 bedroom cabin** in a secluded wilderness setting close to the Bella Coola River.

Day 4: A full day of guided activities with an expert local guide during which you will go in search of Grizzly Bears and other wildlife in an offroad vehicle and on foot .

Day 5: Today you will enjoy a 6 hour scenic drift down the Atnarko and Bella Coola rivers in a McKenzie river drift boat with your personal guide. Chance to see Grizzly Bears feeding on spawning salmon and more Bald Eagles that you can count.

Day 6: This morning you will enjoy a shorter drift (3-4 hours) down the lower stretches of the Atnarko rivers specifically looking for Grizzly Bears. Rest of the afternoon free.

Day 7: Free day for relaxation or self guided bear in some of the locations you have become acquainted with during your stay in the valley.

Day 8: After breakfast bid a fond farewell to the Bella Coola River Valley and drive 4½ hours east to Williams Lake, sightseeing en-route. Then continue 2½ hours south to the historic community of Ashcroft where you will overnight in 2 rooms at the '**Blue Sage B&B**'.

Day 9: Depart Ashcroft after breakfast and drive 4½ hours south and then west to Vancouver international airport where you will return your rental car and connect with your flight home.



Total Cost: £2235 (based on 2 adults and 2 children under 16 years of age) including an 8 day car rental (midsize car with unlimited mileage and comprehensive insurance), and all accommodation and activities described above. Costs valid for travel between August 15th & 30th, 2009. Please note that international flights are not included.

Finally, we continue to look for creative ways to make some of the world's most coveted wildlife destinations and experiences affordable for true wildlife enthusiasts with limited budgets, rather than let them become solely the domain of wealthy globe-trotting travellers.

Following recent our recent visit to the World Travel Market in London, we have been able to negotiate a more keenly priced [Brazilian trip](#) that still involves our preferred operators on the ground and includes an excellent length of stay in the most productive wildlife locations of the [North Pantanal](#) – we were not willing to compromise on maximising your experience of this region!

Private Wildlife Tour of the [North Pantanal](#) focusing on Giant River Otters & Jaguars (11 days)

Day 1: on arrival in Sao Paulo you will connect with an onward flight to Cuiaba. On arrival you will be met by your own personal guide/driver and he will transfer you to the Pixaim River (a journey of approximately 3 hours). The second half of this journey marks the starting point of the unsealed road and your first wildlife viewing opportunity. As well as hundreds of birds, caimans and maybe even the odd Neotropical Otter, you will enjoy the change of scenery as the Pantanal landscape comes into view. Night time drive (with spotlight) looking for Crab eating Racoons and Foxes, Anteaters and lesser cats such as Ocelot (rare!). Overnight at a '**Riverside Lodge**'

Days 2 & 3: a full day spent on the Pixaim River with your guide and boatman on a private boat, as you look for Giant River Otters, Iguanas, Howler and Capuchin Monkeys and a huge variety of birds. Overnight at the same riverside lodge with the opportunity again for a night time drive.

Day 4: transfer to the '**Pantanal Lodge**' (a half-day drive) which is famous for the number of wildlife encounters; especially on night time safaris. In the late afternoon you will drive along a private track looking for wildlife and this will be followed by a night drive

Day 5-7: 3 full days of morning and afternoon private boat safaris in one of the best locations in the world to see Jaguars. There is also a chance to see Tapir, Giant River Otters, Black Howler Monkeys, Iguana, lots of Caimans and some beautiful birds



Day 8: after breakfast you will drive back to the Pixaim River, stopping for lunch and then transfer further to the 'Board Walk Lodge'. Late afternoon walk from the lodge along the 800m wooden board walk, looking for Marmosets and Capuchin Monkeys. Climb the 25M canopy tower to enjoy the beautiful views and possibly see Neotropical Otters and Marsh deer in the open area next to the lake

Day 9: after breakfast you will be transferred to Cuiaba and connect with a flight to Sao Paulo, where you will check into the 'Transamerica Flats'. Rest of the day free for your own activities

Day 10: when appropriate you will connect with your international flight home

Cost: £2250 per person (based on two people sharing a double/twin room throughout) OR £2000 per person (based on four people sharing two double/twin rooms), includes all transfers, accommodation and meals as listed and a private car and driver/guide from Days 1-9.

