

24 March 2015

## NEWSFLASH

### **Kalahari Plains Camp – Reduction in Number of Rooms**

We recently lost 1 twin room at Kalahari Plains as a result of a fire. The cause is not yet known and no further details can be provided until the risk assessment is complete and a report compiled. There are no plans at this time to rebuild the 10th room, so Kalahari Plains now has a total of 9 rooms - 2 family rooms and 7 twins accommodating a total of 22 guests. All bookings affected by this (i.e. where 10 rooms are booked and only 9 are available) are being handled separately and your Journey Specialist will be in touch, if they have not already done so.

### **Banoka Bush Camp – No Longer Available to FIT Bookings**

Banoka Bush Camp will be closed to all FIT bookings from 1 May 2015. It will be utilised solely for a series programme going forward so existing bookings have been moved to alternative camps. As of this date, Banoka will not be visible in Agent WISH or via the Wilderness Window, and details/rates will be removed from our collateral.

### **The River Club Handover**

As of 30 March 2015, the River Club will no longer be marketed as part of the Wilderness Safaris brand and portfolio. It will become a third party product falling under our Associated Product portfolio and the inventory will no longer be on WISH. Operations continue as usual headed up by Peter Jones and his team, however, it will be marketed and sold by Classic Portfolio with reservations being handled directly by The River Club. All existing bookings and rates as quoted (plus related terms & conditions) whilst in the Wilderness portfolio will be honoured. All relevant booking details will be shared with The River Club to ensure a smooth transition. Going forward, we will continue to book The River Club as and when requested, bearing in mind that all new bookings for The River Club placed from Monday 30 March 2015, will be subject to their rates, terms & conditions – the same as any other third party supplier.

## TRAVEL REGULATIONS

### **UPDATE | Yellow Fever Requirements for SA**

The latest feedback received from our team at O.R.Tambo International Airport is that on occasion, immigration officials are still requesting Yellow Fever certificates from passengers travelling from Zambia – apparently because it is not in the Government Gazette and therefore not law yet. We continue to monitor the situation and will advise should there be any significant change. In the interim, our recommendation is still to have the inoculation (valid for ten years plus useful for other destinations) and/or travel with a Yellow Fever certificate to prevent denial of entry or exit and subsequent inconvenience.

### **Review of Travel Regulations**

In his State of the Nation address, President Zuma advised that the new Travel Regulations (biometric visas and unabridged birth certificates from 1 June) would be reviewed. However, to date there has been no change in these requirements and the status quo remains.

### **Paying for the KAZA Univisa in Zambia & Zimbabwe**

It is possible to pay for the KAZA Univisa by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) in Zambia at Harry Mwaanga Airport (Livingstone), the Victoria Falls land border, the Kazungula land border and Kenneth Kaunda Airport (Lusaka). However, due to potential operational or connectivity problems we do recommend using cash. In Zimbabwe however, US Dollar cash is required to purchase the KAZA Univisa.

### **UPDATE| Hand Luggage Regulations**

Further to the recent hand luggage restriction implemented by ACSA (Airports Company South Africa), it would appear that while the airlines are obliged to adhere to this restriction, there are occasions where exceptions will be granted. Should a guest carry valuable equipment that exceeds the 7kgs restriction, they may proceed to the ticket/check in counter and request an exception. If the airline grants this, an airline staff member will be required to accompany the guest to the security gate. Note that these exceptions are totally at the discretion of the airline concerned – depending on the manager on duty and aircraft weight restrictions – and items may still be put in the hold.

## REMINDERS

### **Documents & Contact Information**

If you provide your own documents and do not use our vouchers and/or detailed itineraries plus contact list, please do ensure your client has the correct information to hand, including our After Hours telephone number and email address.

### **Newsletters on the Information Centre**

Copies of our Product Updates plus the General Newsletter are saved on the Information Centre for you to refer back to when needed.

### **REMINDER | Information Centre, Rates and Change Controls on the Wilderness Window**

The Rates and Information Centre options/tabs have been removed from Agent WISH, so it is a tool to access availability only. All product information, the General Information Manual, Nett Rates, details on specials, Pre-tour documents, copies of product updates, etc. are accessed via the Information Centre on the Wilderness Window. Please refer to the Change Control Sheets under the Rates tabs for details on any changes made to the published Nett Rate Sheets, and use the online Nett Rates Sheets only for the most up to date information.

## **WILDERNESS TOURING CAPE TOWN**

### **UPDATE | Cape Peninsula Fires**

Following the devastating fires that swept through the southern peninsula recently, most Cape Town attractions have reopened for business. Wilderness Touring continues to offer Peninsula Tours and the experience has not been negatively affected by the fire damage.

