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TRAVEL GUIDE 2022/23

Botswana

Central Kalahari

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Okavango Panhandle

What's happening on the Seronga side?

Mabuasehube

There's a lion between you and the loo...

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TO STAY

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MAPS

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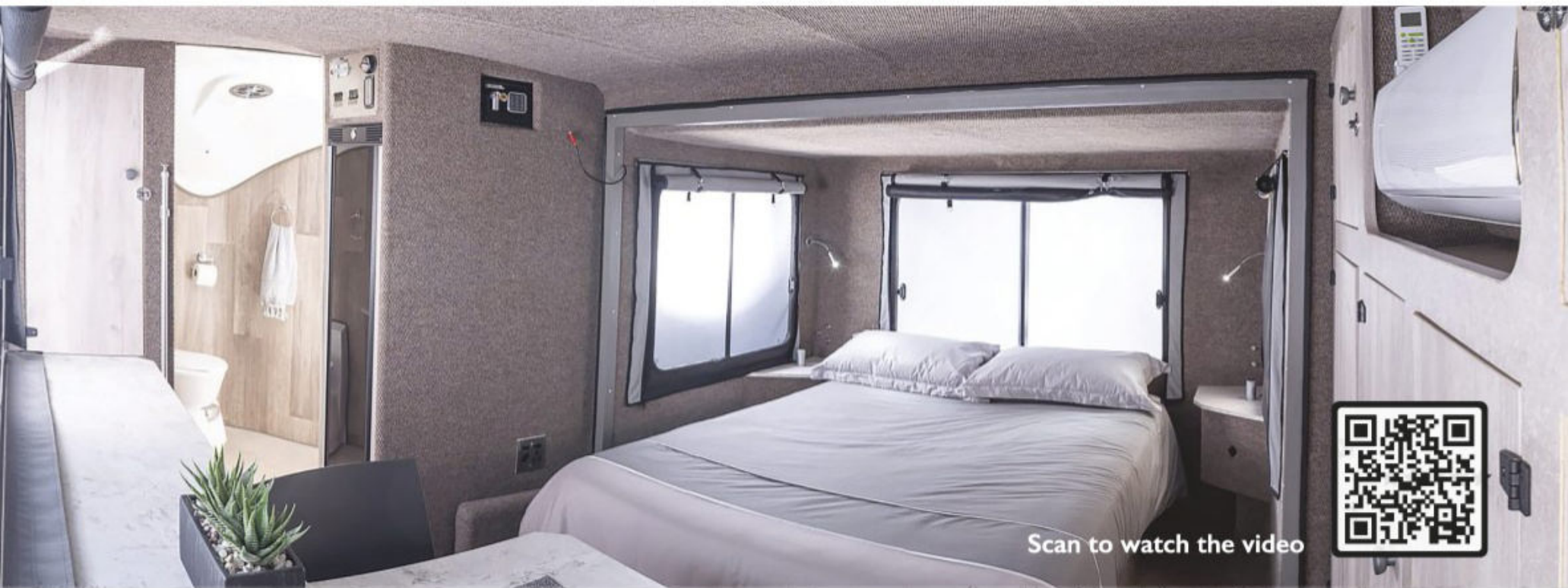
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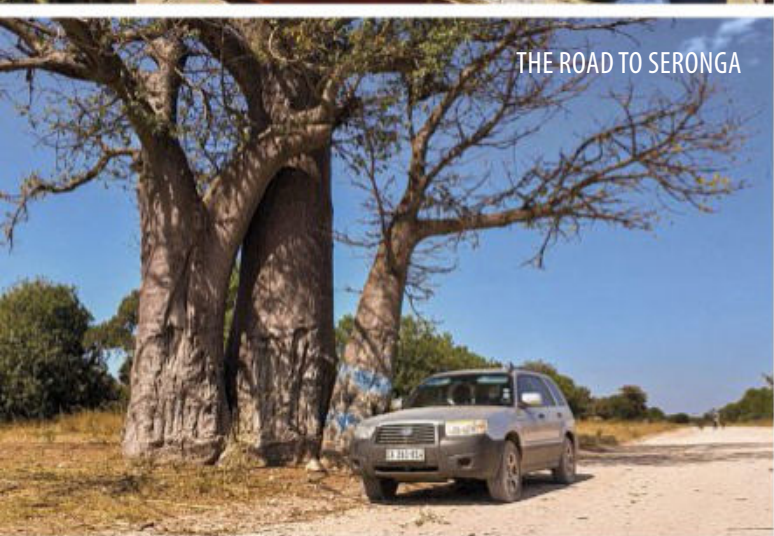
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TOAST COETZER

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The search for a place where you can feel like yourself again – that’s one of the main reasons why the wilderness of Botswana is so popular among our readers.

It’s easy to become despondent when you watch the news and see the frenetic pace of the world around you. That’s exactly why you need a holiday – to get away from the things that weigh on your heart, so you can walk around more freely and in step with nature.

When you’re in the bush, loadshedding doesn’t matter – you have a campfire and a headlamp. Admire a lion and you’ll forget all about those unanswered e-mails – you don’t have cellphone reception anyway.

On a trip with family and friends, you’ll start talking to each other again and the conversations will bring you closer. Even long stretches of open road have value: When it’s quiet in the car, your thoughts turn like pebbles in a stream.

There are many ways to enjoy Botswana. You can fly to a luxury camp in the Okavango Delta and pay for percale linen and Michelin-star meals. But this guide is mainly for people who like to explore in their own vehicle. People who like to plan a trip hunched over a road map with a coffee in hand, months, even years, in advance. People who like to load the camping fridge and strap things to a roof rack. People who like to pitch their tent in the wilderness. People like *you*.

Our guide focusses on places where you can get these experiences, like the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (particularly the Mabuasehube section), where Vic Ives saw leopards, lions and lightning strikes (p 20). François Haasbroek also went to that part of the country – he explored the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (in the wet season!) with our travel partner Bhejane 4x4 Adventures (p 46).

Co-editor of this guide, Toast Coetzer, drove the quiet dirt road between Mohembo and Seronga on the eastern side of the Okavango Panhandle (p 30), and Fiona McIntosh gives the lowdown on the best things to do in Maun (p 54). Some of the Chobe’s finest photography guides share tips on how to take great bird photos (p 38) and the young adventurer Cally Silberbauer tells how she rode her bike across Botswana on her way to Kilimanjaro (p 66).

The entry fees for Botswana’s parks have increased in 2022, but if you plan well you can still have a budget-friendly holiday. After all, the north of Botswana borders on the Kavango East and Zambezi regions of Namibia, where you can have similar camping experiences at lower prices (p 72). Our accommodation section also includes Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe and Livingstone in Zambia because a tour of Botswana often spills over into neighbouring countries.

Enjoy this year’s guide and let us know what you’d like to read about in the next one!

TOAST

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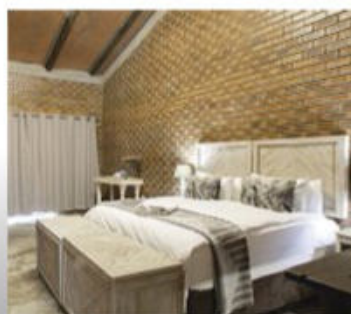


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We connect you with the best 4x4 operators for those looking to hire vehicles as part of their holiday or if you are driving your own 4x4 let us assist with doing all the administrative work for you. Our team of consultants are on the ground in Maun, the gateway to the Okavango, and have years of experience with itinerary planning and booking. We have visited every lodge and campsite that we book so we know what we are selling.

We specialize in bookings for Kalahari Trans-frontier Park, Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park but we can book any campsite, lodge or hotel in Botswana.

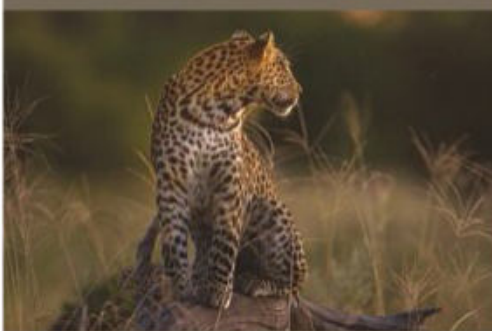
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Back to normal (sort of...)

After the disruptive effect that Covid had on international travel, things have now (almost) returned to normal. Crossing the border is easy if you're well prepared. Always keep an eye on the news since regulations can change overnight. If you're vaccinated, always travel with your original certificate and the electronic version – save it on your phone. At the time of going to print, all smaller border posts between South Africa and Botswana had reopened – thank goodness!

BORDER FEES

Botswana

Fees are payable in pula – you can pay by card. Vehicle fee P165 (R221). Trailer P115 (R154). If you plan to pass through Botswana twice on your trip (if you're also driving through Namibia, and then re-entering Botswana) you can request a double-entry permit. This permit costs P217 (R291) per car and P167 (R224) per trailer.

Namibia

You can pay in rand (cash or card). Vehicle fee R337. Trailer R215.

Zambia

Some fees are payable in US dollars only; others in kwacha (K). You can exchange dollars for kwacha informally at most

borders. Carbon tax K330 (R366); third party insurance K163 (R181); council levy K50 (R56); toll/road tax US\$38 (R657). Some fees may vary according to your car's engine size. If you cross over the new Kazungula bridge, there is a bridge fee of K450 (R500) for vehicles and K450 (R500) for trailers or caravans.

Zimbabwe

Fees are paid in US dollars. Carbon tax US\$30 – US\$50 (R519 – R865); insurance US\$30 – US\$50 (R519 – R865); road tax US\$10 – US\$20 (R173 – R346). Figures vary according to how big your vehicle's engine is. At some borders a gate pass might also be payable.

AT THE BORDER

TOAST COETZER



OKAVANGO DELTA

COVID

At the time of going to print (October 2022), the countries featured in this guide (Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) all required proof of full vaccination upon entry, or a negative PCR test no older than 72 hours. However, do extra research before you depart so you don't get caught unawares at the border. Search for these news and travel information sites on Facebook:

- **Botswana:** BWgovernment; DriveBots
- **Namibia:** Ministry of Health and Social Services – Namibia
- **Zimbabwe:** Zimbabwe Ministry of Health & Child Care; DriveZim
- **Zambia:** Ministry of Health Zambia



FOR YOUR VEHICLE

- **ZA sticker.** Put it on the back.
- **Emergency triangles.** Pack two in case someone asks. Keep them close at hand.
- **Fire extinguisher.** Compulsory. Keep it within easy access.
- **Reflective vest.** Wear it when you get out of your car at the side of the road to fix a tyre.
- **Reflective strips for your bumpers.** White or silver reflective strips stuck to the front bumper; red reflective strips stuck to the rear bumper. Even if your car already has reflectors! This is compulsory in Zimbabwe and Zambia.



TRAVEL TIPS

CROSS EASILY

- Try to avoid the bigger border posts, especially around the end of the month and during peak holiday season. Keep cash handy; some border posts don't have card facilities.
- Before you leave home, write down the serial number(s) of your camera, lenses, cellphone, GPS, etc. Print copies of this list and attach a copy to a customs declaration when required.
- A printout of your itinerary is occasionally requested at a checkpoint. Have a few ready in your Flip File.

MEDICAL

- First aid kit – as needed.
- Masks and sanitizer – just in case.
- Malaria – take precaution wherever you go. Consult with your GP.
- Medical insurance – good to have. Make sure your medical aid and/or insurance covers unexpected medical tests (e.g. for Covid), foreign hospitalisation, or evacuation.

PLAY IT SAFE

Crocodiles can be found in all of Botswana's rivers, plus those in neighbouring Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Never linger by the water's edge. Keep children well away from the river. Hippos like to mow the lawns of campsites at night – use a torch when you trundle to the bathroom.

Crime is everywhere. Behave as you do at home: Leave someone with your vehicle when you stop in a town to do shopping. Tourists make for easy targets.

- Yellow fever vaccination – not compulsory, but outbreaks do occur.

MONEY

- Notify your bank that you'll be using your credit and debit cards outside of South Africa.
- Your bank cards won't be accepted everywhere. Make sure you have some cash, especially at filling stations.
- Use local ATMs to draw currency like pula (Botswana) and kwacha (Zambia). You can use rands in Namibia and US dollars in Zimbabwe and Zambia.

THRIFTY TRAVEL

- Cellphone. Save money on roaming charges by buying a local SIM card for your phone. Buy a data package so you can WhatsApp your friends.
- Internet. Most places you'll stay at will have free Wi-Fi.
- Drive slowly. This will keep your fuel consumption low. Speeding fines can also make an unexpected dent in your budget.



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THE MEAT QUESTION

There have been repeated cases of foot-and-mouth disease in South Africa in recent years, making it illegal to import any raw meat from SA to Botswana or Namibia. Rather buy meat at a good supermarket or butchery once you've crossed into Botswana. It's widely available and of good quality.

VETERINARY CONTROL POINTS

These control points might have two stop signs – stop at both and proceed only when the official waves you along. Your vehicle might be searched, usually only when you leave an area in the north of the country with foot-and-mouth disease, like when you're travelling south from Kasane to Nata or east from Maun to Gweta. Meat, vegetables, fruit and dairy are sometimes confiscated.



