

## SAFARI INFORMATION

Welcome to Africa! Please take a few moments to go through this helpful travel information.

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## ARRIVING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

### INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

Please be sure to discuss with your consultant your onward travel plans and your flight bookings before you confirm them, so we can advise on the connection times and best routing. The minimum connection time at Johannesburg Airport is supposed to be 90 minutes, however we recommend a minimum of 2-3 hours, when connecting on to Botswana (from an international or domestic flight). On departure from Botswana we recommend you allow 3-4 hours before your onward connecting flight to allow for delays or late notice scheduled time changes which can be a common occurrence.

It is essential to ensure that your full name as stated in your passport matches that of your international airline ticket. Tickets issued in an incorrect name may result in you being denied boarding and potentially incurring additional costs for the purchase of a new ticket.

Any guests travelling with children under 18 years of age, under new South African law effective June 2015, must carry the appropriate documentation: an unabridged birth certificate, passport and affidavit from both parents if they are travelling with only one parent, or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, authorising their travel with the child(ren). Contact us for further details. This applies to guests transiting (ie flying through Johannesburg) or travelling in South Africa.

When arranging your international and regional flights for the start and end of your safari, please bear in mind that charter aircraft cannot fly after sunset/ during hours of darkness. You need to arrive on the first day of your safari with sufficient time for charter aircraft to fly you to camp and return to the point of origin before sunset, as well as allowing for any potential delays with immigration.

If booking a flight scheduled for arrival within 2 – 3 hours of sunset, a pre-night in the town of arrival is recommended as any flight delays will result in you losing your first night on safari and having to lay-over at a local hotel/guesthouse at your own expense. Similarly, on your day of departure, light aircraft can only fly out of the originating airport and into camp to pick you up after sunrise. If your connecting flight is scheduled for the early morning, you may need to spend a night in town to allow you to connect with your international/regional flight.

## GETTING AROUND

### CHARTER FLIGHTS

On fly-in safaris, movement between camps is generally by a light aircraft due to remote areas visited and distances travelled. Light aircraft used for inter-camp transfers vary in size from 3,5,7 & 12 seater aircraft. The most common makes of aircraft used are the Cessna C182, C206, C210, C207, Cessna Grand Caravan, Britten Norman Islander and the Gippsland Airvan. Air transfer times vary between twenty minutes to one hour twenty minutes depending on your itinerary. The flight departure and drop off times are scheduled by air charter companies the day prior, to fit in with their flying schedule, therefore we cannot advise travel times in advance. Most transfers are scheduled between activities or to suit your flight arrival/departure times.

In an effort to keep the cost of the air transfers reasonable, the lodges in the region co-operate to share daily schedules wherever possible. The rate you have been quoted is therefore '**A SEAT IN A PLANE RATE**' (unless otherwise specified) rather than a private charter rate, meaning you will share the aircraft with guests flying to other lodges/camps. As a result, your aircraft may stop up to three times at airstrips en route to your destination in order to pick-up and drop-off other travellers.

Charter aircraft cannot fly during hours of darkness. If you arrive too late for the pilot to make a return flight, you will have to overnight at the point of arrival at your own expense before continuing to camp. These flying restrictions are even more important to keep in mind during winter months (May, June, July, August) when days are shorter in Southern Africa. Please read full details under ARRIVING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA for further information on what to keep in mind when booking your international ticket for connections with charter flights.

Under current regulations, all guests must submit their weight at the time of booking. This allows forward planning by the flight operators and ultimately reduces the costs for all travellers. Strict luggage restrictions apply on all light aircraft transfers - see bag dimensions under our packing section. It is of particular importance that you advise your agent if one of your travelling party is over 100kg as this information needs to be passed onto the light aircraft company whilst making your booking, for safety and logistical reasons. There may be additional charges involved, depending on the policy of the individual charter company.



### ROAD TRANSFERS

During your safari you may be transferred between camps/lodges and hotels by road. Some lodges will have scheduled transfers which are timed to connect with major commercial flight arrivals/departures and arriving outside these scheduled times may result in you having to pay for a private transfer. Out in the bush, some transfers may also be done by road between two camps and these transfers are normally conducted as a game drive in an open vehicle as you will be driving in wildlife areas.

On mobile safaris, movement between campsites is generally by road in an open safari vehicle. These drives are generally through wildlife areas and taken at a comfortable pace, stopping for refreshments and game viewing as you travel. Depending on the time of year, some of these transfers can be quite interesting with water crossings and some bumpy

roads, which are all part of the adventure. In winter these transfers can be chilly in the open vehicles, so be sure to pack/dress accordingly.



In addition your itinerary may include road, boat and mokoro transfers as dictated by the locality of the camp and its seasonal access. Please discuss details of these transfers with your agent.

