

BOTSWANA WILDERNESS SAFARI



By staying in a combination of lodges and custom-designed en-suite safari tents at exclusive semi-permanent mobile camps, this luxurious safari allows you to explore Botswana's best-known wildlife areas in comfort and style. It offers luxury camping in three prime wilderness areas, fantastic guiding, and detailed insights into habitats and game movements. You can explore the country's game-rich plains, and the clear waters and wooded islands of the flooded inner Okavango Delta, in several ways: by air; on a variety of walks; through boat, canoe and mokoro excursions; and on day and night game drives. The spectacular start to your trip is a visit to the majestic Victoria Falls in Zambia.

Day 1 – Victoria Falls

On arrival at Livingstone Airport in Zambia you are met and embark straight onto a tour of the spectacular Victoria Falls. At 1,708 metres wide in full flood, the Victoria Falls is the largest curtain of water in the world, and one of its seven natural wonders. After you've had your fill of the Falls you drive west, to spend a very comfortable night at the lovely Toka Leya. Set along the Zambezi's riverbank, each of the raised en suite rooms here is spacious with an open plan lounge and bedroom, and a private deck with spectacular views. The lodge's main areas include an open-sided, comfortable lounge, a pool and nearby bar area, and a campfire below – all with views over the Zambezi River.

Includes dinner.

Day 2 – Chobe River & Linyanti Reserve

After breakfast you transfer to Livingstone Airport and leave Zambia and the Victoria Falls behind by taking short flight transfer Botswana. Your destination is Kasane Airport, and from there it's a quick transfer to the Chobe River.

Along the riverfront area of Chobe National Park the game viewing is often better from the river than from a safari vehicle, as the animals come down to the water during the heat of the day. Therefore we settle you aboard a shaded boat for a stunning adventure cruising along the Chobe River – watching the area's vast herds of elephant and buffalo come to drink, as well as a host of antelope. Sable antelope are often found here and you'll have your first opportunity to see puku – an antelope only found in a select few areas of Africa. There are also good chances of spotting the shy Chobe bushbuck.

Once back at the boat station you board a vehicle and transfer back to Kasane Airport where a light aircraft waits to fly you to the private Linyanti Reserve in northern Botswana. Your destination is the exclusive Linyanti Tented Camp overlooking the Linyanti Marshes where a variety of animals come down to slake their thirst.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Days 3 & 4 – Linyanti Reserve

The landscape of the Linyanti includes open floodplains beside the water, an adjacent band of riverine forest, and dense (mostly mopane tree) forests stretching away to the south. This variety of habitats creates a wilderness paradise for a high diversity of wildlife and bird species. Activities include day and night safari drives in the northern sector, where this private reserve borders Botswana's Chobe National Park, exploring a range of habitats from riverbanks to scrub and forest. Also on offer is an all-day game drive to the Savuti Channel. Your guide will discuss the options with you: if s/he believes the wildlife viewing to be better in Linyanti's northern sector, due to seasons and animal movements, you will probably concentrate your safari drives in that area.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Days 5 to 7 – Santawani Reserve

Fly by light aircraft to the Santawani Reserve, bordering Moremi Game Reserve to the southeast. Considered one of Botswana's top wildlife areas a quarter of a century ago, tectonic movements changed the course of the waterways through this area and dried up much of the landscape. In more recent years, further earth movements and a higher Okavango Delta flood cycle have brought the water back, and wildlife is again present in very good concentrations.

Spend your time exploring the game drive trails through woodland, open plains and forests. Your guide will lead you on nature walks, spot-lit night drives and the more traditional game drives - the first two activities are not permitted in Botswana's national parks but are possible in Santawani which is a private reserve.

Your base will be the Gomoti Tented Camp where you'll sleep in large walk-in canvas tents, each with its own en-suite bathroom. The furniture is made from teak and the beds are covered with lush and comfortable linens.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Days 8 to 10 – Okavango Delta

From Santawani you take a light aircraft flight deeper into Botswana's Okavango Delta. Your destination is a wilderness camp situated in a permanently flooded region of this watery landscape. Spend the next three nights in relative luxury at a true water camp: either Jacana Camp or Xigera Camp. The setting represents the essence of the Okavango Delta as abundant water, sunlight and soil combine to form a paradise bursting with life.

Activities from either camp focus on experiencing the Okavango Delta environment and include year-round mokoro excursions (traditional dug-out canoes used by tribes in Botswana) as well as island bush walks and, water level permitting, motorboat cruises. Safaris by 4WD seeking out big game are also possible when water levels are low, typically from September to May.

Each luxury safari camp is set in one of the Okavango Delta wetland areas most densely populated with the elusive sitatunga antelope and more common red lechwe. Wildlife concentrations depend on the water flow and volume, so change from season to season, but all the large animals can be found in this exclusive wilderness area including elephant, lion, leopard and buffalo. Birds such as Pel's fishing owl can be seen here as well as the greater and lesser jacanas and a variety of kingfishers.

Accommodation will be in a spacious en suite room linked by pathways through the vegetation. Each is on a wooden deck overlooking the floodplains or surrounding waterways. The safari camp has a plunge pool for cooling off from the midday sun, a dining area and a lounge with a view. Each is a lovely small camp offering relaxed comfort with a touch of luxury during your safari in Botswana.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 11 – Flight home

From the Okavango Delta you transfer by light aircraft to Maun. It's the end of your Botswana Wilderness Safari and you bid farewell your safari guide and the rest of your group before taking your scheduled flight home.

Includes breakfast.

