

WILDERNESS PRODUCT

NEWS & UPDATES

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August 2023

NEWSFLASH

- We are delighted to announce that Wilderness Busanga Bush Camp (BBC) recently completed a remarkable addition to its facilities: a brand-new viewing deck and pool. With its comfortable lounge areas, the pool is now the perfect spot to unwind after game drives or birdwatching. The pool deck is also ideal for a relaxing massage from BBC's new on-site therapist. The soothing ambience, combined with the stunning views, creates an enchanting atmosphere that complements the untamed spirit of the Busanga Plains.
- Wilderness listed among the [Top 10 Safari Outfitters](#) in *Travel + Leisure's* World's Best Awards 2023 – as voted by the magazine's readers!
- Wilderness Mombo enhances in-camp guest experiences. These include adding a new fire deck, the creation of a series of intimate dining pods and a walk-in wine cellar. These new areas have expansive views over the surrounding plains, and offer exciting options from which to enjoy Mombo's superb food and wine offering.
- Wilderness Mokete – we are disappointed to advise that there is a delay in the opening of this extraordinary camp, and it's now scheduled for 1 March 2024. All impacted bookings have been communicated with in this regard. Unexpected hold-ups and other unforeseen events have meant that our team on the ground has only recently been able to commence construction. The upside of this is that they have had an extended time in the area, getting to know the lie of the land and witnessing truly spectacular wildlife sightings!
- Drones: Please note that it is illegal to fly any aerial UAVs/drones or operate terrestrial UAVs/beetle-cams in all of our Wilderness concessions in all areas of operation, unless a permit is obtained from the relevant Government authority.
- We are thrilled to celebrate a decade of Wilderness24 – a pioneering risk and incident-management system that has set the standard across Africa's safari industry. A one-of-a-kind in our industry, Wilderness24 offers a sophisticated, robust and tailored approach to proactive safety, as well as incident response across all of our regions.

Speak to your Travel Designer for more information.

GENERAL REMINDER

Wi-Fi in our Camps

We firmly believe disconnecting to reconnect is one of the greatest benefits for guests spending time in our remote, beautiful areas. However, Wi-Fi is available in our guest suites for use at their leisure. It is important to note though, that as our internet connection relies on satellites rather than fibre, speed and reliability might not be quite what they are used to. It is best suited to messaging, low data emails, and WhatsApp voice calls (i.e. it is not suitable for downloading movies and high data items). There is no Wi-Fi in the main communal areas out of respect for those guests who prefer to remain disconnected. If you have guests travelling over the next few months who have important work and need a good connection, please do let your Travel Designer know to inform our Operations team.

FEATURED PRODUCTS

Wilderness Jao

- Perfect for families or small groups, Jao's two supremely luxurious and exquisitely decorated villas each comprise two identical tents (four beds in total). Each has its own en-suite facilities, and a spacious lounge and dining area, a

kitchenette (with private chef), fire deck and private plunge pool, as well as a private vehicle, guide and private butler. Large folding doors and mosquito gauze make up the front wall so guests can enjoy more of the wonderful view.

- Watch our Family Safaris video filmed at Jao [here](#).



Other Camps with Family Accommodation

Botswana

Chitabe Lediba • Vumbura North • Little Vumbura • Mombo • Qorokwe • Seba • Tubu Tree • DumaTau • Savuti

Namibia

Little Kulala • Kulala Desert Lodge • Damaraland Camp • Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp • Serra Cafema • Doro Nawas

Zambia

Shumba • Toka Leya

Zimbabwe

Linkwasha • Little Makalolo • Davison's • Chikwenya • Ruckomechi

The Wilderness Family Offering

The Wilderness family offering at our camps in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe incorporates a fun and learning programme designed for younger guests aged 06 to 16 years (inclusive), and includes:

- Family accommodation with different configurations, so that parents can choose a camp best suited to them.
- Well-trained guides and staff, who are professional, friendly and enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge with the next generation.
- Games and activities led by guides to ensure children learn about the natural environment in an entertaining manner.
- Bush Buddies* – these are key staff members who have been trained in childcare, and the educational aspects of looking after children in the bush. They either have children of their own or they have had previous experience working with youngsters, making them ideally suited to this position. Our dedicated Bush Buddies provide insightful entertainment and special activities just for children.
- Flexibility in activities, allowing for early meals for younger children if required.
- Arts and crafts, offering the opportunity to learn about local culture and customs.

