

Africa on Six Wheels: A Semester on Safari

Betty Levitov



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"I think I get it," Betty Levitov's youngest student said, sitting on a porch in Harare, Zimbabwe. "You've had a potentially fatal disease, and faced death, and now you'll do just about anything." The student was trying to fathom why a teacher would take thirteen kids from a small midwestern liberal arts college on a three-month trek across Africa.

The answer, a learning experience like no other, unfolds in Levitov's thoroughly engaging account of her life-changing stint as a *mwalimu* ("teacher" in Swahili) with an Australian bus driver and thirteen college kids from Nebraska in tow. The group's wanderings take them—and us—through seven countries. Through dhow trips and donkey rides on the Swahili island of Lamu, scuba diving and spice tours in Zanzibar, camping in the Namib Desert, and swimming on the edge of a cataract at Victoria Falls, we encounter remarkable people, new customs, and intriguing arts (along with malaria, flat tires, a bike accident, and a hostage crisis). As the students apprentice themselves to African cooks, fishermen, carvers, and batik artists, we discover with them a subtle and complex connection among people normally worlds apart.

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