

26 August 2015

## NEWSFLASH

### EXTENDED INTO 2016 | Wings over Namibia & Spirit of Namibia

The 2016 rates for our Wings over Namibia and Spirit of Namibia packaged safaris are now available. There is no change to the itinerary for 2016 so the flyers on the Info Centre apply to both 2015 and 2016, and the rates are in the 2016 Namibia Nett Rates Sheet. Namibia is a fantastic destination – offering unique experiences, wildlife and vistas – and the packaged pricing will help you with a quick turnaround. The Wings over Namibia is ideal for the first time visitor to Namibia, while the Spirit of Namibia will suit the repeat traveller or those wanting something a little different!

### SPECIAL | Toka Leya Camp & the Tour of the Falls

It is that time of year again, when the levels of the Zambezi River start to drop and the Falls become more concentrated on the Zimbabwe side. The good news is that with immediate effect until 31 December 2015, guests staying at Toka Leya now have the option of participating in EITHER a Zambian or Zimbabwean Tour of the Falls. There is no extra cost involved if guests wish to visit the Zimbabwean side of the falls INSTEAD of the Zambian side. This is the perfect opportunity to utilize the Zambia & Zimbabwe UNIVISA and tie in with the “low water” period on the Zambian side of the Falls. This does not have to be pre-booked although it will assist if you let us know in advance whether your guest has a preference. Alternatively, arrangements will be discussed with guests in camp.

### NEW | Private Full Day Winelands Tour with Table Mountain

Wilderness Touring Cape have introduced a new tour which features the following:

- A journey on the revolving cable car (re-opened on 10 August 2015 after annual maintenance) for a bird’s-eye view of Cape Town and the Peninsula from the top of the iconic Table Mountain (weather dependent).
- Tasting some of South Africa’s finest wines in the beautiful Boland region.
- Visiting wine estates according to guest preferences.
- Having lunch at one of the many classic, award-winning restaurants coupled with superb wine.
- Exploring the rich history and culture of towns such as Stellenbosch and gastronomic Franschhoek.

### INFO | Drop in Water Levels in Botswana for this Season

- Abu & Seba – water activities have been curtailed at this time.
- Kings Pool – the Queen Sylvia barge excursion will be shorter in duration due to the exposure of sand banks and hippos in shallower water...it may cease entirely in the next couple of weeks.
- Savuti – a reminder that we stopped canoeing 3 years ago and for the last couple of years boating has been seasonal...it stopped in April this year.
- Xigera - water levels are decreasing rapidly. Boats will be moving to the boat station approximately 40 minutes’ drive from camp (if they have not already done so) and boating may not be possible past October/November.
- The Jao Concession – we anticipate that by mid-September, Tubu and Little Tubu will no longer be offering water based activities. Guests from Jao or Kwetsani travelling to Hunda may find the trip longer and more challenging as the water levels drop.

### UPDATE | Livingstone Airport, Victoria Falls Airport & Kazungula Border

- **Livingstone Airport** – clearing immigration on arrival is relatively quick and smooth, although forms related to Ebola must be completed on arrival and guests’ temperatures are assessed.
- **Victoria Falls Airport** - delays are being experienced as a result of the BA and SAA flights arriving/departing at virtually the same time, resulting in queues for check-in and clearing immigration formalities (an increased number of travellers are applying for the Kaza Univisa).
- **Kazungula Border Post** – delays are being experienced due to higher traffic volumes and an increased number of travellers are applying for the Kaza Univisa

## IMPORTANT

### ONGOING | Child Travel Regulations

Discussion and debate continue between various stakeholders in this regard. We have received reports of some immigration officials and/or airlines not having a clear understanding of the requirements resulting in confusion, frustration and delays. Note that Wilderness Safaris is not directly responsible for these regulations nor the implementation thereof. Our recommendation is to err on the side of caution and travel with as much “paperwork” as possible to avoid issues...affidavits, copies of passports, legal letters, birth certificates, etc. Should you require it,

please contact your Journey Specialist for further information in this regard.

### Preferred Charter Operators

Per the directive from our Safety Review Board, our Journey Specialists may not quote on nor book a supplier that does not appear on our Preferred Aircraft Operator Supplier list. Please contact your Account Manager should you have further queries in this regard.

## REMINDERS/GENERAL

### Information Request from Operations

Your assistance in obtaining and providing the details listed below will allow our teams on the ground to meet, if not exceed, guest expectations.

- Who is sharing with whom?
- Who requires a twin or who requires a double (subject to availability)?
- Who has what dietary requirements?
- Ages of all members of the party?
- Whether guests are repeats or not?
- Special anniversaries/occasions/birthdays and the actual dates thereof?
- Details on relevant medical history, allergies, food and drink requirements?

### Rate Basis

Where different rates exist at our Wilderness camps, note that all bookings must be made on the same rate basis for the duration of a stay – e.g. either Fully Inclusive OR Dinner, bed and breakfast.

