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26 April 2022

NEWSFLASH

Wilderness Air Zimbabwe - Minimum 2 Requirement Falls Away

With immediate effect, Zimbabwe joins Botswana and Namibia in not having a minimum two (2) requirement on our Wilderness Air seat rates, opening the door to more single travellers.

For operational and logistical reasons, our Zambia circuit and the Zambezi triangle flights (VFA/BBK/LVI) will remain as minimum two (2).

Daily Access for the Kafue from June

We now have daily flights for the forthcoming season on the fantastic Busanga Plains in Zambia. Available from 1 June to 31 October (previously June and July were restricted), we have partnered with both Staravia and United Air Charters (UAC) which has allowed us to increase flight capacity on our circuit. Inventory has been amended to reflect the following, with additional seats on request (subject to availability):

- Kafue/Lusaka and vice versa, 8 seats daily
- Kafue/Livingstone and vice versa, 4 seats daily

Note that it remains mandatory to have a Wilderness Safaris camp in your Zambian itinerary in order to book seat rates with Wilderness Air Zambia.

CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

BOTSWANA

Kalahari Plains to Resume Operations in July

Although there are positive signs of recovery in the travel sphere, occupancies in some camps are still low over the coming months. In addition, there has been extensive damage recently to the tents and water infrastructure at Kalahari Plains caused by rogue elephants which have been transient through the area. Kalahari Plains was scheduled to resume operations on 1 May 2022, however, this has now unfortunately been delayed to 1 July 2022, to allow the requisite time for necessary repairs.

FLIGHTS, TOURING & TRANSFERS

WILDERNESS AIR

Passenger Weights required for Wilderness Air Namibia

A current shortage of resources in Namibia means some flight bookings are being outsourced. These operators use different, sometimes smaller, aircraft so until further notice, please provide all individual passenger weights, not only those over 100 kg. This applies to Wilderness Air Namibia flights specifically – both seat rates and sole use charters. It is vital for planning purposes and to avoid inconvenience on the ground, should we have to request weights on arrival and make alternative flight or aircraft arrangements thereafter – resulting in possible delays or even additional costs.

Flexibility on the Wilderness Air Namibia Circuit

The times and routings on our Namibian flying circuit were developed to operate both efficiently and cost effectively in a country that has vast flying distances. In the current climate, we do not have the same high occupancies as before plus we are faced with limited resources. To accommodate this need to be more flexible, please allow for some adjustments to our published circuit, and advise your clients accordingly. Although flights may not match our published times and routes, rest assured that all movements will take both the guests' convenience and arrangements into account.

Ruckomechi - Mana West Airstrip Currently Closed

Due to late rains in the area, we have been unable to carry out required maintenance at Mana West airstrip, so alternative arrangements have been made for Ruckomechi guests as follows:

- Wilderness Air Zimbabwe will fly all guests to and from Chirundu.
- It is a 10 minute road transfer from the airstrip to the Zambezi River dock at Chirundu, followed by a boat transfer to Ruckomechi (1 hour downriver & 1.5 hours for the return...against the current).

We hope Mana West will resume operations in early May, while flights are operating as normal to/from the Chikwenya airstrip.

Reminder – Departure Taxes & Landing Fees, Excluded from Seat Rates

There are instances where departure taxes (usually airports) and landing fees (usually airstrips) are excluded from our Wilderness Air seat rates. Some are settled in advance, while others must be settled direct. When prepaid, they must be added to the quote in advance, and if settled direct, please communicate the amounts to the guest to ensure they have the available funds with them. Below is a summary for your information but please also refer to the Wilderness Air sections of our published Rates Sheets for further details and costs.

Botswana

- Prepaid to Wilderness Safaris:
 - Landing fees for the Khwai, Xakanaxa and Piajo airstrips
 - Botswana Domestic departure tax (Maun/Kasane)
 - Botswana International departure tax (Maun/Kasane)

Namibia

- Prepaid to Wilderness Safaris:
 - Windhoek International Airport (Hosea Kutako) domestic departure tax
 - Windhoek Eros Airport domestic departure tax
 - Swakopmund/Arandis domestic departure tax

Zambia

- Paid direct at the airport:
 - Zambia Domestic departure tax, plus security tax and infrastructure & development tax (Livingstone/Lusaka)
 - Zambia International departure tax, plus security tax and infrastructure & development tax (Livingstone/Lusaka)

