



[Newsflash](#) | [Camps & Activities](#) | [Wilderness Air](#) | [Touring & Transfers](#) | [Airlines & Airports](#)

13 FEBRUARY 2020

## NEWSFLASH

### Excess Luggage to Accompany Guests on Wilderness Air Flights

Thank you for your patience. The good news is our revised excess baggage allowance and costs are now LIVE! Applicable to all NEW bookings going forward, the details follow below - do note that a different policy applies to Namibia. Existing bookings will remain as is.

- One unit of excess baggage allows for an additional 20 kg (44 lb), no longer 75 kg (165 lb).
- This additional weight allowance is booked as an extra on the flight sector line – a seat on the aircraft does not need to be booked.
- The extra baggage does not have to be in one bag, but it must conform to the standard dimensions as detailed in our collateral and communicated previously.
- The cost of this additional weight allowance is no longer based on seat rates. It is now a set rate as listed below, charged per 20 kg, per sector:
  - US\$ 100 per sector in Botswana & Zimbabwe
  - US\$ 200 per sector in Zambia
  - NAD 2 500 per sector in Namibia
- We highly recommend that excess baggage is pre-booked. Flight scheduling is done in advance, and if Operations do not know about the additional weight allowance required, there will be delays while the necessary arrangements are made re: aircraft and collecting payment. If last-minute additional weight entails arranging a second aircraft, the costs of a sole use charter will be passed on to the guest.
- In Namibia, the aircraft used/distances travelled are very specific when it comes to weight. The only way to guarantee an additional 20 kg of weight allowance per person in Namibia is to pre-book and pay, so that aircraft may be scheduled correctly. For example, if guests arrive with 4 extra pieces of additional weight and are scheduled on a Cessna 210 (only carries 4 passengers with the standard permissible luggage weight of 20 kg), then guests will either have to leave luggage behind or incur sole use charter costs for a second aircraft if the luggage is to accompany them.
- The cost of this additional weight allowance is NAD 2500.00 - charged per 20 kg, per flight sector – IF PRE-BOOKED.
- Should guests arrive with additional weight allowance in Namibia without pre-booking, they will be charged NAD2 500.00 per sector for a maximum of 10 kg per party/group/couple (instead of the 20 kg per person in other regions). The remaining excess luggage will have to be stored in Windhoek until the guests return.

## E-Bikes at Kulala Desert Lodge

Effectively immediately, the e-bike excursions at Kulala Desert Lodge are now INCLUDED in the FI Rate. Note that bookings may only be made directly in camp, as they are subject to availability – nine e-bikes in total, for eight guests plus one guide.

## Water Based Activities & Water Levels

- We have updated and revised our water based activity table for the Botswana camps – I do hope you find the new format useful and informative. It can be found on the Info Centre on the Window: Product Information, under FAQs / Wildlife & Ecology – Plus Activities.
- Qorokwe - water levels are low but they are still doing the mokoro activity.
- Water levels in the Zambezi, Okavango and Kunene rivers are higher than the same time last year, which bodes well for a decent flood this year. Recent satellite images indicate good rains in the Zambezi River catchment plus scattered rains over the northern and central parts of Namibia.

## NEW | Air Ventures Ballooning in Chobe in 2021 plus Rates

- Between 1 May and 15 September 2021, Air Ventures (AV) will offer ballooning ex hotels/lodges in the Kasane area. Transfer by road (approximately 45 minutes) to the launch site, and enjoy an hours' balloon safari over the Seloko Plains. On landing, the flight is celebrated with sparkling wine and orange juice, before guests are transferred to a five star camp for breakfast. About 6 hours in duration, AV will arrange the necessary pick-ups and drop-offs for this excursion.
- We have also received the 2021 rates for the ballooning excursion ex the Vumbura camps. Note that the season for next year will be 15 April to 15 September, with a special low rate between 15 & 30 April 2021.

## EXTENDED | Maintenance of the Vumbura Airstrip

Due to some much-needed rain in the area, additional time is required to complete this task. The closure of Vumbura airstrip has been extended from 15 February to 29 February, scheduled to re-open 1 March 2020. Managed on the ground by Operations, guests are flown to/from the Mombo airstrip with Wilderness Air and transferred to/from Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura by helicopter. The helicopter used (2 or 5 seater) depends on the number of passengers and helicopter availability on the day. Larger parties are shuttled, and the flight duration is 15 minutes. Costs remain the same, and our standard luggage dimensions/weights apply.

## CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

### Private Gorilla Trekking Possible from Bisate

To elevate the experience to another level, it is possible to arrange private gorilla trekking which means:

- A choice of gorilla family
- A choice of park guide
- Exclusive personalized tour guide service
- Briefing in the comfort of the lodge where guests are staying
- Tracking to start at time of their choice, although they are encouraged to track as earlier in the morning for better sightings

The details:

1. May be booked for 1 person or up to a maximum of 8 persons in a group.
2. The cost is US\$ 15 000 for the group, regard less of size.
3. The gorilla trekking guides do the briefing at the lodge around 07:00/07:30, in the main area whilst guests are enjoying their morning coffee or finishing breakfast. After the briefing, guests drive straight to the starting point of the hike – there is no need to go to the park headquarters.
4. Guests booking this service may indicate up front their preference for a specific gorilla group and if they would like to have a shorter or longer hike. On request, it is possible for the park warden or one of his team to come to the lodge the evening before to talk about the trek during pre-dinner drinks.
5. Practically this means that guests have a relaxed breakfast from around 06:45. We assist with putting on the gaiters during the briefing, and after a bathroom stop, the party leave the lodge around 08:00/08:15. In contrast, for normal gorilla trekking, it is an early start. Guests leave Bisate at 06:30 and head to the park headquarters, where they wait to be divided in their groups. Departure for the trekking is then around 07:45/08:00 to drive to their starting point...or later if there any unforeseen delays.

