

[Newsflash](#) | [Camps & Activities](#) | [Wilderness Air](#) | [Touring & Transfers](#) | [Rates](#) | [Reminders & Regulations](#)

OCTOBER 2019

## NEWSFLASH

### Reduction in Wilderness Air Namibia Rates

We are adjusting our 2020 flying rates by reducing them to the current 2019 rates! This means our rates have been held for the third year in a row as there was no increase from 2018 to 2019. All new bookings and quotes going forward will be at these lower rates.

### Change to Baggage Dimensions on Wilderness Air

We are in the process of changing the permissible dimensions for luggage and reducing excess luggage costs. Detailed below, this will come into effect shortly (mid-November we hope). Until then the status quo remains and once finalised, we will advise and amend collateral accordingly.

Revised Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe luggage dimensions will allow for bigger bags with a solid base!

- NEW | Soft bags with a rigid structure at the base - including wheels and/or a collapsible handle - will be accepted. Alternatively, standard soft duffel/tog type bags,
- NEW | The maximum dimensions of ALL bags which can be accommodated are as follows: 30 cm (11.8 inches) wide x 35 cm (13.8 inches) high and 70 cm (27.5 inches) long.
- The maximum permissible luggage allowance when travelling on a seat rate basis, including carry-on, remains strictly 20 kg (44 lb) per person.

There is no change to the type of bag allowed when flying with Wilderness Air Namibia, due to the aircraft utilised on that circuit. Should you book a combination of regions, guests will need to adhere to the Namibian luggage dimensions (as specified below) for their full journey or be made aware that they will need to re-pack in Windhoek:

- Only soft duffel/tog type bags will be accepted – no frames or rigid structures may be transported as they physically cannot fit into the aircraft. Wheels on a bag are only permissible if they are not part of a solid frame or rigid structure.
- The maximum dimensions of ALL bags which can be accommodated are as follows: 25 cm (10 inches) wide x 30 cm (12 inches) high and 62 cm (24.4 inches) long.
- The maximum permissible luggage allowance when travelling on a seat rate basis, including carry-on, is strictly 20 kg (44 lb) per person.

## Revised Costs and Weight Allowance for Excess Luggage on Wilderness Air

Excess luggage may still be stored as per the norm, however, should guests wish their excess luggage to accompany, please note the following changes and in particular the situation regarding Namibia:

- Additional weight allowance booked for excess luggage will allow for 20 kg (44 lb), and no longer 75 kg (165 lb). Bags must conform to the standard dimensions as laid out above.
- The cost of this additional weight allowance/seat is no longer based on seat rates. It is now a set rate as listed below, charged per 20 kg, per sector – i.e. 1 x 20 kg excess luggage on the route Maun/Seba/Savuti/Kasane will cost US\$ 300 (calculated as US\$ 100 x 3). The 20 kg does not have to be in one bag, but must still conform to the specified dimensions.
  - US\$ 100 per sector in Botswana & Zimbabwe
  - US\$ 200 per sector in Zambia
  - NAD 2 500 per sector in Namibia
- Bookable in inventory, we highly recommend excess luggage is pre-booked as opposed to simply arriving with the additional weight. Flight and aircraft 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. Note too, that if the last-minute additional weight entails arranging a second aircraft, the costs of a sole use charter will be passed on to the guest.
- This is particularly relevant in Namibia where the aircraft used/distances travelled are very specific when it comes to weight. Should guests arrive with additional weight allowance in Namibia without pre-booking, they will be charged NAD2 500.00 per sector for a permissible maximum of **10 kg** per party/group/couple (instead of the 20k g per person in other regions). Any additional weight will have to be stored in Windhoek till the guests return.

## Forthcoming Elections in Botswana

Reminder – 23 October 2019 is national Election Day in Botswana. While 24 and 25 October have also been declared public holidays, the actual voting day is Wednesday, 23 October 2019.

Our staff will be exercising their constitutional right to vote and Wilderness Safaris are proud to be assisting with movements in and out of all our Botswana camps for registered voters. There will, as a result, be a reduced work force over this limited period of three days (as some staff vote in their home villages and will be returning from afar). The same will apply to our offices and flight operations.

