

## General Travel Information for your Botswana Experience

### Travel Documents

All visitors to Botswana must have a passport which is valid for at least six months beyond their intended departure date from Botswana. Visitors to southern Africa must ensure they have enough blank pages in their passports bearing in mind they may be visiting several different countries. Visitors must also be in possession of outward travel documents and have sufficient funds for the duration of their stay.

### Currency

The currency in Botswana is the Pula (P) which is made up of 100 Thebe. Botswana banks only accept US Dollars, Pound Sterling, Euro and South African Rand in cash. Any cash payments made to camps for curios, or gratuities to guides or staff, need to be in one of these currencies. Travelers' cheques in any of the above currencies are also acceptable.

### Credit Cards

International Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted throughout Botswana but American Express and Diners Club are often not accepted. Please note Wilderness Safaris' camps are unable to accept American Express cards.

### Language

The National language is Setswana however the official language is English.

### Time

Botswana is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) all year round.

### Climate

Summer is from November to the end of March and usually brings very high temperatures. It is also the rainy season and cloud coverage and rain can cool things down, although only usually for a short period of time.

The winter season begins in May and ends in August. This is also the dry season when virtually no rainfall occurs. Winter days are invariably sunny and cool to warm; however, evening and night temperatures can drop below freezing point in some areas.

The in-between periods - April/early May and September/October - still tend to be dry, but the days are cooler than in summer and the nights are warmer than in winter.

## Public Holidays

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year – refer below. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday

|                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 01 January New Year's Day | 01 July Sir Seretse Khama Day |
| Varies Good Friday        | 17 July President's Day       |
| Varies Easter Monday      | 30 September Botswana Day     |
| 01 May Labor Day          | 25 December Christmas Day     |
| 25 May Ascension Day      | 26 December Boxing Day        |

## Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT of 10% is levied on all goods and services.

On departing from Botswana, non residents may claim a VAT refund on goods exported as accompanied luggage. In order to claim, the original tax invoice, with passport details reflected thereon, must be presented to the designated Customs Officer together with the VAT 006.1 claim form and the BW500 export declaration form.

The value of the goods must exceed P 5,000 per export and the goods must be available for inspection. Refunds are made by way of a cheque payment which is mailed.

## Duty Free

There is no duty free shopping available at Johannesburg International Airport on flights to Botswana. Please make sure any duty free purchases of camera film, alcohol, etc. are made before arriving in Southern Africa.

## Excess Luggage

The most common mode of transport in Botswana is light aircraft which is usually done on a seat-in-plane shared basis, which has certain luggage restrictions. If you need to bring luggage in excess of your allowance, you may have the option of buying an extra seat which will allow an additional 154 lbs (soft bag only). The additional cost of this varies depending on your flight schedule so please contact your agent for further details.

On arrival in either Maun or Kasane, you also have the option of sending your excess luggage ahead at an additional cost. If the safari begins in Maun, the excess luggage will be forwarded to Kasane and stored. If starting in Kasane, the excess luggage will be forwarded to Maun for storage. You can then collect this excess baggage at the end of your Botswana trip. We need to know in advance if this service is needed so that arrangements can be made and the transfer can be handled smoothly.

Should you be starting and ending your safari in Maun, and do not require the excess luggage to accompany you on your trip, we can store this for you at our office in Maun at no extra charge.

Wilderness Safaris and its staff will not accept responsibility for luggage kept in our office on your behalf. We do not anticipate any problems with stored luggage being damaged or stolen, but you must please ensure that you are in possession of full travel insurance including the luggage cover.

## **Laundry**

Laundry can be done at most camps. This service is complimentary at Wilderness Safaris' managed camps but there may be a nominal charge at other establishments. The camp staff will not wash underwear, due to prevailing local traditions in the country.

## **Power at Wilderness Camps**

All our camps are situated in remote areas and we have to generate our own electricity. We do so in a number of ways but each camp has a generator which runs for about 6 – 7 hours per day (split between morning and afternoon when guests are out on activities). In most camps, these generators then charge a bank of batteries known as an inverter system which then provides 220v power in each tented room for lighting and ceiling fans.

This excludes:

- Jack's and San camps where no power is received in the tents and paraffin lamps are used;
- Zibalianja where they use solar power to generate electricity
- Our Walking Safaris and Trails Camps where they use rechargeable electricity.

Mombo, Little Mombo, Chitabe, Chitabe Trails, Kings Pool, DumaTau, Jao, Jacana, Kwetsani, Tubu Tree, Duba Plains and Vumbura Plains have 220v plug points in the tents but these can be used for the charging of batteries only.

At Abu's, Jack's, Little Vumbura, San, Savuti, Seba, Selinda, Walking Safari & Trails, Xigera and Zibalianja camps you still need to hand any batteries which need charging to the camp staff who will charge these for you in the bar or office areas while you are out on an activity.

Guests who need to charge their battery should bring a spare one for use while the other is being charged, as well as a power converter if applicable as our power is all 220v. All camps have the following adaptors: 3 prong round, 3 prong square, 2 prong round and 2 prong flat.

It is not possible to use appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers in the tented rooms at the Wilderness Safaris camps in Botswana as they have low wattage fuses which will trip.

## Drinks Policy

Wilderness Safaris' Botswana managed camps include all local drinks. However drinks policies in other operators' camps, lodges or hotels may differ. Please refer to your itinerary for specific details.

## Recommended Reading

We recommend the following books specific to the Botswana region. A further list of recommended books is contained in our pre tour information.

- Okavango: Wetland Wilderness - Adrian Bailey
- Okavango: An African Paradise - Daryl Balfour
- Chobe: Africa's Untamed Wilderness - Daryl Balfour
- The Lions and Elephants of the Chobe - Bruce Aitken
- This is Botswana - Daryl Balfour
- The Bushmen - A Changing Way of Life - Anthony Bannister.
- Botswana: A Brush with the Wild - Paul Augustinus.
- The Kalahari, Survival in a Thirstland Wilderness - Nigel Dennis, Dr Michael
- Newman's Birds of Southern Africa and Common Birds of Botswana - Ken Newman.
- Guide to the Trees & Shrubs of the Okavango Delta - Veronica Roodt
- Guide to the Wildflowers of the Okavango Delta - Veronica Roodt
- Botswana Tourist Map & Guide - Veronica Roodt
- Running Wild: Dispelling the Myths of the African Wild Dog - John McNutt, Lesley Boggs, Dave Hamman & Helene Heldring.
- Wild About the Okavango - Duncan Butchart
- Botswana - The Bradt Travel Guide - Chris McIntyre

A set of reference material in all most vehicles. However, if you are a keen birder we recommend that you bring your OWN bird book. Everyone should bring their own pair of BINOCULARS in order to get the most out of the safari.