



Wildlife and Water Northern Circuit

Experience the tranquility of the waterways of the Okavango Delta, a vast inland river delta with lush grasslands and abundant wildlife. Africa the way it was at the very dawn of humanity. Enjoy the magic of the Chobe River at sunset with a myriad of wildlife coming to drink before nightfall. Wonder at the might of the Zambezi River as it thunders over Victoria Falls.

This 14 night fly-drive adventure is a true African experience not to be missed. You will have time to appreciate the Botswana countryside, meet the people, see elephants grazing the roadside, spend time out on the water; and visit a colony of lovable meerkats enroute.

If you enjoy birdwatching then the Nata Bird Sanctuary will be especially rewarding. Keen fishermen will have an opportunity for fishing for tigerfish, catfish and African pike in the Okavango Panhandle; and wildlife enthusiasts can take the opportunity to look for the specialized animals of the swamplands – sitatunga antelope, reedbuck, lechwe, cape clawless otter, marsh mongoose and hippo.

Art enthusiasts can visit the Tsodilo Hills, a UNESCO World Heritage site preserving an enormous collection of ancient rock art. Tsodilo is a sacred mystical place where the spirits of the San people are said to dwell. Human occupation here seems to go back to the Early Stone Age. Northern Botswana has something for everyone.

Many Botswana take their own annual holidays in the sparsely populated north and once you've been here you will understand why.

The-route as described begins and ends in Maun. It would be possible to complete the same circuit from Kasane or Livingstone with only a small impact on the price. The circuit can be completed in an ordinary 2x4 car, and hire of a Toyota Cross or similar is included in the price. You will be staying in the comfort of well-appointed lodges with an onsite restaurant throughout the journey.

Note that the itinerary has you transiting through the Caprivi Strip of Namibia for one day; and crossing into Zambia for a day to visit the Victoria Falls.





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Day 1: Maun

The adventure begins in Maun, a bustling frontier town and the gateway to the Okavango Delta. Your car will be waiting for you at the airport. Here in Maun you can buy just about anything you might need for your trip; obtain a local SIM card; and visit an ATM to stock up on local currency. If time allows you can also enjoy browsing the street markets.

Day 2: Maun

Maun is a tourist town. There are many tempting activities on offer:

- a horseback ride amongst the wildlife on the banks of the Thamalakane River;
- scenic flights by helicopter or fixed wing aircraft to appreciate the geography and extent of the Delta;
- boat trips up the Boro River;
- guided bird walks along the riverbank;
- and lessons in traditional basket weaving;
- and visits to the traditional artisans working at the Nhabé Museum.

None of these are included in the price but any of these activities can be added to your itinerary on request.

There are also many places of interest around Maun which can be visited without prior arrangement, and often at no charge.

There will be guidenotes for these in your personalized guidebook. You can visit a craft brewery making beer from millet grown in the Okavango Delta; taste gin flavoured with local botanicals; find a craftsman making paper from elephant dung; and stroll across a bridge with a very unusual history.

A day in Maun is a day well spent. And if you wish, you can end the day by dining with live Afrojazz: an opportunity that probably won't occur elsewhere on the circuit.

Days 3 & 4 : Maun Mochaba Crossing (Shorobe) 25 miles, ¾ hr

Head out towards the edge of the delta for a half day on the water in a dugout canoe; a visit to one of the tiny villages in the area; and a full day guided trip into the famous Moremi Game Reserve to see the wildlife. You'll be staying at Mochaba Crossing for two nights. It's a lodge only 300m beyond the end of the tarred road, on the very edge of the wilderness.

Nothing beats gliding along the narrow channels of the river system amongst the wildlife, and the polers here are BaYei fishermen who have been plying these rivers by canoe all their lives. The only thing that comes close is a game drive into the famous Moremi Game Reserve with an experienced guide. You will be doing both, and they are included in the price.

