

Travel Plans Botswana

Please note:

It is essential to ensure that your full name as stated in your passport matches that of your international airline ticket. Tickets issued in an incorrect name may result in you being denied boarding and potentially incurring additional costs for the purchase of a new ticket.

You should ensure there is a minimum of 2 to 3 hours between any flight connections from/to international and regional flights at Johannesburg International Airport.

If beginning your safari with an onward charter flight to camp after arrival in Botswana/Zambia/Zimbabwe or Mozambique, your flight should be scheduled to arrive at least 2 – 3 hours before sunset.

When arranging your international and regional flights for the start and end of your safari, please bear in mind that charter aircraft cannot fly during hours of darkness. You will need to arrive on the first day of your safari with sufficient time for the charter aircraft to fly you to camp and return to the point of origin before sunset, as well as allowing for any potential delays with immigration.

If booking a flight scheduled for arrival within 2 – 3 hours of sunset, a pre-night in the town of arrival is recommended as any flight delays will result in you losing your first night on safari and having to lay-over at a local hotel/guesthouse at your own expense.

Similarly, on your day of departure, light aircraft can only fly out of the originating airport and into camp to pick you up after sunrise. If your connecting flight is scheduled for the early morning, you may need to spend a night in town to allow you to connect with your international/regional flight.

CHARTER FLIGHTS

On fly-in safaris, movement between camps is generally by a light aircraft due to remote areas visited and distances travelled. Light aircraft used for inter-camp transfers vary in size from 3,5,7 & 12 seater aircraft. The most common makes of aircraft used are the Cessna C182, C206, C210, C207, Cessna Grand Caravan, Britten Norman Islander and the Gippsland Airvan. Air transfer times vary between twenty minutes to one hour twenty minutes depending on your itinerary. The flight departure and drop off times are scheduled by air charter companies the day prior, to fit in with their flying schedule, therefore we cannot advise travel times in advance. Most transfers are scheduled between activities or to suit your flight arrival/departure times.

In an effort to keep the cost of the air transfers reasonable, the lodges in the region co-operate to share daily schedules wherever possible. The rate you have been quoted is therefore '**A SEAT IN A PLANE RATE**' (unless otherwise specified) rather than a private charter rate, meaning you will share the aircraft with guests flying to other lodges/camps. As a result, your aircraft may stop up to three times at airstrips en route to your destination in order to pick-up and drop-off other travellers.

Charter aircraft cannot fly during hours of darkness. If you arrive too late for the pilot to make a return flight, you will have to overnight at the point of arrival at your own expense before continuing to camp. These flying restrictions are even more important to keep in mind during winter months (May, June, July, August) when days are shorter in Southern Africa. Please read full details under ARRIVING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA for further information on what to keep in mind when booking your international ticket for connections with charter flights.

It is of particular importance that you advise your agent if one of your travelling party is over 100kg as this information needs to be passed onto the light aircraft company whilst making your booking, for safety and logistical reasons. There may be additional charges levied, depending on the policy of the individual charter company.

ROAD TRANSFERS

On mobile safaris, movement between campsites is generally by road in an open safari vehicle. These drives are generally through wildlife areas and taken at a comfortable pace, stopping for refreshments and game viewing as you travel. Depending on the time of year, some of these transfers can be quite interesting with water crossings and some bumpy roads, which are all part of the adventure. In winter these transfers can be chilly in the open vehicles, so sure to pack/dress accordingly. Walk Botswana Safaris does provide blankets and winter ponchos for those chilly morning and evening drives.



In addition your itinerary may include road, boat and mokoro transfers as dictated by the locality of the camp and its seasonal access. Please discuss details of these transfers with your agent.

ON our SAFARI

STARTING YOUR SAFARI

A local Walk Botswana Safaris or local agent representative will meet you on arrival at the airport. Should you encounter any problems with flight delays or lost luggage they will be there to assist you.

TYPICAL DAY ON SAFARI

Even though different days bring different experiences, safaris follow a general pattern, which is consistent throughout your travel.

