



24 March 2016

NEWSFLASH

Revised Wilderness Air Namibia Circuit – Effective 1 April 2016

After a year of flying the circuit that was introduced in October 2014, we have now re-assessed the pros and cons, and driven largely by the constructive feedback that we have received from our trade partners, we have made some changes that we trust will streamline this service.

The key items that are being addressed are as follows:

- Timing: there have been limitations due to a) the type and speed of aircraft that we have used to date, b) the distances that have to be covered within specific timelines and c) reliance on hubs/refuelling points. It is very evident that the ideal aircraft for the type of flying done in Namibia has to be fast and reliable, and we are now introducing two x Cessna 406 Twin-engine aircraft into the mix. These faster, twin-engine aircraft will allow us to make small but favourable adjustments to the departure times from Kulala (Geluk airstrip) and Serra Cafema as requested by our trade partners.
- Morning flights to the south: we are re-introducing our morning flight to Kulala and back, that will depart from Windhoek in the morning at a more convenient time for the incoming international flights. This flight will return to Windhoek in the early afternoon. The current afternoon flight to Kulala (Geluk airstrip) will still be available.

In order to deliver an improved service, and understanding that the majority of our costs related to flying are in USD, we have had to adjust our rates accordingly. We do feel however, that these new rates are still highly competitive in Namibia.

All existing bookings up to 30 March must be confirmed by 30 April 2016 – the full itinerary i.e. both accommodation and flying – for the current rates to be honoured. The revised rates will apply to all new bookings placed from 1 April or existing bookings confirmed from 1 May. Important to note is that for this and future rate adjustments by Wilderness Air Namibia, travel partners will be given a period of 30 days to confirm bookings at the existing rate.

Times and some routings have changed in the A, B and C sectors while there is no change to the D sector. Links between Eros and Windhoek International have been added, plus the following additional flights to the south:

- 10:30 Windhoek International to Sossusvlei 11:30
- 12:30 Sossusvlei to Windhoek International 13:30

Your Journey Specialist will get in touch re: affected bookings, while changes to the Window, Namibia Nett Rates Sheets and the Namibia circuit flyer will follow in due course.

IMPORTANT

Office Hours over Public Holidays

Please note the following trading hours for the South African reservations offices for the March, April and May 2016 period.

Friday 25 March – Closed for Good Friday

Monday 28 March – Closed for Family Day...limited service will be available on this public holiday

Wednesday 27 April – Freedom Day...limited service will be available on this public holiday

Sunday 01 May – Workers Day (carried over to 2 May)

Monday 02 May – Public Holiday...limited service will be available on this public holiday

For access to information, rates and availability over this time, click [here](#) to access the Wilderness Window.

As always, our After Hours Service will provide assistance with any **emergencies** over this period. Mobile/cell: +27 82 576 9173 Email: WSAfterHours@wilderness.co.za.

Zimbabwe Relaxes Visa Regime

Zimbabwe has relaxed its visa regime for 37 countries including China, and has removed visa requirements for all SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries. Contact your Journey Specialist for the new table of Visa Categories published by the Zimbabwe government, showing the latest changes which came into effect on 3 March 2016.

- Category A: Countries whose nationals do not require visas.
- Category B: Countries whose nationals obtain visas at the port of entry after paying visa fees.
- Category C: Countries whose nationals are required to apply and obtain visas prior to travelling can apply online www.evisa.gov.zw.

PRODUCT UPDATES

Introducing Massages at Xigera Camp

Xigera is now providing in-room massage treatments for guests, using Africology products. A therapist is based in camp and treatments will be done either in the guest's room or an empty room if available.

Coming Soon - Air Cons at Linkwasha Camp

We will be installing air conditioners in the rooms at Linkwasha during the next month and will advise once they are in and operational.

Hoanib River & Mowe Bay Excursion

After recent good rains in Namibia, we are still flying guests in both directions for the Skeleton Coast excursion. Should this change, we will advise.

Abu Camp Plunge Pools & Main Area Update

Placed in such a way as to offer optimal views from the comfort of the pool, each room at Abu now features a plunge pool. In addition, the main area decks have been replaced and the new main swimming pool should be complete by the second week of April.



REMINDERS

Binoculars on Safari

While we do have reference materials in our camps/lodges/vehicles for guest use, we do not provide binoculars nor should guests expect to use those belonging to our guides. As per our pre-travel documentation, we highly recommend that guests bring their own pair of binoculars for viewing both wildlife and birds. General-purpose binoculars with specifications of 8x40 or 10x42 work well.

Access to Ongava with Wilderness Air

Although Ongava Game Reserve is no longer part the Wilderness Safaris brand and portfolio, we continue to access Ongava on our Wilderness Air Namibia Flying Circuit and will notify you should this change going forward.