TOAST COETZER

COMPULSORY PAPERWORK

- **Passport with more than two blank pages;** valid for six months or more. South Africans don't need a visa to visit Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe or Zambia.
- **Vehicle registration documents** – copies will do. Remember your trailer's documents, too.
- **Letter of authorisation from the bank** if you're still paying off your vehicle, or from the owner of the car if you're borrowing one. This should specify the dates you intend to take the vehicle across the border, countries you plan to visit, the registration number, and the physical address, ID number and name of the owner.
- **Unabridged birth certificates for all children under 18,** unless your kids have new passports which now list parents' names in the back. If your children have these new passports, you don't need to bring birth certificates along.
- **SA driving licence.** Have it ready for presentation at checkpoints.



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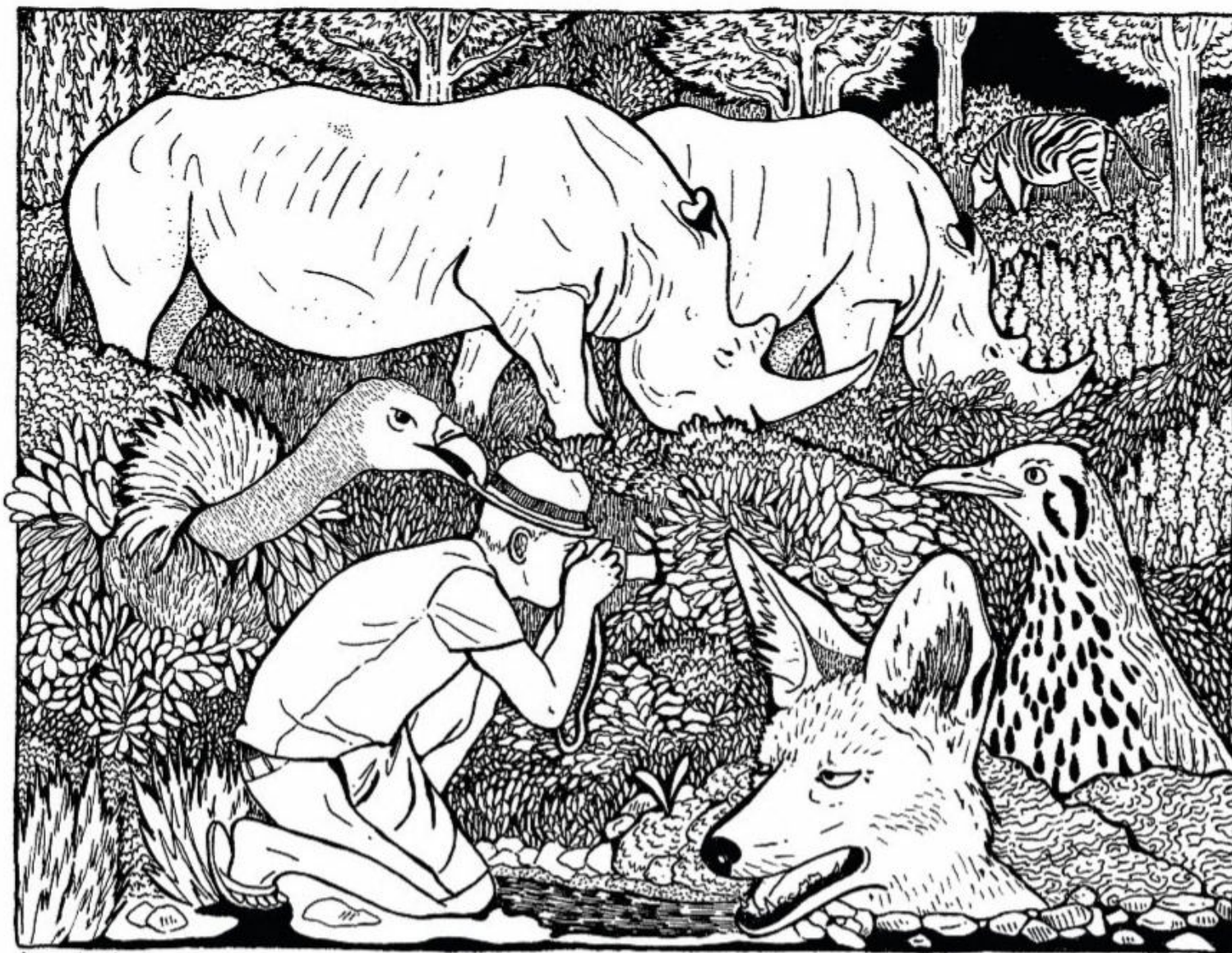
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Good Khama

Having grown up in Serowe, **Leanne Rencken** has visited the nearby Khama Rhino Sanctuary for more than three decades. In January, she went back for her birthday...

You know that scene at the beginning of *The Lion King*, when the sun is rising, the music swells, and all the animals start making their way to the waterhole to hear Mufasa's big announcement? Well, every year on my birthday, I try to re-enact that scene at the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, just outside Serowe.

In my case, though, the sun is usually setting, the soundtrack is less Elton John and more birdsong, and there are no lions or elephants in the gathering ensemble. My latest return

– in January 2022 – was the most magical yet. There was just a little bit extra in the air!

I grew up in Serowe and the rhino sanctuary was quite literally my family's backyard. My mom Patty still boasts about the full moon nights she spent as a young girl with her older siblings, trying (mostly failing) to catch spring hares around Serwe Pan. At that time, in the 1950s and 1960s, before it became a cattle post, this area served as a communal hunting ground,

conveniently situated along the old Maun Road. My grandfather was born in 1900 in Old Palapye, about 90km east of Serowe, and for many years he worked as a veterinary officer traversing the country on horseback. He eventually settled in Serowe with his wife and children and they opened a general dealer.

Over the years, Serwe Pan was incorporated into a cattle post and later purchased by the Serowe community, who were determined to create the rhino sanctuary.

This all started to happen in

1989, when I was 11 years old. I remember the buzz as my parents, aunts, uncles and other members of the community worked together to put their long-talked-about plans into place to create a safe haven for rhino.

In 1992, the land board allocated Serwe Pan and its surrounds to the Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust, and the first four white rhinos arrived. Many more came over the years, and even a couple of black rhino. I remember the bomas being built, and the snorting dust storms that accompanied the animals.

My two brothers and I, and a handful of cousins, were all at boarding school in Pietersburg (now Polokwane) while this was going on. At the end of term, we'd be collected from school in an old Toyota Dyna truck. The cargo bed would be covered in mattresses and we'd load as many friends into the back as possible for the holidays. The main attraction, as always, was visiting the still-under-construction rhino sanctuary.

Since then, the rhino numbers have grown and the sanctuary has grown, too. It's now spread across about 90km² of Kalahari sandveld. Besides the rhino, the plains game and the odd transitory elephant, there are also more than 230 bird species to look for. I'm partial to the dour but delightful marabou stork, and on the other end of the beauty scale, I've been lucky enough to encounter a flock of flamingos. Khama is truly a birthday gift that keeps on giving – a remarkable place, always teeming with life.

Even so, I had low expectations for my latest birthday visit to the sanctuary. It was early January 2022 and the middle of a very wet summer. The bush was green and lush, which was great for the bush, but not so great for spotting animals.

My safari companions included my boyfriend Brendan, my mom, and my brother Warrick. We'd put out the word to various aunts and uncles living in Serowe, and our plan was to drive around the park before heading to the pan to meet them. This was a typical arrangement, and to keep with tradition we would reverse in, lower the tail gates, set up our potluck picnic, put out the camping chairs and make the most of the sunset.

As soon as we drove through the thatched gate, my muscle memory kicked in. I started to get excited – for myself and for Brendan, who'd only visited the sanctuary once before. I navigated my nostalgia as we hit the familiar dirt tracks and drove past the campsites underneath the mokongwa trees (also known as manketti trees). Eventually I shrugged off my doubts – I had a feeling this birthday was going to be very special.

I prefer not to be impala-ist. I enjoy watching the family dynamics in the herd, so I'm never dismissive when we inevitably come across a group of them at the beginning of a game drive – they always make for a sweet welcoming committee.

Other sightings soon started rolling in: a lone white rhino, a herd of zebra with foals, their friends the wildebeest, a steenbok, a warthog and more rhinos – in small crashes; adults and young ones.

We spent a few minutes staring through our binos into very dense bush, trying to make sense of something hopping around furiously. It turned out to be a couple of energetic crimson-breasted shrikes.

Soon we were stopped on the road by a head popping out of a hole in the ground. Two black-backed jackals had denned down into what was probably an old aardvark hole, and they weren't in a hurry to get out of our way. We watched them for a while.

The pause meant that we were not the first to get to the pan – the rest of the family was already there, and so were the lanky giraffe, the rhino we'd already met along the way, ostriches, pronking springbok, a huddle of marabou, the wildebeest and zebra, and some open-billed storks in the water.

As we were observing all of this, tall drinks in hand, a swirl of vultures descended in slow circles. Ever since my dad passed away the year before, I've found myself looking for signs of his presence in my life, and I convinced myself that on this occasion, those stately vultures were it. Because it was my birthday, I wanted more than ever to have the feeling of him nearby, and I didn't mind what form he took – feather or fur.

I was entranced by the vultures. A white-backed vulture knows how to make a graceful entrance, and these guys kept things classy. The big birds landed in silhouette, one after the other, as the sun splashed out behind them.

The sky got even more dramatic as it grew darker. When the animals started leaving the waterhole, we decided to make our way home, too. We left in a convoy, but my family, Brendan and I were quite far behind, right at the back. Far enough that our headlights were all we could see – until a leopard stepped into the road!

We squealed, we bounced up and down in our seats! We kept checking in with each other, asking if it was real. And then it moved off the road and into the bush. There it stopped, turned, and paused. Just long enough for Brendan to get a grainy “proof of life” photo, and for me to realise that the leopard was actually my dad's unexpected delight, and my dad's distinctive, “Howzit, happy birthday!”

Sorry, vultures.

ANGOLA

NORTHERN BOTSWANA

NAMIBIA



BOTSWANA

Ngamiland District

Ghanzi District

Central Kalahari Game Reserve



SOUTHERN BOTSWANA





BOTSWANA

Central District

Kwaneng District

Khama Rhino Sanctuary

Kgatlung District

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Lentsweletau

Letlhakeng

Mochudi

Modipane

GABORONE

Gabane

Mabule

Rustenburg

Brits

Zeerust

Ramatlabama

Phitsane Molopo/Makgobistad

Vryburg

Klerksdorp

Potchefstroom

to Harrismith

to Bethal

to Emalaheni

to Bronkhorstspuit

to Mokopane

to Polokwane

to Gaborone

to Francistown

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Gaborone

to Wolmaransstad

to Kimberley

to Upington



Thunderbolts and lions

It's no tall tale when you hear someone boasting about how many big cats they saw in Mabuasehube. **Vic Ives** explored the furthest reaches of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and got rained on for his trouble.

We had a small campfire going with camel thorn wood. In the dusk, we watched thunderclouds gathering in the west, as our little blue and orange flames flickered defiantly. It was February: peak rainy season.

A slight breeze blew through our camp at Rooiputs. A jackal called. I looked over my shoulder to see where the call had come from. After spending a couple of weeks on the South African side of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, my partner Steph Perrin and I were now on the Botswanan side, where the campsites aren't fenced. Thrilling, but also a little scary...

Then the jackal appeared: a slender female. She looked at us, as if to ask: "Why aren't you braaiing yet?"

We were feeling thankful that we were now on the "wild" side of the park. What would this desert paradise have in store for us over the next week or so?

A lioness lurks in the tall summer grass near Rooiputs.

Opposite page, clockwise from the top: Iconic gemsbok silhouettes at sunset near Rooiputs. A springbok at Monamodi Pan in the Mabua section. Steph Perrin tends to the campfire at Mabua Pan while rain clouds gather in the background. A ground agama performs sentinel duty.

HOW IT WORKS

The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is unique in the sense that you can travel between the South African and Botswanan sides of the park without having to get your passport stamped.

However, should you wish to drive from the SA side to the Botswana side and exit the park there to continue your journey in Botswana, you have to go through immigration at the Twee Rivieren/Two Rivers border post. Likewise, if you've been travelling elsewhere in Botswana and you enter the park via the Mabuasehube or Kaa sections and then proceed to the South African side and exit via Twee Rivieren, then you must also go through immigration at the Twee Rivieren/Two Rivers border.

You have to stay at least two nights within the park if you plan to transit in this way.

Easing into it

Getting campsite bookings on the Botswanan side of the Kgalagadi isn't as straightforward as on the South African side. We were lucky to get a couple of nights at Rooiputs and Two Rivers. Rooiputs is about 24 km from the main gate at Twee Rivieren, on the route going north towards Nossob.

It's a basic campsite with six stands, each of which has an A-frame shelter. We were booked for two nights at number five (booking code: KT-ROI-5) and two nights at number one (KT-ROI-1). Running water in the Botswana campsites is a luxury, and at Rooiputs we enjoyed being able to have a cold shower after a hot day out. Since there's no hot water, you make your own. We used a simple bucket system: We boiled a kettle of water on the fire and then added cold water to get to the right temperature.

Rooiputs Lodge is near the campsite, and other campers complained that you can see some of the lodge infrastructure. But this didn't bother us. We appreciated the fact that one of the lodge staff came to check on us every evening.

