

COWABUNGA FLY-CAMP
(Correspondence for Brian only)

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COWABUNGA MAIN CAM
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Safaris since 1974.

Attention!

The following itinerary is meant to help your safari planning. Since 1974, we at Cowabunga Safaris have done many, many kinds and variations of safaris to Botswana - including horseback safaris.

This is only one kind of safari. Do you want something more upscale? Do you want something more rustic and participatory? If you have a different safari in mind, wish to stay longer, or want to travel to other parts of the continent, tell us. We can make it happen.

BOTSWANA:

"The Bush, The Desert, The Delta, The River"

-- SAFARI OVERVIEW --

Length: 15 days from the USA; 12 days in Africa

Accommodations: 3 nights in upscale lodges; 9 nights in luxury tented camps. All accommodations have private, hot-water showers and en suite toilets. One lodge even has a filtered swimming pool (yes, out in the middle of Africa). Most important, all the places Cowabunga stays are in breathtaking surroundings in or near world-renowned wildlife areas. Pictures of accommodations are available on request.

Luxury Tented Camps: An additional explanation... Our luxury tented camps are not the same as the camps you might find on a weekend camping trip in the USA. The tents are large - they are big enough to walk into and stand in -- with comfortable twin beds complete with linen and duvets. All tents are bug-proof with mesh windows, have nightstands next to the beds, and, as has been mentioned, possess en suite bathroom facilities.

- Fitness Level:** Almost any level of fitness can be accommodated on this safari due to the wide variety of activities available: optional treks and walks (at a pace set by the individual), game-drives (during the day *and* at night, in open vehicles with no sides and no top), canoeing in the Okavango Delta, even whitewater rafting the Zambezi River!
- Group size:** Cowabunga believes in keeping groups small, to better share Africa. Unless otherwise stated, this type of safari will have no more than 10 Safarists. A custom-designed itinerary might have fewer still.
- Food:** You should NOT go on this type of safari to lose weight! All meals cater to western preferences, are first-class, and excellently prepared. Chefs make exquisite cuisine using a wide array of meats, pastas, and fresh vegetables and fruits grown in the area. Desserts are delectable and overwhelming - so much so, we encourage all Safarists to practice the Cowabunga mantra: to "Eat dessert first, because life is so uncertain.")
- Water:** Treated drinking water is provided everywhere we stay. Bottled water is available for purchase.
- Stay Longer:** Experiencing all Africa has to offer is a once-in-a-lifetime privilege for most. Accordingly, some Safarists like to stay longer. We at Cowabunga Safaris understand! If, after this safari, you wish to go horseback riding in Zimbabwe, elephantback riding, to travel to Cape Town, or to continue on to other parts of the continent, we can help. In fact, given our love of the continent, you can bet we'll beg to join you!
- Detailed Briefings:** Cowabunga provides in-depth written briefings for all Safarists after they sign-on for any safari. Furthermore, when possible, Cowabunga conducts face-to-face briefings approximately three months before departure. For those who can't make the face-to-face briefings, a detailed transcript of questions and answers is sent to them. Gary, Brian and Nancy always stand ready to brief Safarists via fax, phone, e-mail, or in-person.

-- THE ADVENTURE --

Day 1 En route

We depart Miami International Airport this evening for our flight to Johannesburg via Cape Town. (D)

Day 2 Johannesburg

Afternoon arrival in Johannesburg. After clearing customs and immigration we are transferred to the Holiday Inn at Johannesburg International Airport for overnight. (B/L)/D

THE BUSH - MASHATU GAME RESERVE

Days 3-5 Mashatu Tent Camp

Located between the Limpopo and Shashe Rivers, the Reserve in southern Botswana borders Zimbabwe on the north and South Africa on the south. The country around Mashatu is extremely picturesque, with hills, rocky outcrops and lush vegetation along the rivers. It is southern Africa's largest private game reserve (90,000 acres), and home to the world's largest privately conserved elephant population. The latter are known as the 'relic herds of Shashe', remnants of the once-great pachyderm populations of the Limpopo Valley. The animals, mercilessly slaughtered for their ivory, became locally extinct and remained so for about 60 years until, in the late 1940's, a few refugee groups began filtering back to the sanctuary of the Tuli enclave. Today Mashatu supports about 700 elephant.

The Reserve is a magnificent wilderness of grassland, rocky ridge and narrow flood plain that sustains a great deal of wildlife besides the elephant. Here we'll find giraffe and zebra, eland, impala, steenbok and, in the more densely vegetated parts, lion leopard, spotted hyena, an occasional cheetah, kudu, bushbuck, waterbuck, eland, warthog, baboon and a host of smaller, mainly nocturnal creatures. Some 375 bird species have been identified in the area.

Our days will consist of game drives in radio-linked 4WD vehicles. The Tswana rangers and trackers are superb guides, profoundly wise in the ways of the wild and more than willing to share their knowledge with us. After Sundowners in the bush, the experience continues with a night drive on return to camp in search of nocturnal animals.

Our tent camp is located in the remote northern section of the Reserve. The area is not open to casual visitors which means we won't see many other vehicles, if any. The tent camp is adjacent to a lighted waterhole. Dinner is served in an intimate boma around a campfire while breakfast and lunch are on an open sided thatched deck. The tents are insect-proofed with twin beds and each has an en suite shower and toilet. Solar power provides hot water. A plunge pool is available.

Ask Gary about the time a zebra ran through one of the tents (unoccupied) while being chased by a lion! B/L/D

THE DESERT - MAKGADIKGADI PANS

Days 6-8 Jack's Camp

We fly from Mashatu to Jack's Camp, located in one of the most remote areas found anywhere -- the famed Kalahari Desert. Once one of the world's largest prehistoric lakes, the Makgadikgadi Pans are salt plains covered with grasslands and isolated 'land islands' of vegetation, baobabs and vegetable ivory palm trees. Scattered Stone Age tools have been found here. Today there is very little human habitation which gives you a feeling of isolation from the rest of the world. Jack Bousfield discovered the site while on a trapping expedition in the 1960's. His son Ralph owns and manages the camp now.

Both day and night games drives are offered as well as walks with a Bushman Guide who points out and explains various signs and tracks in the sand and shares Bushmen myths with us. One of the 'must sees' is the centuries old baobab about 10 km from the camp. This huge tree has the inscription of such early explorers as Chapman, Thomas Baines, and David Livingstone engraved in the bark over 100 years ago. This also was the 'mail tree' where all post was left in a natural hole within the tree for various explorers to collect when they passed by the area.

One of the highlights of Jack's Camp is travel by 'quad bike'. These are 250 cc Yamaha motor bikes with 4 large wheels which displace the weight of two passengers, offering the least amount of disturbance to the ecology when driving out over the pan. Our Zimbabwe Guide Garth Thompson wrote, "It certainly is a unique experience to travel over a white and totally flat area, devoid of any life, stones or vegetation. The curvature of the earth is quite visible on the totally featureless horizon". The latter is one of the most frequently heard exclamations about the Pans how the land curves over the horizon.

Our large tents have en suite bathrooms (flush toilets and bucket showers). The luxury tents are fashioned after the classic 1940's style with Persian carpets, interesting chairs and cotton sheets. Each tent has a verandah with a view of rugged wilderness outside. The food is excellent and dinner is served on damask tablecloths in the middle of the desert! B/L/D

THE DELTA - OKAVANGO DELTA

Days 9-11 Jedibe Camp

The African country of Botswana has one of the world's great wetlands and one of the few unexploited water surfaces on earth. The Okavango River enters Botswana in the north. As it flows in a southerly direction it loses its vigor and takes on a new beauty, its lazy waters gradually fanning out to form the Okavango Delta before it reaches the vast flatness of the deep Kalahari sand. The countryside becomes an inland delta with islands, streams and shallows. When the rains begin the great herds migrate to the dry savanna, wandering among small rainwater pans.

The Okavango Delta is a 7,000 square mile inland floodplain of crystal-clear water that languidly covers firm, white sand. It is the pearl of Africa. Into this rich basin flow the waters of the mighty Okavango River, only to be lost in a myriad of palm-fringed islands, channels and backwaters. Africa's herds are here in abundance, including kudu, lechwe, sitatunga, tsessebe, sable, roan, hippo and impala. Even the smaller animals can be seen -- such as springhare and leopard tortoise. The bird life is prolific, with Pel's fishing owl and the magnificent fish eagle being fairly easy to spot. It truly is a "Sea of Land -- Land of Water".

We fly to an airstrip near Jedibe where we transfer on a boat to Jedibe Camp which is located on an island in the Delta. (There are no motor vehicles here.) The Camp is situated in the permanent waters of the Delta and activities include excursions in mekoro (dugouts) and motorboats, swimming, fishing for tiger fish or bream, walking on the islands and bird watching.

There are accommodations for 16 people in large Meru tents, each with private reed and thatch bathroom (with flush toilet, shower, washbasin and hot and cold water) although they are not en suite. A lounge, bar and dining room complex is situated adjacent to the jetty which is shaded by a magnificent waterberry tree. B/L/D

THE RIVER -- ZAMBEZI

Days 12 & 13 Tongabezi Lodge

Our charter flight takes us from the Okavango Delta to the international airport in Livingstone, Zambia, where we go through customs. We are met by staff from Tongabezi Lodge and travel overland to the Lodge, which is 25 Km. from Livingstone. We spend two nights here. The Lodge is in a beautiful setting on the banks of the Zambezi River. It has four themed chalets and five luxury tents under thatch. All have en suite bathrooms. The swimming pool is hewn out of rock and overlooks the Zambezi River. Be sure and pack your suit. Tongabezi is small, quiet, secluded, luxurious and the ratio of staff to pampered guests is four to one.

On our full day at Tongabezi we journey to the town of Livingstone to view Victoria Falls from the Zambia side. There are paths you can walk along close to the edge of the Falls and for the more energetic a walk down to the famous Boiling Pot can also be included. A short wander around some curio markets and local craft shops is a must.

THE RIVER -- VICTORIA FALLS

Aptly known as Mosi-aotunya (the smoke that thunders), Victoria Falls is the greatest waterfall in the world. At the height of the rainy season, 140 million gallons of water a minute cascade over the falls! There is so much water that it forms a mist rising skyward from the bottom of the falls. From a distance the mist looks like smoke, hence the name.

The first glimpse of the falls is breathtaking whether viewed from Zambia or Zimbabwe. Walking along the edge of the cataract across from the falls is an awe inspiring experience. The scene is totally unspoiled and just as it was when Dr. Livingstone saw it for the first time 17 November 1855. The mist from the falls creates a unique small rain forest habitat with ferns and "strangle" vines. Often vervet monkeys and occasionally a shy bushbuck are seen hiding in the undergrowth. There truly is a special magic you feel as you look across the chasm at the Falls and the mist touches your skin and spirit. It's incredible. Farewell dinner tonight at Tongabezi. B/L/D

Day 14 En route

This morning we are transferred via the Peace Bridge to the town of Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwe side. We should have time for last minute shopping before we proceed to the Victoria Falls International Airport for our flight to Johannesburg. In Joburg we connect with our South Africa Airways flight to JFK International Airport in New York. B(D)

Day 15

Morning arrival in New York City for connection to homebound flights. (B)



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