
Water & Wilderness

BOTSWANA 2024

Maun - Okavango Panhandle - Divundu - Tsodilo Hills - Katima Mulilo - Kasane - Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)

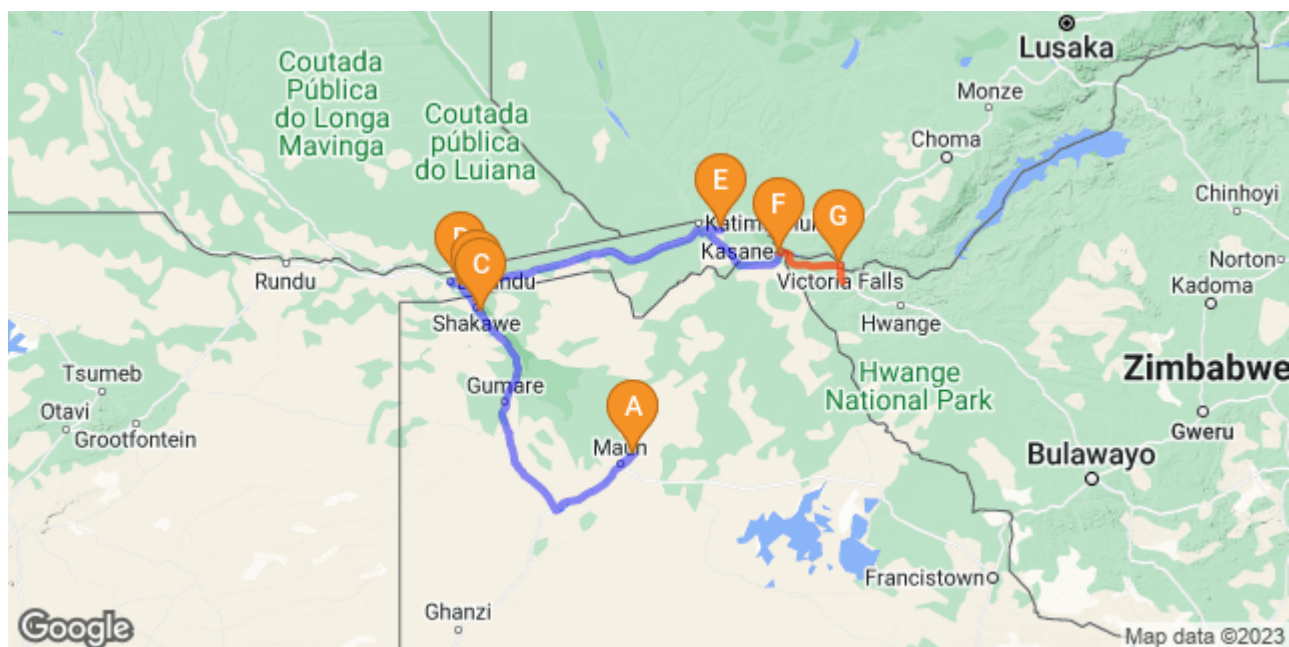
13 Days / 12 Nights

Reference: S14/24

13 October 2024 - 25 October 2024







Introduction

Our Botswana birding safari offers an exciting and rewarding birding and wildlife experience. While this area is not very rich in endemics, the sheer number and diversity of species to be seen is amazing. Indeed, the region covered on this trip offers some of Southern African's most spectacular birding. From the houseboat experience on the Okavango River to birding boat cruises on the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers, this tour gets one into the heart of this prime region.

Areas covered

Our **Botswana birding safari** starts in Maun, gateway to the Okavango. From there we make our way up the western side of the delta to Shakawe. Here we have time on a houseboat on the river. After that, we enter Namibia's Caprivi Strip, meandering eastwards. We have a couple of stops before we reach Chobe in Botswana. And from there we visit Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe where the tour comes to an end.

Accommodation

The accommodation is of a medium-plus to high standard. It includes a house boat, safari lodges and a hotel. Importantly, all accommodations have en-suite facilities, and are clean and comfortable.

The birding

The birding is simply spectacular on this Botswana safari. Variety and numbers are incredible. And birding / photography from a boat offers a whole new perspective. Indeed, from start to finish you'll be kept busy by almost not-stop birding action! Some of the highlight species to see include: Pel's Fishing Owl, African Skimmer, Western Banded Snake Eagle, Dickinson's Kestrel, Slaty Egret, Schalow's Turaco, Chirping Cisticola, Luapula Cisticola, Rock Pratincole, African Finfoot, White-backed Night Heron, Southern Carmine Bee-eater, African Pygmy Goose, Wattled Crane, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Hartlaub's Babbler, Secretarybird, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Long-toed Lapwing, Brown Firefinch, Lesser Jacana, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Brown-necked Parrot and many others.

The mammals

This is primarily a birding safari, and it doesn't visit the prime game viewing areas. However there are some great mammals to be seen. These include Elephant, Hippopotamus, Roan, Sable, Southern Lechwe, Puku, Spotted Hyena, Lion, Cape Clawless and Spotted-necked Otters, to mention a few.

Group Size

Maximum of 4 participants

Expected weather conditions

Warm to hot for the most part, though mornings and evenings can be cool. Low probability of rain.

In conclusion, this Botswana birding safari offers an awesome overall experience. It takes place in one of the sub-region's richest birding areas. And not only is it rich in birding terms, but it's an incredibly beautiful and wild part of the world. From the houseboat on the Okavango River to boat cruises on the Zambezi and seeing Victoria Falls, this safari is bound to be the trip of a lifetime. For something similar that includes more of Namibia have a look at Windhoek to Victoria Falls.

