



MEET THE PEOPLE

The northern part of Botswana is home to a great diversity of peoples, each with their own unique culture and history. Explore the northern part of the country and the border areas over 14 days. Meet the different tribes; learn about their traditions and cultures, how they survive living amongst the wild animals; and the history of the area. And of course you can't come to Botswana without meeting the wildlife. The adventure of a lifetime.

Starting from Maun, you will get to explore Moremi, the Makgadikgadi Pans, Chobe, Livingstone in Zambia, the Caprivi Strip in Namibia and the Okavango Panhandle. The itinerary includes at least 1 activity where you will interact with the locals in each area. Tribes you will meet are the Batawana, San (i.e. the Kalahari Bushmen); Bamangwato; Basubiya; Mafwe; BaYei and Hambukushu.

There are two accommodation options, luxury accommodation for those looking for extra comfort and budget B&Bs for those looking to travel in the style of a Motswana. This circuit is confined to tarred roads; you can use any 2x4 vehicle. The price includes hire of a Toyota Cross or equivalent.



Luxury Accommodation Tour
from USD 10 025
Budget Accommodation Tour
from USD 6 677

15 days Northern Botswana Circuit - 2x4 vehicle - self drive cultural and historical

WHATS INCLUDED

- A personal meet and greet service on arrival at Maun International Airport .
- 14 nights accommodation for two persons sharing a room
- Shared safaris experiences in the Chobe region
- Village tours along the way
- A visit to open markets along the way
- Road maps of Botswana
- A bespoke Self Drive Tours Botswana guidebook tailored to your route and interests
- Hire of a Toyota RAV4 or equivalent high clearance 2x4 car for the duration



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DAY 1 ARRIVAL IN MAUN

Welcome to Botswana. Most international flights arrive in the morning, so even after collecting your car from the airport; visiting a local ATM; and checking into your accommodation; and visiting a local ATM you will probably have a little time to spare. How much will depend on your airline schedule. But Maun is a tourist town, and there is plenty to tempt a new arrival. You can have a leisurely afternoon exploring the town, buying road trip supplies, and just getting your bearings before starting your adventure. And of course there are plenty of bistros and restaurants for you to try out in the evening

DAY 2 EXPLORE MAUN/MOREMI

Start the day with a half day mokoro trip to Chiefs Island and enjoy a guided bush walk hosted by local guides from Maun.

This is one of our highly recommended activities for anyone that wants to see the Okavango Delta and learn about the people who live within it! A mokoro is a dug-out canoe (similar to a gondola in Italy) and an essential mode of transport in the delta. Enjoy the ride while having a chat with your poler about life in the Delta, then enjoy lunch on one of the Islands. You'll be on tribal land, and subject to water levels your guide may be able to take you to visit one of the five tiny villages amongst the waterways of the southern Okavango Delta. The people here are BaYei fishermen and farmers, growing two crops of millet in tiny fields, carefully fenced to exclude elephants. Round the day off with a late afternoon visit to feeding the baby elephants of Elephant Havens when they come in from the bush. This elephant orphanage takes care of abandoned or orphaned elephant calves and prepares them for release into the wild.

DAY 3 DRIVE TO GWETA

Gweta is a Bamangwato village on the edge of the Makgadikgadi Pans. An afternoon of either driving or quad biking on the salt pans awaits. A visit to the pans is not complete without a visit to the meerkats! There is a troop of habituated meerkats that live out on the edge of the Ntwetwe Pan. This is followed by an interactive session with a Kalahari bushman who will demonstrate the life hacks for life living in this most inhospitable of environments.

DAY 4 DRIVE TO NATA

Take a guided walk around Gweta village. The walk includes visiting a local school, the library, the clinic and other unique places around the village. On course a village tour is not complete without a visit to the kgotla. A kgotla is an important meeting place where the chief, his advisors and other community leaders can be found. It is similar to a town hall or government enclave. It is the backbone of every settlement in Botswana. They are an integral part of the traditional justice system of every tribe. This is not a staged show of any kind, just a walk around the modern village with one of the villagers.

Then continue on to Nata where you can enjoy a leisurely walk alongside the Nata River, or visit the flamingos and other birdlife of the Pans at the Nata Bird Sanctuary the village, or . End off the day dining with the elephants at Elephant Sands. Enjoy a 3 course meal at the restaurant which is placed immediately in front of a waterhole which attracts elephants of all sizes, including big elephant bulls. The elephants seem to enjoy watching us just as much as we enjoy watching them. This is an unfenced camp and the wild elephants may walk right past your chalet.





