

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

By Diane Daniel

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

In February, Watertown-based Thomson Safaris organized “A Taste of the Wild with Chef Jody Adams,” a 12-day trip to Tanzania that included a big-game safari and other natural and cultural stops. Brookline resident Adams, 59, is the James Beard Award-winning chef behind Harvard Square’s Rialto (which she recently announced she will be leaving in June), and Trade, in Boston’s Seaport District. Her most recent venture is Saloniki, a quick-casual Greek restaurant that opened in Fenway earlier this year. Below are edited excerpts from an interview with Adams about the trip, which repeats next year, Jan. 21-Feb. 1 (from \$8,990 per person).

Q What inspired you to go on safari?
A I’ve known Rick (Thomson) and Judi (Wineland) of Thomson Safaris for years. They know I’ve led bike trips for people interested in cycling and food, mostly in Italy. For a few years they’ve been saying “you should bring your group to Africa,” but I hadn’t really thought about a culinary safari. But once we started talking about the quality of food and the fresh ingredients, I was sold. A lot of the ingredients were very familiar, like eggplants, garlic, tomatoes, goat, and chicken.

Q What was the general itinerary and what was expected of you?
A We were at the Eastern Serengeti Nature Refuge, Serengeti National Park, and Ngorongoro Highlands and Crater. I cooked a few times with camp chefs and led a day-long session at Gibb’s Farm, an amazing eco-lodge. That’s the only place I had a full kitchen.

Q Most of your tours have been in Western Europe. Were you worried about the culinary challenges in a less-developed country?
A I’d been in Africa a few times, but of course there were a lot of unknowns. I’m coming into someone else’s kitchen in a foreign environment and I don’t know how they do things. I knew that the safari camps weren’t terribly rustic, though there is no electricity and no running water and you cook with charcoal or propane. Plus they have to truck everything into the middle of the Serengeti. So I had a little nervousness, but mostly excitement. My life is really organized, so to be thrown into a situation where I

On safari with chef Jody Adams



KEN RIVARD PHOTOGRAPHY

Juma Kimweri and Jody Adams prepare a meal in Tanzania.

have to think on my feet, I love that. I have a dream of having a TV show where I’d be dropped from a plane wearing a fanny pack with olive oil, salt and pepper, and few other essentials, with no idea where I was going, and come up with a meal.

Q Were you concerned about cultural or language barriers?
A I like environments that are interesting and challenging and where I learn about people, how alike we are

and how different we are. In a kitchen there’s an understanding that doesn’t require verbal language. The language is through your hands and your ingredients. It’s really fabulous.

Q What did you pack for cooking?
A I brought tongs, a microplane, a peeler, and five different knives that I could bear to lose, just in case.

Q Your husband, Ken Rivard, is a photographer. Was he excited to join you?

A It was kind of a dream come true for him. He brought one of those ginormous lenses that it takes three people to hold.

Q What was your setup like in the Serengeti?
A Our guide, Willie (Hombo), was a wealth of knowledge. He exuded so much pride in Tanzania. There were 15 of us – all from New England. We first stayed at the Arusha coffee lodge, which was beautiful, then flew into

the Serengeti. At the safari camps, we had some generators for refrigeration, and solar-powered lights in tents. Heated water is available, but not running water. When I first heard we weren’t allowed to walk around at night because of wild animals, I thought it would be claustrophobic, but by the end of the day, we were so tired and ready for a glass of wine and a great meal that it didn’t matter.

Q What did you cook with the safari chefs?
A They call little dishes “bitings.”

Don’t you love that? Coconut is used a lot in Tanzania, not just as a flavoring but as a fat. For a biting, I toasted coconut, let it harden, and fried it into little crisps. The cooks make a spinach puree, so I made one with ginger and also a charred eggplant puree. I used their flavorings, but brought an Italian technique. We ended up grilling a lot of veggies to serve with eggplant, basically baba ganoush. We shared and exchanged ideas using similar recipes but different techniques.

Q What were some of the safari highlights?
A The big one for me was watching a cheetah eyeball a gazelle from way across the way and our guide knowing what would happen. In a second, that cheetah was there. The other gazelles just froze, watching this happen, like a ritual of acceptance and then they turned away and left as the cheetah sat down to eat. Also, we were there during the migration of the wildebeest and zebras, and we saw thousands and thousands of them together. The guides take enormous pride in making sure the guests see the best of things. They were determined we’d see the big five, and we did. Also, in the Ngorongoro Crater, the flamingoes just blanketed the horizon. We also had the chance to spend some time with the Maasai community. It was a real privilege to talk to them.

Q What did your cooking day at Gibb’s Farm involve?
A Some guests milked cows, some baked bread, others picked veggies, and then we all worked in the kitchen and made a beautiful meal. We had spatchcocked chicken, fresh pasta with pesto, roasted beets, asparagus with lemon zest. Dessert was a passion fruit soufflé that didn’t work. It rose and fell quickly. Everybody thought it was delicious, but it definitely wasn’t a soufflé.