### **ROAD CONDITIONS**

Main roads in Southern Africa between urban centres are generally tar roads, however some stretches of road may be gravel and depending on where you are travelling, roads may be pot-holed and shoulders non-existent. As a rule, driving in Botswana in particular during hours of darkness is not recommended due to increased animal movement (such as donkeys, elephants and plains game) on the roads. The risk of accident increases dramatically between sunset and sunrise and we strongly advise against travelling on the roads during these hours.

In Botswana's National Parks, roads are generally sand or dirt and are not paved or graded. Petrol consumption and travel times increase significantly when driving through the parks and you must take this in consideration in order to properly plan distances and arrive at your destination before sunset in accordance with national park rules. Depending on the time of year, the risk of getting stuck in thick sand, mud or during water crossings increases dramatically. Certain areas (such as the Central Kalahari Game Reserve) are best driven in convoy. Any self-drive itinerary taken through a National Park needs to be planned carefully with expert advice and can only be undertaken in a 4x4 with good clearance and sufficient equipment to assist you in the event of getting stuck or lost (i.e. satellite phone, GPS, high-lift jack, extra fuel, water etc.)

Driving in Southern Africa is on the left-hand side and for driving in the national parks you will need park permits organised for your vehicle and its occupants in advance. In Botswana the National Parks require you exit by 11am on the last day to avoid paying an additional entrance fee.

### **BORDER CROSSINGS**

You will need to present your passport at border crossings and some countries may require a pre-arranged visa depending on your country of origin (check with your local embassy/consulate requirements). For many nationalities tourism visas are not required for Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, and the visas for Zambia & Zimbabwe can be purchased at the port of entry, however Mozambique visas must be obtained in advance. There are many exceptions and it is your responsibility to check all visa requirements before booking your trip. For more details on visas, please check the entry under PRACTICALITIES.

You may experience queues at immigration and potential delays in your transfer as a result. When crossing a border by vehicle you may be required to change vehicles at the border, with particular reference to the Botswana/Zimbabwe Kazungula border, and may have to carry your bags the short distance between vehicles.

For transfers at the Botswana/Zambia Kazungula border, guests are ferried across the Zambezi River by small speed boat to immigration on the opposite side.

For self-drivers, you may be required to show an authorisation letter from the rental company allowing you to take the vehicle across the border and written proof of vehicle insurance. Self-drivers may also be required to prove they comply with local road safety standards by carrying certain equipment (i.e. fire extinguisher, reflective vest, triangle in case of

breakdown, reflective tape or buttons on the front & rear of the vehicle) and these requirements should be checked before picking up your rental vehicle. You may also be required to pay certain cross-border taxes and charges to customs in order to temporarily import the vehicle.

## ON SAFARI

### STARTING YOUR SAFARI

Safari Specialists representative or a transfer company representative will meet you at the airport (subject to travel itinerary). Should you encounter any problems with flight delays or lost luggage we will be there to assist you. The 24 hour emergency phone number (based in Maun, Botswana) is +267 72311321 and alternative office number is +267 6865 175.

### TYPICAL DAY ON SAFARI

Even though different days bring different experiences, safaris follow a general pattern, which is consistent throughout your travel.

Typically, a safari day in Botswana includes two major activities per day – one beginning early in the morning and the second starting in the mid-to-late-afternoon and continuing until dark. If you are staying in a private concession or community area the afternoon activity may extend into a night drive up until two hours after sunset.

The day starts with a wakeup call at around 5h00 to 5h30 depending on the season of travel, but normally before sunrise with tea/coffee and a light snack taken in camp before the first activity. The mornings are the best opportunity to follow fresh tracks and see game interactions, as some of the nocturnal animals are still active. The game activity normally lasts 3 – 5 hours depending on what you see and the nature of the activity.

Morning activities are usually over by late morning (around 11h00) and guests will return to camp for a full breakfast/brunch. The early afternoon is spent resting and relaxing in camp as this is the hottest part of the day and animal activity is minimal.

At around 15h00-15h30 pm high tea is taken before departure for the afternoon activity. The game activity starts in the late afternoon providing you with another opportunity to see game in the daylight. If you in a national park, park regulations require your guide to have you back at camp by sunset, however if you are in a private concession or community area, you will often enjoy sundowners out in the bush before experiencing a night drive en route back to camp. On arrival back at camp you may sit around the camp fire and enjoy drinks while waiting for dinner. Please note water activities and walking also need to end by sunset for safety reasons.

After dinner, drinks may be enjoyed around the fire however most people find they are tired from the fresh air and early start and are in bed by 22h00.

On transfer days where you move between camps the itinerary may be slightly different depending on the daily flight schedules. Your guide and the camp managers will discuss and plan your days with you.