Game-viewing options are excellent from Rooiputs because you have access to all the roads on the South African side of the park. There were two huge male lions patrolling the Nossob riverbed every morning, and we saw a female cheetah with two sub-adult cubs, making sure to stay well clear of the lions... Herds of springbok enjoyed all the greenery, so too the ever-present gemsbok. Wildebeest frolicked in mud pools left behind by the thunderstorms, and we saw plenty of reptiles like Cape cobras, puff adders and lots of leopard tortoises. The desert was teeming with life.

Two Rivers campsite was our next stop, barely a kilometre from the park reception – just out of sight over a dune.

There are four campsites, and we were booked at KT-TWR-01. There was cold running water at the ablution block, but the showers and long drop toilets were in disrepair: missing toilet seats, broken tiles, ceiling boards falling in, broken taps... We

decided to use our own bucket shower as the facilities were poor. Other than this, we enjoyed the camp even though it was not nearly as wild as Rooiputs.

Twee Rivieren next door (on the SA side) can get very busy, but Two Rivers isn't the most popular camp so there was nobody else around – more peace and quiet for us! Also, on the Botswana side you don't have to get your permit signed every morning before departing on your game drive, so we could skip the queue and be off earlier.

A perk of being so close to the entrance gate was that we could pop out to Kgalagadi Lifestyle Lodge (about 6 km down the road) to enjoy a restaurant meal, Wi-Fi and aircon. They also have a little shop that we found to be well stocked with fresh vegetables, basic groceries, liquor and firewood.

Tshabong, via Upington

We spent five nights between Rooiputs and Two Rivers, but now it was time for the properly wild side of the park – the Mabuasehube section.

During our visit, Covid restrictions were still in place and the Twee Rivieren border post wasn't open. (*Things are back to normal now.* – Ed.) This meant that we couldn't enter the park from South Africa, drive through and exit into Botswana.

Luckily, the Gemsbok/Bokspits border post close to Askham was open, so we used it to enter Botswana. (We also had issues with a broken battery terminal on our Toyota Land Cruiser, so we first had to drive to Upington to have it fixed.)

The Gemsbok/Bokspits border post was a breeze. The Botswana officials were just so happy to see tourists. With only a cucumber lost in the battle with the customs official, we were through both sides within an hour.

A long and windy tar road took us past beautiful sand dunes to our left and the Molopo River to our right, to the bustling town of Tshabong – about 265 km further. It was sweltering hot, with temperatures

in excess of 40° C. School had just come out and the streets of Tshabong were lined with friendly schoolchildren walking home. Unfortunately, the power was out in town, so we couldn't refuel or draw money from the ATM. Our booking on the Mabuasehube side of the park was last-minute and we therefore still had to pay for our camping, which would be done in cash at the gate.

A couple of hours passed and eventually the power came back on. We hurried through the shops, found an ATM and filled up the Cruiser, as this would be our last chance to do so. You need to plan carefully as there's no fuel on the Botswana side of the park. Be conservative and remember that your tyre pressure will be lower, and you'll be driving through thick sand, both of which will increase your fuel consumption.

From Tshabong to Entrance Gate (the name of the eastern gate of Mabua) the distance of 110km is divided into 55 km of gravel and 55 km of sand. We left Tshabong at around 4 pm and I was getting a little nervous as the park gate would close at 7 pm. The road condition varied from bad corrugations to deep patches of sand, and some rough patches of calcrete. We saw less and less cow dung as we got closer to the park, indicating that we were leaving the farming areas behind. A massive thunderstorm started releasing heavy drops onto the windscreen. What a relief it was after a stinking hot day to feel those cold drops hitting my forearm!

The last 20km section was through heavy sand. It was very soft and it threw the car around a bit. We were driving in 4WD high range, keeping up the momentum, and with soft hands on the steering we managed to get through without a hitch.

Mabua or bust

The sun was just setting when we arrived at Entrance Gate. With a quick and friendly word at the gate (we arranged to return the next morning to pay our fees), we headed off to our first campsite at Monamodi. Lightning jolted from towering clouds all



Opposite page, clockwise from the top: This lioness came right into Vic and Steph's camp at Mpayathutlwa. Sylvester Mokara is the park warden at Entrance Gate. A family of meerkats catch the last light at Monamodi Pan. These marks were made by a leopard as it dragged its kill through the campsite at Mpayathutlwa.

around as the skies turned to gold.

Monamodi only has two campsites – we were booked into number one (KT-MON-01). As if the day hadn't been long enough, when we got to our site it was occupied! I walked up to the folks sitting around the fire. It was very awkward – they knew they were in the wrong, but nobody got up to talk to me. Eventually there was a mumbled excuse and an offer of a brandy and coke... I was over it, so I kindly declined and said we'd sort it out in the morning. Slightly annoyed, we drove down to the pan and camped there for the night.

The next morning, we drove back to the gate to check if there was a double booking for the site we were supposed to be on. As I expected, there wasn't. Sylvester Mokara, the friendly warden we spoke to, has worked in the park since 2009. He told us that a nasty trend has developed, where people arrive at the park without an official booking, and then say they'll camp at Entrance Gate, which is less popular and therefore usually has space. But they don't camp there – they drive around looking for the better campsites and if there's nobody there by sunset, they settle in. Hopefully this will not become the norm in the future.

We went for a drive around Monamodi Pan and saw two hyenas trotting across the pan. When we got back from our drive our squatter friends had vacated the site, leaving us some beer bottle tops to clean up.

The two sites at Monamodi are spaced far enough apart that you don't get to see your neighbours. Number two is bigger than number one, with more space for off-road caravans or trailers. Number one has an old motopi (shepherd's) tree, which provides good shade and a partial view of the pan. The sites have those typical Botswana A-frame structures, which provide shelter and some sense of safety. Both sites have water, but only number two has a shower and a toilet. Again, we were perfectly fine with our bucket shower.

We had a relaxing afternoon and sat in the shade until it cooled down enough for a drive. Down at the little waterhole next

to the pan, we saw white-backed vultures, blue waxbills, a crimson-breasted shrike, kori bustards, lanner falcons, turtle doves, banded mongooses and more tortoises.

That evening's sunset was like a gift that kept on giving. We were in awe of how the light kept changing as the sun slid behind the thunderclouds. We made a fire and cooked dinner with barking geckos and hyenas calling in the distance.

The next morning, we made brunch on the fire and sat under the shade of our motopi tree. There was so much to see in and around camp. Little critters like geckos and lizards appeared out of nowhere. Butterflies were lured to the moisture on the ground under the tap. We saw dung beetles, corn crickets and grasshoppers. Yellow-billed hornbills came looking for scraps and fork-tailed drongos kept a quiet eye on us.

A short drive close to sunset yielded a family of meerkats – what a highlight it was spending time with these magnificent creatures!

Lion country

The next day we were off to Mpayathutlwa, or Mpaya as it's more commonly known, about 15 km away. The great thing about this eastern part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park is that it has several campsites that are all relatively close together (10 – 15 km on average) and always next to a pan or two, which is where you see most game. Yet, at the same time, you can spend a whole day out driving and not see a single other car.

Mpaya is one of the bigger pans in Mabuasehube, with a working waterhole that is visited regularly by lions, jackals and birds of prey. It has two campsites (plus an overflow site) and we were booked at number two (KT-MPA-02). Arriving there, we immediately discovered some leopard tracks. Not only that, but a leopard track that indicated the cat had been dragging something right through our campsite!

The tracks were small, and we had heard that a mother and a cub were seen in the area, so we concluded it was a female.

PARK FEES

P20 (R27) per person per day;
P4 (R5) per vehicle per day. See
page 89 for accommodation
booking details.

She must have killed the night before and dragged it into a tree nearby.

Sylvester the warden had also told us about a female lion that had been caught on a cattle farm. She'd been brought to the park and put inside a boma just to the north of Mpaya for a couple of weeks, to get used to her surroundings. We drove there to have a look. There were three male lions circling the boma as they were very intrigued by the new lady in the neighbourhood. Apparently, they'd spent the whole night roaring for her attention – and the whole day passed out in the shade!

Park authorities planned to release her in the park after she settled in. (*This was done not long after Vic's visit in February 2020. – Ed.*) It was good to see that there was effort made to save the so-called “problem” animals, rather than just getting rid of them. Who knows, this lioness could be mothering a new generation of cubs in Mabua by now?

We made our customary campfire at sunset and Steph was busy getting ready for an early dinner. Steak salad was on the menu, and as she walked to the tap to rinse the lettuce something caught my eye. Steph and a huge lioness were walking straight towards each other! The only problem was Steph hadn't seen the lion...

I yelled out urgently, calling Steph to slowly get back to the Cruiser. Adrenaline was pumping – the lioness was metres away from her. Luckily, both Steph and the lion stayed calm.

While Steph made her way back to the car, the lion crouched and almost disappeared with only her eyes and ears visible. We got into the Land Cruiser. Relief! The lioness immediately got up from the grass and walked to the tap to look for water.

What we didn't know was that the previous campers had left water out deliberately – a 5-litre water bottle had been cut open, planted in the sand and filled with water. The lioness wasn't afraid of us at all – she was simply thirsty. When she was done drinking, she slunk off, never to be seen again.

It will remain a vivid memory for





Fuel: Plan your trip well and have enough fuel for game drives, plus some extra. There's no fuel in (or close to) the Botswana section of the park. On the South African side, Nossob, Mata-Mata and Twee Rivieren rest camps have fuel.

Tyre pressure: On the gravelly bits, we stuck to around 1.8–2 bar, but as soon as we got into thicker sand, we reduced tyre pressure to 1.5 bar or even lower. Test your vehicle beforehand so you're familiar with how it handles in sandy terrain.

Sand driving: Driving with soft hands on the steering wheel is better than clutching it hard and reacting jerkily to every movement your car makes. Try to avoid making any sharp turns with low tyre pressures. If you get stuck, don't panic, and try not to dig yourself in even more. Try to reverse out and approach with a bit more momentum.

Shower: We used a portable 12V Companion USB rechargeable shower that packs into a bucket. It costs R529 from [takealot.com](https://www.takealot.com)

Water: Don't rely on there being any water in the camps. We have a 67-litre water tank on the vehicle and that worked fine for us. Budget for at least 5 litres of drinking water per person per day. Do not compromise on drinking water – stay hydrated!

Grass net: Make sure to have a seed/grass net in your kit, as the grass in the middelmanetjie of the tracks can be quite long at certain times of the year.

TWO RIVERS CAMPSITE #1



Steph, as it was her first really close lion encounter. After we'd recovered, we continued to prepare dinner, with a wary eye on the outskirts of the camp. We ate, packed up and went to bed early.

Later that night, Steph woke me. She'd heard a licking noise. We switched on our lights and found the leopard had also come for a drink!

What an introduction to Mpaya – camps like these really make you feel alive.

The next morning, we sat at the little waterhole on the pan. It wasn't long before the first flocks of Namaqua sandgrouse came flying in. It was like someone had flicked a switch to signal that it was their turn to come for a drink. They came in their thousands.

We watched as they landed, drank and dipped their chest feathers to take water back to the nests. They disappeared as quickly as they'd arrived and made way for some secretarybirds and a brown snake-eagle. It wasn't long before one of the big male lions we'd seen at the boma made his way down in style, swaying his magnificent black mane.

We spent our last night at Mpaya's overflow campsite, which has no facilities other than one motopi tree for shade. There were plenty of ticks, probably because this stand was covered in grass, unlike the other stands which are cleared and have sand underfoot.

It's a challenging campsite, but there are great views of the pan itself. We enjoyed a beer while looking at a big herd of springbok on the pan.

The male lions roared around the boma again as the sun set on our last day in Mabuasehube. We felt blessed and privileged to be in such a vast and beautiful place.

We went to bed early, but the desert had one more surprise for us... We woke with white flashes and booming all around as an almighty thunderstorm unleashed its fury. It was too late to get out of our rooftop tent and pack up; we had to sit it out.

It was terrifying. Raindrops pelted down from all sides and violent winds shook the Cruiser and the tent. We felt very exposed in that campsite as we were probably the highest point around. Steph was getting more anxious as the thunder and lightning got closer, and we were feeling claustrophobic with all the tent windows zipped up tight. Although it felt like an eternity, the storm lasted only about an hour, and by 11.30pm we could safely get out of the tent. Water stood ankle-deep around the vehicle. What a goodbye!

The Botswana side of the Kgalagadi is always humbling. If you're up for a bit of adventure and you're into wilderness camping, this is the place for you. Respect this landscape, though, because Mother Nature will very quickly put you back in your place.



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The last ferry to Seronga

A new bridge across the Okavango River at the northern end of the Panhandle has opened up the eastern side to commerce and tourism. Before the first cars were allowed across, **Toast Coetzer** lined up for one of the final ferry rides.

My car drives up the ramp with a clank and a young attendant directs me to a parking spot. Minutes later, the ferry's diesel engines roar with extra oomph and we pull away from the bank. Soon we're taking a diagonal course across the Okavango River. It's a wide expanse of water – no wonder the locals here in Mohembo and nearby Shakawe talk about going “overseas” when you take the ferry from the western side to the eastern side.

The eastern side is very different to the western side. From Mohembo, the Okavango

floodplain widens, forming the so-called Okavango Panhandle, which eventually spreads out into the vast Okavango Delta from Seronga southwards.

