



## ASSOCIATED PRODUCT

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BOTSWANA

May 2024

## GENERAL UPDATES

African Bush Camp's Migration Expeditions has been permanently closed as of 01 April 2024. In light of this closure, Linyanti Expeditions' opening dates have been extended to include 01 May to 30 November 2024, and 01 April to 30 November 2025. Linyanti Expeditions has also been added to the Honeymoon Special offer for 2024 and 2025 where one partner pays 50% of the accommodate rate and there are a complimentary 30-minute couples' massages, a private dinner setup, romantic room turndown and sparkling wine experiences. African Bush Camps is also discontinuing the complimentary 20-minute scenic helicopter flight at Khwai Leadwood and Khwai Lediba that was previously offered on a 3-night stay (1 flight per stay). This change will take effect from 01 January 2025. The complimentary flight will still be available at Linyanti Bush Camp and Linyanti Ebony. All existing bookings for 2025 will be honoured.

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## FIRST-HAND FEEDBACK

Chantell Faasen recently had the opportunity to visit some of the Natural Selection properties in Botswana.

**North Island Okavango** is in the Okavango Delta on a private island surrounded by open savannah and woodlands. The staff are friendly, and the facilities are beautiful and more than what a guest would need. Main area has a library, bar, dining area, fire pit and pizza oven. There are so many quaint nooks for private dining, which really adds to the romantic feel. There is also a hot tub and gym close to the main area, but no spa, though they offer in-room treatments on request. Each room has its own private pool so there is no pool in the main area.

For this time of year, we saw great game. Location-wise, they have a good population of wild dogs and other predator-prey interaction. It is great for birding, has mokoro excursions throughout the year and water-dependent boating. Moderate herds of buffalo are seen in the area, meaning lion sightings too. Their location allows for night drives, and we were able to see serval, civet and genet on our early evening drive.

This property is great for honeymooners and guests with a healthy budget. It will combine well with Mombo or Little Mombo to create a high-end itinerary.



**Tuludi Camp** was amazing, the staff were incredible, and we immediately felt comfortable. You can see that the staff are all proud and honoured to be hosting us. Ndi was the camp manager during our stay. She has a warmth and vibrancy to her that added to the overall experience of the trip. Her presence was felt throughout camp, and she clearly knew the importance of inspiring and leading the rest of the team, who all work so well together, and I could find no fault in their service delivery.

KK was our guide, and he has such a wealth of knowledge, sense of humour and storytelling attributes that made for a fun and informative game drive experience. He was patient and put everyone on the vehicle first. It was my first game drive where a guide wanted time with everyone in the front seat to get to know us all, so we rotated to ensure that each of us had time in the front seat with the guide.

The rooms are massive and had fully stocked minibars, plunge pools and lounge space on the decks. Housekeeping asked if she could stock with different items when we met and did a briefing of the room. A WhatsApp number is available as a direct line to staff for anything guests might need.

Tuludi has a unique style and flow, unlike any other main area I have seen. Some of the deck and walkway webs together and forms a treetop viewing deck, with lower decks for private dining, sunken decks for lounging, and the fire pit. There is no shortage of private spaces for guests to relax and spend time in the main area. It also has a slide for adults that every guest will no doubt try at some point. There is no traditional boma area or spa, but they do have a pool close to the main area. All dining is private, unless guests request to share with other guests in camp. Food was incredible. All fresh and high standard. They took careful note of everyone's dietaries and our group even commented that the chef executed their dietaries perfectly, so very confident that they can accommodate most requests. They also offer a "breakfast to go" option for game drives to enjoy on the morning coffee stop. Nice offering to guests who do not eat early in the morning. Some options were fruit salad and yogurt to go. Also jaffles, rusks and coffee to go.

Natural Selection in Khwai operates in a private concession within the Khwai Reserve – good location for year-round Okavango Delta experience. Historically the Khwai River has water throughout the year, which attracts wildlife.

Overall, I was so impressed by high level of service in all areas from housekeeping through to food and guide. Impeccable service. This is a property that is easy to sell for all guests and is easy to combine with the likes of Singita, Tswalu, Mombo, Vumbura Plains, DumaTau given its high level of service and offering.



**Tawana Camp** officially opened on 1 May 2024, and my visit was prior to the camp being ready for guests, so there were still some construction and final preparations taking place during our visit. Taking this into consideration, I would like to comment on the camp's potential to be a premier camp offering, experiencing a camp prior to opening is a completely different experience and once they work through the initial stages of opening the camp, would combine well with any Wilderness premier offering and the likes of Singita or Tswalu. Staff were all welcoming and immediately made us all feel at home. They were all excited for the opening and the expected high level of service was detailed in every meal and interaction with the staff.

Tawana is located inside the Moremi Game Reserve overlooking the Gomoti Channel. The camp is built around popular animal corridors, allowing for in-camp wildlife sightings. The high concentration of antelope and water nearby has the potential to be a versatile wildlife destination year-round. Currently awaiting the opening of Santawani Airstrip, you can only access the camp via helicopter. Once the airstrip opens you can access by fixed wing flights on Mack Air and Wilderness Air flights.

Tawana is the new addition to Natural Selection's premier circuit partnered with the local community and built with the purpose of offering much needed opportunities to the nearby communities.

Luxurious accommodations cater to every traveller – 8 suites include 3 family suites, each with its own lounge, private terrace, plunge pool and outdoor sala. At the moment the camp is undergoing construction of a spa and until construction is complete, they do offer in-room treatments. In my experience this camp caters more for couples and romance, but taking into consideration the family rooms this camp could also be perfect for multi-generational or small-group travellers.

Activities are land-based and limited to the Moremi Game Reserve rules, therefore no night drives or water activities are permitted. This in no way hampered some spectacular sightings during my stay.

