

January 2014

Welcome to a brand new year with Wilderness Safaris! There are a number of exciting developments and important updates to share with you in this first edition for 2014.

NEWSFLASH

Opening of Hoanib Skeleton Coast

After much anticipation, I am delighted to advise that Hoanib Skeleton Coast will be opening on 1 August 2014!

Adding to the highlights of the north-western region of Namibia, Hoanib will be a fantastic area to combine with Desert Rhino Camp for the rhino tracking experience, Damaraland Camp for the cultural/wildlife interaction and Serra Cafema for the ultimate Himba experience plus the unique contrast between the Kunene River and the beautiful desert landscapes! A few key points to take note of:

- ❖ Valid from 1 August 2014 to 10 January 2015, we have an unbeatable special launch price of R 6000 per person, per night (Recommended Selling Price)! For children, we are extending the 65% discount on the adult rate over this same period.
- ❖ Consisting of 8 rooms plus guide accommodation, the 7 twins will have en-suite bathrooms with showers and shaded outdoor lounge areas while the 1 family unit will have two separate bedrooms with en-suite facilities, sharing a central outdoor lounge area.
- ❖ The main area will have a library and bar area, dining room, internal winter lounge, internal and external summer lounge areas, plunge pool and deck.
- ❖ Activities will include game and nature drives to the Hoanib riverbed and floodplains plus Mudorib Spring, and presentations from/interaction with wildlife researchers when in camp. On a stay of 3 nights (or more), a fly-in excursion to the Skeleton Coast is included in the rate. Due to the number of activities on offer in the area, and challenges offered by the coastal fog, a stay of 3 nights or more is necessary to offer this excursion as it allows for more flexibility. Occasionally the fog will cause delays in the morning causing a change in plans, however, once the fog has lifted, guests will still experience a scenic flight over the area. On longer stays (details still to be confirmed), the plan is to offer sleep outs, participation in research and scenic flights.

Have a look at the website <http://www.wilderness-safaris.com/camps/hoanib-skeleton-coast> or contact your Journey Specialist/Sales Manager for more detailed information. The camp has been added to WISH and the rates added to the Rates Sheets on the Information Centre.

Revised Wilderness Air Namibia Schedule

To accommodate access to Hoanib Skeleton Coast, **our Wilderness Air Namibia circuit has been revised to include Hoanib from 1 August 2014**, via Doro Nawas as the hub. You will note that for 2014, there are four date ranges:

- 11 January 2014 to 5 April 2014 (summer) – already in the system, no change here.
- 6 April 2014 to 31 July 2014 (winter) – already in the system, no change here except the “end” date of 31 July instead of 6 September.
- 1 August 2014 to 6 September (winter) – Hoanib legs have been added, other flights remain the same.
- 7 September 2014 to 10 January 2015 (summer) – Hoanib legs have been added, other flights remain the same.

New Wilderness Air Zimbabwe Schedule – effective 1 April 2014

Taking feedback received regarding the late arrivals into and early departures from Ruckomechi camp, and refining the schedule to exclude multiple drop-offs at partner properties in Zimbabwe, **we will be introducing a revised flying circuit in Zimbabwe from 1 April 2014**. Notable elements of this move to improve the guest experience are:

- ❖ Instead of the main route starting and ending in Mana Pools, it will now start and end in Victoria Falls so guests will be able to enjoy an activity on arrival and departure at Ruckomechi.
- ❖ An additional Hwange/Victoria Falls/Hwange route will be introduced, allowing for more flexibility and better connections to/from international flights as well as access from Botswana and Zambia into Hwange.
- ❖ There is no change to the times of the Mana Pools/Harare/Mana Pools route that operate while Ruckomechi is open.
- ❖ There is no change to the rates...the published 2014 rates apply, with the relevant increase to be implemented for 2015.

The main schedule and additional Hwange flights will be operational during peak season only from 1 April to 15 November 2014. In low season (16 November 2014 to 31 March 2015) when Ruckomechi is closed, only the new midday schedule between Makalolo and Victoria Falls and vice versa will be available.

The existing schedule will remain in operation until 31 March 2014. Where the new times do not connect with ticketed scheduled commercial flights, Wilderness Air Zimbabwe will honour and accommodate those confirmed bookings only. Your Journey Specialist is co-ordinating this and will advise you accordingly. All other existing (confirmed and provisional) bookings plus new bookings will be booked onto the new schedule from 1 April 2014.

Note that from 1 April 2014 we will no longer have the option of Hwange A or Hwange B. There will only be Hwange A which will service The Hide or Camp Hwange, at times to be advised and linked to both the revised main route and the new midday schedule in/out of Makalolo as applicable.

The Kariba stop is for Changa specifically utilising the Fothergill airstrip, or to refuel at Kariba Airport. A pick up from Fothergill

Airstrip by Bumi Hills or Musango is possible, however, must be booked and charged for separately. In the summer months, we will fly into Kariba Airport only and you will need to book and charge for the relevant onward connecting road, boat and/or air transfer to Changa, Bumi Hills or Musango.

On the new schedule, guests will not be able connect directly to Ruckomechi from Victoria Falls ex scheduled commercial flights, nor from Ruckomechi back to Victoria Falls for onward scheduled commercial flights. This will require overnights in Victoria Falls, although we do recommend the Harare/Ruckomechi/Harare route for international flight connections where possible as it is shorter (with no stops) and cheaper than the route between Ruckomechi and Victoria Falls.

IMPORTANT

Temporary Closure of Shumba Camp

As a result of damage sustained in a fire caused by lightning during December 2013, Shumba Camp has been closed for the months of June and July 2014 to allow the team time to rebuild once they have access to the area. The good news is that Shumba Camp will re-open on 1 August 2014, start of both the peak game-viewing season and the hot air balloon experience on the Busanga Plains! Your Journey Specialist will be in touch regarding alternative arrangements for all existing bookings.

Upgrade to Xigera Airstrip

Due to the extremely heavy rain that Botswana experienced at the beginning of this month, major work has to be done on the airstrip at Xigera to ensure it is compliant and safe for the season ahead. This means that the airstrip will need to be worked on for approximately 30 days, from 28 January to 28 February 2014 inclusive. Your Journey Specialist will be in touch regarding all existing bookings – either offering an alternative or making use of the Nxabega airstrip which will include a transfer by road of approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours each way.

Impact of Revised VAT legislation in Zambia on Explorations

Further to my recent communication regarding the increase in rate on our standard Zambia rates, Six Countries and the Distinctive Zambezi and Kafue package, note that the rates have increased on our Explorations product too - the Great Wilderness Journey, Migrations Routes and Botswana Summer Encounter. These updated Exploration rate sheets, plus Recommended Selling Prices, have been added to the Information Centre.

CONGO

Update – Visas for Congo

From 1 January 2014, all foreign passport holders visiting Congo MUST obtain a visa in advance – it is no longer possible to do this on arrival. Our collateral has always said that guests have to obtain a visa prior to arrival, however, previously some exceptions were possible. Bear in mind that a letter of invitation is needed to apply for a visa and guests must travel with both the letter and visa.

EXPLORATIONS

Zimbabwe Showcase Update

The new flying schedule has affected our Zimbabwe Showcase scheduled safari as guests will need to over-night in Victoria Falls at end of the safari at additional costs. As a reminder, the itinerary in brief is as follows:

Days 1 & 2: Arrive at Bulawayo Airport and meet your Explorations Guide. Road transfer to Camp Amalinda (Matobo Hills).

Days 3, 4 & 5: Road transfer to Hwange National Park through Teak Forest with a picnic lunch. Davison's Camp.

Days 6 & 7: Scheduled air transfer to Mana Pools. Ruckomechi Camp.

Days 8 & 9: Scheduled air transfer to Fothergill Island Airstrip. Boat transfer to Changa Safari Camp.

Day 10: Boat transfer to Fothergill Island Airstrip. Scheduled air transfer to Victoria Falls, arriving approximately 16:40. Bid farewell to your guide.

SOUTH AFRICA

Transfers to/from Rocktail Beach Camp

With effect from 1 February 2014, the scheduled transfers between Coastal Cashews and Rocktail Beach Camp must be booked in advance. The transfer is 30 minutes one way and seats are available at the following times:

- Coastal Cashews to Rocktail – 10:30am, 2:00pm, 4:00pm
- Rocktail to Coastal Cashews – 9:30am, 1:00pm, 3:00pm

Any guest/booking without a confirmed Coastal Cashews scheduled transfer booked 48 hours prior to travel, will be charged the private transfer fee direct at camp should a pick-up and drop-off be required.

Turtle Drives at Rocktail

Normally arranged in camp directly with the guest, turtle drives have always been subject to availability on a first come first served basis due to a limit of only 10 seats on 1 vehicle. However, due to a high demand for the experience, the booking process will change going forward. For the 2014/2015 season (15 October 2014 to 15 March 2015), turtle drives MUST be pre-booked and paid for in advance. Do note that:

- A maximum of ONE turtle drive per guest may be booked in advance (Rocktail will sell any open seats direct in camp to guests who want to go a second time)
- Should any guest who has pre-booked, decide not to go on the drive for whatever reason, there will be no refund

SEYCHELLES

Helicopter Weight Allowance

Important to note is that the weight allowance for the helicopter transfers to/from North Island differs to that of Wilderness Air, so from a costing and planning perspective, it is vital we obtain passenger weights at the time of quoting. Zil Air operate the helicopter transfers using a EUROCOPTER EC 120 which seats a maximum of 4 guests per flight. Taking standard fuel allowances

and normal weather conditions into account, weight allowance is calculated as follows:

- An adult male maximum weight cannot exceed 80 kg (176 lb).
- An adult female maximum weight cannot exceed 60 kg (132 lb).
- A child (9 years and younger) maximum weight cannot exceed 40 kg (88 lb).
- Luggage allowance per passenger per flight cannot exceed 20 kg (44 lb), including hand luggage and camera equipment. Space is limited so only soft bags are allowed.
- The maximum total weight allowed per helicopter transfer is restricted to **325 kg (715 lb)**. Thus the total number and weight of passengers plus luggage on a transfer must be calculated accordingly to determine whether an additional helicopter is required.
- If you bring more than the allocated luggage allowance per person on the helicopter transfer then you will need to pay extra to transfer the luggage to/from North Island, either by helicopter or by boat.

Change in Meet & Assist Arrangements on Mahe

Fast-Track Immigration Meet & Assist – valid until 30 April 2014: On arrival at Seychelles International Airport on Mahé, guests will be met by a Mason’s Travel representative on behalf of North Island. They will be assisted through customs and once they have collected their luggage, the Mason’s Travel representative will escort them out of the terminal to an awaiting Zil Air representative, who will transfer them by road to the Zil Air Lounge. The helicopter will take off from the Zil Air Lounge/Hangar for a 20 minute air transfer to North Island.

Welcome Meet & Assist – valid from 01 May 2014 to 31 October 2014: On arrival at Seychelles International Airport on Mahé, guests are to proceed through customs and collect their luggage. Once outside the International Terminal they will be met by a Masons Representative with a name-board, who will escort them to an awaiting Zil Air representative for their road transfer to the Zil Air Lounge. The helicopter will take off from the Zil Air Lounge/Hangar for a 20 minute air transfer to North Island.

WILDERNESS AIR

Reminder - Wilderness Air Weight Allowance Change for 2014

Further to previous product updates, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that for 2014, Wilderness Safaris reviewed our guest weight allowance policy and we are no longer enforcing the purchase of additional weight allowance for all passengers weighing more than 100 kg (220 lb).

However, while additional seats no longer have to be booked and charged for, we continue to maintain our strict focus on safety and a quality air service for our guests, your customers. It is therefore vital that we manage all weight and balance calculations ahead of time and for this reason, **we still require ALL guest weights prior to travel.**

Wilderness Air has to comply with very strict controls and legislation regarding weight on our aircraft – taking not only the weight of the passenger into account but luggage and fuel requirements as well. Please ensure you ask for, and receive, the weights of all guests prior to travel and pass the information on to your Journey Specialist accordingly. This allows Wilderness Air to manage all weight and balance calculations ahead of time, in order to operate efficiently while still maintaining a strict focus on safety and a quality air service for our guests. If weights are not provided in advance and additional aircraft need to be arranged on the day, your clients will be liable for the relevant costs.

There is NO change to our luggage restrictions guidelines, which remain 20 kg (44 lb) per person in a soft bag including camera equipment and hand luggage, and within the relevant dimensions.

RATES UPDATE

Explorations

2014.01	Due to the New Zambia VAT, the rates for the Great Wilderness Journey, Migrations Routes and Botswana Summer Encounter have increased.	10/01/14	Page 1
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Namibia

2014.11	Hoanib Skeleton Coast has been added to the rates sheet, as it will be opening on 01 August 2014.	24/01/14	Page 1
2014.12	Wilderness Air Namibia schedule has been updated to include the Hoanib Skeleton Coast legs.	24/01/14	Pages 6 - 12

Recommended Selling Price List

2014.03	Rates at Toka Leya & River Club increased to include the new VAT.	03/01/2014	Page 10
2014.04	Due to the introduction of the new VAT in Zambia, the rates for the Great Wilderness Journey, Migrations Routes and Botswana Summer Encounter have increased.	10/01/2014	Page 12
2014.05	Hoanib Skeleton Coast has been added to the rate sheet	24/01/2014	Page 6

Zambia

2014.08	The rates at Toka Leya, River Club, Distinctive Zambezi & Kafue Package, transfers & touring have increased due to the new VAT implementation in Zambia.	06/01/2014	Pages 1, 4, 7 & 8
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Zimbabwe

2014.05	The rate for the Distinctive Zambezi & Kafue Package has increased due to the new VAT implementation in Zambia.	06/01/2014	Page 4
2014.06	The Wilderness Air Zimbabwe schedule will be changing from 01 April 2014. New schedules have been added.	24/01/2014	Pages 6 - 7

As always, please do refer to our Agent Portal – the Information Centre, Rates Sheets and General Information Manual – for further details or contact your Journey Specialist directly.

Warm regards,

Tina

Wilderness Product Services Manager

For further information on Wilderness product or rates, please contact either myself tinak@wilderness.co.za or your reservations cluster/Journey Specialist directly.

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