Costs valid for travel between June and October 2009. Please note that international and domestic flights are not included.

We also remain committed to offering affordable tailor-made tours to Churchill, Manitoba on the shores of Hudson Bay, which each year in October and November hosts the largest gathering of Polar Bears anywhere in the world. This year we will again be offering these tours in early to mid October at a cost little more than half that of the escorted group tours of similar length and content that dominate the Churchill market. We have been offering these signature tours for 5 years now and they have been a huge hit with our clients who've been able to save a lot of money, avoid the crowds associated with the peak Churchill season (mid October to mid November), and still see plenty of polar bears while enjoying a more intimate and personal experience.

Tailor-Made Polar Bear Tour of Churchill in early October (7 days)

Day 1: Arrive in Winnipeg. Overnight at the Sheraton Four Points just across from the arrivals area.

Day 2: Morning flight to Churchill, the self styled polar bear capital of the world. You will be met at the airport and transferred to a good quality B&B where you will overnight.

Rest of the day free to explore Churchill and perhaps visit the Parks Canada Interpretive Centre and the excellent Eskimo Museum.

Day 3: In the morning you will be collected for a full day guided tour of the town and vicinity focusing on the area's history, culture and fauna. Good chance to see Arctic Hare and Snowy Owl, with possibility of Polar Bear and Arctic Fox. Overnight at the same B&B as before.

Days 4 & 5: In the morning you will be collected for a full day Tundra Buggy Tour looking for Polar Bears and other wildlife out on the tundra to the east of Churchill. Overnight at the same B&B as before.

Day 6: Most of the day free for your own activities in Churchill. Around 6PM you will be transferred to the airport to catch an evening flight to Winnipeg where you will once again overnight at the Sheraton Four Points Winnipeg Airport.

Day 7: When appropriate connect with your flight home.



Cost: £1725 per person (based on two sharing) or £2025 for a single traveller, including flights between Winnipeg and Churchill, and all transfers, accommodation, activities, and meals as described above. Costs valid for travel between October 5th & 15th, 2009 though a similar tour can often also be arranged in the October 15-25 period at a slightly increased cost. Please note that flights between the UK and Winnipeg are not included.

India Accommodation

Nature Heritage, Bandhavgarh, attractive and comfortable single storey cottages, with ceiling fans and en suite bathrooms, each has its own veranda. A small number of cottages offer air-conditioners. Set in three acres of forest on the periphery of Bandhavgarh National Park. Resident naturalists and an enthusiastic team of staff. **All meals are included,** served both indoors and out.

Bajaj Indian Homestay, New Delhi, located in a residential area close to a bustling bazaar, individually decorated rooms inspired by the Hindu gods. Essentially a guest house with a roof-top terrace bar, bedrooms have all modern amenities including air-conditioning. **Breakfast included.**

Ranthambhore Regency, a well run property with air-conditioned cottages set around lawns and an outdoor swimming pool. Rooms are spacious and comfortable with en suite bathrooms and outdoor terrace, room service is available and the food has been highly praised by all visiting Wildlife Trails clients. **All meals are included.**

Rwanda Accommodation

Serena Kigali, Kigali, Rwanda, this property has been taken over by the well know Serena Group and now attracts both leisure and business travellers looking for quality accommodation for their stay in Kigali. Rooms are spacious with modern furnishings, ensuite bathrooms and air-conditioning as standard. Other facilities include a good quality restaurant, bar and swimming pool. **Breakfast included.**

