

Canoe & Camping Safari, Botswana



Highlights

Canoe your way along the Selinda Spillway for three nights in the heart of this huge 320,000-acre nature reserve. Made up of vast floodplains, sprawling forests and habitat where only wildlife treads, this part of Botswana is perfect for safaris. Explore by day and then cozy up under canvas by night on this magical canoeing and camping safari.

Botswana is a wildlife lover's paradise. For a start, it's huge – roughly the same size as France. And secondly, the roads are few and far between, so hippos, lions, and elephants are left to their own devices. The Selinda Nature Reserve itself is a private space where animals can roam without fear as there's relatively low human input here. It's a flat, arid landscape with views that stretch for miles, and sunsets that belong on celluloid.

This epic canoeing adventure carves a path through 70km of the Selinda Spillway in the heart of the Selinda Nature Reserve. Harking back to the spirit of traditional safaris, you'll be making way by paddle and foot through an area rich with wildlife. Over the course of the 4 days, you'll paddle eastwards along the Spillway, from Motswiri to Selinda. Along the way, you'll leave the canoes and explore by foot, accompanied by an experienced guide. The Selinda Nature Reserve is home to about 300 species of birds, so there's ample chance you'll spot many on your safari. But it's not just birds that flock here. Because no hunting has taken place here since 2004, bigger creatures like elephants, buffalo and sable antelope are also often spotted. And if you're really lucky, you could even see a cheetah, lion or leopard.

Is it for me?

Lots of safaris just involve sitting around in the back of a truck, twiddling your thumbs, waiting for the moment you spot that elusive giraffe. Not this one. You will be right in the thick of nature, paddling along peaceful waterways and hiking with hardly a sign of other humans for three nights. So, if you're more of a 'doing' person then this will be right up your street. You'll be canoeing and walking during the day, and camping at night. You'll have to be ok with camping and short-drop toilets, but let's face it, they're a small price to pay for a great adventure safari in Botswana. Children above the age of 12 are welcome on this trip, guests over the age of 65 are most welcome, but are asked to provide a recent certified medical certificate. It is recommended that you stay at Motswiri Camp the night prior to departure. This means that you can have an early start on your first day. Contact us for details.

Accommodation

Accommodation isn't luxurious, but is entirely in keeping with the back to nature spirit of this canoeing and camping safari. You camp along the banks of the Selinda Spillway wherever you find yourselves at the end of the day. Everything is carried on the canoes, which places natural limitations on the facilities available. You'll be staying in dome-tents that come with comfy bedrolls and good-quality linen. And you can get clean with hot bucket showers, but you'll have to brave short-drop toilets. In terms of food, it's all provided but as meals will be rustled up on the camp fire, expect tasty rather than elaborate food.

Itinerary

Prices from

1,047 GBP (4 days) per person

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Day 1: The trail begins at the Motswiri airfield at approximately 1 pm. Once the guide has briefed the group, the trail starts with a short walk to the canoe station where the real adventure begins. As there is no set distance to be covered on the first day and also due to the fact that all the equipment is carried with the group, you'll paddle until you're ready to stop, just before sunset at a suitable site on the banks of the Spillway. The dome-tented camp will be erected and you'll enjoy well-deserved sundowners around the campfire before dinner, followed by a good night's sleep.

Day 2: After an early wake-up call, enjoy tea or coffee and a light breakfast, while the camp is being dismantled. Then it's back in the canoes for a full-day of paddling, with lunch en route. Depending on time and the route, there may also be the chance to stretch your legs with a walk. The evening will be spent camping at a suitable site along the Spillway.

Day 3: Enjoy an early breakfast while the camp is taken down, and then it's back in the canoe to continue along the river for another full-day excursion. In the evening, set up camp for the last night of this trail.

Day 4: Today's the last day, and you should be finished around 11 am, so that you can be met by car and transferred to the Selinda airstrip. Or, if you're planning on staying on, you'll be taken to either the Selinda or Zarafa camps.

Details

Getting there

The best route from the UK to Botswana is to fly from London to Johannesburg and then catch a connecting flight with Air Botswana. To get to the start of the trip, the Motswiri Airstrip, you'll need to fly in by light aircraft. The tour operator can happily make these arrangements for you.

Price includes

Accommodation, food, canoes and equipment.

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed