

26 October 2015

NEWSFLASH

Concessions made to Controversial Travel Regulations

Good news! In response to a concerted drive by the tourism and business communities pointing out the impact that these regulations have had on tourism and economic growth, the South African Government has announced that the following changes will be implemented over the next three months to a year:

- It will no longer be mandatory for inbound travellers from visa-exempt countries to carry unabridged birth certificates for children travelling with them, although proof of the relation and consent from the absent parents or guardians should be carried as immigration will have the discretion to ask for it (note that unabridged birth certificates will still have to be presented by South African children leaving the country, however the term will be "birth certificate containing parental details")
- Capture biometrics at ports of entry
- Provide long-term multiple entry visas
- Consider visa waivers for certain countries

For now, the status quo remains and relevant documentation as per current requirements must be carried. As soon as we have confirmation that the revised requirements have been gazetted, communicated and implemented, we will advise. For further details: <http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/Home/Detail?articleId=103198>

Ongava Handover

As of Sunday 1 November 2015, Ongava Game Reserve will no longer be part the Wilderness Safaris brand and portfolio. Operations continue as usual although they will become a third party product falling under Associated Product and their inventory will no longer be on WISH. Existing Ongava bookings/rates as quoted at the time of handover will be honoured and all booking details shared to ensure there is a smooth transition. Going forward, we will continue to book Ongava as and when requested, bearing in mind that all new bookings for the Ongava properties placed from Monday 2 November 2015, will be subject to their new rates, terms & conditions – the same as any other third party supplier. At this time, we will continue to access Ongava on our Wilderness Air Namibia Flying Circuit and will notify you should this change going forward.

For your information, some of the Ongava properties have temporary closures early next year. Affected bookings have been handled separately, however, the details are as follows:

- Ongava Tented Camp 11 to 18 February 2016 inclusive - solarisation of the camp.
- Little Ongava and Ongava Lodge 2 to 15 March 2016 inclusive – to build a new viewing hide at the waterhole. The present hide is too small and requires a significant upgrade. While the lodges will not be directly affected by the work on the hide, there will be heavy machinery and builders in front of the lodge, and this is not conducive to tranquil game viewing. In addition, there will be some soft upgrades and a new back of house area at Little Ongava.

Zambia Launches e-Visa

The Government of the Republic of Zambia has launched an e-Visa facility. This is open to all foreign nationals who require visas to visit Zambia...for those who obtain visas at ports of entry the e-Visa will take 3 working days to process and for those who requires visa prior to travel, it will take a minimum of 5 working days. Standard visa fees remain and applications are made online as follows: <http://evisa.zambiaimmigration.gov.zm/#/>

Note that while both Zimbabwe and Zambia now have the option of online visa applications (e-Visas), this does NOT apply to the KAZA Univisa as this may only be purchased at the port of entry.

Limited Space in Victoria Falls – Early December

A large convention is taking place in Victoria Falls from 8 to 13 December 2015. As a result, accommodation is limited and alternatives in Livingstone may need to be considered over this period. Although there will be increased traffic in the resort town, business continues as normal.

IMPORTANT

Purchase of & Travel with Animal Products

In light of poaching concerns, all guests who purchase items made from animal products, must ensure they have the necessary paperwork and proof of purchase before crossing any borders. An export permit should be applied for at the time of purchase and the relevant authorities will then make an application for an import permit with the next port of entry. Note that this cannot be applied for at the port of entry nor is there any guarantee it will be granted. Guests who have purchased horns, skins, anything made from bone, etc., need to bring these items to the attention of custom officials at ports of entry and exit BEFORE their bags are scanned and searched. Using Botswana as an example, where it is a crime to have trophies that do not have the accompanying permits (export and import), anyone found in this position may be faced with a BWP 10 000.00 fine or 5 years imprisonment, plus the items being confiscated.

No DBB Rate for Rocktail in 2016

As per the published South African Nett Rate Sheet, we do not have a dinner, bed and breakfast rate for Rocktail in 2016. We only have the inclusive FB4 rate which includes accommodation, all meals, twice daily scheduled camp activities, laundry, scheduled transfers between the camp and Coastal Cashews, 14% VAT and Satour Tourism Levy. This rate excludes all drinks and park fees.

Published Country Rate Sheet

Please always refer to our online Published Rates Sheets for the most up to date and current rates. The Change Control Sheets listed in the Rates section on the Info Centre provide details of changes made should you wish to check. Recent updates include:

- The adjustment to all Mombo camp rates according to the new opening and closure dates.
- The increase at Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp.
- The re-classification of Little Kulala and Serra Cafema as Classic camps.

INFO CENTRE

Photography Tips, Use of Drones, Red Light Filters, etc.

Details of the above are included in the General Information Manual from page 40 and in our General Pre-Tour Information.

Double Beds & Converters in our Camps

Our Camp Information Sheets advise how many doubles vs twins are possible in our camps. We do specify if the bed is a physical double i.e. cannot be split into twins, and how many mattress converters are available in each camp to convert twins into doubles. Please do not assume that the camps will be able to accommodate doubles in every room – they are on request and cannot be guaranteed. Let your Journey Specialist know of your requirements and Operations will do their best to accommodate accordingly.

Power Supply Information

Details on power supply (including solar) and types of plugs available in our camps may be found in our country specific pre-tour documents.

