



*EXTRAORDINARY TRAVELERS CLUB DISPATCH - ISSUE #7 - APRIL 2024*

## **Africa: Always Dazzling; Never Irrelephant!**

by Richard Bangs

**Africa, cradle of humanity, coaxes with a primal rhythm that resonates deep within our beings.** It is a continent that defies easy categorization, a kaleidoscope of landscapes, cultures, and wildlife that leaves an inextirpable mark on all who venture here. **Africa is not just a destination—it is a pilgrimage, a revelation, and a call to action.**

**Africa is a symphony of senses—a crescendo of colors, sounds, and fragrances that envelop from the moment the step is made off the plane or boat.** The ochre hues of the savannah, the emerald green of rainforests, the sapphire blue of lakes and the white crests of rapids on the Zambezi create a canvas that defies imagination. The air carries the scent of acacia blossoms, damp earth, and wild grass. And the sounds—the haunting cry of a lion, the rhythmic beat of tribal drums, the rustle of leaves as elephants pass by—all merge into a connate melody that stirs something ancient within us.

**Africa is the theater where nature's grandest spectacle unfolds.** The Great Migration, a mesmerizing ballet of wildebeests and pajama donkeys, zebras, crossing bursting crocodiled rivers is a testament to the circle of life. Witnessing a lioness stalk her prey or a giraffe stretch its neck to nibble leaves from the treetops is like glimpsing the secrets of creation. Staring into the knowing eyes of a mountain gorilla in Uganda it seems we have stumbled upon a neighborhood of mirrors, or of lenses to a different time in our lives. And the gentle giants—the elephants, rhinos, and hippos—whose very existence hangs in the balance speak of an unfallen place and age, and for a moment there seems a kinship that transcends species barriers. Africa is their last stronghold, and we must bear witness before it is too late.

**Africa is not a monolith; it is a mosaic of 54 countries, a honeycomb of diverse cultures, languages, and traditions.** From the Maasai warriors of

Kenya to the Himba women of Namibia, each tribe weaves its unique thread into the fabric of humanity. Spend a night in a Bedouin tent under the star-studded Saharan sky, dance with the Samburu people around a bonfire, or listen to the haunting melodies of the griots in Mali. These encounters are not mere snapshots; they are portals to understanding our shared heritage.

**Africa is a time machine.** In its ancient rock art, crumbling ruins, and whispered legends, we glimpse epochs long past. The Pyramids of Giza, the lost city of Great Zimbabwe, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela—they all whisper tales of empires risen and fallen, of wisdom and folly. To stand where our ancestors stood, to touch the same stones they touched, is to bridge the chasm between past and present.

**Africa is at a crossroads.** Poaching, encroachment, even reckless resource extraction threaten its delicate ecosystems. But there is hope. Conservation efforts, community-based tourism, and sustainable practices are gaining ground. [Hero of Africa, Clive Stockil, Brokering Conflict to Cooperation.](#) By visiting Africa now, we become ambassadors for its preservation and its vital throughline. We contribute to local economies, support wildlife sanctuaries, and forge connections that transcend borders. Africa needs us, and we need Africa.

So, heed the summons of the roaring silence. Pack the bags, leave preconceptions behind, and step into the many worlds of Africa. Let its songs and cadences infuse the spirit, its landscapes etch themselves into memory, and its people, ancestors to all, inspire our common humanity. For Africa is not just a place; it is the origin story, and the eternal home. **A handshake here reaches back to Earth's first morning, and forever changes the visitor, the host, the now and the future.**

**Oh yes, and it has delectable cuisines not found anywhere else.** How I order when at the Carnivore Restaurant in Nairobi: "I'll have the crocodile. And make it snappy."

##



Richard Bangs in South Sudan



# An Invitation - Richard Bangs' The Last Great Kingdoms of Africa

A Private Experience Exploring Eswatini & Lesotho



**Would love to share the Last Great Kingdoms of Africa with you!**

Can we crack the ancient code and find the fabled mines of King Solomon?

A favorite author, H. Rider Haggard, traveled through the Kingdom of Swaziland (now Eswatini, and one of the few remaining absolute monarchies in the world) in the 1880s, and the striking rock formations known as Sheba's Breasts and Execution Rock inspired his seminal novel *King Solomon's Mines*.

As did South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal, and its Zulu People, and "The Kingdom of the Sky," Lesothos.