### ACCOMMODATION ON SAFARI

The accommodation on safari varies from safari tents to chalets (depends on the choice of camp or lodge). The formation of the beds is different in all camps. Most lodges in Botswana feature twin beds, which are arranged separately or pushed together with a mattress converter on top. It's very rare that camps/lodges have beds with one big mattress (king or queen size). The definition of a safari 'tent' or chalet is very broad, however generally a tent is a walk-in structure with canvas walls, varying in size, whereas a chalet will generally feature a more solid wooden frame, often with large panels of mosquito screening to open chalets up to the bush. Tents can be anything from a 3 metre<sup>2</sup> dome tent with bed rolls in the most basic accommodation types, up to extremely spacious accommodations which may be 100 metre<sup>2</sup> with separate rooms, both indoor and outdoor bathrooms and only a canvas wall or ceiling to attest to the fact that it is, technically, a tent.

### ARE OUR SAFARIS PHYSICALLY DEMANDING

- Generally, safaris are not strenuous in terms of heavy physical activity, however there are elements, which can be tiring that you need to be aware of when planning your safari. Long-haul international flights often crossing time zones need to be taken into consideration, as well as your connecting charter flight and/or road transfer to access the camps and lodges.
- Once you are in Botswana the light aircraft are very compact and there is a certain amount of stepping and bending to get into the seats. Travellers are also more likely to experience travel sickness in small charter planes than larger commercial flights and this should be kept in mind.

- Game drives at the camps/lodges are in open 4x4 safari vehicles. Due to the nature of the terrain the roads are often bumpy and can be a little strenuous for passengers. Open vehicles also expose travellers to the elements more than closed vehicles meaning greater exposure to the sun in summer and icy winds in winter. Generally safari vehicles have a canopy overhead to minimise exposure to the elements, however there are select operators, which do not use canopies in order to enhance photographic opportunities.

Southern Africa has varying weather conditions depending on the season.

- In winter (May – Sep), expect warm temperatures during the day and very cold nights in accommodation with canvas walls. Hot water bottles, extra blankets and ponchos may be provided to keep you warm in camp and on your game drives to minimise the impact of the cold. In summer (Nov – Apr) you will experience hot days and nights with rainstorms in the afternoons. It is imperative to increase your fluid intake considerably, to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion. Symptoms include but are not limited to migraines and nausea. In September & October both the days and nights are incredibly hot and may cause discomfort. See temperature chart.

- Selected camps offer walking activities of 2 – 3 hours and this is generally the most strenuous activity you will encounter with individuals of average fitness experiencing no problems. Some guests find the lack of physical movement on safari can be frustrating, so discuss your preferences with your consultant. For guests who prefer more physically active itineraries there are specialised camps focussing on walking, canoeing and horse-riding, including the possibility of multi-night trails.

### **ACTIVITIES ON SAFARI**

There are a wide range of activities available on safari in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia which vary throughout your itinerary and may include game drives, night drives, game walks and nature walks, mokoro excursions (traditional dug-out canoe), boat excursions, fishing (water levels, seasons and areas permitting), canoeing, quad biking. Please note that all wildlife activities we book are carried out by professional guides.

Your itinerary will state which activities are included. Generally in Botswana the activities are pre-arranged and included in the nightly rate, but the Kasane/Chobe area is a common example of where inclusions differ and certain extras (such as drinks and activities) may need to be settled additionally.



### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES IN VICTORIA FALLS & LIVINGSTONE**

In Victoria Falls & Livingstone, the majority of accommodation is booked on a Bed and Breakfast (B&B) basis meaning all extras, including activities are to be settled by the guest directly. For specifics, please refer to your detailed itinerary.

We recommend that activities in Victoria Falls and Livingstone be pre-booked for groups of 4 or more and for individuals in the busy seasons (peak season July – October and Christmas/Easter holidays). A choice of activities includes, tour of Victoria Falls (both Zimbabwean and Zambian side), game drives, elephant back safari, river cruises, helicopter flights over Victoria Falls, micro light flight over Victoria Falls (Zambian side only), bungee jumping, white water rafting, canoeing, fishing, village visits.

### **ACTIVITIES IN MOZAMBIQUE**

There are a wide range of activities available at lodges in Mozambique, which vary throughout depending on your itinerary. Inclusive activities are more likely to cover non-motorised water activities, village visits and beach picnics. Optional activities available at an additional cost usually include motorised water activities, SCUBA diving and any spa treatments. As inclusions in Mozambique can vary widely between one lodge and the next, we strongly recommend referring to individual lodges' inclusions and exclusions on your detailed itinerary for specifics.

Included activities may be shore-based snorkelling, non-motorised water activities (i.e. windsurfing, sea kayaking, shore-based snorkelling), beach picnics, dhow sailing, shore-based fishing, walking trails, village visits and honeymoon value-adds.

Excluded activities normally are any motorised water activities, deep sea fishing, SCUBA diving and spa treatments.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING DIFFERENT SEASONS

### SEASONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern Africa offers an exciting travel experience all year round. However there are certain seasons when activities may be restricted or camps may close. Please note that places in and around water like the Okavango, Linyanti and Chobe tend to have less extreme, more moderate temperatures than the drier desert areas of the Kalahari, Makgadikgadi and also Savuti.