## **Rwanda Gorilla Permits: Costs & Possible Discounts**

- U\$ 1500 is the standard permit cost
- US\$ 1050 (includes 30% Discount) for gorilla permits if including other Rwandan national parks (Akagera & Nyungwe) for 3 days or more during the low season of November to May
- US\$ 1275 (15% discount) for conference guests who stay pre & post MICE events to see gorillas

## **No Pilot/Guide Room at Mombo on Temporary Basis**

In mid-December, room# 3 at Little Mombo was badly damaged during a storm and repairs are currently underway. As the pilot/guide accommodation at Mombo is the same standard as the guest rooms, Operations are utilising this room for guests – allowing us to keep 12 guest rooms open. Accordingly, we had to close the pilot/guide room in inventory until 15 March. No bookings were affected up to that point, however, we now need to extend the closure through to 15 April 2020. All pilots and guides booked in the pilot/guide room over this period, will be accommodated back of house which will be arranged by the team on the ground.

## **Booking Private Vehicles on the Abu, Mombo and DumaTau concessions**

Remember that we accommodate 4 guests per vehicle at Abu, Mombo and Little Mombo (unless it is a larger party and they wish to be on the same vehicle) – and will do like-wise at DumaTau and Little DumaTau when they open in August. Bookings for 2 rooms (3 or 4 guests) will automatically get sole use of a vehicle so there is no need to book a private vehicle in this scenario. Like-wise, if 4 rooms are booked for a party of 7 or 8 guests, they will get 2 vehicles.

## **WILDERNESS AIR**

### **Certain Restrictions for Wilderness Safaris Botswana Airstrips**

First communicated in October 2019, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of these restrictions. Effective 1 March 2020, access to the Mombo, Jao and Abu airstrips will be restricted to Wilderness Air only. The location of the airstrips is so close to the camps (the premier camps in particular) that the constant noise of air traffic is negatively impacting our guests' wilderness experience – precisely the reason they seek to be in these wild places. Wilderness Air ensures there are optimum passenger numbers on their aircraft and operate flights during a set flying window between 11:00 – 16:00, which in turn allows our guests to enjoy as much peace and quiet as possible – both in camp and on activities. Note that this ruling applies to Botswana charter operators only – it is not applicable to private or sole use charters booked with foreign operators.

## **TOURING & TRANSFERS**

### **WILDERNESS SAFARIS PRIVATE JOURNEYS – CAPE**

#### **Introducing our New Operations & Product Manager**

Wilderness Safaris Private Journeys is delighted to welcome service-industry professional, Brendan McCarthy, to the team as Operations and Product Manager. With many years' experience managing several operations for a range of leading car rental and chauffeur drive companies, Brendan has worked closely with operations, agents and guests alike to ensure a world-class service on the ground. A qualified cultural guide, Brendan is an avid student of South Africa, with a broad knowledge and interest in local art, culture, nature, adventure and other diverse interests. Coupled with his enthusiasm for sharing the Cape's highlights with guests and his extensive experience in tourism, Brendan will drive our Private Journeys division to even greater heights – offering unique and extraordinary privately-guided experiences that are off the tourist track but still showcase the very best of what the Cape has to offer.

#### **Annual Closing Dates for the Table Mountain Cableway**

The Table Mountain Aerial Cableway will be closed for three weeks between 7 and 26 July 2020 for annual maintenance to ensure the safety of visitors and smooth, efficient operations.

## **WILDERNESS SAFARIS TOURING – ZAMBEZI**

### **Lunar Rainbow Dates 2020**

Ask your Journey Specialist for this year's lunar rainbow dates – a unique way to experience the Victoria Falls (which by the way, are flowing very nicely for this time of year!).

### **Immigration Assistance at Livingstone Airport**

To clarify, this is NOT a Fast Track service, i.e. delays could be still be experienced. It may however, put guests' minds at ease if they are worried about the visa side of things. Guests are met by a Wilderness Safaris representative in the arrivals hall of Livingstone Airport at the Immigration desk and assisted with visa formalities (what type of Zambia visa to get i.e. single, double or multiple entry, day tripper or KAZA Uni-visa). Guests are then escorted through to collect their luggage (porter fee not included) and on to customs before meeting up with their transfer driver.

### **Devil's Pool Closed**

Livingstone Island - Devil's Pool is now closed due to higher water levels. As an alternative, Angel's Pool is available until end April/May when the Livingstone Island Tours will close.

## **AIRLINES & AIRPORTS**

### **BidAir/Wilderness Partnership for Airside Services**

Wilderness Safaris are pleased to advise that we have entered into a partnership with BidAir Services to assist with airside services at OR Tambo International Airport (Johannesburg). Dedicated representatives wearing co-branded uniforms will meet and assist Wilderness Safaris guests accordingly, further enhancing the guest experience. Contact your Journey Specialist for details and costs.

### **SAA Business Rescue & Flight Cancellations**

The airline is implementing cost reduction measures and this includes cancelling flights where there is low demand. Selected domestic, regional and international flights for the month of February and possibly into the future will be affected. SAA has said it will accommodate all affected customers on alternative flights. Should the situation change, we will advise.

---