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## BIG IN JAPAN

RUGBY, SUSHI & THE SMALLEST ROOMS

60

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
10 of the best backpackers to stay at

66

**ETHIOPIA**  
Head to Addis Ababa for an authentic experience

72

**KALAHARI**  
A transformative retreat for solo female travellers

84

**JAPAN**  
Your Rugby World Cup guide in the land of the rising sun





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# ROAR & RESTORE

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT TRIP

If it is true that one of the many benefits of travel is to help us to understand our place in the world better, it should come as no surprise to learn that in the post-#MeToo era, solo female travel is on a speedy upward trajectory. ROAR AFRICA, a New York- and Cape Town-based specialist travel company, is leading the way in crafting just these kinds of journeys and shattering long-held gender barriers in the process.

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## WITH MORE MEANS AND FLEXIBILITY

at their disposal than past generations, global statistics show that women are leading the way when it comes to solo travel and women-only holidays. "Women are embracing solo travel not because they are necessarily single, but because they are wise to the fact that taking themselves out of their comfort zone can be transformative and lead to life-changing learnings," says Deborah Calmeyer, founder and CEO of ROAR AFRICA. This US- and South African-based specialist company is leading the way in crafting experiential journeys and empowerment for women in the male-dominated safari industry.

And Deborah would know, for late last year she was named one of the 30 most powerful women in travel by the US magazine *Condé Nast Traveler*, while this month her company, ROAR AFRICA, was voted the second-best safari outfitter in the world (for the second year in a row) by the readers of US-based *Travel + Leisure* magazine.

"Our ability as women to bond through conversation, and our willingness in general to be more cohesive as a group, is a big part of this trend's success. I think intrinsically, we know that travel makes us better people – and invariably better partners, wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends as a result," says Deborah.

With a firm focus on self-actualisation, Deborah's learning journeys are designed to debunk the long-held view that global adventure travel (and conservation in Africa, for that matter) is a male-only domain.

"In fact, since time immemorial we have assumed that men were at the forefront of global exploratory travel, but dig deep enough, and you will discover a host of female explorers who were

getting on with it quietly for centuries," she adds, citing Egeria, one of the first female pilgrims to climb Mount Sinai as far back as 381 AD, and Gertrude Bell, an archaeologist, linguist and the greatest female mountaineer of her day who mapped out the boundaries of Mesopotamia or present-day Iraq, in the early 1900s.

"Of course, there is a plethora of modern-day heroines to choose from," says Deborah, who was inspired in the creation of ROAR AFRICA's learning journeys by the very many women she interacts with daily. With this in mind, Deborah devised an inaugural seven-day Women's Empowerment ROAR & RESTORE Retreat, at which she asked five globally influential women in the fields of women's empowerment, philanthropy, conservation, business and science to share the vision, passion and successes of their personal stories.

The retreat hosted by Deborah and media powerhouse Pat Mitchell, a lifelong advocate for women's rights, was the first of its kind in that it was led by an all-female team of African pilots, guides, trackers, conservationists, anti-poachers, chefs and a hospitality team. Created for a group of 12 international "interested and interesting" women who are all influential leaders in their respective fields, the retreat kicked off in June 2019 in Graaff-Reinet at the historic five-star Droutdy Hotel.

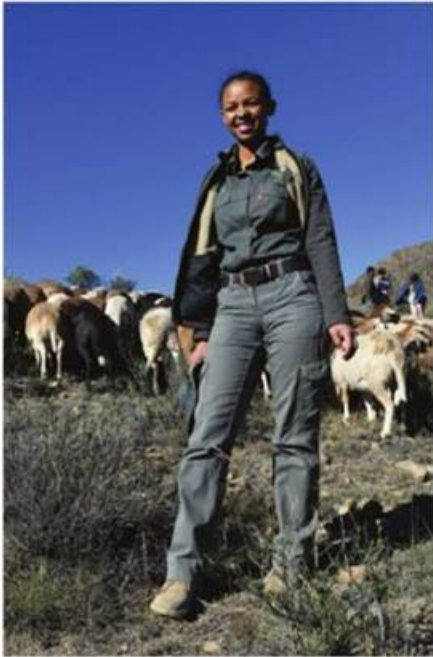
This hotel, a luxury destination in itself, was chosen as a starting point, because it is part of a game-changing women's empowerment initiative with the South African College for Tourism (SACT), a non-profit organisation also based in Graaff-Reinet.

Founded by Dr Anton Rupert in 2001 and today with the genius of Gaynor Rupert, the aim is to train young women from underprivileged backgrounds in a year-long tourism course. It is a massive success story in that since its inception, it has produced more than 1 200 graduates, all of whom have received on-the-job skills training, enabling them to work in hotels, lodges or guesthouses.



INTRINSICALLY, WE KNOW THAT TRAVEL MAKES US BETTER PEOPLE





Kelathlwe Malaki (a graduate from the academy) on our trip. "This is a critical example of the ways in which women are shattering tribal and Western glass ceilings," says Deborah.

Another reason for the visit to Graaff-Reinet was to facilitate a visit to the Herding Academy at St Olives farm in the Rupert Nature Reserve, the first and only academy of its kind in the world, that was initiated by the Rupert family.

The genius behind The Herding Academy is that it teaches the ancient skills of migratory and pastoral herding to both men and women by fostering an understanding of and imitating the herd, hoof and migration effects of wild animals.

In fact, with an estimated 30 000 herders required in South Africa alone, many of whom are women, the importance of this training cannot be underestimated.

The herders that are women are often the caregivers and heads of families too as a result of the men going to the city for work. That they are fulfilling the vital role of providing food through subsistence farming, with little to no training in the ancient art of herding, makes this a critical initiative, as their lives and those of the

#### DIG DEEP ENOUGH, AND YOU'LL FIND A HOST OF FEMALE EXPLORERS

The Drostyd Hotel commits to 30 internship positions every year, meaning that by virtue of staying here, you are contributing to their empowerment (all profits are ploughed back into SACT), but also experiencing the incredible transformative power of responsible tourism.

The Tracking Academy forms part of this philanthropic endeavour too. "The enormous knowledge and skills required to track animals in the wild is one of our most indigenous art forms," explains Deborah. "Wildlife tracking is an ancient skill set that evolved out of necessity; and has been critical to our survival as humans."

As such, it was of huge importance to discover that in addition to our all-female guide complement, we were also privileged to have the expertise of Africa's first and only fully qualified female tracker,

generations to come, depend upon it.

"We have learnt in our own journey as a company that just as we need to take care of the land and animals, we need to take care of ourselves too," explains Deborah. "And so, we work hard to pioneer immersive experiences that marry our commitment to the preservation and support of the people, animals, and environments that we visit, with the deep, instinctual reconnection that happens when one is in the bush."

While on this particular women's empowerment trip, Deborah wanted to create an experiential journey that shows how women are not just overcoming Western norms, but traditional African norms too.

"There is no reason why women in the safari

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THE BEST OF CALING  
AND HERITAGE







industry should be in housekeeping and reservations alone," adds Deborah. "In my experience, women are an indispensable asset on the frontlines of hospitality; and we at ROAR AFRICA support those people and places committed to transformation by exercising gender equality, and putting women in these kinds of leadership roles."

There are few places as transformative as the Kalahari Desert, an area known as South Africa's last great wilderness. And precious few safari operators that cut to the core of conservation with such an inspired vision as Tswalu. It is here that the next stage of the retreat took place when both guests and speakers visited Tswalu and its newly refurbished Motse Lodge. Set within 114 hectares of private nature reserve, the reserve and lodge are owned by the Oppenheimer family, who have spent more than two decades restoring this once ravaged land.

Here, the guests were treated to helicopter flips over a generous landscape of mountains, dunes and grassland, and game drives against a dramatic backdrop with incredible wildlife sightings, from lion, cheetah, giraffe and wild dogs to the elusive pangolin and aardvark, not to mention the reserve's prolific 240-strong species of birds.

Here, amidst the incredible expanse of sand, sky and savannah, we were treated to talks twice daily by inspirational women: Dr Lucy King, a zoologist based in Kenya's Tsavo region, who is the head of the human-elephant coexistence programme for the research charity Save the Elephants, and a research associate to the University of Oxford; conservationist Cathy Dreyer, a pioneer in the establishment of new black rhino populations across Africa, and the winner of the 2016 Tusk Award for the Best Emerging Conservationist in Africa; Meagan Fallone, the founder and director of Barefoot College International, a social enterprise that trains and empowers women globally, that has brought light to one-million people across 96 countries in the developing world; Christine Schuler Deschryver, whose life's work helping rape survivors at City of Joy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the subject of a must-

see Netflix documentary entitled *City of Joy*; and Lindsey Taylor-Wood, the founder of The Helm, a US-based venture-capitalist fund and lifestyle platform committed to investing in female entrepreneurs.

