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24 March 2022

NEWSFLASH

Exciting Developments in Rwanda

- Since 2016, when Wilderness Safaris and Governors' Camp Collection joined forces, there have been a number of positive changes within the Governors' portfolio. Property upgrades, the development of Governors' Mugie House as well as growth in their aviation and ground handling operations.
- The next step in that evolution, is that the Wilderness Safaris management team in Rwanda have taken over responsibility for the day to day operations of Governors' Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge. Rob Baas (Managing Director) and Ingrid Baas (Operations Manager), together with our great Rwandan team, will manage Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge, along with the Wilderness Safaris properties, Bisate and Magashi.
- Opening some 15 years ago, Governors' Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge is situated on the slopes of Mt. Sabyinyo, surrounded by the wonderful biodiversity of the Virunga massif. Trekking the mountain gorillas and other primates of the Volcanoes National Park is a key experience, but the lodge is also a driving force for conservation and community development.
- The Governors' team are delighted to pass custodianship to Rob, Ingrid and the team, continuing the ethos and purpose, while taking the lodge to even greater heights.

Governors' vehicles and driver/guides in Rwanda are also being consolidated into the Thousand Hills Africa (THA) team, so going forward there will not be a separate Governors' vehicle and driver/guide offering in Rwanda. All bookings in the system under Governors' will be honoured at the rate charged at time of booking, while all new bookings will go through Ketty NshimiJimana and her team at THA, and be at the THA rates.

Installation of Walkways at Qorokwe

Qorokwe is in the process of installing raised walkways throughout the camp, which should be complete by the beginning of April. Connecting all the rooms and the main area, the new walkways are raised for the most part, with a few sections descending to just above ground level for animal movement. Walkway lights are being incorporated into the design, and they have been laid out in such a way to allow for more privacy.

Toka Leya Rejuvenation

Toka Leya has resumed operations after a number of structural/maintenance changes. In the main area this included reducing the size of the pool and installing stone cladding, expanding the deck out towards the Zambezi River, and re-imagining the lounge/dining area. The rooms all have new canvas wraps (walls) and shade-net roofs, while the showers have been tiled. Softs, interiors and light fitting changes are happening now so by end March, the camp is going to look fabulous.

Hoanib Skeleton Coast Camp

- Due to some good rains in parts of Namibia, causing a number of the rivers to flow, we are currently flying both ways on the coastal excursion, as we are unable to traverse the riverbed.
- All 'skins'/roofs in the main area and rooms have been replaced.

Maintenance of the Jao & Hunda Airstrips - March to mid-April

The airstrips on the Jao Reserve are undergoing required maintenance. Jao is currently closed, so all guests for guests for Jao, Jacana and Kwetsani are flying into Hunda Airstrip. We anticipate work at Jao to be complete by 28 March, when Hunda Airstrip will close until approximately 18 April, and Tubu Tree and Little Tubu guests will fly to Jao. Transfers are by road but should water levels rise in the coming weeks, part of the transfer may be by boat. We appreciate this may inconvenience guests due to the longer transfer time (depending on route it is between 1.5 to 2 hours), but it is vitally important that all airstrips are well-maintained, especially in the unique Delta environment. However, the transfers will provide the ideal opportunity for our guests to see more of this beautiful concession and its' wildlife!

REMINDERS

Bank Charges

As noted on our invoices and statements, bank charges are not included in our invoice values and must please be taken into account when payments are made. If the payment selection under bank charges is not set to "Own" or "Our" when processing wire transfers, fees are deducted by either your Bank or the intermediate Bank. This will result in a short payment to Wilderness Safaris, which will necessitate an additional payment required for the shortfall of the bank charges. Contact your Travel Designer should you have any queries.

Documents added to the Info Centre

- Our latest Liability Insurance document – valid 01 March 2022 to 28 February 2023.
- Under FAQs:
 - Wilderness Staff Biographies
 - VIP Lounge images (Kigali)
 - Wilderness Airport Lounge images (Kasane, Maun, Victoria Falls, Windhoek)
- A new tab called Partnership Safaris – which features the White Desert and Panthera itineraries, and any future programmes we develop.
- Under WS Newsletters & Updates, we have added our Partnership mailers, joining past copies of the External Product Updates, monthly newsletters, press releases, etc.

Search Functionality on the Info Centre

The Search function makes it easy to look for specific Wilderness information or documents. When in the Info Centre, click on Wilderness Safaris on the left and then WS Product Information. Type what you are looking for in the blank space next to Name at the top of the page and hit the Search/View button. All related documents will be pulled up, and you can select the one you need.

CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

BOTSWANA

Qorokwe Massage Therapists

We have two therapists on the team now, providing in-room treatments for our guests.

NAMIBIA

Booking the Namibian Camps on a DBB basis

The DBB rate available for Doro Nawas, Damaraland and Kulala Desert lodge may only be utilised on a self-drive basis. Bookings must be made on the same rate basis for the duration of a stay i.e. DBB, and private vehicles may not be booked on this basis – only FI. Please also refer to the published Namibia Rates Sheets for details on booking and paying for lunches or activities on a DBB basis.

Private Vehicles in Namibia

With the exception of the Kulala Reserve, booking a private vehicle from another camp/lodge is not possible due to the distances involved between the camps/lodges. However, at Little Kulala, the private vehicle from Kulala Desert Lodge may now be booked for guests at Little Kulala. Note this does not apply in the reverse.

Namib Sky Balloon & Transfers ex the Kulala Properties

Namib Sky only offer courtesy transfers from certain lodges to the balloon take-off site for fly-in guests. Self-drive guests must drive directly to the Namib Sky office, situated right next to Le Mirage about 20 km south of Sesriem. At the office, passengers will sign flight tickets, meet their pilot and receive a safety briefing while grabbing a coffee, before a courtesy transfer to the launch site. This scenario also provides more flexibility should guests not show up, or if there are last minute weather conditions to consider.

For our camps specifically:

- Little Kulala guests are transferred by the camp to/from the launch site.
- Kulala Desert Lodge guests are collected by Namib Sky Adventures from the lodge, but only if guests are travelling on a fly-in basis and the transfer has been booked with Namib Sky in advance.

RWANDA

Increase in Gorilla Trekking Numbers

Good news - gorilla trekking is back to a maximum of 8 guests. During COVID the number was brought down to a maximum of 6 people per trek, but this is now back to 8!

The Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund

Established in 1967, the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund works to protect and study gorillas and their habitats and to empower people who live near their forest home. With a team of almost 300 working in Rwanda and the DRC, the Fossey Fund is the world's longest-running and largest organization dedicated entirely to gorilla conservation.

In 2022, the organization moved to its first permanent, purpose built home, the Ellen DeGeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. Nestled in a beautiful, reforested landscape near the Volcanoes National Park it is worth visiting, with a stop at the campus easy to add during a stay at Bisate or Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge. Contact your Travel Designer for more information, or to make the necessary arrangements. There are no additional costs besides the entrance fee and it can be done either on arrival or departure, or in the afternoon after trekking: <https://gorillafund.org/ellencampus/>

Activities included in the Bisate and Magashi Nightly Rate

- Bisate: guided or self-guided birding and nature walks on the property, guided nursery visit and indigenous tree planting, guided walks to the surrounding communities, 20 minute complimentary neck and shoulder massage, gym in a basket in the villas, wine tasting, explanation from guide on biodiversity on the property, documentary film screenings.
- Magashi: guided game drives and boat cruises.

Akagera Ballooning

Recently introduced in the southern part of Akagera National Park, it is unfortunately not possible to include the hot air balloon experience in a stay at Magashi camp. Guests need to be at the launch site by 05:15, and with a three hour drive from Magashi, it would mean departing camp at 02:15. Aside from being uncomfortable travelling that distance at night in an open vehicle, we do not have the vehicle and guide capacity for the return journey.

ZIMBABWE

Mana Pools Access - Boat & Road transfers

With the Mana Pools season opening next month, arrangements have changed regarding access from Lusaka and between the camps if combining Ruckomechi and Chikwenya. Please contact your Travel Designer, or refer to the document on the Info Centre plus the published Zimbabwe rates sheets, for further details regarding timings, size of boat, luggage allowance, facilities on the boat, rates, etc.

- The Mana Pools Transfer Company (MPTC) will now be handling all boat transfers for us on the Zambezi River – between the Mana camps and to/from Chirundu.
- A boat transfer is the only way to connect the Ruckomechi camps and Chikwenya. The air hop is no longer an option, as it was simply not practical nor financially effective to offer this service.
- It is not possible to connect on the same day when combining the Kafue and Mana Pools. Our scheduled Wilderness Air flight from the Kafue arrives in Lusaka at 10:40 but the road transfer to Chirundu can take up to 4 hours, and departure from Chirundu to Chikwenya can be no later than 13:00 and no later than 15:00 for Ruckomechi. Accordingly, one would need to arrange an overnight in Lusaka, departing the following morning at 08:00 by road to Chirundu, for onward boat transfers to the Mana camps between 12:30 and 13:00.
- Note there are no testing facilities at Chirundu, so guests need to overnight in Lusaka (unless they have been tested in camp) to test for and obtain a negative COVID-19 test result to enter Zimbabwe.

FLIGHTS, TOURING & TRANSFERS

WILDERNESS AIR

'Charter' Terminology

We no longer use the term sub-charter in reference to Wilderness Air services, and will only use charter in this context. The Wilderness Air Flying Circuit note in the Rates Sheets, plus in other collateral, has been amended accordingly, i.e. *when the need arises, Wilderness Air reserves the right to charter an authorised, third party, preferred aircraft operator.*

Excess Baggage Rates

2022 rates for excess baggage on Wilderness Air flights have been extended into 2023.

WILDERNESS TOURING & TRANSFERS – ZAMBEZI

Note Rate Increases for Third Party Services

- Rhino walk in Livingstone
- Bushtracks dinner run for both Zambia and Zimbabwe and the Bushtracks canapes for Zimbabwe

WILDERNESS SAFARIS PRIVATE JOURNEYS – CAPE TOWN

WSPJ Rates on the Info Centre

The rates sheets for Wilderness Safaris Private Journeys (WSPJ) have been added under the WSPJ section, under WS Product Information.

AIRLINES

- On 25 June, Qatar Airways will resume flights three times a week between Doha and Windhoek.
- fastjet have added direct flights between Victoria Falls and Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA), with flights between Victoria Falls and Maun to follow at the end of June. End March, they will increase their Johannesburg/Victoria Falls schedule to daily flights.
- The regional Airlink network includes a daily service between Cape Town and Harare, five flights a week between Cape Town and Victoria Falls, six flights a week from Nelspruit to Livingstone, and three flights a week from Johannesburg to Livingstone. There are also flights to Kasane ex Johannesburg and to Maun from both Johannesburg and Cape Town. On 5 April, Airlink will launch scheduled direct services between Durban and Harare three days a week,
- United has applied to introduce year-round flights between Cape Town and Washington DC in November 2022, starting with three flights per week. United already holds three frequencies for non-stop flights between Newark/New York and Cape Town, operational from 5 June 2022.
- Airlink will launch a new service between Durban and Gqeberha (previously Port Elizabeth) from 4 April, operating every day except Saturday.
- Madagascar has banned all flights between South Africa and the island for up to three months.
- Eurowings Discover, will start scheduled flights to Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) on 15 November 2022. Operating until 25 March 2023, the airline will fly three times a week from Frankfurt to KMIA, with a short stopover in Windhoek.

COVID-19

TESTING INFORMATION

Medlab COVID-19 testing facility at Hosea Kutako International Airport, Windhoek

- Reduction in cost: 24 hour turn-around is NAD 700, and 2 to 4 hour turn-around is NAD 1100.
- Contact details have changed – please make use of the email and phone numbers as relevant per the testing document, found on the Info Centre.
- Guests need the results of their tests to check-in so ensure you allow enough time for this i.e. 2.5 hours for the test PLUS the required time for check-in, security and immigration.

COVID-19 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS & REGULATIONS

The 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 protocol document must be noted.

Botswana

- **Fully vaccinated travellers are no longer required to produce negative RT-PCR test results.** They are required to present an authentic, valid vaccination card at point of entry.
- **Travellers who are not fully vaccinated, must produce a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test result that is not older than 72 hours from the time of testing, AND at his or her own cost, be required to undertake immediate COVID-19 RT-PCR testing on arrival.** Should the test on arrival be negative, the person shall be allowed entry but if positive, the person shall isolate within the district of the port of entry at his or her own cost.
- Travellers under the age of 12 are exempt from the above.
- The test on arrival is a 2 hour express test, conducted by Diagnofirm, and costs P 1700. Travellers need to wait for their results at the airport before continuing with arrangements. This is available in Maun only. Kasane does not have this facility so in all likelihood, an overnight will be required.
- The test on arrival will also have an impact on our flight operations. Airlink lands in Maun at 13:40 and guests are usually out by 14:30 – if there are no delays. They need be tested and wait 2 hours for results i.e. until 16:30. Earliest possible departure from Maun with Wilderness Air is then 17:00.
- As we head into winter and only being allowed to fly in daylight, this means connecting to the Linyanti as the first stop will not be possible – requiring a change in itinerary to do the Delta first, or an overnight in Maun. We may also encounter issues if we need to make multiple stops within the Delta.
- Arrangements will need to be managed accordingly, bearing in mind that a late arrival in camp will probably mean missing the first activity.

