



**Don't let fear put you off going anywhere.** But do invest in experienced guides and drivers, with an established tour company that specialises in the place. I like Abercrombie & Kent ([abercrombiekent.co.uk](http://abercrombiekent.co.uk)) or Roar Africa ([roarafrika.com](http://roarafrika.com)). In 'edgy' places, such as Egypt, their guides are informed, reassuring and know the destination inside out.

**In Cuba, you definitely need a local expert.**

I went with Cultural Journeys, which is run by art professor Mary Drobny ([cultural-journeys.com](http://cultural-journeys.com); tours from £115). She takes you to meet artists in their homes or studios, and knows where all the locals go dancing.

## Glam adventures By Vanessa Williams

The *Save the Best for Last* singer and *Ugly Betty* actor has been ticking off her bucket list in style

**Grill the receptionist.** I'm not one for lazing by the pool — as soon as I arrive anywhere, I ask what there is to do in the area. That's how I ended up doing a helicopter safari and hot-air ballooning in Kenya. Last year, I stayed in Guam, near the Philippines, and they told me I could book flying lessons nearby ([en.skyguam.us](http://en.skyguam.us); lessons from £99). I went up in a Cessna 172 — the skies were so clear, I didn't feel nervous at all.

**Don't scrimp on your safari.** They're expensive as hell, but it's worth splurging as much as you can afford, as the quality and access improves. Lion Sands in South Africa, for example, has an unfenced border with Kruger National Park. There were so many

lions, hippos and elephants around that it only took minutes to find them ([lionsands.com](http://lionsands.com); from £557pp a night, all-inclusive).

**Different reserves have different species.** Think about which animals you want to see, and check which reserves have them. Terrain matters, too: at Samara, near Port Elizabeth, we found rolling hills instead of dense forest, so we could spy leopards in the distance while we ate our breakfast ([samara.co.za](http://samara.co.za); from £212pp a night, all-inclusive). At Kenya's Sanctuary Olonana, I could hear rhinos grunting all night ([sanctuaryretreats.com](http://sanctuaryretreats.com); from £288pp a night, all-inclusive). It felt so intrepid, even in a luxury tent.

**Night walk: from top, the Great Pyramid of Giza; hire an insider to show you the real Cuba; enjoy beach heaven at Bora Bora, French Polynesia**

**'AS SOON AS I ARRIVE, I ASK WHAT THERE IS TO DO IN THE AREA'**

**On a multi-stop adventure? End your journey in a city.** I find it's really soothing to be able to shake the dirt off your boots and transition back into normal life before the plane home. In South Africa we went back to Cape Town's gorgeous Cape Grace hotel ([capegrace.com](http://capegrace.com); doubles from £588, B&B). In Buenos Aires, I'd recommend the sexy red Faena ([faena.com](http://faena.com); doubles from £344, room only); to go out with a bang, book the hotel's fantastic tango show for your last night (tickets from £168).

**Cruises can be glamorous!** It's a great way to experience French Polynesia, for example, with the best beaches you'll ever see. Just make sure it's a small ship. I went with Windstar and ours had about 100 cabins ([windstarcruises.com](http://windstarcruises.com)). Not a mall or a water slide in sight.

*Vanessa stars in City of Angels at London's Garrick Theatre until July 25. Book at [cityofangelsmusical.co.uk](http://cityofangelsmusical.co.uk).* ■