"Each of the learning journeys that I have created, have taken on a life of their own, however, the community of women we created on this trip and the chain of events that have been set in motion beyond it, have exceeded my wildest expectations," says Deborah, in reference to the lifelong friendships that were formed, and the renewed commitment that speakers gained by being given a platform.

Not to mention the meaningful collaborations, the generous donations including an enormous grant from a US foundation, and the opportunity that Dr Lucy King has been afforded to talk at TEDWomen later in the year.

"It is these kinds of outcomes that we have come to expect from our trips," says Deborah. "It gives voice to a mantra we live by at ROAR AFRICA, that if 'African women rise, wildlife will thrive.'" It was everything it promised to be, a life-changing journey that showed how women can truly embrace the value of their contribution through tourism when they begin to shatter the plethora of geographical, gender and social barriers that remain – what better way to do that than by travelling with, and meeting, those women who live that reality every day.

For more info on ROAR AFRICA, email [welc@roarfric.com](mailto:welc@roarfric.com), or visit [roarfric.com](http://roarfric.com)



#### GETTING THERE

•• FLY SAA flies to Port Elizabeth daily from Johannesburg. From there, rent a car and take a road trip to Graaff-Reinet. Visit [flysaa.com](http://flysaa.com)

[www.roarfric.com](http://www.roarfric.com)



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### Announcing the 20TH PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINERS' FORUM (PSTF) CONFERENCE

On 7 – 9 October 2019 to be held at the  
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Organised and hosted by the  
National School of Government and the PSTF Advisory Committee

#### BACKGROUND

In 2011, the South African government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030. Chapter 13 of the NDP calls for the building of a capable and developmental state. This vision calls for professional, disciplined, loyal, and committed public servants who possess the necessary skills and competencies to do their work. In order to achieve Vision 2030, the public sector must have a strong cadre of public sector trainers and facilitators who are themselves well capacitated to empower other public servants with requisite skills, competencies and attributes. This will afford attendants an opportunity to reflect critically on their roles in the context of building a capable and developmental state. Among others, the conference will deal with the policy environment, capacity development and career pathing, youth empowerment, facilitation of citizen-focused development programmes, using existing models and methods, and financial and other resources needed for public sector trainers/facilitators to empower others.

#### THEME: "ENABLING VISION 2030 THROUGH HRD: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT"

#### Participant's profile

This conference will be of immense value to:

- ETD/HRD practitioners (trainers, organisational-development specialists, skills-development facilitators, training coordinators, and managers)
- Members of organised labour
- SETA officials
- Academics and researchers in HRD/ETD, public-sector leaders and administrators

- Academics and researchers in HRD/ETD, public-sector leaders and administrators
- Students in the fields of HRD/ETD and Public Administration

#### 1. CONFERENCE BOOKING

- An amount of R6 717,82 is payable per delegate. For quotations, please send an e-mail to [pstf@thensg.gov.za](mailto:pstf@thensg.gov.za). For telephonic enquiries, please contact Teboho Khalushi at 012 441 6729, or Martie Bergh at 012 441 6187.
- Conference fees must be paid on or before 31 August 2019, otherwise the booking will be regarded as cancelled.
- For general enquiries, please contact Dr Thami Shezi, Head of the PSTF Secretariat, at 012 441 6849 or [thami.shezi@thensg.gov.za](mailto:thami.shezi@thensg.gov.za)

#### 2. REGISTRATION PROCESS

- Please use the e-mail address [pstf@thensg.gov.za](mailto:pstf@thensg.gov.za) for all registration-related correspondence. The registration process is as follows:
- Delegates can request a quotation by sending an e-mail to the afore-mentioned address.
  - The NSG will generate a quotation and send the booking and registration forms to you within four working days.
  - Delegates should complete the booking form and the registration form, and submit these, together with a government purchase order via e-mail, [pstf@thensg.gov.za](mailto:pstf@thensg.gov.za).
  - An invoice will be issued to your department within 7 working days after receipt of the government purchase order.
  - Proof of payment should be submitted via e-mail to [contactcentre@thensg.gov.za](mailto:contactcentre@thensg.gov.za) no later than 31 August 2019.
  - The NSG will confirm your booking for the conference by 30 September 2019.



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