Kenya

- **All travellers coming to Kenya who are fully vaccinated shall be exempt from the requirement of an RT-PCR test.**
- All eligible unvaccinated travellers arriving at any port of entry into Kenya, must be in possession of a valid COVID-19 negative RT-PCR test certificate conducted within 72 hours before departure regardless of the route of entry. Children below the age of five (5) years are exempt from this requirement.
- Unvaccinated travellers arriving at any point of entry shall be subjected to a rapid antigen test at their own cost of USD 30. Any person who tests positive on the rapid antigen test will be subjected to an RT-PCR test at their own further cost of USD 50 and required to self-isolate. Children below the age of five (5) years are exempt from this testing requirement.
- There will be no paper verification of COVID-19 test results and vaccination certificates upon arrival into Kenya. Travellers should ensure they have uploaded both documents onto Global Haven before boarding via www.globalhaven.org
- Mandatory wearing of face masks in open public spaces is now lifted. People are encouraged to maintain social distancing and avoid crowding in public spaces. The use of masks in all indoor functions is encouraged.

Namibia

- **Fully vaccinated travellers are no longer required to produce negative RT-PCR test results.** They are required to present an authentic valid vaccination card at the point of entry.

- Travellers who are not fully vaccinated must produce a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test result that is not older than 72 hours calculated from the date that the sample for testing was taken and was issued by a laboratory that is certified in the country of issue, to issue RT-PCR test results.
- All incoming travellers must upload their laboratory results on the Trusted Travel system prior to travel.
- Children younger than 5 years are exempt from COVID-19 testing for entry.
- Wearing of masks in public places is no longer mandatory. However, the use of masks on public transport or at all indoor functions is encouraged.

Rwanda

- **All travellers arriving in Rwanda must have a negative COVID-19 certificate.** The only accepted test is RT-PCR test performed within 72 hours prior to departure (meaning travellers must be tested and get results within 3 days of their first flight).
- **At Kigali International Airport, all incoming travellers eligible (aged 12 years and above) for COVID-19 vaccine are encouraged to be fully vaccinated before their travel*.**
- **COVID-19 RT-PCR and Antigen Rapid Tests will be taken upon arrival at own cost.** Travellers must self-isolate at the first accommodation establishment on their itinerary until they get negative RT-PCR test results taken on arrival (maximum 24 hours), before proceeding with arrangements.
- Revised costs for COVID-19 additional tests at the airport (both RT-PCR plus Antigen Rapid) are Frw 62,200 or USD 65 (USD 55 for COVID-19 tests and USD 10 for specific logistics at the airport).
- Daily rapid testing, or on day 3, is no longer required.
- There is no change to testing requirements to access national parks, nor requiring a negative test result (RT-PCR or Antigen Rapid) to stay in hotels and other accommodation establishments. The turnaround time for RT-PCR tests is still 24 hours, although for the test on departure, it is 48 hours – tests must be taken within 72 hours (no change here, just a reminder).

* While vaccinations are not mandatory for entry, they are recommended because some facilities in-country require it.

South Africa

- Travelling to and from the Republic from neighbouring countries (via land borders) is allowed, as is international travel, provided that travellers who are:
 - fully vaccinated, must upon arrival at the land border or Port of Entry, produce a valid vaccination certificate; and
 - unvaccinated, must upon arrival at the land border, produce a negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test result, obtained not more than 72 hours before the date of travel.
- Outbound travellers from South Africa must comply with the requirements of the country of destination.
- The wearing of face masks is mandatory in an indoor public place, as well as on any form of public transport. This regulation does not apply to a child under the age of six years.
- All persons in an open public space need not wear a mask but must maintain a distance of at least one metre from another person.

Zimbabwe

- **A negative RT-PCR test result is now required to DEPART Zimbabwe, via land or air, even if the onward destination does not require a negative RT-PCR test result (should the traveller be fully vaccinated).**
 - Applicable to travellers aged 5 years and older.
 - If it is same day transit, i.e. to Botswana or Zambia, then the negative test result required for entry to Zimbabwe (taken within 48 hours) will apply to departure, as long as it is still valid.
-