There's a tar road on the western side of the Panhandle (albeit a decrepit one), but the eastern side has always been geographically cut off from major infrastructure. The people who live in the small villages on that side have struggled to access schools, shops and better-equipped medical facilities that a town like Shakawe on the western side offers.



The new 1,2 km-long bridge over the Okavango River at Mohembo was built in collaboration with Italian contractors.



Opposite page, clockwise from the top: The Mohembo ferry gets ready to dock on the eastern bank of the Okavango River. “OT” Motswai of Supercool Kiosk, next to the road in Gunotsoga, east of Seronga. You’ll see southern ground hornbills everywhere in the Okavango Delta. Lucas Moses crouches in one of the “caves” at Red Cliffs near Carmine Rivercamp. Go on a game drive with guide Baruti Tlale of Jumbo Junction.

Sitting on the stoep at Jumbo Junction gives you a beautiful view over this ephemeral waterway...

For a long time, you could only cross the river by boat, or on the government ferry, which often broke down. In 2022, that all changed – a road bridge was finally completed across the Okavango here at Mohembo. (*Toast travelled there in May; the bridge was opened to traffic on 24 June. – Ed.*)

As the ferry chugs across the water, covering the 750m downriver journey to the other side, I get out of my car to admire the 1,2km-long bridge. This type of structure is called a cable-stayed bridge and the pylons that hold up the cables look like elephant tusks. It’s quite beautiful, even if the massive structure looks out of place in this rural landscape.

The ferry starts to slow down as the pilot lines up our mooring spot. The pedestrian passengers gather their bags – they’ll be the first to get off, followed by the six vehicles.

I carefully drive off the ferry – another clank or two – and up the embankment to the road. From here, it’s a 100km drive along a dusty gravel road to Seronga. I’m aiming for a lodge called Jumbo Junction, which is 23km beyond Seronga.

My Subaru Forester is packed with camping gear but I always keep a seat free for hitchhikers. While waiting for the ferry back in Mohembo, I was approached by Ame Bareelwang carrying her baby, and by Kingman Tanago, who did most of the talking. I promised Kingman that I would give them a lift to wherever they needed to go once we got off the ferry. Ame and her baby get off not far down the road, but Kingman and I drive through several more villages before he indicates where he wants to hop off.

The landscape varies: There are overgrazed areas close to villages, where goats, cattle and donkeys roam; and there are sections of bush where I spot the odd dry pat of elephant dung. A chicken might dash across the road in front of you while a scythe-like bateleur circles above.

Occasionally, to my right, the Okavango floodplain is revealed. The road is elevated here, giving you views you never really get on the western side of the Panhandle.

I’ve been to Seronga before, but only by boat: A few years ago, I spent a couple of nights on a houseboat that used Seronga as a base – the passengers were dropped off there for an outing one morning. Today I cruise through town and take a left turn into what for me is *terra incognita*.

The road gets worse, but it’s nothing my car can’t handle. When I eventually reach the turn-off to Jumbo Junction, I stop to deflate my tyres a touch, since the final kilometre goes through deep sand.

Arriving at the lodge, I’m welcomed by manager Henry Kangooutui, who shows me to my chalet. At reception, I briefly meet a group of South Africans connected to an organisation called Wild Graze – they work with local herders to improve their livelihoods and to minimise conflict with wild animals like elephants and lions. They’re off to spend the night at a cattle post somewhere, which means I’m the only guest.

Jumbo Junction is on the northern edge of the Okavango Delta, overlooking a concession called NG 12. (NG stands for Ngamiland, the region I’m in.) It’s a drier part of the Delta – the water that does come past eventually drains to the north-east, into the Selinda Spillway, which, in good years connects the Delta system to the Linyanti swamps and the Chobe River beyond. Sitting on the stoep at Jumbo Junction gives you a beautiful view over this ephemeral waterway – dry at times, but about knee-deep at the moment.

I’m treated to a fine dinner of chicken, potato and salad, and after a couple of G&Ts poured by barman Mmika Mahadiro, I head to bed. I’ve got an exciting day tomorrow: a game drive in the Okavango Delta!

Dazed by the Delta

After a quick breakfast, I’m taken to an informal boat station where a flat-bottomed aluminium boat (about 5m long) is being loaded with supplies for



Opposite page, clockwise from top left: The white, dusty road to Seronga passes through several villages, where the only traffic is usually donkey carts and Land Cruisers. A donkey foal rests in the road. Zebras – along with lechwes and blue wildebeest – are the most common game in the Okavango. After giving him a lift, Seyave Shatwika gifted Toast eight pumpkins.

African jacanas, lesser jacanas and various other aquatic birds take flight as we approach. This is a boring work commute for the other passengers, but for me it's magic.

a lodge: everything from beer and Ricoffy to packets of flour and chips. (Don't worry, they remembered the Pringles!) I get onto a second boat with a handful of passengers – all from the nearby village of Gunotsoga, heading to work at Kadizora Camp.

What follows is an exhilarating half-hour, 8 km journey through channels so narrow I constantly have to duck for grass and reeds swaying across our path. African jacanas, lesser jacanas and various other aquatic birds take flight as we approach. This is a boring work commute for the other passengers, but for me it's magic. We even pass some hippos.

I've been in contact with the managers at Kadizora Camp, Greg and Sue Flaxman, and I've organised a full-day game drive in the concession. My guide, Baruti Tlale, is waiting in a Land Cruiser when we arrive at the camp.

Baruti is my companion for the rest of the day as we explore large tracts of the concession. Besides many zebra, wildebeest and red lechwe, we also see elephant, hippo, waterbuck, sable, giraffe, tsessebe, warthog, kudu, impala and even a couple of lions.

Baruti has a beautiful, kind smile and he's so patient. He's willing to stop whenever I need to take a photo or study a bird. He grew up in the Delta, where his family fished for a living.

"My grandfather taught me about the tracks and the droppings of animals," he tells me as we sit quietly next to the lions, waiting for them to stir from their slumber. "When I was 12, he also taught me how to use a mokoro. I had to pole from island to island, collecting bundles of thatch grass. The whole family helped with this task because we re-thatched our houses every six months."

It's this intimate knowledge of the landscape that makes spending time with a good guide like Baruti so worthwhile. Thanks to him, my bird sightings for the day include everything from raptors like Ovambo sparrowhawk, African hawk-eagle, secretarybird and lappet-faced

vulture, to pygmy geese, glossy ibis, wattled crane and – my favourite bird – southern ground hornbill.

It's late in the afternoon when Baruti drops me back at Kadizora. I meet Greg and Sue, the camp managers, and also one of the owners, Roni McFarlane, who has come up from Maun. Roni tells me about the potential of this part of Botswana. Apparently, the completion of the bridge at Mohembo is part of a long-term plan to connect this lost "overseas" part of the country with the popular tourist areas to the east of Seronga: Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park. Once the road network from Mohembo to Seronga and further east is improved, tourists might one day be able to travel right around the entire Okavango Delta, which will relieve pressure on the popular parks.

I learn later that there's even talk of a new border post with Namibia, which might allow you to drive from Seronga north-east to the Namibian border and cross near the Kwando River into Bwabwata National Park. It's pie-in-the-sky stuff right now, but just imagine!

I'm back on my transit boat to Jumbo Junction and the sun is low on the horizon. The cool evening air whips across my face, where a big smile is plastered. I'm in a Delta daze and it feels great!

Back to the Panhandle

The Delta might be one of Botswana's most famous destinations, but it's also famously exclusive. Plus, you have to fly in from Maun since most Delta camps can't be accessed by private vehicles.

By staying at Jumbo Junction, I've managed to tap into some of this exclusivity at a fraction of the price. Thanks to the bridge, this side of the Okavango Panhandle is opening up; places like Jumbo Junction will soon become a fixture on self-drive itineraries in the area.

My "overseas" holiday is a short one. I would have liked nothing more than to spend another day or three hanging out





Henry Kangootui
Manager, Jumbo Junction

This part of the Okavango Delta, where Jumbo Junction is situated, is very different from places like Moremi and Chobe. We have the same birdlife and wildlife, but we offer a quieter, more private experience. If you go out on a game drive, you might see two or three other vehicles – in Moremi you'll see 20!

You can also get to us by car – you can drive all the way from Cape Town to Jumbo Junction, even in a small car. The roads get a bit muddy during summer when it rains, but usually they're not too bad.

We have amazing, loyal staff at the lodge – people who came in during Covid even when we didn't have guests. The best thing to do here is a mokoro trip. We offer trips to an island for lunch. You haven't been to the Delta if you haven't been in a mokoro!

in Jungle Junction's restaurant area, with a big plunger of coffee and binoculars ready to scan the floodplain, but I have to turn back.

It's a Sunday. When I drive into Seronga, only a few pedestrians and the odd dozing donkey stir in the streets. I drive down to the water, where the houseboat docked last time I was here. I stroll out onto the jetty and suddenly a head pops up between the water lilies: a spotted-necked otter! I wait for it to peek out again, this time holding my camera, but it's gone for good.

There are precious few lodges and camps on this side of the Panhandle. My next stop, Carmine Rivercamp, isn't even officially open yet. Nonetheless, owner Charlie Katsch has invited me to come and look at his setup. About 53 km from Seronga, I see a yellow smiley face sign, which indicates where I must turn. The sandy track is so faint that I hesitate before following it. But sure enough, after 3 km, I come upon an almost magical clearing in the bush where Charlie is waiting.

Charlie hopes to be open for business in 2023, once he's jumped through all the administrative hoops. There's a lot to like about Carmine Rivercamp – it's high on the riverbank, which gives you views over the main channel and papyrus beds, all the way to the distant Tsodilo Hills, visible on a clear day some 47 km away.

It's late in the afternoon and Charlie takes me out on the river to see Red Cliffs – a high section of riverbank where carmine bee-eaters (and other bee-eater species) make their nests. This part of the river is also a popular fishing spot. I try my luck at tiger-fishing and get a few bites, but nothing stays on the line.

Early in the evening, while Charlie bustles around the kitchen preparing me a delicious meal, I stand outside just as a bright meteorite whooshes overhead. Never mind not catching a tiger fish! To add to the magic of my short stay, I'm also here for a lunar eclipse. I wake early the next morning and photograph the

moon as it sets towards the west.

When the sun is up, Lucas Moses, who works for Charlie, takes me for a short walk to see a stretch of riverbank that Charlie and I noticed on the boat ride yesterday afternoon. Animals – everything from cattle to elephant – come to this section of the bank to eat soil, since it contains certain minerals their bodies need.

We see another spotted-necked otter and a few water monitors. It feels like I've stepped into a magical realm. When we reach the cave-like part of the riverbank where the minerals are found, an almost sacred hush descends. But Lucas seems extra circumspect – he tells me he's watching out for black mambas, which are apparently common here. I force myself to concentrate properly under all the dark overhangs...

On my return to the ferry, I pick up Seyave Shatwika who's heading back home to Mohembo. We have to wait a while for the ferry to arrive, but Seyave is unperturbed. For people like him, who have relatives "overseas" and on the more connected western side, this wait has been part of his life for decades. But now there's a modern, white bridge looming over us. It's a good thing, Seyave says, because it will make family visits easier, and it will improve access to goods and other services.

For the ferry, it's the end of an era. This is sad for romantic-minded travellers like me, but there's no denying that the bridge will bring a brighter future to the region. "Overseas" is now right next door.

I drop Seyave at his home in Mohembo and he tells me to wait – he has a gift for me. It turns out to be eight gifts: big pumpkins that I'll eat for weeks to come, even when I'm back in South Africa. Each bite brings back memories of Seyave and the other people who live in this beautiful part of Botswana.

For places to stay along the western and eastern sides of the Okavango Panhandle, see pages 104 – 105



Charlie Katsch

Owner, Carmine Rivercamp

During dry times, we've seen herds of up to 150 elephant moving along this side of the Okavango. When it starts raining again, they disappear into the bush and drink from the temporary pools that form. In 2017, I had a few bulls here in camp, shaking the pods from the camel thorn trees.

I first came to this area in 2006. I was farming in Namibia at the time and I always thought it would be great to have a camp on the eastern side of the Panhandle. In 2009, I secured a piece of land. It has been a long process since then – getting all the necessary government approvals – but I hope to be open for business in 2023.

We're in a great location because of the views over the Panhandle, and because we're right on the main channel of the Okavango. We always have water and we can run mokoro trips year-round, unlike some camps in the Delta where the water dries up from time to time.

I love making food. When I came here, we started planting a garden. The first three trees were limes – for the G&Ts – a grapefruit tree for breakfast, and an olive tree so we could have olives for salads and pizzas. Since then, we've also established bananas, pawpaws, granadillas and lots of vegetables. I plan to expand and put up some tunnels and grow stuff like cucumbers, which I'll sell at the market in Serowe or to other lodges.

We use elephant dung as fertiliser, which is really excellent. I have a deal with some of the cattle farmers nearby. I bring them water with the bakkie – because they don't have enough water at their settlements – and they fill up the bakkie with elephant dung, which they collect for me in the veld when they're out with their livestock.