- Prepaid to Wilderness Safaris:
 - Zambia International passenger safety tax (Livingstone/Lusaka) - National Airport Corporation Limited
 - Zambia Domestic passenger safety tax (Livingstone/Lusaka) - National Airport Corporation Limited
 - Zambia International passenger safety charge, per leg - Zambia Civil Aviation Authority

Zimbabwe

- Paid direct at the airport:
 - Zimbabwe Domestic passenger service fee plus AIDEF* (Harare, Victoria Falls, Hwange, Kariba)
 - Zimbabwe International departure tax plus AIDEF* fee (Victoria Falls)
- *Aviation Infrastructural Development Fund

COVID-19

Vaccination Q&A

With many countries introducing a policy of vaccination OR negative RT-PCR test result as a requirement for entry, a number of questions have been raised. Herewith some clarity based on what we have been able to ascertain from our areas of operation (subject to change).

Fully vaccinated: thus far, all regions require travellers to be fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated in this context means having had the requisite two doses of Pfizer, or the single dose of J&J, etc. - the standard regime depending on what type/make of vaccination it is. It is a bonus if the traveller has also had their booster jab but it is not an official requirement.

Waiting period: to our knowledge, there is no waiting period required between date of vaccination and date of travel. Formal regulations do not specify this. We also believe that officials are not checking the date of the last vaccine. Key is to have the full dose as relevant, and provide proof thereof.

What sort of proof:

- In most cases, details of exactly what sort of proof of vaccination will be accepted by the various airlines, border and Port Health authorities have not been provided – other than it has to be valid and authentic. Our recommendation is to travel with the following to cover all eventualities and facilitate the ease of travel, mitigating the chance of queries and delays:
 - Hard copy. Bring the original vaccination card plus printed certificate or card (electronic). It may not be possible to access online links in some areas due to poor or no connectivity, hence hard copies are required as a back-up.
 - Digital/electronic version on a device. If there are QR codes on these documents, these should be opened and the results printed, to have that in paper as well as on the phone.

In South Africa specifically:

- AirlinK will not accept images/photographs of the above.
- International travellers must show their proof of vaccination in whatever manner their country/ state uses. It must be an official card/certificate indicating that they are fully vaccinated. Any digital certificates must be printed out as hard copy to present to immigration officials on arrival.
- Be aware that Port Health officials have the right to request an antigen/RT-PCR test on arrival should they feel this is necessary.
- COVID-19 vaccine passports do not exist nor are they accepted in South Africa as yet – only proof of vaccination.
- The QR code certificate requirement is only relevant for South African citizens for entry/exit.

Cancellation of Tests

In instances where revised regulations negate the need for RT-PCR tests for entry, testing arrangements made may need to be cancelled. Policies differ depending on the third party supplier, however, for those booked with Wilderness Safaris, please note the below.

- Bookings cancelled outside of a week prior to the date of testing, will be refunded.
- Bookings cancelled within a week prior to the date of testing, may be subject to penalties. This will be determined on a case by case basis as it will depend on timing and what arrangements have already been booked with the service provider.

COVID-19 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS

Listed below is a breakdown of the most recent developments, with some easing of restrictions. We do our best to provide as accurate and detailed information as possible, but the disclaimer on each country specific protocol document must be noted. Please also refer to these on the Info Centre for the latest details.

Currently, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa all require proof of full vaccination OR a negative RT-PCR test result for entry. This should ease the burden of additional costs from both the testing and the necessary arrangements to facilitate it.

Namibia

Further clarity was received on vaccination requirements. An individual is considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if:

- a) An adult, 18 years and older, has received: two (2) doses of a two-dose regimen vaccine, or one (1) dose of a one-dose regimen vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson, 14 days prior to the date of entry into Namibia.
- b) Children and adolescents 12 years and older should meet the requirement in a) above.
- c) A booster vaccine is not a requirement for entry into Namibia.

Child regulations:

- Children between 5 and 11 years of age should present negative COVID-19 test results.
- The vaccination certificate and COVID-19 RT-PCR test requirements do not apply to children younger than 5 years.

Rwanda

The latest entry requirements are listed below. All other measures stay in effect for another month.