The novel was the earliest and most influential work in the "lost world" literary genre, and it captured my heart and imagination. I rolled out the map and said, "I want to go there!"

At last, I have put together a private experience through these **Lost Kingdoms**, **October 14-25, 2024**, and would love to have you join me. Easy hiking, fabulous lodges, and passages into the hidden realms of mythical sways.



Take a look at the detailed itinerary and for more information and to join, contact the foremost authority on all things Africa, **Nicole Russo**:

[NicoleRusso@MTSobek.com](mailto:NicoleRusso@MTSobek.com)

t: +1 510 594 6041 or +1 800 974 0300 x 6041

**I hope you can make it!** H. Rider Haggard was one of the world's greatest fabulists. This trip, in the footsteps of his most famous character, Allan Quatermain, is simply fabulous.

- Richard Bangs

**Click for Details & Itinerary**  
**Lost Kingdoms of Africa**  
**October 14-25, 2024**



Read The Green Gold of Uganda by Richard Bangs

<https://community.thriveglobal.com/the-green-gold-of-uganda/>

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**Hadza: The Last of the First**  
by Jack Wheeler



**Humanity – *Homo sapiens* – began evolving from our *Homo ergaster* hominid ancestors in East Africa around a quarter-million years ago.** In all that time since, only one group of us is directly descended from those first of us, still living in East Africa, practicing the original nomadic hunter-gather lifestyle of countless millennia, their DNA unrelated to any other people on earth, their language unrelated to any other.

**They are the *Hadza*.** It is with good reason anthropologists call them “the last of the first” – for there are less than a thousand of them left as cattle-herding and farming tribes continually encroach on the hunting grounds they need to survive.

**The Hadza men hunt with bow and arrows, the Hadza women gather roots, tubers, fruits and berries. They have no villages.** Living together in bands of 20-30, they encamp in small shelters of boughs and leaves wherever the men have killed an animal like an eland (their favorite), warthog or some baboons, make a fire (the ancient hand-twisted stick method) and feast on it until it’s time to move and hunt again.

**They wear animal skins, supplemented with clothes they trade for with nearby tribes like the Datoga. They love to sing and dance around the campfire. They smile easily and laugh freely.**

The only metal I saw them have were Datoga-made arrowheads and knives traded for. It’s hard to imagine a more utterly basic and simple existence. **Yet they live a far happier, purposeful, and satisfied life than a great, great many of our species elsewhere.**

The Hadza live around Lake Eyasi on the floor of the Great Rift Valley at the base of the Serengeti Plateau in Tanzania. **It's in the deep South Serengeti where our Wheeler-Windsor Safaris are during the late Birthing Season of February-March before the Great Migration begins.**

**You witness the most extraordinary wildlife spectacle on earth.** Can you imagine seeing 250,000 wildebeest stretching across the Serengeti as far as the eye can see?

No picture does that justice, so you focus on the individual, like this male lion...



... or a mommy cheetah watching her cub's reflection in a small pool.





Here is where humankind began amidst this primordial scene. And the Hadza have been here since that very beginning. It is such a privilege and honor to be with and learn from them.

It is having life-memorable experiences like this that we aspire to give those who go on safari us.

*To learn more about how you can meet “the last of the first” on our Wheeler-Windsor Serengeti Birthing Safari in 2025, go here:*

**Click Here for Details & Itinerary**

**Serengeti Luxury  
Birthing Safari**

**March 8-19, 2025**

## **An Invitation - Jack Wheeler & Rebel Holiday - Luxury Serengeti Birthing Safari - March 8-19, 2025**



Our prior guests have found this to be a very special personal experience. They have called it life changing, enlivening, rejuvenating. You will find others like you who embrace the natural world.

**Contact: Rebel Holiday - [holiday@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com](mailto:holiday@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com)  
or [explore@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com](mailto:explore@wheelerwindsorexpeditions.com)**

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## 10 Powerful Ways Adventure Travel Affected My Children by Rebel Holiday



*Photo: Brandon Holiday Wheeler, Kenya, age 5*

Born into a family of adventurers, both our sons traveled internationally beginning from the age of five with their dad, Jack Wheeler, a professional explorer and adventurer. Milder trips with me. By the time they reached 16 we trusted them enough to travel alone overseas. While it wasn't always easy to "let them go," I had to be true to my values as an adventurer myself. Now I can appreciate how travel has contributed to their exceptional appreciation of all life, of the diversity of people and cultures from the far-away, and how it has

strengthened confidence, gratitude, and the desire to make personal contributions to the world.

