

WILDERNESS PRODUCT

NEWS & UPDATES

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September 2023

NEWSFLASH

- Wilderness Air Zimbabwe has introduced a VIP Meet & Greet service on the air side, for departures and arrivals from both Victoria Falls Airport and Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport.

This includes the following options (depending on which service you select):

- VIP Arrival Meet & Assist:
Includes assistance through Immigration and Customs with optional baggage handling service (collecting luggage from the baggage carousel).
 - VIP Departure Meet & Assist:
Includes check-in assistance with international scheduled commercial flights, as well as assistance through Customs and Immigration, and Security.
- Wilderness Usawa Serengeti wins in *Architectural Digest 2023* Best New Hotels Awards!
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FEATURED PRODUCTS

Livingstone Island Picnic Lunch

On offer from August through January, this activity takes advantage of the Zambezi River's low level to allow guests to picnic on the famous island David Livingstone camped on while researching the Victoria Falls. Bring a swimsuit and towel too, as a thrilling swim in Devil's Pool, at the lip of the Falls, is also an option. Learn [more](#) or chat to your Travel Designer.

Tour of the Victoria Falls – Zimbabwean side

This approximately 2-hour tour explores the rainforest of the Victoria Falls and the abundance of birdlife. Here, guests learn about the geographical formation of the Falls, and can amble along the scenic pathway, stopping at spectacular vantage points along the way. Learn [more](#) or chat to your Travel Designer.

Tour of the Victoria Falls – Zambian side

An ideal option for Wilderness Toka Leya guests, this tour takes in the rainforest of the Victoria Falls and its abundance of birdlife. Here, they visit the Eastern Cataract, and cross the footbridge to the Knife Edge for spectacular photographic opportunities. The low flow over the lip in summer affords excellent views of the geology of the Falls. Learn [more](#) or chat to your Travel Designer.

Wilderness Toka Leya – Victoria Falls, Zambia

Included activities

- The guided tour of the Zambian side of the Victoria Falls has no set departure times and no age restriction, and has an approximate duration of 1.5 to 2.0 hours
 - From January to June, Zambia benefits greatly from the increased water flow over the Victoria Falls at this time of year
 - However, between September and early December, there can be very little water flowing over the Falls, and a guided tour of the Zimbabwean side of the Falls (visa costs apply) is available
 - Note that temperatures are high from September to December, and guests are advised to start the tour early to return to Toka Leya in time for breakfast and to avoid the midday heat.
- Boating in 02 x 06-seater motor boats – water levels permitting, though usually possible all year round

- River cruise – usually a sunset cruise and water levels permitting; however, usually possible all year round, with approximate duration 2.0 to 2.5 hours
- Fishing on a catch-and-release basis (additional nominal park fee applicable) with standard equipment and sufficient fishing tackle for 03 boats and 09 fishing rods provided. No set times for activity, and scheduled according to availability, guests' needs and duration of stay. Maximum 04 guests per fishing boat (approximate duration 2.0 to 2.5 hours).
- Guided nature walks close to Toka Leya
 - Guests learn about the medicinal properties of the plants and trees, the ecology, and the birds and insects, as well as how to interpret the signs of the wild, including animal tracks
 - Seasonal and subject to the availability of a qualified walking guide
 - Approximate duration 2.0 to 2.5 hours
- Rhino tracking with a Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) scout.
 - Available on request with travel to the location by vehicle and tracking on foot accompanied by the scout
 - Approximate duration 2.0 to 2.5 hours
- Back-of-house tour and discussions by camp staff on the camp's eco-focused initiatives (approximate duration 1.0 hour).
- Children's activities
 - Tailor-made by guide and parents based on the child/ren's preference
 - Includes fishing on a catch-and-release basis, a walk around the camp perimeter identifying flora and fauna, tracks and animal scat, as well as tree planting.

Optional activities at additional cost

- Batoka Sky Canoeing Safaris – full-day (minimum age 12 years) or half-day (minimum age 10 years); minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- Ride Zambezi Horseback Trails – suits all levels of riders
 - River Ride – approximate duration 1.0 to 2.0 hours
 - Champagne Breakfast Ride – approximate duration 2.0 to 3.0 hours
 - Half Day Land & River Ride – picnic lunch option available, approximate duration 6.0 hours and minimum participants 02
 - Pony Trails for Children – approximate duration 30 to 45 minutes, and parents are welcome to enjoy a nature walk at the same time
- United Air Charter Scenic Helicopter Flights
 - Short flight (approximate duration 12 to 15 minutes, climbing to 1,500 feet)
 - Long flight (approximate duration 25 to 30 minutes, climbing to 1,500 feet)
 - Both require minimum participants 03 and maximum 04
- Batoka Sky Quad Biking
 - Eco Trail at Batokaland – approximate duration 1.0 hour, with minimum participants 04 and maximum 06
 - Village Trail – approximate duration 2.5 hours, with minimum participants 04 and maximum 06
- Batoka Sky Horseback Trails
 - Horse Trail (approximate duration 2.0 hours)
 - Half-day Ride with Lunch
 - Half-day Pony Rides – for children over the age of 04 years
- Batoka Sky Helicopter Flights
 - Gorge Lift-out Short Helicopter Flight – approximate duration 15 minutes
 - Long Helicopter Flight – approximate duration 30 minutes
 - Both flights' guest numbers minimum 02 for 03-seater helicopter; 04-seater helicopter minimum 03 guests; 06-seater helicopter minimum 04 guests; they fly a maximum of 200 passengers for a full day utilising the fleet of three helicopters on the Gorge Lift-out Short Helicopter Flight
- Abseil Zambia Adrenaline Products – minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb); full-day or half-day options and mostly with minimum age 08 years
 - Abseil (54 metres above the ground)
 - Rag Jump (54 metres)
 - High Wire/Flying Fox – maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb), 135 metres long and 75 metres above the ground, minimum age 06 years
 - Gorge Swing – 70 metres freefall, maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb), with minimum age 06 years; guests with high blood pressure, back problems or heart issues are advised to not participate
 - Whoopee Slide – 350 metres long and minimum 06 years
 - Canopy Tour – maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb) and minimum age 06 years

- Victoria Falls Bridge Company Adrenaline Products – minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb)
 - Bungee Jump – 111 metres, minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 120 kg (265 lb), with minimum age 14 years; guests with high blood pressure, back problems or heart issues are advised to not participate
 - Solo Bridge Swing – 70 metres, minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 180 kg (397 lb), with minimum age 14 years
 - Tandem Bridge Swing – 70 metres, minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 180 kg (397 lb), with minimum age 14 years
 - Solo Bridge Slide – 70 metres, minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 180 kg (397 lb), with minimum age 14 years
 - Tandem Bridge Slide – 70 metres, minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb) and maximum weight 180 kg (397 lb), with minimum age 06 years; children 06 to 13 years must be accompanied by an adult
 - Big Air Combo – includes Bungee Jump, Bridge Swing and Bridge Slide (approximate duration 1.0 hour excluding transfers), minimum weight 40 kg (88 lb); guests with high blood pressure, back problems or heart issues are advised to not participate in Bungee Jump or Gorge Swing
 - Zipline – maximum weight 140 kg (308 lb), minimum age 06 years
 - Bridge Tour – suitable for all ages, however, minimum age 10 years for the “under the bridge” part of the tour
- Safari Par Excellence Rafting
 - Full-day or half-day
 - Both minimum age of 15 years and maximum age depending on the individual’s general state of health and physical fitness
 - Whether Low Water at Rapids 01 – 21 or High Water at Rapids 14 – 25, note that White Water Rafting minimum participants 03 (as adjusted from the previous minimum 04)
 - Seasonal and water levels permitting, rafting may close between January and June for safety reasons due to water levels being too high
- Tongabezi Lodge Livingstone Island Trips – Morning Breezer
 - Minimum age 05 years
 - Approximate duration 1.0 hour, seasonal with annual closure usually April to June, depending on water levels (subject to change) on the island
 - Swimming is not always possible, even when the island is open
- Livingstone Island High Tea
 - Approximate duration 1.5 hours
 - Seasonal with annual closure usually in the months of May and June depending on water levels (subject to change) on the island
- Bushtracks Express Steam Train Dinner Run – operational on Saturday only (approximate duration 3.5 hours and offered even with a minimum participant 01)
- Safari Par Excellence Jet Boat & Lunch with Elephants, The Elephant Café
 - Pre-booking is essential
 - Minimum age 07 years
 - Approximate duration 3.0 hours, with time on the river approximately 30 minutes
 - Minimum participants 03 (adjusted from the previous minimum 02)
- The Elephant Art of Africa – minimum age 06 years, minimum participants 02
- Lady Livingstone Cruise – approximate duration 1.5 hours
- Bundu Adventures swimming under the Victoria Falls
- Private activities at Wilderness Toka Leya operate slightly differently to those at our other safari camps and are offered at a reduced rate
- Private activities booked at Wilderness Toka Leya include game drive/s and river cruise/s (usually sunset cruise/s), vehicle transfers from/to the activities only (the activities guided tour of the Zambian side of the Victoria Falls, guided visit to a local African village, boating (water levels permitting), a guided tour of Livingstone town and Livingstone Museum are on a shared basis with the general public
- Note that vehicle transfers from/to Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport (Livingstone, Zambia) are excluded from the nightly rate, and may be conducted on a shared basis due to demand; thus, we are unable to guarantee a private vehicle

Wilderness Chikwenya – Mana Pools National Park, Zimbabwe

Included activities

- Guided nature walks – available throughout the season
- Water-based activities in 05 x 02-seater canoes and 02 x 08-seater pontoon boats (both water levels permitting)
- River cruise (usually sunset cruise and water levels permitting)
- Fishing (whilst not a predominantly fishing camp) is possible on a catch-and-release basis from the bank or by boat for leisure (not the sole purpose of the safari) and is included as a standard camp activity (water levels permitting and at no extra cost), dependent on boat availability and guest numbers
 - Basic fishing tackle is available from the camp (rods/reels/line sinkers/hooks/steel trace, as well as worms, which can be used to fish for bream (tilapia), barbel (catfish) and tigerfish
 - Fly fishing equipment is not stocked in camp and for serious fishermen requiring sole use of a boat (subject to availability), a per-hour per-boat cost (subject to change) will be levied, payable direct
 - Note that priority for the camp boats is game-viewing activities for all guests
- Birding
- Stargazing with a laser pointer
- Picnics on Chikwenya Island in the river
- Private activities on offer (subject to vehicle availability, which needs to be booked and paid for) may be requested in advance

Wilderness Ruckomechi – Mana Pools National Park, Zimbabwe

Included activities

- Guided nature walks available throughout the season
- Water-based activities in 02 x 08-seater pontoons, 01 x 04-seater speed boat and 01 x 09-seater Pelican motor boat, as well as 05 x 02-seater canoes (water levels permitting)
- River cruise (usually sunset cruise)
- Fishing (whilst not a predominantly fishing camp) is possible on a catch-and-release basis from the bank or by boat for leisure (not the sole purpose of the safari) and is included as a standard camp activity (water levels permitting and at no extra cost), dependent on boat availability and guest numbers
 - Basic fishing tackle is available from the camp (rods/reels/line sinkers/hooks/steel trace, as well as worms, which can be used to fish for bream (tilapia), barbel (catfish) and tigerfish
 - Fly fishing equipment is not stocked in camp and for serious fishermen requiring sole use of a boat (subject to availability), a per-hour per-boat cost (subject to change) will be levied, payable direct
 - Note that priority for the camp boats is game-viewing activities for all guests
- Birding
- Star Bed at Parachute Pan
 - Approximately 400 metres and a 40-minute drive from camp
 - King-sized bed with mosquito net; wash basin and flush toilet
 - Weather permitting and operated subject to the discretion of the camp manager
 - No minimum night stay and booking of a private vehicle not required (guests are transferred by vehicle to the platform after dinner in camp)
 - However, dinner or breakfast at the platform may be arranged if requested in advance, with guests returning to camp in time for the early morning game drive with other guests in camp sharing the vehicle;
 - Maximum of 02 guests, accompanied by a guide who sleeps in a pop-up tent nearby
- Stargazing with a laser pointer
- Private activities on offer (subject to vehicle availability, which needs to be booked and paid for) may be requested in advance
- Note that there is one private vehicle on the Ruckomechi Concession, shared between Wilderness Ruckomechi and Wilderness Little Ruckomechi

REGIONAL UPDATE

BOTSWANA

Water levels and activities

- Mokoro and boating – Jao (boating in Mud Buddies to accommodate the low water levels) • Kwetsani • Jacana • Pelo • Abu • Seba (at least until the end of the month, though levels are dropping quickly)
- Mokoro only (no boating) – Tubu Tree • Little Tubu

KENYA

The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Kenya has advised that the challenges experienced on the Government E-Citizen portal have now been resolved. Travellers can no longer acquire visas upon arrival in Kenya.

NAMIBIA

The Eurowings flight (4Y142) that normally lands at 08h05 has informed us, that until further notice, they will be landing at 09h00 in Windhoek.

We normally cut off the arrival times from 08h45 to connect to the 10h30 to Geluk. However, with the Eurowings flight now landing at 09h00, it will cause some inconvenience for guests and agents who would otherwise have to wait for the next (15h10) departure. In the interest of convenience, Reservations is making the departure window period more flexible now, to between 10h30 and 11h00, to accommodate this flight's slightly later arrival time.

Wilderness Air Namibia

- 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.

RWANDA

Wilderness – Emergency After-Hours (EAH)

Wilderness office-hours are 08h00 to 17h00 on weekdays (Monday to Friday) should you have any queries.

Our Emergency After-Hours service is primarily telephonic, allowing for more immediate and prompt assistance. In the event of an emergency, your first course of action should be to call the number below to alert the staff member on duty to the situation, with further information or details to follow by email. Should the line be engaged, please do try again. As emails are not the primary means of contact, please follow up with a phone call if no response to your email is received.

EAH is an emergency service assisting with medical emergencies, last minute amendments; as well as last minute bookings. These numbers are to be used for emergencies only – flight cancellations, medical concerns, family emergencies, last minute changes to itineraries while guests are travelling, and so forth.

Hours of service are based on South African time, which is Central African Time (CAT). Central Africa Time is two hours ahead of Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC+02:00).

Active Emergency Phone Duty

Monday – Friday	17h00 to 22h00 and 07h00 to 08h00
Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays	07h00 to 22h00

Standby Emergency Phone Duty

Weekdays and Weekends	22h00 to 07h00
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(During this time emails and WhatsApp messages will not be checked, however, phone calls and WhatsApp calls will be answered in the event of an emergency)

Emergency After-Hours Email

wsafterhours@wildernessdestinations.com

Emergency After-Hours Phone Numbers

Mobile Number: +27 82 576 9173

Landline Number: +27 257 5000 (Main Switchboard)

Landline Number: +27 807 1800 (Secondary Line)

The relevant booking office/after-hours numbers should be contacted for assistance accordingly. As we have a number of regional offices handling reservations, the Emergency After-Hours services may not be completely familiar with your booking details – your patience is appreciated while the necessary investigation is undertaken.

Should guests be delayed for any reason and are unable to arrive at their scheduled destination/sightseeing tour/transfer, etc., please make every effort to notify the supplier, using the contact details provided, or contact the Wilderness offices on the numbers advised.

WILDERNESS TOURING

ZIMBABWE

Wilderness Touring Zambezi has notified us that as of 01 September 2023, the Zambezi Sunset Cruise will return to its summer schedule. Cruises will now depart at 16h30 and return at 18h30.

Water levels

Our Zambian driver-guides have advised that the Victoria Falls' water level on the Zambian side has dropped noticeably. They anticipate that the Zambian side will be dry by the end of the month. From the Zimbabwean side, there are still significant flows from the mouth to Livingstone Island, but the flow has decreased markedly from Horseshoe to Eastern Cataract, and we estimate it will be dry by early October.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY (DMC) – GENERAL NEWS

fastjet moved its check-in services from Terminal A to Terminal B at OR Tambo International Airport on 15 August 2023.

- The primary reasons for this change are to provide our passengers with improved convenience, streamlined check-in procedures, and closer access to essential facilities within the airport.
- Terminal B is closer to fastjet's ticket desk, making the airport process more efficient for passengers and staff, helping reduce travel time and enhancing the overall flow for customers.
- Terminal B has more amenities and facilities to elevate passengers' travel experience further. With more dining options and relaxation zones, customers will have a more comfortable and enjoyable pre-flight experience.

On the below routes, our preferred airline remains Airlink. Nevertheless, Mozambique's national carrier, **LAM**, has resumed flights connecting Johannesburg to two key Mozambique tourism cities, Vilanculos and Beira, effective 06 August 2023.

- The additional flight schedule operates Mondays to Fridays, with an early departure from JNB at 06h50, arriving in BUQ at 08h10. Departures from BUQ will be at 08h50, arriving in JNB at 10h10.
- These flights are in addition to the daily evening return rotation between the two cities.

Johannesburg – Vilanculos

- Flights are scheduled for Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays and depart Johannesburg at 11h10, arriving in Vilanculos at 13h05. Return flights depart Vilanculos at 14h15, arriving in Johannesburg at 16h10.

Johannesburg – Beira

- Flights operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and depart Beira at 08h30, arriving in Johannesburg at 10h10. The return flight departs Johannesburg at 17h35 and arrives in Beira at 19h15.

The airline recently resumed flights to Lusaka on 30 June.

Lufthansa and SWISS have announced a new unilateral codeshare with Airlink.

- Agents can book clients flying from George, Gqeberha, Durban, or East London on Lufthansa's long-haul connections to Frankfurt from Johannesburg and Cape Town, all on one booking.
- Likewise, inbound passengers may also be booked on a single Lufthansa booking from Europe through Johannesburg or Cape Town, to travel seamlessly onward to their final destination of George, Gqeberha, East London or Durban.
- The codeshare also allows seamless baggage service, with luggage checked to its final destination.
- The Lufthansa Group has also announced the restoration of the Lufthansa and SWISS codeshare with SAA.

Kenya Airways will launch direct flights to Bangkok (BKK), starting 21 November 2023.

The airline will offer three weekly flights from Nairobi (NBO) on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, with return flights on the same days.

The flight schedule is as follows:

- Flight KQ886 departs NBO at 23h45 and arrives at BKK at 13h30.
- Flight KQ887 departs BKK at 01h00 and arrives at NBO at 06h05.

Qatar Airways officially opened its Zimbabwean office in Harare this month.

- This follows the launch of the **airline's linked service** between Doha and Lusaka and Harare, with thrice-weekly flights from Doha on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

FlySafair has just announced the relaunch of a key local route to its growing list of local destinations.

- From September 8, the airline will once again connect the two largest cities in the Western Cape: Cape Town and George.
- This will be welcome news to both holiday-makers and businesspeople who regularly travel between the two cities.
- Three flights per week are planned.

Brazilian airline LATAM JNB/São Paulo route

- The flight operates three times per week as of September 2023 on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, departing Sao Paulo at 17:25. The JNB – São Paulo flight also departs on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays at 13:10.