Accommodation	Destination	Start	End	Basis	Duration
Thamalakane River Lodge	Maun	13 Oct	14 Oct	FB	1 Night
Delta Belle	Okavango Panhandle	14 Oct	16 Oct	FB	2 Nights
Drotskys Cabins	Okavango Panhandle	16 Oct	17 Oct	FB	1 Night
Ndhovu Safari Lodge	Divundu	17 Oct	19 Oct	FB	2 Nights
Zambezi Mubala Camp	Katima Mulilo	19 Oct	21 Oct	FB	2 Nights
The Old House	Kasane	21 Oct	23 Oct	FB	2 Nights
Victoria Falls Safari Lodge	Victoria Falls	23 Oct	25 Oct	FB	2 Nights

Key

FB: Full Board - Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Lunch

Price

4 participants **USD 7 050** per person sharing

3 participants **USD 7 830** per person sharing

2 participants **USD 9 550** per person sharing

Single supplement **USD 516**

Included

- Accommodation
- All meals
- Ground transport
- Insulated water bottle
- Entrance fees
- Personalised checklists
- Specialist guide fees

Excluded

- All airfares
- Travel and medical insurance
- All drinks
- Optional excursions where applicable
- Gratuities
- Items of a personal nature

Day 1: Sunday, 13 October

Thamalakane River Lodge, Maun

Day Itinerary

Today you'll catch a short morning flight from Johannesburg to the rustic 'frontier' town of Maun in Botswana, arriving around midday. You will be met by your Lawson's safari guide and will have lunch before settling in and relaxing at our lodge overlooking the Thamalakane River, with some casual birding in the resort ground to start off our check lists, with some time to freshen up before dinner.

Botswana

Situated in the southern reaches of Africa, Botswana is renowned for its pristine wilderness areas characterised by deep lagoons, wetlands, lush palms, rugged hills and desert plains. The country's primary tourist drawcard is undoubtedly the vast red expanse of the Kalahari Desert and its remarkably beautiful Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta in the world. These natural wonders provide a tranquil haven for an abundance of African wildlife to thrive. Other highlights include the impressive Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, where visitors are privy to massive zebra migrations during the flood season; the Savuti plains, which host a significant pride of lions; and the Tsodilo Hills, where 4500 rock paintings form a unique record of human settlement over many millennia.

Maun

Set on the banks of the beautiful Thamalakane River in northern Botswana, Maun is the third-largest town in this spectacularly scenic southern African country. Maun is the starting point for most expeditions into the Okavango Delta and as a result, has developed into a bustling metropolis that is considered Botswana's tourism capital. Area attractions include a renowned riverboat that offers cruises up and down the Thamalakane River; the forest groves of the Maun Game Reserve; and Moremi Game Reserve, home to hippos, lions and rhinos. Maun also serves as the jumping-off point for many safaris and air charters as well as offering private 4x4 rentals. Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Nhaba Museum exhibiting the local history, art and culture of the Ngamiland region.

Overnight: Thamalakane River Lodge

Thamalakane River Lodge is ideally located an easy 20-minute drive from Maun Airport en route to the famous Moremi Game Reserve. It is a secluded haven of tranquility nestled in a grove of mature riverine trees on the bank of the Thamalakane River. The rambling lodge has an idyllic setting and is committed to service excellence.



Day 2-4: Monday, 14 October to Wednesday, 16 October Delta Belle, Okavango Panhandle

Day Itinerary

Today we can do some early morning birding before breakfast and departure for our next stop, our route taking us on a four hour drive around the western side of the Okavango Delta to the village of Shakawe, situated aside the Okavango River in the 'Panhandle' region upstream of the delta. Here we will board the house boat, our base for the next two nights, on board which we'll have wonderful en-suite cabins. Our birding adventure will start as soon as we put foot on the house boat as the skipper points the boat upriver and into the sunset, and no doubt Gin and Tonics will duly be served... After some late afternoon birding from the boat we'll have time to freshen up before dinner served on board, prepared in the galley by our local crew, before retiring to our cabins for the night.

Our full day will have an early start, with a cup of coffee or tea served on the deck before we set off on a birding trip in the tender boat, leaving the house boat behind as we work our way along channels and floating papyrus islands looking for Greater Swamp Warbler, Long-toed Lapwing, Lesser Jacana, Allen's Gallinule, Open-billed Stork, Pygmy Goose, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Chirping Cisticola, White-backed Night-heron, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater and Luapula Cisticola, among others. Elephants, Hippo's and Nile Crocodiles are always present, if we are lucky we may catch glimpses of the shy and rare Sitatunga antelope, the swamp specialist of central Africa. A scrumptious brunch will await us back on the house boat and while enjoying the food we'll have panoramic views from the deck as our skipper takes us further up river. After breakfast we'll have time to unwind on the boat, birding from the deck, reading or just relaxing. In the afternoon, after anchoring the boat, we will get into the smaller boat for our afternoon birding trip. Pel's Fishing Owl, Osprey, African Fish Eagle, African Marsh Harrier, Western-banded Snake Eagle and African Hobby are some of the raptors we will hope to find on this excursion, among a plethora of other species, and in the late afternoon we'll return to the boat for our second night on the Okavango River, enjoying another idyllic sunset before dinner and bed.

