

26 March 2018

NEWSFLASH

South African VAT Increase – Effective 1 April 2018

Further to the announcement made by our Minister of Finance on 21 February 2018, the VAT rate in South Africa will increase from the current 14% to 15% on 1 April 2018. Applicable to all South African entities rendering services in South Africa, Wilderness Safaris is required by law to follow suit and as a result may have to adjust quotes or re-invoice to correctly reflect the new VAT amount. We will attempt to minimize the impact of the increase, however it is reasonable to expect that most service providers will adjust their rates upwards to take this VAT increase into account. We also refer you to our Terms and Conditions in this regard where it is stated that prices quoted by Wilderness Safaris are subject to change in the event of any unforeseen increases in government levies/taxes. Your Journey Specialist will be in touch regarding affected bookings.

Temporary Closure of Little Makalolo

To facilitate the changes below, we have closed the camp between 15 April and 8 June, to re-open on 9 June 2018. We are very excited that we have this opportunity to revamp an iconic Hwange destination and as soon as we have more details on the style and design, we will be sure to share these with you!

- Build a new main area, deck, bar, infinity pool.
- Install new floors and roofs for the rooms, while wall structures stay the same.
- New softs, fittings and furnishings.

Ballooning in the Kafue – Fee Applicable from April Onwards

A rate of US\$ 200.00 per person will apply to the balloon experience on the Busanga Plains from 1 April 2018. Booked and paid for in camp only, this will serve as a conservation fee contributing directly to anti-poaching efforts in the area. If guests are interested in the activity prior to arrival, please let your Journey Specialist know so that a note may be added to the booking. There is no restriction on length of stay to do the balloon, and as always, the excursion is subject to availability.

KAZA Univisa Update

Currently operating as normal with a sufficient supply of visa stickers in both Zambia and Zimbabwe.

eVisa Planned for South Africa

To facilitate easier access for tourists to South Africa, authorities plan to roll out an eVisa initiative, commencing 31 March 2019.

IMPORTANT

Wilderness Product “Bites” & Changes

- Chitabe Main: currently closed for maintenance and will re-open on 1 June 2018.
- Serra Cafema: currently closed for a rebuild and will re-open on 16 June 2018.
- Kulala Desert Lodge: effective immediately, configuration has changed from 20 twins and 3 family rooms TO 21 twins and 2 family rooms, total of 50 beds.
- Rocktail Camp: effective 1 May 2018, configuration will change to a total of 14 rooms - 10 twins/doubles and 4 family rooms (36 beds) – as we have closed 2 family rooms.
- Abu: the Star Bed is closed until 30 April 2018 for maintenance, and there is still no walking with the herd.
- Linyanti Tented Camp (West): a swimming pool has now been installed.
- Jao Camp: closed for a rebuild between 1 October 2018 and 31 May 2019.
- Kings Pool: closure for the rebuild extended, now from 22 November 2018 to 15 June 2019.
- Jacana Camp: closed between 7 January and 11 March 2019 to rebuild the main area.

RATES

Rocktail Camp Rates - 2018 & 2019

Accommodation & activity rates have increased from 1 April 2018 due to the increase in South African VAT to 15%. Updated published rates sheets are available online.

Segera Retreat - 2019

The 2019 published rates sheets for Segera Retreat in Kenya are available online.

North Island – 2019

Rates are now available for the 23 December 2018 to 22 December 2019 period.

REMINDERS

Camps with NO Pilot/Guide Accommodation

- Chitabe Camp (however, shares with the one located at Chitabe Lediba, within walking distance)
- Little Tubu (however, shares with the one located at Tubu Tree Camp, within walking distance)
- Little Mombo (however, shares with the one located at Mombo Camp, within walking distance)
- Linyanti Tented Camp (West)
- Busanga Bush Camp
- Shumba Camp
- Davison's Camp
- Rocktail Camp

Bookings and costings for pilots & guides at these camps work as follows:

- Chitabe/Little Tubu/Little Mombo – book the pilot/guide accommodation at Chitabe Lediba, Tubu Tree and Mombo respectively and charge the pilot/guide rate.
- Rocktail/Davison's – book a standard guest room and charge the pilot/guide rate.
- Shumba/Busanga Bush Camp (BBC) – book a standard guest room and charge the pilot/guide rate. If the pilot/guide does not have to stay with the group at Shumba, the preference is to book a room at Busanga Bush Camp instead - the transfer time is about 10 minutes by road.
- Exception to the above is Linyanti Tented Camp (West) – you may only book sole use of the camp at a nightly camp rate, regardless of whether there is a pilot/guide in the party, staying in the fourth room.
- For guaranteed single room use, minimum two applies.
- How to book and charge for tour leaders is different – refer to page 37 of the General Information Manual for the policy.