INFO CENTRE

Split between Wilderness Product & Associated Product

We have made a slight change to the Info Centre, separating Wilderness Product and Associated Product to make it easier to find information. When you click on the Info Centre, a drop down menu will appear and depending on what you are looking for – select Wilderness Product or Associated Product. Each will have its own tabs for Product Information, Specials & Packaged Safaris, Newsletters & Updates, etc.

RATES UPDATE

Little Ruckomechi – Opening 1 July 2016

We have added the rates to the published Zimbabwe Nett Rates Sheet.

WILDERNESS AIR

Weights & Gender for Wilderness Air Flights

Providing relevant information such as names, passenger weight and gender plus adhering to specified luggage restrictions (details found in our Quote Templates, Pre-Tours, Rates Sheets, General Information Manual, Agent Manual, Website, etc.) is vitally important:

- Air tickets are issued for every passenger travelling on Wilderness Air. The name must match the passport as the same legislation applies here as it does to scheduled commercial air.
- Strict Civil Aviation Regulations are in place when it comes to operating light aircraft, particularly with regard to the mass and balance of the aircraft. Non-compliance could result in the suspension of our Air Service Licence.
- Guest gender (male/female) and ages (children) are used if Wilderness Air is unable to verify the weights of each passenger on board the aircraft. Note that "average" weights are determined by the aviation authorities of the relevant country.
- Should guests weigh more than expected, or have incorrect/too heavy luggage, the knock-on effect is as follows:
 - guests have to re-pack
 - additional aircraft need to be sourced
 - costs are incurred for which the guest is liable
 - delays are experienced
 - other guests are inconvenienced...delayed either at the airport or waiting at the camp airstrip

Revised Departure Taxes in Namibia

Changes to the Namibian departure taxes will come into effect on 1 April 2016:

- Windhoek International Airport domestic departure tax – R 135 (was R 124)
- Windhoek Eros Airport domestic departure tax – R 135 (was R124)
- Swakopmund Airport domestic departure tax – R 73 (remains the same)
- International Departure tax to Botswana – R 255
- International Departure tax to other destinations – R 440

WILDERNESS TOURING

NEW | Bushtracks Express – Victoria Falls Bridge Train Run

Operated by Bushtracks Africa, the Bushtracks Express offers guests the ultimate pre-dinner experience, invoking the glorious age of steam and culminating in a view of the world-famous Victoria Falls Bridge at sunset. Consisting of three carriages, beautifully restored by Rohan Vos of Rovos Rail and pulled by a 14a Locomotive 512, the train is fully air-conditioned. On request, it is possible to do the excursion from Toka Leya, bearing in mind that a multiple entry visa will be required (until the KAZA visa is back in action).

The scheduled Victoria Falls run operates with a minimum of two guests on Tuesdays and Fridays. Drinks and canapes are served on board, and to reach the bridge by sunset, operating times vary depending on the season:

- Summer - 1 September to 31 March - 16:30 to 19:30
- Winter - 1 April to 31 August - 16:00 to 19:00

No Microlight Flights

Wilderness Safaris may not quote on or book microlight flights in either Livingstone or Victoria Falls. Should you wish to book this excursion, you will need to deal directly with the supplier. The reason for this is that Wilderness Safaris may not book any Non-Type Certified Aircraft operation – the term used to refer to "aircraft" such as microlights, amateur/home built aircraft and paragliding.

CAPE FEATURED EXCURSION | Private Half Day Constantia Winelands Tour

Leaving Cape Town, head south along the Peninsula towards Constantia, for a tour of the famous Constantia Wine Ward and the numerous wine cellars. This historic valley, with vineyards clinging to the eastern slopes of the Constantiaberg Mountains, was home to 17th century Dutch governor, Simon van der Stel's wine farm. Its legendary dessert wines graced the tables of the European monarchy in the 18th century and the area's famed signature wine is still the exquisite Vin de Constance from Klein Constantia! Tailor-made according to preference, enjoy tastings at some of these renown estates, which continue the tradition of producing wines from classic European noble varieties. Celebrated for its Sauvignon Blancs, Semillons and Chardonnays from the Steenberg, Constantia Uitsig and Buitenverwachting estates – there are also wonderful Merlots, Cabernet, Shiraz and red blends in classic Bordeaux styles made at Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia and High Constantia.

BOTSWANA

Water Level Update related to Water-Based activities

We have had some very welcome rain in the Delta area - which came later than expected and was quite scattered. The Environmental team think the floods should start pushing through in April to increase the water levels and we can revert to normal water activities then. In the Jao concession, they are now offering boating from Jao, Jacana and Pelo although this is still not possible from Kwetsani and Tubu. Even though water levels remain low in some areas in some areas, the game viewing is great – we can traverse new areas, wildlife are congregating around water sources and there is a flush of new vegetation after the rains.