Typically, a safari day includes two major activities per day – one beginning early in the morning and the second starting in the mid-to-late-afternoon and continuing until dark. If you are staying in a private concession or community area, the afternoon activity may extend into a night drive up until two hours after sunset. We like to change according to what we see on game drives or other activities, if we find or see something very interesting we will stay and experience it. We live by flexibility in the bush, so as to make the most of each opportunity.

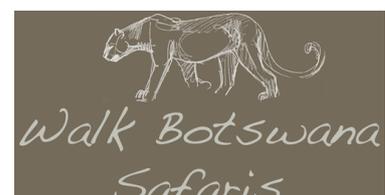
The day starts with a wakeup call at around 5h00 to 5h30 depending on the season of travel, but normally before sunrise, with tea/coffee and a light snack taken in camp before the first activity. The mornings are the best opportunity to follow fresh tracks and see game interactions, as some of the nocturnal animals are still active. The game activity normally lasts 3 – 4 hours depending on what you see.

Morning activities are usually over by late morning (around 11h00) and guests will return to camp for a full breakfast/brunch. The afternoon is spent resting and relaxing in camp, as this is the hottest part of the day and animal activity is minimal.

At around 15h00 pm high tea is taken before departure for the afternoon activity (usually around 15h30). The game activity starts in the late afternoon providing you with another opportunity to see game in the daylight. If you are in a national park, park regulations require your guide to have you back at camp by sunset, however if you are in a private concession or community area, you will often enjoy sundowners and snacks out in the bush before experiencing a night drive en route back to camp. On arrival back at camp you may sit around the campfire and enjoy drinks and snacks while waiting for dinner.

After dinner, drinks may be enjoyed around the fire however, most people find they are tired from the early starts and are in bed by 22h00.

On transfer days where you move between camps the itinerary may be slightly different depending on the daily flight schedules. Your guide will assist in organising your day and letting you know the plans.



ARE OUR SAFARIS PHYSICALLY DEMANDING?

Generally, safaris are not strenuous in terms of heavy physical activity however; there are elements, which can be tiring that you need to be aware of when planning your safari. Long-haul international flights often crossing time zones need to be taken into consideration, as well as your connecting charter flight and/or road transfer to access the camps and lodges.

Once you are in Botswana the light aircraft are very compact and there is a certain amount of stepping and bending to get into the seats. Travellers are also more likely to experience travel sickness in small charter planes than larger commercial flights and this should be kept in mind. If you are prone to motion sickness it is advised that motion sickness medication be taken 30 minutes before embarking on your flight.

Game drives at the camps/lodges are in open 4x4 safari vehicles. Due to the nature of the terrain the roads are often bumpy and can be a little strenuous for passengers. Open vehicles also expose travellers to the elements more than closed vehicles meaning greater exposure to the sun in summer and chilly winds in winter. Generally safari vehicles have a canopy overhead to minimise exposure to the elements.

Southern Africa has varying weather conditions depending on the season:

- In **winter** (May – Sep), expect hot temperatures during the day and very cold nights in accommodation with canvas walls. Hot water bottles, extra blankets and ponchos may be provided to keep you warm in camp and on your game drives to minimise the impact of the cold. In **summer** (Nov – Apr) you will experience hot days and nights with rainstorms in the afternoons. It is imperative to increase your fluid intake considerably, to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion. Symptoms include but are not limited to headaches and nausea. In September & October both the days and nights are incredibly hot and may cause discomfort for sleeping.

Walk Botswana Safaris as the name suggests, is orientated around walking opportunities where possible. Should our guests want to walk of course...! Walking activities of 2 – 3 hours normally take place in the morning and this is generally the most strenuous activity you will encounter with individuals of average fitness experiencing no problems. Some guests find the lack of physical movement on safari frustrating, so discuss your preferences with your agent or direct with Walk Botswana Safaris. For guests who prefer more physically active itineraries please let us know so that we can schedule your itinerary to include some of the following activity options: walking, canoeing and horse riding.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING DIFFERENT SEASONS

SEASONS IN BOTSWANA

Botswana offers an exciting travel experience all year round. However, there are certain seasons when location or activities or may be restricted:

