



7 DAYS/6 NIGHTS ZAR 19,260 PER COUPLE

LODGE AND GUESTHOUSE
ACCOMMODATIONS

MAKGADIKGADI PANS CIRCUIT



OVERVIEW

Imagine a landscape the size of Portugal, with stark, flat terrain stretching to eternity, fusing with a distant horizon. This is the Makgadikgadi, an area of 12 000 km². In winter dust devils dance across the surface, and the salty grasslands seem barren and lifeless. The rains arrive in massive downpours in summer months, transforming the pans into vast powder blue lakes - a reminder of the gigantic, prehistoric lake that once was here.

The Makgadikgadi Pans are actually a myriad of pans of varying sizes. Interspersed between are sand dunes, rocky islands and peninsulas, and gently undulating grasslands. It's a harsh, forbidding landscape, offering solitude as complete as you'll find anywhere in Africa.

There are a wealth of hidden treasures here for those prepared to look. A plethora of archaeological sites suggest continuous occupation ever since the early stone age. The San (Kalahari bushmen) people are still here. You will find them. And the pans are not as lifeless as they seem from a distance. Desert specialists like meerkats, brown hyaena, and springhare are here all year. Huge herds of zebra and wildebeest are seasonal visitors. And the Sua Pan is the most important breeding site for flamingo in Southern Africa.

Wherever there is fresh water around the margins of the Makgadikgadi there are small villages. Many different tribal groups have been drawn to the area, and each village has a unique character.

The pricing of this package assumes that you are SADC citizens and that you are a couple sharing accommodation.

THE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 6 nights accommodation staying in lodges or guesthouses enroute
- Breakfast on 7 days
- Entry fees for the Orapa Game Reserve
- A step-a-board guide for half a day in Mosu
- A guided tour of the Nata Bird Sanctuary (though you have to pay the reserve entry fee of BWP 100 per person).
- A 'meet the meerkats' tour in Gweta
- A bespoke Self Drive Tours Botswana guidebook covering the route travelled, and tailored to your interests. This will help you to make the most of your journey and provide some unique insights into this special area of Botswana

THE PACKAGE EXCLUDES:

- Entry fees for Nata Bird Sanctuary
- Entry fees for the Adrian Gale Diamond Museum and the Orapa Mine Tour
- Entry fees for Douma Crocodile Farm
- Tips, gratuities and items of a personal nature
- Cross border fees and paperwork for your car

*Based on two people sharing accommodation.
Rates are based on low season prices and
may vary with the time of year you visit.*

DATES

*All year round. Weather conditions during the
rainy season may require minor adjustments
to the itinerary.*



CONTACT US

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ITINERARY

1

Palapye

Palapye is about 1 ½ hrs from the Groblersbrug border post, and two hours from Stockpoort. Your accommodation for tonight is a 2 bedroom self catering cottage in the countryside. The owners can supply you with everything you need to cook a sumptuous braai on request. If you arrive with time to spare there are well marked walking trails nearby.

The infinity view over the Sua Pan



2

Palapye to Orapa: 326 km, 4 hrs

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

Orapa

Orapa is a giant diamond mine. Visit the huge diamond museum, and perhaps take a tour of the mine itself (offered every Thursday). Diamonds have facilitated Botswana's development from one of the poorest in Africa to the country with the highest GDP per capita.

The Orapa Game Reserve is home to all the species of the Kalahari excepting elephants. The internal roads are paved with waste rock from the mines, and you can take a self drive safari in an ordinary sedan car. A good place to find rhino.



4

Orapa – Gweta 345 km,4hrs

Today you'll be following the Boteti River northwards on the B300 highway.

The Boteti is the western boundary of the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. During the dry season the wildlife of the park is concentrated along the riverside. Elephants, impala, wildebeest, and zebra galore. It's worth stopping wherever a road gives access to the river. But there are other points of interest along this road too. Something to see in every season.

When the B300 reaches the A3 highway, turn east. The road to Gweta crosses through both the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park and the Nxai Pan National Park for most of its length. The elephants have learned to open valves on the water pipeline, and create their own waterholes alongside the highway. You can expect to see all manner of wildlife along the roadside.

The big attraction at Gweta is a guided excursion to see a troop of fully habituated meerkat out on the margins of the Ntwetwe Pan. These meerkats have become so accustomed to human presence that they will often climb onto someone to get a better view of the surrounding landscape. You'll have to be up before dawn in the morning to join the daily meerkat excursion from the lodge.

5

Gweta – Nata 100 km 2hrs

You'll return from the meerkat excursion late morning, and arrive in Nata in time for a late lunch. Then take a late afternoon tour of Nata Bird Sanctuary on the edge of the Sua Pan. Depending on water levels the sanctuary is home to 70,000 flamingos. Wildlife such as springbok, zebra, brown hyaena, and jackal will be here too. Lonely wildebeest bulls dot the landscape here and there. And the sunset is usually superb.



5

Palapye to the border 125 km; 1 ½ hrs (Groblersbrug)

Return to South Africa via either Groblersbrug or Stockpoort border posts.

6

Nata – Palapye 360 km 4 ½ hrs

You'll be following the A3 and A1 highways back to Palapye. Along the way you can:

- Climb Mosetse Hill for a panoramic view over the eastern side of the Makgadikgadi
- Stop at a crocodile farm producing fine skins for the Italian fashion trade
- Climb Nyangabgwe Hill for a panoramic view over Francistown, Botswana's second city
- Visit the site of the first discovery of diamonds in Botswana
- Visit some Great Zimbabwe era stone walled ruins

And more besides, so make the most of the journey.

HIGHLIGHTS

1

The Porcupine Loop Trail

This is an 8 km self guided nature walk through the forest of the Tswapong Hills. Created for school groups, and well marked so children can run on ahead. Dogs are welcome too.



2

The Hill Fort on Swaneng Hill

This is a climb up a steep volcanic hill. The fort on top is a stone walled defensive structure. It was built by the Tsweneng people during the Mfecane Wars in the early 19th Century. It was never needed, and when peace returned the builders returned to their homes near the Limpopo River. The fort remains just as it was left. It provides a 360 degree view over eastern Serowe.



3

Khubuladintša Hill

Khubuladintša literally means 'Hill of the dogs'. It is a forested, flat topped hill with an interesting archaeological history, providing a great view over the Mmashoro area. A good place for a brief history lesson. The rocky outcrops are home to many rock dassies.

4

The Sua Pan

The Sua Pan covers about 24,000 square km, making it one of the largest playa lakes in the world. The southern shoreline of this vast and deserted playa lake can be accessed (in places) from the A30 highway. There is space enough for thousands of children and dogs, but you will probably have the beach to yourselves. You can't count on finding water, but when there is water here it is fun to swim. A bit like the Dead Sea – the very high salinity makes it hard to sink.