

A practical guide to tapping into multi-sensory wildlife safaris

As the travel industry moves towards more immersive and inclusive experiences, multi-sensory safaris are emerging as a game-drive-changer. These safaris are going beyond the visual element of game drives by engaging sound, touch, smell, and even taste.

Here's your step-by-step guide to successfully integrating multi-sensory safaris into your tourism offering.

1. Understand the multi-sensory safari market

Traditional safaris rely heavily on sight to garner guest engagement, but nature has so much more to offer. Multi-sensory safaris enhance the experience by amplifying auditory elements and introducing tactile interactions that activate all the senses.

Sound Safaris co-founder Sarah Solomon advises: "Involving all the senses changes the way people enjoy and remember wildlife encounters. They become immersive, memorable, and often profound experiences that resonate with the conscious traveller."

These safaris cater to both adventurers seeking a closer connection with their surroundings as well as visually impaired people who have previously been excluded from game drives. With enhanced sounds, travellers with low vision can immerse themselves on their terms, too.

“ Multi-sensory safaris open the door for people who perhaps thought a traditional wildlife viewing experience wasn't easily accessible to them due to its mainly visual component. Now all senses are involved – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. It's a rewarding and stimulating adventure for all. ”

- Sarah Solomon, co-founder of Sound Safaris

Ask yourself:

- How does your safari experience currently engage all five senses?
- What can you introduce to create a more inclusive experience for a diverse range of travellers with sensory impairments?

2. Invest in the right technology and training

Audio technology is an essential component for successful multi-sensory safaris. High-quality microphones, amplifiers, and headsets allow guests to hear the wilderness in greater detail.

Implementation strategies:

- Fit sensitive stereo microphones and directional amplifiers to vehicles to capture and enhance wildlife sounds.
- Train guides to focus on all senses, not just visual cues – pointing out sounds, textures, and scents.

3. Partner with accessibility-friendly destinations

Partnering with lodges and reserves that offer disability-friendly facilities is essential to guests' comfort.

What to look out for:

- Lodges with features like shower chairs and safety railings in the bathrooms.
- Easy-to-navigate premises for people with wheelchairs or walking aids.
- Reserves close to major urban centres to minimise travel burdens.

4. Design immersive itineraries

Beyond technologies like sensitive microphones and headphones, consider other activities that stimulate all the senses and make the safari experience more engaging. "Slow down!" suggests Solomon. "Not just the game drive – the whole safari experience. A game drive is so much more than just the visual appeal of coming across iconic wildlife. Take time to enjoy and understand how the natural world ticks."

Add these to your itinerary:

- **Tactile experiences:** Allow guests to touch animal hides, bones, or different types of vegetation.

“ It doesn't need to be complicated – like the smooth bark of a rhino rubbing post, the sand beneath your feet, or textured leaves and rough tree bark. ”

- Sarah Solomon, co-founder of Sound Safaris

- **Scent trails:** Introduce guests to the distinct aromas of the bush – crushed leaves, wild herbs, dung piles, and fresh earth after the rain.
- **Culinary elements:** Offer local flavours, such as wild honey, marula fruit, or traditional bushveld meals.

5. Market the experience thoughtfully

Your marketing approach should emphasise the uniqueness and inclusivity of multi-sensory safaris.

Try these strategies:

- Testimonials and case studies from travellers (particularly those with disabilities) can illustrate the impact of multi-sensory safaris.

“ One Sound Safaris guest said he doesn't ever want to go on a traditional safari again. He explained that, with the enhanced sound, he could hear a lot more than just footsteps. It was like having his 20/20 vision back. ”

- Sarah Solomon, co-founder of Sound Safaris

- Leverage both high-quality audio and video content to showcase the power of sound and touch in wildlife encounters.

Top tech tip: Augmented reality (AR) apps can allow users to preview sensory elements of a safari, building anticipation and setting expectations.

- Collaborate with travel influencers and accessibility advocates to reach a wider audience.

6. Incorporate educational elements

Multi-sensory safaris provide a special opportunity to educate guests on how wildlife works and the importance of sensory elements, such as sound, in the natural world.

Try this:

- Work with experts to develop guided audio experiences explaining the ecosystem's sounds and behaviours.
- Offer workshops where guests can learn to identify bird calls, animal tracks, and scents in the wild.
- Create partnerships with schools and institutions to promote awareness and inclusivity in safari tourism.

“ At the start of every multi-sensory safari, we take guests through a presentation unpacking how sound works and why it is important for animals' survival. ”

- Sarah Solomon, co-founder of Sound Safaris

These inclusive safaris represent the next evolution in wildlife tourism, making nature more accessible, engaging, and meaningful for all travellers.

Now is the time to embrace this innovative approach and bring the wild to life for everyone.