Greg and Sue Flaxman, Managers, Kadizora Camp

Greg: *We're originally from Zimbabwe but we lived in Pretoria for nearly 30 years. We were keen for a lifestyle change and started looking into lodge management.*

Sue: *I've always had a passion for food so I did a chef's course about 10 years ago. That set things in motion. People often get jobs like this as a 'management couple' – it helps if you're a bookkeeper or a chef, to complement the general running of the camp.*

Greg: *During my job interview, I was asked: 'So, if you have to change the water pump on a 4.2-litre diesel Land Cruiser, would you know how to do it?' I didn't, but at least I knew where the water filter was!*

Sue: *And I was asked: 'Do you know how to roast a chicken?' I went back home and compiled a great menu, which Greg printed nicely because he had a printing business back then, and we got the job soon after.*

Greg: *We drove up here and arrived on 27 December 2014. At the time, you could drive all the way to the lodge. That changed about three years ago – a channel re-opened and we now have water around*

us throughout the year. We got a bit lost, and they sent out a game viewer to come find us. . .

Sue: *. . . We followed the game viewer and there were so many zebras. The migration was happening and they galloped alongside our car. I felt like Meryl Streep in Out of Africa! I was intimidated and wondered if we could do this job, but we soon got the hang of things.*

Greg: *We treat Kadizora Camp as if it's our home and we're having lots of guests over for dinner.*

Sue: *We eventually managed to get our beloved sausage dogs, Douglas and Cecil, out here. They love it and they live an adventurous life. Five days ago, a leopard killed a warthog under the deck area. We didn't know until Cecil ran in there and a small, spotted thing ran out the other side. A staff member looked at the tracks and realised it was a leopard with her two cubs! The mom had left the cub with the dead warthog while she went out for the day. We had to strap Cecil and Dougie into their harnesses and tie them to the chairs in the kitchen for the rest of the day so they wouldn't run into mom. . .*

Birds of the Chobe

On a river cruise or in a vehicle, Chobe National Park offers excellent opportunities for bird photos. Three Kasane-based guides from Pangolin Photo Safaris share some of their best shots – and tips to get the same results.

PICTURES **SABINE STOLS, DANIELLE CARSTENS & CHARL STOLS**

➤ FISH-EAGLE, SABINE STOLS

GEAR: Canon 1DX Mark III; Canon EF 200 – 400 mm lens with a 1.4x extender

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/40 second; aperture f18; ISO 400

SABINE'S TIP: To blur or freeze? These are the two options you have when photographing a moving animal. A fast shutter speed freezes the action and leaves every part of the subject sharp, whereas a slow shutter speed can blur certain parts to emphasize movement and create a more dramatic image.

Why not do both? A panning shot executed correctly will result in a sharp subject and a blurry background. Pan your camera along with a moving subject while shooting continuously. Practise the sweeping motion beforehand so you know what to do when the opportunity arises in the wilderness. (Try it on cars driving past you.)

The tricky part – and crucial for success – is to match the speed of the pan to the speed of the subject in motion. This will ensure that at least some parts are sharp – like the head and talons of this fish-eagle – while the moving parts show blur.

Panning is a hit-and-miss technique. Keep trying until you nail it!





➤ **YELLOW-BILLED HORNBILL,
SABINE STOLS**

GEAR: Canon 1DX Mark II; Canon EF
200 – 400 mm lens with a 1.4x extender

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/320 second;
aperture f5.6; ISO 640

SABINE'S TIP: Eye contact in wildlife
photography is always great because it
creates a direct connection with the viewer
and the image is more powerful as a result.

Southern yellow-billed hornbills use
natural tree cavities to nest – these cavities
are easy to find because the male regularly
flies in and drops food into the narrow
opening. This nest in Savuti, in the south-
western part of Chobe, was conveniently
situated at eye-level with our vehicle, so I
could capture that special moment of eye
contact as the female watched us.





⬆ LAPPET-FACED VULTURES, SABINE STOLS

GEAR: Canon 1DX Mark II; Canon EF 200–400 mm lens with a 1.4x extender

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/2 500 second; aperture f4; ISO 200

SABINE'S TIP: In photography, an odd number of subjects is generally more appealing than an even number. Two will do, but three's a party, right?

These lappet-faced vultures were having a territorial dispute. Animal interaction immediately introduces an element of storytelling. The challenge is to avoid crucial parts being obscured, like the birds' faces. (In this case, a wing could easily have got in the way). Use burst mode and shoot, shoot, shoot. One of your shots will be the one!

⬇ AFRICAN SWAMPHEN, SABINE STOLS

GEAR: Canon EOS R3; Canon EF 600 mm lens

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/3 200 second; aperture f4; ISO 1 250

SABINE'S TIP: Anticipation is one of the greatest tools in wildlife photography. By spending time with your subject, you start learning behaviour patterns and you can anticipate them. It's always good practice to leave some open space towards the side of the frame that the animal is facing, as this will usually be its direction of movement.







◀ **RED-BILLED OXPECKER ON IMPALA, DANIELLE CARSTENS**

GEAR: Nikon D750; Nikon 300 mm lens with a 1.4x teleconverter

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/1 250 second; aperture f5.6; ISO 900

DANIELLE'S TIP: Try to capture your subject behaving in a way that is characteristic of its species. Oxpeckers, for example, are known for their symbiotic relationship with antelope like impala: The bird gets food, and the buck gets rid of parasites. Let your photo tell this story – it will make for a more captivating scene.

I sat patiently with this herd of impala and after a while I noticed that the oxpeckers were flying away with fur in their beaks and returning for more – they use the fur to line their nests. I noticed that a specific impala was targeted more frequently; I trained my camera on that one until I got my shot.

▲ **CARMINE BEE-EATER, DANIELLE CARSTENS**

GEAR: Canon EOS R6; Canon 100 – 400 mm lens

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/60 second; aperture f9; ISO 250

DANIELLE'S TIP: Rainy days can be great for wildlife photography. In this case, I used a slow shutter speed to capture the movement of the raindrops around the bee-eater. The rain streaks add that bit of creativity that elevates the photo beyond a conventional portrait.

To achieve this effect, it's advisable to use a tripod or a bean bag to stabilise your camera. And take note of your background: The dark green foliage here allowed the raindrops to stand out.

Try different settings – an even slower shutter speed will make the rain streaks longer, whereas a faster shutter speed will result in shorter streaks. Next time it rains, grab your waterproof camera cover and get shooting!



▲ YELLOW-BILLED STORKS, CHARL STOLS

GEAR: Canon EOS R3; Canon EF 400 mm lens

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/2 500 second; aperture f5.6; ISO 640

CHARL'S TIP: Winter is breeding time for yellow-billed storks. We find them in large numbers nesting in trees in the rapids of the Chobe River near Kasane. When it comes to feeding, these storks are very territorial and they don't like competition. What looks like a harmonious dance is actually a territorial fight!

Because I'd seen this behaviour before, I could anticipate it and get the shot. It starts with the birds raising their tail feathers and dropping their wings to display dominance, before they start jumping on each other until one of them surrenders and flies off.

▶ GREY CROWNED CRANES, CHARL STOLS

GEAR: Canon EOS 1D Mark III; Canon EF 600 mm lens

SETTINGS: Shutter speed 1/1 600 second; aperture f5.6; ISO 640

CHARL'S TIP: I generally make use of the rule of thirds – a composition technique where you put your subject one third from the edge of the frame, not right in the middle.

But there's always an exception to the rule! In this case, I opted to place the pair of cranes in the middle because of their near-perfect symmetry.

Grey crowned cranes are a rare sighting on the Chobe floodplains and I was chuffed with this shot.

JOIN A TRIP!

Pangolin Photo Safaris is based in Kasane and offers specialised boat-based photography excursions on the Chobe River. They also have a houseboat and a hotel, both of which cater to wildlife photographers.

pangolinphoto.com



Dumela, Central Kalahari

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve is one of the remotest and wildest parks in Africa. If you do a guided tour like **François Haasbroek** did, you can concentrate on enjoying the experience while Bhejane 4x4 takes care of the nerve-wracking stuff.



A herd of springbok on the road between Passarge and Deception valleys.



It's March when Phil van Wyk, tour leader at Bhejane 4x4 Adventures, and I arrive at Palm Afrique Lodge south of Ghanzi. This is where we'll meet up with the rest of our tour group before we set off on an eight-day camping trip to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR).

It's a hot night and I sit next to the swimming pool in a puddle of Wi-Fi, trying to finish all my admin before we head into the veld. Our host Sonia de Villiers walks over to ask whether I want to order something from the bar and we get talking.

"We're hoping for a little more rain before the dry season starts," she says.

I share Sonia's hope, but with one qualification: I hope the rain waits until *after* our trip, because a wet CKGR will make for "interesting" driving conditions...

It's still humid when I go to bed but the stars are out and I don't put the flysheet on my tent. Around 3 am, Sonia's wish comes true: A thunder crack wakes me and I hastily dig around for my headlamp to get my tent waterproof before the heavens open.

Turns out it would rain for seven days straight...

IN OTHER WORDS



Jim & Gail Hawkins, Hillcrest

We expected a desert – we were endlessly surprised by how green and wet the Kalahari was. The trip was amazing, but next time we'll enter the reserve from the Rakops side, because it gives easier access to the northern parts. The people on our tour made the experience so memorable. We can recommend Bhejane wholeheartedly.



Carel & Wyona van Dyk, Johannesburg

Carel: I organise hunting trips for my friends, so I know how much hard work goes into a tour like this. Bhejane is exceptional at what they do. You camp in comfort, the tents are clean, and the food is delicious, especially the pot bread! We even had red velvet cake, prepared over the coals, one evening.

Wyona uses a wheelchair and the Kalahari is not really wheelchair-friendly, but we knew that beforehand. My brother Chris and his sister Yolande helped us a lot. We wouldn't have been able to do this without them. If you'd like to do a similar tour with a special needs person in your party, bring a good team and do your research. We bought special tyres for Wyona's wheelchair to make it easier for her to move on sand.

DAY 1 Lekhubu Valley

Phil had planned to depart at 7 am, but we have to wait for the rain to abate. Eventually we head out at 9 am. Phil, tour guide Samunzala “Max” Matabakanyi and I are driving together in one vehicle. Max is from Botswana and he's here to help us get to know the landscape and its animals. Logistical problem number 1: We're in a Land Cruiser game-viewing vehicle, with luggage stacked on all the seats except the last row, which is where I'm sitting... Phil and Max have the cabin to protect them from the rain, but the canvas roof above my head collects water and I get soaked every time there's a bump in the road. And there are lots of bumps in the road!

The rest of the Bhejane team – Hansie Ruben, Stagga Lesitlamang and Jonno Mbwe – drive ahead of the main convoy every day so they can set up camp. On a Bhejane tour like this one, you don't need to hassle with your own tent. What a pleasure.

From Palm Afrique Lodge to the village of New Xade, it's 97 km along a good dirt road. After New Xade, the rain slows our progress and the next 70 km section to the Xade park gate into the CKGR is more challenging. We only arrive there at 3 pm.

There's a campsite at the gate, but no one wants to stay there – the generators that power the staff houses are noisy, and the ablution facilities have no water. They also seem to have an ant problem, which we find out when we have a late lunch in the campsite...

We'll have to push on to the campsite we booked: Letiahau, 121 km into the reserve. After a quick meal, we head north towards Piper Pan. The northern parts of the reserve are popular with tourists because there are more roads, more campsites and more animals. It's also due to the lay of the land: The south is so flat that you can't see much further than the first row of bushes. In the north, there are open plains and two ancient riverbeds – Passarge and Letiahau – where animals gather around pools of water.

We reach Piper Pan by 5 pm and the

clouds part to reveal a beautiful sunset. We still have 40 km to drive to Letiahau, and we'll be driving in the dark. Thank goodness for Hansie and the rest of the crew, who welcome us with delicious potjiekos and roosterkoek. It's been a long day. Everyone eats then hits the sack.

DAY 2–3 Passarge Valley

Most of the campsites in the reserve don't have any real facilities save for a braai and two timber shelters, one for the pit toilet and the other for the shower. (Bring your own bucket shower.)

Letiahau doesn't even have those. It's a wilderness camp, which basically means a clearing in the veld. The Bhejane team set up a bush toilet.

It rains again the next morning and we quickly break camp to find shelter in our vehicles. Today we're heading to Passarge Valley further north, but first we go back west on the route we drove yesterday.

We have lunch at Phokoje camp and the sun finally comes out. The jeep track is drenched – in places it looks like two rivers flowing through the grassland. There are some deep puddles, but nothing our Land Cruiser in low-range second gear can't handle.

We see two young lions basking in the sun near Phokoje, and we spot three cheetahs in the road near our campsite at Passarge 2. We crawl along slowly behind them. It's a female and her two adult cubs. Max stops the game viewer. “Look at her ears!” he whispers.

I didn't notice a change, but Max radios the convoy to tell them something is about to happen.

The three cheetahs sneak to a bush. They've noticed a herd of springbok grazing upwind. We watch as one springbok wanders closer to the cheetahs. One of the young males can't contain his excitement and lets out a sharp yip. The moment the springbok looks up, the female is off and she chases the antelope past our vehicles. Had the springbok been a few metres closer to the cheetahs, it would have been dinner.

Thanks to the cheetahs we arrive at our next camp at nightfall again. But this time no one is complaining.

The Central Kalahari is about 53 000 km² in size – more than double the size of the Kruger Park. You have to drive long distances to explore and you have to plan very carefully since the nearest filling station is an hour or three from the gates.