Kinigi Guesthouse, PNV, Rwanda, simple stone built cottages standing in well-maintained grounds just minutes from the Parc National des Volcans head quarters. Operated on a profit share basis with the Association of Solidarity between Rwandan Women (ASOFERWA). Guest accommodation is simple, but with electricity and hot water supplied, and offering a restaurant and lounge area with an open fire place at its centre. **All meals included.**

Canada Accommodation

Carmana Plaza, Vancouver, a stylish all suite hotel just off lively Robson Street, close to all downtown attractions. Self contained 1 & 2 bedroom suites feature separate living rooms with dining area, full kitchens, and balconies. Hotel facilities include a small fitness room and a coin laundromat.

Chilcotin Lodge, Riske Creek, a historic backcountry lodge built in 1940 in cowboy country on the high grasslands plateau. 10 nicely decorated guestrooms, each with their own unique character and equipped with wash basins, and **2 shared bathrooms.** **Breakfast included.**

3 Bedroom Cabin, Bella Coola River Valley, a self-contained timber cabin in a secluded, wilderness setting within walking distance of the river offering peace and quiet, privacy, and plenty of room. Accommodations consist of a lounge with satellite TV and VCR, kitchen/diner, 3 bedrooms (2 with queen size beds), and a full bathroom. Amenities include wireless internet access, gas barbecue, and full laundry facilities. **Self-catering.**

Blue Sage B&B, Ashcroft, a charming bed & breakfast property with old world charm and friendly hosts in the heart of historic Ashcroft. Guests can relax on the front porch swing and enjoy the beautiful flower gardens, stroll next door to the gallery, or enjoy the entertainment at the nearby opera house. This 2 storey property has 2 guest rooms and a **shared bathroom** on each floor. **Breakfast included.**

Four Points Sheraton Winnipeg Airport, a modern property, conveniently connected to the airport arrivals area via a skywalk. Amenities include restaurant, lounge, sports bar, business centre, fitness centre, and video library. Comfortable, well equipped rooms with 1 king or 2 queen beds, cable TV, VCR, and complimentary newspaper.

Churchill B&B, a clean and comfortable, family owned and operated bed & breakfast property just off the main street. The property has 4 guestrooms and **2 shared bathrooms.** **Breakfast included.**

Brazil Accommodation

Riverside Lodge, small scale single story lodge built around a quadrangle and located next to the Rio Pixaim. There are pleasant gardens in the centre of the property, with a good sized swimming pool. Rooms are very simple and with little natural light, as is the norm in the Pantanal to keep the heat out. All rooms have air-conditioning and ensuite bathrooms as standard. **All meals included.**

Pantanal Lodge a simple family run property with great food and one of the best locations in the North Pantanal for night drives. All rooms are simply furnished with ensuite bathrooms and small windows to keep the interiors cool. There are nice covered verandas to relax in a chair or hammock and the gardens are excellent for birds. **All meals included.**

Boardwalk Lodge, a lovely property with bags of character and run by one of the pioneers of ecotourism in Brazil. The lodge is designed to allow you to take a number of different wildlife activities; including walking along the 800M raised board walk and climbing the 25M viewing tower. Rooms have an 'ethnic' design and have ceiling fans and recently fitted modern ensuite bathrooms. There are extensive grounds to explore and a small swimming pool. **All meals included.**

Transamerica Flats, Sao Paulo, a stylish modern hotel well located for both the international airport and the city. Built in the style of community apartments, the rooms have a contemporary design, with quality furnishing and ensuite bathrooms. There is a lovely rooftop pool and gym, as well as a good quality restaurant. **Breakfast included.**

Quoted costs are valid for bookings made during the next two months and do not include international flights. We are however ATOL bonded and can offer a complete package including flights. All Wildlife Trails tours are protected by the Travel Trust Association (www.traveltrust.co.uk).

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at Wildlife Trails to discuss any of the itineraries above in greater detail, or for further information and advice. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes

Allan, Kirsty, James and Nick



