

Safari in Botswana



Highlights

African safaris are usually considered to be the most life-changing experiences on any travel wish list and this safari in Botswana is no exception. Explore the Okavango Delta on a luxury houseboat and then swap boutique for basic, camping out close to nature in Chobe National Park and the Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana. Add to that a couple of nights in Zambia to see the awe-inspiring Victoria Falls and you have the perfect formula for a memorable (and affordable) holiday of a lifetime!

Although over two-thirds of the country is covered in desert, the remainder of Botswana is varied in its terrain with savannahs, grasslands and river flood plains providing home to a plethora of life. Botswana also features the Okavango Delta within its borders, the largest delta on Earth and the setting for this one-of-a-kind adventure. What's more, the second half of your trip is spent in Chobe National Park which is home to the largest concentration of African elephants in the world. A curious point of note (and this isn't a joke!) is that a pink elephant was discovered in the region by a tourist this year, one of only three ever recorded. The chances of you spotting one are slim, but surprises abound on this safari and as mother nature is providing the majority of the entertainment, no two trips are ever the same. Pink elephants aside, you can also hope to encounter springbok, wildebeest, zebra, rhinos, antelope, giraffe and hippos by the dozen as well as all the usual big cats you would expect to find on an African safari.

Over the course of two weeks, you will see the varied wildlife in Botswana, staying first on a luxury houseboat on the Okavango Delta Panhandle and then camping in the wilds of the Chobe National Park. The first three days of your safari in Botswana are spent based on a luxury houseboat in the Okavango Delta, with all the rooms looking out onto the water and beyond. The boat has its own tender, so you will be able to head out for boat safaris looking for wildlife, enjoying relaxed picnic lunches on the riverbanks. You will also have the opportunity to visit the Unesco World Heritage Site at Tsodilo Hills which is home to a fascinating collection of San Rock Art paintings. You will then transfer to Zambia, to stay near the impressive Victoria Falls for two days, where you are left to explore under your own steam, but a trip to the Falls is a must. From here, you transfer to Chobe National Park, Botswana's third largest game reserve, home to over 120,000 elephants. From now on, you will be in much simpler accommodation, camping, enjoying dinners by campfire. During the days here, your guides will take you on game drives in the Serondella and Savuti areas of the park. Your final destination of the trip is the Moremi Game Reserve on the east of the Okavango Delta, home to over 500 bird species. The reserve is only accessible by 4 wheel drive and here, again, accommodation will be in tents, with game drives during the day.

Is it for me?

If you have any interest at all in African safaris, this tour will appeal if only for one reason - the price. In a world where you can easily blow multiple tens of thousands embarking on such a safari, this one is remarkably good value for money (especially given the standard of amenities and unrivalled nature of the accommodation.)

People interested in African safari can be approximately divided into two distinct groups - those who want to see it all whilst resting in the lap of luxury, and those who prefer to abandon mod-cons and rough it. This 13-day tour aims to cross the bridge of both, giving you a mixture of luxury and more basic accommodation.

At the time of writing there are no mandatory vaccinations or travel requirements for tourists visiting Botswana for less than a month, but a course of anti-malaria medication is recommended before travelling. As always, we cannot provide medical advice and suggest visiting your GP before your tour.

Prices from
2,044 GBP (13 days) per person

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Accommodation

Your first three nights are spent on the houseboat. "Kabbo," loosely translated, means "to dream" in the language of the indigenous San Bushmen. It's quite a fitting name for a houseboat that takes luxury to the next level. Your floating lodge is the epitome of good design, made specifically for touring and wildlife watching. The eight large en-suite cabins are spread over the bottom deck, with sliding glass doors opening out onto the Botswanan countryside on the lower deck. The dining room, multiple bars and sun decks are located on the upper deck (you won't want to miss having a cocktail while watching the sun set behind the African horizon.)

After three nights of luxury, you will then spend two nights at the Waterfront Hotel in Zambia 4 km up stream from Victoria Falls. Located on a riverbank, the accommodation comprises a 'village' of 30 safari style tents. The tents have all got electric power points and use shared showers and toilets. There is also a swimming pool for guests to use.

