



## FACT FILE SELINDA CANOE TRAIL NORTHERN BOTSWANA



### **A TRAILS EXPLORATION – 4 NIGHTS / 5 DAYS CANOEING DOWN THE SELINDA SPILLWAY**

The high waters flowing through northern Botswana in 2009 and 2010 caused the Selinda Spillway to flow in a way that it has not done for nearly three decades. This has enabled adventurers the opportunity to experience a rare first – the Selinda Canoe Trail.

The Selinda Canoe Trail replicates the safari experiences of old as we navigate along the Selinda Spillway over five days, camping along the banks of the river at the end of the day, wherever we find ourselves.

By popular demand for additional adventure and exploration, the 2014 Selinda Canoe Trail has been extended to four nights. It was discovered, after five successful seasons, that the desire to further explore the islands and lagoons of Selinda Reserve was overwhelming. Our guests consistently asked for an additional night to reach remote areas only accessible by foot. The updated itinerary, for implementation in the 2014 season, extends this sought-after adventure by one day allowing for an even more extraordinary experience.

The distance from one end of the Canoe Trail to the other is roughly 45km; along this route we can well expect to come across many species of wildlife. The area is well known for some of Botswana's largest herds of buffalo and elephant, roan antelope, and the Explorer's pack of African wild dog. Other possible sightings include cheetah, lion, leopard and variety of other species. It is also a birder's paradise with some 300 species to be seen.

The canoe trail starts at the Selinda Airstrip where all participants meet at around midday. We then drive in open game drive vehicles for about two hours westward till we reach our starting point. This four night safari is comprised of roughly three full days and two half days (the first afternoon and the last morning) of paddling to cover the distance. All four nights will be spent in fly camps along the way at no particular pre-arranged site. The days are spent paddling along the Spillway with stoppages and walks whenever there is something of interest to be seen along the banks. Each canoe has two guests, their bed rolls and bags. Participants paddle their own canoes each day. No previous paddling or canoeing experience is needed as tuition will be given – but participants must be strong enough to paddle their own canoes. Please note that guests are not expected to put up tents or help with the cooking and camp chores as our is on hand. 3m x 3m Dome tents are provided as they are comfortable and large enough for two people - yet are compact enough to fit onto the canoes.

Each canoeing day begins in the early morning after a hearty breakfast and when the Spillway is at its most peaceful. Walking is part of the experience, and it is now more extensive to allow for access to new islands and lagoons. Day 3 includes a walking experience of approximately four hours to investigate an area of regular predator sightings. If there happens to be activity that warrants investigation, we stop on the banks and take a short walk into the bush.



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Brunch is taken around midmorning and light snacks are available throughout the day for sustenance until dinner. At night, the deep silence is punctuated by nocturnal sounds, from peeping frogs to roaring lion or the hyaena's whooping call. The atmosphere is magical and the highlight of any African safari. At the end of the trail, guests are transferred to the Selinda Airstrip in the late morning for onward departures or ideally they may elect to stay on for an additional night at either Zarafa or Selinda camps.

Trails Explorations bring the guest closer to nature. Such camps are specifically outfitted to create that sense of wilderness with a clear emphasis on essential camp comforts and maximum wilderness experience.

### GUIDE

The entire trail is guided and hosted by a professional and passionate guide with extensive experience in big game areas and excellent interpretive skills to bring the environment alive. He carries a rifle for safety while on the water, walking and in the camp.

### EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE

The Selinda Spillway is an ideal setting for this canoeing and walking adventure safari. The route begins downstream from Selinda airstrip in the north-east of the Okavango Delta and travel eastwards along the Selinda Spillway through the private 300 000-acre Selinda Reserve towards the Kwando and Linyanti Rivers close to where Selinda and Zarafa Camps are located.

### ITINERARY

**DAY 1:** The trail begins at Selinda Airstrip in the mid-afternoon, followed by a three hour road transfer in 4x4 vehicles from the airstrip to the starting point of the actual canoe trail. Once the guide has briefed the group, the trail starts with a short late afternoon canoe experience before arriving at the evening's first camp.

