

DESTINATION INFORMATION

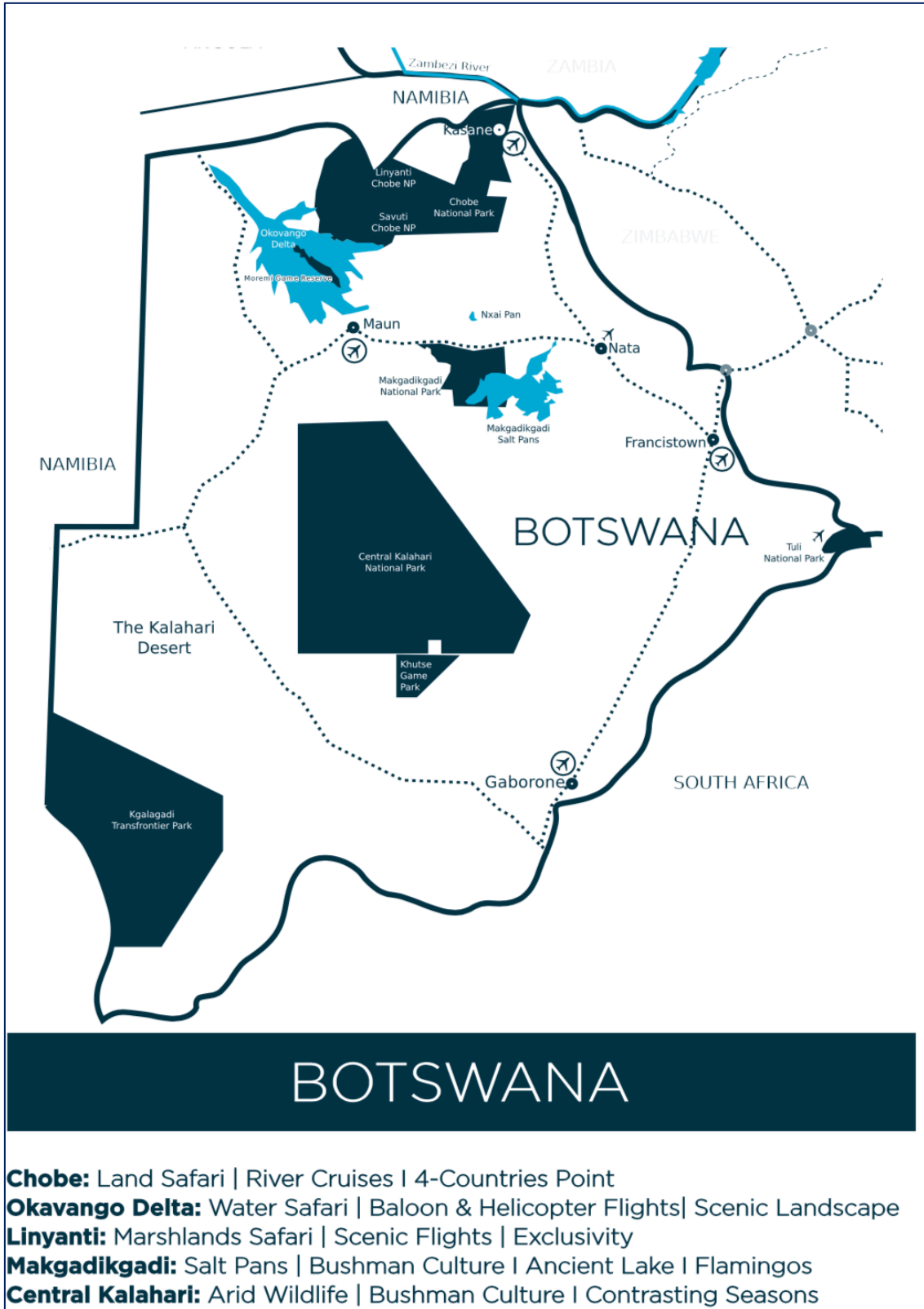
BOTSWANA



Voyeni
Creating Escapes for the Soul

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Botswana is a landlocked country in central-southern Africa. In the safari industry Botswana is mainly known mainly for its high end tourism offering in the Okavango Delta. The Chobe, Mkgadikgadi Salt Pans and the Kalahari are other exceptional wildlife areas.

WEATHER

Botswana is mostly a flat country with about two thirds of its surface area covered by the Kalahari desert. It is not easy to convey exactly when the best times are to visit because the weather is highly varied throughout the country. Importantly the Kalahari can be extremely hot from September right through to May, with June to August being the coolest months. The main rains in country hit from December through to March. It is coolest throughout Botswana in June and July. During this time it can get very cold at night and in the early morning, particularly when on safari, so we would like to suggest that you pack accordingly –warm clothing including an anorak/winter jacket, a beanie, scarf and gloves are recommended. September to mid-November can be very hot and very dry, and game viewing is limited to areas where there is permanent water like the Chobe River section of Chobe National Park.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mobile phone connections for calls are good, and local sim cards are also available. The mobile internet is also generally good and Wi-Fi is widely available in most international hotels/lodges/camps in the main towns/safari areas.

The Okavango Delta starts flooding in May and has plentiful water right through until October. During this period the most comfortable temperatures and best times to view wildlife fall in the period May to September.

This is also generally a good time to visit the other parks of Botswana, except for the Nxai Pan National Park, which is best to visit during the rainy months Dec to March. The Central Kalahari is also good in the rainy season.

LANGUAGE

English is the official language and Setswana is widely spoken throughout the country. Batswana is the collective name for people from Botswana.

WATER

It is advised to drink from a purified water source in your accommodation or you can also buy bottled water in the shops. *Please remember to be conscious of not using too much plastic, if any.* Usually available borehole water is perfectly safe to drink, but be sure to check if the borehole is in good order and has not been interfered with or damaged.

ELECTRICITY

Many of the safari camps are situated in remote areas and have to generate their own electricity. Generators or solar power, are used as a main power source, whilst in some camps gas heating is used and solar units charge the batteries located at each tented room, providing good 12V lights all night (if used sensibly). There are only 220V power points in camp. If you have an item that runs on 110V, please bring a converter. Often batteries are charged in the main area or office while you are out on an activity so please bring spare batteries for use. Electrical plug outlets are now available in many tented camps, but appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers cannot always be used during your stay there. Sleep apnoea machines can be accommodated by arranging for a battery and an inverter to be placed in the rooms, however, please note that prior warning is required. In major cities, electrical appliances run on 230 V and 50Hz accessible British type 3 square-pinned plugs. While some camps may be able to supply adaptors (3-prong round, 3-prong square, 2-prong round, 2-prong flat) it is advisable that you carry your own. Remember also to bring the appropriate phone, ipad and other appliance adaptors.

BOTSWANA

TIME ZONE

GMT +2

HEALTH

Please check the latest information with your medical practitioner

Malaria precautions must be taken especially if travelling to all the Safari areas of Zambia. You must please consult your doctor before you travel to ensure that you are prescribed the correct type of protection.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography near sensitive sites like border crossings, dam walls, road blocks or the airport is **strictly prohibited**. Please be sensitive and ask for permission if you wish to take a photograph of local people. Beware of self-appointed officials trying to charge fees to take pictures of well-known sites of interest.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

All visitors need a passport which remains valid for six months after proposed entry into Botswana and at least two blank passport pages. Travellers must also have a round trip itinerary and sufficient funds for their stay. The information provided here is valid as at January 2019. It is subject to change at short notice and you should contact your local Botswana Embassy or consul services or your travel agent to gather the most up to date information. Our recommendation is to obtain your Botswana visa prior to arrival, as this will expedite the immigration process at both airport and border crossing. You can do this by applying at your nearest Botswana embassy/consul.

You must advise the relevant officials of the **total** number of days that you are spending in Botswana otherwise you may be charged to obtain an extension/additional visa later on. If you arrive in Botswana before continuing with your safari in another country (such as Zambia, Namibia or Zimbabwe) and then return to Botswana prior to departure; or will be staying in Kasane/Chobe and doing some touring across the border into Zambia or Zimbabwe, then a **double-entry** visa must be obtained. To find out which visa regime you qualify for please check with the Botswana Embassy or Consul nearest you.



The KAZA Uni Visa is now available and costs US\$ 50.00. This is a permit for unlimited entry into Zambia and Zimbabwe within 30 days of travel. You may also enter Botswana for a once off day visit ONLY on this visa. Kindly view the latest information here:

<http://www.kazavisa.info/>

SECURITY

Botswanans are mostly very peaceful people and there is an especially low level of crime directed at tourists. Make sure your accommodation is secure at all times. Like most global destinations mugging and other forms of theft can take place in city centers, and you should be more vigilant especially after dark. Exercise caution at airports, and when leaving banks and cash points. Don't carry large amounts of cash if you can avoid it and avoid travelling around alone.

BAGGAGE

Light aircraft travel has a strict luggage restriction of *15 kg per person* including hand luggage, depending on your destination. If you need to bring luggage in excess of your allowance, you may have the option of buying an extra seat. This "seat in plane" allows for a maximum of 70 kg (154 lb) excess weight, on the proviso that the bag/s conforms to the dimensions 40 x 40 x 80cm (16 x 16 x 31 inches); soft bag, i.e. no wheels/frame/rigid structures; able to physically fit onto a light aircraft seat; able to be physically secured with one seatbelt; will not impact on the comfort of other guests on the flight. The additional cost of this varies depending on your flight schedule so please contact your agent for further details.

It is strongly recommended that you use a **soft-sided carry bag or a duffel bag** plus a small piece of hand luggage such as a handbag or small rucksack (which is also convenient for use on game drives to contain your camera gear, binoculars, sunscreen and hat particularly if on an all-day game drive). The weight allowance is a requirement of all light air travel for space and safety reasons.



Should guests have excess luggage which does not need to accompany them throughout their safari, and they are arriving as well as departing from Victoria Falls, we can make arrangements for the excess luggage to be stored in our Victoria Falls/Harare operations offices at an extra charge of US\$ 20.00 per bag. The luggage can then be returned to the guest either at their hotel in Victoria Falls/Harare (if they are staying overnight) or by luggage transfer to the airport. This service, which is normally the most practical method of handling excess luggage in Zimbabwe, is charged for at a nominal rate and you are advised to pre-book it through your agent prior to travel. We do not anticipate any problems with stored luggage being damaged or stolen, however, guests must ensure that they are in possession of full travel insurance including luggage cover.

DRESS CODE

Batswana people usually dress smartly and in business attire. Otherwise the dress code is casual, although some international hotels and restaurants require gentlemen to wear long trousers for dinner. Good manners and respect come naturally to Zambians.

WHAT TO PACK ON SAFARI

Casual, relaxed, breathable and light weight clothing (ideally UV protected as the sun can be strong) is best when you are on Safari. You can get away with packing light as laundry facilities are available at all the camps, lodges and hotels. It is however worth noting that often you will need to wash your own underwear and delicate clothing yourself.

Expect warm weather for the most part and humidity at times. Shorts and short sleeved shirts are ideal during the day unless you have a strong sun sensitivity. At night it is advisable to wear lightweight long pants and shirts to protect yourself from being bitten by mozzies and bugs. Most accommodation will provide insect repellents for you to use during your stay. During the winter time you must pack some warm clothing – compact sweaters and long pants are great and even some gloves/scarf for early morning drives. It can get pretty chilly at night and in the evening as well as early mornings, but it is invariably warm during the day.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a pre-requisite of travel that all travellers take out comprehensive travel insurance. This must cover cancellation or curtailment of arrangements, emergency medical evacuation, medical expenses, hospitalization, repatriation, baggage loss and loss/breakage of valuables.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Clothing

**Note: ideally brown, beige colours. Bright colours scare animals. Be careful to avoid camouflage army style gear though.* The list below is just a guideline and is not exhaustive

- Comfortable walking shoes
- 1 x pair slops/sandals
- Long sleeve breathable shirts
- Short/Long Pant combinations
- Wide brimmed hats
- Swimsuit
- Warm compact clothing (esp. in winter)

Accessories

- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Prescription glasses/Contact Lenses
- Mosquito repellent
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Battery chargers & Memory cards
- Personal toiletries
- Personal medications (esp.Malaria)

Brands/Shops who stock great safari gear

- Columbia
- Northface
- K-Way
- Cape Union Mart

DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Botswana is low at only around 2 million (compared to 45 million in each of Kenya and Tanzania). The main cities/towns are Gaborone (population estimated to be about 230,000), Francistown and Kasane. Botswana is about the same size as France or Texas. Botswana are largely religious with nearly 80% being Christian, most of whom regularly attend church. There is also a sizeable number (20%) of citizens who have no faith and a small number who follow other religions. As in other African countries, Christianity may be mixed with traditional and ancestral beliefs.

