



Binoculars & Photography on Safari

For photography, most people use Smartphones these days given the advanced camera capabilities they offer. If you are a more serious photographer, you might consider bringing:

- 35mm cameras with flash (possibly one standard and one auto-focus)
- Standard lens, 35-50mm range
- Wide angle lens, 24-35mm range
- Zoom lens, 70-200 or 100-300mm range
- Long lens, 200-400mm range, with f3.5 or f4 speed if possible
- Miniature 35mm camera or digital for “happy snaps” and campfire shots
- Camera battery charger

For binoculars, the guides will have a pair (their own) in the vehicle... and will pass it over to you to look at when they aren't using them to spot wildlife. Due to the weight restrictions a really heavy-duty pair will add too much weight.

Here is the further scoop on this so that you understand the most important features to look out for when deciding on a safari binocular:

Toughness

Even though the safari vehicles are pretty comfortable these days, you are bound to drop them or bash them against something at some time during your holiday. Remember you are also going to be traveling about and so a flimsy pair could easily get damaged. So, look for a pair that has a tough rubber armor covering and comes with a good quality and protective carry case.

If you are going to be walking about in the bush, another tip is to look for a pair that has their objective lenses set back quite deeply within the body. This will protect them from getting damaged or scratched when walking through and around thick bushes. Failing that, make sure your optics come with some good objective lens caps that fit well and that can be tethered to the body so you can easily cover your lenses when required without having to look through your bag for them. (Importance 7/10)

Size of Binocular

- Full Sized Binoculars have objective lenses of around 42mm or larger
- Mid-Sized Binoculars have objective lenses of around 32mm to 36mm
- Compact Binoculars have objective lenses between 21mm and 28mm

Unless you want to struggle around with tons of luggage everywhere you go, it only makes sense that the optics that you travel with are as compact as possible. An easy to carry and compact binocular is even more important if you are planning to go on walking safaris and is especially important if you want to carry your camera with you at the same time as well. But compacts do have their drawbacks and so some people may feel that the benefits that full size or even mid-sized binoculars have over them are worth the extra weight and size.

The two main advantages that larger binoculars have over compacts in relation to safaris are:

1. Because of their larger objective lenses full sized and even mid-sized binoculars are able to take in more light, meaning that all other factors being equal, the image that you view through them will usually be brighter and of better quality - Note: other factors like coatings and the quality of the lenses and prisms will also have a big bearing on this.

On a bright sunny day, the image brightness will not be a problem even with very small compacts and is only really an important factor in poor light conditions. On safari you may go out very early in the morning or late in the afternoon and early evening when it is cooler and most wildlife is more active.

The problem with this is the light quality will not be at its best and it is at these times where a binocular with larger objective lenses will perform better than a smaller one with the same quality glass and coatings. Having said that, if you choose a really good quality compact binoculars that use high quality glass and coatings, they will actually often outperform cheap or poor-quality full-sized binoculars and will work fine for most conditions that you encounter whilst on safari.

If you are looking for a very cheap pair of binoculars (please don't!) I would suggest opting for a full-sized pair of porro prisms, but if you are able to spend just that bit more, you could easily get the same performance from a compact porro prism that is far easier to carry around whilst on safari and when travelling.

2. At the same magnification full size binoculars tend to have a wider field of view, which as you will see below is a fairly important feature for racing binoculars. If you want a better performance than a compact can offer, but do not want to carry about a full-sized pair of optics, you should consider a pair of mid-size binoculars which offer a great compromise between the two.

The ideal size compromise.

On walking safaris, I tend to use my compact binoculars, but if you want a better performance than a compact can offer, but don't want to carry about a full sized pair of optics, you should consider a pair of mid-size binoculars which are a great compromise between the two and are in my opinion are an ideal size of binoculars for most safaris especially ones where you will be viewing the wildlife from a vehicle. (Importance 7/10)

Tip: When walking in the bush, I always have a pair of binoculars with me, but I also sometimes want to have my camera with me as well. Obviously on these walks a compact binocular makes sense, but what you really need is one that can fold away small enough to fit into your shirt or jacket pocket, rather than have it dangling round your neck where it can get in the way when you are trying to photograph something. When it comes to size, not all compact binoculars are created equal - look out for roof prism compacts that have a dual hinge design that makes them far smaller than standard single hinge or porro prism compacts when folded.

The Right Magnification

The main reason you have a pair of binoculars for safaris is to get closer to the wildlife, so you may be forgiven for thinking that the more powerful the magnification the better. However, this is not always true as very high-powered binoculars have a two main drawbacks that may not make them ideal on a safari:

1.The first problem with increasing the magnification is the higher the magnification, the smaller your field of view (FOV) will usually be (see field of view below). This means that binoculars with a high magnification and small FOV will enable you to see loads of detail, but less of the whole picture and so you could miss out on some of the action.

2.The next problem with high powered binoculars is that it becomes harder and harder to keep the image steady as any movement you make becomes progressively magnified through the binoculars. Image shake is a real problem when you have to follow something like birds or are using your binoculars for long periods of time like viewing animals at a watering hole where it is not only annoying but can eventually give you a headache.

So, with magnification you have to make a compromise between getting close enough to really see the details, but not so close that it makes actually seeing what is going on difficult! So, in my opinion binoculars with a magnification of between 8x and 10x will be ideal for most safari binoculars. If, however you are going to be particularly far away from the action you could consider a 12x magnification which is still fairly easy to keep still without a tripod and has a decent FOV, but will get you just that bit closer to the action. (Importance 7/10)

Powerful Magnification, smaller Field of View

Field of View

The field of view (FOV) of a pair of binoculars is the width of the image that you can see through the binoculars and so a wide FOV enables you to catch as much of the action all at once without having to move the binoculars about. For observing large relatively slow-moving animals, a fairly narrow field of view is not really an issue. A nice wide FOV is much more important when observing small and fast-moving objects like birds as a wide picture will make it far easier to spot them in the first place and then keep them in view as they dart about a tree or bush. So, for a good general all round safari binocular used for both bird and large animal observation you want as big a FOV as possible but don't get too obsessive about it.

A binocular's FOV is usually expressed in feet at a distance of 1,000 yards, but you also find it expressed in meters at 1,000 meters or it is sometimes displayed as an angle. I would say that for safaris a FOV of 315ft at 1,000 yards (105m at 1,000 meters / 6.0°) should be fine for most people, but as I say, the wider the better, so if you are undecided between two models, check which has the widest FOV. (Importance 6/10)

Less powerful Magnification with a wider Field of View

Other features to look out for

Waterproofing: Waterproof binoculars are important especially if you are traveling in the rainy season (yes it does rain in Africa!) Most safari vehicles are not the most waterproof vehicles out there and sometimes some of the best game viewing experiences can happen when it is raining. On one occasion that comes to mind, I sat in the rain for over an hour with some hardy guests watching a cheetah shelter from the rain under a tree. We got very wet and so did our equipment, but it was well worth it to be able to spend such a long time observing this magnificent cat.

Waterproofing not only protects your optics from moisture, but in dry dusty conditions that you will often encounter on safari it will also prevent any dust and other small debris from entering them that could easily lead to your view being spoilt. (Importance 6/10)

Image Stabilization: Image Stabilization Binoculars can really help if you definitely want or need a high-powered binocular, or if you have particularly unsteady or shaky hands. Most work by using sensors that detect horizontal and vertical movement and a micro-processor within the binocular that instantly adjusts the refraction angle of the incoming light on the prisms to cancel or smooth out the movement for a much steadier view. Do

they work? Most definitely, but they also have their drawbacks - If you are looking for Image Stabilization, the best is the Canon IS Binoculars (Importance 2/10)

This link will assist you with getting a better understanding of some of the best options for binoculars on safari and a bit of an understanding on binoculars.

[Best Binoculars For Safari Video | A Bit about Binoculars:](#)

Links to the best binoculars for safari we listed in this video:

5. AVANTEK Binoculars - <https://amzn.to/36VNJ9Y> Not currently available on Amazon
4. Eyeskey 10x42 - <https://amzn.to/2SNtTWd> Weight 1.4 lbs.
3. Adorrgon 12x42 - <https://amzn.to/351HT4y> Very well priced! Weight 1.1 lbs.
2. Celestron Outland X - <https://amzn.to/2GDJfKz> Weight 2lbs.
1. Bushnell H2O - [Bushnell-BSH134211-10x42-Porro-Binoculars Link](#) Weight 2.7 lbs.

[Also, another good article on Lightweight binoculars...](#)