



25 May 2017

## NEWSFLASH

### Revamping the Main Area at Busanga Bush Camp

By mid-June we will have a new and improved main area tent plus decking at Busanga Bush Camp in Zambia. The furniture will remain as is, and the decking will still be low, to provide that real bush feel and being at one with the expansive plains of the Kafue.

### DumaTau Star Bed Rebuild

Used for DumaTau guests, the sleep-out hide on the Zibalianja lagoon has been closed for a rebuild and is scheduled for completion at the end of June.

### Back to Normal - Coastal Excursion ex Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp

As of Monday, 22 May 2017, guests now drive from Hoanib camp to Mowe Bay and return by air.

### Water Restrictions for the greater Cape Town area

Cape Town (and indeed the entire Western Cape area) is currently experiencing a severe drought. Dam levels are extremely low and we are all hoping the winter rains arrive soon! Please ensure guests are made aware of the situation and that they join us in using water sparingly during their stay in the Cape.

### Kazungula Border Delays

We have experienced delays at the Kazungula border between Botswana and Zimbabwe due to an increase in tourists passing through. Immigration is working flat out to ensure delays are minimised, however, as the safari high season kicks into gear, be aware of possible delays when planning of itineraries.

## IMPORTANT

### Serra Cafema Upgrade, Temporary Closure & Boating

We are going to rebuild the iconic Serra Cafema camp on the banks of the Kunene River in the first half of 2018, whilst maintaining the same footprint on the island! In order to facilitate this, we have closed the camp between 15 January and 15 June 2018, and made alternative arrangements for affected bookings.

In addition, Serra Cafema is going 100% solar and we are moving our back-of-house to a new location. Both projects are currently underway and while there has been minimal impact on guests thus far, building is proceeding apace. We would ask that you do inform your clients there will be signs of work in progress for the next few months, however there will be no impact on their stay. The current camp had a softs refurb recently and is looking great.

NB! Boating excursions on the Kunene River are suspended until further notice due to low water levels.

## RATES

### Change to Jacana & Kwetsani Rates in June & November respectively

The following rate changes will apply to all new bookings placed from 1 June 2017:

- For bookings travelling from 1 June 2017, a reduction in rate for Jacana will common-rate it with Xigera.
- For bookings travelling from 1 November 2017, an increase in rate for Kwetsani will common-rate it with Tubu Tree and Little Tubu.

### Published Rate Sheet Updates

#### Botswana - 2017

- Mombo Trails camp rates and notes updated.

#### Namibia 2017 & 2018

- Departure taxes amended ex Eros and Windhoek International Airports.
- Namib Sky Adventure ballooning added to 2018 rate sheets and notes updated for both 2017 & 2018.

## **North Island 2018**

- Rates are now available for the 2018 season, valid from 23 December 2017 to 22 December 2018.

## **Zambia 2017 & 2018**

- Flying schedule updated with the revised departure and arrival times for Livingstone to Kafue leg.

## **Recommended Selling Rate Sheet – 2017**

- Mombo Trails Camp rates and notes updated.

## **TRAVEL REGULATIONS**

### **Effective 01 June 2017 - Botswana Tourism Development Levy (TDL) Information**

- The purpose of the levy is to raise funds for conservation and national tourism development.
- Cost is US\$ 30.00 per person. A lower rate for children is under consideration but not yet confirmed.
- Payment of the TDL may be made by credit cards - definitely Master, AMEX and Visa while Diner's or any other to be confirmed. Cash in exact denominations only is recommended.
- At this time, this process will allow for ONLY one payment, per passport, for the TDL. In future they may be able to collect group payments i.e. pay with one credit card for multiple guests travelling in one party
- No collection in advance is possible - this is an "at-entry-port" charge (border posts and airports) and will also apply to all day trippers into the country, from Victoria Falls, Livingstone, etc.
- It is tied to passport nationality. All non-SADC passport holders will be charged the levy at any port of entry into the country with the exception of Botswana expat residents. SADC residents travelling on a non-SADC passport will be charged the levy.
- The levy terminal (machine) will have 4/5 foreign languages to facilitate the payment. A voucher or receipt is generated which the traveller must take to immigration, along with their entry card (immigration form completed on arrival and departure), for the passport to be stamped and entry allowed.
- We suspect there will undoubtedly be delays on arrival while payment of the levy is facilitated and security/immigration procedures followed.
- Should the traveller stay longer than 30 days, there is no additional charge, as long as they do not leave the country.

## **WILDERNESS AIR**

### **Passenger Names for Wilderness Air**

In terms of aviation law, names MUST be provided to confirm a booking. No booking may be made for scheduled commercial air without names as per passport, and the same applies to our Wilderness Air operation. Please ensure names as per passport are provided for all reservations made with Wilderness Safaris.