## 1. Confidence

Real confidence is based on a strong sense of competence and efficacy – the ability to do things drawn from real-life experiences. In many ways American society has created vehicles for kids to effectively achieve goals, simple and hard. However, many contrivances described as “confidence builders” are often artificial kudos from authority figures such as school or parents, “grading on the curve.” Consider the difference between seeing the Matterhorn at Disneyland, watching a movie about climbing the Matterhorn, vs actually getting up onto the mountain. Even if only up to Hornli Hut and onto the Hornli Ridge, *climbing the Matterhorn* is the real deal, and success imparts self-worth and a positive sense of identity

## 2. Curiosity & An Inquiring Outlook

Many young Americans are jaded. They think they’ve seen it, know it, and BORED with life before they hit the quarter century mark. How curious are they likely to be when everything to which they are exposed is second-hand info, already filtered and pre-interpreted? Connecting with other peoples, cultures and lifestyles up close and in living color, one can’t help but wonder and become more curious

## 3. Engagement with Life and People

The internet, computers, video games, mobile devices, texting, and other aspects of American life today, not surprisingly foster dis-engagement with authentic human interaction. A “lack of engagement by employees” is one of the biggest challenges faced by U.S. corporations, while 80% of American workers report being dissatisfied with their jobs. This feeling of “staleness” can begin early in life and can be shifted with adventure travel. Upon returning home, there is a renewed sense of meaning and appreciation. Many are open to greater local engagement, after interacting with people from other cultures and finding ways of relating on their turf. As a lifelong entrepreneur, I’ve seen how increased engagement is vital in innovation, business, relationships, and family. Empowering kids to relate to and communicate with people outside of their immediate sphere brings lifelong benefits.

## 4. Being Active, Not Passive

Similar to **Engagement**, being **Active, Not Passive** is mindset that can foster positive habits and become an invaluable life skill. That’s why playing sports does more for self-worth than merely *watching* sports. This is essential for most any type of achievement or personal and professional success. Adults who

remain **Active, Not Passive** throughout their lives report higher levels of wellness and satisfaction, as do their partners, family and friends.

## 5. Seeing Multiple, Different Perspectives

We are often fish in the water and don't recognize fixed ways of relating to life. Not seeing other perspectives destroys relationships, and undermines many types of business initiatives. Traveling with Americans in a first-class bubble may be a great pleasure, but it does not provide the same take-home value as Adventure Travel when you're on the train or in the village with the locals.



*Photo: Jackson Holiday Wheeler with Taureg guides on a Trans-Sahara Expedition with his father, Jack Wheeler. Photo by Jack Wheeler*

## 6. Flexibility & Adaptability with Circumstances and Other People

This is built upon seeing other perspectives and understanding cooperation from a practical standpoint. On an adventure you must adapt as chance and circumstances dictate, and solutions often come with an open mind and a willingness to cooperate with others. This is especially relevant for kids used to getting their own way.

## **7. Good Judgment based on Real Life Experiences**

Many young people have distorted perceptions of risks, danger, and relative safety. This is partially created by society and perpetuated by the drama of television, motion pictures, video games, social media and the dark spaces of the internet. Dangerous things can appear “safe” and safe things could be dangerous. When you immerse in unfamiliar parts of the world, you see life in a fresh and authentic form without the Hollywood glitz or big media spin. International travel can assist with developing the ability to distinguish real from artificial situations, and to develop good judgment, useful in all areas of life.

## **8. Awareness for a Stronger Sense of Self**

Many kids ask themselves, “Who am I as a unique individual?” and “Who can I become?” But who, besides their internal voices, can they turn to for answers? Greater awareness and a stronger sense of self lead to heightened self-esteem and help build confidence in many ways. Any type of mindfulness increases cognitive control, the ability to deal with delayed gratification, perseverance, and the realization of long-term goals.

## **9. High Self-Esteem**

Self-Esteem is a natural outcome from all the other benefits of this life. The trait is often equated with confidence. They are, in fact, quite different. Self-Esteem is how you value yourself, e.g., what you think you are worth as a person. Confidence relates to sureness and efficacy – the belief in competency. It is not uncommon for a person to be confident at his or her work– or on the tennis court, but not have positive self-esteem in personal relationships.

