



[Newsflash](#) | [Camps & Activities](#) | [Wilderness Air](#) | [Touring & Transfers](#) | [COVID-19 Updates](#) | [Reminders](#)

**18 August 2021**

## **NEWSFLASH**

### **Extension of our Flexible Terms**

#### **EXISTING BOOKINGS**

- Existing bookings for Wilderness Safaris camps scheduled to travel before 31 October 2021 may be postponed, at no additional cost, to travel within 12 months of the current travel date.
- These bookings will need to be postponed at least 30 days prior to the date of travel. Where such bookings are postponed within 30 days of the date of travel, cancellation penalties will apply.
- Note that all bookings must have the required non-refundable deposits paid in order to be postponed.

#### **NEW BOOKINGS**

- New bookings for Wilderness Safaris camps – made between today and 30 September 2021 – are required to pay a 20% deposit to hold and confirm space, subject to an upward adjustment if required by third party suppliers.
- This deposit will be fully refundable up to 45 days prior to travel for all Wilderness Safaris services, provided that travel is not possible, or it is reasonably foreseeable that travel restrictions will still be in place on the date of travel. For services booked for third party suppliers, the relevant cancellation penalties will apply.

### **Free Flying Deal – Extended to 2023**

Our free flying deal has been extended to the end of 2023, with the same criteria in place, except that Kalahari Plains no longer forms part of the Free Flying deal when it resumes operations in May 2022.

### **eVisa Platform Launched in Botswana**

Botswana have launched an online visa application platform [botswana-evisa \(gov.bw\)](https://botswana-evisa.gov.bw). Travellers who require a visa to visit Botswana, may now log onto the portal to create an application, make payment, complete the visa application and upload all supporting documents. They can also check their visa status via the portal.

The eVisa costs BWP 300 (approx. USD 27) for a single entry for up to one month, and BWP 500 (approx. USD 45) for multiple entries for up to three months. The visa fee is non-refundable and payment does not guarantee approval. Visas granted will be subject to compliance with the immigration regulations of the Republic of Botswana.

## CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

### BOTSWANA

#### Maun Airport

After an extensive revitalisation, slowed down somewhat by COVID-19, the 'new' Maun Airport allows for a much nicer guest experience – more spacious, improved facilities, additional check-in counters, etc.

#### Savuti Hides

With the shift of the Star Bed offering in the Linyanti to Savuti, the Southern Cross and Orion decks which were used for sleep-out options, and sometimes brunches, will no longer be available. The log pile hide is still in front of Savuti and when dry, is functional. At the moment however, the hide is mostly submerged due to water in the channel.

#### No rate increase for Helicopter Horizons

Rates remain the same for 2022 for the various scenic helicopter flights and transfer options offered by Helicopter Horizons.

### NAMIBIA

#### Changes to the 2022 Diverse Namibia Explorations Itinerary

See below for the revised itineraries. Now open for bookings, the departures dates and rates manual are also on the Wilderness Window:

#### From January to May 2022, the itinerary will be:

Days 1 & 2: Drive from Windhoek to Kulala Adventurer Camp, Sossusvlei.  
Days 3 & 4: Transfer by road to Swakopmund, Atlantic Seaboard, Hansa Hotel.  
Days 5 & 6: Drive to **Desert Rhino Camp**, Damaraland region.  
Days 7 & 8: Road transfer to **Ongava Lodge**, Ongava Game Reserve.  
Days 9: Drive to Windhoek Airport.

#### From June to December 2022, the itinerary will be:

Days 1 & 2: Drive from Windhoek to Kulala Adventurer Camp, Sossusvlei.  
Days 3 & 4: Transfer by road to Swakopmund, Atlantic Seaboard, Hansa Hotel.  
Days 5 & 6: Drive to **Desert Rhino Camp**, Damaraland region.  
Days 7 & 8: Road transfer to **Ongava Tented**, Ongava Game Reserve.  
Days 9: Drive to Windhoek Airport.

### RWANDA

#### Discounted Gorilla Permits

Still available in low season for this year and in 2022, a 30% discount (USD 1 050 vs the normal rate of USD 1 500 – subject to change) applies to the first gorilla permit (any subsequent permit will be at the full rate), if visiting other Rwanda national parks (Akagera National Park or Nyungwe National Park) for 3 days (2 nights) or more during the low season of 1 November to 31 May. NB: There is no block-out period over the festive season.

#### Bisate Kwanda

Information on our new Bisate Kwanda Day Lounge has been added to both the Wilderness Safaris Camp Information Sheet and our published Rates Sheets, found in the Wilderness Window.

#### Check-in & check-out times at Bisate

- Standard arrival time for the lodge is from 12:00, where guests are served lunch before being shown to their villas after they have finished lunch. Alternatively, we can accommodate guests at Bisate Kwanda from as early as 10:00.
- Standard departure time from the lodge is 10:30. Should guests be participating in any activities (gorilla trekking/an excursion for Golden Monkey sightings/a visit to Dian Fossey's grave site/climbing Mount Bisoke) on the day of departure, they will need to vacate their villa between 06:00 and 06:30 when they will be collected for their onward activity. When departing later in the day, guests may make use of the facilities at Bisate Kwanda until 15:30.

## **Transfers to and from Magashi, Akagera National Park**

Please refer to the Camp Information Sheet, published Rwanda Rates Sheets or liaise with your Journey Specialist regarding timings and routes, for transfers to and from Magashi. All times and arrangements must be adhered to, as this is what has been authorized by African Parks, custodians of Akagera.

## **ZIMBABWE**

### **Payments at our Camps**

At this time, we can only accept cash payments (for extras, drinks, curios, COVID-19 tests, etc.) at all the Zimbabwe camps – no credit cards. Operations are planning to install facilities to process credit card payments in the coming months, so we will advise when this is up and running.

## **WILDERNESS AIR**

### **Change in Airstrip utilised for Duba Explorers**

Great Plains no longer make use of the Vumbura Airstrip so guests for Duba Explorers are flown to Omdop.

### **Booking Flights to Kalahari Plains**

Should you include Kalahari Plains in an itinerary once it resumes operations in May 2022, note that while the physical flight may go via Maun, there is only one rate between Kalahari Plains and our camps (i.e. KHP/A2, KHP/A3 and vice versa).

### **Change in Namibian Departure Taxes**

Airport departure taxes in Namibia increased earlier this year. Already implemented in the system, the new figures for your information are:

- Domestic (within Namibia) NAD 204 per person
- International/Regional NAD 590 per person

## **TOURING & TRANSFERS**

### **CAPE TOWN**

#### **Private Cable Car experience – exclusive use of a Table Mountain Cable Car**

It is now possible to book exclusive use of cable car to go up Table Mountain. Able to carry 40 passengers, the current cost for the return trip is ZAR 10 000 to secure the cable car plus standard ticket prices per person in the group. This is ideal for those who wish an extra level of social distancing and privacy when hosting their event, special occasion or private group to the top of Africa's leading tourist attraction.

#### **Additions to the Wilderness Safaris Private Journeys Experience plus Rates Update**

- Private driver-only transfer rates are now available in the 1-7 pax range for guests travelling on a budget. The 8-13 pax range remains the same where the vehicle rate includes the services of an English speaking driver with the option of adding on a private guide (which is highly recommended).
- The City transfer rate has been extended to include the Camps Bay, Constantia and Hout Bay areas as well.
- The current 2021 Private Journeys' vehicle and guide rates remain unchanged for 2022. Entrance fees/activities/meals and other third party services will however carry our standard annual increase for 2022.
- Recent communication from Kirstenbosch Gardens stated that a two tier rate structure would be introduced for non-South African and South African visitors, so rates for the Peninsula Discovery pass and Classic Peninsula entrance fees were adjusted accordingly.

## **COVID-19 UPDATES**

### **Entry Requirements & In-Country Protocols**

Please refer to the COVID-19 folder under Wilderness Safaris/WS Product Information on the Info Centre for the latest details regarding entry, departure and in-country regulations for South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Be aware that all information is subject to change, sometimes quite frequently by government and health authorities.

Recent amendments include:

- The entry requirement for travellers to Namibia is now a negative RT-PCR test that must be valid for 72 hours from time of testing until arrival in Namibia.
- South Africa is currently on Adjusted Alert Level 3 with no review date provided at this time. Entry requirements remain the same but in-country regulations have been revised. Key changes included alcohol may be sold for off-site consumption from Monday to Thursday, between 10:00 and 18:00, with on-site sales are allowed until 20:00; and leisure travel in and out of Gauteng is now permitted.

### **Zimbabwe Specific Notes**

- We are aware of reports that arrivals in Zimbabwe need to quarantine for 14 days, despite having a negative RT-PCR test. Thus far, this is only applicable to travellers from or transiting through India.
- The Kazungula Border between Zimbabwe and Botswana, and the Victoria Falls Bridge Border between Zimbabwe and Zambia are now allowing road transfers in both directions, on the proviso that for entry INTO Zimbabwe, the traveller has both a vaccination certificate (fully vaccinated) and a negative RT-PCR test result.
  - If 17 years of age and younger, a vaccination certificate is not required but a negative RT-PCR test is still mandatory.
  - Unvaccinated travellers may only cross land borders into Zimbabwe when in transit, however, they may still fly into Zimbabwe and exit by road.

### **COVID-19 Testing Information**

- Please refer to the consolidated Excel spreadsheet on the Wilderness Window – separate tabs for different countries – for information about testing options available in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia.
- Rwanda testing information remains on the Rwanda protocol document as most testing is facilitated by the government – such as the mandatory requirement on arrival and departure – and options are not available for guests to choose from when it comes to testing.
- In-camp testing is now available at our Hwange camps.
- Express RT-PCR tests with a 2 hour turnaround time are now possible between 06:00 and 22:00 at OR Tambo International in Johannesburg. Offered by Next Pathology, facilities are located at the Intercontinental Hotel and cost ZAR 2000 per person.
- Be aware that although in some instances labs are returning results for standard tests in less than 24 hours (sometimes in as little as 6 hours), it is advisable to work with a 24 turnaround when planning an itinerary. As case numbers rise and fall, this has a knock-on effect on the turnaround times due to additional pressure on the labs.

### **COVID-19 Self-tests**

We are aware self-test kits are available, however, they are not RT-PCR tests – they are antigen tests. RT-PCR testing requires laboratory processing and the countries in which we operate only accept RT-PCR test certificates from approved laboratories. While this may change in the future, home testing kits or antigen tests are currently not accepted for entry. Travellers must adhere to the relevant government immigration requirements or they risk being denied boarding/entry to the country.

### **Wilderness Air/Health Declaration/Other Forms**

- Botswana: one form is required by Wilderness Air, and another by the Botswana Ministry of Health and Wellness. Copies of both are available on the Info Centre. If completed prior to arrival, it should speed up immigration, customs and port health formalities on arrival in Botswana.
- Zimbabwe: all guests have to complete a form for Port Health authorities upon arrival. A copy has been added to the Info Centre, and if completed prior to arrival, it should speed up immigration, customs and port health formalities on arrival in Zimbabwe.
- Rwanda: all travellers to Rwanda must complete the online passenger locator form and upload the necessary documents on [www.rbc.gov.rw](http://www.rbc.gov.rw). The requirements for completion are:
  - Passport information.
  - Travel/flight details, including times and dates.
  - Negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test certificate conducted within 72 hours prior to departure.
  - Hotel booking confirmation in Kigali for arriving passengers, where guests await the results of the COVID-19 test carried out upon arrival at the airport. A Wilderness Safaris voucher reflecting the designated hotel name, dates confirmed and reservation number is acceptable.

## REMINDERS

### The Abu Camp Experience

Further to the previous update, please ensure all guests travelling to Abu Camp in future are aware of the change in the experience at Abu, with regard to elephant interaction. As we have moved into the next phase of our elephant conservation programme at Abu Camp, integrating the Abu Herd into wild herds, we no longer offer activities such as meeting and greeting the Abu Herd, nor direct elephant interaction – feeding, touching, and walking with the elephants.. This also means that the Abu Star Bed experience, will be unavailable until a replacement Star Bed has been built in a new location away from Abu Camp.

We have therefore reimagined the guest experience to concentrate upon the abundant wildlife in the expansive 180 000-hectare Abu Private Reserve – including a great many wild elephants, in addition to other iconic Okavango species, such as lion, leopard, buffalo, giraffe and endangered wild dog. Activities in the Abu Private Reserve include guided day and night game drives, guided nature walks and seasonally available mekoro and boat excursions. Abu Camp offers a world-class luxury safari experience – which recent feedback from a guest can attest to:

*“Everything was spectacular! Food was awesome. The fantastic game sighting never stops! Dinner venue was always new. Everyone was so welcoming and nice. Pizza oven was unique and delicious. We cannot say enough about how great the food was. Abu camp is spectacular. Game viewing with unbelievable accommodations. Service was more than impeccable along with being warm and affable. Lastly, in Covid times, everyone was fastidious and diligent about all protocols. Everything spectacularly clean and sanitized.”*

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