- **June – August** is the most popular time to visit Southern Africa, partly due to the fact that it ties in with summer holidays in the Northern Hemisphere, but also due to good game viewing opportunities. Normally at this time of the year, vegetation has thinned out following the green season, making game more visible. These months bring the coldest temperatures of the year, however they are still comfortable for safari activities with day time temperatures sitting around 20 – 28 degrees Celsius. Nights and early mornings can drop as low as 0 – 8 degrees Celsius with wind chill factor making it even colder on an open vehicle or boat activity.
- **September – October** is arguably the best time for big game safaris as the temperature rises, further drying out landscapes and surface water, resulting in game concentrating around permanent water sources. Whilst the game viewing can be excellent, October can be extremely hot with maximum daytime temperatures between 35 – 40 degrees Celsius, so may not suit all travellers.
- **November – March** is when lot of animals give birth due to the summer rains bringing an abundance of vegetation and surface water. These months are also referred to as ‘green season.’ Temperatures are still warm during the day, up to 30 – 35 degrees Celsius, but may drop down to 15-18 degrees when it is raining. Rain tends to fall in short, often spectacular thundershowers, usually in the early afternoon, which may interrupt game viewing. Rainfall patterns vary annually, however and this is still a great time of year to visit with a lot of juvenile animals around, leading to increased predator/prey interaction. Game viewing can be more challenging as grasses are longer, vegetation is thicker and game more spread out due to the availability of surface water away from permanent water sources. It is the ideal time to travel should you have an interest in the Kalahari, Makgadikgadi or Savute region (due to animal migrations to the region) and birding.
- **April and May** continue to be a good time to visit the Southern African region, and travel into the parks is easier as roads dry out, making game areas more accessible, however the landscape is still lush and green. These months are perfect for travelling with clear skies, warm days and cool nights as temperatures begin to drop.

#### Temperature – average lows and highs:

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
19/32C	19/31 C	18/31C	14/31 C	9/28 C	6/25 C	6/25 C	9/28 C	13/33 C	18/37 C	19/34 C	19/32 C
66/89 F	66/87 F	64/87F	57/87 F	48/82 F	43/77 F	42/77F	48/82 F	55/91 F	64/98 F	66/93 F	66/89 F

### SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of areas in Southern Africa which are more affected by changing seasons than others and possible activities may vary dramatically from one season to the next as a result. The below is a general guideline for what areas are most dramatically affected, however as seasons and weather are constantly changing and unpredictable, the below is an indication, not a guarantee of what can be expected *on average* from one year to the next.

#### THE OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

The water levels of the Okavango Delta vary by several metres in depth throughout the year and this affects what activities are available at camps in the area. The flood water that fills the delta originates as rain over the Angolan highlands and takes several months to reach Botswana from its source. Very little of the Okavango’s water levels result from local rainfall and so the peak flood levels do not coincide with rainy season. Lowest water levels in the delta generally occur between November – April with highest water levels occurring between May to September. Camps offering boating/mokoro activities may not be able to offer these activities during low water for reasons of safety & practicality, whereas during high water, camps offering game drives may have very limited game drive routes to offer. In order to ascertain what camps are best to visit and what activities will be available at the time of year you’ll travel, please check with your travel agent.

#### MAKGADIKGADI SALT PANS, BOTSWANA

Accessibility of the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans is severely limited during green season and for some months after as the pans dry out. Generally, from the first rainfall (normally October/November) the pans become inaccessible for quad biking and sleep-outs. Camps on the pans generally focus more on game drives in the surrounding grasslands during this time to look for migrating zebra and wildebeest. Birds also arrive in the area during green season to take advantage of the water

on the pans. From the first rainfall until the pans are dry (generally April/May) no vehicles (including quad bikes) can drive on the pans without getting stuck. For details on how the time of year you travel may impact the activities available to you when visiting the pans, please check with your travel agent.

#### **CAMP CLOSURES, ZAMBIA**

Many camps in Zambia are dismantled or closed for the green season (November to April) each year. In Kafue, all camps in the Busanga area close, while camps outside the park remain open. In the Lower Zambezi, all camps in the park and Chiawa management area also close except those to the extreme west side. In South Luangwa, most 'bushcamps' inside the park close with a few bigger camps inside the park and most camps outside the park remaining open. Game drive routes can be quite restricted at this time due to poor road conditions following rain.

#### **VICTORIA FALLS, ZAMBIA & ZIMBABWE**

The Victoria Falls, one of the "natural wonders" of the world is situated on the Zambezi River, on the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. The Falls are considered to be one of the 8 Natural Wonders and are a major attraction for all visitors. With this in mind the level of the Zambezi River fluctuates throughout the year, and causes high and low water periods.

