



26 September 2016

## NEWSFLASH

### Introducing Linyanti Tented Camp as an FIT Offering

Although Linyanti Tented Camp was previously used by Explorations, Series and Specialist Groups only, going forward one half of the camp will be made available to FIT bookings on a sole use basis, making it ideal for families, small groups travelling together or parties with a specialist guide. The two camps (East & West) were built in such a way that while they share the same traversing area, entrance and back of house, they each have their own main area and 4 rooms to the east and west respectively.

- The camp is available on WISH inventory and the Window. Made up of 4 twin rooms, you may only book sole use of the whole camp – which the Window will do automatically, regardless of whether you book a minimum of 1 guest or a maximum of 8.
- Accordingly, there is one nightly rate for the whole camp that is divided between the number of guests in the group.
- There is no separate guide accommodation. Should you have a pilot or guide, that will need to be taken into account i.e. they would be in 1 room, leaving 3 rooms for guests.
- There is only one vehicle at the disposal of Linyanti Tented Camp (West) which will carry up to 8 passengers – no private vehicle is possible.
- Our standard child policy applies although triples are not possible and children 16 years and under must share with an adult.
- Access is via the existing Wilderness Air Botswana flying circuit into Chobe Airstrip. The transfers between camp and airstrip are approximately 1hr30 one way – however this is also treated as a game drive.
- It will be a seasonal camp, operational from 1 May to 30 November.
- Important to note is that there may be other guests in Linyanti Tented Camp East (still used exclusively for Explorations). While guests in both camps will be hosted separately with their own main area, guides and vehicles, neither side will have strictly exclusive use of the greater camp and game-viewing area.
- Rates have been added to our published Botswana Nett and RSP Rates and all collateral is in the process of being updated accordingly.

The camp itself is lovely – I have been fortunate enough to visit twice this year. The main area has a lounge, bar, dining area plus fire-pit under the stars. The general colour scheme is charcoal grey (even the canvas of the tents) with touches of lime green and images in black & white. Walkways are on the ground and wildlife do wander through – giraffe, baboons, hippos, hyenas, elephants – so it has quite a wild feel to it. The tented rooms are well appointed, with all needs met:

- A small outside deck with chairs and table
- Double entrance doors with gauze screens
- Very comfortable twin beds with bedside tables and lamps
- Desk with camp and Wilderness collateral, charging station, water flasks & glasses
- Standing fan
- Bathroom with a good shower, toilet, cupboard, basin, washline, laundry basket.





### Little Vumbura Upgrade

Little Vumbura was closed some time ago between January and March 2017 to accommodate a refurb. We have consequently increased the scale of this project and require a further closure between 16 November and 16 December 2016 to do the necessary work. We are very excited about the plans for Little Vumbura, so to give you an idea of the scope:

- Extensive modification of the rooms: increasing in size by 17m<sup>2</sup> by closing in the current verandah, creating a larger lounge area in front of the bed, down a step so that the view is not impacted; adding a new shaded verandah with dropped seating; putting glass doors in for the shower and toilet; glassing in the shower itself instead of the gauze; addressing the heat issue by opening up the side walls and back with "clearvu" panels; adding fly-outs – shade over the back and sides for the rooms; new interiors and softs, lightening up the furniture, replacing or sanding and treating all floors.
- Main area: replacing all timber decking; doubling the size of the bar to create a large oval; re-doing the pool and surrounding deck which will include putting up shade and screens; completely rebuilding the Back of House operation – kitchen, laundry, offices, stores, new water and sewage system.

### IMPORTANT

#### ZAR in Zimbabwe?

There have been recent reports about Harare adopting the South African Rand for the tourism sector, however this was only a recommendation from Treasury. It is not policy and it is business as usual with the US Dollar still the acceptable currency.

#### Operational dates for Ruckomechi in 2017

Apologies – there was some confusion in this regard. Note that the opening dates for the two camps differ:

- Ruckomechi operates from 1 April to 15 November
- Little Ruckomechi operates from 1 June to 15 November

#### Public Holidays in Botswana

29 & 30 September plus 1 October 2016 are public holidays in Botswana. The 29<sup>th</sup> is not normally a holiday, however has been declared one this year to celebrate Botswana's 50 years of Independence.

### TRAVEL REGULATIONS

#### KAZA Visa – Still Pending

No further change in this regard. The Zambia and Zimbabwe Tourism & Immigration ministries are still working on the necessary paper work and sign off, so the standard visa process remains in place.

#### Kenyan Visas

When the new e-Visa was introduced in September 2015, it was supposed to replace the manual visa. However, challenges were experienced and the two systems continue to run side by side today. All eligible visitors to Kenya may either apply for the e-Visa prior to departure or make a manual visa application upon arrival at any port of entry. While not mandatory, it is recommended that clients do apply for the e-Visa, although Immigration authorities have given assurances that ample notice would be given when the manual visa was to be discontinued.

