

GETAWAY

LATE BREAKS

GREAT DEALS ON LAST-MINUTE HOLIDAYS



SPOOKY THEME PARK THRILLS
FRIGHTFULLY good fun awaits at Alton Towers' annual Scarefest next month.

The horror highlights include the new Project 42 live-action maze, where volunteers must enter the underground Phalanx compound and outwit human test subjects who have been infected by a mutant antidote.

Scarefest 2018 is on October 6/7, 13/14 and daily from October 19 to November 2.

Theme park admission costs from £33 for an adult and £27.50 for a child in advance online. Maze tickets start from £5 per person. Overnight stays start at £41pp.

See altontowers.com/scarefest for more information.



EGYPTIAN ADVENTURE
THE first episode of the BBC2 series, Ancient Invisible Cities reveals the secrets of Cairo and Ancient Egypt using the latest 3D-scanning technology.

Holidaymakers wanting to go on their own adventure, to discover the ancient sights, could opt for a 10-night trip with Discover Egypt. This package includes a relaxing seven-night Nile cruise on board the new 5-star M/S Tulip from Luxor to Aswan, followed by three nights visiting the magnificent treasures of Cairo.

Price is £1,199 per person for departures on December 14, and £1,245pp for departures October 26, November 9 and 16, plus Christmas departure, December 24 from £1,499pp.

This includes return flights from Heathrow; full-board cruise and three nights bed and breakfast the Steigenberger El Tahrir in Cairo, plus all transfers in resort. To book call 0207 407 2111 or visit discoveregypt.co.uk

SAFARI SO GOOD.. IN SOUTH WALES!



ADRIAN CAFFERY MEETS A MENAGERIE OF ANIMALS WITHOUT THE FUSS OF TAKING A TRIP TO AFRICA

MOVING the mosquito net to one side, we rolled out of the four-poster bed in our safari tent, excited about the animal adventures that lay ahead.

Later, just a 10-minute drive away, we got up close to some of the area's magnificent wildlife – giraffes, lions, rhinos, zebras and those lovable meerkats.

But rather than taking an all-terrain vehicle, we drove there in a Ford Fiesta. And this wasn't the plains of Africa, this was Pembrokeshire in south Wales.

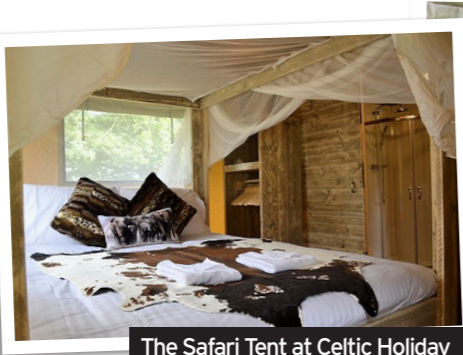
Yet it was as if we were getting the full safari experience during our weekend with Celtic Holiday Parks and the nearby Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo.

Our safari tent certainly did its best to give us a feel for Africa, with a canvas exterior, faux fur rugs, wildlife print cushions and those mosquito nets.

Unlike the earliest African explorers, we enjoyed running water and full electricity, with heaters, a kettle, microwave, toaster, gas hob, fridge and even a TV.

In fact, the tent took glamping (glamorous camping) to a new level with quirky, industrial light fittings, a very spacious shower room and Rattan furniture in the living area.

The tent was unusual in having two stories, with a ladder leading to the single beds which our two children were ridiculously excited about sleeping in.



The Safari Tent at Celtic Holiday Parks' Noble Court, Pembrokeshire

The quality feel continued on the private decking area where there was a sturdy wooden dining set for six, plus additional seating and coffee tables. Best of all, there was also a large, sunken hot tub.

From the decking, we watched the kids playing on the large open space opposite, and by night we eyed satellites and shooting stars in the unpolluted skies.

And we were able to bring the outside in by simply rolling up the canvas across the full length of tent – with the only wildlife to fear being field mice!

We were staying at Noble Court, which is one of three holiday parks in the Celtic family within close proximity – the others being Croft



A play area at Folly Farm

Country Park and Meadow House.

Noble Court is on the edge of the charming town of Narberth and is just a 12-minute drive to Folly Farm, where our African-themed weekend went into overdrive.

