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22 September 2021

NEWSFLASH

Recent Amendments to Entry Requirements and In-Country Protocols

Botswana - revised regulations include:

- The lifting of the suspension on the sale of alcohol.
- Removal of quarantine requirements for all travellers originating from or transiting through India.

South Africa – on Adjusted Alert Level 2 as of 13 September 2021, changes include:

- A shorter curfew period between 23:00 and 04:00.
- Sale of alcohol from retail outlets for off-site consumption is permitted between 10:00 and 18:00 from Monday to Friday, and on-site consumption be permitted as per license conditions up to 22:00 daily.

Rwanda – as of 23 September 2021:

- Shorter curfew in Kigali between 23:00 and 04:00, while in the rest of the country, curfew starts at 21:00.
- Removal of the seven-day mandatory quarantine for passengers from India and Uganda.

Zimbabwe - having moved from a COVID-19 lockdown level 4 to level 2, restrictions have been eased:

- Take note of the latest phrasing used for entry requirements: *Travellers entering the country must present a COVID-19 test valid within less than 48 hours.*
- Quarantine is no longer a requirement for those arriving from Delta variant countries.
- Revised curfew hours are 22:00 to 05:30
- Restaurants and bars within hotels and lodges may operate from 08:00 to 22:00.

Namibia - the following regulations are in effect until 15 October 2021:

- *Persons may enter Namibia on the proviso that they present a negative SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result from the country of departure, which is not older than 7 days 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 SARS-CoV-2 PCR test results.*
- Curfew between 23:00 and 04:00.
- Specific hours apply to the sale of alcohol for off-site consumption. On-site consumption, with meals, is allowed Sunday to Sunday between 09:00 and 22:00 at restaurants and hospitality establishments.

CAMPS & ACTIVITIES

BOTSWANA

Water activity update for Botswana

- Jao Reserve
 - Kwetsani: water is receding so boating in some areas is difficult. At this time, we can still boat across to Hunda Island, and do mekoro and boat cruises.
 - Jacana: still has water. Currently able to do boating with a mud buddy boat as well as mokoro activities.
 - Tubu: has no water at the moment.
- Vumbura concession: all water activities continue as normal.
- King's Pool: still some water in the area so we should be able to offer the barge for about another month.
- Qorokwe: currently there is enough water to still offer mokoro excursions, but it is getting lower every day.
- Dumatau: all water activities continue as normal.
- Abu Camp: the water level has dropped and we are no longer offering boating, only mokoro excursions.

WILDERNESS AIR

Windhoek International vs Eros

All flights on the Wilderness Air Namibia circuit depart from/return to Hosea Kutako International Airport (WDH). We are aware that in the current situation, there are guests who are overnighing in Windhoek at the end of their itinerary due to the need for COVID-19 testing, and the best way to facilitate this is listed below.

Going forward, this scenario will also apply in a non-COVID situation i.e. if guests are overnighing in Windhoek at the beginning or end of their itinerary for reasons other than testing. When circumstances allow, guests may be transferred between Eros and Hosea Kutako Airports, and vice versa, by air.

1. Book and charge for the circuit flight back to Windhoek International as normal, to allow for onward scheduled flight connections as relevant, or pick-ups by properties such as Omaanda.
2. Book and charge for a road transfer from the International Airport to town – either to the hotel or lab as per arrangements.
3. There are occasions when the aircraft returns to Eros Airport in town, and will be able to carry those passengers who were going to be transferred by road, by air instead.
4. Should this happen, Wilderness Air Namibia will advise the consultant and the relevant parties to amend the transfer to collect guests from Eros Airport.
5. The same would apply to departures – if Wilderness Air are in a position to collect guests from Eros instead of the International Airport, they will do so, and advise all parties accordingly to amend the transfer.
6. There is no refund for the road transfer in this scenario, but there are no additional costs should flight arrangements be revised to pick up from or drop off at Eros Airport.
7. We cannot guarantee these arrangements in advance – scheduling is only determined 24 hours prior but where we are able to accommodate the guest, we will do so.
8. This is applicable to self-drive bookings too as there are the same rental agencies at both airports, and it should be possible to shift the drop off and pick up points as needed.

Change in refuelling stop

Fog occurs along the Namibian coastline on a fairly regular basis, which makes Swakopmund inaccessible. Wilderness Air Namibia will now use Arandis for refuelling on the circuit, instead of Swakopmund. Located inland to the north-east, and not exposed to the fog, Arandis is more reliable plus it has a tar airstrip and is a shorter flying distance between Geluk and Doro Nawas.

If weather conditions are favourable, and guests need to be dropped off or picked up from Swakopmund because of their arrangements, the aircraft will land there and refuel accordingly. However, if there is fog on that particular day, then the aircraft will fly to Arandis and guests will be transferred to/from Swakopmund by road. Arranged by Wilderness Air, and taking about 40 minutes, there is no additional cost for the road transfer. These decisions are made prior to departure from Geluk/Kulala, and should the fog consequently clear as we get closer to the coast, the aircraft will still land at Arandis. We cannot reverse these arrangements at the last minute as flight plans have been filed, etc.

Wilderness Air Namibia COVID-19 Declaration Form

Similar to the process in Botswana, Wilderness Air Namibia also require completion of a COVID-19 Declaration Form. Found in the COVID-19 folder on the Info Centre, please include this in your final documentation where possible so that guests may complete it in advance to make the process easier and quicker on the ground.

Flying Circuit Information

Updated flyers for Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe are available on the Info Centre. The Namibia flyer takes the change in routing via Arandis into account, plus some tweaks were made to maps and text on all of them.

TOURING & TRANSFERS

Livingstone Island Devil's Pool Re-opens

Due to low water levels on the Zambezi, the Livingstone Island Devil's Pool re-opened on 21 August 2021.

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, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Be aware that all information is subject to change, sometimes quite frequently by government and health authorities. For Kenya protocols, please refer to [this page](#) on the Governors' website for information on entry, departure and in-country regulations for Kenya.

In-camp testing in Botswana

Our in-camp testing offering in Botswana has been reviewed, taking both the guest experience and operational resources into account. Going forward, we will focus solely on the helicopter test option due to the flexibility it affords. Important to note:

- Medical personnel are flown by helicopter to various camps in a circuit to take swabs. As this is entirely dependent on the number of locations and guests on any given day, we cannot dictate the time for the test.
- Times are provided by the service provider the day prior. Camp management will inform the guests, and depending on the time, swabs will be taken either in the guest room or whilst out on an activity.
- Due to the operational necessity to plan ahead, the confirmed day of testing is fixed and any change will result in a new charge for the guest.
- While turnaround times have improved and tests may be conducted the day prior to departure, we still recommend guests are tested two days prior to departure, to allow for any possible delays. Should they insist on testing the day before, we cannot be held liable if test results are not received timeously.
- Guests receive the printed results in Maun or Kasane when they depart for their onward arrangements.
- For parties of 4 or more guests, please ask your Journey Specialist for a tailored cost. Rates will vary depending on the location of the camp where swabs are taken. Note that on this basis, it is still not a private service and test times will be advised the day prior.

Testing Options in South Africa, including faster turnarounds

Our preferred operator for COVID-19 testing options in South Africa is Next Pathology. In addition to standard tests in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban (where swabs can be taken in the comfort of the guest's hotel), they have and continue to expand their offering, catering specifically for the hospitality industry.

Next Pathology now have a testing facility at OR Tambo International Airport (ORT), located in the Airport Intercontinental Hotel. A more pleasant environment than the options for testing in the airport terminal, the offering is professional, efficient, easy and very much customer-centric. They have a mini-lab in the hotel to take the swabs, and process two of the tests, particularly the swift two hour test. With their pre-registration process it is very quick and convenient, and results can be emailed as well as printed out. The available options are:

- Swift 2 Hour RT-PCR Testing (on site). While expensive at R 2000 per person, this means that additional overnights may not be required. If you arrive at ORT at 08:00, you can have a test at 10:00, results by 12:00 and still fly out by lunchtime or the afternoon. Likewise, you could have your test in the afternoon before an evening international flight.
- Antigen Test 1 Hour (on site)
- 12 Hour Expedited PCR Test (swab on site / processed off site)
- 24 Hour Standard PCR Test (swab on site / processed off site)

Next Pathology can also assist with testing in the Kruger, Nelspruit and Hoedspruit area (i.e. at any of the lodges), with a 24 hour turnaround time. They send their nurses to the lodges and then bring the swabs back to the central laboratory to conduct the tests.

Rwanda - negative tests required for check-in

Most hotels in Rwanda now require a valid negative test on check-in – either RT-PCR or rapid. The price of a rapid/antigen test is USD 5.00 per person with a turnaround time of 10 to 15 minutes. We can arrange for the driver to take guests to the relevant facility in Kigali to conduct the rapid/antigen test, before heading to the hotel.

In-camp testing at Toka Leya, Zambia

- The call-out fee has reduced.
- Payment must be made “directly” to the provider conducting the tests in cash i.e. guests cannot pre-pay Wilderness Safaris. That said, we have been made aware that US Dollar notes older than 2017 are not accepted by the providers’ bank. To assist, Toka Leya can facilitate this payment – via credit card with a 7% fee applicable - and in turn, pay the doctor in cash.
- Test results are emailed directly to the guests. Once the certificate is downloaded, they can ask camp management to print it out. Currently, Livingstone airport will accept a digital copy (downloaded certificate on a phone), however, the land borders are insisting on a printed copy.

Testing in the Kafue, Zambia

Although expensive due to the logistics involved, it is possible to arrange for swabs to be taken at Shumba Camp. Conducted in the morning the day prior to departure, the aircraft and nurse fly to the Plains Airstrip to meet guests – who need to be transferred there as part of the morning activity – and the swab is taken. The swabs are flown back to Lusaka and taken to the lab. Results are delivered to guests at the airport on their return from the Kafue.

Testing at Third Party Properties in Victoria Falls

The most effective option is make arrangements directly with the hotel or lodge where guests are staying as they have procedures in place, and the property will assist in organising the necessary transport to and from the lab conducting the tests in Victoria Falls, and co-ordinate the timing around arrangements or other guests requiring the same.

REMINDERS

Wilderness Safaris After Hours Service

Our South African based Emergency After Hours services is available to assist with situations such as delayed or cancelled flights, lost luggage, changes to arrangements while travelling plus family, medical or other emergencies. Hours of service are based on South African time, or Central African Time (CAT).

Active Emergency Phone Duty -

Monday to Friday 17:00 to 22:00 and 07:00 to 08:00

Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 07:00 to 22:00

Standby Emergency Phone Duty -

Weekdays and Weekends 22:00 to 07:00

(During this time emails will not be checked, however, phone calls will be answered in the event of an emergency)

Emergency After Hours Number International Dialling

Local Dialling

Emergency After Hours Email

+27 82 576 9173 (Mobile)

082 576 9173

WSAfterHours@wilderness.co.za

Clarity on the M&G service in Windhoek

- The standard welcome service (at no charge) at Hosea Kutako International (Windhoek) International remains as is. Our team require guest and flight information, to meet and assist accordingly – directing guests to our lounge to wait for onward Wilderness Air arrangements, need to store luggage, or to the transfer service, etc.
- The other full service (at a cost) has been renamed so that there is no confusion between the two offerings. Now called Guest Briefing, guests are met by a Wilderness representative to go through their itinerary in detail, hand over vouchers, assist with hired car collection, check-in for flights, run through driving conditions, etc. Our systems plus published Rates Sheets have been amended accordingly.

Unabridged Birth Certificates

Both Botswana and Namibia require unabridged birth certificates for children under the age of 18 years. Although this is no longer a requirement for South Africa, it remains in place for these countries. For Namibia, the Ministry of Health also stipulate that if the child is travelling with only one parent, the other parent needs to provide a written consent affidavit, which needs to be taken along. Please refer to the Travel Regulations in the General Information Manual for further details on documentation required according to situation for all regions.

Communiques on the Wilderness Window

Previous Wilderness Safaris and other related communiques – Product Updates, Monthly Newsletters, Press Releases, etc. may be found on the Info Centre under Wilderness Safaris/WS Newsletters and Updates. Children in the Wilderness and the Governors' Collection are also included.