DAY 5 DRIVE TO KASANE

After a leisurely breakfast with the elephants, head north to Kasane. Take a short break at Pandamatenga along the way. It's the largest broadacre cropping area in Botswana. Enjoy a magical sunset boat cruise on Chobe River. You will see one of the great wildlife spectacles of the world up close.

DAY 6 EXPLORE VICTORIA FALLS, LIVINGSTONE TOWN, ZAMBIA

Victoria Falls is a waterfall on the Zambezi River, located on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. You'll be approaching from the Zambian side. Enjoy a visit to the falls; walk along the tracks in the Mosi-a-Tunya National Park to reach all of the viewpoints; take a swim if you wish; and visit the craft market that is also on site. You have the option of organising other activities such as visiting the Devils Pool, a scenic flight or doing other adrenaline activities such as bungee jumping, water rafting etc once you arrive.

Spend the afternoon exploring the Railway & Gateway Jewish Museum and the David Livingstone Museum. Both great places to learn about the history of Victoria Falls.

DAY 7 EXPLORE LIVINGSTONE

This morning is all about meeting the locals. Visit Chief Mukuni's Village. This is a Royal village which was founded around the 13th Century. It is home to about 7,000 Leya people. The chief has invited visitors into his village to get a glimpse of how his people have lived for generations and to learn a little about their traditional customs and beliefs.

Then visit Maramba Market. This is the largest market in Livingstone - colourful, vibrant and bustling with activity. Here the local people sell everything; "chitenges" (brightly coloured fabric), fruit and vegetables, grains and rice, pots and pans made out of old motorcars, farm tools, chickens, beads and clothes.

Have lunch at the famous elephant café on your way back to Botswana. The Elephant Café veers off the beaten track not only in location, but with its unique blend of wild edibles, foraged locally. The guests are greeted by the resident elephants, gentle giants of all ages, whose peaceful demeanour washes over their guests. Seated upon a beautifully-appointed deck suspended over the Zambezi River, the diner's taste buds are taken on an African adventure

After the day's activities head back to Kasane.

DAY 8 EXPLORE the CHOBE AREA

Rise early for a guided game drive into the Chobe National Park. A must-do activity for all that visit Kasane. It departs before dawn so you have a chance to catch some of the nocturnal animals as they head off to bed, and the daytime animals as they prepare for the day ahead. A vehicle shared with other tourists.

In the afternoon, drive out to the Chobe Enclave, and take a walk through the savannah grasslands of the Chobe floodplain amongst the mixed wildlife and livestock. See the flood recession farming being practiced on the floodplain; visit a local craft centre; and see some basket weaving in progress. (Get a basketweaving lesson if you want). Explore the history of Letsolathebe II (whose final resting place is here) and find out about his influence on international law. The Chobe Enclave is the stronghold of the BaSubiya people, and they have a low-key cultural centre to welcome people to their area. Entry is free, but they hope you will buy something before you leave.

DAY 9-10 EXPLORE THE CAPRIVI STRIP, NAMIBIA

An early start is required in order to get the most out of today's activity. You'll be crossing the border into the Caprivi Strip of Namibia.



Two ‘must do’ activities are a visit to the ‘living museum’ of the Mafwe people and a visit to the big craft centre in Kongola, owned by the villagers of the Kwando River. The Living Museum movement in Namibia aims to preserve culture by recreating pre-colonial village life. After showing off their traditional skills and lifeways, the Mafwe will then take you to tour their modern village nearby to show what has changed. Allow 3 to 4 hours for a unique experience.

visit Popa Falls on your to Botswana. These are beautiful falls in the Kavango river. The river flows from Angola into the Kavango that feeds the Okavango Delta. With beautiful landscapes and walking tracks, it is a perfect serene place to explore. Visit the Shakawe market where there is a lot of interesting things on display.

DAY 11 EXPLORE TO SHAKAWE

Shakawe is a vibrant village alongside the Okavango River. Somewhere to experience traditional fishing methods, farming and local food. Did we mention that the Okavango River is one of the best fishing spots in Botswana! The Samochima Fishermen’s Cooperative take advantage of this and operate a commercial fishery along the river.

DAY 12 VISIT TSDILO HILLS

This is a UNESCO World Heritage site, based around the San rock art. The National Museum provides guides to take you around some of the paintings. Afterwards you can explore the small museum; climb one of the hills or take one of the hiking trails around them. The longest of the trails is 16km and circumnavigates all three hills.

