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This week's dream: on safari in the tiger forests of Nepal

It's nearly 18 months since the country's devastating earthquake and Nepal remains in "crisis": rebuilding has been sluggish, and the tourist industry has been hit hard as a consequence. So the opening of a luxury hotel here, "where luxury travel is still in its infancy", has to be a boon for the country, says Charlotte Sinclair in the FT. Taj Safaris' Meghauri Serai is a vote of confidence in Nepal's future, and sets a "new bar for style". The lodge sits beside a "wide green" river in the Chitwan National Park, a former royal hunting ground southwest of Kathmandu made up of acres of "riverine forest, grasslands and rocky hills", carefully protected by the Tharu people who live in this fertile region. The park is also home to 120 or so tigers, and a larger, now thriving, population of greater one-horned rhinos.

The lodge has sixteen adobe villas for guests, an infinity pool and an "airy, elegant" thatched restaurant serving food in thalis. "All life gathers" around the river below – sunbathing crocodiles,



Elephant guides in Chitwan National Park

mahouts with their elephants, children fishing, women in bright sarongs carrying "unfeasible" loads. Walks in the area are a sensual delight: butterflies rise like "confetti" from the brush, "armour-plated" rhinos stomp through meadows tall with elephant grass, and there are endless birds to spot – from emerald doves to paradise flycatchers. And though you're unlikely to see them, there are so many signs of the tigers – the warning calls of spotted deer, claw marks on trees, paw prints in the dust – they feel all around you.

For a relaxing finale to your trip, check into the "holistic" Dwarika's retreat in Dhulikhel. Set on a steep hillside with "staggering" views of the Langtang mountain range, it has meditation zones, "chakra sound rooms", a "Himalayan salt chamber" and bedrooms that many guests "never want to leave". This is luxury "without a hint of flash". Greaves (020-7487 9111, www.greavesindia.com) has a seven-night trip from £2,650pp incl. flights.