After several days of staying in a new place every night, it's nice to spend two nights at Passarge 2. When we wake up for breakfast, it's bucketing down again – surprise! – but Phil and his team quickly put up a canvas awning between two trees.

Today we can relax in camp or drive around on our own. I pile into the game-viewing vehicle with Phil and Max and we return to where we saw the cheetahs yesterday.

Spotted hyenas are relatively rare in the Central Kalahari, compared to other parks in Botswana like Chobe and Moremi. The most prolific scavenger here is the black-backed jackal – you can't drive 5 km without seeing one. This morning, there are even more jackals than usual, and they're all heading in the same direction. We follow them. About 10 minutes later, we come across two cheetahs and a gemsbok kill. They are two males, so not the mom and cubs from the day before.

The cheetahs have already eaten their fill and about 30 jackals are waiting on the sidelines. When a jackal becomes too impatient and tries to steal a scrap, a cheetah chases it off. Finally, the cheetahs leave the carcass and the jackals take over in a frenzy. They seem to fight more than eat! Before long the jackals are surrounded by vultures, now waiting their turn.

When our own hunger pangs strike, we drive back to camp to have lunch and rest before our sunset drive. As the light dwindles in the west, Passarge Valley treats us to another cheetah – it crosses the road, heading towards another herd of springbok. This valley has been good to us!



The road to the Xade entrance gate was flooded in places due to heavy rainfall.



A juvenile pale chanting goshawk.



The tour group stretch their legs during lunch at the Xade Gate.



Black-backed jackals devour a gemsbok carcass near the Passarge 2 campsite.



GO ON YOUR OWN

The Central Kalahari Game Reserve is a dream destination for any adventurous 4x4 enthusiast. We recommend that you travel in a small convoy of at least two or three vehicles, so that someone can go get help if you run into trouble. Pack a proper first aid kit, vehicle recovery gear, an extra spare wheel and enough fuel and drinking water. There's no cellphone reception in the park – hire a satellite phone for peace of mind.

Park fees: P190 (R255) per person per day, plus P75 (R101) per vehicle per day.

Accommodation: See pages 94–95.

GO WITH BHEJANE

How does it work? This is a self-drive camping trip (eight days, seven nights). All meals are included in the rate, plus park and camping fees, and the use of a tent. Professional guides accompany you through the park and communicate with you via two-way radio (supplied).

What kind of vehicle do I need? You need a 4x4 – preferably one that you don't mind getting scratched in the bush.

Upcoming tour dates:
4–11 March 2023 (wet season);
21–28 September 2023 (dry season).

Cost: R19 250 per person.

More info: ☎ 082 724 0442

📍 bhejane.com

DAY 4–5 Deception Valley

Hansie Ruben is the pot bread king. Every night, he and Stagga and Jonno whip up a feast to serve the guests, and one of the staples of that feast is Hansie's pot bread, which he makes over the coals in a flat-bottomed pot.

Phil tells me that Hansie used to work on his family farm near Gochas in Namibia. "He would unpack and wash all the gear after a trip," Phil says. "One day he told me he didn't want to clean the gear any more, he wanted to come on tour."

That was 10 years ago. Each tour Phil has led since, Hansie and his secret bread recipe have accompanied him.

After breakfast we drive to Deception campsite where we'll also stay for two nights. Rain falls throughout the morning as we navigate to the northernmost tip of Passarge Valley. Then the road turns south through dense thickets, to Leopard Pan. We stop here for lunch.

The name Deception campsite is indeed deceptive because it's not in Deception Valley, but 13 km west of the Kori campsites situated along the edge of the valley.

Deception Valley is a seemingly endless grassland as far as the eye can see – a great place to see plains game and raptors like martial eagle, black-chested snake-eagle and pale chanting goshawk.

The rain and lack of shelter on the back of the game-viewing vehicle are starting to take their toll on my gear. My trusty Nikon D610 has gone the way of the dead gemsbok. I find out later that a lens motor broke.

Fellow travellers Neil Mouton and Wyona van Dyk come to my aid – they both lend me a camera! And I'm so grateful, because if I didn't have a camera on this particular drive, I would never have forgiven myself.

About 10 km from the camp, Max catches a glimpse of a white tail tip in the bushes next to the road. "It's a leopard," he says on the radio to the rest of the

convoy. "And I think I know where it will appear next..."

He turns onto one of the access roads to the Kori campsites, and as he predicted, the leopard walks out of the bush and down the jeep track. It marks its territory a few times and then leaves us, its captive audience, to return to the bush.

Our next stop is an "island" of trees in the grassland, where the US authors and controversial conservationists Mark and Delia Owens set up camp while doing research in the 1970s. (*Cry of the Kalahari*, published in 1984, was an international bestseller.)

All that's left of their camp today is the concrete square of their erstwhile pit toilet.

We stretch our legs at Deception Pan and watch wildebeest and gemsbok crossing the muddy expanse. I almost lose a flip-flop in the mud – it's as sticky as toffee.

Late afternoon, we park our convoy in a semicircle in a clearing. Camping chairs are unpacked and G&Ts are poured. As we settle in, the Kalahari lifts her veil and sunlight falls over the valley.

DAY 6 Sunday Pan

It looks like today might be the first sunny day of our trip. Problem: The game-viewing vehicle won't start. Johan Nieuwoudt, a retired technical drawing teacher from Cape Town, and Fred Schärli, who used to work for Mercedes-Benz, investigate the problem. It's a broken terminal on the battery, which they repair with a piece of galvanised wire.

Sunday Pan is only 20 km away, so we take a wide detour to look for animals while the Bhejane team break and move camp. The road network in this northern part of the reserve makes a big loop through Passarge, Deception and Lekhubu valleys. We plan to complete that circle today and return to Sunday Pan to overnight.

It's refreshing to see the veld shimmering in the sunlight. We pass

Deception Pan again, where we find a pride of lions fast asleep. Judging by the size of their bulging stomachs, they're not moving anytime soon...

Beyond the pan, at Lekhubu campsite, the road turns west. We stop at the campsite where we stayed the first night. The circle is complete and we turn around again.

Our convoy arrives at Sunday Pan late in the afternoon. The campsites there are on one of the few hills in the reserve, with a view of the pan and its waterhole.

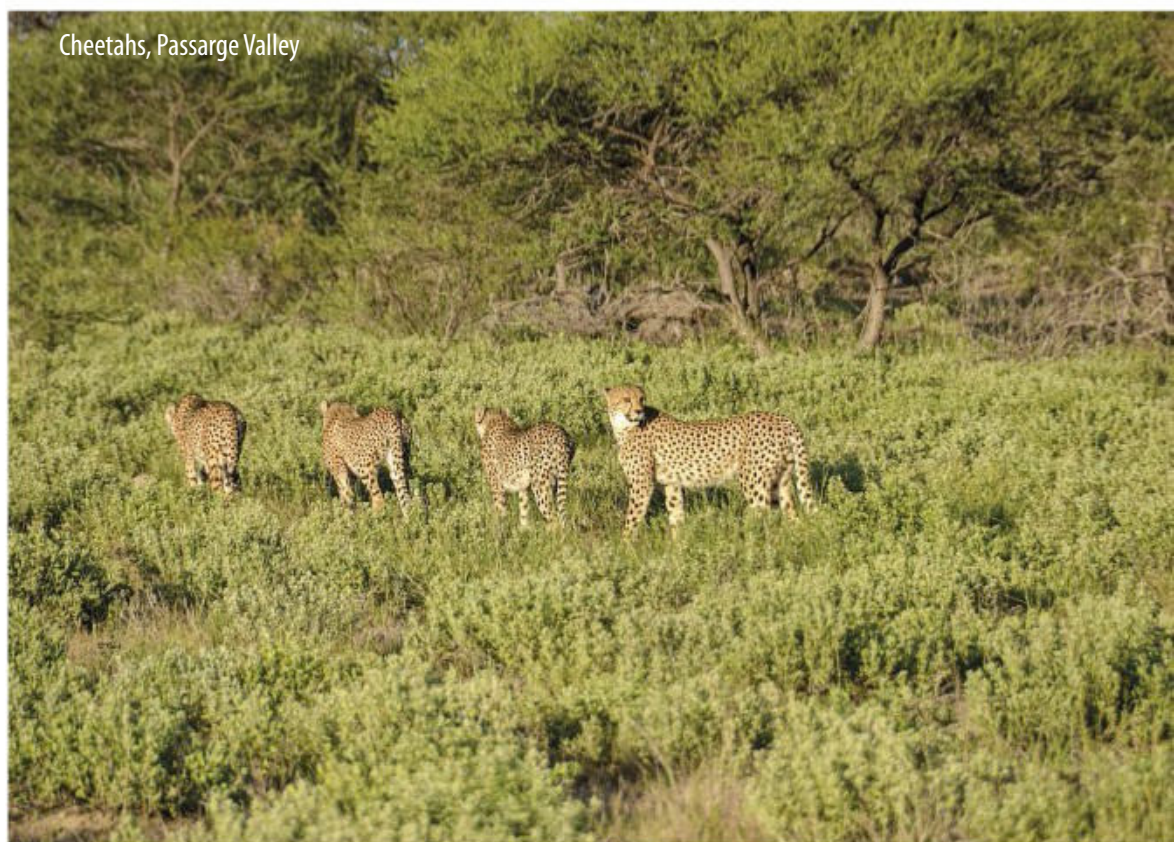
There are two stands available, but we decide to all camp on one. It's our last night together. We watch as the sunset is replaced by a million stars.

After breakfast the next morning, it's time to say goodbye. From here, all the guests will return home on their own. Some of the travellers from Gauteng want to sleep in their own beds tonight and leave for the Matswere gate before daybreak. Others turn north at the gate and carry on to Maun, where they'll spend a few days before heading to Moremi and Chobe, also with Bhejane.

I visited the Central Kalahari for the first time in 2017. I drove around on my own for two weeks while doing research for a map of the park. (See page 52.) I wondered whether the feeling of utter solitude that I experienced then could be replicated on a group tour. But I needn't have worried. The CKGR is so vast that even a convoy of vehicles feels irrelevant in the landscape.

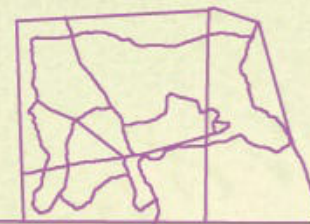
Little has changed here, in the heart of Botswana, since my first visit five years ago. There aren't any new roads or infrastructure at the campsites. Even the bat-eared foxes in Passarge Valley were in the same place I saw them last.

A few days later, I fly home to Cape Town from Maun. I watch as the passengers stare listlessly at the "boring" Kalahari unspooling below. If only they knew of the wonders that exist down there...



CENTRAL KALAHARI GAME RESERVE

This vast reserve offers some of the best wilderness camping in Botswana. You must be fully self-sufficient – take enough fuel, food and drinking water. It is also a 4x4 driving challenge – roads are very sandy and areas around the pans can be muddy during the rainy season. Take recovery equipment along and drive in a small convoy. Park fees: P190 (R255) per person per day; plus P75 (R101) per vehicle per day.



← to Kuke/Ghanzi

Tsau gate

There's a road on either side of the fence.

Motopi 1

Motopi

Motopi Pan

Motopi 2

Motopi 3

Tsau Hill (1 118 m)

2022: We saw cheetahs in this area on three occasions during our tour. Two of them caught a gemsbok – later about 30 jackals squabbled over the carcass.

In 2018 and 2022 we saw a family of bat-eared foxes here.

Passarge 2

Passarge Valley

Passarge 3

Passarge Pan

Passarge

Kalatraverse road

This sandy cutline road is not very scenic, but it's a useful shortcut between the western and eastern parts of the circular route.

Tau Pan Camp

Tau Pan

Phukwe Pan

San Pan

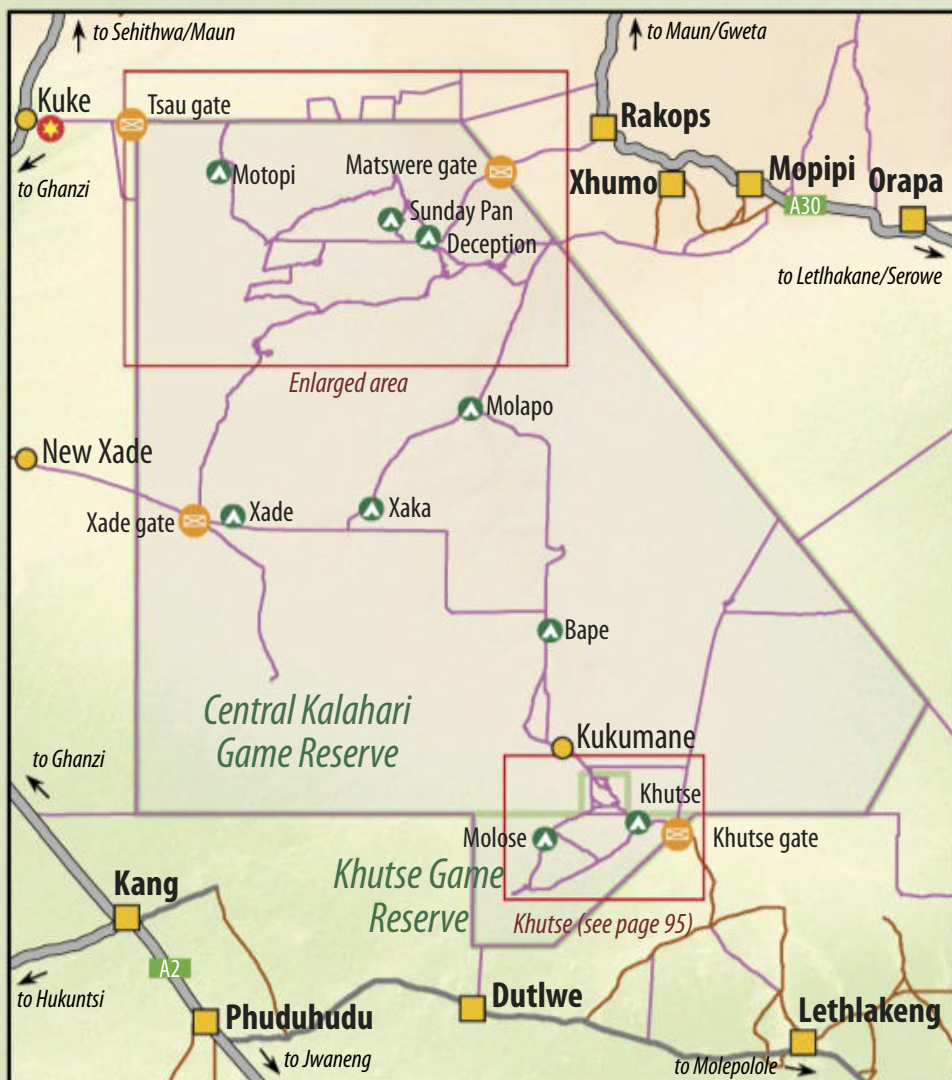
San Pan

Letiahau Valley

Phokoje Pan

Phokoje Pan

Circular route



Piper Pan

Piper Pan 1

Piper

to Xade gate

Piper Pan 2

HAINAVELD

↑
to Makalamabedi/Maun

Deception Valley Lodge

Evolve Back Gham Dhaô Lodge

Kuke Corner

This road is overgrown; drive to Rakops via Matswere.

to Rakops →

Matswere gate

Passarge 1

Circular route

Leopard Pan

Leopard Pan

Kukama Pan

Kukama

Sunday Pan

Sunday

Sunday Pan 2 & 3

Sunday Pan 1

2022: A leopard suddenly appeared in the road here!

Deception 1 – 6

Kori 1 – 4

Deception Pan

Kalahari Plains

Deception Valley

2022: A large pride of lion lay fast asleep under the trees.

N
20 km

Letiahau

Letiahau

2018: We watched a leopard kill a jackal! Wild!

Lekhubu Pan

Central Kalahari Game Reserve

- Public camp
- Bigfoot Tours camp
- Private camp

to Molapo camp

Make the most of Maun

Riders cross the Thamalakane River
with Ride Botswana.



Maun changes in subtle, almost imperceptible ways, just like the watery wilderness of the Okavango Delta next door. **Fiona McIntosh** sampled the local culture, the best eggs Benedict in town, and the Delta's finest cider.

I first visited Maun in 1988: My husband Matthew and I hitchhiked from Joburg to the Okavango with the optimistic naivety of youth. A lift deposited us on the roadside some way beyond Francistown, where we stood, thumbs out and increasingly dejected for more than 24 hours until an overland truck took pity on us and drove us to Maun.

In those days, Maun had the air of a frontier settlement. It was dusty and low-key and although we were relieved to get there, there wasn't much to do. Donkey carts vied for space with bakkies and safari vehicles on the unpaved streets, and the limited stores were frequented by overland travellers, safari guides and hunters.

The tarring of the road between Maun and Francistown in the early 1990s spurred tourism development, and Maun has grown dramatically since then. The town now offers a diverse array of tourism activities and accommodation options to suit all budgets. There is a bunch of cool cafés and restaurants (even shopping malls), a craft brewery, and a burgeoning art scene. Indeed, Maun has become more than just a place to refuel and restock before tackling the Delta or Moremi, it has become a destination in its own right.

It's still sleepy, and you'll still encounter donkeys and goats, but there's also a sense of anticipation and excitement, especially among tourists who are forever either on their way to a nearby wilderness destination, or freshly returned from one.

My first stop on a short visit in 2021 was The Duck Café Bar opposite the airport – a vibey place with great coffee, indoor and outdoor dining, and a gallery. Passengers from international flights flocked in but it seemed popular with locals, too.

The area around the airport is one of two main tourism hubs in Maun where you can park and walk, or drive short distances between restaurants like Marc's Eatery, Tandurei, Dusty Donkey and Hilary's. The Nhabe Museum, which is being revamped and has some interesting historical panels and exhibitions, is worth a visit. In the same precinct you'll find Akacia Café and some other art and craft shops.

The other hub is a few kilometres north-east of the airport, where you'll find the Sedia Riverside Hotel, Okavango Craft Brewery, Botswana Basket Weavers, Old Bridge Backpackers, The Space and the Motsana Centre and Arts Café.

7 THINGS TO DO

1. WALK IT OFF

Maun is strung out along the Thamalakane River (one of the outflows of the Okavango Delta), and many lodges have their own stretch of waterfront. Spend some time watching the birds and taking in the riverine setting, but don't go too close to the water's edge... Crocodiles!

A good leg stretch after a long drive is to walk from Old Bridge Backpackers over the historic Matlapaneng Bridge and along the riverbank on the other side. The bridge was built in 1943 and greatly improved the flow of people and goods between the two sides of the river, but it was inadequate to carry the weight of motor vehicles. Maun pioneer Harry Riley (yup, of Riley's Garage) operated a barge that ferried cars across.

Dip into local lore and you'll hear stories of the early players in the safari industry negotiating their way home over the narrow, rickety bridge after late night partying at the town's watering holes.

2. DO A BOAT CRUISE

When the level of the Thamalakane allows for it (generally from July to December/January), Sitatunga Camp offers a two-hour sunset cruise.

Common sightings like African fish-eagle are almost guaranteed, but you might also see rare birds like wattled crane and pygmy goose.

If you have time for a longer and wilder cruise, Old Bridge Backpackers offers a full-day trip that takes you from the Thamalakane up the Boro Channel (which brings water to the Thamalakane from the Okavango) as far as Chief's Island. The game viewing on this cruise is excellent, and it also includes lunch and an hour-long guided walk.

Cost: Sitatunga Camp sunset cruise P200 (R268) per person (minimum four people); Old Bridge full-day trip P3 150 (R4 221) per person.

Contact: Sitatunga Camp 00 267 72 506 420; Old Bridge Backpackers 00 267 73 177 260

3. MOKORO RIDES

Of course, the proper way to explore the Okavango Delta is by mokoro. Nothing beats the stillness as you glide among water lilies and birdlife.

The Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust (OKMCT) operates in the concession area known as NG 32 north of Maun. (NG stands for Ngamiland.) Their mokoro station is at the Boro settlement, about 2 km from The Bell Frog Inn. You can drive there in a 4x4, but chances are you'll get lost. It's better to drive to the inn, or book a boat transfer to the inn from Maun, although this is only an option when the water is high in the Boro Channel, usually

The Bell Frog Inn – and its “croc-proof” pool – as seen from the air.



between June and September. From The Bell Frog Inn, the OKMCT polers will come and collect you.

The OKMCT offers day trips and self-catered overnight trips where you have to bring your own tent. You can also book similar mokoro trips through a variety of lodges and tour operators in Maun – enquire at the place you’re staying. They inevitably also make use of the OKMCT polers, but sometimes offer catered options, which are pricier.

Cost: Day trip with OKMCT P525 (R704) per person; overnight P1 155 (R1 548) per person.

Contact: Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust 📞 okmct.org.bw;
The Bell Frog Inn 📞 00 267 75 116 886

4. RIDE A HORSE

Even if you’re not a serious rider, I’d highly recommend going for a ride in Thamo Telele Private Game Reserve on the south-western outskirts of town. The affinity that the horses and guides have with the wildlife, and your raised vantage point, always result in good sightings. High-water periods, when you splash through the floodplain on your well-schooled mount, are particularly magical.

Cost: US\$55 (R952) for one hour to US\$225 (R3 893) for a full day.

Contact: 📞 ridebotswana.com

5. HOP ON THE CULTURE BUS

The Maun Immersive Experience is a great way to get your bearings and support local entrepreneurs. This three-hour tour is led by upbeat guides who introduce you to street artists, vendors, seamstresses, bead workers and other craftspeople. You’re transferred by vehicle to the main points and you spend about 30 – 45 minutes exploring the town centre on foot.

The tour also includes a basket-weaving workshop with charismatic expert weaver Mma Kushonya. You get a meal at Akacia Café and hang out at a carwash. Yes, a carwash! Carwashes play an important cultural role in a town like Maun: Men often congregate here, over a cooldrink or a beer, and have manly chats about life and its issues.

Cost: US\$120 (R2 076) per person (minimum two people).

Contact: 📞 yourbotswanaexperience.com

6. LISTEN TO A STORY

Thari-E-Ntsho Story Tellers was founded by Bonty Botumile, who arranges interactive cultural evenings with food and dance performances, at a riverside plot in town. Listen to traditional folklore,



MAUN IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

learn about Botswana’s rites of passage, and try your hand at drumming, bead work and other local crafts before indulging in an all-you-can-eat, seven-dish traditional buffet.

Cost: P500 (R670) per person.

Contact: 📞 botswanastories.wordpress.com

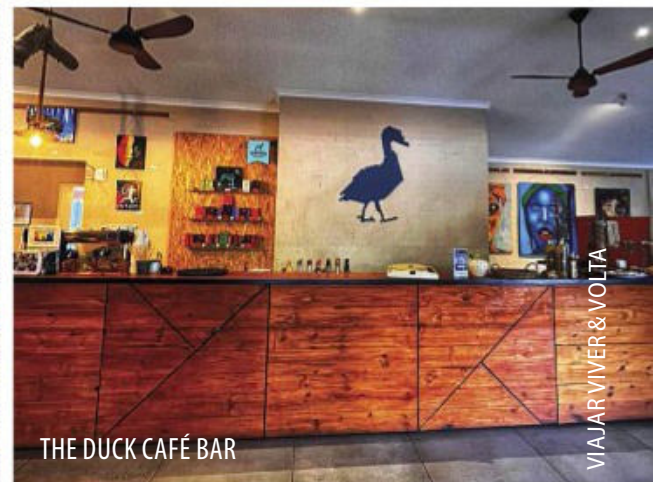
7. DIY CULTURE TOUR

It’s easy to devise your own cultural walk-about. Check out Maun Made in The Duck Café Bar – a gallery where local artists exhibit their work. Halethaba Artspace is a funky craft stall opposite Riley’s Garage, home to a pool of artists in various fields of performing and visual arts, including the founder Prince Moyo – a charismatic artist and entrepreneur who draws the crowds with his colourful hand-painted clothing. If you’re feeling creative you can paint your own T-shirt, jacket or cap.

The Space is in a shipping container (with an outdoor gallery) on the main road to Moremi; and Katongo Chisenga Art is in Boseja Ward, across the river in the south-east of Maun.

Contact: 📞 thespacebotswana.com; find the others on Facebook by searching “Halethaba Artspace”, “Katongo Chisenga Art” and “The Duck Maun”

Clockwise from top left: A mokoro ride offers a peaceful introduction to the Okavango Delta. Kids watch as a carver creates art from a makalani palm nut as part of the Maun Immersive Experience. You can paint your own T-shirt at Halethaba Artspace. Graffiti at a Maun carwash – a popular local hangout. Mma Kushonya shows off her basket-weaving skills.



WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Hilary's Coffee Shop

This long-established coffee shop serves up refreshing juices and well-priced, healthy salads, plus home bakes with vegan and gluten-free options.

hilaryscoffeeshop.wordpress.com

Dusty Donkey Café

A popular brunch spot. They also host live music on the first Friday of the month. Various vegetarian and vegan options.

"Dusty Donkey Café" on Facebook

Motsana Centre and Arts Café

A chilled café in a pretty courtyard, surrounded by shops selling second-hand goods and crafts. It's a great breakfast spot and they host a monthly market and weekly movie nights.

"Motsana Centre" on Facebook

The Duck Café Bar

A family-run spot opposite the airport. Great coffee and light meals, in generous portions. Their croissants are awesome, and you won't find better eggs Benedict! They sell Okavango gin and Maun Made arts and crafts.

"The Duck Maun" on Facebook

Old Bridge Backpackers

There's an upmarket pub on site, which offers good-value burgers and pizzas.

maun-backpackers.com

Tandurei

This Indian restaurant offers grills and tasty curries that make a change from typical bush fare.