### RATES UPDATES

#### Explorations

The 2017 Botswana summer Encounter – rates have been amended and are lower than previously published.

#### Namibia

- The 2016, 2017 & 2018 Rates Sheets have been updated due to the recent Airport tax increase.

- The Wings over Namibia and Spirit of Namibia programmes for 2016 have been repriced to take the new Namibian departure taxes into account.

### Seychelles

Remember that the 2017 rates for North Island are EXCLUSIVE of 15% VAT and this must be added for the correct cost. Note too that under included in the nightly rate are daily complimentary yoga classes and a complimentary welcome treatment at the Spa – 30 minutes per person for Presidential Villa guests and 60 minutes for Villa North Island guests. Excluded from the rate are private yoga sessions.

### Zimbabwe

The single supplement rate at Little Ruckomechi has increased for 2017 & 2018.

## WILDERNESS AIR

### Air Tickets

On check-in, Wilderness Air guests are given an air ticket folder with their circuit flight air ticket and an important message that says the following – please do mention this in conversations you may have with your guests:

*"Please ensure you have your ticket with you at all times whilst flying with Wilderness Air. Pilots will require tickets before boarding all flights".*

### Wilderness Air Sole Use Charters to Jack's Camp

Effective immediately, Wilderness Air Botswana will no longer be offering sole use charters into and out of Jacks Camp (Tsigaro Airstrip). Sole use charters may be booked through Major Blue or Mack Air directly. Likewise on seat rates – Wilderness will do the flights between Maun and Wilderness camps, however the flights to and from Jacks Camp / Tsigaro Airstrip must be booked through the other companies. Existing bookings with Wilderness Air will be "honoured" in that Wilderness Air will sub-charter Major Blue / Mack Air to do these flights on our behalf at the same rate.

### Estimated Seat Numbers & Aircraft

Due to many variables on the day (weather temperatures, weights, fuel and routings) seat rate allocations per aircraft are subject to change. The below is purely to give an idea of the variety of aircraft used and the capacities per aircraft. Wilderness Air reserves the right to split groups booked on seat rates and schedule aircraft load factors in accordance with safety.

#### Botswana

- C208 Caravan: 8 – 11 passengers
- Airvan: 4 - 5 passengers
- C206: 3 – 4 passengers

#### Namibia

- Cessna 406F: 10 passengers (*Note the 406 now operates the main schedule*)
- C210: 4 passengers
- C208 Caravan: 8 – 11 passengers (*Until further notice, the Caravan is used for access to and from Hoanib*)

#### Zambia (Staravia operating on behalf of Wilderness Air)

- Beechcraft Baron: 4 passengers
- C210: 4 passengers
- King Air 200: 9 passengers

#### Zimbabwe

- C208 Caravan: 8 – 11 passengers
- C206: 4 passengers

## WILDERNESS TOURING

### CAPE FEATURED EXCURSION | Scheduled Full Day White Shark Cage Diving – Gansbaai (All Year Round)

Gansbaai is near Cape Agulhas, approximately a two and a half hour drive from Cape Town. On arrival, guests are offered refreshments and complete an indemnity form before embarking the vessel. En route to the dive site, an onboard marine biologist will brief everyone before getting up close and personal with this amazing ocean predator. Involved in shark research, identification and tagging, the operator will share all aspects of their valuable conservation work. The boat ride to the dive site takes approximately 15 minutes, and once anchored in the channel, a specially designed shark cage which floats above the surface is lowered into the water. Guests enter the cage's inside ring which hovers above the water, descend into the water, and wait for a shark to approach. On average the boat is anchored for 2 hours, but this depends on the shark activity. A light lunch of sandwiches and cold drinks will be served on board before returning to shore. Other wildlife species such as Cape fur seals, Cape gannets, Cape cormorants, African penguins, various whales and dolphins are likely to be seen while on the trip.

NB: Shark cage diving is very weather and tide dependent and for this reason, times are only confirmed the afternoon prior. Basic diving courses are available and an underwater video-camera can be hired.

## **BOTSWANA**

### **Annual Maintenance**

In addition to Little Vumbura, we have implemented a number of closures in the months ahead at our Botswana camps:

- DumaTau - 3 rooms have been closed between 1 and 30 April 2017 for maintenance in all rooms – floors and canvas.
- Kings Pool - 4 rooms have been closed between 1 and 31 October 2016 for re-thatching.
- Kalahari Plains - closed from 23 September to 1 October 2016 for back of house maintenance and treatment of decks.
- Savuti - closed from 1 January to 28 February 2017 for maintenance in the main area and to replace all boardwalks.
- Seba - closed from 26 January to 13 February 2017 to re-thatch the main area roof.
- Vumbura North - 1 room closed from 1 February to 22 March 2017 for maintenance to floors, outside decks and lighting.
- Vumbura South - 1 room closed from 1 to 30 April 2017 for maintenance to floors, outside decks and lighting.
- Xigera - closed from 20 January to 3 February 2017 for back of house maintenance AND 2 Rooms closed from 1 January to 30 March 2017 to treat the floors.