Here, we were able to do something that those on safari in the Masai Mara or Serengeti cannot – hand-feed some African wildlife.

First up was my wife, Jayne, who came face to face with three giraffes (which is never easy to do) while a keeper revealed all about the gentle giants.

The graceful animals (the only ones in Wales) reached down to Jayne's outstretched hand and wrapped their long tongues around tree branches and cabbage leaves.



Adrian feeds a rhino at Folly Farm Adventure Park and Zoo

I got up close with a couple of formidable female black rhinos who weren't nearly as scary as I'd imagined (admittedly they were on the other side of sturdy metal bars).

After a tour of their bedrooms it was a case of 'open wide' as they chomped through a bucket load of sliced carrots, which to them is a special treat.

It was a privilege to interact with Dakima and Manyara, and to see the mutual respect between them and their dedicated keeper Jack.

The rhinos arrived last year and are one of the critically endangered species that Folly Farm is committed to protecting in a series of global conservation projects.

There's also a breeding male and the zoo hopes to one day hear the patter of baby rhino feet (if paffer is the right word in this instance).

So as not to feel left out, the children adopted a zebra and a lion, for which they received a certificate, a soft toy and recognition on a notice board by the enclosures.

The cheeky chappies also 'adopted' the cuddly giraffe and rhino that my wife and I were given as a memento of our animal experiences.

Beside lions and zebras (not housed together!), the zoo is also home to penguins, monkeys, meerkats, camels, lemurs, flamingos, bats, macaws, tropical fish and amphibians.

In the original farmyard, young

visitors can get up close to ponies, donkeys, lambs, rabbits, chicks, ferrets, rats, guinea pigs and owls, and they can even milk a goat.

For thrills there's Europe's largest indoor vintage funfair with 17 rides (including the Caterpillar, Waltzers and Ghost Train) a Big Wheel and a go-cart track.

As if all that wasn't enough, kids could also quite easily spend a whole day on the play areas, which were the most impressive I've ever come across at any attraction.

There are nine in all, including two almost life-size pirate ships, a construction-themed Destruction Playground and an enormous indoor climbing and sliding structure.

Back at Noble Court, we made use of the bar, play area and outdoor pool, but there's no restaurant so we took a 10-minute drive to one of its sister parks.

Charlie's, at Croft Country Park, is bright and spacious and our meals, made from quality, locally sourced ingredients, earned high marks all round.

You can dine al fresco as the restaurant has a large patio, complete

with a couple of giant deckchairs, which is next to a play area to keep the kids busy between courses.

The following day, after checking out, we drove to the fabulous seaside resort of Tenby, where the old walls enclose narrow, cobbled streets and medieval houses.

We had Sunday lunch at The Qube, in Tudor Square, which is owned by chef Matthew Ronowitz, who started his catering career, aged 13, washing up in the same building.

The family-friendly restaurant's beautifully presented dishes, prepared with fresh Pembrokeshire produce, received a royal seal of approval after Prince Charles and Camilla dined there.

My Welsh loin of pork and Jayne's chestnut, mushroom, spinach, leek and blue cheese en crouete were among the best meals we can remember.

Matthew and wife Claire also run a quality outside catering company (it supplied our sumptuous breakfasts) and their many A-list customers include Prince William and Kate.

A paddle on one of Tenby's beautiful beaches brought our wonderfully wild weekend to a close.



The Qube and one of its delicious dishes

NEED TO KNOW

- **NOBLE COURT**, just off the main A40 to Haverfordwest, is a recent winner of the National Tourism Award for best camping, glamping and caravan park. It has also been awarded the Gold David Bellamy Award for Conservation. Glamping options include stunning lodges, safari tents and log pods. There is also the option of a single-storey, one bed safari tent. Prices vary according to the time of year and there is a three-night minimum stay. See celticholidayparks.com or call 0800 1777 411.
- Entry to **Folly Farm Adventure Park and Zoo**, between Narberth and Saundersfoot, costs £15.50 for adults and £13.50 for children. Rides extra. Giraffe experiences cost £39 per person. Rhino experiences cost £59 per person or £99 for two people booked in on the same date. There are also penguin and lion experiences. See folly-farm.co.uk or call 01834 812731.
- **QUBE**: Visit www.theqube-tenby.co.uk or call 01834 845719