

Ella Al-Shamahi is an explorer, palaeoanthropologist, and evolutionary biologist turned TV presenter, who has fronted science, archaeology and natural history programmes on the BBC, Channel 4, and beyond! With an adventurous spirit and unafraid to get her hands dirty, Ella specialises in expeditions in politically unstable, hostile and disputed territories. She has led expeditions in Yemen and Somaliland and in 2015 she was given the prestigious title of National Geographic Emerging Explorer.

New for 2025, Ella presents HUMAN, a major 5-part Landmark BBC Studios and PBS series. HUMAN uses a combination of archaeology, travelogue and reconstruction to tell the story of how we became, well, 'us': modern humans. Ella follows in the footsteps of our ancient ancestors – visiting historical sites to meet experts who can help her unlock the secrets of our deep past.

She is also making her mark in the podcast scene as host of BBC's The Conversation – a podcast that amplifies women's voices. Ella hears from incredible women across the globe as they share first-hand personal experiences and some of their most intimate insights, from what it's like to be a woman in the music industry, to promoting women's rights through sport, or working with local communities to fight climate change.

In 2019 she presented National Geographic's Viking Warrior Women where during filming she discovered what might be the first evidence of a battle injury on a female Viking warrior! As well as this, Ella has presented multiple documentaries for Channel 4 including 'What Killed the Whale' which investigated a 40-foot sei whale washed up in... Edinburgh!

In addition to her scientific work, Ella uses comedy as a tool to communicate complex scientific concepts to a wider audience. She has performed stand-up comedy internationally, including at the Bloomsbury Theatre, the National Geographic main stage, and Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Her TED mainstage talk 'The fascinating (and dangerous places) scientists aren't exploring' is at 2.5 million views and her debut book 'The Handshake' was a Times/Sunday Times Book of the Year. Ella has a BSc in Genetics (UCL), and MSc in Taxonomy and Biodiversity (Imperial College/Natural History Museum) and is undertaking a PhD in palaeoanthropology at University College London.