



# X•zone



What is the **largest desert** in the world?



You wouldn't want to find this **spider** in your shoe!



What are the "**ships of the desert**"?

## Desert Safari

by ANDREA SAVAGE





The Sahara only gets about 10 inches (254 millimeters) of rain a year. Some years it doesn't rain at all!



### A DESERT ADVENTURE

Close your eyes and imagine you are in the desert. What do you see? Camels, a prickly cactus, whitened animal bones? Or maybe a person lost and dying from thirst!

Well, my desert pal, Zack, and I are going to take you on a sandy adventure to the largest desert in the world: the Sahara in Africa.

I am going to share my safari travel journal with you. You will read about how a massive desert spider ended up in my shoe. And how we almost met up with a dust devil.

So, bring along your goggles and your imagination, and join me on a desert safari. Oh, and don't forget your hat—most days are over 122°F (50°C)! This is sure to be an adventure you will never forget.



# A Sea of Sand

The desert can be a dangerous place, so it's good to know some facts before we set off. Some people go and never return!

Nestled in northern Africa, the Sahara is the largest desert in the world. It's been there a very long time—2.5 million years in fact. The word Sahara comes from the Arabic language and means desert. It takes up a mighty big space. Check out the map!

You'd wonder why anyone would want to live in a desert because it's such a hot, dry place. Well, plenty of people do. Around two million people call the Sahara home. Most people live near an **oasis** where there is water, so they can herd animals and farm. Others roam the desert, moving from place to place. They are known as **nomadic** people.

Zack is revving the engine. Get ready. We are off to Niger, the heart of the Sahara ... oh, and just to warn you—watch out for the camel slobber!

## DAY 1: DESERT SURVIVAL

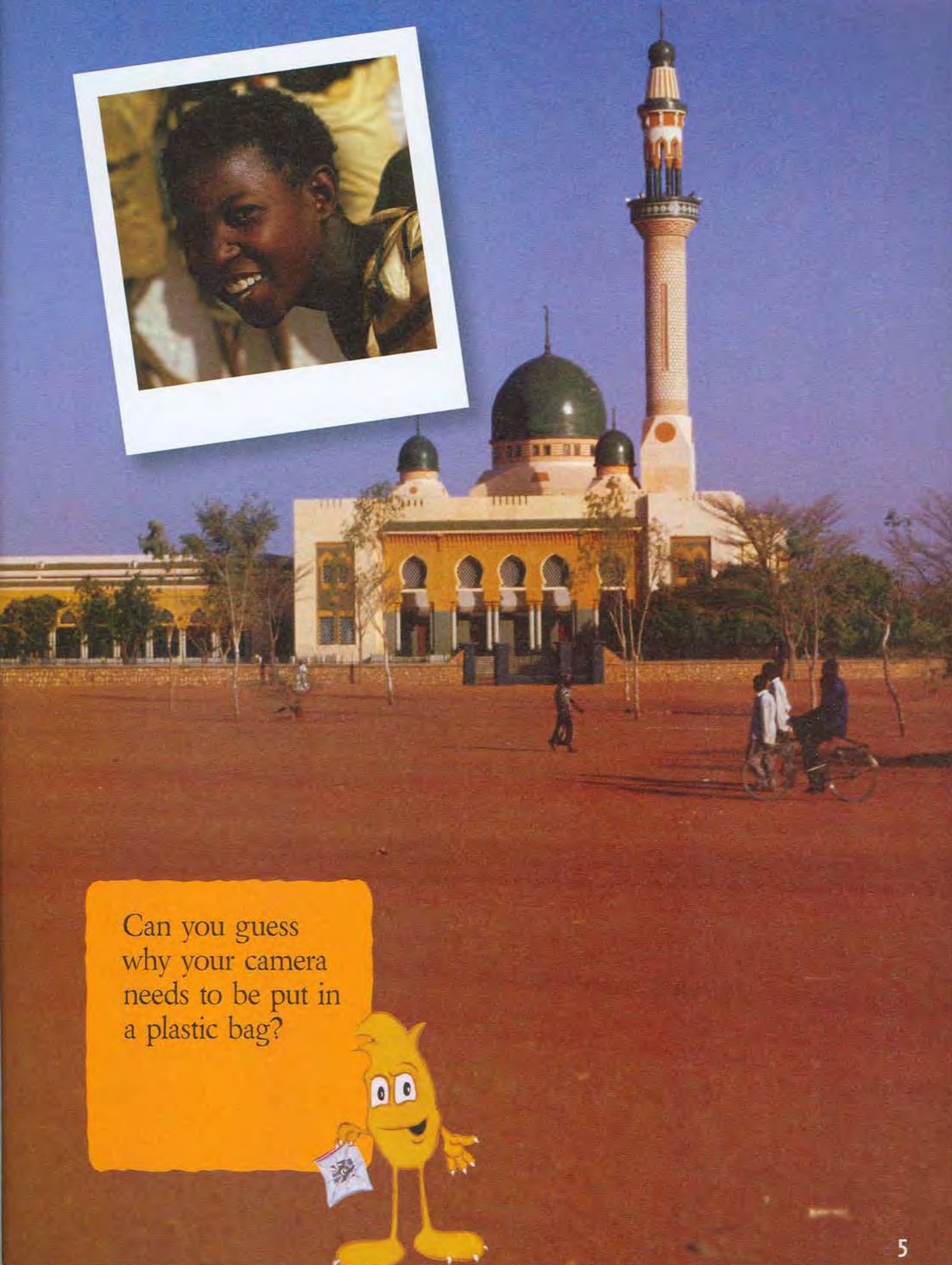
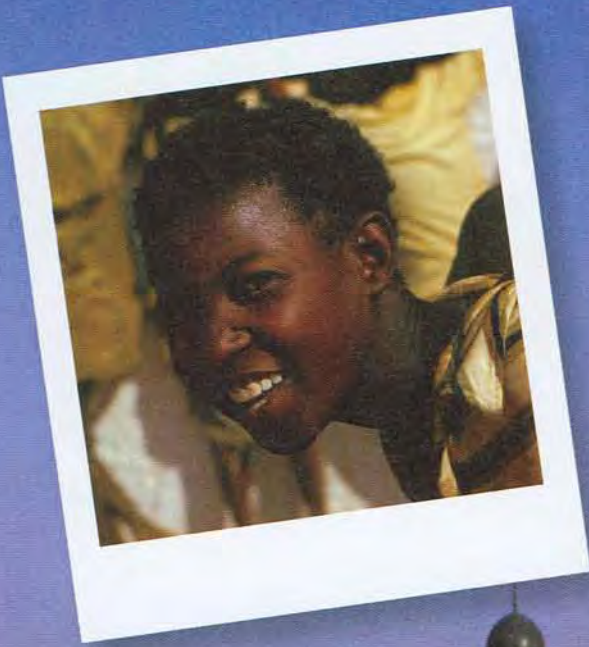
### Dear Diary,

