

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

### Tour-Only Itinerary

A flock of cattle egrets explodes in flight; elephants stand knee deep in shallow water, using their trunks to pull up water lilies, swish off the grit, and wind them into their mouths. Cape buffalo graze on a vast plain; somewhere a young leopard sleeps in a tree; while overhead stretches an unbroken sky.

Botswana's Okavango Delta fans out for nearly a hundred miles, creating one of Earth's richest wildlife habitats. Tracking animals and birds on foot with your expert guide on this walking safari in Botswana, you find your place in this remarkable wilderness—where myriad rivulets, puddles, and lagoons create green abundance in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. Here once again—as on previous days' adventures amidst Chobe's elephant herds and the thunder of Victoria Falls—Africa's unparalleled majesty hits you full force.



### 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. Due to the flat terrain and the limited amount of walks per day, walking poles will not be provided on this tour.

## DAY 1

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

Your guide meets you at the Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport in Livingstone, Zambia, to begin your tour.

A complimentary transfer from the Harry Mwanga Nkumbula International Airport to Sussi & Chuma Lodge will be provided for you regardless of your arrival time and date (and whether or not you have reserved the optional Flight + Tour Combo). Please be sure to inform Country Walkers of your flight arrival date and time at least 60 days prior to the tour start date so that we can confirm this transfer.

Upon arrival at the Harry Mwanga 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.

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 with color.

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 dishes that may be more familiar to you, with vegetarian options available. Later, retire to your luxury treehouse, built into a canopy of majestic ebony.

**Accommodation:** Sussi & Chuma Lodge, Victoria Falls

**Included Meals:** Lunch, Dinner

## 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 several 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, or watch a soap-making demonstration by the village ladies. 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 you find the rhinos, you'll get out on foot for a closer look at these magnificent creatures, and your guides and the rangers will explain 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, Victoria Falls

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## 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 Victoria Falls has been called one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. No matter what you call them, the falls are breathtaking. More than 19 million cubic feet of water per minute plummets over the edge of the falls’ massive gorge, across a width of one-and-a-quarter miles plunging to 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 edge 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 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 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. Lush floodplains, marshlands, and dense forests of mahogany and teak surround the river. 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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## 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. (Bushwalks 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 looking 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 for 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

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## 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 *moporota*) 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 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 a glass of excellent wine, and topped off with one of the chef's specialty desserts.

**Accommodation:** Stanley's Camp, Okavango Delta

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 6

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

2 hours of 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. You can continue to enjoy the privilege of exploring this lush environment on 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 area 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. You may 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:** Stanley's Camp, Okavango Delta

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## 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 a thrilling bush walk or game drive, searching for any elusive animals you have not yet seen. 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 an aft platform 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 it 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 helicopter flight over the Okavango Delta. These flights travel further west into the Delta to places that are not accessible by vehicle or boat and will give you a true appreciation of the vastness of these everchanging grasslands. This activity is bookable and payable upon arrival to Stanley's Camp and is subject to availability.

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 in the past week. This evening, you toast your adventures over a memorable farewell dinner.

**Accommodation:** Stanley's Camp, Okavango Delta

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## 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, with 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	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓
Airport car service for arrival & departure	✓