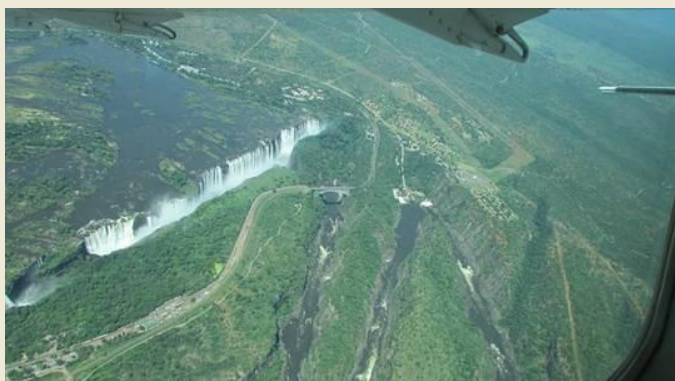
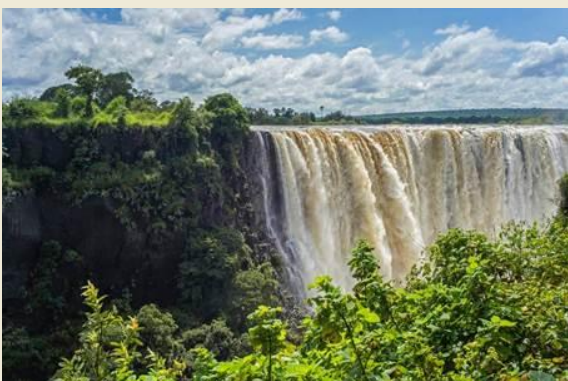
The Savuti Channel is now dry, and there is no water in front of camp – below is what it looks like now (L) and what it looked like in 2009 (R). Savuti was a real hot spot when the channel was dry and it will go back to that with amazing game viewing along the ribbon of grassland - a source of food for the antelope so predators follow. As you can see in these pictures, there is good visibility in the dry channel - when the channel was full, game drives were often conducted in the forested areas. This is all part of a natural cycle and in a few years, there might be another shift in the plates beneath the sands of Botswana and no El Nino phenomenon – resulting in the channel flowing again! In my opinion, experiencing these changes in nature is all the more reason go on safari more than once in a lifetime – at different times of year or during different cycles – and appreciate the stuff that is beyond our control!



ZIMBABWE

The Victoria Falls

The images below show that the level of the Zambezi is rising and the Victoria Falls are looking good!



AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

UPDATE | Renovations at OR Tambo

On 9 February 2016, renovations commenced in Terminal A at OR Tambo International Airport. Expected to last six to eight weeks, we have received reports that this is having an impact on connections due to delays in security screening and immigration, resulting in missed flights/additional costs. Connection times must allow for possible delays and passengers should arrive well in advance.

Reports of Syndicates Targeting Passengers at OR Tambo

We have received reports of syndicates, involving several employees at OR Tambo International Airport, allegedly extorting money from passengers. Officials have advised that passengers are not required to pay any money to government officials or private security officers: "should anyone try to solicit money from passengers for whatever reason, they must refuse to pay and immediately go to the police station at the airport and report the incident."

Airlink launches Cape Town – Botswana service

Airlink has commenced direct services between Cape Town and Maun five times a week - on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays – and intends to add additional days as destination moves into its peak from August. Flights depart Cape Town at 10:35 and arrive in Maun at 13:05. The return flight departs Maun at 13:35 and arrives back in Cape Town at 16:10. Airlink also operates daily services from OR Tambo in Johannesburg to Maun, as well as Kasane.

Air Seychelles Increases Johannesburg Service

Coming into effect on 19 March 2016, Air Seychelles now offers an additional flight on Saturdays, in addition to the existing Wednesday, Friday and Sunday flights. Flight HM060 departs Johannesburg at 14:00 to arrive in Seychelles at 20:55. The return flight HM061 departs Seychelles at 09:25 to arrive in Johannesburg at 12:35.

Kenya Airways Increases Johannesburg Service

Operating 4 days a week, Kenya Airways will add an additional flight from 2 April 2016. This new flight will operate on Mondays, Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays with flight KQ767 departing Johannesburg at 05:00 to arrive in Nairobi at 10:05. Return flight KQ766 will depart Nairobi at 00:55 to arrive in Johannesburg at 04:10 on the same day.

SAA Launches Codeshare on Washington Route

SAA and JetBlue Airways have introduced codeshare operations on SAA's flights between Washington DC and Accra in Ghana, effective immediately. JetBlue flies from Washington DC to various areas throughout North America, including Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Orlando and Fort Lauderdale. Customers purchasing a codeshare itinerary will benefit from having a single ticket combining JetBlue and SAA-operated flights, as well as the convenience of one-stop check-in and baggage transfer.

Warm regards,
Tina

Wilderness Product Manager

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