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We Went on a Meerkat Safari and Loved It

by MARY HOLLAND
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They say dynamite comes in small packages, and for meerkats this certainly rings true.

Looking at a meerkat, you might not believe they're the **most murderous mammal known to science**. Topping out at only 12 inches as adults and weighing less than two tubs of ice cream, with jet-black masks across their eyes and swollen bellies, meerkats look pretty unthreatening. They also make soft squeaking noises and cuddle each other when they sleep. But spend a day on a meerkat safari, and you'll quickly learn that they're a whole lot more vicious (and engaging) than one would think.

Squirrel-like omnivores, meerkats are only found in the drier and more expansive parts of South Africa, Botswana, and **Namibia**. They aren't as common as zebra or wildebeest, and due to their size, they're also not as easy to spot. One of the most popular places to see meerkats is Makgadikgadi National Park in the eastern part of Botswana, an arid landscape with low wildlife density, where visitors travel just to see meerkats who live in colonies of between 20 and 30. The meerkats have become so popular that at lodges like **Natural Selection's San Camp**, a seasonal tented camp, "meerkat men" are employed to study and monitor these tiny creatures.

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“OH LOOK,” HOWLS MY
GUIDE. “TODAY IS A VERY
EXCITING DAY IN
MEERKAT LAND.”