DAY 13 EXPLORE THE VILLAGES ON THE OKAVANGO PANHANDLE

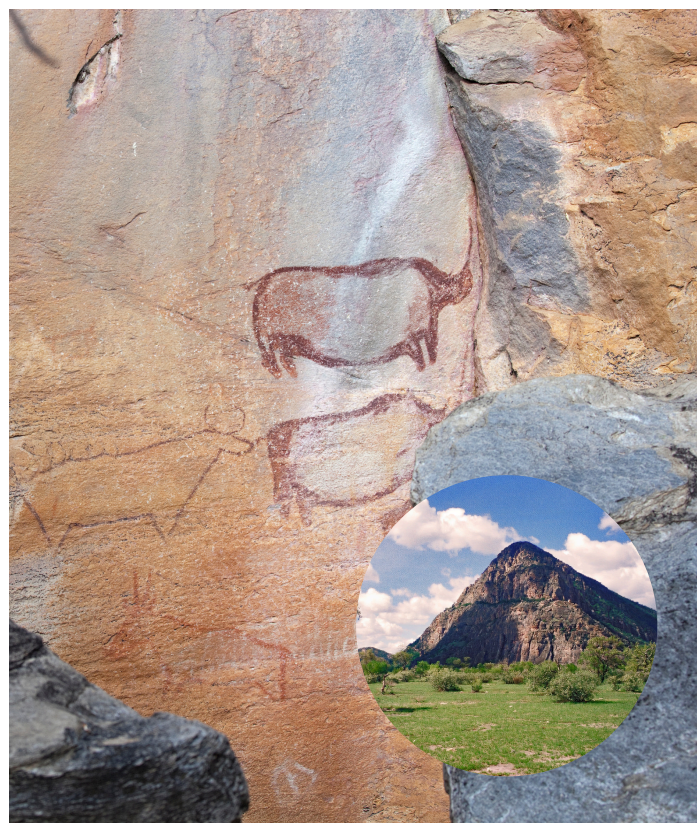
The Okavango Panhandle is an interesting place to visit. Most of the villages here remain authentic and seemingly bypassed by the modern world. There are people here who still practice traditional methods of cooking, farming etc. Many are Hambukushu, and came as refugees during the civil war in Angola in the 1970’s. They were settled in numbered villages along the Okavango River, and are still here today as citizens of Botswana.

Enjoy a tour with one of the local community trusts. The women of this area are famous for their basketry, which is even displayed at the Smithsonian Museum in the USA. The Hambukushu brought their own style of basket weaving with them from Angola, and adopted the traditional plant dyestuffs of the Tswana to produce baskets which are beautiful works of art. But you don’t have to plan a trip to America to see these baskets for yourselves, visit a local basketry shop enroute and meet the creative women who make them.

You can also visit a local Herero village. The Herero are a western Bantu tribe that came to Bechuanaland at the start of the 20th century, seeking refuge from German oppression in South West Africa. They have retained their language, customs, and at least for the women, their traditional dress with elaborate horned hats. Enjoy a cold drink in a Herero Village; watch the locals go about their business; see the women’s costumes and listen to the everyday language. A brief stop in passing.

DAY 14 EXPLORE MAUN

Your last full day in Botswana. One of the highlights in Maun is the Nhaba Museum. The museum itself is small. One of the regional museums of the National Museum network, it specialises in the history of the Ngamiland area. The museum grounds, though, are quite spacious. They are home to traditional artisans making musical instruments; paper from elephant dung; carved animals and much more. They are there to show off how they do it, and all will talk at length about their work.





Enjoy a visit to the craft markets around town as well. Other highlights around Maun are the Motsana Arts Centre; the Matlapana Old Bridge with its fascinating back story; and the Okavango Craft Brewery, which makes beer from millet grown out in the Okavango Delta. End the day dining to the strains of live Afrojazz if you wish.

DAY 15 FLY OUT

Most international flights leave Maun after lunch, leaving you plenty of time to take an early morning scenic flight over the Okavango Delta before you depart. The Okavango Delta is flat, so a scenic flight is really the only way to appreciate the geography and the vast scale of the area. Flights are typically 45 minutes in length. The options here are either a fixed wing plane or a helicopter. Photographers can request a helicopter with the doors off to get some superb shots. Fixed wing planes cover more distance in the time available but fly a bit higher.

The doors-off helicopter flight is a bucket list experience for all avid photographers. The helicopter gives you a vantage point to capture the perfect shot of the Okavango Delta from a unique perspective. The pilot offers a guided experience, making sure every vista and sighting is perfectly set up for you in a way that a fixed wing pilot cannot. Early or late in the day will offer the best light conditions for capturing the perfect shot, and also the calmest conditions for the flight.