From US\$5800 for a couple

15 DAYS / 14 NIGHTS

2x4

GUEST HOUSES AND LODGES

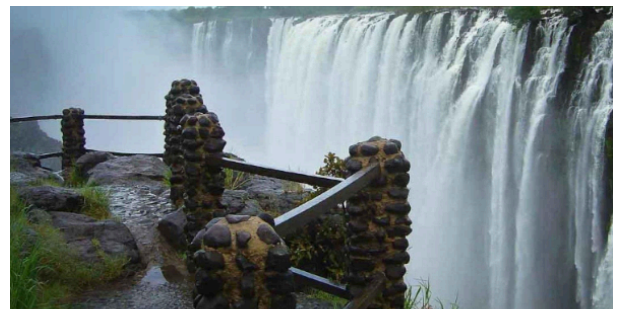
WHATS INCLUDED

- A personal meet and greet service on arrival at Maun International Airport .
- Hire of a Toyota Cross or equivalent for period of stay.
- 14 nights accommodation for two persons sharing staying at designated lodges (1 night sleeping under the stars instead of lodge optional)
- A half day dugout canoe trip into the Okavango Delta
- A full day guided game drive into the Moremi Game Reserve or the neighbouring NG32 wildlife area
- A 'meet the meerkats' tour in Gweta
- A guided tour of Nata Bird Sanctuary
- A sunset river cruise on the Chobe River in a private boat
- A full day trip to the Victoria Falls
- Game drive into Chobe National Park and
- Transfers between Etsha 13 and Guma Lagoon
- A boat and guide for the day in the Okavango Panhandle
- Road maps of Botswana
- A bespoke Self Drive Tours Botswana guidebook tailored to your route and interests
- Twelve breakfasts and four evening meals.

WHATS EXCLUDED

- National Park and reserve fees – you pay these at the gate as you enter. The cost depends on nationality.
- Scenic flight over the delta
- Cross border fees and visas
- Entry to the Tsodilo Hills
- Fuel for the boat at Guma Lagoon: the amount used will be assessed at the end of the day and charged at BWP 20 per litre.
- Personal vacation insurance. This is essential and cover should be in place from when you book your vacation
- Surcharges for pickup or return of the rental vehicle on a public holiday or a weekend
- Tips, gratuities and items of a personal nature
- Flights to and from Maun





The day trip to Victoria Falls will take you across the border into Zambia, and deliver you to the entrance of the Mosi-A-Tunya National Park. The numerous walking tracks here allow you to view and photograph the falls from all angles. There are restaurants inside the park should you get hungry or thirsty. There is also a surprising amount of wildlife, all very accustomed to the presence of humans. Your driver will be waiting at the gates again in the late afternoon and will return you to your accommodation in Kasane. The distance is about 55 miles each way.

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Day 5 : Shorobe – Gweta 150 miles, 3.5hrs

Today you drive back to Maun and south east to Gweta. The road will take you through Nxai Pan National Park. The elephants here have learned to open the valves on the water pipeline and create their own waterholes right alongside the highway. Expect to see a variety of wildlife as you travel.

The big attraction in Gweta is the opportunity to visit a troop of fully habituated and very lovable meerkats out on the edge of the giant Ntwetwe Pan.

There are two options here: the lodge will organize a night out under the stars on the Ntwetwe Pan where you will be provided with a three course picnic dinner, a bedroll and sleeping mat; or you can elect to spend the night in the comfort of the lodge and visit the meerkats next morning

Day 6 : Gweta – Nata 68 miles, 2 hrs

Early this morning you will be off to seek out the meerkats. They make their home in the grasslands on the edge of the pan. Your guide will be in contact with a tracker who follows the meerkat troop every day. They are constantly on the move so would be difficult to find otherwise.

You will also find San Bushmen in their traditional dress. They will tell you of survival in the desert and how to make a fire without firelighters. You will return to Gweta late morning, giving time to get to Nata in time for a late afternoon guided tour to the Nata Bird Sanctuary. Depending on the time of year and water levels in the giant Sua Pan, the sanctuary is home to 70,000 flamingos. Wildlife such as springbok, zebra, wildebeest, and jackal will be here too. And the sunset is usually superb.

