

Contributor guidelines 2018

Travel Africa magazine

Who writes for *Travel Africa*?

Travel Africa is produced by a small team, and a large proportion of our words and pictures are the work of freelance contributors. Most of these are professionals, many of whom we have an established relationship, but we also like to support and encourage new writers and photographers.

We also welcome contributions from readers, on any subject. We have created specific sections to enable readers to share their experiences and advice (as outlined below).

However, with only four magazines a year and such a wide subject to cover, opportunities for publication in the magazine are, sadly, limited. We do also offer occasional opportunity to run additional content on our website, monthly e-mag called *Travel Africa Extra* and through our mobile app.

It is hoped that these guidelines will make it easier for you to submit your suggestions in a clear and workable way that will make our decision-making process quicker and increase the likelihood of your proposal being accepted.

Reader contributions:

We welcome and encourage readers to contribute to the magazine. Specific areas of interest include:

- *Letters*: A general opportunity for you to discuss anything to do with African travel or conservation, comment on anything you've read in *Travel Africa* magazine, or share a travel tip with fellow readers.
- *Journal*: A section for readers to share their travel experiences, either in text or photos. Particularly popular are unusual sightings or visits to less well-known destinations that other readers may be especially curious to read a first-hand account of visiting.
- *Q&A*: An opportunity for readers to ask questions of our many expert advisors. These could be related to travel advice or the natural world... anything goes!

Correspondence can be sent by post or email, to editor@travelafricamag.com, with the subject clearly and simply written in the subject line. Please ensure your full name and contact details (including phone number) are included so we can contact you if necessary.

While we aim to respond to all correspondence efficiently, there may be times when a response is slow forthcoming as we are on deadline or not yet in planning, so please be patient in awaiting feedback.

We reserve the right to edit reader submissions at our discretion, to accommodate the entries in the space available.

If you would prefer your letter not to be published, please indicate this clearly.

How to submit your proposals:

Submissions are welcomed by post or email using the following contacts:

The Editor

Travel Africa magazine

13 Kellys Road, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1NT, United Kingdom

Email: editor@travelafricamag.com

Please ensure your correspondence is clearly labelled in the subject line as an editorial proposal and for which country / subject it refers.

Publishing timetable:

Magazines are published at the end of each March, June, September and December.

The contracting and editing process for each issue begins about two months before that, and the scheduling (and some commissioning) is often done some time before that. So there are long lead times in the process and it may be some time from your submission and/or acceptance to date of publication.

If content is to be used only on our website or app, it may be used at any time.

Response / feedback:

We try and maintain a fairly long-term editorial plan. In theory this means that decisions can be made reasonably easily. However, we tend to review this schedule only after each issue is published, so it can be several months before we make final decisions.

If you require a more urgent commitment (ie to allow you to plan travel arrangements), please state it clearly up front in your correspondence.

Often we are able to tell you reasonably quickly if the story will not be useable, for whatever reason, and so you should then be freer to offer it elsewhere. Similarly, if we are interested but not yet able to commit, we will endeavour to let you know, so you can plan accordingly.

We do try to correspond as efficiently as possible, at least to acknowledge receipt and to let you know what timeframes are in play. However, we receive a great number of proposals and it is not always possible to respond as efficiently as we would like, so we do ask for your patience and understanding.

Withdrawal of proposals:

If for any reason you wish to withdraw your proposal at any time, please let us know. It may be that it has been accepted elsewhere and you are no longer able to offer it to us.

Presenting your proposal:

It makes our job a lot easier if you make certain information clear in your presentation:

- Clearly state up front (ie subject line) the country or region to which the story relates and/or the main subject. This makes the filing and referencing of proposals considerably easier.
- If there is a timing issue, state this clearly and early. For example, if you have a trip planned at a particular time, or the story covers an event that is time-sensitive. This makes a huge difference to when we have to consider the application and potential publication date.
- If you have already travelled, please state when the trip took place and if it was sponsored or personally paid for.
- If the proposal is for a specific section in the magazine, please flag this as it again makes it easier for us to reference and make decisions.
- Proposed length of article. Although we may change this, it helps to understand how long you envisage the piece being.
- Synopsis. A short summary explaining the outline of the story and what our reader will get out of it. This should be similar to the standfirst that may appear alongside the title when published.
- Clarify early if you are able to supply images with the editorial proposal and, if possible, include sample images with the submission. If you can't supply images yourself, but know of a good source, please reference them with contact details if possible.

Submitting a completed article:

If you have a finished article, by all means send it in. If we can actually read the story we have a much better idea of your writing style and the flow of the article and this makes the decision much easier. In most cases it has been very helpful in making a quick decision on publication. And, of course, if we already have the story, it saves a lot of time coming back to you, and we are likely to use it sooner. We may come back to you for changes or a rework, depending on what space we have available, but at least we are out of the blocks.

Researching the magazine / editorial balance:

- The more familiar you are with the magazine structure, the more likely you are to submit a proposal that is relevant. This saves time, shows you have researched the magazine, and makes our job considerably easier.
- Content summaries of most issues are available on our website, and issues are available to view online and via Zinio.com and through our app.
- Some contributors make the mistake of suggesting a topic simply because they want to write about it or photograph it. An enthusiasm for your subject is important, of course, but even more important is the ability to engage an audience. Our regular contributors plan their stories and/or images with our readers' specific needs, interests and inclinations at heart.
- If we have covered a destination or subject in the last two or three years, we are almost certainly not going to cover it again.
- There are certain sections and regular items throughout the magazine. Some of these may be carried over to the website so we can carry additional items. If you are aware of the length of article for each of these slots and can pitch it accordingly, you are likely to have a greater chance of acceptance.
- There are certain countries on which we carry an article in every issue. These tend to be the main safari destinations in east and southern Africa. But we do also carry articles on lesser-visited destinations and on countries in West and North Africa, although these tend to be more sporadic.
- We also try and achieve a good spread of type of article and subject through each issue: a blend of safari/wildlife, culture, history, practical advice and the like.
- Decisions are often influenced by what other articles we have scheduled in each issue.

Submitting images:

- It always helps to see images so feel free to submit photographs with your proposal. Not only will they show us the quality and scope of images available, they will add context to the proposal and can be very helpful in shaping the way the story is presented, and over how many pages.
- There are often opportunities to use images on the website or app, so seeing them early helps us to shape potential useage.
- Initially we only require low-res images to look at, and these can be watermarked if you like. If and when we require high-resolution files, we can request specific images.
- If you are unable to provide high resolution JPEG or TIFF files that can be used at 300dpi at a large size, please don't worry about submitting images as we won't ultimately be able to use them in print.
- Images can be sent as email attachments or via Dropbox or other file sharing applications. Also on CD if that is easier, particularly for lots of high-resolution images.

Style notes:

Writing:

Our biggest challenge is space. We need to fit a lot of varied content into the magazine, so the space allocated to each story is often restricted.

Also, so much practical information is widely available online these days, so it is important we focus on what makes your experience unique and different. Our stories must convey your personal experience, your personal insight or recommendation... readers want to know about real travel experiences from writers they can trust.

- Make your writing personal, bringing you and the people you meet to the heart of the story. It needs to be bright, original, vivid, evocative and cliché-free; accurate, authentic, informative, authoritative and independent-minded.
- What makes your story fresh and unique? Do you have an original approach or angle on a subject? What is the personal narrative or experience that makes your piece stand out?
- Keep it topical and of relevance to today's traveller (bearing in mind we often work six months in advance of publication)
- Have an opinion. Share your thoughts and stimulate a discussion on issues you are passionate about or think readers should be aware of.
- Who were the people you encountered? Introduce them to our readers.
- It should communicate a sense of adventure; a curiosity about, and respect for, political, cultural and environmental concerns; a powerful impression of your personal experiences – preferably things you have done, rather than just things you have seen. Bring humour in where possible, to keep it entertaining.
- It should include a compelling hook and a dynamic argument or plot that keeps our readers reading right to the end.
- We like to underpin our articles with a more serious message about the conservation battles and social responsibilities our readers will experience when travelling.

Photography:

There are so many pictures readily available, and our readers are regular travellers who have seen loads of pictures of African places and animals, so our challenge is to find imagery that is unusual, fresh, and unique to the story, wherever possible – something that we won't feel we have seen before.

- The pictures should tell a story by recording actions or events or highlighting significant or unexpected details – i.e. they do more than simply showing what the place looks like.
- They should try and place the reader in the location, in the story. Bring people into the portfolio, especially people met and referenced in the text, who have something to add to the piece.
- Composition and colour is important. Seek the unusual angle or unconventional view. A strong visual mix of colour or a humorous or dramatic composition help catch the eye on the page.
- Images that tell a side story often work really well: a small plant or animal that may not feature prominently in the article, but which can be picked out as a separate point of interest, a learning point for our readers.
- Provide captions where possible, please, especially for most unusual images. Name files appropriately, so it is easy to see where the pic was taken and what it is of.

Use of material:

- If we agree to use your material, useage will be confirmed in writing.
- Unless specified otherwise we will require first rights for the use of your material in all present and future forms of *Travel Africa* – magazine, website, newsletters, e-mags, apps, CD ROM etc – worldwide.
- We also ask that work commissioned by *Travel Africa* is not offered to any competing publication, in any medium, within six months of your acceptance of our assignment. If your material is to be published elsewhere please advise us so that we can plan accordingly.
- You will remain the copyright owner of any original material submitted.
- You must supply full attribution details for any material submitted which is not your original work.

Travel arrangements:

If your assignment requires you to travel, we may sometimes (but not always) be able to offer assistance with the arrangements. These will be discussed as required.

In such cases we will require that:

- you sign our commissioning form to signal your agreement to the terms of the assignment
- you inform us of your visa requirements with sufficient notice for applications to be made
- you take personal responsibility for your possessions and for your health and safety, including checking that your vaccinations are up to date, you are adequately insured, etc
- you bear any expenses incurred if you choose to alter your travel dates or arrangements once bookings have been made.

Additional notes re travel:

- *Travel Africa* does not allow contributors to join press trips or request discounts, “comps” or “fam trips” of any sort in our name without a confirmed assignment.
- *Travel Africa* requires that travel companies and PR representatives who intend to provide a writer or photographer with transport, accommodation, assistance etc contact us directly to discuss the details before making any arrangements.
- *Travel Africa* does not enter into any arrangements that we believe could compromise our editorial integrity and objectivity.

Financial matters:

- The fee payable for a commissioned assignment will be fixed at the time that the work is commissioned. Reproduction fees for syndicated text and images including stock photos will be agreed prior to publication wherever possible.
- Generally fees are based in British pounds sterling, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy of the magazine containing your work will be sent to you along with a letter requesting your invoice for the agreed fee.
- Payment will be made post-publication. Invoices are settled within 30 days of receipt of the invoice, following publication.
- Any bank fees or loss in exchange are borne by the contributor.

About *Travel Africa* magazine:

- *Travel Africa* is the only international travel magazine covering African destinations, wildlife and culture. Its mission is to convey the excitement of all things African through vivid writing and inspiring photography, backed up by solid facts, expert advice and the very latest news.
- Launched in 1997 and published in the UK four times a year, *Travel Africa* is a highly-illustrated, full colour publication. It has a loyal readership, a strong profile in the travel trade and a vibrant presence online as well as in print.
- Although we work closely with many organisations across several sectors, *Travel Africa* has no affiliation with any governmental, charitable, environmental or commercial organisation involved in wildlife management, conservation or the travel industry. As such we pride ourselves on our well-informed, objective coverage of the topics and issues that matter to travellers and travel professionals.

Our readers:

- *Travel Africa* readers are knowledgeable, well-informed, experienced travellers with a curiosity and respect for Africa, its people, natural resources and future.
- 42% of our readers visit Africa at least once per year and 39% once every two or three years.
- Readers are committed African travellers: 61% are actively planning a trip in the next year, and a further 27% are planning a trip in the next two years.
- 82% of readers are over 41 years old.
- Readership is split between the UK, North America and mainland Europe.

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