- **June – August** is the most popular time to visit Southern Africa, mostly due to the fact that it ties in with summer holidays in the Northern Hemisphere, boosting visitor numbers. Normally at this time of the year, vegetation has thinned out following the green season, making game more visible. These months bring the coldest temperatures of the year, however they are still comfortable for safari activities with daytime temperatures sitting around 20 – 28 degrees Celsius. Nights and early mornings can drop as low as 0 – 8 degrees Celsius.
- **September – October** is arguably the best time for big game safaris as the temperature rises, further drying out landscapes and surface water, resulting in game concentrating around permanent water sources. October can be extremely hot with maximum daytime temperatures between 35 – 40 degrees Celsius, so may not suit all travellers.
- **November – March** is when lot of animals give birth due to the coming summer rains bringing an abundance of vegetation and surface water. These months are also referred to as 'green season.' Temperatures are still warm during the day, up to 30 – 35 degrees Celsius, but may drop down to 15-18 degrees when it is raining. Rain tends to fall in short, often-spectacular thundershowers, usually in the early afternoon, which may interrupt game viewing. Rainfall patterns vary annually, however and this is still a great time of year to visit with a lot of juvenile animals around, leading to increased predator/prey interaction. Game viewing can be more challenging however as grasses are longer, vegetation is thicker and game more spread out due to the availability of surface water away from permanent water sources. This is a great time of year for bird enthusiasts, with many of our summer migrants present, as well as breeding season for resident bird species.
- **April and May** continue to be a good time to visit the Southern African region, and travel into the parks is easier as roads dry out, making game areas more accessible, however the landscape is still lush and



green. These months are perfect for travelling with clear skies, warm days and cool nights as temperatures begin to drop.

SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of areas in Southern Africa, which are more affected by changing seasons than others, and possible activities may vary dramatically from one season to the next as a result. The below is a general guideline for what areas are most dramatically affected, however as seasons and weather are constantly changing and unpredictable, the below is an indication, but not a guarantee of what can be expected *on average* from one year to the next.

THE OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

The water levels of the Okavango Delta vary by several metres in depth throughout the year and this affects what activities are available at locations in the area. The floodwater, which fills the delta, originates as rain over the Angolan highlands and takes several months to reach Botswana from its source. Very little of the Okavango's water levels result from local rainfall and so the peak flood levels do not coincide with rainy season. Lowest water levels in the delta generally occur between November – April with highest water levels occurring between May to September. Locations offering boating/mokoro activities may not be able to offer these activities during low water for reasons of safety & practicality, whereas during high water, locations offering game drives may have very limited game drive routes to offer. In order to ascertain what locations are best to visit and what activities will be available at the time of year you'll travel, please check with your travel agent or Walk Botswana Safaris.

MAKGADIKGADI SALT PANS, BOTSWANA

Accessibility of the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans is severely limited during green season and for some months after as the pans dry out. Generally, from the first rainfall (normally November/December) the pans become inaccessible for quad biking and sleep-outs. Camps on the pans generally focus more on game drives in the surrounding grasslands during this time to look for migrating zebra and wildebeest. Birds also arrive in the area during green season to take advantage of the water on the pans. From the first rainfall until the pans are dry (generally April/May) no vehicles (including quad bikes) can drive on the pans without getting stuck. For details on how the time of year you travel may impact the activities available to you when visiting the pans, please check with your travel agent.

PRACTICALITIES

ELECTRICITY

Many safari camps and lodges run on generators and a few have 24-hour electricity. Some camps will not have plug points in guest accommodation but will generally have power points in the main camp area for charging batteries. Many camps will have universal plug points, however the most commonly used systems in Zambia, Botswana & Zimbabwe are the UK square pegged plugs, South African round, three-pronged plugs and Euro two-pronged pin plugs. To be on the safe side, you should purchase an international adaptor before travel.



During your mobile safari with Walk Botswana Safaris, there will be opportunities to charge your camera batteries and associated

electronic devices using an inverter system in the vehicle. In addition, we do also have a solar system, which is capable of charging smaller devices should the weather permit.

