

## Botswana & Zambia Safari: Victoria Falls to the Okavango Delta

### Tour-Only Itinerary

Embark on a journey through Zambia and Botswana to experience the sights and sounds of the vast African wilderness. Listen to the thundering roar of Victoria Falls from a lookoff, surrounded by mist-soaked air. Marvel at expansive, green fields and pristine bushland overflowing with wildlife, taking in the grace of grazing elephants. Experience Africa's landscape up close as you track wildlife through the bush on foot during a walking safari in Botswana. Watch for submerged hippos as you travel calm waters on an early morning boat cruise. Relax and reflect on your time in Africa, sundowner in hand, before returning to your luxurious bush camp accommodations for a sumptuous meal. This is wild Africa – a landscape of untouched natural beauty waiting to be discovered.



### Highlights

Follow in the footsteps of animals great and small, noting subtle signs and tracks while spotting zebra, giraffe, genets, and even tiny millipedes.

Feel the excitement as you encounter majestic, wild elephants in Botswana's Chobe National Park, home to Africa's largest elephant population.

Immerse yourself in pristine wilderness and deluxe comfort, staying at intimate, award-winning lodges and bush camps evocative of the classic African safari.

Delight in a sundowner during an evening boat cruise, soaking in the dramatic colors of the African sunset while wildlife gathers at the river's edge.

## On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our small-group Guided Walking Safaris, rated easy, on some uneven wilderness terrain with very minimal elevation gain or loss. On the days where walks are offered, they range from 1-3 hours, with shorter and longer options when feasible. Our goal is to offer as much walking as possible, but there are some days where due to park restrictions and/or transfers, game drives, cultural activities or water activities are included instead. Bush walks are typically held early in the morning or late afternoon. Telescopic walking sticks are not provided on this tour as walking sticks are generally not recommended on bushwalks.

## DAY 1

### **Join your *Botswana & Zambia: Victoria Falls to the Okavango Delta* tour. Arrival in Zambia: sunset boat cruise**

Upon arrival at the Harry Mwange Nkumbula International Airport, receive a warm welcome and transfer approximately 30 minutes to your home for the next two nights, a serene sanctuary overlooking a scenic bend of the Zambezi River in Mosi-Oa-Tunya National Park. Depending on your time of arrival, you may have time to refresh and relax before setting out on an evening cruise along the Zambezi.

**Important Note:** All guests must acquire the KAZA UNIVISA upon arrival to Zambia as the tour may include traveling through the Zambia & Zimbabwe border crossings.

You meet your guide at 3:00 p.m. in Sussi & Chuma's lounge area to begin your tour by embarking on a Zambezi River sunset cruise. During your two-hour boat cruise, you marvel at the landscape much as Scottish explorer David Livingstone may have when he first arrived in 1855, naming the nearby waterfalls for Queen Victoria. You are likely to spot pods of hippo, crocodiles, and an array of birds. Your cruise culminates with sundowner drinks and canapés as the African sun disappears behind the distant bush and sets the sky ablaze.

Return to the lodge, where a festive welcome dinner has been prepared. Your first meal in the bush might be quail kebab or curried chicken stew, perhaps finished with poached pears in red wine. Tonight and throughout your adventure, you may choose from preparations of local game and fish or from dishes that may be more familiar to you, with vegetarian options available. Later, retire to your luxury tree house, built into the canopy of majestic ebony trees. The calming sounds of the river and the wilderness lull you to sleep.

Accommodation: Sussi & Chuma Lodge, Victoria Falls, Zambia

## DAY 2

### **Morning bushwalk. Village visit and game drive**

1-2 hours of walking, easy. 1-2 hours optional walk, easy

After an early breakfast, set out with your guide(s) and park ranger on your first walking safari of the Mosi-

Oa-Tunya National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. You might see water buffalo, wildebeest, zebra, kudu, warthogs, and other plains game along with a number of bird species. The elusive wild dog also passes through this park.

Back at the lodge, you have several ways to fill your time. First, pay a visit to Nakatindi Village, about three miles from the lodge. Here, some 3,000 residents live in simple mud and brick homes. One of Nakatindi's community leaders shows you around. The village is special to Sussi & Chuma Lodge as its owners support the village's education, conservation, health clinic, and enterprise. During your visit, stop by the clinic, grain mill, and school with its vegetable gardens, or watch village ladies in soap-making demonstration. If you prefer, simply relax at the lodge, indulging in a spa treatment or a plunge in the pool. For lunch, enjoy a delicious bush picnic.

Late afternoon, join your guide(s) for a two-hour jeep safari in the game-rich Mosi-Oa-Tunya National Park. Among its riverine forest, miombo woodland, and grassland, you might spot elephants, impala, giraffe, hippopotamus, vervet monkeys, and baboons. Mosi-Oa-Tunya is also home to the highly endangered white rhino. During your game drive, your guides will be in radio contact with the dedicated park rangers who keep a watchful eye on these elusive giants. Once the rhinos have been tracked, you get out on foot to get a closer look at these magnificent creatures and learn from the guides and rangers about the steps that Zambia is taking to conserve them. This evening, share stories of your afternoon discoveries over another delicious meal.

Accommodation: Sussi & Chuma Lodge

## **DAY 3**

### **Victoria Falls: rainforest walk and transfer to Chobe National Park in Botswana: afternoon game drive**

2 hours of walking, easy

After breakfast, join your guide on a walking tour of Victoria Falls. When David Livingstone first set eyes on this spectacular natural wonder, he wrote, "Scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight." Superlative descriptions don't end with Dr. Livingstone: Natives call it "the smoke that thunders" and they have been called one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. No matter what you call them, Victoria Falls takes the breath away: More than 19 million cubic feet of water per minute

plummet over the edge of its massive gorge across a width of one-and-a-quarter miles and a depth of more than 330 feet. It is the largest known curtain of falling water on Earth, transforming the placid Zambezi River into a ferocious torrent that sends misty clouds of spray into the air visible from miles away. You walk through the surrounding wilderness this morning, peaceful and pristine even with the backdrop of the roaring falls. Trace footpaths along the table of a gorge-side cliff through the mopane woodland and rainforest. The vegetation you observe, including ebony, ivory palm and date palm is rare for this region, nurtured by spray from the falls. Throughout your walk, pause at inspiring viewpoints and keep your eyes open for one of the 35 species of fish-eating raptors. Fish eagles, peregrine falcons, and others perch in riverside trees waiting to dive for their catch.

Please Note: For the March departure, the group will walk on the Zambian side of the falls. During the November departures, the group will walk on the Zimbabwean side. This is based on seasonality and water levels. Guests joining the Pre-tour Extension will have the opportunity to walk on both sides of the falls (an additional cost may apply and can be paid directly to the lodge).

Bid Victoria Falls farewell and transfer by land to Chobe National Park, Botswana's first national park and home to the one of the highest concentrations of game in Africa, including hippopotamus, water buffalo, antelope, lions, and the continent's largest herd of elephants. The journey takes about 90 minutes, excluding customs and immigration formalities at the border.

Your destination is a luxurious lodge perched on the edge of the park above the Chobe River. The river is surrounded by lush floodplains, marshlands, and dense forests of mahogany and teak. It is common for elephants and other wildlife to gather here to drink and bathe. Spoonbills, ibis, stork, and other water birds may linger on the shore or in the canopy in search of fish.

The lodge offers unparalleled panoramic views across an island and floodplains as far as Namibia. After settling in to one of the property's 15 guest cottages, join your expert guide and driver for a thrilling late afternoon game drive into Chobe National Park. Though wildlife is at its most prolific here, as little as a century ago this land was inhabited by the San bushmen who still believe that humans and animals are equal and that these untouched lands of Botswana bring energy to all who visit. Chobe's elephants are Kalahari elephants, the largest known species. You might notice their short tusks which, many believe, result from local soils that are low in calcium. Conclude your outing with sundowners in a scenic spot and return to the lodge for a gourmet dinner of regional cuisine, perhaps pork loin burgundy or grilled ostrich.

Accommodation: Chobe Chilwero Lodge, Chobe, Botswana

## **DAY 4**

### **Chobe National Park: early morning boat excursion and afternoon game drive**

Few experiences compare to game viewing on an African river cruise. As you slept to the distant symphony of beast and bird, a hush settled over the floodplain and all is still now. A stork at full wing glides over the tranquil current of the Chobe. Across the water, you glimpse a troop of baboons foraging in the shrub. An impala drinks from the river, its ears standing on end, attune to whatever predators might lurk.

No matter the morning scene, each new day holds the promise of eventful river cruises and game drives to come. (Bush walks are not permitted at Chobe National Park.) After a hearty and satisfying breakfast, you depart for a boat ride on the Chobe River, marveling as life unfolds along its vibrant banks. These waters flow here from Angola to form part of the border between Botswana and Namibia's Caprivi Strip before merging with the Zambezi River. It passes through six game reserves or wildlife management regions, supporting an enormous variety of wildlife.

After lunch back at the lodge – you may have the opportunity to make your own pizza or savor a three-course meal – relax during the hottest part of the day (the “siesta” to locals). Treat yourself to a spa treatment (at an additional cost) or relax on the terrace or in your cottage. Later, enjoy afternoon tea and scones before you embark on a game drive with your guide in an open-sided 4x4 vehicle designed for prime viewing. You traverse mopane forest and riverine woodland for water buffalo, hippopotamus, and other wildlife that gather on the Chobe's verdant banks or watering holes. Common antelope such as impala, kudu, red lechwe, and puku (a small, rust-brown species) might also reveal themselves. Less common in Chobe are lions and leopards, though you might cross paths with these legendary big cats. Your guide is familiar with the habits and typical patterns of them all. And to many safari-goers, the majestic “grey giants” steal the show, often congregating at the river's edge to drink.

As dusk settles, you witness a hushed quiet along the river's bank where you may stop to enjoy a sundowner under a painted African sky. Back at your lodge, gather for a candlelit dinner served on the covered veranda, or a traditional barbecue set up on the manicured lawn.

Accommodation: Chobe Chilwero Lodge, Chobe, Botswana

## DAY 5

### Chobe Chilwero Lodge to Stanley's Camp: Okavango Delta: afternoon game drive

Time permitting, enjoy a final Chobe game drive this morning. Then transfer 10 minutes to the tiny Kasane Airport, where you board a small plane for an 80-minute flight into the remote heart of the Okavango Delta. From the airstrip, it's a 15-minute drive to your award-winning, luxurious camp, set among ebony and sausage trees (or moporoto) on a 260,000-acre private reserve adjacent to the Moremi Game Reserve.

The Okavango Delta is one of Africa's most breathtaking natural wonders. The inland delta forms the end of the Okavango River, but the desert climate of the Kalahari Desert evaporates the water for part of the year. As the river bursts its banks during the rainy season, the waters flow down from the Angolan highlands (May through July), creating a lush, water-drenched paradise of rivulets and reed-filled waterways that lure a huge diversity of wildlife. Changing water levels throughout the year mark distinct seasons and different wildlife viewing experiences none of which will disappoint.

Your intimate "camp with a conscience" combines classic elegance with sustainability, preserving the fragile environment. Recently refurbished, sturdy tents have a lighter footprint and a solar farm generates 80 percent of the electricity. What's more, the camp's connection to the local community is strong: Most of the staff live in nearby villages and some of the camp's artisanal features were locally made.

After savoring a tasty lunch, set out on your first game drive with your experienced guide. This is the best way to get up close to the big game. As this is a private game reserve, your guide can detour off-road to follow the tracks and tell-tale signs of recent (and elusive) passersby such as lions and leopards. Stop at a watering hole to savor a sundowner and observe (from a safe distance), pods of hippo, birds, and maybe elephants in the distance.

Return to the lodge and refresh before reconvening at the main lodge. This evening, enjoy a multi-course dinner, perhaps venison lasagna or a gourmet lamb burger, paired with an excellent wine, and topped off with one of the chef's specialty desserts.

Accommodation: Sanctuary Stanley's Camp, Okavango Delta, Botswana

## DAY 6

### Okavango Delta: morning bush walk and evening game drive

1-2 hours of optional walking, easy

This morning, you set out on foot for your first walking safari in Botswana, a two-hour adventure in the bush with your expert guide and armed professional camp guide. This a rare chance to experience the Delta with all your senses, free of the whirl of a vehicle engine, feet to the wild earth, and close to the scents and textures of the vegetation. During certain times of the year, the shifting of the Delta's rivulets and lagoons make it difficult to plan a driving route and anticipate river crossings, hence there are fewer vehicle game drives in the area. This means you can continue to enjoy the privilege of exploring this lush environment by foot, relying on the fine-tuned tracking skills and knowledge of your guides. The birdlife in this "watered-down desert" is incomparable. You may also see larger game from a distance or come upon zebras standing belly-deep in water or giraffes and other plains animals marching across the floodplains. This is home to one of the largest water buffalo populations; a herd can number as many as 2,000.

You return to the lodge for lunch and a relaxing afternoon. If you wish, continue your game-viewing from the swimming pool, or your private deck, perhaps spotting a few of the rare wild dogs that roam the plains. Later, enjoy your customary sundowner cocktails as the African skies turn fiery shades of red and orange, then set off on an evening game drive by vehicle. This is a rare opportunity to see some of the Okavango's nocturnal species such as hyena, leopards, and bush babies, a small primate that makes its home in the trees. Your guide searches the hushed landscape with a special spotlight. After this thrilling adventure, return to the lodge for another delicious dinner.

Accommodation: Sanctuary Stanley's Camp, Okavango Delta, Botswana

## DAY 7

### Okavango Delta: morning and afternoon game activities

1-2 hours of optional walking, easy

Awake to another peaceful day in the bush. Today's activities are at your leisure. You may choose to join your guide for another thrilling bush walk or game drive, searching for any elusive animals you have not seen yet. Depending on water levels and the season, you may even be able to take in the Delta from a

different perspective: Embark on a mokoro (a dug-out canoe) for a safari by water. Your pilot navigates the craft by pole, standing on a platform aft and plying the waterways at a gentle pace. One of the most iconic symbols of the Delta, the mokoro was once the only form of transport when these plains filled with water and is still used by locals to fish and move goods around. Please note that mokoro canoe excursions are not available on March departures.

Another option for today is to partake in a once in a lifetime experience to walk with semi-habituated elephants with the Living With Elephants Foundation. This foundation has given orphaned elephants a safe place to call home in the concessions surrounding the camp. The elephants are allowed to roam the bush freely, but are always under the watchful eyes of their caretakers. During this encounter, you will have the chance to walk alongside an elephant while learning about their care and conservation. Afterwards, the elephants “join” you for a bush lunch. This activity is bookable and payable upon arrival to Stanley’s Camp.

After lunch, enjoy time to relax and reflect on your journey while soaking in the pristine beauty and splendor of the Okavango. Before setting off on another walk or game drive, you gather with your guide to review all the mammal, bird, and plant species you have encountered on the past week. This evening, you toast your adventures over a memorable farewell dinner,

Accommodation: Sanctuary Stanley’s Camp, Okavango, Delta, Botswana

## **DAY 8**

### **Your *Botswana & Zambia Safari: Victoria Falls to the Okavango Delta* tour concludes**

Rise early with the sun to soak up your last moments in this special place. Join your guides on a final game drive or walking safari in Botswana, and one more opportunity to witness the fantastic mix of wildlife in the Delta. After breakfast, you bid your hosts farewell and transfer to the airstrip to board a 15-minute flight to Maun for onward travels. (Departure time will be communicated to you by your guides on tour.)

## What's Included

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