As there is a minimal distance to be covered on the first day and also due to the fact that all the equipment is carried with the group, we paddle until just before sunset at a suitable site on the banks of the Spillway.

The dome-tented camp will be pre-erected and we enjoy a well-deserved sundowner around the campfire before dinner, followed by a good night's sleep.

**DAY 2:** After an early wake-up call, tea or coffee and light breakfast while the camp is being dismantled, we head out on the canoes for a full day of paddling, with lunch en route and the possibility of stretching our legs if we come across something worth investigating on foot. Tonight we camp in another suitable location as we gradually make our way down the Spillway.

**DAY 3:** An early breakfast fuels us for a day of exploration on foot. We will venture into the islands and lagoons formed by the flood waters each season. It is only possible to enter this area by foot. There are antelope a plenty and large herds of elephant and



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buffalo, a humbling experience to have on foot. The length of day is tailored to the group, and either way a cold refreshment is waiting, and stories around the camp fire are colorful.

**DAY 4:** Up again for early breakfast, camp is taken down, before we continue along the water course by canoe for another full-day excursion and set up camp for the last night of this trail.

**DAY 5:** We head out after breakfast, aiming to finish around mid-morning. At this point we are met by the vehicle and transferred by road to the Selinda Airstrip, where we bid farewell to the safari.

### PRE-TOUR INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS SELINDA CANOE TRAIL

We look forward to hosting you at the Selinda Canoe Trail in Botswana in the near future. In order to ensure that you have the best experience possible, we ask that you read the following information carefully.

#### GROUP SIZE

This canoeing and camping safari is guaranteed on a scheduled departure basis with a maximum group size of eight guests and a minimum number of two guests.

Private and flexible tailor-made safaris where a group books out an entire departure or organises their own safari are welcomed and encouraged.

Each canoe will have two guests, their bed rolls and bags. Participants paddle their own canoes each day.

No previous paddling or canoeing experience is needed as tuition will be given – but participants must be strong enough to paddle their own canoes.

#### STAFF

Depending on the size of the group, each safari will usually be hosted by between 4 and 6 staff members. There are usually 1 cook, 3 camp hands and our guide. The staff members will be accompanying the safari in their own canoes and will be carrying most of the equipment, although we will spread the weight of drinks and food for the day and other gear throughout all the canoes. The staff members have been carefully selected to give the guests an even more memorable experience.

#### AGE LIMIT

Children from the age of 12 are welcome on all scheduled departures. For guests with children from 8 - 11 years, we can create a private tailor-made safari which is subject to an extra cost.

#### VEHICLES

As we canoe through areas that are inaccessible to vehicles, there are no back-up vehicles that accompany the canoe trail. An open game drive vehicle is used to transport guests to and from the airstrip at the start and end of the safari.

#### ACCOMMODATION/CAMPING EQUIPMENT

This safari is all about taking ourselves away from today's world. The Selinda Spillway runs through a remote part of the Selinda Reserve in northern Botswana, in areas where you will be completely removed from the modern world. We will be carrying



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all of the equipment on the canoes with us so the camp site will be of a rustic but comfortable nature.

3m x 3m Dome tents are provided as they are comfortable and large enough for two people - yet are compact enough to fit onto the canoes. They are furnished with comfortable bedrolls and quality linen. We carry enough camp chairs on the canoes for dinners at a well appointed dinner table and for guests to sit around a fire at night. Our meals will be prepared on the fire by the cook, enhancing that safari atmosphere of old experience.

Our ablution facilities will be bucket showers with hot water in the evenings and 'long drop' toilets and a shovel.

## LANGUAGES

Our safaris are all conducted in English, and it is therefore required that all participants on the safari have a knowledge of English and be able to communicate in that language. This is primarily due to safety factors.

## JOINING AND/OR LEAVING THE SCHEDULED SAFARIS

This canoeing safari will start and end at Selinda Airstrip at around midday. Unless guests are arriving on a private charter, it is essential that guests have spent at least a night in northern Botswana beforehand as guests arriving directly off the Air Botswana or the SA Airlink flight from Johannesburg will not have enough time to join the start of the safari. A night at Selinda, Zarafa, Duba Plains or any other Okavango or Linyanti camp is recommended beforehand and afterwards.

Please also ensure that you have all the correct information for this safari. Should you have any doubts concerning the below instructions please do not hesitate to contact your booking agent.

Please note that the safari & our guide's services start on OUR Day 1. Please also ensure that your flights coincide with the starting & ending point of this safari. The trail begins at 13h00 latest at the Selinda Airstrip on Day 1 and ends at around 10h30 at the Selinda Airstrip airfield on Day 5; it is important that your agent has arranged the connecting flights to and from the Selinda Airstrip accordingly.

Please ensure that your departure flight from Maun, Kasane or Victoria Falls is booked for after 14h00 if your regional flight back home is on the last day of the trip.



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## **INCLUSIONS ON THE SAFARI (AS PER THE DETAILED ITINERARY PROVIDED)**

- Accommodation on a sharing basis
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to the end of the scheduled safari
- A reasonable amount of soft drinks, wine and beer at meal times
- Selinda Reserve fees

## **EXCLUSIONS ON THE SAFARI (AS PER THE DETAILED ITINERARY PROVIDED)**

- Flights
- Visas
- Compulsory medical and travel insurance
- All relevant entry and departure government taxes
- Gratuities
- Pre and post safari tours, meals or accommodation before or after the safari.

Please ensure you have a sufficient amount of US Dollars/Euro in cash of small denominations to cover for gratuities.

## **ITINERARIES**

The route we follow will be flexible, changing with the seasons to maximise each guest's experience. Please ensure that you have the correct information. We also reserve the right to change itineraries due to unusual game concentrations or any reason beyond our control. If there is a change to an itinerary, this will be advised as timeously as is possible.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

All visitors to Botswana must have a passport which is valid for at least six months beyond their intended departure date from Botswana.

Visitors to Southern Africa must ensure they have enough blank pages in their passports bearing in mind they may be visiting several different countries.

Visitors must also be in possession of outward travel documents and have sufficient funds for the duration of their stay.

Further visa information is available on the following website:

[www.botswanaturism.co.bw/getting\\_in/visas.html](http://www.botswanaturism.co.bw/getting_in/visas.html)

Please note we have provided this website as a guideline for further information, and we cannot be held responsible for the content thereof.

## **TIPPING / GRATUITIES**

Tipping is not compulsory. If, however, you have received excellent service and would like to leave a token of your thanks, the following are guidelines:

- Guide: \$20 per guest per day
- Camp staff (collectively): \$15 per guest per day

## **LUGGAGE**

No formal clothes are needed; however we recommend that you keep your luggage to a minimum. Bright colours and white are NOT advised and ARMY CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORMS OR ARMY HATS ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED (this excludes khaki-coloured clothes).

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For safety and space reasons, we have a maximum 20 kg limit on luggage. Please ensure this is packed in a soft bag. Please remember that you will have to paddle your own canoes with your own luggage and bed rolls. The lighter your canoe is, the easier it is to propel your canoe forward. As the dress code on this safari is so informal, we recommend that you take the minimum possible on the canoe safari. Additional luggage can be collected off you at the Selinda Airstrip and stored for you, for your return.

Please bring a head lamp type of torch / flashlight with you for night time walking to your tents. Also, please bring your own high quality binoculars and camera equipment to enhance the enjoyment. Waterproof camera bags are strongly recommended.

## **TORCHES/FLASHLIGHTS**

As all camps selected for the canoe trail are unfenced, it is essential that you bring a good torch as you may encounter wild animals in camp at night. We suggest at least a TWO D-cell torch/flashlight and a head lamp. You should also bring a spare globe as well as batteries as they are often unobtainable locally. (A good LED flashlight is NOT a mini-Maglight or a small penlight flashlight).

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC TIPS**

The choice of the correct camera equipment will determine the quality of your photographs on safari.

For photography of birds and animals, a good digital SLR camera and telephoto lens is necessary. High-resolution digital cameras are outstanding and give superb quality images, especially if you are using a digital SLR camera body, with inter-changeable lenses. Camera bodies from Canon, Nikon and Sony are excellent.

Spare batteries are essential (we recommend that you bring 3 spare batteries) and an image storage device of some sort is recommended. Make certain you have enough card storage – most people take more photographs than they expect to. There are no charging facilities, so all batteries need to be charged before arriving here.

## **VIDEO**

Charging facilities for video cameras are unfortunately not available on the trail, so please bring enough batteries to last you the full 5 days of video filming.



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## SUGGESTED CLOTHING LIST

### MAXIMUM 20 KGS IN BOTSWANA, PACKED IN A SOFT BAG - (Including camera equipment within reason)

- Good quality sunglasses with good UV protection preferably polarised. Wide brimmed bush hat
- T-shirts and one long-sleeved cotton shirt
- Shorts/slacks/skirts and swimming costume
- Long trousers
- Warm track suit (essential for the very cold June/ July/August early mornings)
- Underwear (sports bra recommended on game drive transfer as the road can be bumpy and uneven) and socks
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Thongs/slip-slops/strops.
- Sweater/jersey.
- Anorak/parka (polar fleece is good), head "beanie" and gloves (essential for the very cold June/July/ August early mornings)
- Camera equipment and spare camera batteries.
- Tissues/"Wet Ones"
- A good LARGE flashlight which takes at least 2 large batteries. Please bring spare batteries and a spare globe.
- GOOD QUALITY BINOCULARS - ESSENTIAL
- Moisturising cream and suntan lotion
- Insect repellent
- Personal toiletries, in addition to those specified above
- If you wear contact lenses we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case of eye irritation from the dust.
- A small "day pack" (without frame) for use on walks and in the canoe – preferably waterproof
- Light rain gear
- Water proof bag or Pelican case for cameras.
- Soft bag or backpack for clothes (preferably waterproof)

## HEALTH

There are a few basic health matters that require care and attention. The following points are recommended guidelines only. Please consult your doctor and also check with your health department prior to departure for any changes in health regulations.

## MALARIA

Even though the canoe trail takes place miles and miles from any villages, northern Botswana is still regarded as a malarial area.

Malaria prophylactic recommendations for southern African travellers:

Expert opinion differs regarding the best approach to malaria prophylaxis. It is important to bear in mind that malaria may be contracted despite chemoprophylaxis, especially in areas where chloroquine resistance has been reported. Both chloroquine-resistant and normal strains of malaria are prevalent in Africa.

Please remember that the best precaution is the preventative kind:

- Avoid being bitten by using mosquito repellents liberally. Please bring your own repellent.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers/slacks in the evenings.

Malaria is transmitted by a very small percentage of female Anopheles mosquitoes. They are mainly active in the early evening and throughout the night. Malaria transmission is at its highest during the warmer and wetter months of November through to April.



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From May through to October the risks of acquiring malaria are reduced. There is also less prevalence in remote areas where our camps are situated; nonetheless, you need to consider taking preventative measures.

There is a six to seven day minimum incubation period before symptoms present themselves. If you become ill on your return, while still on prophylaxis or even once you have stopped taking them, ensure that your doctor does everything to establish that your illness is not malaria. Malaria can be prevented if you are sensible and take basic precautions. It is inadvisable for pregnant woman to visit malarial areas as malaria infection during pregnancy can be detrimental to mother and child.

## **WATER**

It is very important that you drink plenty of water whilst on the canoe trail. It is generally recommended that guests drink at least 2 to 3 litres of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and therefore can actually contribute to dehydration.

Generally, water throughout Southern Africa is safe to drink directly from the tap. However, bottled water is readily available on the canoe trail, so please do not allow yourself to become dehydrated.

## **DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

For those guests with specific dietary requirements please ensure your agent is notified prior to arrival. We can accommodate most reasonable requests.

## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

You need to notify your agent and ourselves of any medical condition you may have prior to your arrival. This includes any allergies e.g. bee stings, nuts, shellfish etc.

## **INSURANCE**

It is a condition of booking, that the sole responsibility lies with the guests to ensure that they carry the correct comprehensive travel and medical insurance to cover themselves, as well as any dependants/travelling companions for the duration of their trip to southern Africa. This insurance should include cover in respect of, but not limited to, the following eventualities:

### **COMPULSORY INSURANCE:**

- Emergency evacuation expenses
- Medical expenses
- Repatriation expenses

### **RECOMMENDED INSURANCE:**

- Cancellation or curtailment of trip
- Damage/theft/loss of personal luggage, money and goods.

Great Plains Conservation, including their representatives, employees and agents will take no responsibility for any costs, losses incurred or suffered by the guest, or guest's dependants or travelling companions, with regards to, but not limited to, any of the above mentioned eventualities. Guests will be charged directly by the relevant service providers for any emergency services they may require, and may find themselves in a position of being unable to access such services should they not be carrying the relevant insurance cover.

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## HEALTH INSURANCE

It is compulsory to have full medical, emergency evacuation and repatriation cover for the full period of time that you are travelling.

## CANCELLATION & CURTAILMENT

If for any reason you cancel a trip close to departure date, you could lose the entire cost of your trip. Should you have to leave before your holiday is finished, we cannot refund you the cost of the portion of the package you do not complete. In the eventuality of this happening, insurance may cover you, depending on the reason for cancellation and curtailment.

## LUGGAGE & MONEY INSURANCE

It is advisable to take out luggage and money insurance especially if you are carrying a lot of cash or expensive camera equipment. You should always carry such equipment as "carry-on" luggage. Do not put anything of value including any vital medication in your checked-in baggage!

## CLAIMS

If you anticipate an insurance claim upon your return, be sure to document as accurately as possible any accident, injury or loss. Doctor's notes and police reports will aid any claim.

## RECOMMENDED READING

We recommend the following books specific to the Botswana region;

- Okavango: Wetland Wilderness - Adrian Bailey
- Okavango: An African Paradise - Daryl Balfour
- Chobe: Africa's Untamed Wilderness - Daryl Balfour
- The Lions and Elephants of the Chobe - Bruce Aitken
- This is Botswana - Daryl Balfour
- The Bushmen - A Changing Way of Life - Anthony Bannister.
- Botswana: A Brush with the Wild - Paul Augustinus.
- The Kalahari, Survival in a Thirstland Wilderness - Nigel Dennis, Dr Michael
- Newman's Birds of Southern Africa and Common Birds of Botswana - Ken Newman.
- Guide to the Trees & Shrubs of the Okavango Delta - Veronica Roodt
- Guide to the Wildflowers of the Okavango Delta - Veronica Roodt
- Botswana Tourist Map & Guide - Veronica Roodt
- Running Wild: Dispelling the Myths of the African Wild Dog - John McNutt, Lesley Boggs, Dave Hamman
- & Helene Heldring.
- Wild About the Okavango - Duncan Butchart
- Botswana - The Bradt Travel Guide - Chris McIntyre
- Sasol birds of Southern Africa - Ian Sinclair, Phil Hockey, W. R Tarboton

Everyone should bring their own pair of BINOCULARS and reference books in order to get the most out of the safari.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.**

# GREAT PLAINS CONSERVATION

## QUICK CAMP FACTS



ACTIVITY	BOTSWANA CAMPS						KENYA CAMPS		
	ZARAFA CAMP	ZARAFA DHOW SUITES	SELINDA CAMP	DUBA PLAINS	SELINDA EXPLORERS	SELINDA CANOE TRAIL	OL DONYO LODGE	MARA PLAINS	MARA TOTO
Day Drives	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Night Drives	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Guided Walks	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Boating	•	•	•	•					
Mokoro									
Canoeing					•	•			
Main Swimming Pool		•	•	•			•		
Private Plunge Pools	•						•		
Horseback Riding							•		
Cultural Interaction *							•	•	•
Hot-Air Ballooning *								•	•
Spa/Massage *	•	•	•	•			•		
Gym	•	•							
Fishing (Seasonal)	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Mountain Biking							•		
Hide			•				•		

(\* ) This activity is available for an additional fee.