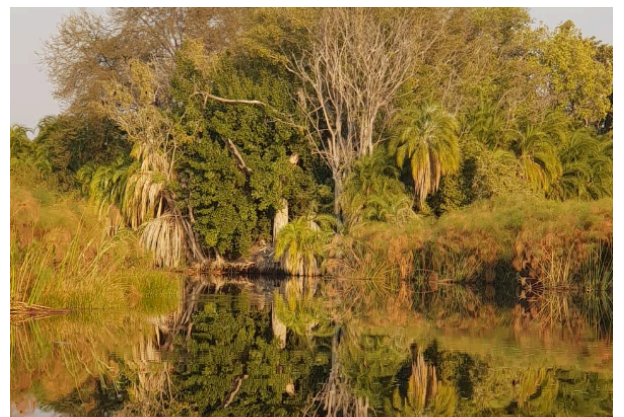
Day 7: Nata – Lesoma 188 miles, 4.5 hrs

The journey north today passes through the large agricultural fields of Pandamatenga with its rich black cotton soils and elephant proof fencing. Before reaching Kasane you turn off to Lesoma, a small village with a lodge where the chalets look directly out to Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. The wild animals recognize no borders and come and go to the waterholes in front of the restaurant and chalets. An underground hide will get you very close to all the action at the largest of the waterholes; and as the property is not fenced you may have mongoose, baboon, elephant and others wandering right past your bedroom window.

Days 8 & 9 Kasane 15 miles, ½ hr

The next two nights are based in Kasane, arguably the wildlife capital of Botswana. It's a small town where warthogs, baboons and banded mongoose are common animals in the streets, and where traffic must regularly give way to elephants and antelope crossing the roads. Kasane makes an ideal base for a sunset cruise on the Chobe River, an early morning guided game drive into Chobe National Park and a day trip to Victoria Falls, in Zambia. All are included in the price.

Chobe has arguably the highest density of elephants in Africa and the sunset cruise will get you right up close to some of them; along with hippos, crocodiles, buffalo and many other animals. You'll be on a small boat with just you and your guide: you can spend as long as you wish at any spot to get the photo you want without inconveniencing other passengers.





Day 10 : Kasane – Muchenje 39 miles, 1hr

Start the day with an early morning guided game drive into the riverfront section of Chobe National Park. This is one of the best places in Botswana to spot lions, and also the rare puku antelope. It's not really cheetah country, but if you are lucky your guide might spot a leopard.

After exploring Kasane itself, you head back into the National Park on the tarred transit road to the Chobe Enclave. In the Enclave the wildlife and domestic animals share the floodplain; and the farmers are quite used to having elephants wandering by their fields. You can see flood recession farming in practice; and visit the cultural centre to see the basketry done by the local women

Day 11 : Muchenje – Shakawe 277 miles, 6hrs

An early start today will give you the time needed to pass through the Caprivi Strip of Namibia, a narrow piece of land that borders Zambia, Angola and Botswana. Most of the journey is through the Babwata National Park, where animals naturally have the right of way and where the speed limit is 80 km/hr. It's a high quality tarred road all the way to Divundu. You need to reach the Mohembo border post before it closes at 6 p.m. to re-enter Botswana.

The brand new bridge over the Okavango at Mohembo – worth a visit if you have time.

The Okavango Panhandle awaits you, renowned for its great birdlife and fishing in particular.

Day 12 : Shakawe – Guma Lagoon 56 miles, 2hrs

It's a short drive to Etsha 13 and transfer to Guma Lagoon but it's worth taking the long detour to the Tsodilo Hills along the way. The Tsodilo Hills are a UNESCO World Heritage site, dedicated to preserving an amazing collection of San rock art. The National Museum provides guides to take you around some of the paintings, and it is possible to climb the hills to get a commanding view over the surrounding desert.

You will leave your car in Etsha 13 and take a 4x4 transfer for the short journey out to Guma Lagoon.

Day 13 : Guma Lagoon

This area of the Panhandle is the Okavango Delta as we imagine it, endless lagoons covered in water lilies and bordered by lush little palm islands. The eastern side of the Delta is mostly seasonally flooded grasslands, but here we have permanent water.

It's not possible to drive around this area: all transport is by dugout canoe or motor boat. The price includes the hire of a boat and a guide for the day and spend the day exploring the Okavango waterways, birdwatching; fishing or visiting some of the islands.

Day 14 : Guma Lagoon – Maun 188 miles, 4-5hrs

You will transfer back to Etsha 13 to travel back to Maun. The Etsha villages are home to the Hambukshu people who arrived in Botswana as refugees from Angola in the 1970's. Bringing nothing but their skills they have a unique pattern of basketry that you can see more of at Gumare.

Day 15 : Fly out

