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17 February 2022

NEWSFLASH

Wilderness Air Zimbabwe Developments

- Wilderness Air have moved to a Caravan only fleet in Zimbabwe. These large, air-conditioned aircraft are perfectly suited to our operation and offer comfort, speed and reliability on remote airfields. Occasionally, if moving small numbers of guests, we may still charter a smaller aircraft from a preferred third party operator but the bulk of flying will be conducted in the Caravan.
- It is no longer be mandatory to have a Wilderness Safaris camp in your Zimbabwe itinerary in order to utilise seat rates with Wilderness Air Zimbabwe.
- We have added two more third party airstrips accessed by our circuit – Giraffe Springs for Camp Hwange and Dandawa for Kanga in Mana Pools.
- When the Mana season opens in April, be advised that we will only be offering a boat transfer between the Ruckomechi camps and Chikwenya. The air hop is no longer an option, as it is simply not practical nor financially effective to have an aircraft sitting there for when a hop may be needed, or to bring a plane in from Victoria Falls or Harare for a 10 minute flight.

Family Offering

A number of our camps have family accommodation, allowing parents to travel on safari with their children. Each camp has a suite of different activities suited to their environment – ranging from nature walks and boat cruises, to arts and crafts or games. There are opportunities to learn about the area, the wildlife and the people from our passionate guides, while our Bush Buddies are key staff members who have been trained in childcare and the educational aspects of looking after children in the bush. Please contact your Travel Designer for further information in this regard.

Now there is even more reason to take the family on safari! We are pleased to advise that for every family booking at Wilderness camps, the company will contribute directly to its Children in the Wilderness (CITW) non-profit programme. An amount of USD 20 (NAD 300 or ZAR 300) per booking is allocated to CITW, to enrich the lives of children in our areas of operation, through Eco-Clubs and other elements of the CITW programme. These contributions to CITW are made by Wilderness on behalf of our guests, and go a long way to making a positive difference in the lives of these children.

Kafue Season opens 1 June 2022, with no more ballooning

In June, the seasonal waters of the remote and untamed Kafue will have receded and our much-loved Shumba and Busanga Bush camps will re-open for the season. While all our other activities within the expansive Busanga Plains will resume, we will no longer be offering the hot air balloon excursion due to limited uptake over recent years. Guests will still be able to fully appreciate this extraordinary destination and iconic wildlife on game drives and on boating activities (subject to water levels).

REMINDERS

Revised Terms & Conditions

Further to recent communication regarding our revised Terms & Conditions, effective 17 January 2022:

- The General Information Manual (GIM) has been updated to reflect these new terms.
- At this time, there is no change to Groups Terms & Conditions and these remain as is in the GIM.
- To avoid confusion, we have removed our previous FIT terms from the GIM. These applied to a) those bookings confirmed prior to 31 December 2020, and b) those bookings placed between 1 January 2021 and 16 January 2022. This information has been saved as a separate document on the Info Centre.

CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

BOTSWANA

Chitabe and Chitabe Lediba Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi has now been installed in the rooms at the Chitabe camps – previously it was only in the library area.

Delta Water Levels

The inundation is currently tracking a bit behind – hopefully the regions to the north will still get some good rain to send downstream in the coming months but thus far, there has been some good rainfall in the area.

NAMIBIA

Rhino-Tracking Excursion at Damaraland Camp going forward

Desert Rhino Camp is scheduled to resume operations on 1 April 2022, and rhino-tracking remains the key focus and purpose at the camp, a standard activity available to all guests.

However, while operations at Desert Rhino Camp have been on hiatus, rhino-tracking has been offered at Damaraland Camp as a standard activity, ensuring our guests did not miss out on this amazing experience and the support for Save the Rhino Trust could continue. Going forward, we will continue to offer rhino-tracking from Damaraland Camp as an optional extra, at additional cost. From 1 April 2022, the following will apply:

- The Rhino-Tracking Excursion is booked and charged for as a separate service. The vehicle and guide will be available to guests from early morning to late afternoon, to go rhino-tracking. Booking only one excursion, per booking would be appreciated to provide an opportunity for other guests.
- This is only possible if booked on a FI basis, and is not applicable to guests travelling on the DBB rate.
- Maximum number of 6 guests on the vehicle, with a minimum stay in camp of 2 nights.

Hoanib Skeleton Coast

Parts of Namibia have been receiving some wonderful rain, turning the seemingly barren landscapes into a sea of green. Rivers have also been flowing, and in particular the Hoanib. This does mean that while we cannot traverse the river bed by vehicle, the excursion to Mowe Bay on the coast will be by air in both directions.

TOURING, TRANSFERS & ACCESS

REMINDER – Magashi Transfers

We no longer have a scheduled shuttle transfer between Kigali and Magashi. For all private transfers to and from Akagera, please do take note of/refer to the specific, and important, requirements regarding access and times for Magashi transfers in the published Rwanda Rates Sheet.

Zambian Visa Fees Increase for 2022

- Single Entry USD 25
- Double Entry USD 40
- Multiple Entry USD 75
- KAZA Visa USD 50
- Transit Visa USD 25
- Day Tripper USD 10

Airlines

- Airlines currently flying into Victoria Falls are fastjet, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, British Airways (operated by Comair), Airlink, Air Zimbabwe and Mack Air, as well as charter airlines, while Emirates has resumed flights to Harare.
- The Lufthansa Group's new leisure airline, Eurowings Discover, will start flying to Victoria Falls from 30 March 2022, increasing Frankfurt-Windhoek flights to a daily service, with a Windhoek-Victoria Falls-Windhoek tag flight three times a week.
- On 30 June 2022, fastjet will introduce four flights a week between Victoria Falls and Maun, gateway to Botswana's Okavango Delta, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- Last year, fastjet announced the introduction of direct flights from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) in Nelspruit, from 16 March 2022. This service will commence with three flights a week until July 2022 when it will increase to a daily service.
- From 3 March 2022, Etihad Airways will start flying to Johannesburg, South Africa. This service will operate on Mondays, Thursdays & Saturdays.
- Emirates flights have resumed on the South African route, along with Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania. There are now daily flights between Dubai and Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Six weekly flights to Harare are linked to its Lusaka service, and ten weekly flights are operational between Dubai and Nairobi. Flights between Dubai and Addis Ababa operate daily while Dar es Salaam will be served with five flights a week.

COVID-19

TESTING INFORMATION

Recent changes are listed below but please do refer to our consolidated testing document on the Info Centre for further details.

NAMIBIA

- Testing at Hosea Kutako International Airport, Windhoek - COVID-19 testing is now possible at the airport through Medlab, who now provide RT-PCR testing to both inbound and outbound travellers. The cost of the test is NAD 1500.00 and the turn-around time is 2 hours 30 minutes. Consider booking and charging for a sole use charter from your last camp to Windhoek Airport to allow for enough time to have the test and get the results before departing on your regional or international flight.
- Seasonal In-Camp Testing - As of December 2021, we no longer offer this service during the summer/rainy season. Weather conditions were having an impact on arrangements with aircraft being unable to take off or land, incurring higher costs and delays. Available at Wilderness camps only, the operational season for in-camp testing is now from 1 May to 31 October 2022.

SOUTH AFRICA – NEXT PATHOLOGY

- All rates have been reduced.
- Swift 4 hour RT-PCR testing is now available in Johannesburg and Cape Town as part of their Concierge Service – quick and convenient testing in the privacy and safety of your hotel.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances, operational hours at OR Tambo have changed to 05:00 to 21:30. The last Swift 2 Hour RT-PCR test will be conducted no later than 21:30 in the evening. The lab opens at 05:00 again for those guests arriving into Johannesburg after this time and requiring a test for onward travel the next day.

ZAMBIA

- The cost of COVID-19 RT-PCR tests in the country has reduced from 1000 Kwacha to 800 Kwacha, and in turn, the cost for the test at Toka Leya has dropped to USD 100 from USD 120.

COVID-19 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS

The below is a summary of the most recent developments, with some easing of restrictions. Please refer to the country-specific protocol documents on the Info Centre for full details. All information provided is subject to change.

BOTSWANA

Current guidelines are listed below. We are aware that further clarification and information is needed but discussions are underway with authorities. We will advise should the situation change.

- You must be fully vaccinated to enter Botswana, including booster shots as applicable.
- If you are not fully vaccinated, then you need to present a negative RT-PCR test result taken within 72 hours AND undergo COVID-19 vaccination (FOC) at the port of entry.
- If you have no proof of being vaccinated and no negative RT-PCR test result, you are required to undergo RT-PCR testing at ports of entry and quarantine while waiting for results – at your own cost. If negative, you may enter Botswana – if positive, you need to isolate in the district of the port of entry.
- If you have no proof of being fully vaccinated, are not willing to be vaccinated at the port of entry, have no negative RT-PCR test result and are not willing to be tested at own cost on arrival, then you will not be allowed entry into Botswana.

NAMIBIA

- The most recent update related to increasing the size of gatherings and allowing residents to enter with proof of vaccination (no negative test required). There were no other major changes, with regulations continuing until 15 March 2022.
- Status quo remains for non-Namibian travellers - negative RT-PCR test results required, the validity of which remains 72 hours from time of the collection of the specimen to the time the individual presents him/herself at the point of entry into Namibia.

RWANDA

- All arriving passengers will be required to take both an RT-PCR and Antigen Rapid Test on arrival. Passengers are not required to quarantine for 24 hours in designated hotels and may proceed with arrangements once tests have been taken.
- An additional Antigen Rapid Test is required on day 3 from the arrival date - no longer an RT-PCR test.
- All three mandatory tests (two on arrival, and one on day 3), are paid for on arrival at Kigali International Airport. The cost of the tests is USD 70 (USD 50 for RT-PCR, USD 5 x 2 for Antigens & USD 10 for logistics at the airport).
- Tourists, including children over 5 years, visiting the country's national parks will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 72 hours (was 24 hours). A negative RT-PCR test result is required for all visitors wishing to see primates at Volcanoes, Nyungwe and Gishwati-Mukura National Parks, while an Antigen Rapid test result is accepted for other parks.
- While not mandatory for entry into Rwanda, virtually every service in public requires clients to be fully vaccinated. This applies to hotels, bars, restaurants, cinemas, fitness centres, conferences, public transport, places of worship, etc.

No change to:

- All travellers must have a negative RT-PCR test result for entry to Rwanda, performed within 72 hours prior to departure.
- All guests intending to stay in hotels and other accommodation establishments must provide valid negative RT-PCR or Antigen Rapid test results taken within 72 hours.
- A negative RT-PCR test is required for departure and must be taken 2 days prior.

SOUTH AFRICA

Effective 31 January 2022, adjusted alert level 1 regulations include:

- Those who test positive with no symptoms do not have to isolate.
- If you test positive with symptoms, the isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 7 days.
- Contacts do not have to isolate unless they develop symptoms.

Travellers who have recently been infected with COVID-19, have fully recovered and have completed their 10 day isolation period, yet their RT-PCR test result prior to travel has come back as positive, may enter South Africa. The following documents must be submitted in advance to porthealth.travel@health.gov.za and presented to Port Health officials on arrival:

- A letter from a medical practitioner confirming they have fully recovered and are fit to travel, along with the date, signature, physical address and contact details of the medical practitioner.
- The original test result which confirmed the initial COVID-19 infection.
- Copy of passport (details in the doctors' letter, including address, must match the passport).
- The test result performed 72 hours prior to travel (as in the traveller has recovered from a recent COVID-19 infection but the results of the test were positive).

The mandatory health questionnaire for entry can be completed up to 48 hours before travel or on arrival into the country. Likewise, an exit screening form must be completed on departure from South Africa. Copies are saved on the Info Centre on the Window.

ZAMBIA

The most recent communication from 21 December 2021, states the following:

- All in-coming travellers will provide evidence of a negative RT-PCR test certificate. The test should have been done within 72 hours of departure date.
- All travellers entering Zambia will adhere to the prescribed COVID-19 public health measures.
- All travellers coming to Zambia are encouraged to be fully vaccinated.

ZIMBABWE

The most recent communication from 28 January 2022, states the following:

- All person entering Zimbabwe must undergo an RT-PCR test not more than 48 hours from the time of their departure for Zimbabwe. Those who do not have a valid negative RT-PCR test and negative certificate to that effect, shall be denied entry into Zimbabwe. At this time recovery letters are not accepted – only the negative test result.
- Quarantine for locals, returning residents and visitors is lifted for those who are fully vaccinated. *(We do not have clarity yet on requirements for those NOT vaccinated. In the interim, it is possible that the Statutory Instrument (SI) published on 2 December 2021 will still apply. It stated that there is a ten-day mandatory quarantine for arriving guests, even with a negative RT-PCR certificate, along with additional testing on arrival at the airport. That said, to date, neither the quarantine or arrival testing have been implemented in Victoria Falls or Harare, nor do we have any more information as to where or what costs might be. Our guests have been proceeding as normal with arrangements as long as they have the negative COVID-19 test result for entry).*

COVID-19 INFOGRAPHICS PLUS HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Be advised that we have removed our 3 COVID-19 Infographics – Camps, Air, and Touring – plus our detailed Health & Safety Protocols document from the Info Centre and website. In light of significant regulatory changes across all the regions, we need to review and update these accordingly.
