



4 DAYS/3 NIGHTS

ZAR 5000 FOR 2 ADULTS

# DIAMONDS & MINERALS



## OVERVIEW

Botswana is famous for beef. But the economy of Botswana is really based on minerals, and especially diamonds. In 2023 the value of rough diamonds mined in the country was about US\$ 5 billion, making them her most valuable export by far. The value of beef exported in the same year was just US\$24 million.

The presence of diamonds was known as early as 1894, but it took another 7 decades to find the first workable kimberlite pipes, at a place named Orapa. It's now the largest diamond mine in the world.

This road trip explores a small slice of the mining history of Botswana leaving South Africa via the Groblersbrug border post and returning via Stockpoort.

## THE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 01 3 nights accommodation
- 02 A road map of Botswana
- 03 Detailed notes on
  - Mmakodu iron smelting site
  - Sese Coalfield
  - The discovery of diamonds in Bechuanaland
  - Ancient copper workings at Thakadu
- 04 Three breakfasts

## THE PACKAGE EXCLUDES:

- 01 Cross border paperwork and fees for your car
- 02 Entry fees for the Supa Ngwao and Adrian Gale museums
- 03 Entry fees to the Orapa Game Reserve (Prepaid on request)
- 04 The Orapa mine tour (Prepaid on request)



## CONTACT US

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# ITINERARY

## 1

Visit the Mmakodu National Monument, one of the earliest known iron smelting sites in Southern Africa. The early metalworkers were mining high grade banded ironstone and smelting it in bloomery furnaces under the shade of giant baobab trees. Traces of their work, the ancient trees and the ancient mines still remain. Overnight in Palapye.



## 2

Head for Orapa via the A1 and A30 highways. Along the way, stop at the site of the huge Sese coalfield and learn about the working of the Southern African Power Pool. Visit the site of the first diamond discovery in Botswana; and then spend time at the Supa Ngwao Museum, with its display of mining history. Carry on to the Thakadu-Makala copper belt, with its prehistoric copper smelting remains, and the more modern Thakadu Copper Mine. End the day in Orapa.



# 3



The mines at Orapa are operated by Debswana, a joint venture between de Beers and the Botswana Government. Debswana offer half-day guided mine tours every Thursday morning, excepting public holidays; and also maintain the Adrian Gale Diamond Museum, open Tuesday to Saturday each week. Get your hands on a piece of kimberlite!

If you can't be in Orapa on a Thursday, the Orapa Game Reserve makes an interesting alternative to the mine tour. All the animals of the Kalahari Desert are there excepting elephants, and since the roads are paved with waste rock from the mines it is easy to explore in a standard car. Overnight again in Orapa.

# 4

Return to Palapye via the A14 highway, stopping en route at the basalt columns and the site of the first attempt to develop a diamond polishing industry in Botswana. Carry on south down the A1 highway to Mahalapye, visiting the abandoned Lose Quarry, and then return to South Africa via Stockpoort border post

There is no interpretive or directional signage at most of these sites so our package provides the best self-guiding information available.

Accommodation in Orapa is at Makumutu Lodge, a favoured watering hole for the geologists and technicians from the Orapa diamond mine, so you never know who you might meet.