### **New Vehicles at Abu & Mombo**

- We have new vehicles at Abu. They have 2 rows with 2 seats per row, with a centre console, and 1 seat next to the driver to make a total of 5 seats. This centre console may be replaced with a seat if needed. There is also a USB charge point on the dashboard.
- We also have new vehicles at Mombo. They accommodate 6 pax in 3 rows with 2 seats each plus a centre console between the seats to store items and with USB charging points. Note that the seats are not heated, and there is a fridge in the front next to the guide – instead of a passenger seat.

### **Water Levels & Water Activities**

Water levels in the Delta are starting to drop, as they always do at this time of year. However, with forecasts saying that the rains will be late this season, there is a possibility that water based activities will be affected. We will keep you updated in this regard.

### **Gunotsoga Village Visit ex Vumbura**

There is no rate change for 2017.

### **Chitabe Lediba Pilot/Guide Accommodation**

This "unit" consists of two complete tents, joined by boardwalks and with the tents far enough apart to have completely separate front decks. They are built to the same standard as guest accommodation and both tents have outdoor showers.

### **Abu Pilot/Guide Accommodation**

Completely rebuilt, the new unit has twin beds and is not of the same standard as guest accommodation – although still quite comfortable as per the images below.



## **ZAMBIA**

### **Change in Toka Leya Activity**

Guided nature walks with a Zambia Wildlife Authority Scout (ZAWA) are no longer on offer as a Toka Leya activity. Guests interested in a guided nature walk with a scout must discuss this with camp management. They will book the activity with a third party supplier and costs are settled direct. The guided nature walk within close proximity to the camp with one of our own staff remains in place. This experience enables an understanding about the medicinal properties of plants and trees, the ecology, birds and insects as well as to interpret the signs of the wild, including animal tracks.

## **ZIMBABWE**

### Payment for Visa Fees

Zimbabwe Immigration now accept credit cards for visa payments – Visa, Master, Amex and Diners. However, problems may be experienced with the point of sale machines when processing card payments, so carrying cash as well is recommended.

## AIRLINES & AIRPORTS

### Acsa Upgrades free WiFi offering

Passengers at boarding gates in Airport Company South Africa's (Acsa) nine airports now have access to four hours or one gigabyte of free data. When the complimentary four hours have lapsed or the one gig of data is reached, users can opt for a pay-as-you-go service. How to access the Airports@vast WiFi service:

- Search for Airports@vast on a smart device (laptop, tablet or smartphone).
- Select the service from the device's WiFi search list.
- Open the device's browser. Users will be redirected to the service's login page.
- Select complimentary service.
- Users will need to register with a valid email address.
- When registration is complete users can surf the web.

### Victoria Falls Airport nears Completion

The new domestic terminal at Victoria Falls International Airport is expected to be completed by the end of this month. It has been closed for refurbishments as part of the airport project, with domestic flights being operated from the international terminal. Note that air-conditioning in the domestic terminal will only be fully installed by the end of October (so we may have some "hot and bothered" guests).

### Namibian Flight Update

- Qatar and KLM will both start flying to Windhoek in the near future.
- On 30 October, Air Namibia will commence a new four times a week service between Durban and Windhoek via Gaborone. The service will operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

### Botswana Airport Update

- The expansion of Kasane International Airport is expected to be complete in June next year. Currently, the airport can accommodate 200 passengers an hour and after expansion this will increase to 230 passengers per hour. Work includes the construction of a new terminal building, with ground and mezzanine floors. An air traffic control tower will be built adjacent to the passenger terminal and the existing tower will be converted to a fire and rescue services watch tower.
- Plans are also under way to expand Maun International Airport, while a new airport control tower and technical block have just been completed.
- Botswana's Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs is to address the lengthy immigration queues at Maun Airport due to a shortage of immigration officers, by increasing manpower at the airport.

### Proflight Direct flights link Durban and Lusaka

Flights will operate three times a week direct between Lusaka and Durban, departing from Lusaka at 09:50 and arriving in Durban at 12:20 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and departing at 8:15 on Sundays for a 10:45 arrival in Durban. From Durban flights leave at 13:00 and arrive in Lusaka at 15:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, providing a comfortable connection with Proflight's thrice daily service from Lusaka to Ndola; and there's an 11:25 departure on Sundays to arrive at 13:55.

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Warm regards,  
Tina

**Wilderness Product Manager**

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