### **Ground Handling in Maun & Kasane**

With immediate effect, the Civil Aviation Authority in Botswana have advised that Wilderness Air Botswana may only do the ground handling for guests travelling on Wilderness Air Botswana aircraft, and may no longer meet and assist any non-Wilderness aircraft. Going forward, Aviation Ground Handlers is the sole ground handler at Maun and Kasane Airports. Arrangements must be booked and paid for in advance, which we can do on your behalf.

### **No more Coastal Scenic Flight between Sossusvlei & Swakopmund**

Wilderness Air Namibia will no longer include a scenic flight over Conception Bay en-route to Swakopmund. Regular fog along the coast in the morning regularly prevents this, and changing the flight routing at the last minute as a result had a knock-on effect on operations. Going forward, flights departing Sossusvlei will head directly to Swakopmund, and not travel via the coast.

## **WILDERNESS TOURING & TRANSFERS**

### **CAPE FEATURED EXCURSION | NEW - Bites & Sites, A Cultural Food Tour of Stellenbosch**

No trip to the Cape is complete without visiting the beautiful Winelands region. If you enjoy food, history and culture then try something a little different to the usual wine tasting experience at the various estates! Established in 1679, Stellenbosch is the second oldest town in South Africa. It charms visitors with its romantic oak-lined streets, amazing architectural diversity, outdoor art exhibitions and its famous food and wine heritage. Savour traditional Stellenbosch food and drinks as your guide leads you through the historic heart of this vibrant university town.

During the leisurely walk hear delightful stories about historic places, including a visit to the oldest restored townhouse in South Africa and meet some of the passionate food artisans of this beautiful town. Enjoy top quality, locally produced, artisan food such as: indigenous tea tasting and rusks; traditional snacks when we visit a small family-run butchery; wine tasting at a trendy spot in the town centre (non-alcoholic options available); a heritage lunch platter featuring some South African favourites; a trilogy of Cape desserts that our grandmothers used to bake and a selection of nostalgic sweets. The tour is approximately four hours in duration and is suitable for everyone over 12 years of age.

### **La Petite Colombe set to open in Franschhoek on 1 August 2017**

Franschhoek, the world renowned and picturesque food and wine capital of South Africa, is abuzz with the imminent opening of the iconic La Colombe's new La Petite Colombe, which is replacing The Tasting Room at Le Quartier Français – an exciting new partnership with the owners of the stylish and luxurious Leeu Collection. Proprietor chefs and business partners, Scot Kirton (Eat Out Chef of the Year 2015) and Head Chef, James Gaag, will be directing a highly talented and select team, to honour the heritage of this fine venue, and marry it with the La Colombe magic.

### **Shark Dive Excursions – A Twist in the Tail**

Shark sightings in False Bay and Gansbaai have diminished dramatically due to, it appears, Orcas (killer whales) preying on the Great Whites (although there could be other factors as well). Wilderness Safaris Private Journeys (ex-Wilderness Touring Cape) are only informed on a day-by-day basis as to whether the shark diving trips will run, and they in turn will advise our guests. Sightings have been erratic...good one day and poor the next...so it is both a fascinating and challenging time for the industry. Please ensure all clients that have booked a shark dive excursion are given a heads-up. We do not know how long this will last and will update you should the situation change.

### **ZAMBEZI FEATURED EXCURSION | Elephant Interaction**

The Wild Horizons Elephant Sanctuary and Orphanage has been a safe-haven to a myriad of orphaned and injured elephants since its conception in 1992. Whilst hand rearing these orphans we have come to understand that the best way to appreciate these magnificent creatures is to watch them living wildly and freely, and this activity will give guests the opportunity to unobtrusively interact with some of the biggest personalities in Africa, in a pristine environment overflowing with raw natural beauty. You will be given an insightful and educational presentation on the sanctuary and the individual elephants, their lifestyle and their future release plans. The sanctuary was founded on the principle of conservation, and one of the most effective ways to evoke a sense of environmental responsibility is to show what stands to be lost. You will have an opportunity to talk to guides that have journeyed, physically and metaphorically, incredible distances with these elephants, and learn more about the complexities of the individuals and the herd structures. There will be an opportunity to take photographs with the elephants. After the encounter with these amazing creatures, you enjoy a selection of hot and cold canapés and drinks including local beers, wines, soft drinks, water, coffee & tea.

### **Zambezi White Water Rafting – Operational Again**

After a short closure, high water rafting (from rapid # 15 to rapid # 24) re-opened on 14 May 2017.

## **BOTSWANA**

### **Mombo Trails Camp – Pilot/Guide Accommodation, Wildlife in Camp, Offering in the Rooms**

- Pilots, guides & escorts booked into the guide accommodation at Mombo Trails, are accommodated in the Mombo staff village and transferred by vehicle (about 10 minutes) to/from the Trails camp for all meals and activities as required. The accommodation consists of 2 rooms, each with 2 x single beds that can be converted into king beds, with a shared bathroom which comprises a basic shower, basin and toilet.
- Reminder - no children under 6 years for safety reasons. Mombo Trails is on the ground with a lot of wildlife activity in and around the camp. All children aged between 6 and 16 years of age must share with an adult – bearing in mind that triples are not ideal due to lack of space and privacy.
- There are weights and yoga mats in the rooms but no hairdryers.