GRATUITIES & TIPPING

Tipping is NOT compulsory; these are simply guidelines and suggestions for a 'thank you' for good service. Work on approximately 10% of the bill for restaurant meals and hotel services (but check the bill, some add in a service charge. Here are some general guidelines for other once off services:

Porterage: US\$2-US\$3

Transfer driver: US\$2-US\$3

Safari Guide: US\$10 per day

Camp Staff: Most safari camps and some hotels have a general tip box or you can consult the manager for the best procedure.

CONSERVATION & COMMUNITY

As a resident Destination Management Company we are deeply connected to the wildlife and communities our region. We endeavour only to support suppliers who have the best interest of wildlife and community at heart. Tourism, when managed properly, can play a huge role in alleviating challenges faced by both people and wildlife. There are many organizations in the region that are doing incredible work to conserve, rehabilitate and assist communities and wildlife be it through community upliftment projects, anti-poaching efforts, conservation levies etc...

Please do not hesitate to contact us for advice or information on what we are doing and how you can assist!

During your journey you may encounter people less fortunate than yourself. In some cases you may want to assist immediately. Please follow our advice and first check with your guide before responding as what may seem the right thing to do could have an adverse effect when you are not fully informed.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

Botswana beef is considered excellent because it is one of the most naturally grazed. There is no shortage of good vegetables and fresh fruit e.g. Pineapple, mango, paw-paw (papaya), banana, oranges and watermelon are all inexpensive when in season. Freshwater fish from the abundant rivers and lakes are also plentiful, especially superb bream (Tilapia).

The Daily Grind and Caravela are considered the number one restaurants in Gaborone, whilst in Maun Marcs Eatery and Hilary's are highly recommended. In Kasane the Old House is a great place to go out for a meal and the food at Chobe Safari Lodge is generally well regarded.

For something local, try *pap*, which is a maize porridge served often best with a tasty relish. Also try *Seswaa* which is a local meat based dish.

South African wines are mostly excellent and are plentiful. A good and well known good Zambian lager beer is called Mosi. For the adventurous try the decidedly local *chibuku*, which is available everywhere.

As a former British protectorate, Botswana has retained some English habits. Elevenses (mid morning tea and biscuits) and Afternoon Tea are widely observed, as is the ritual of a Gin and Tonic as a sundowner!

MONEY

The Zambian currency is called Kwacha. The United States dollar is widely accepted. Expect to receive Kwacha as change. The Euro, the British pound, the South African Rand and the Botswana Pula may also be accepted in some tourist areas.

Take US\$ cash and keep small denominations handy.

International Visa and Master Credit Cards are widely accepted and can be used in most hotels, restaurants and shops of the main cities and tourist related areas/services.

ATMs are reliable.

Western Union and/or Money gram outlets, where cash can be transferred and accessed the same day, can be found in almost every main street throughout the country.



LOCAL COSTS

Here are some approximate ideas of what to expect in terms of additional costs if you are not on a fully inclusive itinerary.

Meals: In the main towns expect to pay about US\$12-18pp for lunch and US\$18-25pp for dinner.

Drinks: Bottled mineral water costs about US\$1.50 in stores and US\$3 in hotels and restaurants for a 1.5 litre bottle. A local beer will cost about US\$3-4.00 in a hotel and US\$1-2.00 in a bar in town. Coffee will cost US\$1-2.00. Meals in some local restaurants can offer real value.

SHOPPING

Shopping for arts and crafts in particular is a fun activity and bargaining is widely accepted even encouraged in the markets like those in Victoria Falls and Harare. Pottery, basket weaving, textiles, jewellery and wood carving is traditional. Amongst the distinctive finds are symmetrically patterned baskets and stools carved from a single piece of wood. Shona sculpture has become world famous in recent years, especially with carved figures human figures and animals, often made with soapstone, serpentine or verdite.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

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