This morning we left Niamey, the capital of Niger. We stocked up on canned food (lots of baked beans) and the most important items of all: **jerry cans** of water and fuel. We have a lot of them. Zack says it's better to be safe than sorry.

He says freak storms, snakebites, sunstroke, and even icy weather can all happen out here. So, we need to be prepared. In our survival kit we have some really cool stuff.

- Sand ladders are really important. We use them to put under the tires of the car to cross areas of very soft sand.
- Duct tape to fix any type of hole.
- Rope, in case we need to be towed.
- We also have this special type of glue to take out cactus thorns.
- The weirdest items are large plastic bags. They can be used to keep you dry in a sudden rainstorm, or to collect water. They can even be stuffed with leaves or cow dung to make nice warm blankets! Dried cow dung is available in the markets; it's cheap and has no odor.





Can you guess  
why your camera  
needs to be put in  
a plastic bag?





# Quiz

- How old is the Sahara?
  - 100 years old
  - 300 years old
  - 2.5 million years old
  - 5 million years old
- The word *Sahara* comes from Arabic and means *desert*.  
**True/False**
- How many people live in the Sahara?
  - around 2 million
  - around 5 million
  - around 300
  - around 2,000
- How many inches of rain does the Sahara get per year?
  - around 5 inches
  - around 50 inches
  - around 20 inches
  - around 10 inches
- What are mirrors in a survival kit used for?
  - signaling rescuers
  - attracting animals
  - burning insects for food
  - checking yourself for sunburn
- A desert monitor is
  - a person who spends his time studying the desert
  - part of a computer system that tracks desert weather patterns
  - a tough, heat-resistant, and ancient type of lizard
  - a river that runs underneath the desert
- What is the name of the mud city in the Sahara?
  - Niger
  - Morocco
  - Agadez
  - Niamey
- Camels store food in their
  - long legs
  - necks
  - humps
  - mouths
- How does a sand dune travel across the desert?
  - rain washes it away
  - the wind blows the sand
  - they don't move at all
  - the sun melts the sand
- What is a dust devil?
  - a type of animal
  - a hole in the ground filled with dust
  - a type of cloud in the desert
  - a whirlwind that occurs in the desert

## Answers

1 (p 01)  
2 (p 6)  
3 (p 8)  
4 (p 7)  
5 (p 9)  
6 (p 5)  
7 (p 4)  
8 (p 3)  
9 (p 1)  
10 (p 2)

# Glossary

**arid** Very dry region and without enough rain for plants to grow.

**habitats** Natural surroundings where a particular type of animal or plant lives or grows.

**jerry cans** Flat-sided cans for storing or transporting liquids, especially gasoline or water.

**mirage** An optical illusion (false impression) of a sheet of water appearing in the desert or on a hot road.

**nocturnal** Active at night.

**nomadic** Groups of people who move from one place to another rather than living in one place all of the time.

**oasis** A place in a desert where there is water and therefore plants and trees and sometimes a village or town.

**ozone layer** Is that part of the Earth's stratosphere containing a high concentration of ozone.

**remote** Far away from civilization or any other populated area.

**stalking** Following an animal as closely as possible without being seen or heard.

**venom** Poisonous liquid which some animals produce usually by biting or stinging.



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## Desert Safari

Join Andrea and Zack on their adventure through the Sahara—the world's greatest desert. It's dry, harsh, and the sand hides many secrets!

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