Okavango Panhandle

Situated in the northwestern area of the Okavango Delta, the Panhandle is a stretch of the Okavango River that follows a more-or-less straight course for approximately 70 kilometers before entering the wetlands. This deep channel serves as the main water source feeding the delta and offers excellent tiger and bream fishing, while the surrounding woodlands and the river's shallow waters teem with a myriad of birds. The Okavango Panhandle is dotted with several villages and serves as a gateway to the scenic Tsodilo Hills, some 40 kilometers west, with their various tribal cave paintings, some dating back as far as 20 000 years. There are also a number of well-established riverside camps that provide comfortable tourist accommodation. Visitors can enjoy excellent fishing, first-class birding, boating on the Okavango river and game viewing in the Mahangu National Park.

Overnight: Delta Belle

The Delta Belle is a comfortable, 5 bedroomed houseboat located in the panhandle region of the Okavango Delta. Moored at Shakawe.

There are more than 350 species of birds to spot on the waterways and guests will have the opportunity of seeing Hippo, Nile Crocodiles, Water Monitors, Red Lechwe and a plethora of other wildlife. Avid fishermen will delight in the chance to catch Tiger fish, Barbel and African Pike which are found in abundance in this area. There is 1 tender boat which is used for activities.



Day 4: Wednesday, 16 October

Drotskys Cabins, Okavango Panhandle

Day Itinerary

Today we may have time for an early morning outing on the tender boat before returning to the main boat for breakfast as we drift back downstream to Shakawe, where we'll disembark. We will get to our next destination, Shakawe River Lodge, after midday where we will have lunch and a bit of relaxation. There will be time in the afternoon to do some birding in the gardens, where we may find Holub's Golden Weaver, Swamp Boubou, Black-Collared Barbet, Black-faced Babbler and White-Browed Robin-Chat, among others, while spotting birds from the comfort of swimming pool is another option, for those so inclined (or reclined!).

Overnight: Drotskys Cabins

In the North-Western corner of Botswana, situated on the banks of the Okavango River, in the panhandle of the Delta, you will find the lush green lawns and tall, shady indigenous trees, a paradise called Drotskys Cabins. Thirty years ago,

Jan and Eileen Drotsky put their roots down here, and today still own and manage the Cabins, one of the first lodges in Botswana, together with a luxury tented camp further downriver, called Xaro Lodge.



Day 5-7: Thursday, 17 October to Saturday, 19 October

Ndhovu Safari Lodge, Divundu

Day Itinerary

An early drive to the Tsodilo Hills, a world heritage site renowned for some impressive San rock art and birding in the area, looking out for species such as Dickinson's Kestrel, Souza's Shrike, Booted Eagle and Pale-chanting Goshawk, among others. We return to the lodge for lunch before moving on. Crossing into the Caprivi Strip region of Namibia, we will find ourselves in Mahango Game Reserve. For the next two days we will explore the reserve, using our lodge as a base camp, spending as much time out in the field as suits us. Early morning and afternoon boat trips and drives will keep us busy, and we'll be looking out for species such as African Skimmer, Laupula Cisticola, Wattled and Grey-crowned Cranes, Böhm's Spinetail, Black-faced Babbler, Grey-headed Parrot, Collared Pratincole, Western-banded Snake-Eagle, Crimson-breasted Shrike, Violet-eared Waxbill, Slaty Egret, African Hobby and many more. In between activities we'll have time to enjoy the lodge, which includes safari tents overlooking the river. After dinner we will do a walk outside the lodge grounds looking for Square-tailed, Fiery-necked and Pennant-winged Nightjars.

Namibia

Located in southwestern Africa, Namibia boasts a well-developed infrastructure, some of the best tourist facilities in Africa, and an impressive list of breathtaking natural wonders. Visitors can explore the capital of Windhoek and discover the lovely coastal town of Swakopmund boasting remnants of the country's German influence, reflected in the architecture, culture, cuisine and the annual Oktoberfest celebrations. To properly appreciate this extraordinary country, you will have to venture out of the cities to explore the remarkable natural landscapes Namibia has to offer. These include: the impressive Fish River Canyon; the vast Etosha National Park teeming with abundant wildlife, such as lions, desert-adapted elephants and the Hartmann's Mountain Zebra; the hauntingly beautiful Kalahari Desert; and of course the Namib Desert stretching for over 2000 km along the magnificent Atlantic Coast. Namibia is an ideal destination for travellers seeking an unforgettable African experience in a uniquely beautiful untamed wilderness.

Divundu

Set roughly 200 kilometres east of Rundu on the southeastern banks of the great Okavango River, the small village of Divundu is a wonderful destination from which to explore the river, game parks and national reserves of the area. Visitors can enjoy fishing or bird watching boat safaris, or visit the Mahango Game Park, which is home to herds of

elephant as well as hippo, buffalo, giraffes, antelope, and many other animals. The spectacular Popa Falls, a dramatic series of cascades - are a popular must-see attraction. Divundu is also the perfect base for adventures in Botswana and the Okavango Delta.

Overnight: Ndhovu Safari Lodge [View iBrochure](#)

Ndhovu Safari Lodge is a peaceful riverine retreat overlooking the well-known Zambezi Game Park (Bwabwata National Park). The birdlife in the area will satisfy the most ardent bird-watcher - over 400 different species have been recorded in the surroundings.



Activities

Tsodilo Hills
Game Drive
Boat Cruise

Tsodilo Hills

Located in the far reaches of northwestern Botswana, the Tsodilo Hills mark the highest point in the country. Abruptly rising 400 metres from the vast western Kalahari, these hills consist of four distinct mounds: the female, the male, the child and an even smaller 'kopje'. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the famed Tsodilo Hills are home to more than 4000 remarkable rock paintings and considered a sacred space for the San people. It is said that the Tsodilo Hills are one of the world's oldest historical sites, which have been inhabited on and off for the last 60 000 years. Visitors can enjoy guided tours around this ancient spiritual mecca.

