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**7 July 2020**

## **NEWSFLASH**

### **Wilderness Safaris Private Journeys – Less is more...**

We are thrilled to share our new, refined offering with Private Journeys in the Cape. At the centre of these changes, was making it easy from the point of sale, taking guest feedback and your preferences into account. Our rates for each component are transparently priced and enable personalised itinerary building, while all our collateral is being updated to align accordingly. There are three key components to this new offering, which we would like to share with you in brief. Do contact your Journey Specialist for further information and details.

- **Signature Journeys** – These full-day experiences, with a private guide and vehicle, include all relevant fees plus the option to have either an exclusive food experience or a casual light meal on the go.
  - Very Best of the Peninsula
  - Into the Vines and Wines
  - City Full of Culture
- **Go as you please** – Book a vehicle of your choice, and a private guide, to curate your clients' experience with their fine knowledge. With costs for the clients' own account, they can enjoy the Cape the way THEY want to.
- **Craft your Own Journey** – For this option, we provide a drop-down list of over 70 experiences (weighted on a time scale). Select what you want and with the help of your Journey Specialist, craft an itinerary that suits your clients' requirements.

We also know that the guide is a key element of a good experience, and it is really important to select the right guide. We will be adding all our guide biographies to the Window, along with a recent image and a short 40-second interview with them, so you can get a feel for their personalities.

On all our journeys, you can upgrade to a luxury vehicle or throw in a 'happy box' filled with Cape craft gins, speciality soft drinks brewed here and delightful juice from the vines. We have au-pairs for families, can arrange private experiences (such as wine-tastings or a tour of a museum) plus so much more to enhance your clients' experience while visiting the Fairest Cape...

### **Remember - Extension of Free Flying**

The booking period for our free flying deal has been extended indefinitely, and is applicable to all NEW bookings made for travel up to the end of 2021.

## Exploration Changes for 2021

- The Diverse Namibia (revised itinerary) will continue to run on a scheduled basis. The new itinerary will be 8 nights (previously 9 nights) with 1 night less at Ongava. The Walvis Bay activity has changed back to a Dolphin & Seal cruise, previously kayaking.
- Bookable on a request/private basis only:
  - Desert Dune Safari
  - Hwange Walking Safari
  - Namibian camping safaris

## Videos & Webinars on the Info Centre

We have added (and will continue to do so) the recent Wilderness Safaris country webinars and videos to the Info Centre.

## CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

### E-Bikes on the Kulala Reserve

When Little Kulala re-opens later this year, e-bike excursions will be available to guests. Numbers will be split as follows:

- Little Kulala – 4 guest bikes; 1 guide bike – 5 in total.
- Kulala Desert Lodge – 6 guest bikes; 1 guide bike – 7 in total.

### Helicopter Horizons Rate Update

Helicopter Horizons in Botswana have decided to no longer increase their 2021 rates and will keep them the same as 2020.

### Water Levels & Wildlife Activity

Much of southern Africa experienced low rainfalls last year. The good news is the rainfall in the most recent cycle, bodes well for some superb safari experiences when travel is allowed again. Our teams in camp have been keeping us in the loop over the past few months on water levels and wildlife activity so we'd like to share this with you.

- Vumbura Plains & Little Vumbura: Water levels are great at the moment - very high to be exact. All water activities will be a go – boating and mokoro excursions. We have had some great sighting on our patrols.
- Linyanti Concession – King's Pool, DumaTau, Savuti and Linyanti Tented Camp: At the moment there is water in the channel about 8km from Savuti, receding every week. It is likely we won't be able to use the Queen Sylvia at King's Pool if water levels continue to drop at the current rate. However, boating activities will be fine in the lagoon at DumaTau.
- Chitabe Concession: There is water in front of both camps and in the floodplains. Some of these areas have been dry for some time, so having water there again is creating a paradise. Game viewing has been outstanding - great predator sightings, with lions seen on a daily basis. Lots of zebras, elephants, hippos and huge herds of buffalos. They have also picked up lots of wild dog activity in the area and it appears that the dogs are looking to den in the concession again this year.
- Abu Concession: Both Abu and Seba lagoons at full capacity and we are able to boat again. The game viewing is amazing from the boat - the islands are full of wildlife with lots of hippo, crocodile, elephant, zebra, buffalo in the water and plenty of plains game to be viewed along the channels.
- The Jao Reserve: It's a good flood this year, which has filled channels and floodplains, returning the area to water paradise it's known for. Boating, mokoro excursions plus catch and release fishing are all on offer from the various camps, with different durations of drive to get to launch points. We can only boat to Hunda Island now, while the game drives on the island itself have been very productive. With the water levels back to normal, Pelo is once again a water based camp.
- Namibia: In some areas, there was unexpected good rainfall in a few areas between January and March. The southern regions received below-average rainfall, while the central-northern regions reported above-average rainfall with isolated patches of below-average rainfall.

