

NEW
TRAVEL

OUT OF AFRICA

RACHAEL RIDLEY
MINGLES WITH
THE ANIMALS
IN ZAMBIA

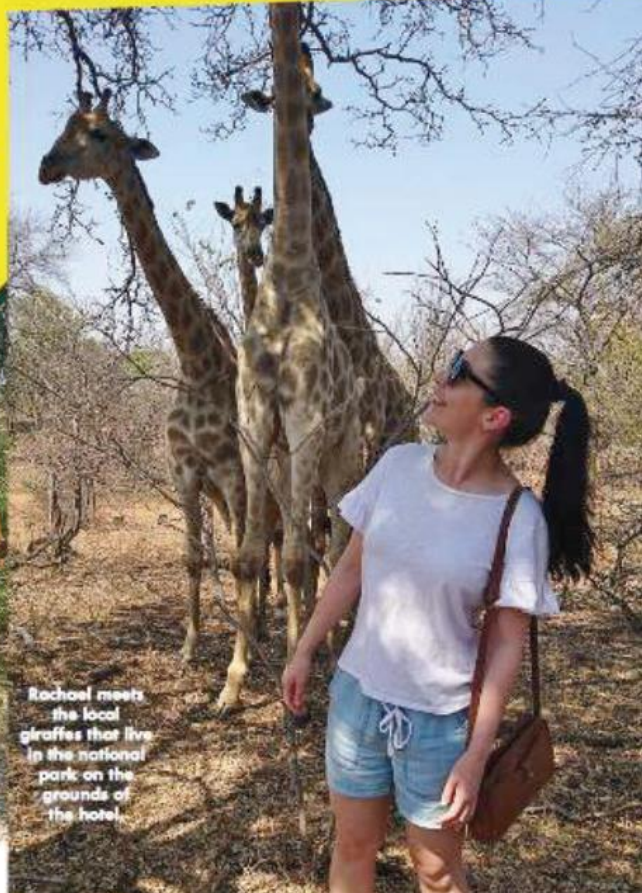
DISCOVER
WHAT IT'S
LIKE TO
HOLIDAY LIKE
ROYALTY



Anantara's five-star Royal Livingstone Hotel will transport you back to the early 1900s with its lavish colonial-style decor. Immerse yourself in local cuisine at its stylish restaurant while enjoying the house wine. The friendly staff can help book tours and adventures (anantara.com).

Fly from Perth via South African Airways (flysaa.com) to Johannesburg with connecting flights from all Australian major cities, and then on to Livingstone, Zambia, with British Airways Comair. Be sure to check with your doctor about what vaccines you'll need at least six weeks before travelling.

The hotel's gospel choir (below) gives the warmest of welcomes.



Rachael meets the local giraffes that live in the national park on the grounds of the hotel.

Staring into the gaping mouth of Victoria Falls, as tonnes of water furiously cascade over the edge, there is a mist so thick it resembles smoke. As I take in the awesome beauty of the world's largest waterfall from above, I'm acutely aware of my unique position: flying tandem some 1500 feet above the falls in a microlight, which is basically two chairs and an engine strapped to a hang glider, with only an aeroplane-style seatbelt to secure me.

The experience is thrilling but my skilled pilot keeps me at ease as we zoom around the snake-like Zambezi River, taking in the incredible views of Livingstone. Flying just above the trees, we head off in search of some of the animals Africa is so famous for, and it's not long before we spot dozens of hippos, gigantic crocs, herds of zebra and buffalo, and even some elephants plodding through the trees!

Despite having been in Zambia for only a day, this isn't my first encounter with its wildlife. I'm holidaying like royalty at Anantara's Royal Livingstone Hotel, on the Zambezi River near Victoria Falls and in the middle of the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, which is teeming with wildlife.

After checking into my luxurious suite with a sunroom overlooking the river, I spotted two giraffes casually foraging among the trees just metres from the room.



Victoria Falls is a 10-minute stroll from The Royal Livingstone Hotel, where zebra graze outside the rooms (below).



It doesn't take much of a search to find herds of zebra and impalas grazing on the grounds. They are so accustomed to the hotel's guests that they will literally appear right outside your door. But don't get too comfortable; remember they are still wild animals.

This lesson is learned the hard way as I spot an adorable monkey outside my room running around with stolen speedos on his head. When approached, he spots my camera and chases me all the way back to my room.

The encounter with a cheeky monkey doesn't deter me from seeking out more wildlife and I book a water safari tour of the Zambezi River with Victoria Falls River Safaris. Our friendly

hosts pass around Zambian beers as we watch the local wildlife enjoy their afternoon. Herds of hippos grunt to each other, occasionally popping up their heads and flapping their tiny ears, and we spot a huge croc sunning itself with its mouth open wide.

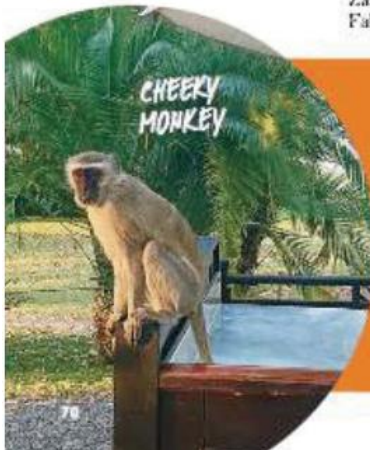
Further up the river we spy an enormous male elephant on the riverbank, and we watch in amazement as he trudges past our boat. As he reaches the other side, he turns and trumpets at our boat, making us all jump with fright. Just through the trees there is a baby elephant waiting for his dad.

At sunset, the sky turns to pastel lilac and the sun becomes a burning hot pink. I've never seen a sunset like it.

Take a break from the heat at The Royal Livingstone Hotel's pool, where waiters can supply cold towels and delicious cocktails.



The sounds of happy hippos grunting fill the air. This trip has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience never to be forgotten.



CHEEKY MONKEY

THINGS TO DO IN LIVINGSTONE

- **Devil's Pool** – If you've got the guts, jump into this natural pool at the very edge of the Victoria Falls!
- **Royal Livingstone Express** – Hop aboard this restored steam train for a fine dining experience as you cross Victoria Falls Bridge.
- **Spa treatments** – Enjoy an outdoor massage in a private gazebo on the banks of the Zambezi River at The Royal Livingstone Hotel.



RACHAEL FLYING ABOVE VICTORIA FALLS