



When we're stuck at home in lockdown, sometimes it feels like the walls are closing in on us. We want to escape, do something new, see anything other than the four walls around us. We're tired of the same old games, the same old toys. You know what we (and our kids) need?

A SAFARI!

Safari means 'journey', better still, an ADVENTURE journey into the bush to see wild animals. Even if we can't physically go to a remote African park, there are other ways to immerse ourselves in the wild for a bit. A massive list of ideas is below! Healthy forms of escapism through exercise, imagination or education is an important way to keep depression and anxiety at bay - both for us and our children. There are mental health benefits from 'switching off' your immediate environment for a bit, forgetting about what's in front of you, and focusing on something completely different from the daily grind. For me, even researching this post and looking through all of these fun African resources has made me feel happier. My kids have loved the stuff we've done together so far. There are some really cool things we can do to encourage our kids' passion for wildlife and to help them feel connected to the places that wild animals live. These areas are life-sustaining ecosystems important to the way our planet functions - in my eyes, this is essential learning.

All the links in the list are completely FREE. You can pick and choose what you want to do. In my recent (new) home schooling journey, I've learned that a theme for our activities makes everything feel more cohesive, means that stuff like maths is more fun, and it even guides daily conversations during meal times ("What do elephants use their trunks for?"). You could do an African safari-themed day, week or term. Or you could focus on specific animals each day/week. Or you could just have a week where their screen time is focused around African wildlife. In this list, I've avoided zoo themes (because we've had enough of cages in our house). And I've avoided "safari parks" because it's important that kids feel excited about the real places where animals live in the wild. Otherwise how will they understand the importance of conserving those places?

Want to ease in to it? While the kids are playing with their toys or doing a colouring activity, play this video on YouTube from them to glance up at: <https://youtu.be/ut2KhcNtm8>. Filmed in Zimbabwe, it is beautiful and simple. It shows African animals going about their daily life in their splendourous ways. It might just be the touch of sanity that we all need during the Coronavirus craziness: a reminder that these creatures are still out there, carrying on as normal without us.

a. START YOUR SAFARI HERE:

1. **Take a toy to meet the African animals:** A fun way to approach the safari theme with your child to pretend that they are taking their favourite toy to meet some wild animals. Make a jeep and binoculars for the toy (see below) and get a few printed resources or videos to 'show' the toy.
2. **Make a jeep:** You could make a 4x4 safari vehicle for the toy out of a small box. Or go even bigger and make a safari vehicle for the kids out of bigger boxes or laundry baskets. The vehicles can be as simple or as intricate as you like. You could simply draw some wheels on to the side of the box and let the kids' imagination do the rest, or you could fill up a few hours by decorating the box (or see the link in the craft section below).
3. **Make binoculars:** To spot those animals, make binoculars out of loo rolls stuck together with masking tape (or see the link in the craft section below for more detailed ones).
4. **Check it out on a map:** At the start of your African wildlife journey, get out an atlas with your kids (or Google Maps) and check out where this continent is in relation to where you are. Trace a line with your finger from where you are, to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe for example. Remember that Africa is BIG: it's the world's second-biggest and second most-populous continent and it is also home to over 1.2 BILLION people (compare this to 741.4 million people in Europe and 579 million people in North America). So it's important to point out to kids that safari animals don't live everywhere in Africa, just in specially protected national parks and conservancies.
5. **Make a tent or den:** The most exciting real-life safaris I've been on have involved sleeping in a tent with the wild animals roaming around us. Make a tent with your kids using a sheet over some chairs or a table. Go in the tent with them and imagine hearing the sound of hippos grunting in the river nearby, lions roaring in the distance, and the scuffling of footprints near you. Bring a torch if you have one! You can then sit outside your tent and pretend to make some food, and "watch" an elephant walking past. Remember to keep very still when you spot the animals so that you don't give them a fright!
6. **You're ready to go on safari:** You could use your "vehicle" and binoculars every day, to pretend that you're going on safari in a new place. You could learn about a new animal or place every day (eg mountains to see gorillas, rivers to see crocodiles, savannah to see cheetahs).
7. **Safari I Spy/I Hear:** Once your child (or their toy) is in their "4x4", pretend to be the game ranger and "find" animals and ask them to guess what it is. eg "I hear a trumpeting noise. I see a big, grey shape rustling in the leaves. Can you guess what it is?" etc.
8. **Go animal spotting around your house or garden:** When you're on safari, the animals are very good at hiding and you have to be really good at spotting! Hide stuffed animals around the house/garden and your kids will enjoy finding them. Older kids can write a checklist of all the toys that they find and where they found them.

More make-at-home safari-themed CRAFTS are at the bottom of this list. I've also made a Kids Safari Resources Pinterest board here: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/greatzimguide/kids-free-african-safari-resources>.

b. Safari-themed VIDEOS:

Because WFH while the kids are home is hard AF. Videos about wildlife are always educational on a basic level, and they're much better than another toy unboxing black hole on YouTube. Videos (especially non-animated ones) are actually really useful because, let's face it, few kids get to see wild animals in person (but it's so important to their understanding of our planet. To fire up their imagination, your kids could sit in their cardboard safari vehicle while watching the videos.

1. MUST DO! WildEarth TV's Safari Live: Join real-time game drives as they happen in South Africa, presented by specialist game rangers, for 6 hours each day. Your child can watch a live game drive from their "4x4". This stream is great because rangers point out interesting animals and tell you amazing animal facts. They even answer your questions live on air! You can watch it on Facebook Live, the web, or on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV6HJBZD_hZcIX9JVJ3dCXQ
2. If you tune in while the game drives aren't on, switch to the live camera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzuMInOKalw> or watch a previous WildEarth video: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCV6HJBZD_hZcIX9JVJ3dCXQ
3. Activity ideas: Listen to all the sounds you can hear and try to guess what animal or bird they might be. Copy the noises!
4. Grab a piece of paper and draw the trees, animals or landscape that you see.
5. Use an animal-spotting checklist to record the animals you've seen: <http://www.greatzimbabweguide.com/wild-animal-spotting-checklist-2020/>
6. Andy's Safari Adventures on BBC iPlayer (or look on YouTube) are a fun kids series: see Andy and the Lions: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b09sz14g/andys-safari-adventures-series-1-7-andy-and-the-lions> and Andy and the Giraffe: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b09szh8n/andys-safari-adventures-series-1-10-andy-and-the-giraffe>
7. Andy's Safari Adventures songs and music are YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoOc9MoVgduPA_6yccyp3YioRftUojJzu
8. Jenny's South African elephant video diaries (also talks about elephants in crisis so check your child's age suitability): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/37499477>
9. Tinga Tales: animated educational videos such as "Why owls' heads turn all the way around": <http://bit.ly/2sKAZ9t>
10. Another real-life animal scenes video to just play in the background: https://youtu.be/dyKYTHd_1Qo
11. All Things Animal TV: a playlist of videos about African animals: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSqW8v_H6ibf55Jc5tqqrVBYAxSGyAdg
12. National Geographic Kids Africa: a helpful overview of the continent of Africa: <https://youtu.be/PSYHMWmyVfo>
13. Ninja Kids on Safari in Africa: slightly cringey but enthusiastic US-filmed show about real kids going on safari: <https://youtu.be/4rm12IYN3Io>
14. Live webcam of an elephant park in South Africa is here: <http://tembe.co.za> and here: <https://explore.org/livecams/african-wildlife/african-animal-lookout-camera>
15. BBC Earth on YouTube has some great clips; start out with Maddy's Wild Files: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5oKW6aT4UgxTg6Oy9-K54eUwXqD8VWBV>
16. Scorpion! An informative video about a rock scorpion bigger than an adult's hand, by The Zambezi Society: <https://www.facebook.com/1599388976981344/posts/2528258077427758>
17. Snake: a fascinating but creepy video about a stiletto snake: <https://www.facebook.com/zambezielephantfund/videos/870473493415697>
18. This is honestly one of the spiders I was most scared of growing up in Zimbabwe: here's the ZEF video fact file about the baboon spider: <https://www.facebook.com/zambezielephantfund/videos/1893594244104279>
19. Elephant lover? Elephants in one part of the world have learnt a very special trick, see it in action in this video: <https://www.facebook.com/zambezielephantfund/videos/1516011008540576>
20. Does your small person love horses? Some African safaris are done on horseback! Go on a virtual horse safari with this video: <https://youtu.be/ewlPS53mCMs>
21. If you have an online video streaming account such as Netflix/Disney+/Now TV, search for: BBC's Africa, 72 Cutest Animals, Adventures in Zambezia, Khumba, The Lion Guard, The Lion King, Madagascar Escape 2 Africa, Born Free, Duma, Cheetah, Animals United, The Gods Must be Crazy
22. What noises do wild animals make at night time? Have a listen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZSii8_LNx4

23. Must-see: You can follow in the footsteps of cheetahs, elephants and lions as you explore South Africa's National Parks in virtual reality with South Africa 360: <https://www.discoverafrica.com/southafrica360/>

c. Safari-themed MOVEMENT AND EXERCISE:

1. Andy's Wild Workout on the African Savannah: kids can pretend to be a springbok and more (this is one of our family favourites) by following the simple workout: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40RvOOVgCv8&t=1s>
2. Oti Mabuse kids' Lion King dance: a fun dance routine for the kids to follow along: <https://youtu.be/35Zp86hZXdc>
3. Cosmic yoga for kids: wild animals: <https://youtu.be/lFbWNmzPBYQ>, jungle safari: <https://youtu.be/C4CaRosyfig>, Lulu the lion cub: <https://youtu.be/DcS7hBE5YJQ> and stretch safari: <https://youtu.be/ybPwuaGoa9E>

d. Safari-themed VIDEO BOOKS AND AUDIOBOOKS:

Kids could sit in their tent or den with a torch to read safari-related books or listen to audiobooks. They could pretend they're camping in the wilderness with animals roaming around them.

1. Ngala the Lion bedtime story (audio) on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/W8RZ8-UGgoE>
2. Andy's Sound Adventures: Andy visits the South African Savannah and records the sound of a cheetah: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio/andys-sound-adventures-african-savannah>
3. Julia Donaldson's The Go Away Bird being read on YouTube by kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgFOFAI1kx8> AND may I just put this second link here which shows what go-away bird sounds like in real life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgmn97epYU> (go-waaay!); the sound of my childhood right there
4. Audible has a 30 day free trial: <https://www.audible.co.uk>. Try The Lion and the Mouse, Monkey Puzzle, Wriggle and Roar, Night Monkey Day Monkey, How the Elephant Got its Trunk, Monkey Madness, The White Giraffe, Good Morning Gorillas

e. Safari-themed EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

Learning can be even more fun if the kids are allowed (and have space) to do their activities sitting in their cardboard safari vehicle! Your child can also bring their favourite toy to meet the African animals featured in the worksheets. Some of the links below are educational in the conventional school sense (number/phonics etc), and some are educational in that they teach about the animals themselves.

1. Twinkl has a HUGE bank of educational resources, many of them featuring African animals. From animal body part reading/matching games, to creature fact files, to safari animals counting worksheets, to eBooks. Honestly, there's so much there that the only difficulty is choosing which worksheet/interactive game/presentation to choose from. Sign up for a free account at <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/> offer using the offer code CVDTWINKLHELPS. Then just enter 'safari' or your favourite animal into the search bar and you'll see them all. African primary resources are here: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/places/countries-and-continents/africa>
2. Scholastic has some safari-based resources and you just need to register for a free account. On the site, enter 'safari' or your favourite animal in the search bar: <https://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk/>. Some of the resources focus on UK-based safari parks whereas I'd rather support kids' interests in animals in their natural habitats, so choose carefully or at least explain the difference to your child. This animal tracks identification printout is fun: <https://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk/resources/88344> as is this role-play poem about going on safari: <https://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk/resources/88343>
3. The National Wildlife Federation has given free access to their kids resources for 3 months, you just need to register. They have magazines for specific age groups so you can tailor resources according to your child's needs. On their videos page you can listen to the sound of a hyena's laugh: <https://rangerrick.org/videos/>, listen to a cheetah and a barking zebra: <https://rangerrick.org/videos/page/3/>, or learn about rhinos: https://rangerrick.org/ranger_rick_jr/rip-roarin-rhinos/ and big bad hippos: https://rangerrick.org/ranger_rick/big-bad-hippos/
4. Put your smart speaker to work! Questions to ask your smart speaker during meal times (or any other time): Tell me about Africa? What is a safari? How big is an elephant? What do I do if a hippo chases me? What sound a hyena/cheetah/hippo/lion/African elephant/giraffe make? Do alligators live in Africa? What should I pack for a safari?
5. Check out the World Wildlife Foundation's daily classroom activity plans and livestreams: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/wild-classroom-daily-activity-plans>
6. Ask your child to draw a map of their safari adventure or draw one with them to discuss together. eg Draw a river (where the hippos and crocodiles live), a forest (where the monkeys live), grassland savannah (where the lions, cheetahs and antelope live), maybe draw some tents where you would sleep if you were on safari, the city (further away) that your aeroplane flew into when you arrived, etc. General map ideas here: <http://getdrawings.com/map-drawing-for-kids>
7. Education.com has some free resources during lockdown. If you search for 'Africa' or 'safari' on their website you'll be able to choose age-suitable resources. Here's an African animal colouring page: <https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/africa-coloring-page/>, a Mount Kilimanjaro colouring page: <https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/color-world-mt-kilimanjaro/> and making a safari graph: <https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/graphing-practice-4/>

