

Zambia Walking Safari



Highlights

Discover Zambia's wild side on this eight-day Zambia walking safari. Heading out into the wilderness with no more than four people in your group, you'll be totally immersed in the bush, learning to track animals with all of your senses and hoping to catch sight of the big five.

At the end of the Great Rift Valley in Zambia lies the Luangwa Valley; the spiritual home of the walking safari. And it's not hard to see why. With the magnificent river Luangwa carving out oxbows and pools over time, water loving creatures such as crocodiles and hippos have made the waters their homes. On dry land, with over 9,000 sq km of land to wander through, herds of elephant and buffalo, the endemic Thornicroft giraffe, leopards and lions all roam. In the air and all around, there are over 400 species of birds, making this an absolute must see destination on any wildlife-lovers list!

On this eight-day Zambia walking safari you'll explore the Nsefu area around the Luangwa River in Zambia. The region is pock-marked with lagoons and woodland, making it a great place to spot game. With no more than 4 people on each safari, you can be guaranteed an exclusive and unique experience with your guide, an expert in her field. She will not only help you to spot the wildlife, but will also teach you how to explore the bush with all of your senses, using sight, sound, smell and taste to track. The emphasis of this experience is to get as up close and personal with nature as is feasibly possible, so you'll be camping and most of the exploring will be on foot. But camping does not have to mean roughing it, far from it, at the end of a tiring day, you can sit back with a gin and tonic exchanging stories by a campfire.

Is it for me?

Safaris are most people's ideas of the dream holiday. You'll stay in a mix of normal fixed camps and a 'bush' campsite, so there's a bit of variety. The normal camps are really plush, but the bush one is a little more basic, so don't expect 5-star quality all the time. In terms of getting out and about, this safari is probably a bit more active than your average jeep-bound one, so it'll help if you've got a decent level of fitness.

The group sizes are very small, so you can be entirely flexible when out walking. Take as long as you want watching a waterhole, there is no rush!

Accommodation

The accommodation is in a mix of fixed camps and bush campsites. The first are well-equipped settings that lean towards luxury – in fact, the word 'camps' doesn't really do them justice.

Your first two nights will be at the Nkwali Camp, which is famous for its giraffe and leopard sightings. The camp sleeps up to 12 guests at one time and accommodation is in ensuite chalets, overlooking the river. The dining room overlooks a watering hole, so you can spot game whilst enjoying a mouth-watering meal.

Your third night is at Tena Tena, a tented camp sleeping up to 10 guests. During the day, tents are open sided in the day and each have a veranda, dressing room and open aired bathroom. The camp is more simple than the others, allowing you to connect with the nature around you.

The fourth and fifth nights are spent in bush camps – and you can forget any notions that it'll be like a scout trip. Far from it! Expect a decent-sized walk-in tent, a warm shower and a better-than-average toilet, too.

Prices from

2,854 GBP (8 days) per person

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Your final two nights will be at the Nsefu Camp – the first game camp to be established in Zambia. Sleeping up to 2 guests at any time, accommodation is in ensuite rondavels, each with large windows and a private terrace overlooking the river. You can enjoy your sundowner at the bar, which is situated next to an extinct termite mound, and watch the animals come to the watering hole that it overlooks.

As for food, past guests have enjoyed things like hearty breakfasts of toast and porridge, picnic lunches, and evening meals of steak served with a bottle of red wine.

Itinerary

Day 1: On arrival at Mfuwe International Airport a guide from Robin Pope Safaris will meet you. Then it's a one-hour drive to Nkwali Camp. Depending on your arrival time in the day, you'll enjoy a lunch looking out over the lagoon to the back of Nkwali or if you arrive in the afternoon, you'll have tea and the afternoon and night game drive.

Day 2: At dawn, breakfast is served around the campfire. The morning walk or drive will leave soon after, entering the park by boat from the camp or by road via the main gate. The game in the area is excellent – and includes many family herds of elephants and the endemic species of giraffe, the Thornicroft Giraffe. Stop for a mid-morning break for tea, coffee and cake at a scenic point on a lagoon or the Luangwa River. Return to camp for lunch around midday. After lunch you can cool off in the swimming pool or siesta. Following tea you will go out on an afternoon game drive that continues into the early night, returning to camp about 8pm with dinner generally at about 8.30pm.

Day 3: Up for an early breakfast and then a game drive through the park to the Luangwa River crossing point opposite Tena Tena. This is a three-hour drive. Tena Tena staff will meet and boat the party across the river, and then a 20-minute drive to Tena Tena camp. This remote and small camp lies within the National Park and enjoys a stunning location on a sweeping bend of the Luangwa River. A grove of mahogany trees shade the large custom-made tents. From the thatched dining room and bar, guests can watch the elephants, hippo and antelope on the riverbank. On arrival you will be shown to your tent and then lunch will be served followed by a siesta and then tea before the afternoon and evening game drive.

Day 4: Up at sunrise for breakfast and then the morning walk to the first bush camp. Situated in a secluded area of the Nsefu sector the camp is simple and “bush”. You'll arrive in time for a leisurely lunch followed by a siesta. An afternoon walk will follow tea and then back to camp for sundowners and dinner around the campfire.

Day 5: The day is spent walking in the game-rich area of the Luangwa river habitat, with ebony groves, many lagoons and of course the Luangwa River itself. During your morning walk the camp will be moved to a second site and lunch will be waiting for you on arrival, alternatively you and your guide may decide to have a picnic lunch en route. This is a very flexible day and your guide will discuss options to suit you and any other guests.

Day 6: Following a relaxed breakfast you will walk out of camp and head towards Nsefu Camp, stopping for tea and cake along the way and arriving in time for lunch. The camp is on a sweeping bend of the river. Nsefu was the first game camp in Zambia and dates back to the early 1950s. There are six round rondavals with luxurious ensuite facilities and each room has a clear view of the river through large windows and from the new wooden verandahs. On arrival you will be shown to your rondavel and then lunch will be served followed by a well-deserved siesta before the afternoon and evening game drive.

Day 7: Your last full day can be spent driving or walking through the ebony groves or visiting Kawaza to meet local people and experience life in an African village. If you wish to visit then it is best to mention this when booking your holiday.

Day 8: Depending on your flight time you'll be transferred to Mfuwe Airport -approximately an hour-and-a-half away by car from Nsefu. Where possible, there'll be a final chance for a game drive.

Details

Getting there

British Airways, South African Airways, Kenyan Airways and Ethiopian Airways fly to Lusaka International Airport. From here you can catch an internal flight to Mfuwe Airport.

Price includes

Full board, all game viewing, laundry, bar, National Park fees, transfers to/from Mfuwe Airport, meet & greet at Lusaka Airport.

Price details

Price quoted is valid from July to October.

When is best

This Zambia walking safari is available in the dry season. October is the hottest month. In June / July you may need to wear a fleece at night.

Available

May—Oct

Typical Duration

8 days

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed