

COWABUNGA FLY-CAMP
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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 Zambia.

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.

ZAMBIA: "LUANGWA VALLEY TO VICTORIA FALLS"

Bush Walks, Canoeing and Boating the Zambezi, Africa "Under Canvas", Night- and Day-time Game Drives...

Length: 14 days from the USA; 11 days in Africa

Accommodations: 1 night in a hotel; 3 nights in safari lodges; 7 nights in luxury tented camps. All accommodations have private, hot-water showers and en suite toilets. 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 the Zambezi River (you may help paddle, or sit back and let one of the guides do so), even whitewater rafting below Victoria Falls!

Group size: Cowabunga keeps 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, Drinks,

Water & Laundry: If you are going on safari to lose weight, this one is not for you! For all meals noted in this itinerary, a chef produces freshly-cooked, exquisite meals. Other than the two nights we are at Johannesburg and Vic Falls, all drinks -- from cold sodas, to cold beer, to wine and spirits -- are complimentary. Fresh filtered water -- as much as you want to consume -- is likewise provided. In the tented camps in the Luangwa Valley and Lower Zambezi, tents are serviced, beds are made, and laundry is done at no extra charge while you are out exploring. In sum, dedicated long-time friends of Cowabunga (some of whom have known us for nearly all of the three decades we've been conducting safaris) look after us royally. All you have to do is enjoy the natural African surroundings and abundant wildlife!

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 horseback ride in Botswana or Zimbabwe, go to Cape Town, South Africa, 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 at a moment's notice via fax, phone, e-mail or in-person.

-- THE ADVENTURE --

THE EPITOME OF MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE

African rivers are the epitome of mystery and adventure. Even their names stir the imagination: The Nile - subject of one of the most intensive rivalries in the history of early African exploration; The Congo - made famous by Joseph Conrad in his book *Heart of Darkness*; The Niger - which lays claim to the fabled city of Timbuktu, on the edge of the Sahara Desert; The Limpopo - Kipling's great grey-green, greasy river "all set with fever trees." And then there is the mighty Zambezi - river of the famed African explorer David Livingston.

THE MIGHT ZAMBEZI

"Mighty" is an appropriate description for the Zambezi. It arises in the highlands of eastern Angola, flows through western Zambia, then serves as Zambia's southern border. In its upper reaches Victoria Falls forms the largest curtain of falling water in the world. The lower Zambezi, downstream, or east, of Lake Kariba, is lined with some of the most beautiful areas of scenery and wildlife in Africa: over 300 bird species, lion, leopard, vast herds of elephant and buffalo, prolific hippo, gigantic baobab trees, and magnificent stands of acacia.

We spend the entire latter half of our "Luangwa Valley to Victoria Falls" Safari along the Zambezi, at Chiawa Camp in Lower Zambezi National Park, and at Victoria Falls.

THE LIFE-FILLED LUANGWA

Under-discovered and only occasionally romanticized in literature, the Luangwa has a magnetic allure. Norman Carr called its valley "The Valley of Life." Thriving beside, or in, the river are over 40 species of large mammals and some 400 species of birds. The immense Luangwa Valley National Park (5,611 square miles), through which the Luangwa flows, encompasses vast tracks of wilderness and is bordered on the west by the spectacular Muchinga Escarpment, the southern continuation of the Great Rift Valley.

We spend six nights along the Luangwa, staying in chalets and bush camps established by the legendary ecologist Norman Carr, the man who introduced walking Safaris to Zambia and author of such books as *Kakuli* and *Return to the Wild*. The Luangwa Valley is arguably *the* best place in all of Africa to see leopard, the most elusive large predator on the continent.

THE EBB AND FLOW OF AFRICA

Like the animals, mystery and adventure thrive on and around the Zambezi and Luangwa Rivers. On our Safari we have the option of doing bush-walks (at a pace set by the individual), conducting game-drives (during the day *and* at night, in "open" vehicles with no sides and no top), canoeing on the Zambezi (keeping an eye out for hippo and crocodile), or watching elephant, cape buffalo, and other animals pass through our camps. Furthermore, for the bulk of it we are in small, remote, yet very comfortable tented camps. All makes for a "full-sensory" experience - one which enables the ebb and flow of unspoiled Africa to wash over us.

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WALKING SAFARIS

Walking safaris are not strenuous and cater to individual abilities and comfort-levels. They usually take several hours and are led by a fully qualified naturalist Guide and an armed Game Scout from the National Parks. The Guides are individually trained in the flora, fauna and bushlore of the Luangwa Valley. The terrain is flat but irregular.

The remoteness of the camps, living and walking in the bush safely, the open-air dining on excellent cuisine -- all make for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The only sounds are what you make or from the animals whose home this is. At times the sky seems enormous and we seem microscopic. Yet each person is so attuned to nature. It's almost a spiritual feeling. You feel so fortunate to be where you are, at that time, on that day.

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KAKULI & NSOLO BUSH CAMPS

Reminiscent of how Teddy Roosevelt, Robert Ruark, Ernest Hemingway and the like went on Safari, during our time in the Luangwa Valley we will likewise be in small yet comfortable bush camps hosting no more than eight guests.

In the vernacular *kakuli* means a solitary Cape Buffalo bull, or a small group who live on their own. The word can also mean "the leader," according to Norman Carr. Each tent in Kakuli Bush Camp is a full-size, stand-up sleeping tent featuring large interiors and en suite hot-water showers, washbasins, and flush toilets. Each overlooks a grazing lawn adjacent to the Luangwa River. The dining area and bar are under a large thatch structure with "Out of Africa" style furniture.

Nsolo Bush Camp's four spacious chalets are made of grass and bamboo on elevated platforms, and also possess en suite hot-water showers, hand basins, and flush toilets. Each chalet has its own private view of the surrounding bush. There is a thatched chitenge with a bar and dining area, offering a peaceful refuge where guests can study the camp's collection of books and old photo albums. A nearby hide overlooks a waterhole where game viewing is most rewarding.

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Day 1 EN ROUTE

Our Safari begins. We depart Atlanta on our South African Airlines trans-Atlantic flight to Johannesburg. (D)

Day 2 JOHANNESBURG

We have an afternoon arrival in Johannesburg where we are met and transferred to our hotel. Depending on the time of our arrival, Brian can arrange a tour of Soweto, the

famous township from where anti-apartheid activists like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu carried out their struggle. Dinner tonight, our first night in Africa, is on our own, but Brian can take us to any number of nearby restaurants. (B)

Day 3 KAPANI LODGE

This morning we return to the Jo'burg Airport for our South African Airways flight to Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. After passing through Customs & Immigration, we board our flight for Mfuwe, the airport serving the South Luangwa Valley. Our guides from Kapani Lodge meet us and drive us past cultivated fields and villages to the Lodge. B/L/D

Day 4 LUANGWA VALLEY

Today's (and tonight's) activities will focus around the movements of animals and knowledge the Guides have of where to find them. There are one or more packs of wild dog in the Park, and because their movements are closely monitored, there is a good chance we will see them. Other uncommon species found here are Thornicroft's giraffe, puku antelope, Cookson's wildebeest, and kudu. Hippo and crocodile abound in the rivers. Lion, hyena, buffalo, waterbuck, impala, bushbuck, zebra, warthog, baboon and vervet monkeys are plentiful. B/L/D

Days 5-8 KAKULI & NSOLO BUSH CAMPS

For the next four nights we split into two groups and are off to our Bush Camps, switching camps after two nights. Imagine the bush lore we will learn and the adventures we will have to share with each other (and later the folks back home!). Each bush camp has its own cook and staff to take care of your needs. This is not like Scout camp: you don't have to set up tents and then strike them, you don't cook or plan meals. You're there to live outside all day and enjoy nature with a campfire each night. B/L/D

Day 9 CHIAWA CAMP

This morning we meet back at Kapani Lodge and try to keep each other honest with our tales of the bush. After a snack we depart for Mfuwe Airport and board our charter flight for Chiawa Camp. We land at Jeki air strip, in Lower Zambezi National Park, where we are met have a game drive on the way to the Camp (about an hour). This evening we'll have a sundowner cruise on the Zambezi River. B/L/D

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RAMBLINGS FROM A ZAMBIAN BUSH WALK

by Brian Hesse

The lion kill -- as we walked through the Zambian bush, my mind fleetingly returned to the kill. Only last night, in close quarters (albeit in a vehicle, but an "open" one with no sides and no top), I had observed a pride feeding on an impala. The scene had been intense: the bearing of canines, the swatting of paws, ferocious growls -- all pierced what had previously been a peaceful evening. Now, however, I was on foot, in the bush, and on the lions' turf.

Still I did not feel threatened. While some comfort arose from the fact that I and the three others on the bush walk were being led by my guide-friend Grant, who, as a precaution, was armed, an accurate description is that I felt liberated. Yes, liberated. Here I was, a humble speck in the vast expanses of the lower Zambezi with nothing between me and the complexities of nature. There were no walls or windows to confine my quiet revelry and boundless curiosity. I was wonderfully, wondrously alive. And the lions? Well, in any other context my view might sound overly nonchalant, but I inherently knew they were *not* a menace. Indeed, I understood and accepted they were necessary variables in the natural equation.

But any thoughts regarding lions were temporarily put on hold as we emerged into a small clearing. In front of us was a winterthorn acacia tree lying in a violent heap on its side. The bull elephant (there was only one set of tracks, indicating that it was probably a lone male) must have been intent on getting every last "apple-ring". I couldn't blame him. As the dry season progressed, forage was getting scarce. Many species of trees were losing their leaves and much of the grass was unappetizingly dry. The winterthorns, however, were just beginning to produce piles of delectable, protein-rich pods. I walked closer, to better inspect the scene.

Chunks of soil clung to exposed roots. I alternately touched lighter and darker dirt. The lighter fell away as dust, the darker in moist chunks. I looked to the ground, to where the tree had been anchored. In the slight depression of up-turned soil were genet tracks. The spotted cat-like predator must have been looking for insects, or possibly birds' eggs, lizards, or frogs, out of reach when the tree had been upright. Next to one track was a leaf covered with a delicate layer of mud. It was the work of a species of termite, one which covers its food in order to protect itself from light, thereby permitting it to feed during the day. And next to the mud-covered leaf was more spoor from the lone bull. In the dung I could see numerous winterthorn seeds. The piles would act as a natural compost for future winterthorns, and the bull's travels would distribute seeds over a wide area.

Looking up from the felled winterthorn, I could see the wide, slow-moving Zambezi through a stand of nearby trees. Like the river's waters, my thoughts about last night's kill and the winterthorn's recent demise gently swirled and blended. In making the kill, the lions helped surviving browsers and grazers: one less competitor for a finite amount of food meant more for others. In pushing down the tree, the elephant enabled the emergence of more forage: freed of smothering shade, seeds could now bask and grow in ample sunlight. In a natural progression, increased forage would result in more foragers. And more foragers would result in healthier predators. Yet there would come a day when prey numbers would drop, most likely because of declining food sources, and a corresponding decline in predators would occur. But then new grasses, bushes, and trees would emerge and numbers would increase once again...

At that moment I realized the Zambian bush was neither overly brutal nor overly benevolent. It was simply in balance. I could *feel* -- with every faculty, to my very core -- its timeless cycle.

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LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK

The Park covers an enormous area between the Zambezi River and the Zambia escarpment, across the river from Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe. Until recent years it has remained relatively undeveloped, mainly because of the difficulty of overland transport in an area with few roads. In order to preserve the natural surroundings, no permanent structures were allowed, which meant that Chiawa Camp had to be dismantled and rebuilt each year. However this is no longer required

enabling Chiawa to build permanent structures while still preserving the traditional safari camp atmosphere without adverse impact on the environment.

Lower Zambezi National Park is a totally magnificent in its wildness, with mopane forests and gigantic baobabs interspersed with acacias. The Zambezi River provides water year-round, which in turn supports large herds of elephant and buffalo, lion, waterbuck, hippo, and crocodile. Birdlife is incredible with specialties being trumpeter hornbills, Meyers' parrot, carmine bee eaters, and Lilian's lovebird.

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Days 10-11 CHIAWA CAMP

Chiawa Camp is located in a grove of mahogany and acacia trees in Lower Zambezi National Park. The tents are set on elevated timber decks providing panoramic views of the Zambezi River. All tents have en suite facilities, insect screens and solar powered lighting. There is a thatched lounge with an upstairs observation deck, and the bar and dining areas look out on the Zambezi River. Animals regularly pass through the lodge grounds - in fact, on a recent Safari Brian had to sit quietly in the bar, sipping a cool drink, as a bull elephant munched on the roof thatching!

Activities during our two full days here include game drives in open 4-WD vehicles, bush walks with an armed guide, night game drives with a spotlight, canoeing, river cruises, and fishing. B/L/D

Day 12 VICTORIA FALLS

Today we return to Jeki air strip for our charter flight to Victoria Falls Airport. After clearing Customs and Immigration, we then proceed to the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge. Our rooms are spacious, have en suite facilities, and overlook a waterhole in Zambezi National Park. Frequent shuttles run into Vic Falls town and to the Falls. You might want to take a plastic bag to protect your camera at the Falls, in case there is spray. A stroll around Vic Falls town takes an hour or so, not counting time spent shopping. The shops and market carry everything from inexpensive items to beautiful jewelry and artwork. It's a good place to buy T shirts, carvings, and gifts. Lunch today is on our own, and if Brian can arrange it, tonight we will have a spectacular, fiery sunset to enjoy from our private balconies. B/D

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VICTORIA FALLS

Aptly known as *Mosi-aotunya* ("The Smoke That Thunders"), Victoria Falls is the greatest curtain of water 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.

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Day 13 EN ROUTE

We leave Zimbabwe and fly on South Africa Airways to Johannesburg International Airport where we change to our SAA flight through Cape Town to the USA. B(L/D)

Day 14 HOME

A morning arrival in the USA, where we connect on to our flights home. (B)



Safaris since 1974.