### Pre-tour Documentation

Please do share our Pre-tour information documents with your clients prior to travel – both the General (which contains important information applicable to travelling with Wilderness Safaris and the areas in which we operate) plus the country specific Pre-tours as relevant to any said itinerary. They are available on the Info Centre on the Wilderness Window and if you receive our printed document packs, will be included in those too.

### Use of Drones in General & in Botswana Specifically

In August 2014, we communicated our stance regarding the use of Drones, Quadcopters & Terrestrial UAVs. As leaders in the African ecotourism industry, and in terms of ethics and operational principles, we do not want to encourage the possibility of irresponsible behaviour through not expressing our perspective. In the case of unmanned aerial vehicles being used for wildlife photography, *we have decided to prohibit this activity on our concessions in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe*. This extends to terrestrial UAVs, as well as to aerial UAVs, so-called drones. We apply this policy to our own staff, to our guests and even professional photographers. Exceptions to this are possible in locations where wildlife and guests will not be disturbed and where landscape photography is the aim (for example in remote areas of the Kulala Wilderness Reserve), and of course where such activity is permitted by law.

Further to the above, the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB) have now released a statement regarding the use of remotely Piloted Aircraft (RAP) in Botswana. It would appear that they are going to ban all use of these aircraft from National Parks, Game Reserves and over Wildlife Management areas, unless a permit stating the purpose of use, operators and areas is obtained prior to arrival.

### Discounts at Mombo during Rebuild

To clarify: our published rates take the discount offered at Little Mombo (20%) and Mombo Trails (40%) over the period of the rebuild into account – no further discount is applicable.

### En-suite Facilities in our Collateral

When we refer to en-suite facilities in our collateral, we mean a bathroom that has an indoor shower, toilet and basin/s as a standard. We will always specify if there is an exception such as a bath, outdoor shower and/or separate toilet (i.e. with a door).

## INFO CENTRE

### The Collection on the Info Centre

We have not duplicated the extensive information that the Collection (Abu, North Island and Segera Retreat) have put together on their product offering. Accordingly, you will not find many Collection documents in the Information Centre – rather make use of the Collection website via the Links button on the same row as Rates and Product Information.

## SPECIALS & PACKAGES

### NO LONGER VALID | Taste of Zimbabwe

Our Taste of Zimbabwe programme, which featured 3 nights at Davison's Camp and 3 nights at Victoria Falls Safari Club, is no longer valid. Africa Albida released new packages and rates for Victoria Falls Safari Club and as a result, the package is no longer competitively priced.

## **WILDERNESS TOURING**

### **ZAMBEZI FEATURED EXCURSION | Elephant Back Ride**

Take an extraordinary and exhilarating journey along the edge of the Zambezi gorges following ancient game trails. Seated comfortably on the back of a habituated elephant, guests experience an age-old tradition whilst silently exploring the majestic grasslands of Victoria Falls National Park and marvelling at the spectacular scenery of the Masuwe River as it plunges 120 metres into the Zambezi River below. Bear witness to this mutually enriching and rewarding relationship between human and elephant in a modern-day Africa. The morning ride includes a full English breakfast while the afternoon ride includes snacks and sundowners.

### **Upper Zambezi Activities**

The Low Water Rafting season started on 10 August 2015 and "The Devil's Pool" on the edge of the Falls should open shortly – subject to water levels.

### **CAPE FEATURED EXCURSION | Private Full Day City Tour with Table Mountain and Kirstenbosch**

Highlights of this tour include a 5-minute revolving cable car ride to the top of Table Mountain for a bird's-eye view of both the city and Peninsula. Return to the city via the old Cape Malay Quarter, for a walk through the Company Gardens, a fresh produce garden for ships and locals in the mid-17th century, and now home to the SA Museum, Houses of Parliament, National Gallery and St. George's Cathedral. Stroll through the city to Greenmarket Square and browse the bustling market stalls before driving to the Castle, South Africa's oldest building, with its formidable collection of Old Cape paintings. Take in the nearby Grand Parade, where Nelson Mandela addressed the nation on his release in 1990, and then move on to the District Six Museum, which showcases the colourful life of this legendary suburb and the forced relocation of its residents during the Apartheid era. Enjoy a delicious lunch at a local city restaurant before rounding off the day with a stroll through Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden, immersing yourself in the diversity and kaleidoscopic brilliance of the Cape Floral Kingdom.

## **BOTSWANA**

### **REMINDER | Village Visit ex Vumbura**

Gunotsoga is a small village with a population of about 750 where the economic base of the village is subsistence farming and fishing. Although funds from these tours are utilised for Community Development projects, we hope that the excursion will enhance our guests' knowledge of and respect for the people of Botswana. On arrival at the village, guests are entertained by a traditional dance troop before proceeding to the kgotla (traditional meeting place). Here they may meet the Kgosi (chief), who will speak to them about the functions and roles of the kgotla as the basis for Botswana's democracy. The tour generally includes a visit to the primary school, where guests will be shown an environmental museum that serves as a teaching aid for pupils; the clinic, where there is an opportunity to interact with the nurse and learn about the healthcare services and the village ironmonger to see how various implements are forged and their uses explained.

A standard offering from Vumbura Plains or Little Vumbura, the access is by helicopter (approximately 18 minutes, one way) and guests are accompanied by a guide. It is possible to visit the village from one of our other camps, however, we do require prior notice and the price will vary as the helicopter cost/access will be different. Contact your Journey Specialist for further information and rates for both the tour and helicopter transfers.

### **Temporary Camp or Room Closures for Maintenance**

- Vumbura Plains South – one room is closed from 13 November to 20 December 2015 (inclusive) to complete the thatching project.
- Savuti – the full camp is closed from 02 to 31 January 2016 (inclusive) for maintenance of the camp, including the completion of the thatching project and general work to be done throughout the camp/rooms.
- DumaTau – the full camp is closed from 26 to 30 January 2016 (inclusive) for maintenance of decks and canvas.

## **KENYA**

### **REMINDER | Online Visa Application**

Further to last month's communique, as of 1 September 2015, all Kenyan visas must be purchased online in advance of travel and presented on check-in. If travellers do not have the required visa, they will not be permitted to travel. A new website fully dedicated to E-Visas is now live - [www.evisa.go.ke](http://www.evisa.go.ke). It is mobile friendly and provides answers to queries regarding process, payment, validity, etc. Note that E-Visas will be valid for 90 days from the date of approval and not from the date of arrival in Kenya. You should therefore ensure your visa will still be valid at the time of travel.

## **NAMIBIA**

### Neuras Wines – Optional Excursion from Kulala Desert Lodge or Little Kulala

Arranged on the ground in camp, this lovely excursion to Neuras Wines <http://www.neuraswines.com/> is a unique experience on offer for our guests on a 3 night stay - a wine farm in the middle of the desert thanks to a water spring! It is owned by Naankuse who are renowned for their rehabilitation programs for cats (leopards, lions, cheetah, etc.). It is not recommended on a 2 night stay due to time constraints, however, on a 3 night stay (subject to vehicle availability), the camp will arrange it accordingly. Should you have guests who wish to guarantee the excursion to the wine farm, then it is advisable to book and pay for a private vehicle.

## SEYCHELLES

### Changes to North Island Inventory & Booking Process

As part of our continued commitment to provide you and your guests with an improved service offering, we are in the process of implementing some changes to the North Island booking and management process. We wish to capture the most accurate and detailed information of our agents and guests, both prior to and during travel, to further enhance our service delivery and exceed expectations where possible. Accordingly, North Island has installed its own inventory management and costing system. Going forward, the immediate changes you will notice are:

- Invoices will be made out by North Island Company Ltd.
- Payments must be made directly into North Island's bank account in the Seychelles.
- North Island is no longer available to book on the Wilderness Window.

Availability may currently be checked on Agents WISH, although this will fall away shortly. In future, access will be via the North Island website only, making use of an Agent's Login facility. The booking channel through your dedicated Wilderness Safaris Journey Specialist remains unchanged, so please do not hesitate to contact them should you have any queries. Your support during this process is much appreciated and we know that that these changes will add value to the overall North Island offering.

## ZAMBIA/ZIMBABWE

### Transfers between Lusaka and Ruckomechi Camp via Chirundu

The following information plus the relevant rates for the above have been added to the 2015/2016 Zambia and Zimbabwe Rates Sheets plus General Information Manual:

- Road Transfer from Lusaka (depart 13:00) to Chirundu (arrive approximately 16:00)
- Boat Transfer from Chirundu (departure depends on arrival in Chirundu) to Ruckomechi is 1.5 hours
- Boat Transfer from Ruckomechi (depart 07:00) to Chirundu (arrive approximately 08:30)
- Road Transfer from Chirundu (depart 08:45) to Lusaka (arrive approximately 11:45)

Note: Times may vary slightly due to transit through Zambian and Zimbabwe immigration formalities at Chirundu, and traffic delays on the road between Lusaka and Chirundu.

### REMINDER | Hwange Road Transfers

The scheduled pick-up time from Hwange Main Camp to transfer to our camps (Linkwasha, Little Makalolo and Davison's) is 12:30. This is applicable to all guests travelling on either a self-drive basis or per road transfer from other Hwange camps, Victoria Falls, Bulawayo or other point of origin.

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Warm regards,  
Tina

### Wilderness Product Services Manager

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For further information on Wilderness product or rates, please refer to the Information Centre on the Wilderness Window or contact either myself [tinak@wilderness.co.za](mailto:tinak@wilderness.co.za) or your reservations cluster/Journey Specialist directly.

[www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com)

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