ADVENTURES WITH WILDLIFE

Spotting Wildlife in THE GALAPAGOS

Tiger Safaris in INDIA

AFRICA
The Wild Side

Into the Cage of Death CROC DIVING IN AUSTRALIA
Featured Contributors

**MELANIE CHAMBERS**
Melanie’s 16 years as a travel writer to over 40 countries has produced adventurous stories for the likes of Outside Magazine, Air Canada, Canadian Geographical, The Toronto Star, Canadian Cycling Magazine, The Globe and Mail and Mountain Life. She has conducted writing workshops around the globe and teaches Travel and Food Writing at Western University in the winter.

**LIZ SCULL**
Liz is Managing Editor and Creative Director of our award-winning Vacations® magazine and has been working in the travel industry for over 20 years. Liz’s job has allowed her to travel the world and is lucky to have experienced once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that she shares with us in this magazine. In this issue, Liz shares her incredible wildlife adventure in the Galapagos and according to Liz, the best trip of her life!

**HEATHER GREENWOOD DAVIS**
Heather is a world traveller and storyteller. The freelance travel writer, speaker, blogger and family travel advocate is a Contributing Editor for National Geographic Traveler magazine and the resident travel expert on The Social CTV. Over the last 20 years, her pieces highlighting people and destinations around the world have appeared in national and international publications including The Toronto Star, The Globe and Mail, Metro News, Canadian Living, Chatelaine and others. Look for Heather’s story from Kaikoura, New Zealand where she got to swim with wild dolphins.

**MARIELLEN WARD**
Mariellen Ward is a Canadian travel writer and digital storyteller. She has a BA in Journalism and runs the award-winning travel blog Breathedreamgo.com, inspired by her extensive travels in India. Mariellen is an advocate for female solo travel and responsible travel. Mariellen has been travelling to India since 2005 and recently moved there. Look for her stories on tiger safaris and solo travel in the Yoga Capital of the World.
STAYING IN A RIAD

Typical riads are decorated with intricately-patterned zellige tilework and carved wood. Rooms are often far larger than in modern hotels and have exceptionally high ceilings. Windows, perhaps of stained glass, open to the central courtyard. There might be a balcony too. Riads catering to tourists have been renovated to add modern bathrooms to traditional rooms. Note that riads aren’t always as quiet as some guests might like. Noise from the courtyard can filter up to rooms, bouncing off all the beautiful tilework. You’re also likely to hear Moroccan neighbourhood mosques and the morning call to prayer during the early hours.

Most riads don’t have swimming pools, but many do have a hammam. Ranging from traditional to spa-like, the steam bath with body scrub and massage is a Moroccan experience that can’t be missed. Riads usually include Moroccan breakfast in the rates, eaten in the courtyard or rooftop terrace depending on the weather. Mint tea and cookies, sometimes baked in the neighbourhood communal oven, are often provided in the afternoons. Higher-end riads have a restaurant where you can order traditional Moroccan dishes like tagine, couscous and pastilla (a meat pastry).

WORTH CHECKING OUT

Just a five-minute walk from the medina centre, Angsana Riads Collection in Marrakech is comprised of five riads and one dar, one in the Kasbah neighbourhood and the others clustered near the Bahia Palace. Throughout the buildings, find fireplaced libraries and rooftop terraces ideal for lounging. There is a riad rooftop with tiled jet pool and views of the old quarter. Also, enjoy the Angsana Spa’s pool, hammam and Moroccan and Thai inspired treatments. Some rooms have private plunge pools. Si Said Restaurant is in a pretty courtyard.

Art-filled Royal Mansour is a collection of 53 luxury riads and, sitting at the foot of the city walls, the riads are connected by underground tunnels. Royal Mansour has a 1.5-hectare garden, a 30-metre long swimming pool with private lounging pavilions, and an award-winning spa. Three restaurants provide the best of Morocco and the world. Each luxurious riad is decorated differently with custom-made furniture and creations by maâlems, local master craftspeople. Nannies and a kids’ club make families feel welcome.

MARRAKECH HIGHLIGHTS

Wander the UNESCO-honoured medina and bargain in the souks for spices, leather, textiles and lanterns. Enjoy getting temporarily lost and celebrating when you find landmarks like the Koutoubia Mosque’s minaret and the Ben Youssef Madrasa, a 14th century Islamic college. Next to the medina, in the Kasbah, explore the ruins of Palais El-Baadi, called the “incomparable palace”, and the 19th-century Bahia Palace.

Traditional residences, sometimes former palaces in or near Morocco’s medinas (historical walled town centres), many riads have been converted into tourist accommodations giving travellers the opportunity to get a feel for Moroccan culture. The word riad means “garden” in Arabic, and many riads have a central garden courtyard, traditionally planted with four citrus trees, while dars have a smaller tiled courtyard. Both often have a bubbling fountain. Whether riad or dar, these two- or three-storey buildings also have a rooftop terrace - perfect for taking in Morocco’s sights and sounds.

SPOTLIGHT

What to Expect in a Moroccan Riad

By Johanna Read