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AUGUST 2019

## NEWSFLASH

### Solo Traveller – Botswana Summer Season

For the forthcoming summer season, we have introduced a Solo Traveller deal at all our Botswana camps (with the exception of the premiers), whereby the single supplement will be waived for all adults booking single accommodation between 1 November 2019 and 31 March 2020 (excluding the festive period of 20 December 2019 to 10 January 2020).

### Kalahari Plains – Long Stay & Self Drives

Worth a visit year round, January to May is when the Central Kalahari really comes into its own, with vast open plains of grass full of large herds of oryx, red hartebeest and springbok, who in turn are followed by predators such as lion and cheetah. More unusual species such as cape fox, bat-eared fox and brown hyaena are seen, as well a variety of species who have adapted to the rather harsh environment of the Kalahari Desert. Spectacular cloud formations, awe-inspiring thunderstorms plus lush green vegetation at this time of year, add a whole new element to the safari experience. For a truly all-encompassing Botswana experience – include Kalahari Plains on your summer itineraries!

- The long stay discounted rate at Kalahari Plains is now be the same as our other Botswana camps – valid between 1 November and 31 May.
- We have great self-drive rates at Kalahari Plains for those keen safari enthusiasts, as well as detailed self-drive directions. Contact your Journey Specialist for further information.

### Linyanti Tented Camp West – Sole Use No Longer Required

Linyanti Tented Camp (LTC) West may now be booked as a standard FIT camp. Sole use is no longer a requirement, so rates have been adjusted accordingly. Key information to bear in mind:

- The camp is physically made up of 4 twin guest rooms/8 beds only. Should you have a pilot or guide, they will be in 1 room, leaving 3 rooms for guests.
- There is no private vehicle offering. Sole use of vehicle will be subject to the same conditions as our other camps i.e. if you have a party with children between 6 and 12 years of age, the relevant number of rooms must be booked and charged for.
- Standard single supplement and child rates apply as per our other Botswana camps.
- Triples are not possible at LTC. Children 16 years and younger must share with an adult in a twin.
- It is still possible to book the camp on a sole use basis. In this scenario, book and charge for all 8 beds and a discount of 10% on the rate will be applied.

## NEW | Satellite Phones for Namibian Self-drive Itineraries

We are now able to offer satellite phones to our self-drive guests as part of their Namibian arrangements. Large areas of Namibia are not covered by the local mobile networks, so a satellite phone is highly recommended to ensure guests can contact Wilderness Safaris should they require assistance. Ask your Journey Specialist for further details on pricing and the booking process.

## CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

### An Update on Xigera Safari Lodge

Xigera Safari Lodge remains part of our portfolio, although wholly owned and managed/operated by Red Carnation, who hold the inventory. As such it will continue to appear on our website, in our brochures and elsewhere as relevant. Rates will be available in the Associated Product manual on the Info Centre. We are excited about the reinvention of this iconic part of Wilderness Safaris' history in Botswana and look forward to selling it in combination with our other Botswana camps.

### Wi-Fi Update

Wi-Fi is now live at our Mana Pools camps - Chikwenya, Ruckomechi and Little Ruckomechi.

### Ruckomechi – New Look Dining Room

The dining room at Ruckomechi has had a facelift.



### Botswana Water Based Activity Update

- King's Pool: the barge is still on offer (with a maximum of 8 guests only), although they may have to stop in the next couple of weeks as water levels are dropping.
- Savuti: the Savuti channel is still flowing although levels are low. There is currently still water in front of camp.
- Abu & Seba: no water activities possible. Focus is on drives with great sightings of wild dog and leopard, including in the camp itself, lions killing buffalo and of course, elephants.
- Qorokwe: water levels are low but there is still enough for mokoro excursions.
- Tubu Tree & Little Tubu: no water activities. Game drives, night drives and guided walks have provided good sightings – including a lioness & cubs, the Jao pride and leopards.
- Jao: water levels are okay for now but dropping fairly rapidly so things may change soon. Mokoro activities are still being done regularly and short boat cruises a little less frequently, all at or near Kubu Lagoon.
- Kwetsani: mokoro excursions are on offer. There are hippo in the deeper channels with cat sightings on a regular basis, as well as Pel's fishing owl. General game around the camp includes herds of wildebeest, tsessebe and buffalo.
- Pelo: mokoro excursions in different areas. They are also doing lots of walking safaris on Sitatunga Island, while morning game drives have proved quite productive.
- Jacana: both mokoro excursions and boat cruises are on offer. Great sightings have been seen on game drives and guides are also doing walks.

## **Segera Farmhouse - the latest addition at Segera in Kenya**

Segera Farmhouse and its magnificent private gardens enjoy sweeping vistas of this magical land and the incredible animal life that wanders over it. Dating back to the 1940s and nestled at the foot of Mount Kenya, the original homestead has been brought back to life with an exquisite refurbishment. Accommodating up to 9 people, the Farmhouse is a perfect spot for families, and those wishing to feel a true sense of home, whilst exploring one of the most magnificent safari landscapes on the planet. Facilities include a pool, multiple dining areas and lounges (indoor & outdoor), a movie/play room and fully equipped private kitchen.

## **No Permanent Mosquito Nets at Certain Namibian Camps**

The mosquito nets have been removed from the rooms at Kulala Desert Lodge, Desert Rhino Camp and Doro Nawas. Mosquitoes are not a huge problem in Namibia and in these camps, it allows for better airflow and a sense of more “space” in the rooms. They are available on request, however, should a guest require them.

## **Clarification – Mowe Bay Excursion**

The word “scenic” should not be used when talking about the flight between Mowe Bay and Hoanib Skeleton Coast. It is an air transfer and on occasion, is not possible due to weather conditions. In this scenario, guests have to drive back to camp, but be aware there is no scenic flight available instead. As a reminder:

- The Coastal Excursion is included in the rate and available to all guests staying for three nights or more.
- The drive to the coast one-way, is approximately 4 to 5 hours and the return air transfer (departing at 14:00) is approximately 20 minutes.
- NB: Typically harsh desert conditions prevail in this area with regards to heat, fog rolling in from the sea, high winds and flooding rivers. Occasionally, these conditions affect the duration and routing of the coastal excursion. In such cases guests will either be driven both ways or - as is the case when it rains and the floodplains fill with water – flown both ways.

## **WILDERNESS AIR**

### **Updated Wilderness Air Circuit Flyers**

Please refer to the Info Centre on the Window for the latest Wilderness Air Circuit flyers for each region, including details of all camps accessed accordingly – both Wilderness and non-Wilderness.

## **TOURING & TRANSFERS**

### **Linyanti Helicopter Scenic Flights & Repeat Guests**

To coincide with the opening of the new King’s Pool in June, we launched scenic flights from all the Linyanti camps – DumaTau, King’s Pool, Linyanti Tented Camp West and Savuti. These 30, 45 or 60 minute flights over the area are a superb way to enhance an itinerary. Furthermore, until 31 March 2020, REPEAT Wilderness Safaris guests, are offered a complimentary 30 minute scenic flight. The applicable criteria are: must be booked at a Linyanti camp on a standard full rates and have previously stayed at any Wilderness camp in all regions. Please provide your Journey Specialist with details to arrange the necessary. We would also encourage you to pre-sell a flight to all non-repeat guests so that everyone has the opportunity to take part in this great experience.

### **Levels of the Victoria Falls on the Zambia side**

The water levels of the Zambezi River have dropped significantly, affecting the falls on the Zambian side – which may dry up completely in the next few weeks. For all guests staying on the Livingstone side, we suggest booking a Tour of the Falls on the Zimbabwe side. Remember too that we are offering the option of a Tour of the Falls on the Zambian OR Zimbabwean side from Toka Leya between 1 September and 31 December 2019. This allows guests the opportunity to see the Falls on the Zimbabwean side when the Zambian side stops flowing. Aside from visa fees (for guests’ own account), there is no additional cost involved.

## Swimming under the Falls

It is possible (subject to water levels) to swim beneath the Victoria Falls. Minimum age is 12 years and average fitness levels are necessary. The trip entails some scrambling over rocks and boulders, so a reasonable sense of balance and physical coordination is essential to enjoy this adventure. Trips are run at 8.30 and 12.00, and take 3 hours (including safety talk and walking up/down the gorge).

## REMINDERS & REGULATIONS

### Currency in Zimbabwe

- The fundamental change is that Zimbabwe no longer supports a multi-currency system. Instead of Zimbabwe's dominant currency being the US Dollar (US\$), it is now the Zimbabwe Dollar (ZWL) – like Britain using the Pound and South Africa using the Rand.
- Prices are displayed in ZWL. When paying with a foreign debit or credit cards, this is converted to the foreign currency equivalent at the prevailing rate of exchange. Only small amounts of Zimbabwe Dollars are available from some banks, not all, while ATMs and banks do not have any US\$ or foreign cash. You will not be able to exchange large amounts of cash for ZWL.
- Entry Visas and National Park entry fees are still priced in US\$ and can be paid for with foreign Credit/Debit card or US\$ cash or equivalent in another foreign currency.
- Supermarkets, curio shops, garages, restaurants, etc. generally do not accept foreign cash. Items must be paid for using foreign debit/credit cards or ZWL cash.
- Hotel accommodation and activities are still currently priced in US\$ and can be paid for using foreign cards or US\$ cash.

The recommendation when visiting Zimbabwe is:

- Bring some US\$ cash for incidentals (small denominations are best) as you will not get any from the ATMs or Banks.
- Bring a foreign credit/debit card (MasterCard and Visa are best, not American Express), as you can pay for most things with these.
- Book and pay for accommodation and activities in advance, to save any hassles on the ground.

### Yellow Fever & Rwanda

While Yellow Fever inoculation is not a requirement to visit Rwanda, proof of inoculation in the form of a certificate is required by all SADC countries for any traveller arriving from Rwanda. This would include Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe amongst others. Our recommendation therefore, when combining Rwanda with another SADC country is to have the inoculation and carry the Yellow Fever certificate.

### Government Eases Travel to South Africa

South Africa in the process of scrapping visa requirements for various countries, including New Zealand. As of 15 August, the first four countries listed below no longer require visas, with the remaining three to follow suit shortly:

- Qatar
- United Arab Emirates
- New Zealand
- Saudi Arabia
- Cuba
- Ghana
- Sao Tome and Principe

### Unabridged Birth Certificate...

It would seem that some immigration officials are still not clear on the revised ruling. To avoid possible inconvenience, our recommendation is still to carry Unabridged Birth Certificates for minors (under 18 years) and where applicable, the necessary affidavits and documentation, such as in the case of only one parent travelling with young children.

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