- Serra Cafema: Water levels on the Kunene River are still high enough to do boating. Some of the Himba tribes have started to garden on the Kunene river shores and are planting crops as part of their efforts to combat food scarcity. As the conservancy itself did not receive a lot of rain, some animals have migrated south.
- Desert Rhino Camp: Some rain and heavy fog have helped provide necessary water on the Palmwag concession. One of the hyena mothers has left her cubs (who are now old enough) to fend for themselves. The Save the Rhino Trust team are still actively working in the area to monitor the deserted adopted black rhino. In times like these, their work is even more vital in terms of conservation.
- Damaraland Camp & Doro Nawas: Both camps have a number of elephant roaming the dry river beds.
- Hoanib Skeleton Coast: The lion cubs are doing well and the elephants are around, looking for fresh water sources. Emsie Verwey and Dr. Philip Stander continue with their crucial research in the area. The brown hyena cubs born in February should be coming out of the den in the coming days, while Dr. Stander has been very active through collaring more lions or advising local communities on the proper setup of kraals that are more lion resistant.
- The Busanga Plains: There is still quite a lot of water on the Plains after the summer rains, although it is receding. On a recent boat trip, the guide saw massive crocodiles, lechwe, puku, buffalo and a large variety of birdlife.
- The Victoria Falls: As you will have seen on social media, the Falls are quite spectacular, with high levels in the Zambezi River.
- Mana Pools: All water based activities will operate as normal when the camps re-open.

## WILDERNESS AIR

### Addition to Wilderness Air Botswana Circuit

Sango Camp has been added to A2, accessed via Khwai Airstrip, and the flyer updated accordingly.

## TOURING & TRANSFERS

### Touring over the Festive Season in Cape Town

Please be aware that resources are extremely limited during the festive season in this popular destination. Cape Town and surrounds are extremely busy over this period, so bookings should be made well in advance. Note that certain wine estates / places of interest are closed during these times, particularly on the following dates:

- 24 December - limited operating hours
- 25 December - closed
- 26 December - closed
- 31 January - limited operating hours
- 1 January – closed

### Important – Numbers of Passengers in a Vehicle

Current COVID-19 protocols implemented by the South African government, require only 70% occupancy in vehicles although in some cases discretion may be applied i.e. in the case of a family. Taking our standard policy of maximum numbers per vehicle into account, Private Journeys will follow these guidelines but on occasion, we may have to re-quote should your booking require a larger or second vehicle to ensure we adhere to official regulations. Your Journey Specialist will advise if this is the situation.

## RESTRICTIONS, AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

### Airlines

While a number of airlines have started planning their schedules for the coming months, which is a positive sign, flights will only happen once border closures have been lifted. Brief mention is included below of the ones we are aware of at this time.

- **Rwanda** - Brussels Airlines plan to resume flights in August, with Rwandair planning on flying to Europe in September. Rwandair also plans to resume flights to Johannesburg, Harare, Lusaka and Cape Town in August.

- **Seychelles** - Scheduled commercial passenger flights to Seychelles will resume with effect from 01 August 2020.
- **South Africa** - Global airlines are keen to return to SA...Lufthansa, British Airways, KLM, Ethiopian, Emirates, Qatar, United and Delta are all on standby, saying they want to come back to South Africa as soon as possible. In addition, Delta, Virgin and TAP plan to start flying to Cape Town.

### Restricted Access due to COVID-19

The current situation in the countries where we book services is listed below. This is subject to change and will depend on the latest government regulations and/or lockdown requirements. A useful website to refer to is: <https://flattenthecurve.global/>

	Restrictions
<b>Botswana</b>	Borders remain closed. Returning residents have to undergo mandatory quarantine.
<b>Kenya</b>	From 7 July, further movement in country is allowed, while the curfew plus restrictions on numbers at gatherings has been extended for another 30 days. Flights and access will resume, in strict conformity to guidelines and protocols issued by the Ministry of Health (we do not have these details as yet and will share once available), as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 15 July, local flights</li> <li>• From 1 August, international travel</li> </ul>
<b>Mozambique</b>	Borders remain closed, however travel within Mozambique by residents was allowed from the beginning of June.
<b>Namibia</b>	Borders remain closed until 17 September 2020. Between 15 July and 15 August, a targeted tourism plan will allow entry to some – subject to county of origin and testing, as well as quarantine. All Namibians and non-Namibians entering the country have to submit to COVID testing and mandatory, government supervised quarantine, at own cost. All non-Namibians must also present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result, valid for 72 hours before entering Namibia.
<b>Rwanda</b>	From 1 August, Kigali airport will open for commercial flights. We do not have details as yet on the procedures for handling of arrivals, testing and hotel stays while waiting for results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People arriving in Rwanda are obliged to have a negative COVID-19 test, from a certified laboratory, done within 72 hours of arrival.</li> <li>• A second test needs to be done on arrival at the airport. Guests have to wait in designated hotels for the results, expected within 24 hours.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Seychelles</b></li> </ul>	Travel recommenced in June. During phase one, only travellers from 'low-risk' countries arriving on private jets and chartered passenger direct flights are granted entry, and they have to apply first. Once approval is given, they may proceed with arrangements, which includes taking a COVID-19 PCR test before boarding the flight. A series of strict entry screening procedures are also in place for when the passenger disembarks in Seychelles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial air access will resume 1 August 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>South Africa</b>	Borders remain closed - both international and inter-provincial.
<b>Tanzania</b>	Borders opened on 18 May. Travellers must provide proof they are COVID-19 negative on arrival, and will undergo additional screening plus complete a Health Declaration form. There are no self-quarantine requirements.
<b>Zambia</b>	On 25 June, the country's air borders and airports were re-opened. Domestic carriers are now able to operate, although it is not clear if and when any international airlines will resume operations. Tourist visas remain suspended. Details for testing passengers with symptoms, social distancing and quarantine (currently 14 days) are not yet available.
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	Borders remain closed. On 2 July, the government passed a resolution to partially relax lockdown regulations for the tourism and hospitality sector, under approved guidelines and strict protocols. Safari operations are allowed to resume as well as hunting, and national parks can reopen, to help boost domestic tourism. We do not know when regional and international traffic will be allowed.