Please rest assured that every effort will be made to ensure there is no disruption to the guest experience under these circumstances.

## Green Season Helicopter Special

Helicopter Horizons are offering a Green Season Special of US\$ 350 RACK per person for a 30 Minute Scenic Helicopter flight including champagne stop. Applicable ex Abu, Seba, Chitabe, Chitabe Lediba, Qorokwe, Jao, Jacana, Kwetsani, Pelo, Tubu Tree, Little Tubu, Mombo, Little Mombo, Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura – this offer is valid from 01 November 2019 to 31 March 2020. It ties in nicely with our Solo Traveller deal – especially as the single supplement on this helicopter special has also been waived i.e. no minimum two.

## REMINDER | Solo Traveller Deal in Green Season

The single supplement has been waived for all adults booking single accommodation at our Botswana camps (excluding premiers) between 1 November 2019 and 31 March 2020 (excluding the festive period of 20 December 2019 and 10 January 2020). This is a wonderful time to travel to Botswana for a number of reasons:

- New life abounds as many species give birth to their young providing lots of “cuteness” and family interactions
- Predator sightings are frequent as they take advantage of the abundance of prey
- The migrants have returned so birding is exceptional
- The Central Kalahari and Deception Valley, plus Kalahari Plains camp, are at their peak
- Lower water levels in the Delta allow for more movement of wildlife
- When the rains arrive, fresh green growth and spectacular skies provide amazing photographic opportunities
- Low season rates apply so great value for money

## Destination Campaign - Toolkits on the Info Centre

We launched our Destination Campaigns this week, starting with Zimbabwe. The link to the Toolkits in the mailer will direct you to the Wilderness Window. Login as normal then go to the Info Centre, Wilderness Safaris Product Information, and select the Toolkits tab at the end. Currently Zimbabwe only is featured as this is the first campaign but the other countries will follow suit.

## CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

### Pre-booking Activities on the DBB rate in Namibia

When booking the *DBB rate at Doro Nawas and Kulala Desert Lodge* be aware of the following:

- Lunch may be pre-booked but only paid for in camp.
- Camp activities may not be pre-booked or pre-paid. They are on a request basis only, subject to availability once in camp and therefore not guaranteed.
- All relevant costs for extras may only be settled direct in camp.

When booking the *DBB rate at Damaraland Camp*:

- Lunch and activities may be pre-booked and pre-paid.

### Davison's Temporary Closure

Davison's in Hwange National Park has been closed between 27 November and 10 December 2019 inclusive to re-do the decking around the pool. At the same time, Operations will be building a new elevated toilet at the Madison Pan Star Bed so that guests do not have to go down steps to visit the bathroom.

### Shumba Guide Unit – from 1 June 2020

Operating on a single occupancy basis, a staff bed for guide/pilot accommodation at Shumba camp will be available for the start of the new season. Effective 1 June 2020, a guest room no longer needs to be booked to accommodate a guide or pilot at Shumba.

### Chikwenya Guide Unit Change – Effective Immediately

The guide/pilot accommodation at Chikwenya has been revised to single occupancy only.

### Botswana Water Activity Update

- King's Pool: the barge is not on offer until further notice.
- Savuti: the water levels are very low although there are still hippos in front of camp.
- Abu & Seba: no water activities possible. The focus is on drives with great sightings of five different leopards, two sub-adult lions, a small pride of two male lions and a female and of course, elephants.
- Jao Concession: there is NO boating on offer anywhere in the concession. Limited mokoro experiences are still possible from Jao, Jacana and Pelo, while water activities are not possible from Kwetsani, Tubu Tree and Little Tubu.

### Sandstorms in the Kulala Area

This is the time of year when winds come up in the desert, and affect Little Kulala in particular with daily sandstorms. The strength of the winds/sandstorms vary each day but have been continuous since last week Wednesday. You may hear from guests who were there (or are still to visit) and found sand on their decks, in the pools, etc. This is a natural phenomenon and something that happens every year. The camp manage it to the best of their ability until the winds dies down again.