WILDERNESS TOURING & TRANSFERS – ZAMBEZI

Introduction of a Bridge Toll Fee

At the beginning of March, the Zambia and Zimbabwe authorities introduced a toll fee for all persons crossing the bridge at Victoria Falls. Used for maintenance of the bridge, US\$ 2.50 per person, one way, will apply to all services that cross the bridge – whether sightseeing or transfers – and in both directions. Negotiations had been underway with authorities to no avail and as this is a government levy, we have no choice but to pass on the costs. However, this will apply to bookings travelling from 1 April 2018 only – Wilderness Safaris have absorbed the fees for all bookings travelling in March 2018.

White Water Rafting on Hold

Due to the current high water levels of the Zambezi River, white water rafting excursions are on hold. They will recommence when the river has dropped to a safe level again (hopefully by late May).

No Swimming at Livingstone Island Devil's Pool

These high water levels have also affected the Livingstone Island excursion – it will still operate but there will be no swimming until further notice.

BOTSWANA

Hot Air Balloon Season starts at Vumbura on 1 April 2018

- *Extended season* – operating period for this year is 1 April to 14 October 2018 (instead of 30 September).
- *Larger Balloon* – normally six pax, but can take up to eight on request, subject to weight.
- *Available from* - Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura only. Note that we do not have exclusive use of the balloon; there may be Kadizora guests on the same excursion.
- *Rates* – based on minimum two. Balloon and helicopter transfer costs now included in the published rates sheets.
- *Access* – various options are possible, with costs applicable to the helicopter and one way road transfers:
 - Drive both ways – no extra charge as it is treated as part of the morning activity.
 - Drive one-way, helicopter transfer the other.
 - Drive one way, helicopter transfer PLUS 30 or 60 minute scenic flight the other.
 - Fly both ways – either straight transfers to and from the balloon launch and landing sites, or include a 30 or 60-minute scenic flight on one of the legs.



Village Visit ex Vumbura Plains & Little Vumbura

After being on hold temporarily, the village visit ex the Vumbura camps is operational again. Situated within the greater village, it is now more organized with a specific central area offering an informative cultural experience. Accessed by helicopter only, the cost of the tour has increased, with the per person rate applicable to all - including children, specialist guides, pilots, etc.

- The return helicopter transfer, quoted separately, is based on minimum 2 pax.
- The standard number of seats on this excursion is 6. It is possible to take a group larger than 6 to the village, however prior permission must be obtained before confirming.
- Timing of the excursion will depend on helicopter availability, although they normally try to schedule it for the morning.
- There is a new optional extra - an Ox or Donkey Cart Ride.
- Please contact your Journey Specialist for further information – rates, detailed description, etc.

Helicopter Scenic Flights

Add a WOW factor to your Botswana itineraries, and book a scenic helicopter flight from any of our Delta camps (helicopter transfers between camps is another possibility to consider when adding value to an itinerary). Rates for the scenic flights are in our published rates sheets. Ranging in duration between 30, 45 or 60 minutes, the scenic flights are described as follows:

"Moments after departing camp, you will enjoy the breathtaking views seen only from a helicopter. Experience the crystal clear water channels meandering their way through lagoons and journey deep into the lush green flood plains to see some of the many animal species of the Okavango region.

- *Doors can be removed great photo and video opportunities.*
- *Helicopters used are the Bell and Robinson series, minimum 2 pax.*
- *Scenic flights are conducted any time of day. Keen photographers prefer early morning or late afternoon, while others prefer flying in the siesta period so activities are not missed.*
- *It is not our policy to disturb our environment in any way, pilots keep adequate distance from wildlife."*

To learn more about Botswana and the history of the San Bushmen, the half day Tsodilo Hills excursion is possible from all our Delta camps:

"Four Rocky Hills, including Botswana's highest point, jut strikingly out of the surrounding Kalahari Desert plains to form Tsodilo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the remote northwest of the country. A definite must see for those seeking more than wildlife from their time in Botswana. Over 4500 rock paintings, some dating back an estimated 26 000 years, adorn the marshmallow coloured quartzite rocks. The hills are sacred to the San Bushman who utilized the caves and water spring here until the late 20th century, and there is evidence of human activity here dating back from 100 000 years. Guests are accompanied by a San guide who will explain the fascinating artwork, presenting a side to Botswana few guests get to experience. The hike can be demanding but the hills have an air and allure that is difficult to describe – perhaps they possess a draw that appeals to something within us all.