8. The Cheetah Conservation Fund has some kid-friendly educational videos and resources about cheetahs: <https://cheetah.org/kids/cheetah-facts/> (including a video asking "Do cheetahs purr?". For older kids see this great cheetah conservation passport: <https://cheetah.org/resource-library/conservation-passport/>)
9. Got a kid that's snake-crazy? Struik has a free poster download with pictures of southern African snakes: <https://www.struiknatureclub.co.za/free-stuff.php>
10. Kids World Travel Guide has a number of pages about Africa, like this overview of South African animals: <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/south-africa-animals.html> and Africa fact page: <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/africa-facts.html>
11. Search for your favourite animal and find fact files, games and videos on National Geographic Kids: <https://www.natgeokids.com>, such as these giraffe facts: <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/ten-giraffe-facts/>
12. Preschooler giraffe spot counting game: <https://www.toddlerapproved.com/2014/07/giraffe-spots-number-game.html?m=1>
13. Match the skin markings to the animal: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/identify-which-animal-each-of-the-skin-patterns-be-6047162>
14. Safari animals colour in and count: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/colour-in-and-count-safari-11674170>
15. Fun facts about the Big Five: <https://www.signatureafricansafaris.com/fun-facts-big-five-infographic/>
16. Older kids could do a creative writing exercise imagining what they would do on their exciting safari journey, what animal is their favourite and why.
17. To inspire your imagination games and conversations, see this infographic on what to expect from a gorilla trek: <https://cdn-images.go2africa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18082836/1-What-to-expect-on-a-Gorilla-Trek-infographic-UGANDA.jpg>
18. Enchanted Learning has a printable African animal book for young readers: <https://www.enchantedlearning.com/books/animals/african/>
19. Printable activity sheets based around The Lion Guard: <https://thankyouhoneyblog.com/lion-guard-activities-free-printables/>

f. Safari-themed GAMES AND APPS:

1. CBeebies Andy's safari sounds: make some funky animal beats: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/games/andys-safari-sounds-game>
2. Quiz game: what safari animal are you?: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/puzzles/andys-safari-adventures-which-animal-quiz>
3. Go Jetters animal tracks puzzle: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/puzzles/go-jettters-animal-tracks-quiz>
4. CBeebies rhino quiz: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/puzzles/rhino-quiz>
5. I Spy on Safari by Scholastic: match animal noises to their surroundings: <https://resource-bank.scholastic.co.uk/resources/88643>
6. The World Wildlife Fund has an app for kids on the app store - and it's free. Just search for the WWF Together app
7. African animal games: http://www.africa-animals.com/animal_games.html
8. Lion Guard Disney games and videos: <http://disneyjunior.disney.com.au/the-lion-guard>
9. More apps to search for on your device include: Did you Know African Wildlife, African animals puzzles, Snoring elephant puzzle, Trumpet Elephant Sounds, The Elephant's Child

g. Safari-themed CRAFTS AND BAKING:

1. DIY loo roll binoculars: <https://artscrackers.com/2015/08/17/themed-playdate-games-craft-tutorial-free-printable>; PS: Pith safari hats are reminiscent of colonial powers in Africa and are a No for me
2. Safari-viewing vehicle/jeep box: <https://artsymomma.com/upcycled-cardboard-box-car-craft-art-playdate.html>
3. Printable plane tickets: <http://cottonridgehomeschool.com/2018/03/14/free-travel-printables-airplane-train-and-cruise-ship-travel-tickets/>
4. Printable suitcase outline for kids to draw what they would pack in their suitcase: <https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/5bbbc5669b7d1566ffe45ea0/1539036874580-MZFDLCDVE6IJEUXBL179/Screen-Shot-2017-06-22-at-9.58.10-AM.png?content-type=image%2Fpng>
5. Lion paw print cookies: Use a basic cookie recipe then decorate with chocolate buttons and choc chips or nuts: <http://chandaandcurtis.blogspot.com/2012/10/kalvns-birthday-party.html>

6. Make a zebra stripe cake: <https://sallysbakingaddiction.com/zebra-cake/>
7. Jungle fun bright animal silhouette printable for kids to cut and make a safari scene or trace around, or add patterns to: <http://blog.catchmyparty.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/junglefunsign.png>
8. Paper plate pet snake: <http://www.piikeastreet.com/2012/04/pet-snake/>
9. Lion hand print craft: <http://www.iheartartsnrcrafts.com/handprint-lion-card-kids-craft-youre-rawr-able/>
10. Paper plate giraffe: <https://iheartcraftythings.com/paper-plate-giraffe.html>
11. Paper plate elephant puppet: this one is cool as the 'trunk' is your arm: <https://iheartcraftythings.com/paper-plate-elephant-puppet-tutoria.html>
12. Rhino foot print craft: <http://www.houseofburkeblog.com/2014/08/rhino-footprint-craft.html>
13. Cupcake liner lion craft: <http://raisinglittlesuperheroes.com/cupcake-liner-lion-craft/>
14. DIY lion card: <https://www.simpleeverydaymom.com/lion-card-craft/>
15. Lion collage: this is super easy to do using old magazines or newspaper: <https://www.artycraftykids.com/art/newspaper-lion/>
16. 10 printable animal masks (not all of them African): <https://www.artycraftykids.com/craft/10-printable-safari-animal-masks-for-kids/>
17. Animal bookmarks: these are really cute: <https://www.redtedart.com/safari-animal-bookmarks/>
18. African savannah shoebox diorama/3D scene: <https://www.firstpalette.com/craft/african-savanna-diorama.html>
19. Animal salt painting: <http://www.toddlerapproved.com/2014/07/zoo-animal-salt-painting-for-kids.html>
20. Elephant headband and trunk: <https://artsymomma.com/dr-seuss-horton-hears-a-who-crafts-book-movie.html>
21. Animal peek-a-boo board: <http://www.toddlerapproved.com/2014/07/zoo-animal-peek-boo-board.html>
22. Printable easy build a monkey craft: <https://simplemomproject.com/monkey-craft/>
23. Zebra printable craft: <http://learncreatelove.com/printable-zebra-craft/>
24. Make a small world safari: <https://nurturestore.co.uk/small-world-play-africa-safari>
25. So many great DIY ideas based around The Lion Guard here: <https://buggyandbuddy.com/the-lion-guard/>
26. Elmer Elephant milk bottle craft: <https://theimaginationtree.com/milk-jug-elmer-elephant-craft/>
27. African sunset animal tracing craft: <https://taminglittlemonsters.com/african-sunset-shadow-tracing-art/>
28. Hyena body part printable: <http://learncreatelove.com/printable-hyena-craft/>
29. Printable stand-up safari animals: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/safari-animals.html>

PS: This list would be waaay too long if I also included resources about Africa's individual countries and modern city life, but if you're interested in that, start here: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschool-lesson-plans/africa/> and for preschoolers this Go Jetties Africa introduction is great: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/cbeebies-go-jetties-continent-of-africa-powerpoint-t-g-642>

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