### Update on the Drought Situation in Namibia

#### Our Concession Areas

- Food and water supplies for our camps have not been affected and operations continue as normal. Where possible, efforts are being made to reduce water use.
- Wildlife is well adapted to the dry conditions, and are moving in and out of the areas to try and find the optimal conditions to survive in. This does mean movement of wildlife and at times lower numbers of certain species, for example Hartmann's Mountain Zebra numbers in the Palmwag concession (Desert Rhino Camp) are lower than normal but we still see them.

- Elephants have recently moved into Palmwag which has added to the game viewing experience around Desert Rhino Camp, although they may move on subject to the availability of food and water.
- Operations have experienced some water challenges with boreholes at Desert Rhino Camp (DRC) specifically. They are in the process of resolving this issue, and to date there has been no interruption of service here.
- *Accordingly, in-camp laundry facilities at DRC are limited due to water scarcity. Although a laundry service is still available for necessities, we would ask that where feasible, guests make use of laundry facilities at other camps before or after their stay at Desert Rhino Camp.*
- Serra Cafema is still able to do short boat rides of around 45 minutes – we will advise if this changes.

#### Communities

- Communities have been affected by the drought conditions with a lack of food and water for livestock, and the dry conditions are having an impact on agriculture in the country.
- In the Northern part of the Palmwag concession, east of Hoanib Skeleton Coast, the community have pushed their cattle further west than normal and on some game drives, guests may encounter these animals and herders.
- There are also fairly large numbers of cattle around Serra Cafema as the Himba look for grazing for their cattle.

#### Windhoek

- There is a collective effort by the Windhoek municipality to curb water usage. The supply is not interrupted but there are some restrictions on using hose pipes, watering gardens and so forth.
- Guests are asked to please follow the advice provided in their accommodation establishments to reduce water use.

#### **Notice of Maintenance Work and Re-Surfacing of Geluk Airstrip (Kulala)**

This is a full rebuilding project, which will commence on 22 October 2019, and take 5 to 6 weeks to complete. The good news is that this project is adjacent to the existing airstrip, meaning that the current strip will be operational throughout the building phase. There should therefore be very little impact on the air traffic over this period, and accordingly, very little inconvenience to our guests. That said, we do apologise for the short notice but we had to act quickly to secure the contractors.

### **WILDERNESS AIR**

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

Effective 1 March 2020, access to the Mombo, Jao and Abu airstrips will be restricted to Wilderness Air only. The reason for this is that 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. This ruling applies to Botswana charter operators only – it is not applicable to private or sole use charters booked with foreign operators.

All flights to the Wilderness Safaris camps accessed by one of these three airstrips (Mombo, Little Mombo, Jao, Kwetsani, Jacana, Pelo, Abu and Seba), will therefore need to be transferred over to Wilderness Air as follows:

1. From Monday 21 October 2019, all NEW bookings/quotes travelling from 1 March 2020, must be based on this revised policy and costing accordingly.
2. By Friday 15 November, all EXISTING bookings/quotes must be amended to take this revised policy into account.
3. If the third party flight is from a third party camp/airstrip accessed by Wilderness Air, then please transfer the sector over to Wilderness Air – i.e. from Sandibe to Mombo. We are now accessing many third party camps so do refer to the latest circuit flyer for a list of these camps.
4. If the third party flight is from a third party camp we do not access on our circuit i.e. Savute Elephant Camp, then that flight will need to be re-routed to Maun and an additional sector booked from Maun to Mombo, Jao or Abu airstrips.

## Expansion to the Botswana Circuit

Kadizora and the Sanctuary camps have been added to the list of third party camps accessed by Wilderness Air.

### Botswana Circuit - Access via Kasane

- The 14:00/14:30 Wilderness Air departure into the camps from Kasane is timed to coincide with the arrival of the Airlink flight.
- Guests may also make use of this connection when arriving from Victoria Falls or Livingstone by road (and ferry ex Zambia) but they must be at Kasane Airport by 13:00.
- Please provide the following so that we can schedule the necessary flights – scheduled commercial flight details, non-Wilderness Air charter information or road transfer details. Please stipulate from where and with whom i.e. the supplier, and estimated time of arrival in Kasane.
- If there are no Airlink passengers, Wilderness Air will try leave at 14:00 so guests get to camp earlier. If there are Airlink passengers, customs and immigration will need to be cleared first, so departure will likely be 14:30.

### Addition to Wilderness Air Zimbabwe Circuit

We have added Nyamatusi Camp to our flying circuit. Located in the Mana area, Chikwenya Airstrip will be used for access.

### Booking the Correct Time on the HWN/VFA/HWN Sectors

Between 1 April and 30 November, there are two departures a day on the Wilderness Air Victoria Falls and Hwange routes. Please advise WHICH flight is required for guests (i.e. morning or afternoon) as well as arrival or departure flight information, touring or other third party arrangements before and after. This will allow flights to be scheduled accordingly and avoid guests having to wait or miss an activity/flight connection.

## TOURING & TRANSFERS

### Revised Transfer Times for Magashi

Speed controls are very strict in Rwanda and all transport vehicles must be equipped with a speed governor. We have amended our scheduled shuttle transfer times accordingly:

- The shuttle transfer TO Magashi departs Kigali Serena Hotel at 07:30 and arrives in camp around 13:00, depending on game sightings en route.
- The shuttle transfer FROM Magashi to Kigali departs camp at 08:00 or 09:00 and arrives at the Serena Hotel at 14:30. A lunch pack from camp will be provided.
- If guests are unable to connect with the daily scheduled departure from Kigali at 07:30, it is possible to book an 11:30 departure from Kigali on request. Note that a minimum two rate applies on this shuttle. On this departure, an afternoon activity at Magashi is not guaranteed due to the late arrival in camp - usually between 16:30 and 17:00.
- Should a private transfer between Kigali and Magashi be required, then a helicopter transfer is the only alternative (price on application).
- Guests travelling from Magashi to Kigali will arrive around 14:30. It is possible to transfer by helicopter or road to Bisate Lodge and avoid the extra night in Kigali. Important to note however, is if guests do an onward road transfer to Bisate, they will spend most of the day in the vehicle, so a helicopter transfer on at least one leg is recommended. Alternatively, guests could do a city tour on the afternoon of arrival, spend the night in Kigali, then visit the Genocide memorial after breakfast before transferring by road to Bisate the following day.
- It is possible to depart from Bisate (or another property in Volcanoes National Park) and continue to Magashi the same day, when booking the 11:30 shuttle departing from Kigali.

## RATES

### Long-stay Discount Introduced in Zimbabwe

With immediate effect, our long-stay discount in off-peak periods now applies to our camps in Zimbabwe (not applicable between 01 June and 31 October). Valid for bookings of 6 nights or more at all Wilderness camps, the 5% long-stay discount is applicable to accommodation only (per person, per night) in low season. It does not apply to single supplements, private vehicles, flying, transfers and sightseeing.

## REMINDERS & REGULATIONS

### Changes in the Pipeline - Unabridged Birth Certificates (UBC)

On 7 October 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa instructed the Department of Home Affairs to rescind the UBC requirement. We will advise once the repeal becomes official and there is 100% clarity. The Department of Home Affairs will make a formal announcement regarding the timetable going forward which will include:

- Notifying IATA, to update all airlines
- Briefing all Immigration Officers as enforcement at the borders is critical
- An awareness campaign between the TBCSA (Tourism Business Council of South Africa), SATSA (Southern Africa Tourism Services Association) and SA Tourism.

Note that South African minors leaving the country will still need to carry birth certificates unless they present the names and identity numbers of their parents in their child passports.

### Pending - E-visas for South Africa

The Department of Home Affairs have announced that it would launch its e-visa pilot scheme next month. This means applicants will be able to access their documents online, eliminating the need for applicants to visit South African missions abroad.

### Launched – Visas on Arrival for Namibia

On 25 September, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration in Namibia launched the 'Visa upon Arrival Pilot Project' at Hosea Kutako (WDH) International Airport. Costing NAD 1000.00, tourists from 47 countries no longer have to apply for visas in advance and may obtain these on arrival. The second phase of the roll-out is scheduled for next year and will include various border posts and Walvis Bay Airport. However, as this is a new initiative and there may be glitches, our recommendation for the time being is that guests still obtain visas prior to travel to avoid any possible inconveniences.

---