- *Total duration – half day, either morning or afternoon*
- *Professional guide at Tsodilo*
- *All entry fees, light lunch and refreshments"*



Water Activity Update

Latest update – status quo remains at those camps not highlighted. Those highlighted have seen a change due to slightly higher water levels – especially the Queen Sylvia barge at Kings Pool getting back into action.

- Vumbura Concession - boating and mekoro still on offer
- Abu/Seba - no boating/mokoro excursions
- Kings Pool – the Queen Sylvia barge is operational again
- Xigera - only mokoro excursions at the moment
- DumaTau - boating all year round
- Qorokwe - only mokoro excursions at the moment
- Jacana – mekoro directly from camp, and short boat cruise
- Kwetsani – mekoro only from Pelo
- Jao – mekoro near camp and boating from Kubu lagoon
- Tubu – no boating/mokoro excursions

NAMIBIA

No Triples at Certain Camps

We are unable to accommodate triples at Desert Rhino Camp, Hoanib Skeleton Coast and Serra Cafema.

SEYCHELLES

North Island 2019

- Current Zil Air helicopter rates are valid for all confirmed bookings (with full names and international flight details). Once available, the new rates will apply to all helicopter transfers quoted/booked.

- For the 2019 season, the following special offers will be valid (excluding travel between 23 December 2018 and 5 January 2019):
 - 7 for 6
 - Honeymoon Bliss
 - Barefoot Wedding
 - Exclusively Yours
- Please refer to the following link for up to date product information: <http://www.north-island.com/north-island-portal/>

SOUTH AFRICA

iSimangaliso Park Fee Increase

Park entrance fees (always subject to change) have increased slightly. Updated costs and inclusions/exclusions are as follows:

- The FB4 rate at Rocktail INCLUDES accommodation, all meals, twice daily scheduled camp activities, laundry, scheduled transfers between the camp and Coastal Cashews, 15% VAT and Satour Tourism Levy. It excludes all drinks and park fees.
- Paid direct in camp, the rate also EXCLUDES park entrance fees of R 32.00 per adult and R 16.00 per child (up to the age of 12 years) per entry and R 27.00 per vehicle per entry, plus a standard Community Conservation Levy of R 5.00 per person.

Activity Reminder

- Diving is not available on 25 December and 1 January each year.
- Lake Sibaya excursions are at an additional cost.

ZAMBIA

No Walking in Kafue

Walking is no longer on offer as an activity on the Busanga Plains.

"Connecting Zambia" – A Useful Sales Tool

Our Connecting Zambia flyer is available on the Info Centre, under Product Categories and Selling Tools. Put together to assist you in planning a Zambian itinerary, it details "How to get around" with Wilderness Air (operated by Staravia) The easy link to the Ruckomechi camps in Mana Pools, Zimbabwe, making use of air and boat transfers is also mentioned.

AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

Cape Town International Airport (CTIA) Goes Silent

As of 1 March 2018, there are no passenger boarding calls in the domestic and international check-in areas and boarding gate areas at CTIA. Standard operating procedures require passengers to start boarding 30 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time for domestic flights, and one hour for international flights. The only instances where centralised terminal announcements are made is for irregular operations such as flight time changes, gate changes, system failure, security matters, etc.

El Al to Increase Frequency on its Tel Aviv – Johannesburg route

Effective 29 October 2018, El Al will increase its Tel Aviv-Johannesburg service to five times a week.

Cathay Pacific Launches Seasonal Non-stop flights between Hong Kong & Cape Town

Between 13 November 2018 and 18 February 2019, Cathay Pacific will operate three non-stop flights on this route.

Air Zimbabwe to Start Gaborone-Harare Flights

Air Zimbabwe has announced plans to start flying between Harare and Gaborone, among other planned destinations. They currently operate daily flights from Harare to Johannesburg, and three flights a week to Dar es Salaam.

Virgin to Introduce Double-daily Johannesburg Flights

From 28 October 2018, Virgin Atlantic will up its current daily service between Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport and London Heathrow to a double-daily service.

SAA Continues to Cut/Reduce Loss-making Routes

The CEO of South African Airways has announced that the airline will continue to cut or reduce loss-making routes and transfer unneeded aircraft to profitable low-cost carrier, Mango Airlines, as it embarks on a three-year recovery plan. Last month, SAA halved the number of flights between Johannesburg and London's Heathrow Airport. Last year, the airline cancelled or reduced the frequency of flights to African capitals including Abuja, Luanda and Kinshasa.

Cheers
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