## **NAMIBIA**

### **Flight Connections in Windhoek**

While the extra flights are good news for travellers, Windhoek International Airport currently cannot cope with the influx of new airlines. Wilderness Safaris Namibia have advised that delays with immigration, security checks and baggage handling are having a knock-on effect with connections to and from our Wilderness Air Namibia flights. Please allow for sufficient connection times when booking an itinerary as less than an hour is simply not enough. We are not in a position to hold our flights back or leave earlier than planned – we have to stick to the times of the scheduled circuit. Examples of some of the problem connections are:

- Serra Cafema/Ongava/Doro Nawas to Windhoek – arriving at 14:25 for SA077 to JNB at 15:00
- Swakopmund/Sossusvlei to Windhoek – arriving at 13:30 for SA077 to JNB at 15:00 (often fog delays)
- Qatar QR1373 to Windhoek – arriving at 09:40 to connect with our flight to Doro Nawas/Serra Cafema at 10:35

## **RWANDA**

### **Rwanda Gorilla Permit Increase**

As recently advised by the Rwanda Tourism Board (RDB), the cost of gorilla permits in Rwanda has increased from US\$ 750 to US\$ 1 500 per person with immediate effect to ensure the sustainability of the conservation initiatives in place and to contribute more to the development of communities living around the Volcanoes National Park. Our Rwandan partners from Thousand Hills Africa (THA) met with RDB and are able to purchase permits at the old rate for bookings confirmed or invoiced prior to 6 May 2017. All new bookings placed from 6 May will be eligible for the new permit cost.

In addition, the number of habituated gorilla groups has increased from 10 to 12, as have the number of permits - from 80 to 96 permits per day.

## **SEYCHELLES**

### **Zil Air Rates**

The current Zil Air helicopter rates have been extended until 30 June 2017. Any confirmed helicopter bookings made (with full names and international flight details) before the new rates are released, will be honoured at the existing rate.

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

### **Maintenance at Rocktail Camp**

An extensive maintenance project is underway at Rocktail, scheduled for completion at the end of May. Operations have been working around guest movements as the camp is not closed.

### **Fishing at Rocktail**

Guests must pre-arrange fishing permits – obtained from the South African Post Office. The camp does have 2 very basic fishing rods which guests are welcome to use on a complimentary basis, however, we do recommend that guests bring their own fishing equipment - rod, tackle, bait, etc.

## **ZAMBIA**

### **Zambia Tourism Levy**

A tourism levy of 1.5% on accommodation was communicated in March 2017 and implemented in April. This was already taken into account in the calculation of our rates so there is no change.

### **Private Activities & Transfers at Toka Leya**

Private activities and transfers booked at Toka Leya operate slightly differently to those private activities booked at our safari camps and are therefore at a reduced rate. Specifically:

- Transfers to and from Livingstone Airport are excluded from the lodge nightly rate and cannot be guaranteed on private basis. We reserve the right to handle these transfers on a shared basis.
- Transfers to and from camp activities such as the Tour of the Falls on the Zambian side, village visit, boating excursion, town and museum will be private.
- Game drives and sunset cruises included in the lodge nightly rate will be private.
- Conducted in the public domain, the following activities are NOT private – visiting the Victoria Falls, local villages and schools, Livingstone town and museums, etc. Other guests from Toka Leya may join on these excursions and there may be guests from other properties.

## **ZIMBABWE**

### **Linkwasha Star Bed**

Our latest Star Bed addition at Scott's Pan in Hwange is now available to Linkwasha guests. Situated a short drive away from Linkwasha Camp, the Star Bed is built on a platform raised a few metres off the ground. Apart from a mosquito net over the bed, the platform is open to the beautiful southern skies, and basic ablution facilities are available nearby. A highly qualified guide will accompany guests, sleeping a little further away to be on standby should they require assistance during the night.

### **Private Vehicle at Ruckomechi & Little Ruckomechi**

The one private vehicle we have on the Ruckomechi concession may now be booked for either camp. Per our child policy, private vehicles are a requirement for children aged 12 years and younger, so if the private vehicle has already been booked, and there are young children in the party, the relevant number of beds in camp must be booked and charged for to secure sole use of a vehicle.

## **AIRLINES & AIRPORTS**

### **Reconfirming Commercial Flights no Longer Necessary**

Per our ticketing agent and the airlines, reconfirming scheduled commercial flights is no longer necessary.

### **Temporary Terminal Building planned for Maun Airport**

Short-term upgrades are planned for Maun Airport, followed by the construction of a temporary terminal to ease congestion, with completion expected at the end of September. We will keep you updated and in the long term, there are apparently plans to construct a completely new terminal building at the airport.

### First Non-stop UK-Rwanda Flight

From 26 May 2017, RwandAir will operate three flights a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from Gatwick to the Rwandan capital of Kigali.

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Cheers

Tina

**Wilderness Product Manager**

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