High self-esteem is enhanced by #8 – a stronger awareness and a Strong Sense of Self. But that alone may not be enough. That’s why although it has become popular at some schools to build self-esteem in a vacuum (“You’re worth it because you just are...), that approach is often not effective. Often children raised in a privileged environment find themselves feeling unworthy when faced with the realities of a competitive world. This is not the mindset for forging a happy, successful life.

## **10. Appreciation**

Appreciation of life, nature, others, and opportunities, is fundamental to wellness and personal satisfaction. Appreciation for the “small things” is a big thing. Travel to foreign countries and remote places can give all of us an enhanced ability to experience how great our lives are – especially when we return home and say, “It’s so great to be back HOME!”

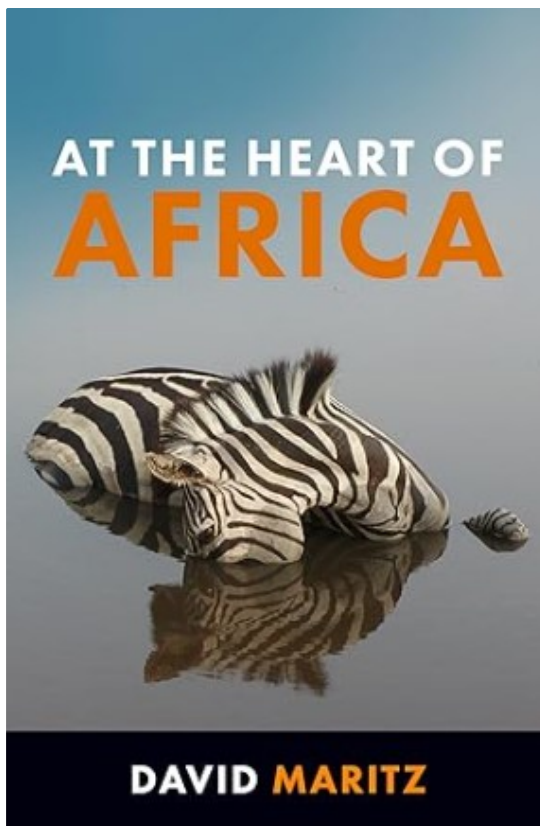
Appreciation for both the small and large is irreplaceable and simply cannot be valued enough.

So, get out and go, and bring the children!



*Jackson Holiday Wheeler, Sahara Elephant Art  
Photo by Jack Wheeler*

## **Extraordinary Travelers Bookshelf**



## At The Heart of Africa by David Maritz

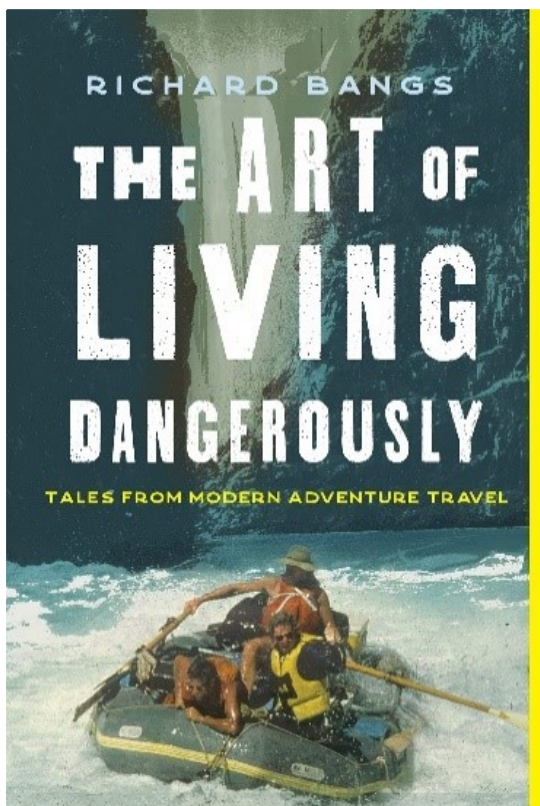
### What reviewers say:

*"Definitely a story of Africa from an insider's perspective, as told through the actions of characters as grippingly rich as the idea of Africa itself is to most outsiders, full of ambiguities and moral quandaries.. A great read!"*

*"The author paints a vibrant picture of central Africa and its inhabitants, with an engaging story that explores important issues facing that part of the world."*

[At The Heart of Africa](#)

**The Art of Living Dangerously**, on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. The thrilling new book celebrating Sobek's 50 years of insane exploration is available. Just click the book image below to get started!