Game Drive

Enjoy a full game drive into the Buffalo Game Park where you have a chance to see bigger herds of buffalo, breeding herds of elephant and the Sharp Tailed Starling.

Boat Cruise

Take boat trips along the border of the Caprivi National Game Park, where you can see hippo, elephant, buffalo, crocodile and birds which include the White backed Night Heron and possibly the Pels Fishing Owl.

Day 7-9: Saturday, 19 October to Monday, 21 October

Zambezi Mubala Camp , Katima Mulilo

Day Itinerary

After an early morning birding walk we'll have breakfast and depart for the Zambezi River. We'll cross the Caprivi Strip from west to east, stopping for lunch in Katima Malilo where we will look for Schalow's Turaco before moving on. Our destination is Zambezi Mubala Camp on the banks of the upper Zambezi River, with Zambia lying across on the northern bank. Here we'll embark on morning and afternoon boat trips as well as walks and drives over the Zambezi floodplain, looking for species such as Copper Sunbird, White-browed Coucal, Schalow's Turaco, Black Coucal, Brown Firefinch, Greater Painted Snipe, Rosy-throated Longclaw, Hartlaub's Babbler, Rufous-bellied Heron, African Skimmer, Slaty Egret and others. We will be staying in luxury safari tents overlooking the Zambezi, and once again we'll aim to include some time in camp to appreciate the surrounds and simply wallow in the magnificence of the place.

Katima Mulilo

Situated on the southern banks of the Zambezi River, the small town of Katima Mulilo is the capital of the Zambezi region. This riverside town is surrounded by lush vegetation and is home to an array of tropical bird species and cheeky monkeys. Katima Mulilo is the service centre for the Caprivi and serves as the commercial hub for the East Caprivi region. Visitors can enjoy a variety of interesting attractions including the vibrant street market, where arts and crafts, such as traditional grass-woven baskets, wood carvings, clothes and jewellery, can be found.

Overnight: Zambezi Mubala Camp [View iBrochure](#)

Forty kilometers east of Katima Mulilo, Zambezi Mubala Camp is idyllically set on the water's edge in a grove of tall, shady trees. For those who love the outdoors as much as their creature comforts, glamorous camping aka 'glamping' at Zambezi Mubala Camp is just for you.



Activities

Boat Cruise
Sundowner River Cruise
Specialist Birding/Photography Cruise

Boat Cruise

Take boat trips along the border of the Caprivi National Game Park, where you can see hippo, elephant, buffalo, crocodile and birds which include the White backed Night Heron and possibly the Pels Fishing Owl.

Sundowner River Cruise

Experience the waterworld of the Zambezi River on a romantic boat trip as the sun goes down.

Specialist Birding/Photography Cruise

Capture the colors of the Zambezi River bird life on a relaxing boat cruise.

Day 9-11: Monday, 21 October to Wednesday, 23 October**The Old House, Kasane****Day Itinerary**

Today we may have time for an early morning birding walk before departing from the banks of the Zambezi and crossing over into Botswana where we will enter the Chobe Game Reserve, birding and game viewing as we drive. It should take us most of the morning and early afternoon and we'll arrive just in time to do our first birding boat trip on the Chobe River, and experience not to be missed! Today and the next day we will spend time in Chobe Game Reserve and on the Chobe River, looking for species such as Rock Pratincole, Schalow's Turaco, Copper and Purple-banded Sunbirds, Coppery-tailed and White-browed Coucals, Collared Palm-Thrush, Long-toed Lapwing, Lesser Jacana, Allen's Gallinule, Yellow-billed Stork and various waders and kingfishers which share the banks of the river with herds of African Buffalo, Sable and Roan Antelope, Lechwe, Impala and of course the large numbers of African Elephants for which Chobe is famous for. Our accommodation for these two nights will be around Kasane village where wildlife and humans live side by side and it's not unusual to see an Elephant or Warthogs crossing the main street in town!

Kasane

Tucked away in the north-eastern corner of Botswana, on the banks of the famous Chobe River, the scenic little town of Kasane rests on the doorstep of the spectacular Chobe National Park. There are no boundary fences separating the village from the park and game such as Elephant and Hippo are often spotted roaming around the town. If on the lookout for elusive game, pay a visit to the Sedudu Valley Road, where large dead trees provide temporary homes for Leopards. Within Kasane, an ancient baobab tree stands on display, once serving as a local prison.

Overnight: The Old House [View iBrochure](#)

The Old House is a family run and owned guest house situated on the banks of the Chobe River and a mere walking distance from the centre of town and a 10 minute boat cruise or drive to famous Chobe National Park for spectacular wildlife viewing.



Activities

Chobe Boat Cruise

Chobe Game Drive

Day 11-13: Wednesday, 23 October to Friday, 25 October Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)

Day Itinerary

After breakfast we will cross the Zimbabwe border and make our way to the village of Victoria Falls. After checking in to our lodge we will have lunch before visiting the Victoria Falls and admiring these natural wonders while looking out for birds such as Collared Palm Thrush, Trumpeter Hornbill, Bearded Scrub Robin, White-browed Robin Chat, Verreauxs' Eagle, Augur Buzzard, Lanner and Peregrine Falcons, before returning to the lodge with enough time to get ready for dinner.