'High water' occurs between February and July, and peaks between March and April. During this period, a rise of one metre in the level of the Zambezi River produces a 5-meter increase in the level of the water forced through the gorge. The spray thrown up is dense, drenching and thick with rainbows - a fantastic sight when viewed from the air.

'Low Water' runs between August and January with absolute lowest water levels between November and early December. During this time there is very little spray and visitors are able to fully appreciate the geological formation of the falls and the full length and breadth of them. When the water level in the gorge drops the Zambezi River becomes its most awesome as one of the best white water rafting experiences in the world.



During low water the Victoria Falls are better seen from the Zimbabwean side. During certain times of year, activities such as white water rafting or Livingstone Island visits may not be possible due to the water levels of the Zambezi.

#### **MANA POOLS, ZIMBABWE**

During the Green Season (November – April) most camps in the Mana Pools area close. For the limited choices that remain open, access to the area is quite difficult as flying schedules are far less frequent during these months. It should also be taken into account that at this time of year, many roads are flooded and the overall safari experience is more limited as a result.

#### **WALKING SAFARIS, BOTSWANA, ZAMBIA & ZIMBABWE**

During Green Season walking safaris may be subject to your guide's discretion. As grasses are quite long at this time of year and any animals (including predators) more difficult to spot as a result, walking safaris will not be undertaken unless your guide is confident that this activity can be safely, without any risk to you.

#### **CYCLONE SEASON, MOZAMBIQUE**

As Mozambique is generally booked as a beach destination, travellers should be aware that most rain falls between December to April and this time of year is considered cyclone season. As with the rest of Southern Africa, rainfall usually consists of brief, vigorous downpours, after which the sun comes out again. January and February are peak cyclone season in southern Mozambique, however and during this time there are increased instances of torrential rain, especially over the Bazaruto Archipelago in the south.

## PRACTICALITIES

### ELECTRICITY

The power supply in Botswana is 220V. Many safari camps and lodges run on generators and very few have 24 hour electricity. Some camps do not have plug points in guest accommodation but will generally have power points in the main camp area for charging batteries. Mobile safaris have a system for recharging camera batteries through the car battery with an inverter. Many camps have universal plug points however the most commonly used systems in Zambia, Botswana & Zimbabwe are the UK square pegged plugs, South African round, three-pronged plugs and Euro two-pronged pin plugs. To be on the safe side, you should purchase an international adaptor before travel.



South African Plug & Socket

Euro Plug & Socket

UK Plug & Socket

### FAMILY TRAVEL

Botswana, Zambia & Zimbabwe offer wonderful safari experiences for families. In the bush camps and lodges the general minimum age for children is 12 years but a range of camps allow for children between 6 – 12 years, with applicable conditions. Some camps accept younger children and most hotels accept children of all ages. It is important to note that even if a lodge accepts children, certain activities (particularly guided walks and mokoro excursions) may be restricted and will be at the discretion of their guide. Conditions such as private vehicles and limited activities may apply depending on the camp or lodge. Some properties will require that children under the age of 18 years share with an adult. More and more lodges are building family rooms but these are typically limited to one unit per property and early booking is essential. There might be discounts for children but these do not always apply depending on the lodge and the time of year. As a general rule, accommodations in Chobe (Botswana), Victoria Falls (both Zambian & Zimbabwean side), Namibia and Mozambique are more flexible regarding minimum ages of children.

### FOOD AND DIETARY

You will enjoy a wide variety of meals during your stay and all camps attempt to include an “African” flavour in their menus.

On safari, many camps and lodges are booked on a fully inclusive basis, however please note that with respect to drinks this is based on local beverages and not premium brands. Please check your itinerary for details. In major towns it is more common that you will be booked on a bed & breakfast basis.

Specific dietary requirements are catered for provided we are notified when making your booking. Please note that specialist gluten free/vegan foods are not always available in Botswana and you need to discuss your particular requirements with your travel agent.

Any food allergies need to be notified well in advance to ensure they are properly prepared for.

### LANGUAGE

English is the official language of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia and widely spoken with all guides and most general staff in camps and lodges having a good command. In the broader population however, not everyone will speak English fluently as many have grown up speaking different tribal languages.

It may be possible to hire a guide that can speak an alternative language (such as German, French or Italian), however the cost of this usually suits groups rather than individual travellers. We have a good range of group camping and group accommodated safaris that are led by German speaking guides.

In Mozambique, the official language is Portuguese, however most staff in the lodges will speak English. Please note that outside of the hotel environment there is much less spoken English in Mozambique than in other Southern African countries.



## **MONEY**

- Cash in US Dollars is generally a universally accepted currency to use for tips and local money exchange (USD is also the official currency in Zimbabwe). Please note that in most African countries, only notes from 2007 onwards are accepted. Because of the risk of forgeries, people are sometimes suspicious of larger denomination notes so USD\$100 and even USD\$50 may sometimes be rejected in shops and it is advisable to carry lower denominations which are also more practical. USD \$1 are not always easy to exchange (so not advised for tipping in Botswana) but are in big demand in Zimbabwe, so plan according to where you are going.
- VISA is the most widely accepted credit card with facilities for MasterCard being more limited. Amex and Diners are NOT widely accepted and therefore not recommended. Please note that some places will charge an additional service charge for credit card payment. Please be sure to contact your credit card company prior to departure, to advise them that you will be using your cards in the specific countries relevant to your itinerary. If not pre-advised credit card companies may block transactions that take place in foreign countries – possibly even after multiple transactions have gone through.
- Zambia has as its official currency the Kwacha (ZMW) BUT you may still use American US\$ dollars for most monetary transactions, excepting small shops. You can purchase Kwacha in Zambia at your airport of arrival, through ATM's, major hotels and bureaux de change. Please note that you cannot take Kwacha outside of Zambia or exchange it in neighbouring countries. Any excess ZMW should be exchanged before departure.
- The official currency of Botswana is Botswana Pula (BWP). BWP can be changed at a good rate in Victoria Falls due to Botswana's proximity. Once you leave these areas, exchange rates will not be in your favour.
- The official currency of Mozambique is metecais (MZN). All major towns have ATMs. Metecais cannot be exchanged outside of Mozambique.
- The official currency of Namibia is Namibian Dollars (N\$) which is on parity with the South African Rand (ZAR). Please note that although you can use ZAR in Namibia as common currency, you cannot do the same in South Africa so you must use or change all Namibian dollars prior to departure.
- Most towns in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia have ATMs where you can draw cash using your Visa or MasterCard with a 4 digit PIN however they are not always reliable so a back up of hard currency is recommended. Please note that not all fuel stations in Namibia accept credit card. Please note that not all airports have ATM machines – including Maun and Kasane Airports in Botswana, though Maun has a bureau de change, so plan in advance.
- You can often pay with USD or EURO notes (coins not accepted) in camps, lodges and hotels at their specified exchange rate. Most camps and lodges also accept credit cards (Visa and MasterCard only). Please note that many operations apply a 3-5% surcharge for credit card transactions. Please research options prior to travel.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

- You may not take photographs or use video equipment near military and government institutions/borders/airports. Always ask for permission before taking photographs of people.
- If you are travelling with a significant amount of photographic equipment (large lenses, tripods etc) you may need to pay for an additional seat on any charter flights to accommodate the equipment. Please discuss on booking.
- Dust is an issue for photographic equipment, be sure to bring appropriate covers and zip lock bags for storage.

## **SHOPPING**

They are many places that you can buy souvenirs like crafts, including baskets, beadwork, masks and woodcarvings.

- For curios and crafts the best value shopping is in the Victoria Falls area and bargaining is accepted.
- There are a good variety of shops in towns, which sell local crafts and many camps and lodges also have small curio shops for purchasing souvenirs.
- Due to your luggage restriction on a fly in safari, we encourage shopping at the end of the trip, either in Victoria Falls, Livingstone, Maun or Johannesburg dependant on your itinerary.

## **TIPPING**

- While tipping is not a requirement, it is a generally accepted form of "thanks" throughout the world and highly appreciated by all levels of staff
- Tipping should reflect the level of service you have received throughout your trip and if you are dissatisfied with the level of service, it is not compulsory. On the other hand, if you have received exemplary service from your guide, poler or general camp staff, you may wish to give more than usual.
- Tips in USD or Euro are generally accepted in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique
- As an idea of who and what you may want to tip, we have listed the following guidelines:
  - Guides in the camps – USD 5.00 -10.00 per day, per guest
  - Mokoro polers or trackers – USD 5.00 - 10.00 per poler, per guest

- General staff (boat drivers, bar staff, housekeeping) – USD5.00 – USD10.00 per day which is put into a communal tip box and shared between staff ensuring those behind the scenes are rewarded

## VISAS & TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Please keep the following documents with you during travel:

- Airline Tickets and/or any e-ticket references for your commercial flights. Most airlines do not require reconfirmation but you still need to check for schedule changes 72 hours prior to your flight.
- A certified colour photocopy of your passport and other important documents for use in case of lost or stolen originals (kept separately from the originals).
- Valid passport – with at least 6 months validity and six empty pages.

**Citizens of certain countries are required to obtain visas well in advance of travel** for South Africa (even transit), Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia and most visitors to Mozambique are required to get a visa in advance. Please note that certain visas can take up to 3 months to be processed so please consider this when booking and note that it is your responsibility to check before final confirmation.

**The below is a guideline only. For up-to-date Visa requirements please check with your local embassy or consulate.**

**Fees for Visas for selected nationalities eligible to receive their visa on entry:**

**Zambia – payable on arrival:** U\$D 50.00 for single entry/ U\$D 80.00 for double entry for selected nationalities only

**Zimbabwe – payable on arrival:** Europe and USA: U\$D 30.00 for single entry/ U\$D 45.00 for double entry.

UK & Ireland: U\$D 55.00 for single entry/ U\$D 70.00 for double entry. Canada : U\$D 75.00 for single entry/ double entry to be obtained from local embassy prior to travel. Other nationalities to enquire regarding visa requirements.

**PLEASE** ensure that you buy the correct visa for your itinerary at the first point of entry and plan in advance for multiple-entry visas if required as these are not always available at the port of entry.

**\*\* NEW \*\*KAZA UNIVISA** – the new Uni-Visa was launched 28<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and offers a one off tourist visa for up to 30-day stay for a single payment of US\$50 for Zimbabwe and Zambia. Citizens of 40 selected countries are eligible for the visa which allows unlimited travel within this 30 day period between Zimbabwe and Zambia as well as in and out of Botswana for day-trips through the Kazangula border. Not only does it reduce time spent at these borders but also a reduction in cost as no re-entry visa is then required. See <http://www.kazavisa.info/index.php/about/zambia-zimbabwe-visa-info> for more information. As it is a new development, please contact us for up to date information prior to travel.

**Visas for Mozambique – advance arrangement required**

**For more information on visas please visit the following addresses:**

- [www.zambiantourism.com](http://www.zambiantourism.com) for Zambia
- [www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw](http://www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw) for Zimbabwe
- [www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw](http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw) for Botswana
- [www.visitmozambique.net](http://www.visitmozambique.net) for Mozambique [www.mozambiquehighcommission.org.uk](http://www.mozambiquehighcommission.org.uk)

## Travelling with Children

Due to new South African regulations effective 1 June 2015 If you are travelling with children please be aware that you will be required to have certified copies of their unabridged birth certificates, and passports on hand. If you are not their legal parents, or if only one of you is travelling – you will need to have consent in the form of an affidavit giving you permission to travel with the child. Please contact us for further details.

## PACKING

### LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

- For safety reasons light aircraft transfers have a restriction of 15kg luggage plus 5kg of hand luggage (20kgs total) per person, packed in SOFT bags. (In Zambia this limit is decreased to 15kg TOTAL per person on light aircraft transfers, schedule flights remain at 20kg)
- Please note that if your luggage is overweight or in the incorrect bag type – you will be asked to re-pack and/or you may have to book additional seats or a private charter at extra cost to accommodate your luggage.
- The maximum size per bag is 25cm wide (10 inches) x 30cm high (12 inches) x 62cm long (24 inches), this is the size of the pod of a Cessna 206, which is the most commonly used aircraft for inter camp transfers.
- Please do not bring hard suitcases or suitcases with wheels as they will not fit on a light aircraft.
- Excess luggage may be stored in Maun, providing clients are returning through Maun Airport to pick their bags up again before onward travel. For clients combining a safari with a Mozambican beach extension, luggage can also be stored in a secure luggage storing facility at Johannesburg OR Tambo International Airport.



Bags/suitcases with hard wheeled bases will not fit into the luggage pod. Soft bags only will fit into the luggage pod.

## CLOTHING

As most game viewing activities are taken in open safari vehicles or boats, it is important that you wear appropriate clothing to suit. Generally layers of clothing are recommended so that you can take off or add on as the day warms up/cool down. Many bush camps offer a complimentary laundry service, however hotels and guesthouses will charge. Laundry is not usually possible on a mobile camping safari.

- Warm jacket/fleece/jumper – windproof in winter months, waterproof in summer months.
- It is recommended that you wear quality sunglasses/a hat/cap throughout all seasons. In colder months bring gloves/scarf (May – Sept) and warmer months it is extremely important to bring sunscreen and sun protective clothing (Sept – April)
- Swimming costume
- Natural clothing (i.e. no bright colours and no white). Depending on the duration of your stay and whether a laundry service is available, an approximate guide is: 5 t-shirts, 2 pairs shorts, 2 pairs of light-weight long trousers and 2 light-weight long-sleeve shirt (long sleeves are extremely useful for sun protection during the day and mosquito protection during evenings), pyjamas, undergarments.
- Camouflage printed clothing is okay for the bush but please do not wear in towns or when crossing borders (particularly in Zimbabwe)
- Comfortable walking shoes (no heavy hiking boots required for normal guided bush walks) and flip flops/sandals

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- Waterproof/zip lock bags for storing personal items and memory cards to keep dust free and/or dry
- In most camps torches will be provided, but we urge our clients to bring their own head lamps, as these are very useful, especially on mobile safaris
- Camera equipment, binoculars, batteries, spare camera batteries and spare memory cards for digital cameras are essential as the opportunity to download photos is limited
- Reading materials – Some camps have a library but these are limited and so it is useful to bring your own books/novels or kindle for siesta hours.
- Toiletries – camps provide basics like insect repellent soap, body lotion and shampoo, please bring any extras you would like, keeping the amounts small. A few suggestions: personal insect repellent stick, sunscreen and hair conditioner for those with longer hair, spare reading glasses or contact lenses, small medical kit (see below).

## TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS

### HEALTH & MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS

- While the typical safari is not physically demanding, most safaris involve prolonged exposure to the elements. Bottled water in Southern Africa often does not contain all the minerals required to stay sufficiently hydrated and we recommend travellers consume a combination of soft drinks, juices and water to avoid any issues, especially as extreme temperatures may be experienced out in the bush.
- If you are taking prescription medication that is essential to your health carry it in your hand luggage. Please bring a spare prescription in case of loss or damage whilst travelling.
- Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, parts of Namibia and South Africa are considered malaria areas. Please visit your local Travel Clinic and take reasonable pre-cautions.
- Precautionary measures to prevent contact with mosquitoes include: sleeping under a mosquito net, making use of mosquito – repelling lotion and wearing long-sleeved clothing when outside at night.
- Due to the remote location of most camps and lodges, electricity is supplied by generator during the day and shut off at night. Camps ordinarily do not have 24 hours electricity as a result. Therefore, if you have a medical condition (i.e. sleep apnoea), which requires 24-hour electricity, please notify your travel agent in advance so that necessary arrangements can be made and if necessary, your itinerary altered to suit.

- If you have recently been in a Yellow Fever affected country (including Tanzania and Zambia) and are returning or transiting via South Africa or Botswana, you will be required to show a yellow fever vaccination certificate.
- If you suffer from motion sickness it may be an idea to take necessary precautions before travelling, particularly for days where you will be travelling by light aircraft.
- Please note: A first aid kit is always available in camps. However, we recommend that you have the following available for personal use: aspirin, laxative, Imodium, anti-histamine pills and ointment, band aids, electrolyte sachets and wet wipes.
- For up to date information, visit the WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION website [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### VACCINATIONS

If guests have visited or have been in transit in Zambia (this includes Livingstone and surrounds), a yellow fever vaccination certificate will be required on entering or transiting through South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique. The certificate may be requested by customs and immigration officials.

### MEDICAL EVACUATION

- All clients for our safaris must have their own medical evacuation insurance. We would like to highlight that there are certain inherent risks associated with a safari. As we are your first point of contact on the ground, it is essential that we have your personal medical insurance and evacuation details on hand in the event of an emergency. On booking please advise all relevant medical and insurance details (name of insurance company, insurance number, contact details/phone number of the insurance company). Alternatively, please complete the **BOOKING FORM** form found at the bottom of this document.
- Please understand that it is a long way from the camps to any commercial medical facility and camps are not able to evacuate clients after dark by charter aircraft. Only in Northern Botswana is there a possibility of evacuation during hours of darkness by helicopter through Okavango Air Rescue, however you must be a patron (small one off fee) and evacuation is dependent on the extent of the emergency and favourable weather conditions.
- In the event of a medical emergency, clients are flown to the nearest medical facility to be stabilised pending a transfer to South Africa for further medical treatment.
- Medical facilities in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique are very limited and therefore there is always a risk involved.
- If clients require special medication, they must ensure that they have this with them and also keep a back-up supply if the medication is necessary for survival.

### PERSONAL SAFETY

Botswana is considered a safe destination as it is economically and politically stable. However, it is wise to take certain standard security precautions as you would for travel to any destination, particularly when in towns or cities in Southern Africa as a whole:

- a) Please do not leave your luggage unattended at airports and at borders.
- b) All valuables and medication needs to go into your hand luggage.
- c) Please do not have your valuables on display when visiting the falls and markets, or any other public areas.
- d) Make use of room safes to lock up personal valuables or discuss with management should one not be provided

Wildlife safety is a separate issue and provided you listen attentively to safety briefings and exercise common sense and respect in wildlife areas you will generally be 'safe'. Please do not hesitate to ask questions and voice any concerns to your guide as your confidence is an important aspect in safety on activities. Please listen to your guide attentively on safety precautions particular to each camp and follow their instructions.

Please note that there is an inherent risk associated with going on safari. All guests are required to sign indemnities at the various camps and lodges and you are also required to abide by the operator's code of conduct in order to ensure safety.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

- Travel insurance is essential for all travellers and must be purchased in addition to your safari itinerary. Most camps and lodges in Botswana have strict cancellation charges and travel insurance is therefore recommended to recoup expenses in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Due to local regulations and practicalities (bush airstrips do not have landing lights) international flight changes and delays which cause you to arrive during hours of darkness will mean you cannot continue to camp the same day. Any expenses arising as a result can only be compensated for by your travel insurance company and it is therefore vital that you choose the right level of cover.
- Cover for cancellation and curtailment, medical insurance lost or damaged baggage and emergency evacuation is highly recommended for all our safaris.
- Okavango Air Rescue patronage (for evacuation to medical treatment by helicopter) is also available for Northern Botswana – please refer to <http://www.okavangorescue.com>

**Please contact us for further information**