



## WILDERNESS PRODUCT

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

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## November 2023

## NEWSFLASH

- Wilderness Usawa Serengeti will be opening a spacious new family unit on 1 December 2023 to cater for adventurous families travelling to Tanzania.
- The OM System Camera Journey experience and binoculars are no longer available in our camps and photo hubs.

## GENERAL REMINDERS

## Wilderness Tubu and Little Tubu rebuild

- Kindly note the revision of operational plans due to full camp closure for the period 01 November 2023 to 31 May 2024 (inclusive) for a complete rebuild.
- Guests with confirmed bookings will be hosted at Wilderness Kwetsani, with rates honoured.
- Should Wilderness Jacana be the alternative, whether on confirmed or provisional bookings, these will be requested on the lower rate.
- In the event that Wilderness Kwetsani and Wilderness Jacana are fully booked, the use of Wilderness Jao may be possible in certain instances. However, this will require special authorisation from Botswana Operations regarding availability and rates.
- On other occasions, as a special exception only, Wilderness Qorokwe may be utilised. However, this will also require pre-authorisation from Botswana Operations regarding availability and rates.
- Flying remains unchanged as all alternatives lie within Area 02 Okavango Delta.

## Wilderness Mombo – Ask-for-Space

RARA has placed Mombo inventory in the Window on an ask-for-space basis for the full camp for 11, 12 and 14 December 2023 for annual maintenance. Do note that the camp had already been closed for December 13 for year-end festivities. There are no affected bookings on these dates.

## Wilderness Desert Rhino Camp rebuild

- Kindly note the revision of operational plans due to full camp closure from 07 December 2023 to 30 June 2024 (inclusive) for a complete upgrade. Expected reopening 01 July 2024.
- Rhino tracking will be offered at Wilderness Damaraland Camp, should your guests be booked on a fully inclusive basis.
- For those bookings opting for Wilderness Doro Nawas instead, rhino tracking is not possible from this camp.
- For guests with existing itineraries that already include Wilderness Damaraland Camp, the alternative of Wilderness Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp may be utilised, with Wilderness Desert Rhino Camp rates honoured. However, please note rhino tracking is not possible from Wilderness Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp.
- Regarding the Wilderness Air flying circuits, please liaise with your dedicated Travel Designer for applicable recostings – e.g., should quotes work out more costly these will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (i.e., itineraries with applicable routings between Wilderness Desert Rhino Camp and Wilderness Damaraland Camp).
- For itineraries involving Wilderness Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp, the flying rate for Wilderness Desert Rhino Camp will be honoured. Please contact your Travel Designer for further information.

## REGIONAL UPDATES

### BOTSWANA

#### Water level update

- The Queen Silvia barge activities are not currently available at Wilderness King's Pool due to the seasonal low water levels.
  - As at the end of October, boating ceased at all camps in the Jao Reserve. However, mokoro remains a possibility.

#### Khwai River Lodge Airstrip

- Belmond Safaris' Khwai River Lodge airstrip is closed off to operators, with the exception of Mack Air. This took effect on 04 October 2023.
- Wilderness Air has been granted permission to use Natural Selection's Khwai Private Reserve airstrip, on condition of increased landing fees – from USD20.00 per person to USD 45.00 per person.

#### Camps that were serviced by Khwai River Lodge include:

- Khwai Leadwood
- Machaba and Little Machaba
- Sango Safari Camp

#### From Khwai Private Reserve, timings are approximately:

- 40 minutes to Khwai Leadwood and Khwai Lediba
- 2 hours to Machaba and Little Machaba
- 45 minutes to Sango

### KENYA

#### Masai Mara increase in entry fees

We would like to inform you of an important update regarding your bookings at our Masai Mara camps.

In line with a new lease agreement from Narok County Government, a Community Fee of USD 50 is applicable per guest, per night, regardless of age or residency. The Community Fee is applicable to guests staying at any Governors' Masai Mara camps, per the below:

- Governors' will cover the cost of the Community Fee for any existing bookings that are already confirmed for travel from 14 November through 31 December 2023.
- For any new bookings for travel from 14 November through 31 December 2023, the Community Fee will be for the direct cost of the client.
- For all bookings (both new and confirmed) that are for travel from 01 January 2024 onwards, the Community Fee will be for the direct cost of the client.

The Community Fee is a part of the Narok County Government's initiative to ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed more broadly to the surrounding communities. We will be updating all bookings for travel starting from 01 January 2024 (including those that are confirmed) and we will be in contact with you soon to provide further information on this adjustment.

We understand that this additional cost may raise concerns, especially in conjunction with the [increased Masai Mara National Reserve entry fees for 2024](#). However, it is crucial to recognise that the Community Fee is a part of the Narok County Government's initiative to ensure that the benefits of tourism are distributed more broadly to the surrounding communities. This fee will also contribute to the sustainability and, where possible, the regeneration of the Masai Mara ecosystem from both a conservation and wildlife perspective.

We greatly appreciate your continued support and understanding as we work together to promote responsible and sustainable tourism in the Masai Mara.

## NAMIBIA

### Driving time from Doro Nawas Airstrip to Wilderness Damaraland Camp

- It was initially advised that this was a 45-minute drive. Please note that this has been amended to a 2-hour vehicle transfer (depending on wildlife sightings, scenery and photographic opportunities en route). Refreshments and snacks are included on the transfer, with stops en route for special-interest sightings.

## TANZANIA

Wilderness Usawa Serengeti offers a spacious, open-plan family unit with view-facing beds to cater for adventurous families travelling to Tanzania.

- The family offering doubles the space available to families by offering two luxurious tents joined together with an external passage between them, making one family unit. This creates an open yet protected space to enjoy together, with the comfort of knowing family members are nearby.
- Usawa's family unit can accommodate up to three children (a maximum of five people).
- Wilderness' expert Tanzanian team has years of experience hosting family safaris in the region, and will offer numerous exciting adventures for children from 06 years of age, as well as delicious child-friendly meals.
- Wilderness Usawa Serengeti can be booked on a sole-use basis in order to accept children younger than 06 years.

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## DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY (DMC) – GENERAL NEWS

### Airlines

Uganda Airlines launched a new long-haul route between Entebbe (EBB) and Mumbai (BOM) earlier this month. The inaugural flight, operated by an A330-800, marked a milestone for Uganda Airlines, with Mumbai becoming its second intercontinental destination after Dubai.

- The airline offers three flights a week on the route. Flight UR430 departs from EBB at 20h15 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and arrives in BOM the following day at 05h55. The return flight UR431 departs from BOM at 07h55 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, and arrives in EBB at 12h35.

### Ramped up frequencies for fastjet

Regional airline fastjet is playing a critical role in enhancing air connectivity in Zimbabwe, with the introduction of scheduled domestic routes to Lake Kariba and Hwange National Park, and connecting these destinations with flights to Harare, Victoria Falls and Johannesburg.

- An additional weekday frequency between Bulawayo and JNB came into operation from 30 October 2023, increasing flights from 7 to 12 weekly.
- The expansion of the international terminal at Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport is also benefiting fastjet and other airlines.

**Etihad Airways** is set to resume passenger flights to East Africa, with daily flights to Nairobi from May 2024.

- Flight EY767 will depart Abu Dhabi at 09h05 and arrive in Nairobi at 13h15. The return flight, EY768, departs Nairobi at 18h10 and arrives in Abu Dhabi at 00h20 the following day.
- The flights will enable passengers from Kenya to connect with Etihad flights to destinations in the GCC, the US, Europe, India, and South-East Asia.

Independent Southern African airline, **Airlink**, will expand its South Africa-Malawi operations with additional flights between Johannesburg and Lilongwe from 16 December 2023.

- In September, Airlink launched services to both Lilongwe and Blantyre as part of its foray into the Malawi market. Airlink will be upping its frequencies on Johannesburg-Lilongwe-Johannesburg to four a week – with the introduction of Saturday flights from mid-December 2023.
- Under the increased schedule, flights on the Lilongwe and Blantyre routes will operate at these times and days of the week, respectively.

Flight No	Days of Week	From	Departure	To	Arrival
4Z 460	1.3.5.6*	JNB	11:00	LLW	13:20
4Z 461	1.3.5.6*	LLW	14:10	JNB	16:35

\*Day 6 with effect from 16 December 2023

Flight No	Days of Week	From	Departure	To	Arrival
4Z 450	.2.4..7	JNB	11:00	BLZ	13:05
4Z 451	.2.4..7	BLZ	14:15	JNB	16:35

#### More South American capacity with SAA's São Paulo flight

- With South America an ever-growing source market for Southern Africa, the industry has widely welcomed SAA's first intercontinental service to São Paulo in Brazil, which took off from Cape Town International Airport on Tuesday, 31 October 2023 at 12h55.
- The first flight out of Johannesburg took off on Monday 06 October 2023. Cape Town will operate on Tuesdays and Saturdays, with Johannesburg flights operating on Mondays and Thursdays.

European carrier **Condor** launched a JNB-FRA seasonal route from Friday, 03 November 2023 until 13 April 2024. Condor's partner, Lufthansa, will provide connections to major cities.

- Based on the success of last year's seasonal flight, this is the second time the route will operate. DE2288 will fly from FRA to JNB on Mondays and Fridays, and return flight DE2289 will depart from JNB to FRA on Tuesdays and Saturdays.
- CPT-FRA flights have also been launched seasonally. Flight DE2290 departs from Frankfurt on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and return flight DE2291 departs from Cape Town on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.
- In November, four flights a week will depart from Frankfurt to Cape Town on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and return on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays. From 18 December 2023, an extra flight will depart from Frankfurt on Sundays and depart from Cape Town on Mondays, bringing the number of flights to five a week.
- The last flight of the CPT-FRA season will be on 14 April 2024.