SAFARI INFORMATION

By staying in a combination of luxury and exclusive, semi-permanent mobile camps in custom-designed en-suite safari tents, this safari allows you to explore Botswana's best-known wildlife areas in comfort and style.

Guide

The Botswana Wilderness Safari is led by an experienced and fully trained professional guide. S/he is very knowledgeable and will be able to name all the animals and birds you see as well as most of the plants, offering detailed insights into habitats and game movements.

Accommodation

Whilst in Zambia on Day 1 of your safari, you will overnight at the lovely Toka Leya lodge overlooking the Zambezi River. This will be your base from which you visit the Victoria Falls.

Whilst in Botswana, you will stay in safari camps with specially designed walk-in Meru tents. Each tent is sited so as to make the most of the spectacular panoramic views offered by the camp's location. Full-size beds with pure cotton linen and soft down duvets raise the comfort of a camping safari to a new level of luxury.

Each tent has an en suite bathroom with a flush toilet, bucket or standard shower, hand basins, mirror, towels, soaps and other toiletries. Bedside lanterns and finishes create style and comfort rivalling those in some of Botswana's most elegant lodges.

At each safari camp, the central area comprises of at least a generously sized 7x5 metre marquee tent, with dark teak camp chairs, a full bar table and basic library, providing a cool, shady and relaxing area where you can rest during the heat of the day.

Delicious three-course meals are prepared by the camp chef and served on a beautifully laid dining table, often situated for you to enjoy dinner under Africa's stars. When night falls, paraffin hurricane lanterns and a crackling campfire set the evening ambience.

Whilst at Gomoti Camp on Days 5, 6 and 7 and at Jacana Camp or Xigera Camp on Days 8, 9 and 10 you may share the safari camp with other guests who are not part of your group. However, your safari guide will remain with you throughout your activities here.

Vehicles

The Botswana Wilderness Safari is conducted in a custom-built 4WD safari vehicle with open sides designed for all-round visibility. Each of the eight passenger seats is a 'window seat'. The sides and top of the vehicle are canvas, which can be rolled back to give excellent all-round visibility during game drives. Each vehicle contains a fridge and a small field-guide library, as well as a supply of blankets during the winter months (June-August).

Language

The Botswana Wilderness Safari is conducted in English.

Costs

The Botswana Wilderness Safari includes transport in a safari vehicle or a light aircraft; transfers; accommodation in safari camps offering relative luxury and situated in private reserves and usually three meals a day as specified in the itinerary.

Meals

This wilderness safari includes three meals on most days. The exception to this is lunch on Day 1 and on Day 11 – although a small sandwich or roll is usually served on the flights from and to Johannesburg.

Drinks

A good selection of drinks is included during your Botswana safari. Premium brands such as French champagne or single malt whiskies are not included in the safari price but may be available to buy at an additional cost.

Luggage

The Botswana Wilderness Safari includes some transfers by light aircraft. Because of this, there is a luggage limit of 20kg (44lbs) per person including reasonable camera equipment. Luggage must be packed in soft squashable bags - no hard suitcases or bags with large wheels can be transported as they physically cannot fit into the aircraft.

The maximum dimensions of the soft bags which can be accommodated are as follows: 25cm wide x 30cm high and 62cm long (10 x 12 x 24 inches). Please keep in mind that the baggage compartments on the light aircraft are only 25cm high, so the pilots must have the ability to manipulate the bag into the compartment. A collapsible wheeled luggage frame/trolley (separate to the bag) is allowed, as long as basic dimensions are similar to that of the bag. Incorrectly sized/weighted baggage will not be allowed, and you may be made to purchase/borrow a soft bag and re-pack your bags at the point of entry. Any costs of storing/repatriating your original bags will be at your cost.

This is seldom a problem as light, casual clothing along with at least one warm jumper or fleece is needed. Warmer clothing is recommended during the winter months (June to August). Speak to us if the luggage restrictions are concerning you because for an additional cost we may be able to book an extra 'seat' to allow for extra luggage allowance.

Weight distribution is important in light aircraft for safety reasons. Because of this, passengers weighing over 100kg (220lbs) must inform us prior to travel. It may be necessary to purchase an extra seat for anyone over the noted weight.

Laundry

A basic laundry service is available all safari camps when spending more than one night. For cultural reasons, the camp staff may not wash any underwear or smalls. Should you wish to hand wash these yourselves, washing soap can be supplied to you.

Tipping

Tipping whilst on your safari to Botswana is not compulsory. However, if you want to tip because you have received good service this is always appreciated. We recommend a discretionary US Dollars \$10 per day for your safari guide, US Dollars \$5 per day for mokoro polers or boatmen and US Dollars \$5 per day for the safari camp staff. The latter should be placed in the camp's communal tipping box to be distributed equally amongst all the staff.

Passport and visa requirements

It is our current understanding that travellers on British, American, Canadian, New Zealand and Australian passports do not need visas for Botswana. You will require a visa for Zambia. Visa fees for entering Zambia are currently US\$50 per person for a single entry and US\$80 for a multiple entry. The visa fee is payable in US Dollars cash on arrival at Zambian Immigration. That said, it remains **your responsibility** to double-check these details with the nearest relevant embassy to you.

It is a requirement that you check that your passport will have **at least six months left to run** when you travel, we recommend a validity of nine months to prevent any problems. You should also ensure that you will **have at least 3 clean pages** for each time that you pass through customs (these must be visa pages, not pages for amendments and endorsements which are usually at the back of a passport). Most countries require this, and we have had recent reports of South Africa actively enforcing this restriction – and refusing entry to those who don't comply. (If you will be passing through customs in more than one country, you need to make sure that you have sufficient blank pages for entry and exit stamps at each destination.)