- Arriving passengers at Kigali international Airport must present a negative Antigen Rapid test taken 72 hours prior to departure from country of origin – no longer RT-PCR.
- An additional RT-PCR test must still be taken on arrival, at own cost.
- The cost of testing has reduced slightly.
- Departing passengers at Kigali international Airport must present a negative Antigen Rapid or RT-PCR test result (depending on requirements at destination), taken 72 hours prior to departure.
- All transiting passengers must complete the passenger locator form and upload the COVID-19 Rapid test certificate taken within 72 hours before heading to the airport.
- Transiting passengers for more than 12 hours through Rwanda will be screened upon entry and must take a RT-PCR test at own cost before entry to Rwanda.

South Africa

As of midnight on 4 April 2022, all Level 1 regulations have been scrapped, with the exception of a few transitional measures, which remain in place.

- Face masks in indoor public spaces must still be worn. A mask is not required when outdoors.
- The existing restrictions on gatherings will continue. Both indoor and outdoor venues can take up to 50% of their capacity without any maximum limit, provided that proof of vaccination or a negative COVID RT-PCR test result not older than 72 hours is required for entrance to the venue. Where there is no provision for proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test result, then the current upper limit of 1 000 people indoors and 2 000 people outdoors will remain.
- The existing provisions with respect to international travel remain in place. Travellers entering South Africa will need to show proof of vaccination OR a negative RT-PCR test result not older than 72 hours. If a traveller does not submit a vaccine certificate or proof of a negative COVID-19 test, they will be required to do an antigen test on arrival and isolate for 10 days if COVID positive.
- All travellers (**over the age of five**) must present proof of full vaccination or a negative RT-PCR test result if they are partially vaccinated or non-vaccinated. Children under the age of five can travel without RT-PCR test results or vaccination certificates.

Zimbabwe

The latest Zimbabwe regulations are listed below, and must also be observed for transit i.e. arriving VFA and transferring by road to Livingstone or Kasane.

- Fully vaccinated travellers and returning residents are allowed entry into the country without a negative RT-PCR test result.
- If unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, all visitors and returning residents must undergo a valid RT-PCR COVID-19 test, not more than 48 hours from the time of their departure for Zimbabwe from country of origin.
- A negative RT-PCR test result is not required on departure from Zimbabwe if fully vaccinated. If unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, then it remains a requirement.
- Children below the age of 12 are exempt from the above requirements.
- Restrictions on the numbers of persons at gatherings have been removed.

OTHER REGIONS

Eswatini (Swaziland)

- Either a valid COVID-19 vaccination certificate (fully vaccinated) or a valid negative RT-PCR test result that is no older than 72 hours.
- Children under 12 years of age are exempt from the above measures.

Zanzibar

- Fully vaccinated visitors to Zanzibar are no longer subject to RT-PCR testing. Proof of a valid vaccination certificate with a QR code is essential.
- All travellers must complete the Travellers Health Surveillance Form within 24 hours of arrival.
- Unvaccinated visitors must still present a negative RT-PCR test result, from a test taken within the 72 hours prior to departure.
- Unvaccinated children aged five years and younger, as well as transiting passengers, are exempt from the RT-PCR requirement.

Seychelles

- Travellers are no longer required to provide a negative RT-PCR test result if they are fully vaccinated.
- If not fully vaccinated or unvaccinated, they must have a negative RT-PCR test done within 72 hours before departure or a negative Rapid Antigen test done within 24 hours before departure.
- Children under the age of 12 are exempt from requirements.

Tanzania

- All arriving fully vaccinated passengers are exempt from providing a negative RT-PCR test at all points of entry. Fully vaccinated passengers will be required to present a valid certificate of COVID-19 vaccination, with QR code for validation.
 - All arriving unvaccinated passengers aged 6 years and older are required to present a negative RT-PCR test, carried out within 72 hours before departure for Tanzania.
 - All arriving passengers (fully vaccinated or unvaccinated), aged 6 years and older, entering Tanzania from the following countries, will be required to undergo a Rapid Antigen Test on arrival (USD 10 per person for the Tanzanian mainland & USD 25 per person for Zanzibar: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, France, India, Malawi, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Rwanda, and South Africa.
 - All children aged 5 years and younger are exempt from RT-PCR entry test or Rapid Antigen Test on arrival requirements. Travellers in transit are exempt from both vaccination and testing requirements, however, they must adhere to the requirements outlined by their destination country.
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