FAMILY TRAVEL

Botswana, Zambia & Zimbabwe offer wonderful safari experiences for families. Walk Botswana Safaris general minimum age for children varies depending on the safari and the locations included in the itinerary. In camps, the general minimum age for children is 12 years but many camps allow for children between 6 – 12 years with applicable conditions. Often activities may be restricted and will be at the discretion of their guide. Walk Botswana Safaris requires that a private trip be allocated to families with children, and do not facilitate shared safaris including different groups of people when children are included. In camps, conditions such as private vehicles and limited activities may apply depending on the camp or lodge. Some properties will require that children under the age of 18 years share with an adult. More and more lodges are building family rooms but these are

typically limited to one unit per property and early booking is essential. Please see our rate sheet for children rates. In camps, there might be discounts for children but these do not always apply depending on the lodge and the time of year. As a general rule, accommodations in Chobe (Botswana), Victoria Falls (both Zambian & Zimbabwean side) and Mozambique are more flexible regarding minimum ages of children.

FOOD AND DIETARY

You will enjoy a wide variety of meals during your stay with us in Botswana. Majority of Walk Botswana Safaris trips are fully inclusive, unless otherwise stipulated. This includes, early breakfast, brunch, high tea, dinner and snacks throughout the day. The style of food varies depending on the style of safari, i.e. standard or luxury, however, we aim to cater to all flavours of life. Please note that beverages are served on an inclusive basis, however, if premium brands are requested, these will not be included. Your agent and Walk Botswana Safaris reservation operator will be sure to ask you all for your dietary requirements and preferred beverages. This is to make sure not only that you are catered for depending on your likes and dislikes, but also so that our mobile operations do not need to carry huge bulks of drinks that will not be used.

Please note that specialist gluten free/vegan foods are not always available in Botswana and you need to discuss your particular requirements with your travel agent.

Any food allergies need to be notified well in advance to ensure they are properly prepared for.

LANGUAGE

English is the official language of Botswana, Zimbabwe & Zambia and widely spoken with all guides and general staff in camps and lodges having a good command. In the broader population however, not everyone will speak English fluently as many have grown up speaking different tribal languages. In Mozambique, the official language is Portuguese, however most staff in the lodges will speak English. Please note that outside of the hotel environment there is much less spoken English in Mozambique than in other Southern African countries.

MONEY

Cash in US Dollars is generally a universally accepted currency (USD is also the official currency in Zimbabwe). Please note that in most African countries, only notes from 2006 onwards are accepted. Because of the risk of forgeries, people are sometimes suspicious of larger denomination notes so USD\$100 and even USD\$50 may sometimes be rejected in shops and it is advisable to carry lower denominations.

VISA is the most widely accepted credit card with facilities for MasterCard being more limited. Amex and Diners are NOT widely accepted and therefore not recommended.

The official currency of Botswana is Botswana Pula (BWP) divided into 100 thebe. BWP can be changed at a good rate in Victoria Falls due to Botswana's proximity. Once you leave these areas, exchange rates will not be in your favour.

Most towns in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique have ATMs where you can draw cash using your Visa or MasterCard with a 4 digit PIN however they are not always reliable so a back up of hard currency is recommended.

You can pay with USD or EURO notes (coins not accepted) in many camps, lodges and hotels. Please note however that they will often use an increased exchange rate in order to accept foreign currency. Most camps and lodges also accept credit cards (Visa and MasterCard only). Please note that many operations apply a 5% surcharge (variable) for credit card transactions. Please discuss any concerns with your travel agent.

PHOTOGRAPHY

You may not take photographs or use video equipment near military and government institutions/borders/airports. Always ask for permission before taking photographs of people.

If you are travelling with a significant amount of photographic equipment (large lenses, tripods etc.) you may need to pay for an additional seat on any charter flights to accommodate the equipment. Please check with your travel agent.

SHOPPING

They are many places that you can buy souvenirs like crafts, including baskets, beadwork, masks and woodcarvings.



For curios and crafts the best value shopping is in the Victoria Falls area and bargaining is accepted.

There are a good variety of shops in towns, which sell local crafts and many camps and lodges also have small curio shops for purchasing souvenirs.

Due to your luggage restriction on safari, we encourage shopping at the end of the trip, either in Victoria Falls, Livingstone or Maun dependant on your itinerary.

TIPPING

While tipping is not a requirement, it is a generally accepted form of “thanks” throughout the world and highly appreciated by all levels of staff.

Tipping should reflect the level of service you have received throughout your trip and if you are dissatisfied with the level of service, it is not compulsory. On the other hand, if you have received exemplary service from your guide, mekoro poler or general camp staff, you may wish to give more than usual.

Tips in USD or Euro are generally accepted in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique

- As an idea of who and what you may want to tip, we have listed the following guidelines:
 - Guides in the camps – USD10.00 – USD15.00 per day, per guest
 - Mokoro polers – USD10.00 per poler
 - General staff (boat drivers, bar staff, housekeeping) – USD5.00 – USD10.00 per day which is put into a communal tip box and shared between staff

VISAS & TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You should keep the following documents with you during travel:

- Airline Tickets and/or any e-ticket references for your commercial flights.
- A certified colour photocopy of your passport and other important documents for use in case of lost or stolen originals (kept separately from the originals).
- Valid passport – with at least 6 months validity and six empty pages.

Citizens of certain countries are required to obtain visas well in advance of travel for Botswana, Zambia & Zimbabwe. Please note that certain visas can take up to 3 months to be processed so please consider this when booking and note that it is your responsibility to check before final confirmation.

The below is a guideline only. For up-to-date visa requirements please check with your local embassy or consulate.

VACCINATIONS

If guests have visited or have been in transit in Zambia (this includes Livingstone and surrounds), a yellow fever vaccination certificate will be required on entering or transiting through South Africa and/or Mozambique. The certificate may be requested by customs and immigration officials. There are a number of other countries that require a yellow fever vaccination but in the Southern African region, Zambia is the only one. Please be sure to check other countries you are traveling to.

PACKING

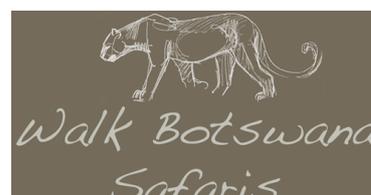
LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

For safety reasons light aircraft transfers have a restriction of 15kg luggage plus 5kg of hand luggage (20kgs total) per person, packed in **SOFT** bags. (In Zambia this limit is decreased to 15kg **TOTAL** per person)

Please note that if your luggage is overweight or in the incorrect bag type – you will be asked to re-pack and/or you may have to book additional seats or a private charter at extra cost to accommodate your luggage.

The maximum size per bag is 65cm wide / long and 30cm high, this is the size of the pod of a Cessna 206, which is the most commonly used aircraft for inter camp transfers.

Please do not bring hard suitcases or suitcases with wheels as they will not fit on a aircraft.



light

Excess luggage may be stored in Maun, providing clients are returning through Maun Airport to pick their bags up again before onward travel. For clients combining a safari with another trip extension, luggage can also be stored in a secure luggage storing facility at Johannesburg OR Tambo International Airport.

CLOTHING

As most game viewing activities are taken in open safari vehicles or boats, it is important that you wear appropriate clothing to suit. Generally layers of clothing are recommended so that you can take off or add on as the day warms up/cool down.

- Warm jacket/fleece/jumper – windproof in winter months, waterproof in summer months.
- It is recommended that you wear a hat/cap throughout all seasons, and gloves/scarf in winter months (May – Sept)
- Swimming costume
- Natural clothing (i.e. no bright colours and no white), t-shirts, shorts, a pair of light-weight long trousers and light-weight long-sleeve shirt (long sleeves are extremely useful for sun protection during the day and mosquito protection during evenings)
- Camouflage printed clothing is okay for the bush but please do not wear in towns or when crossing borders (particularly in Zimbabwe)
- Comfortable walking shoes and flip flops/sandals

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Waterproof/zip lock bags for storing personal items and memory cards to keep dust free and/or dry

In most camps torches will be provided, but we urge our clients to bring their own head lamps, as these are very useful, especially on mobile safaris

Camera equipment, binoculars, batteries, spare camera batteries and spare memory cards for digital cameras are essential as the opportunity to download photos is limited

Reading materials – Some camps have a library but these are limited and so it is useful to bring your own books/novels for siesta hours.

TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS

HEALTH & MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS

While the typical safari is not physically demanding, most safaris involve prolonged exposure to the elements. Bottled water in Southern Africa often does not contain all the minerals required to stay sufficiently hydrated and we recommend travellers consume a combination of soft drinks, juices and water to avoid any issues, especially as extreme temperatures may be experienced out in the bush.

It is essential that you carry all prescribed medication in your hand luggage.

Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique are considered malaria areas. Please visit your local Travel Clinic and take reasonable pre-cautions.

Precautionary measures to prevent contact with mosquitoes include: sleeping under a mosquito net, making use of mosquito – repelling lotion and wearing long-sleeved clothing when outside at night.

Due to the remote location of most locations, electricity is not readily available during the day or night. Therefore, if you have a medical condition (i.e. sleep apnoea) which requires 24-hour electricity, please notify your travel agent in advance so that necessary arrangements can be made and if necessary, your itinerary altered to suit.

If you are travelling to Zambia and are returning or transiting via South Africa, you will be required to show a yellow fever vaccination certificate.

If you suffer from motion sickness it may be an idea to take necessary precautions before travelling, particularly for days where you will be travelling by light aircraft.

Please note: A first aid kit is always available in camps. However, we recommend you have the following available for personal use: aspirin, laxative, Imodium, anti-



histamine pills and ointment, band aids, electrolyte sachets and wet wipes.

For up to date information, visit the WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION website www.who.int

MEDICAL EVACUATION

All clients for our safaris must have their own medical evacuation insurance. We would like to highlight that there are certain inherent risks associated with a safari. As we are your first point of contact on the ground, it is essential that we have your personal medical insurance and evacuation details on hand in the event of an emergency. It would be advisable to give your local booking agent all relevant medical and insurance details (name of insurance company, insurance number, contact details/phone number of the insurance company).

Please understand that it is a long way from the camps to any commercial medical facility and camps are not able to evacuate clients after dark by charter aircraft. Only in Northern Botswana is there a possibility of evacuation during hours of darkness by helicopter through Okavango Air Rescue, however you must be a patron and evacuation is dependent on the extent of the emergency and favourable weather conditions.

In the event of a medical emergency, clients are flown to the nearest medical facility to be stabilised pending a transfer to South Africa for further medical treatment.

Medical facilities in Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe & Mozambique are very limited and therefore there is always a risk involved.

If clients require special medication, they must ensure that they have this with them and also keep a back-up supply if the medication is necessary for survival.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Please be sure to always listen to your guide regarding safety precautions, how to behave around wildlife and what to not do while in the bush.

If you are traveling between camps, you will meet different guides in each camp, please listen to them attentively on safety precautions particular to each camp and follow their instructions.

There is an inherent risk associated with going on safari. All clients will be required to sign indemnities at the various camps and lodges and will also be required to abide by the operator's code of conduct in order to ensure their safety.

It is advisable to take certain standard security precautions, when visiting Southern Africa as a whole:

- a) Please do not leave your luggage unattended at airports and at borders.
- b) All valuables and medication must go into your hand luggage.
- c) Please do not have your valuables on display when visiting the busy area, towns or markets, or any other public areas.
- d) Many camps and lodges have safes in the rooms, where clients can lock up their personal valuables.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is essential for all travellers and must be purchased in addition to your safari itinerary. Walk Botswana Safaris together with most operations, camps and lodges in Botswana have strict cancellation charges and travel insurance is therefore recommended to recoup expenses in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Due to local regulations and practicalities (bush airstrips do not have landing lights) international flight changes and delays which cause you to arrive during hours of darkness will mean you cannot continue to camp the same day. Any expenses arising as a result can only be compensated for by your travel insurance company and it is therefore vital that you choose the right level of cover.

Cover for cancellation and curtailment, medical insurance lost or damaged baggage and emergency evacuation is highly recommended for all our safaris.

Okavango Air Rescue patronage (for evacuation to medical treatment by helicopter) is also available for Northern Botswana – please refer to <http://www.okavangorescue.com>. Walk Botswana Safari is an official patron of Okavango Air Rescue and automatically signs up all their guests for the cover. Please be sure to check if you are traveling to other camps if you have to sign yourself up. Okavango Air Rescue subscription is valid for 12 months.

Please contact us if you require further information