On our full day we take a boat trip on the Zambezi River during which we'll be looking for African Skimmer, Rock Pratincole, Half-collared Kingfisher, African Finfoot, Rufous-bellied Heron and White-backed Night-Heron, among others. If possible we will attend the vulture feeding spectacle at the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge at 13h00 before an afternoon leisurely birding stroll around the village. Species we'll be on the lookout for include Trumpeter Hornbill, Schalow's Turaco, Brown Firefinch, Collared Palm-Thrush, Broad-tailed Paradise-Whydah, Orange-winged Pytilia and Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, among others. In the late afternoon we'll return to the classic Victoria Falls Safari Lodge for sundowner drinks before dinner.

Zimbabwe

A nation of spectacular natural beauty, friendly people and rich culture, Zimbabwe's status as one of Africa's leading safari destinations was dampened for years by its political instability. But now that the country is transcending its strife and returning to a state of equilibrium, it is once again emerging as a vacation highlight of the continent. Victoria Falls – known to locals as 'The Smoke That Thunders' – is one of the seven natural wonders of the world and the sheer power of this massive body of water plunging into the Zambezi Gorge is awe-inspiring and unforgettable. Lake Kariba, with its game-rich shores and islands, is an idyllic safari spot featuring mind-blowing sunsets.

Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe)

Victoria Falls is one of the world's most impressive waterfalls. It is set on the magnificent Zambezi River which creates the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. These spectacular falls can be easily visited and viewed from the Zimbabwean side. Considered to be the world's widest waterfalls, Victoria Falls measures an impressive 1708 metres in width. The small town of Victoria Falls, which lies adjacent to the waterfalls, serves as a great base from which to explore the many attractions this area of Zimbabwe has to offer.

Overnight: Victoria Falls Safari Lodge [View iBrochure](#)

Built on a plateau overlooking the Zambezi National Park, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge is just 4km from the majestic Victoria Falls and offers a unique wildlife experience.

Built of thatch and timber, the lodge rises several levels, giving the impression of a vast open-plan tree house. Our rooms all have private balconies, most of which overlook a central waterhole, offering the opportunity to observe herds of Buffalo, Elephant and Kudu, as the sun goes down, and Hyenas later in the evening.



Activities

Kalunda Birding Cruise

Vulture Culture Experience

Vulture Culture Experience

All guests at the resort, as well as visitors to the Lodge are invited to enjoy this daily educational activity affectionately referred to as the 'Vulture Culture' experience.

This program is for guests at the resort, as well as visitors. It focuses on the ecological importance of raptors and scavengers in order to maintain and to build an overall awareness of conservation issues these birds face. By educating about the feeding habits and conservation of vultures, we are not only creating awareness of the conservation issues that faces these birds, but benefiting their living environment within the area. The experience occurs daily at 1300hrs in front of the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, and lasts approximately 30 minutes. The activity is great for photography and bird identification, and to date is thoroughly enjoyed by guests and visitors.

At 12h45hrs, our resident guide gathers the guests sitting at the Buffalo Bar to join him to head to down to the feeding area. Carcasses from The Boma dinner the previous night are thrown out to attract circling vultures. This is an amazing experience as there is activity in the sky at 12h45hrs and by 13h00hrs – it is heaving with over 100 vultures and other birds of prey.

Day 13: Friday, 25 October

End of Itinerary

Day Itinerary

Today we will hopefully have time for a last birding walk in the lodge grounds followed by breakfast and departure for Victoria Falls Airport for our return flight to Johannesburg and onwards.

Travel Information

Botswana

Entry Requirements

Please acquire the necessary travel documents for your trip to Botswana.

For travel via South Africa (even if in transit) all adults travelling with children under the age of 18yrs will be required to carry an original copy of the child's Unabridged (full version) birth certificate. It is also advised that should you be travelling as a solo parent without the other parent, that one carries a certified affidavit with permission for the children to travel.

Further documentation may be required, please research this thoroughly (<http://www.dha.gov.za/>) or contact the airline you are booked on for specific requirements.

Banking and Currency

Botswana's currency is Pula (which means 'rain' in Setswana). It is divided into 100 thebe (which means 'shield' in Setswana).

Botswana also use US Dollars. It would be advisable to bring along some US Dollars in cash (small denominations) for border crossing and small purchases.

Master & Visa cards are widely accepted, Diners Club and American Express are not as widely accepted. Cash machines are readily available in most towns. It's best to ask your guide about where and when it is best to draw cash. Please inform your local bank about your travelling arrangements, as they are able to freeze your account should they be suspicious of banking activity in a foreign country. Traveller's cheques are not widely used anymore. It would be best to change money at airport on arrival if you have not arranged it before leaving home.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

Public transport in Botswana is geared towards the needs of the local populace and is confined to main roads between major population centres. Although cheap and reliable, it is of little use to the traveller as most of Botswana's tourist attractions lie off the beaten track.

Driving off the main roads in Botswana is only recommended to experts in 4x4 vehicles, that are equipped correctly. Most lodges offer transfers or they can be arranged. If, however, you will be driving in Botswana: your home driving licence will be accepted (with an official English translation if necessary; driving is on the left side of the road; and the national speed limit is on tarred roads is 120km/h and 60km/h in towns and villages.

Be sure to watch out for wild animals on the roads!

There are major airports in Maun, Kasane and Gaborone, while smaller charter flights are used to get to the other top attractions and camps.

Health and Medical Information

Your guide will carry a very basic first aid kit with antiseptic, bandages and band aids. It would be advisable to bring some of your own basic medical supplies including anti-histamine cream for bites and itchiness, Imodium (or something similar for stomach trouble), rehydrate sachets, painkiller, antiseptic and other personal medication.

Malaria Risk

You will be travelling through malarial areas. In malarial regions the rains usually arrive in spring and early summer (September – November), after which the Malaria Risk starts to build up and peaks in February to April. As a company we do advise taking malarial prophylactics. We advise consulting your medical practitioner. Prevention is better than cure though, so wearing socks and closed shoes, long pants etc in the evenings and spraying with repellent is a key measure of prevention.

Please consult your health care practitioner for official medical advice.

Also have a look at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>, under General Information for more advice and information.

Safety Notices

Botswana is in general a very safe country to visit.

Snakes and Scorpions

In the kinds of places we stay, we may encounter snakes and scorpions. It is thus advisable to wear closed shoes and socks when out in the field and to ALWAYS wear closed shoes and socks after dark in areas where scorpions may be encountered (these are more common in hot, dry areas). Also be vigilant and always keep an eye out, even in your rooms (check bedding, towels etc before use).

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice

Safari lodges and camps serve international-style cuisine, generally of an extremely high standard, along with local beer and imported wine and spirits. Good restaurants and bars can be found in main towns, often within hotels. Beef and goat are very popular meats. Elsewhere, food is more basic: millet and sorghum porridge are the local staples.

Tap water is considered safe to drink, although outside main cities and towns, visitors are advised to check first and sterilise water if in any doubt. Bottled water is available in most tourist centres. Filtered water is available at most camps and shops offer bottled water - it is advised to be well stocked of bottled water if you are travelling off the beaten track. Milk is pasteurised, and dairy products, local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally safe.

A discretionary five-to-ten-percent tip is typical for restaurant bills. In many places, a service charge is automatically added. It is customary to tip the game guide and lodge staff while on safari.

Climate and Weather

Summer: September to April

- Botswana falls under a summer rainfall climatic regime, with most rain falling between October and May. Most rain falls during afternoon / evening convection thunderstorms.
- The country is generally dry, except for the north and north-east.
- In general it is warm to very hot in summer.

Winter: May to August

- Winters are generally mild, though it can get cold to very cold overnight and in the early morning, especially in the Kalahari, where sub-zero temperatures are not unheard of.
- Minimal chances of rain.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

Comfortable casual clothing will be suitable and it is best to avoid white and bright colours whilst birding and game viewing on foot. Khaki, brown, beige or sombre coloured casual clothes are best. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers will help protect you against the sun and insect bites. Comfortable walking shoes will be needed, but sandals can also be worn at times. Hiking boots are not necessary unless your tour includes a specific walking / hiking component. Hats and sunblock lotion are vital, as are sunglasses. A warm jacket, scarf, woollen hat and gloves are advisable if your tour includes open safari vehicle drives in winter (June to September), while a windbreaker / raincoat and warm fleece are recommended for all tours, regardless of the time of the year or mode of transport.

In addition:

- Binoculars, camera and accessories. A Spotting Scope is also a good idea.
- Wide brimmed hat.
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams and insect repellent.
- Prescription medications (if any).
- Hairdryer if necessary.
- Torch / Flashlight.
- Travel alarm clock or mobile phone with alarm.

On group trips please pack luggage in **soft bags** as it helps with the packing of the vehicles.

Internet Availability

Some hotels, lodges and guest houses offer internet access or WiFi (free or paid), and there are internet cafe's in Gaborone and Maun. Internet access in more remote rural areas is often hard to come by.

Electricity and Plug Standards

The Botswana electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ.

Most plugs are 15 amp 3-prong or 5 amp 2-prong, with round pins. If an adaptor is called for, consider bringing one with you, although they can be purchased locally. US-made appliances may need a transformer).

General Guidance**Laundry facilities**

Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like detailed info.

Tipping

Waiters at meal times generally get 10% of the bill but you would only need to worry about the meals that you will personally be paying for as the guide will cover the tips for the meals that they will be paying for.

R10 - R15 per main bag is the norm for portage.

As far as your guide is concerned, there is no set standard. It is not compulsory to tip drivers and guides, but if you feel that your guide has given his or her best in order to make sure that your safari was enjoyable, then a gratuity is always appreciated.

WIFI Access

Wi-Fi access is limited, though more and more accommodation establishments are offering Wi-Fi services. Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like to know which specific establishments have internet access for public use.

Mobile Phone Reception

Cell signal can be limited in some of the more remote areas. Please enquire if you would like more specifics.

Recommended Reading

Your guide will have a small reference library with them (provided they are not embarking on any flights during the tour) so it is not necessary to bring that many books, but a personal bird and mammal field guide is recommended for those who want to do research on their own time.

Recommended Field Guides**Birds**

Sasol Birds of Southern Africa, Fourth Edition. Sinclair, Hockey, Tarboton & Ryan. 2011
ISBN-13: 9781770079250

Roberts Bird Guide, Second Edition, Chittenden, Davies & Weiersbye
ISBN 978-1-920602-01-7

Mammals

Smither's Mammals of Southern Africa: A field Guide. Second Edition. Peter Apps. 2012
ISBN-13: 9781770079137

Namibia**Entry Requirements**

Please acquire the necessary travel documents for your trip to South Africa.

For travel via South Africa (even if in transit) all adults travelling with children under the age of 18yrs will be required to carry an original copy of the child's Unabridged (full version) birth certificate. It is also advised that should you be travelling as a solo parent without the other parent, that one carries a certified affidavit with permission for the children to travel.

Banking and Currency

Namibia uses the Namibian Dollar (N\$) this is linked on a one to one exchange with the South African Rand. The Rand is legal tender in Namibia, but the N\$ cannot be used in South Africa.

If you are wishing to purchase currency before arriving in Namibia, it is easiest to buy Rand as the Namibian Dollar is seldom available in banks outside of Namibia.

Master & Visa cards are widely accepted, Diners Club and American Express are not as widely accepted. Cash machines are readily available in most towns. It's best to ask your guide about where and when it is best to draw cash. Please inform your local bank about your travelling arrangements, as they are able to freeze your account should they be suspicious of banking activity in a foreign country. Traveller's cheques are not widely used anymore. It would be best to change money at airport on arrival if you have not arranged it before leaving home.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

It is easy to travel around Namibia by car, and a 2WD vehicle is perfectly adequate for most journeys. However, long distances, poor mobile phone coverage outside of main towns and infrequent petrol stations that only accept cash mean that planning ahead is vital.

There are major airlines that fly into Windhoek and Walvis Bay. Other destinations are reachable by car or charter flight.

Namibians drive on the left and all signposts are in English. Seat belts must be worn at all times and talking in a mobile phone while driving is prohibited. The general speed limit is 120km/h on tarred roads outside of towns and 100km/h on gravel roads. In built up areas, the speed limit is 60km/h. Extreme caution must be taken on dirt / gravel roads, where loss of control can occur very easily. 80 km/h is the recommended maximum speed on dirt roads.

Health and Medical Information

Your guide will carry a very basic first aid kit with antiseptic, bandages and band aids. It would be advisable to bring some of your own basic medical supplies including anti-histamine cream for bites and itchiness, Imodium (or something similar for stomach trouble), rehydrate sachets, painkiller, antiseptic and other personal medication.

Malaria Risk

Only north-eastern Namibia is classified as a malarial area. Etosha carries 'some risk', but this would only be in the wet season. The Caprivi Strip, however, is definitely a malarial risk area. In malarial regions the rains usually arrive in spring and early summer (September – November), after which the malaria risk starts to build up and peaks in February to April. As a company we do advise taking malarial prophylactics. We advise consulting your medical practitioner. Prevention is better than cure though, so wearing socks and closed shoes, long pants etc in the evenings and spraying with repellent is a key measure of prevention.

Please consult your health care practitioner for official medical advice.

Also have a look at <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/>, under General Information for more advice and information.

Safety Notices

Namibia in general is a very safe country to visit. Theft out of vehicles does occur however so make sure to keep vehicles locked and to be vigilant around the vehicle when stopping to look at birds etc.

Snakes and Scorpions

In the kinds of places we stay, we may encounter snakes and scorpions. It is thus advisable to wear closed shoes and socks when out in the field and to ALWAYS wear closed shoes and socks after dark in areas where scorpions may be encountered (these are more common in hot, dry areas). Also be vigilant and always keep an eye out, even in your rooms (check bedding, towels etc before use).

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice

Traditional Namibian cuisine is rarely served and so the food at restaurants tends to be European in style and is, generally, of a very high standard.

Namibia is very meat-orientated, and many menu options will feature steaks from various animals. However, there is usually a vegetarian and seafood section offered by most restaurants. National Park catering doesn't offer as much choice for vegetarians as private restaurants / lodges do.

In the supermarkets you'll find pre-wrapped fresh fruit and vegetables (though the more remote the areas you visit, the smaller your choice), and plenty of canned foods, pasta, rice, bread, etc. Most of this is imported from South Africa.

The water in Namibia's main towns is generally safe to drink, though it may taste a little metallic if it has been piped for miles. Natural sources should usually be purified, though water from underground springs and dry riverbeds seldom causes any problems. However, filtered and bottled water are readily available in most towns and all camps, lodges and hotels.

Climate and Weather

Summer: September to April

- Namibia is generally a summer rainfall region.
- It can be mild / warm to hot / very hot during the day, depending on altitude and specific location. It's generally cooler along the coast and hotter inland.
- The north and north-east are wetter and one can expect thunderstorms. Further south it becomes drier, though some rain is possible on the central plateau. The Namib proper is extremely dry.

Winter: May to August

- Winters can be cold to very cold overnight and in the early morning while days are usually cool to mild, though occasional cold fronts can make it cold all day.
- Minimal chances of rain.

Clothing and Dress Recommendations

Comfortable casual clothing will be suitable and it is best to avoid white and bright colours whilst birding and game viewing on foot. Khaki, brown, beige or sombre coloured casual clothes are best. Long-sleeved shirts and trousers will help protect you against the sun and insect bites. Comfortable walking shoes will be needed, but sandals can also be worn at times. Hiking boots are not necessary unless your tour includes a specific walking / hiking component. Hats and sunblock lotion are vital, as are sunglasses. A warm jacket, scarf, woollen hat and gloves are advisable if your tour includes open safari vehicle drives in winter (June to September), while a windbreaker / raincoat and warm fleece are recommended for all tours, regardless of the time of the year or mode of transport.

In addition:

- Binoculars, camera and accessories. A Spotting Scope is also a good idea.
- Wide brimmed hat.
- Personal toiletries, sun barrier creams and insect repellent.
- Prescription medications (if any).
- Hairdryer if necessary.
- Torch / Flashlight.
- Travel alarm clock or mobile phone with alarm.

On group trips please pack luggage in **soft bags** as it helps with the packing of the vehicles.

Internet Availability

Telecom Namibia offers a service called wi-space. You purchase a wi-space voucher that allows you to connect to WiFi wherever you see the wi-space logo (about 40 locations in Namibia).

Alternatively good WiFi access is available at most holiday accommodation venues across the country (free / paid).

Electricity and Plug Standards

The Namibian electricity supply is 220/230 volts AC 50 HZ.

Most plugs are 15 amp 3-prong or 5 amp 2-prong, with round pins. If an adaptor is called for, consider bringing one with you, although they can be purchased locally. US-made appliances may need a transformer).

General Guidance

Laundry facilities

Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like detailed info.

WIFI Access

Wi-Fi access is limited, though more and more accommodation establishments are offering Wi-Fi services. Please enquire with Lawson's if you would like to know which specific establishments have internet access for public use.

Mobile Phone Reception

Cell signal is generally quite good in Namibia, but it can be limited in some of the more remote areas. Please enquire if you would like more specifics.

Zimbabwe

Banking and Currency

Zimbabwe uses US Dollars. No other currency is accepted. Do not plan on being able to use cash machines in Zimbabwe to draw money. Before leaving home please exchange all the money that you will need for your trip. Most of this should be in 1, 5, 10 and 20 denominations because change is not always available. In an emergency you can try Barclays Bank, Stanbic Bank or Standard Chartered Bank as they will infrequently accept foreign debit cards for withdrawing cash.

Only VISA and MasterCard are accepted in Zimbabwe, however it should be noted that very limited facilities will have credit card machines, and the connection is not always reliable so it is advisable to carry cash as back up.

Travel, Transport and Getting Around

Taxis are safe and reliable, and can be booked through your hotel front desk. Taxis in cities travel within a 40km radius of the city. Always take a taxi at night.

Major airlines fly into Victoria Falls, Harare and Bulawayo. Charter flights are available to most attractions and camps.

Zimbabwe has a good road infrastructure, by African standards, although potholed. Between major towns, there are frequent road blocks. Traffic drives on the left side of the road.

If you are driving yourself around Zimbabwe, be sure to check on fuel availability in advance. If you are covering long distances within the country, ensure you carry extra fuel in 5 or 10lt metal containers in case of emergency. Fuel is generally available, but supply can fluctuate. Fuel is only available for cash.

Food, Drink and Cuisine Advice

Zimbabwe's native cuisine is based on sadza, a cooked porridge made from ground maize which is normally accompanied by some tasty relish, perhaps made of meat and tomatoes, or dried fish. Safari camps will often prepare sadza if requested, and it is almost always available in small restaurants in the towns.

Camps, hotels and lodges that cater to overseas typically serve a variety international fare, and the quality of food prepared in the most remote bush camps is usually excellent.

If you are driving yourself around and plan to cook, then get most of your supplies in main towns. There are a number of South African shopping chains operating in Zimbabwe which will generally have all that you will need.

Water in the main towns is usually purified.. The locals drink it, and are used to the relatively innocuous bugs that it may harbour. If you are in the country for a long time, then it may be worth acclimatising yourself to it. However, if you are in Zimbabwe for just a short period of time, then try to drink only bottled, boiled, or treated water available in towns and from all camps, lodges and hotels.

Climate and Weather

In Zimbabwe, the rains come principally in **December, January, February and March**; the further north you are, the earlier the precipitation arrives and the later it leaves. Zimbabwe's higher eastern areas usually receive more rainfall than the lower-lying western ones.

By **April and May** most of the rain is gone, leaving a verdant setting, which is starting to dry out. Especially in more southerly and higher locations, the night-time temperatures start to drop.

The nights in **June, July and August** become much cooler, so don't forget to bring some warmer clothes, in case you want to spend an evening outside; the days are still clear and warm. For Zimbabwe, this is the start of the 'peak season'– days are often cloudless and game sightings continually increase.

Into **September and October** the temperatures rise once again: Zimbabwe's lower-lying rift valley – Mana Pools – can get very hot in October. During this time, you'll see some fantastic game, as the Zimbabwe's wildlife concentrates around the limited water sources.

November is unpredictable; it can be hot and dry, it can also see the season's first rainfalls – and in this respect it's a very interesting month, as on successive days, you can see both weather patterns.

Internet Availability

Internet availability is very limited especially outside of the major cities.

Most holiday accommodation venues offer internet and/or WiFi (free or paid) to their guests but there are often disruptions in service.

Electricity and Plug Standards

Electrical sockets in the Republic of Zimbabwe are Type G (BS-1363) and Type C (CEE 7/16 Europlug) and Type D (BS-546). If your appliance's plug doesn't match the shape of these sockets, you will need a travel plug adapter in order to plug in. Travel plug adapters simply change the shape of your appliance's plug to match whatever type of socket you need to plug into. If it's crucial to be able to plug in no matter what, bring an adapter for all types.

Electrical sockets usually supply electricity at 230 volts AC / 50 Hz frequency. If you're plugging in an appliance that was built for 230 volt electrical input, or an appliance that is compatible with multiple voltages, then an adapter is all you need. If your appliance isn't compatible with 230 volts, a voltage converter will be necessary.

General Guidance

Laundry facilities

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Mobile Phone Reception

Cell signal can be limited in some of the more remote areas. Please enquire if you would like more specifics.

Terms and Conditions

Itinerary Terms and Conditions

This itinerary is subject to change due to weather conditions at the time and other factors beyond our control.

Birds and mammals mentioned on this itinerary do not represent all that can be seen. A full list of possibles appears on your checklist.