WILDERNESS TOURING

NEW | Livingstone Island Walks

This offering comes at the right time, when the Falls on the Zambian side have dried up. With four departures a day (06:15, 09:15, 11:15 and 14:15), these walks depart from the National Heritage office at the entrance to the Falls and go from the Eastern Cataract to Livingstone Island. Catering for a maximum of 8 per group, they are led by qualified guides with a focus on safety. Drinks are offered on the island and there may be an opportunity to swim in the Livingstone Island pool on the edge of the Falls. One has to be relatively fit to participate in this activity and comfortable walking shoes like rafters or trainers are recommended - no flip-flops or hard-soled shoes. Although operated by Tongabezi, participants do not have to stay at Tongabezi and Wilderness Safaris Zimbabwe will book as requested. Transfers to/from the National Heritage site are extra and costs will depend on where guests are staying.

ZAMBEZI FEATURED EXCURSION | Game Drives (including Night Drives with a Bush Dinner)

Capture the essence of the African bush at its best, with this dusk or dawn wildlife experience! Professional guides in open 4x4 vehicles take you on a meander along the shores of a scenic lake, through basalt plains to teak forests and Kalahari sands within Victoria Falls Private Game Reserve – where you might see elephant, giraffe, zebra lion and leopard. Morning game drives include an approximate 2-hour game drive and bush breakfast while evening game drives include an approximate 2-hour game drive followed by a bush dinner under the stars.

CAPE FEATURED EXCURSION | Private Full Day Peninsula Tour with Sea Kayaking

Meet your sea kayaking guide in Simonstown for a safety briefing before enjoying a few hours easy paddling in twin kayaks along the False Bay coast – with an ocean-side view of the African penguin colony at Boulders Beach. After lunch, head to the Cape of Good Hope section of the Table Mountain National Park with its unique Cape fynbos vegetation and wildlife. Climb (or ride in the world's first environmentally friendly funicular) to the famous Cape Point Lighthouse

and capture the magical vistas of False Bay. Head back to your hotel along the dramatic Atlantic seaboard - featuring Chapman's Peak Drive, the picturesque fishing hamlet of Hout Bay and the towering Twelve Apostles.

BOTSWANA

ADJUSTED | Chitabe Closure Dates for Maintenance

Chitabe Main camp was closed from 26 January to 29 March 2016 for annual maintenance. However, this has been revised to 26 January until 13 February, reopening on 14 February 2016, allowing for more availability over our Summer season. Chitabe Lediba closure dates remain 9 to 25 January 2016.

UPDATE | Water Activities in the Delta

- Water activities have been suspended at Tubu Tree and Little Tubu due to very low water levels.
- The Xigera boats have been moved to the boat station, which is approximately a 40 minute drive from camp. Boating will continue in the main channels and mokoros in the flood plains until water levels get too low.

Change in Access to Mombo & Little Mombo

The guest access bridge burnt down last week due to a large veld fire in the area. As was the case before we built this bridge two years ago, access to the camps will now be past the workshop and staff village. However, this back of house area is now screened so should not impact on the guest experience.

KENYA

UPDATE | Online Visa Applications

Following some technical glitches with the e-visa application procedure, the Government of Kenya recently announced that it is reinstating the visa counters at arrivals, and will allow for the manual and on-line systems to run concurrently until such a time that the online application process runs seamlessly.

NAMIBIA

In-Room Massage Treatments at Little Kulala & Serra Cafema

Although these two camps have been re-categorised as Classics, we are still offering in-room massage treatments (additional cost) at both Little Kulala and Serra Cafema.

SEYCHELLES

Helicopter Transfers to/from North Island

We have received the new season rates from Zil Air – valid from 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016. In addition, Zil Air now have two helicopters available, with different weight allowances (contact your Journey Specialist for details):

- EUROCOPTER EC 120 which seats a maximum of 4 guests per flight (including luggage).
- EUROCOPTER EC 145 which seats a maximum of 6 guests (including luggage).

ZAMBIA

Credit Cards no longer accepted for Departure Tax in Zambia

We have been advised that credit cards are no longer accepted as a form of payment for departure taxes at airports in Zambia. All departure taxes must be paid in cash - Kwacha (KR), the local currency, or the equivalent in US Dollars – directly at the airport when guests depart from Livingstone, Lusaka or Mfuwe. Small denominations of US Dollars are encouraged for easier and quicker transactions and it helps to have the exact amount to hand as change is sometimes not provided. Note that Travellers Cheques are not accepted forms of payment for this purpose.

AIRLINES

NEW | Airlink to Launch Cape Town/Maun Service in 2016

On 11 March 2016, Airlink will launch a new service on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays between Cape Town and Maun. The flight will depart Cape Town at 10:35 and arrive in Maun at 13:05. The return flight departs Maun at 13:35 and arrives in Cape Town at 16:10.

Proflight Cancels Kafue Route for 2016

Proflight have announced that they will discontinue the Lusaka/ Kafue route in 2016. The route was not successful for a number of reasons and they have concluded that they are not in a position to make the necessary investment to ensure this a sustainable route. ProCharter will continue to offer charter flights to any airstrip in the Kafue using their variety of aircraft.

Warm regards,

Tina

Wilderness Product Manager

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