- The Silvermine and Tokai sections of Table Mountain National Park will remain closed to the public until further notice.
- The Constantia Wine Estates escaped damage and are all open for business.
- Tintswalo Atlantic was severely damaged; however they are in the process of rebuilding the hotel with plans to reopen in December 2015.
- Chapman's Peak Drive has reopened but remains under close assessment and can close at any stage due to weather conditions.
- Cape Point National Park, excluding the fire-affected areas of Olifantsbos Road and Gifkommetjie, has reopened and our guests can access all of the tourist landmarks.

### **Annual Closure Dates for Table Mountain Cableway**

The Table Mountain Cableway will be closed from 27 July to 9 August 2015 for annual maintenance.

### **Changes to some Cape Town Excursion Rates**

There have been a number of changes made - including revised rates (Robben Island entrance fees, cycling tours, overnight guide accommodation, meals for early transfers, shark safaris) and activities no longer operational (water taxi tour). Please refer to the Nett Rates Sheet available online or contact your Journey Specialist for further details.

### **FEATURED EXCURSION | City Walking Tour - Mandela in Cape Town: from Prisoner to President**

*When most people think about Mandela and Cape Town they do not see beyond Robben Island. However, Cape Town has a captivating Mandela story to tell as it provided the setting for the unfolding of a series of significant and secretive meetings that led to the surprise release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC in February 1990. With a focus on the context and background of this momentous change in South Africa's history and an understanding of the roles that many played, the highlights include: The Mandela Rhodes Building, Greenmarket Square & the Methodist Church, City Hall, Rhodes & Smuts, Parliament, Tuynhuis and Queen Victoria Street. Bringing to life the journey Mandela took from his conviction in 1964 at the Rivonia Trial until his current status as a global icon of bravery and freedom, this 2 ½ hour walk covers approximately 2km of the historic and cultural heart of Cape Town and may be combined with various other activities as Full or Half Day options.*

### **FEATURED EXCURSION | Peninsula Tour with Lunch at The Flagship**

*Chef Duncan Dougherty and The Flagship team are continuing the legacy of the late Chef Bruce Robertson, with a meal that is truly a piece of culinary theatre. This seafood experience starts with a glass of sparkling wine to accompany the first of your 5 courses with wine tasters, finishing some 3 hours later with a sublime dessert. This is a 'Bucket List' occasion for people who love seafood, wine and engaging with others. Features of the tour include:*

- Travelling through many famous coastal suburbs and traversing one of the world's most spectacular passes - Chapman's Peak;
- Catching a glimpse of Southern Right Whales (seasonal) off the Cape's longest beach;
- Spotting wildlife in the Table Mountain National Park, and exploring the rocky coastline, the Cape fynbos vegetation and the south-westernmost point of Africa - Cape Point - plus its lighthouse;
- Visiting a colony of endangered African penguins at Boulders Beach (optional).

## **WILDERNESS TOURING ZAMBEZI**

### **NEW | Chipala Cultural Experience in Victoria Falls**

Located approximately 200m from Victoria Falls Hotel, Ilala Lodge and the Kingdom (across the railway line), Chipala serves a buffet meal and offers a traditional dancing show. The venue is smaller than the Boma at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, taking a maximum of 120 guests and requiring a minimum of 20 paying guests to confirm a booking. Reservations for smaller numbers are subject to availability i.e. if there are other bookings on the same day making up the minimum number. The rate includes return transfers within Victoria Falls town – please contact your Journey Specialist for further details.

### **FEATURED EXCURSION | Full Day Chobe Trip**

*Chobe National Park has one of the largest concentrations of game in Africa and offers excellent birding. The Chobe River is a major watering spot for breeding herds of elephants, as well as giraffe, sable and Cape buffalo; while the flood plains are the only place in Botswana where Puku antelope may be seen. Close to both Victoria Falls and Livingstone, Chobe is an ideal day trip destination – especially with the introduction of the KAZA Univisa, which allows guests freedom of movement between Zimbabwe or Zambia and Botswana. The full day Chobe excursion is divided into a morning boat cruise and an afternoon game drive with lunch in-between.*

## **BOTSWANA**

### **Temporary Closure of the Abu Airstrip**

Abu Airstrip is currently under maintenance and scheduled to re-open on 3 April 2015. All guests will be flown into the Jao Airstrip as an alternative and met by the Abu and Seba vehicles for the approximate 40 minute road transfer to camp. Depending on water levels, the Hunda Airstrip (Tubu) may also be used.

## **NAMIBIA**

### **Walking on the Ongava Reserve**

Note that both guided nature walks and rhino tracking at Ongava are seasonal and subject to the availability of a qualified walking guide.

### **Self-drive Access for Desert Rhino Camp – Time Change**

Desert Rhino is not accessible on a self-drive basis. For any self-drive itinerary, vehicles need to be parked, at own risk, at Twee Palms. A Desert Rhino Camp staff member will meet guests at Twee Palms at 14:30 in Winter (01 April to 31 August) and 15:30 in Summer (01 September to 31 March). Guests are to arrive at Twee Palms no later than 14:00 in Winter (01 April to 31 August) and 15:00 in Summer (01 September to 31 March) to be on time for the onward road transfer to camp. It is an approximate 2.5 hour nature drive through the Palmwag Concession to Desert Rhino Camp.

## **SEYCHELLES**

### **UPDATE | Fast Track Service Process**

On arrival at Seychelles International Airport on Mahe, guests are met by the Air Seychelles team as part of the Fast Track service and assisted through customs. Once they have collected their luggage, guests are further met by a Mason's Travel representative on behalf of North Island who will escort them out the international terminal to an awaiting Zil Air representative for the transfer 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.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Rocktail Beach Camp Activities**

Please refer to the South Africa Nett Rates Sheets or the price list saved on the Information Centre for details on the options available and relevant prices. These activities are at additional cost (non-commissionable) and booked/paid for directly in camp.

### **Transfer Vehicles at Rocktail Beach Camp**

Rocktail Beach has four open 4x4 Land Rover Game Viewers, seating 9 each. These vehicles are used for activities and the transfers between the camp and Coastal Cashews. They are not used for transfers further afield such as to Richard's Bay - there is only one closed vehicle that is used for transfers to/from Richard's Bay Airport or elsewhere (a mini-bus which can carry 6 guests plus luggage). Transfers for more than 6 guests will be booked with a third party and costed accordingly.

### **Self-drive Directions for Rocktail Beach Camp**

Please ensure you have received our detailed directions and that these have been passed on to your clients prior to departure. We have received reports of guests travelling with directions from Google maps and getting lost en-route to Rocktail.

## **ZAMBIA**

### Hot Air Ballooning on the Busanga Plains

When guests spend 3 or more nights at either Busanga Bush Camp or Shumba Camp, a hot air balloon excursion over the plains is included on a complimentary basis. Operating during the months of August, September and October only, this excursion is not available in June or July. Guests staying for 2 nights or less may book/settle direct in camp (subject to availability) at a standard rate of US\$ 300.00 per person for the balloon excursion. Reduced from US\$ 450.00 per person, this is nett and non-commissionable.

### ZIMBABWE

#### REVISED | Number of rooms at Linkwasha Camp

Linkwasha will have 9 rooms/20 beds (8 twins and 1 family room) when it opens on 1 May 2015 – not 8 rooms/18 beds as previously advised.

#### REVISED | Davison's Camp Room Configuration

The correct room configuration at Davison's is as follows: 6 twins, 1 family, 2 doubles (previously 1 double).

### AIRLINES

#### NEW | Federal Air Luggage Restrictions

Federal Air will be enforcing strict baggage regulations on their flights into remote bush runways. If bags do not meet their requirements below, guests will have to purchase soft-sided bags from Federal Air at the lounge and re-pack:

- Soft (all-sides) luggage/duffel bags with no rigid sides
- Maximum luggage weight is 20kg/44lbs (in the hold)
- Maximum hand luggage is 5kg/11lbs (1 piece allowed)
- Suggested luggage size is 40cm (16 inches) wide x 30cm (12 inches) high x 60cm (24 inches) long

#### Key Points regarding Scheduled Commercial Air

Further to a recent meeting with Thompsons Travel, our ticketing agent, please note:

- Luggage restrictions are being strictly enforced. Even though an international Business Class flight might allow for 2 x 32 kgs pieces, regional and domestic airlines generally do not. Guests need to travel lighter or arrange to store luggage.
- While there may be great fares on the new low-cost airlines, their tickets are not interchangeable and they do not have back-up aircraft. If there are delays or technical issues, your guests may be stranded and/or have to pay for new flights.
- There are no longer IT fares – airlines have special fares or Thompsons make use of their corporate fares for our guests. They will always book the best value for money for our guests, using fares that allow for changes.
- There is no need to re-confirm flights 48 hours prior, although online check-in prior to travel is recommended.
- Airlines will and do overbook – it is vital that check-in and connecting times are adhered to or your client may be denied boarding.
  - Domestic – minimum 1 hour prior for check-in
  - Regional & International – minimum 2 hours prior for check-in
  - Connecting between flights – minimum 3 hours...regardless of whether the system allows a close connection when making the booking

#### SA Express Introduces a New Route

From 1 April 2015, SA Express will introduce three weekly flights between OR Tambo International Airport and Pilanesberg International Airport. It will also introduce two flights between Pilanesberg and Cape Town International Airport.

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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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