## The Art of Living Dangerously by Richard Bangs

Be swept away by these awesome and implausible tales from Richard's 50 years of insanely great explorations.

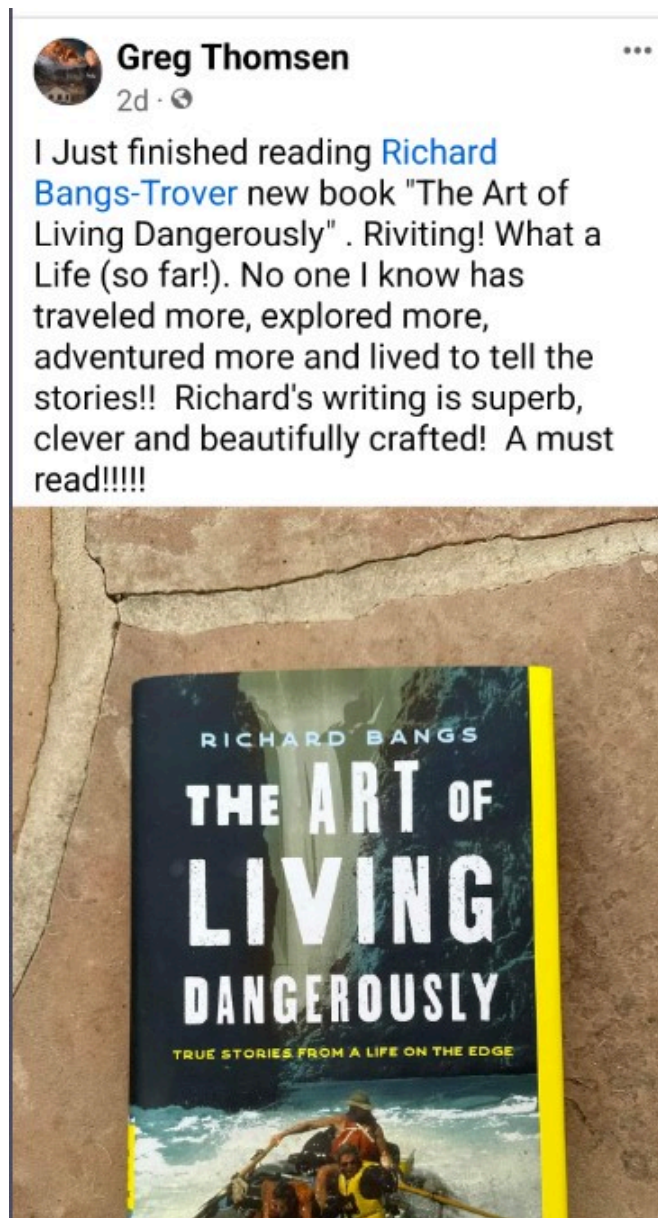
### What reviewers say:

Thom Beers, creator of *The Deadliest Catch*, says ***"Richard Bangs is the epitome of living life to the fullest. Danger is and has always been his comfort zone."***

*Paul Maritz, conservationist, tech investor, former senior exec at Microsoft and VMware says, "Richard tells great stories, some of them true."*

[The Art of Living Dangerously](#)

## Submit Your Review on Amazon



**Yes, Let's Go There!**





Jack Wheeler and Richard Bangs reaching for the stars. (photo by Jasper Bangs)

### Connect with Richard Bangs



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Your comments are welcome, email [richardbangs@extraordinarytravelersclub.com](mailto:richardbangs@extraordinarytravelersclub.com)

Share with us your Extraordinary Travel experiences!  
Just email: [RichardBangs@ExtraordinaryTravelersClub.com](mailto:RichardBangs@ExtraordinaryTravelersClub.com)



The Extraordinary Travelers Club is a celebration of extraordinary travels and those who pioneer and partake. Each month we offer commentary, interviews and opportunities to explore our remarkable world, to turn unturned corners and breathe rarefied air.

This is a club for the bold, the curious, and those who seek exceptional experiences in the hidden scapes and the back of beyond. There is no membership fee; just the currency of curiosity. We invite you to be a part of this wayfaring League, a community within which to share the insights, codes and secrets with like-minded travelers from around the globe.

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### Special Thanks To Our Fellow Travel Pioneers...



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