* Our complimentary Bush Buddy service is available on request prior to arrival for children aged 06 to 12 years. A Bush Buddy joins the family at each camp, offering mentorship and friendship to the children wherever needed throughout the day, and evening for dinner, if required. Children aged 06 to 10 years receive a Kids Bag, while older children, 11 to 16 years, receive a Teen Backpack — providing educational and entertaining items for a safari. For each bag or backpack handed out, a donation is made to Children in the Wilderness**.

Please speak to your Travel Designer regarding the costings, and booking arrangements. While the Kids Bag and Teen Backpack are complimentary, this excludes bookings that feature only Discovery category camps, and SADC bookings.

The beauty of our family-friendly safaris is that parents are able to spend quality time with their children, as well as pursue their own interests and relax in camp. Or are welcome to join in on the activities!

Family Safari Activities by Region

Here are just a few ideas for activities:

- **Okavango Delta and Linyanti Wildlife Reserve, Botswana:** Enjoy boating, game drives, catch-and-release fishing and numerous other exciting activities for the whole family. Large trunks filled with games are available in camp for the children to use.
- **Sossusvlei, Namibia:** Our camps have an exclusive-use access point to Namib-Naukluft National Park, allowing for an early arrival at Sossusvlei and a shorter journey overall — which results in happier children and parents. Large trunks filled with games are available in camp for the children to use.
- **Damaraland, Namibia:** A guide will take the children on a nature walk, searching for interestingly shaped and coloured rocks among the thousands of red basalt stones, find unusual plants and watch desert-adapted elephants.
- **Busanga Plains, Zambia:** Boating, game drives, catch-and-release fishing, and a thrilling introduction to birding are just some of the unforgettable activities that can be tailored to younger guests.
- **Hwange and Mana Pools, Zimbabwe:** A full schedule of guided children's activities, games and crafts is available, giving parents the time for a guided walk, or simply to make the most of their siesta.

Speak to your Travel Designer for specific information on the many activities available by region.

**** Children in the Wilderness (CITW)** is Wilderness' life skills educational and environmental programme that focuses on the next generation of rural decision makers. We focus on developing environmental leaders who are inspired to care for their natural heritage so that they become the custodians of these areas in the future. The CITW programme cannot operate without support and funding of Wilderness, generous guests and travel partners. Please feel free to visit the [CITW website](#) to get involved.

For every family booking at Wilderness camps, the company contributes directly to CITW. An amount of USD 20.00 (or NAD 300.00) per booking is allocated to CITW, to enrich the lives of children in our areas of operation, through Eco-Clubs and other elements of the CITW programme.

Pack for a Purpose (PfaP) – Make Your Travels Meaningful

Guests can make an impact in the communities they visit by simply using a small amount of space in their luggage to pack supplies needed by our community projects. See the PfaP [website](#) where all items required are listed by destination.

Other Family Activity Options

- **The Lion Trail – Cape Town, South Africa**
 - Guided walk around Lion's Head through fynbos, forest and beach; finishes with a fun electric scooter ride along the Sea Point promenade.
 - Features fascinating stories, ever-changing views and delicious local cuisine, The Lion Trail is the ideal way to explore Cape Town's biodiverse nature and find out what makes this city incomparable.
 - The Lion Trail features stories of the city's history, geology, flora, fauna, oceans, legends, food and wine. Led by a knowledgeable local guide, the route was specifically chosen for its spectacular views and sense of adventure – all adding up to a most enjoyable day out in Cape Town!
 - The Lion Trail takes five hours, and starts and ends at the Green Point Lighthouse (at 1 pm in time for lunch).
 - The trail is ideal for honeymooners and families, but also anyone active. Ages 10 - 60 can comfortably do it. The tour can also be shortened and customised according to travellers' needs.

Speak to your Travel Designer for more information or see the WETU brochure [here](#).

- **Elephant Art of Africa – Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**
 - This collaboration between Wild Horizons and Art of Africa is certainly one for the bucket list. Spend time with a herd of Africa’s gentle giants, elephants, minutely observing their characters and behaviour.
 - Easels and palettes await beneath the trees in front of the wallow where the herd descends to splash and play in the cool mud.
 - A private tutor is provided to guide guests through an interactive and fun painting workshop, using their sketch pads and brushes to capture amazing moments.
 - The experience includes return transfers from the guests’ hotel in Victoria Falls.
 - After lunch on the deck guests are transferred back to their hotel. Children aged 5 and older are welcome if accompanied by a parent.

Speak to your Travel Designer for more information.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Botswana Water Levels

Botswana Operations has advised that they can’t commit to predicting the water levels in the coming months, but levels this year seem lower.

- Mokoro only (no boating)
 - Qorokwe
- Mokoro and boating
 - Jao • Kwetsani • Jacana • Pelo • Tubu Tree • Little Tubu • Vumbura • Little Vumbura • Jao • Kwetsani • Jacana • Pelo
Estimated that before the end of August boating may stop, as sand banks are becoming visible – a clear indication. Mokoro will still be doable for some time.
 - Abu • Seba
Flow levels are lessening and Operations is unsure for how long boating will continue unless additional waters are incoming. Presently, boating is guaranteed until the end of August, with mokoro possible until the end of September.
- Boating
 - Savuti
- Boating and barge
 - DumaTau, Little DumaTau and King’s Pool

Wilderness Air Botswana, Namibia, Zambia (operated by Staravia Air Charters and/or United Air Charters) & Zimbabwe

- In Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, soft bags with a rigid structure at the base – including wheels and/or a collapsible handle – will be accepted. Alternatively, standard soft duffel/tog bags.
- In Namibia, **only soft duffel/tog bags will be accepted** – no frames or rigid structures may be transported, as these cannot physically fit into the aircraft. Wheels on a bag are only permissible if they are not part of a solid frame or rigid structure, i.e. bags cannot have a retractable handle in a structure base. The whole bag needs to be flexible so that it can be stored in the cargo hold compartments, which have restricted space. This applies to camera bags as well. Should bag dimensions not conform, guests will be provided with soft bags to repack at our Wilderness Lounge at Hosea Kutako International Airport, Windhoek. Alternatively, luggage may be stored at our airport lounge or our offices in town.
- The maximum dimensions of all bags which can be accommodated with Wilderness Air 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 hand luggage and camera equipment, is restricted to 20 kg (44 lb) per person.

Flexibility on the Wilderness Air Namibia Circuit

- This has been previously communicated; however, we find ourselves in a similar position at the moment.
- Please be aware of the below when making bookings or finalising arrangements utilising our Wilderness Air Namibia circuit. It is really important that guests are made aware to ensure expectations are met.
- If there is a particular concern/need for very specific timing, please contact Wilderness Air Operations.

Our Wilderness Air Namibia Flying Circuits are published with times and routings in order to operate efficiently in a country with vast flying distances. Both departure and arrival times will vary, as well as flying direct, where previously we may have made another stop on the route. Please, therefore, allow for adjustments in timings and scheduling, bearing in mind that regional and international connections will always be considered as per the published flying circuit timings. Rest assured that all movements will take guests' convenience and arrangements into account. If there is a particular concern or need for very specific timing, please contact Wilderness Air Operations before travel date and confirmation of booking.

When the Namibian coastline is fogged in, Swakopmund is inaccessible. As the norm, Wilderness Air Namibia will use Arandis for refuelling on the circuit, instead of Swakopmund. Located inland to the north-east, out of the fog, Arandis is more reliable. If weather conditions are favourable, and guests need to be dropped off or picked up from Swakopmund because of arrangements, then the aircraft will land there to refuel. However, if it is foggy, then the aircraft will fly to Arandis and guests will be transferred to/from Swakopmund by road.

WILDERNESS TOURING CAPE TOWN

Please note that as of May 2023 Wilderness Touring Cape Town's new physical address is 97 Durham Avenue, Salt River, Cape Town 7925

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY (DMC) – GENERAL NEWS

Airports

- The expansion of **Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport** in Harare has been completed, and the revamped facility officially opened on 13 July 2023.
 - The government's airport expansion project, run by Airports Company of Zimbabwe, started in 2018.
 - It included developing a VIP pavilion, gyms, salons, coffee bars and children's play-centres. Additionally, two new aprons were constructed to accommodate four air bridges, one of which is in the domestic terminal. This allows the airport to accommodate seven aircraft in the international terminals at a time.
- **Namibia's Airports set for Revamp.**

The Namibia Airports Company (NAC) plans to upgrade the facilities at Hosea Kutako International Airport (WDH) in Windhoek, Katima Mulilo Airport (MPA), Rundu Airport (NDU) and Lüderitz Airport (LUD).

The airport infrastructure developments for the next three financial years include:

 - The Windhoek congestion alleviation project, which plans to extend the VIP facilities, VVIP facilities and the Presidential Lounge, as well as parking configuration.
 - The apron expansion at Windhoek over a two-year period.
 - The construction of Terminal 3 at Windhoek.
 - The construction of new terminal buildings at Katima Mulilo Airport (MPA), Rundu Airport (NDU) and Lüderitz Airport (LUD).
- **Rwanda is set to complete work on a new airport situated approximately 40 km south of Kigali by 2026.**
 - Work on the airport kicked off in 2017 but construction was halted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Once the new airport opens, the existing Kigali International Airport will remain operational for special arrivals, some chartered flights, and a pilot training school.
 - Qatar Airways has 60% ownership in the new airport, after signing an investment agreement with the Rwandan government in 2019.

- **Cape Town International Airport is open and operational.**
 - To ensure a smooth travel experience, passengers are advised to arrive four hours earlier for International travel.
 - Two hours earlier for Domestic travel as ACSA are working on a reduced staff complement.
 - Please monitor your flight status via the [CheckMyTrip app](#) or liaise with your dedicated Thompsons Travel team.

Alternatively, you can follow [City of Cape Town](#) for more frequent updates.

Airlines

- **FlyNamibia**, the privately owned domestic and regional airline, is joining **Airlink** to promote its flights and services. They will operate the Eros Airport – Lüderitz route from Monday to Friday on the following schedule:
 - Flight WV942 departs ERS at 07h15 and arrives in LUD at 08h15.
 - Flight WV941 departs LUD at 13h00 and arrives in ERS at 14h30.
- **RwandAir** will launch daily flights between Kigali International Airport and London Heathrow on 29 October 2023.
 - The carrier launched four direct flights a week to Heathrow in November last year. Before that it operated flights to the UK capital via an indirect service through Brussels.
 - The daily service will operate as follows:
 - Flight WB107 departs JNB at 16h00 and arrives KGL at 21h30.
 - Flight WB 710 departs KGL at 23h35 and arrives LHR at 06h20 the following day.
 - Flight WB 711 departs LHR at 20h30 and arrives KGL at 07h00 the following day.
 - Flight WB 106 departs KGL at 09h40 and arrives JNB at 15h00.
 - The Cape Town flight connects with just 1 hour and 10 minutes to spare in either direction. However, as Kigali International Airport is small and efficient, the connecting time should be sufficient.
 - Flight WB 111 departs CPT at 16h10 and arrives KGL at 22h25.
 - Flight WB 710 departs KGL at 23h35 and arrives LHR at 06h20 the following day.
 - Flight WB 711 departs LHR at 20h30 and arrives KGL at 07h00 the following day.
 - Flight WB 110 departs KGL at 08h10 and arrives CPT at 14h55.
- **FlySafair** has added four regional routes – Harare, Livingstone, Victoria Falls, and Maputo.
 - On 02 October 2023, operations will start between Johannesburg and Harare, and Johannesburg and Livingstone.
 - The Harare flights will operate daily while Livingstone flights are scheduled for four times weekly – Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.
 - From 03 October 2023, Johannesburg to Victoria Falls will operate three times a week.
 - On 05 October 2023, the route Johannesburg to Maputo will begin operations four times per week.
- **Kenya Airways (KQ) and Delta Airlines (DL)** have expanded their codeshare agreement by including Kenya Airways' nonstop Nairobi to New York service, effective 05 August 2023.
 - This is the only nonstop flight from East Africa to America.
 - KQ currently offers daily flights from Nairobi to the US via John F Kennedy International Airport in New York.
- **Ethiopian Airlines** will introduce three weekly flights to Gatwick, starting on 21 November 2023. This will mark Gatwick's first direct connection with the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, since 2006.
 - Flight ET718, the new nonstop service, will depart Addis Ababa at 00h15 and arrive in Gatwick at 05h15 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.
 - The return flight, ET719, will depart Gatwick on the same days at 10h10, arriving in Addis Ababa at 20h40.

ET719	LGW	10.10	ADD	20.40
ET718	ADD	00.15	LGW	05.15

- **Qatar Airways** has temporarily suspended passenger services from Namibia with effect from 23 November 2023, citing operational reasons.