The remaining seven nights are spent camping in mobile camp sites. For the duration of your safari you'll stay in few different campsites, all of which are good quality. You probably won't spend a great deal of time at the camps however, since your day will be filled with exhilarating game drives (usually two per day with a siesta in between.)

The dome tents are large (3x3 meters for couples with larger tents available for families) and tall enough to comfortably stand up in. The campsites have flushing toilets, hot bucket showers, mosquito-proofing, high-quality sleeping gear, furniture and separate dining facilities.

Whilst you're staying on the houseboat and camping, everything is included in the price, including exquisite meals cooked fresh by the onboard or camp chefs and all drinks (with wine during dinner and all the fresh tea, coffee and water during the day.) While you're at the the Waterfront Hotel, just breakfast is included.

Itinerary

Day 1: Upon arrival in Maun Airport, you will be met by a representative and transferred by motor-vehicle to //Kabbo Luxury Houseboat on the Okavango Panhandle. This birding mecca forms part of the permanent Okavango Delta. (L & D)

Day 2: Today will be spent exploring the crystal clear channels of the delta by motorboat, with a picnic lunch on the river banks and an afternoon tour by foot. The evening's meal will be held back at //Kabbo. (B, L, D)

Day 3: You'll leave the boat following breakfast and journey by car to Tsodilo Hills. This area is hailed as one of Africa's richest San Painting sites and has rightly been allocated World heritage Status. The day's walking and nature spotting will lead along beautiful hills surrounding the delta. (B, L, D)

Day 4: A short drive to Molembo Border Post and onwards will take you to the town of Livingstone in Zambia. The afternoon can be spent at your leisure exploring or indulging in water sports. You're not far from the famous Victoria Falls on Zambezi river which is a must-see (though please note that entry fees are not covered by the tour price.) Overnight stay will be at Waterfront Hotel. (B, L)

Day 5: Another full day in Livingstone, Zambia for leisure and optional activities with overnight stay once again at the Waterfront Hotel. (B)

Day 6: Today the group will depart Livingstone by road transfer at 8:30am with border crossing back into Botswana and on to Chobe National Park. A guide will assist with drinks purchase in Kasane and then drive you to the campsite near Chobe River. (B, D)

Day 7: This day is dedicated to exploring the Serondella area of Chobe National Park. You'll travel north to the mighty Chobe River which attracts large herds of big game, such as elephant and buffalo. Other species such as hippo, giraffe and kudu also occur in large numbers. (B, L, D)

Day 8: Following an early start you'll travel via the Mababe depression to Savuti. The Savuti channel is well known for its healthy populations of Bull elephants and is an excellent location for exploration by vehicle and for camping. (B, L, D)

Day 9: Today the group will take a leisurely drive to the next campsite in the Khwai area of Moremi Game Reserve. This area's diversity of game is astounding and the reserve has been hailed as one of the best in the world. The afternoon's game drive will finish up at the overnight camp in Moremi. (B, L, D)

Day 10: Another day further exploring Moremi Game Reserve with early morning and afternoon game drives (and probably a siesta in between during the hottest part of the day!) (B, L, D)

Day 11: The day begins with road travel to Xakanaxa which forms part of the permanent Delta. The area boasts some of the best game sightings in Botswana along the waterways and floodplains. Species such as giraffe, Zebra and wildebeest are but a few that occur here. Overnight will be spent camping in the Xakanaxa area. (B, L, D)

Day 12: Starting with a light breakfast in the early hours of the morning, you'll head out by vehicle as the sun rises. This is a fantastic time for game spotting, and for the rest of the day you'll continue on your stunning wildlife adventure. (B, L, D)

Day 13: Transfer back to Maun Airport. (B)

Details

Getting there

International flights service to Maun Airport, the start and end point of the tour.

Price includes

Guide services, accommodation (houseboat, camping and hotel), most meals and beverages, national park entrance fees, transfer to and from Maun airport, guided game tours.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

13 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed