

ASSOCIATED PRODUCT

## News and Updates

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**FULL UPDATE**

**June 2024**

# GENERAL UPDATES

## AIRLINES

**Airlink** has increased its seat availability from both Cape Town and Johannesburg to Skukuza. Two flights per week to and from both cities on the routes have been upgraded from a 37-seat Embraer ERJ 135 Regional Jet to a more comfortable and spacious 98-seat Embraer E190 E-Jet, which offers six Business Class seats and 92 Economy Class seats.

**Auric Air** has a new scenic flight over Mount Kilimanjaro. Each passenger is guaranteed a window seat, offering an unobstructed view of the world's highest free-standing mountain. On board, guests are equipped with Bose noise-cancelling headphones and tablets loaded with an engaging Flight Audio Tour, ensuring you're fully immersed in the experience. Morning flights are available from 07h00 to 08h00, and evening flights from 17h00 – 18h00.

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## BOTSWANA

**Kwando Safaris** has announced the opening of the 4 Rivers Airstrip, which is located a short 15-minute drive from the camp; guests no longer need to fly into the Kwara Airstrip and transfer into camp via helicopter.

**Natural Selection** will be closing North Island Okavango for the period 5 January to 14 March 2025 as they will be adding an additional 2 standard units and 1 family unit.

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## KENYA

**Asilia Africa** is adding an extra tent to Ol Pejeta Bush Camp, located on the Ewaso Nyiro River, in central Kenya's Laikipia region. The main area of the camp is also being redesigned to create more space, and a large deck with comfortable seating is being added on the river side. Ol Pejeta Bush Camp is an ideal destination from where to encounter the last two remaining Northern white rhinos and learn about the efforts to save the species.

**Finch Hattons Luxury Tented Camp**, located in Tsavo National Park, will be the latest addition to the Virgin Limited Edition brand from 1 July 2024. The camp offers 17 luxury tents and is set to become the ninth property within the collection, and its fifth footprint in Africa, complementing Virgin's other world-class properties across the continent.

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## NAMIBIA

**Strand Hotel** will no longer be offering Dinner Bed and Breakfast rates from 01 July 2025 onwards. Only Bed & Breakfast rates will be available, though dinner can still be booked additionally.

**Namibia Tracks & Trails** no longer offers transfers from Swakopmund to Pelican Point. An alternative supplier, **Oshili Namibia**, can offer this service, with a minimum of 3 guests. Children under the age of 12 years booked on transfers in and around Swakopmund in a group of 3 or more passengers, will qualify for a 30% discount, valid until 31 December 2024.

**O&L Leisure** is delighted to announce the addition of a spa facility at Chobe Water Villas, further enhancing the world-class experience for guests. Rates from 1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025 do not include the spa offering. Rates from 1 July 2025 onwards include the spa offering. Should guests wish to include the spa offering from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, an additional charge will be applicable.

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## SOUTH AFRICA

**Simbavati Lodge Collection** has introduced a new sleep-out activity on the Shilope Sleep-Out Deck. The sleep-out is available to guests staying at **Waterside Lodge** in the Klaserie Reserve, and will be booked in conjunction with a room at Waterside Lodge (no children under the age of 16 allowed).

At **Simbavati River lodge**, from January 2025 the luxury safari tents will have a private plunge pool on the deck, and the 2-bedroomed family chalets now require a minimum of 3 guests. A surcharge will apply for single or double occupancy.

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## ZIMBABWE

**The Victoria Falls Hotel** has announced that Rodney Meiring has joined the hotel as the new General Manager as of 01 June 2024. Rodney has over 20 years' experience in the hospitality industry and in similar positions. Farai Chimba who has been acting General Manager is leaving the hotel after 15 years of service.

**Ilaa Lodge Hotel** has renamed their Standard rooms to better reflect the timeless elegance of the property. From 01 April 2025, Standard Rooms will now be called Classic Rooms and Standard Suites will now be called Classic Suites. All other room types remain as is, and the amenities, and inclusions/exclusions remain the same.

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## TANZANIA

**Asilia Africa's** Ubuntu Migration Camp has packed up its southern location and specific look, and will open in its northern setting with an entirely new look. Both the main area and guest tents will be replaced, and the main area is being upgraded with recycled deck flooring. The designs centre around the shared feeling of community, in line with the meaning of "ubuntu". Tent interiors have been locally designed and locally built, with old furniture upcycled in new designs, and sustainable, recycled materials used for additional pieces. Bucket showers will be replaced with fully plumbed showers. The fresh new look will be launched when the migration camp is in the Lamai area of the northern Serengeti from mid-June to the end of October. From mid-November to March the camp will be in the Kusini area in the southern Serengeti.

**Chem Chem Safaris** has launched three specialised wellness walks at Chem Chem Lodge as a new immersive experience. These include their signature Nature Walk, and two new offerings, being the Silent Walk and the Power Walk. The Nature Walk offers guests a morning or late afternoon walk with local Maasai to interact and learn about their incredible knowledge and history, and the surrounding landscape, before ending with a delicious bush breakfast or a striking sundowner experience on the shores of Lake Manyara. On the Silent Walk, feel the senses come alive while soaking up the sights, smells, and sounds that surround you. As the walk comes

to an end, break the silence with a Maasai guide over some freshly brewed baobab tea. The Power Walk is designed to get the blood pumping. This brisk and invigorating walk is led by a Maasai guide and charts a 6-10km course through Chem Chem's exclusive-use wilderness protected area.

**Onsea House & Machweo Wellness Retreat** in Arusha have closed indefinitely after 18 years of operation. The property will be undergoing major renovations over the next few months.

**The Zanzibar Collection** has announced changes to arrival and departure timings at all properties. Effective 1 June 2024, check-in will change to 3 pm and check-out will change to 12 noon.

**Laba Fanjove** has launched new accommodation categories: The Coral Manor (a private villa), 2 Coral Villas, 2 Family villas, and the stunning Villa 16. The property has also opened a new Kids Club, as well as a spa overlooking the ocean, and added a host of new water activities to cater for guests looking to fully experience the island's 11km intact coral reef. A reminder that while Coastal Air has an inducement of four passengers per booking, the resort will cover the cost of 2 of these seats. **Laba Jongomero** has unveiled a new bush thermal spa, built on the site of natural hot springs, offering their guests unique bush and spa combinations.

**Foxes Safari Camps** has launched a new excursion to visit an isolated sandbar directly from Lazy Lagoon Island Lodge. The excursion, called Mwamba Kuni, takes guests on a local dhow to the sandbar, which only emerges from the water for a few hours during low tide. Guests can sunbathe, snorkel and stand-up paddleboard while a seafood barbeque lunch is prepared. Lazy Lagoon Island Lodge is located on a natural, secluded, mangrove island. This off-the-grid destination is only a short journey from Dar es Salaam by road, and then a short boat ride to the island.

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## RWANDA

**Akagera National Park** has banned single-use plastic items with effect from 01 June 2024. This includes any of the following items:

- Drinks bottles and straws
- Food wrappers and bags
- Plastic cutlery, cups, and plates
- Plastic bottle caps and lids
- Cigarette butts
- Drink stirrers
- Single-use take-away container

# SPECIALS

## BOTSWANA

**Mashatu** is extending an additional 5% discount on rates for all new bookings until 31 January 2025

## SOUTH AFRICA

**Camissa House and Silvan Safari Lodge** are offering a new combination special. When booking three nights at Camissa House and four nights at Silvan Safari Lodge, guests will receive a free night at each property. The offer is valid for travel until February 2026, but excludes the Festive Season of 20 December to 06 January each year.

**Kateka The Safari Wellness Experience** is offering a Stay 4 Pay 3-night special, and a Stay 7 Pay 5-night special from 01 May – 15 December 2024, and 10 January – 30 June 2025. During the same period there is also a Single Supplement Waiver applicable to single travellers in a group of three or more applied to one room per booking. For all specials, the offers do not apply during peak periods or holidays (Easter, Christmas). The deals can be applied to any package (honeymoon/wellness). Rates are subject to change without prior notice

**Jamala Madikwe** is offering a Winter Special for May, June and July 2025. Guests staying for three nights at Jamala Madikwe will receive a 50% discount on the third night, and if staying four nights will receive a 75% discount on the fourth night. All bookings are subject to availability and only one promotion may be applied per visit.

**Mateya Safari Lodge** has released a Stay 3 Pay 2-night Winter Bush Break Special for 01 May – 31 August 2025, where guests booking 3 nights will only pay for 2 nights. The offer is valid for new bookings only, and not redeemable for cash, nor to be used in conjunction with any other package, promotion, special offer or child rates. The offer is subject to availability at time of reservation.

**Babylonstoren** in the Cape Winelands is offering an additional 30-minute spa treatment to their Stay 4 Pay 3 Winter Special, for new bookings from 04 June 2024 onwards.

**Jaci's Lodges** has launched a Stay 4 Pay 3-night deal for the period 01 May – 30 June 2025 and 01 November – 15 December 2025.

**Cape Grace, A Fairmont Managed Hotel** has released its new Back with Grace Opening Offer. For all new bookings travelling until 30 September 2024, guests will receive a room upgrade, guaranteed early check-in at 12h00, late departure until 16h00, complimentary whisky tasting and a R1000 hotel credit offered once per stay, valid for use in the Restaurant, Library, in-room dining & in-room refreshment centre.

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## MOZAMBIQUE

**Kisawa Sanctuary** have extended its Mozambique Calling offer and created an exciting new September Sun offer for September 2024.

Mozambique Calling is a Stay 5 Pay 4-night special valid for stays from 01 May 2024 to 31 March 2025, and bookable until 10 December 2024. The special is not available during the following block-out dates: 01 – 31 August 2024, 23 – 31 December 2024, and 01 – 10 January 2025. Standard payment terms apply.

September Sun is a Stay 4 Pay 3-night special valid for 01 – 30 September 2024 and bookable until 31 July 2024. Full pre-payment is required at time of booking and is non-refundable.

## ZIMBABWE

**Matetsi Victoria Falls** has announced that it is including the month of September 2024 in the "Stay 3 nights and only pay 50% for the last night" special offer, which is already available in October, November and early December 2024. The special will also be available in 2025 during mid-season from 08 January – 31 March, and 01 October to 15 December. In 2026 the special will be available from 08 January – 31 March.

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## SEYCHELLES

At **Waldorf Astoria Seychelles Platte Island** all new bookings made before 31 July 2024 for travel until 31 October 2025 receive a complimentary room upgrade, from a Deluxe Room to a One-Bedroom Hawksbill Pool Villa. A minimum stay of three nights or more is required, and bookings are subject to availability and stop sales.

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# FIRST-HAND FEEDBACK

## ZIMBABWE

**Samantha Botes, Simone Solomons, Portia Mphothe and Kelefilwe Molongwa, recently went on an educational trip to Zimbabwe, and shared this feedback on the Associated Product property they stayed at.**

What an amazing way to start an epic educational... at **Victoria Falls River Lodge** in Victoria Falls. The lodge is close enough to see the spray of the magnificent Victoria Falls, yet far enough to escape the noise of town. Access to the lodge is via a short boat ride on the Zambezi River or game drive through Zambezi National Park. Located on the banks of the Zambezi River, each room has a view of the river and a private plunge pool – this is a great choice for honeymooners. We were served wholesome meals with a variety of options for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and on a fully inclusive basis we did not need to worry about booking any of the popular activities in Victoria Falls, as they are all included in the rates. We also had time to relax on the decks of our rooms, enjoying cocktails and watching the birdlife on the banks of the Zambezi. From our rooms, we also enjoyed watching all the game that comes into camp, especially the elephants.

An optional daily transfer from camp (typically departing at 10h00 and returning at 15h00) is available to Victoria Falls town. We enjoyed doing the Tour of the Falls (part of the daily transfer to town) and only the entry fee into the rainforest was for our own account. Two game activities are included per day – a choice of either a morning or afternoon game drive in Zambezi National Park, and a sunrise or sunset river cruise per person per day (subject to availability). Snacks and local drinks are included on the game drives and/or the sunset river cruises. Afternoon tea is also served daily, and there is complimentary access to the Fitness Centre, and complimentary WI-FI.

The Luxury Tents and Luxury Family Tents are well-suited for families – or for a multi-generational group the Hippo Creek Villa and Rapids View Villa are ideal. The Island Treehouse Suites (no under 12 years) are perfect for couples or honeymooners seeking tranquility and exclusivity.



**Naseemah Isaacs and Debray Mugnaioni joined a post-Indaba agent educational trip in May hosted by Africa Albida Tourism, and shared this feedback on their properties.**

Located just 4 kilometres from the renowned Victoria Falls and town, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge Estate is an ideal setting for guests seeking a safari lodge experience away from the bustling town. The lodge rooms and main areas overlook an active waterhole frequented by elephants, buffalo, kudu, and other species.

The main property, Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, has 72 rooms, the renowned MaKuwa-Kuwa Restaurant, the iconic Buffalo Bar, and a striking two-tiered swimming pool. The Siduli Hide is a lovely activity and opportunity to observe animals at the waterhole up close. Despite the size of the property, all staff are very attentive to all guests and ensure you are warmly welcomed to their lodge.

We enjoyed the unique the Vulture Culture Experience and The Boma – Dinner & Drum Show. The Vulture Culture Experience educates guests about the endangered vulture species and offers insight into conservation efforts, including a chance to witness the supplementary feeding programme.

The Boma – Dinner & Drum Show is an immersive cultural and culinary experience. Guests are treated to a delectable four-course meal, vibrant dance performances, interactive drumming sessions, and traditional storytelling. The infectious energy of the staff performers sets the stage for guests to showcase their own dancing skills, culminating in an evening of unforgettable camaraderie.



We were fortunate to enjoy a guided tour of the Falls, an absolute must! Our guide delved into the formation, history, and discovery of the Victoria Falls. Following the informative session, we embarked on a walking tour, exploring this breath-taking World Heritage site, gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation for this natural wonder. Given the current season, with the Falls in full flood, raincoats were essential. Along the way, we encountered various lookout points offering spectacular views, while at others, excessive spray limited visibility.

Experiencing this spectacle both from ground level and an aerial perspective is truly a must! The Livingstone's Angels Flight lasts 15 minutes and offers incredible photographic opportunities. The pilot navigates a figure-eight pattern, ensuring all passengers have the chance to view the Falls from various angles before returning to the helipad.

Also on the estate, is the Victoria Falls Safari Club with 20 luxury rooms. Each room, including the suite option, offers spacious accommodation. With exclusive access granted to club patrons, dining and facility usage are imbued with an unparalleled sense of exclusivity. The Safari Club lounge deck is a great setting to unwind, enjoy cocktails and canapés while enjoying sunset views. The talented chefs at the Club Restaurant treated us to an exquisite fine dining and food tasting experience for dinner. The meticulously crafted six-course menu was a feast for the eyes as well as the palate, with each dish presented beautifully. Throughout the evening, our senses were further enchanted as we were serenaded by the soulful melodies of an a cappella group, regular performers at the venue and shining examples of local talent.



The Victoria Falls Safari Spa is tucked away in a tranquil area surrounded by trees. They offer a range of treatments, splash pool and café. They served the best iced tea and we indulged in an hour-long massage treatment. It is a great way to end off your safari experience before taking a long-haul flight back home.

No visit to Victoria Falls would be complete without the serene experience of reclining, indulging in canapés and drinks, and witnessing a stunning sunset over the majestic Zambezi River. We embarked on a sunset cruise onboard the Zambezi Explorer, an exquisitely finished vessel boasting three decks that ensures a memorable outing. The two lower decks, known as the Luxury Decks, offer comfortable lounge seating, while the uppermost Signature Deck provides a premium experience for guests seeking an elevated perspective.