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HERE

BOUTIQUE B&B DEBUTS IN VINEYARD HAVEN

If staying at a B&B makes you shudder with thoughts of teddy bears and lace, think again. The new 7-bedroom Nobnocket Boutique Inn (formerly the Doctor’s House Bed and Breakfast) has been transformed by Annabelle and Simon Hunton into a contemporary lodging experience. Located on a bluff overlooking Vineyard Haven Harbor, the almost 2-acre estate — circa 1908 — was originally owned by the town’s doctor. Though the Arts and Crafts period house may be reminiscent of an old English Manor with perennial gardens, the interior’s complete contemporary redesign steps into the 21st

century with luxury rooms, private en-suite bathrooms, air-conditioning, Wi-Fi, and other upscale amenities. A home-cooked breakfast includes fresh baked pastry and fruit, homemade granola, and choice of French toast, omelets, and more. In June, a mid-week (Sun-Thu) Run of the House special offers the best available room for \$295/night. Rates Oct. 16-May 26, \$160-\$230; May 27-Oct. 15, \$325-\$475. 508-696-0859, www.nobnocket.com

ANTICIPATING SUMMER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Enjoy some northern hospitality with the Springing into Summer Festival sponsored by the Jackson New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce (May

29-June 12). Local businesses in Jackson, Bartlett, Intervale, Harts Location, and Glen are opening their doors with special lodging deals and dining experiences, drink and food tastings, gift-giveaways, stargazing nights, a new Doorways, Porches & Sidewalk Stroll, creative art classes, and more. The highlight of the festival is the Exquisite Gardens of Jackson Tour, a self-guided tour of more than 12 private and community gardens (Sat. June 11, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., rain or shine). Beverages and light refreshments will be served at every garden. Advanced ticket purchase suggested. Adults \$10; children \$5. E-mail kathleen@jacksonnh.com to request a brochure. 603-383-9356. www.jacksonnh.com

THERE

EXOTIC ITALIAN AUTO EXHIBIT IN NASHVILLE

This month, the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville debuts an exhibition that is certain to make exotic car lovers swoon. Bellissima! The Italian Automotive Renaissance, 1945-1975, curated by award-winning automotive writer, Ken Gross, celebrates the spirit of Italian innovation and creativity. The exhibition features a selection of extraordinary cars and motorcycles, including vehicles by Alfa Romeo, Bizzarri, Ducati, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lancia, and Maserati. The 19 coach-built and concept cars, and three motorcycles on display, may surprise even the most knowledgeable car aficionados. Highlights include the ultra-rare Alfa Romeo BAT models 5, 7, and 9 from the 1950s; a 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO; and a 1970 Lancia Stratos HF Zero. Each vehicle in the exhibit comes from private collections and museums. Exhibit dates: May 27-Oct. 9. Adults \$12. 615-244-3340, fristcenter.org

MOTOR VALLEY LAUNCHES WEBSITE

Speaking of exotic Italian cars, the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board invites visitors to discover Italy’s long automotive history with the launch of the newly redesigned and easy-to-use website, MotorValley. Located in Northern Italy, the Motor Valley — as it is affectionately called — is home to a world of automotive titans including Ferrari, Lamborghini, Ducati, Pagani, 11 private collections of historic vehicles and 14 museums devoted to ultimate driving machines, including the

Ferrari Museum of Maranello, the newest museum dedicated to Enzo Ferrari in Modena, and the Ducati and Lamborghini Museums near Bologna. Visitors to the website will find one-to-four-night tour packages and special offers that celebrate the region, pairing car factory tours with gastronomic experiences, legendary races, spa excursions, and shopping expeditions. www.motorvalley.com

EVERYWHERE

REVIEW SITE FOR GUIDED TRIPS

Planning a guided trip for your family and friends? Unsure of how to evaluate the thousands of tours on the market? Stride Travel recently launched its site, which enables users to search and read reviews for nearly 6,000 pre-planned trips, including traditional group tours. privateguided.com

supplier, including global brands such as Intrepid Travel, Explore, G Adventures, and Rothschild Safaris. www.stridetravel.com

ALL TERRAIN BLUETOOTH SPEAKERS

Those who must have music on an outdoor adventure — and you know who you are — should consider Yatra Aquatune Speakers. Waterproof, shockproof, dustproof, and built to float, the compact Aquatune 5712 speaker utilizes Bluetooth technology to provide up to 12 hours of wireless listening for the adventurous traveler. Bump up the power specs from 5 watts to 9 and 12 respectively with Aquatune’s 5712 and 9612 models, perfect companions for backpacking, camping, kayaking, and all other rugged activities. \$39.99-\$79.99. www.shopyatra.com

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