"Tandurei Maun" on Facebook

The Tin Cup Restaurant at Sitatunga Camp

They serve slap-up buffets and they have a great sports bar where locals

and visitors congregate to watch big games.

deltarain.com/sitatunga-camp-2

Marc's Eatery

Known for their Mediterranean- and Middle Eastern-influenced dishes, Marc's is pricier than most Maun eateries, but the lush garden setting and funky décor are gorgeous. All menu items are available as take-aways, and there's a well-stocked deli and bakery.

marcseatery.com

Sedia Riverside Hotel

Recently revamped, this hotel has a great restaurant, spa and a big swimming pool. The teak deck around the pool is shaded by an enormous jacaranda tree, which creates a romantic ambience.

sedia-hotel.com

Akacia Café

Situated in the grounds of the Nhabe Museum, Akacia is always buzzing. The menu combines traditional Setswana cuisine with dishes that the owner Ednah Rosen discovered while travelling. She's a Motswana who married a Swede and lived overseas for 30 years before returning to Maun. Their cakes are to die for (don't miss the cheesecake) and every Friday there's sushi and live music. akaciacafe.com

Okavango Craft Brewery

The massive garden and kids' play

area make it fun for families – day and night. In addition to their standard lager, pale ale, stout, session IPA, and a dry cider with baobab extract (my favourite!), they release a small batch of a newly developed beer in The Taproom on the first Friday of every month. They also host regular music events as well as Conservation On Tap – a monthly panel discussion featuring global conservation experts. A brewery tour costs US\$25 (R433) and includes a tasting tray of beer. Book in advance through

sales@okavangocraftbrewery.com

The Bell Frog Inn, Farm & Deli

Situated on the banks of the Boro River, an hour's 4x4 drive north of Maun, this makes for a great day outing. When the water is high enough (from June to September) it's more fun to go by boat (P700/R938 each way, max 10 people).

The food at the inn includes fresh vegetables and salads from their hydroponic farm. You might even see elephant while you dine. Cool off in the (cordoned off) pool in the river, laze on the bank or take a mokoro trip. There's a guest chalet and five safari tents should you want to overnight – see page 106 for more info.

"The Bell Frog Inn" on Facebook

See page 105 – 107 for places to stay in and around Maun.



WHERE'S THE WATER?

The Okavango Delta is a seasonal system. Once summer rain has fallen in the Angolan highlands, where rivers like the Cubango (which becomes the Okavango) and the Cuito (which feeds the Okavango) have their headwaters, the water slowly makes its way down through Namibia and eventually into Botswana. Because this area is so flat, the water moves very slowly through the often narrow, overgrown channels of the Okavango Delta. To keep track of which rivers, channels and outflows are carrying water, follow the Facebook group "Maun Flood Arrival 2020 & Beyond" where local residents post daily updates as the water approaches town. It's exciting to follow the action!

TUCK INTO A **MOUTH-WATERING** ADVENTURE



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Ts & Cs apply. Visuals are for descriptive purposes only.

📍 www.spursteakranches.com/bw



MAUN

Airport

to Marc's Eatery, Okavango Craft Brewery, Sedia Riverside Hotel, Old Bridge Backpackers, Island Safari Lodge, Motsana Centre & Moremi Game Reserve

Newton Ward

Bushcamp Safaris

Naga Safari

Firewood & wood furniture

Pentzone Plaza

Container Village

Maun airport terminal

The Duck Café Bar (Maun Made) Natlee Centre

Vuyo's Cousin's Carwash
Kalahari Kanvas (buy great camping bags!)

Ngamiland Data Services
Botswana Tourism

Airport Hotel

Women Against Rape
Predator Conservancy Program & Laboratory

Travel Wild Centre
Ride & Walk Botswana

Motovac
Lepopo Food and Liquor (good prices)

Okavango Management Offices

Belmond Safaris

The Village

Small filling station

Sanyedi Ward

MAUN CBD

Phokoje

Lefika

Phuti

Department of Water Affairs

Maun Magistrates Court

Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Infrastructure, Science & Technology

Department of Veterinary Services

Ministry of Transport & Communications

Department of Wildlife

Wildlife Reservations offices

Government buildings

Department of Tourism

Department of Forestry's nursery

Maun Nissan

Prison gardens

Department of Forestry's nursery

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Thamalakane

Thamalakane Floodplain

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Dainty Bakes Bakery

Standard Chartered ATM

Maun Mall

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Maun Mall

Thamalakane

RIVER LODGE



BOTSWANA • MOBILE SAFARIS • BOATING • BIRDING • MOKORO

OKAVANGO DELTA - MOREMI GAME RESERVE - CHOBE RESERVE - MAKGADIKGADI PANS

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PROFILE

Meet the Delta fixer

If your bakkie breaks down in the middle of Moremi, **Louis Milne** should be the first contact saved on your satellite phone.

BY FRANÇOIS HAASBROEK

It's a Sunday night in Maun. I've spent the weekend with Louis Milne and we're in his Land Cruiser, driving to his house outside town. Before we reach the bridge over the Thamalakane River, the Cruiser starts to stutter. Louis pulls over immediately because something is clearly wrong. Like most safari vehicles in these parts, the Cruiser has two fuel tanks and for some reason the second tank won't feed fuel to the engine now that the first tank has emptied.

Louis gets on his cellphone and starts making calls. He speaks to everyone from a general mechanic to the owner of the local Toyota dealership. He starts several of his calls saying something to the tune of, "Remember that time I helped you with..." Seems like quite a few people owe him a favour.

Three different people rush to our aid and the vehicle is fixed in half an hour. Louis Milne is that kind of guy – if he can't solve a problem, he knows someone who can.

I met Louis in March 2020 when I explored Moremi and Chobe with Bhejane Adventures. We drove

several routes to work out itineraries for Bhejane's future tours – it was a recce and we sometimes ventured into unfamiliar territory. Louis visited our camp in Maun the day before our departure to drop off extra camping gear and a satellite phone. His business – Swampland Safari Trails – rents out equipment to tourists and tour operators.

Louis didn't join us, but he was our safety net. One morning we drove the cutline road between Khwai and Linyanti – a 90km sandy track that sees very little traffic. It was good to know that we could call Louis if we got stuck or if something went wrong.

Louis and I have kept in touch and during my recent trip to Botswana in March 2022, I arranged to stay with him. It's a long story, but I forgot a bottle of Tanqueray gin here during a previous visit and he promised to keep it safe for me...

The Cruiser is on the road again and we soon arrive at Louis and his wife Laetitia's house. There are more safari vehicles under an awning, and a neat workshop nearby. Tyson, a boisterous young boxer, comes to



say hello, followed by an older beagle called Smeagol.

We walk through the house to the veranda on the other side. A lawn stretches down to the river and big trees fill the garden. Bar sounds drift across the water – a hint that civilisation is not far away – but it feels like the Milne house is deep in the wilderness. Laetitia busies herself in the kitchen and Louis lights a fire. We pour



Louis Milne has been living next to the Thamalakane River in Maun for more than two decades. He's your go-to guy for anything from car trouble to wanting to see a monitor lizard.

some of the Tanqueray and get talking.

Louis grew up in Stellenbosch and worked as a paddling guide on the Orange River for a while. He later owned a business that arranged paddling tours and also had shares in a scuba-diving school in Cape Town. Louise and Laetitia moved to Maun in 2001, in the footsteps of his late brother Ian, who worked as a tour guide and

had moved to Botswana five years previously.

"My brother didn't have the funds back then," Louis says. "My business partner and I helped him buy a Unimog and other necessities to get started."

The move was an easy decision for Louis and Laetitia. "I've always been outdoorsy," Louis says. "The traffic in Cape Town was getting too hectic for me. But these days

even the Maun traffic gets to me..."

Louis and Ian operated Swamp-land Safari Trails together until Ian passed away in 2013 after a battle with cancer. They started small with bespoke camping tours and expanded over the years. These days, Swamp-land does tours that include lodge accommodation and luxury camping experiences – in Botswana, Namibia and even Angola.



Louis has the Okavango Delta in his backyard – he greets every guide or pilot by name.

CALL LOUIS

If you want to hire a satellite phone or camping gear, or if you need help with your bookings, contact Louis Milne from Swampland Safari Trails.

☎ 00 267 71 234 300

🌐 swampland-safari.com

For the past two days, I’ve been following Louis around Maun as he ran business errands. One of those errands was a visit to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP). It’s often difficult to make bookings via DWNP – especially if you’re in South Africa and you’re struggling to get through on the phone – so Louis goes to their offices to make bookings on behalf of his clients. When he hears that a camp is fully booked, he says: “But can we make a plan?”

“It’s important to build relationships with the people who work for me, and the people who work *with* me,” he says as he stokes the fire. “When I walk into DWNP, we always joke around a bit. You can be frank with people without being rude. Sometimes you say things that people don’t want to hear, but they get to know how you operate and they accept you.”

We also stopped at Riley’s Garage

to pick up a battery for his Land Cruiser. A young guide walked over when he saw Louis, and he had a strange request: “Oom Louis, can you help with a group of Chinese guests? They want to see a monitor lizard...”

When Louis left five minutes later, he not only had the battery but also a tour group to accompany.

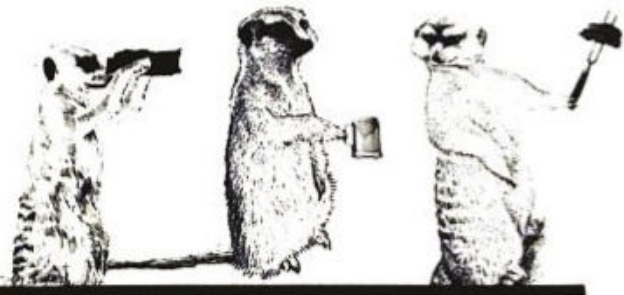
“This is the kind of community we have in Maun,” Louis tells me as he places mutton chops on the braai grid. “We help each other and we help tourists passing through. You don’t leave anyone stranded next to the road. It’s not about making money; I’d rather put a smile on someone’s face.”

Louis knows almost everyone in Maun. He introduced me to one of the local butchers, the beer brewer at Okavango Craft Brewery, a tour guide or three, pilots from Mack Air and Helicopter Horizons, and someone who raises orphaned elephants at Elephant Havens.

“The community stands together. Over weekends we like to load cooler boxes on our boats and go braai in the bush. I don’t think I could ever become blasé about this place. I realised it again last year when a group of us spent a night on an island in the Delta. After dark, hyenas attacked a buffalo nearby. We couldn’t see anything, but we could hear the struggle! It made me remember why I’m here: When I’m in nature, I become my true self again. In the city it’s all make-up and nonsense. Everyone is equal in the bush; you can see how people from the city change when they come to Moremi or the Delta.”

Louis’s beloved backyard is a place that will charm you when you visit. And it’s comforting to know that he and his Cruiser are only a call away if you run into trouble in the middle of nowhere...

Tel +267 73635534 / +267 73387759
Email mababeriverlodge@gmail.com



MABABE RIVER LODGE & CAMPSITE

- **Mababe is an oasis situated 105 km from Maun**, the gateway to the Okavango Delta, and well situated logistically to a planned holiday.
- Our Lodge/Campsite comprises of **self-catering rooms** with private BBQ and kitchen. The campsites have their own private ablution facilities with hot water and electricity.
- **Game viewing is phenomenal** with resident prides of Lion and wild dogs.



MABABE IS WELL SITUATED FOR ACCESS TO

Mababe depression	3 km
Mababe Gate (Chobe National Park)	12 km +-30 min
Khwai	37 km +-59 min
Savuti Channel and Marsh	60 km +-2 hours
North Gate (Moremi National Park)	43 km +-35 min
Xakanaxa	83 km +-3 hours



- Since 2012 -

We are in the automotive car industry. Selling spares, tools, hardware, camping equipment, brake down services with workshop facilities.



Address: Sekgoma Road, Plot 16659, Boseja, Maun

Tel: +267 686 5698

Fax +267 686 5699

Cell: +267 72 290 624

E-mail: midasmaun1@gmail.com



Botswana by bike!

Adventurous journalist **Cally Silberbauer** cycled from Cape Town to Kilimanjaro in 2022. This is how she made her way across Botswana.



The trip began as a dangerous dream: one of those lingering ideas that won't let you go. How about a solo bike-packing journey from Cape Town to Kilimanjaro? I've always wanted to explore Africa and as an avid cyclist, a bicycle trip was the obvious choice – the petrol price was quite persuasive as well!

I wanted this adventure to be meaningful beyond simply crossing countries by bike, so I decided to do it as a woman alone in the hopes of making a statement against gender-based violence. The trip would also help to raise funds for the Saartjie Baartman Centre, a safe haven for women and children in Cape Town.

My journey – which I dubbed “Cape2Kili” – began on 21 May 2022 from Rook Cycles in Bree Street, Cape Town. Rook sponsored my bike (aka “Chonky Donkey”), and all the spares that I could possibly need, so it was only fitting to start there. My family and some close friends came to see me off, and my sister and dad cycled with me for the first day.

My plan with Cape2Kili was to cycle to Tanzania via Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi over the course of three months. I had about 6000km to cover by 25 August, when I'd start hiking up Kilimanjaro. After that, I'd fly back to Cape Town.

I followed the roads hugging the West Coast for a while and then cut back to the N7 at Nuwerus. Once in Namibia, I took the scenic back roads (read: sandy and corrugated) to Windhoek. From there, I headed to Botswana, which I entered via the Buitepos/Mamuno border post. By this point I was covering around 100km a day.

My only previous visit to Botswana was when I cycled the Tour de Tuli – a catered, fairly luxurious three-stage event. This would be a very different experience. My plan was to follow the A2 from Buitepos and then turn north to Ghanzi and Maun along the A3. From there, I'd aim for Nata

and Francistown, and enter Zimbabwe via the Plumtree border.

Botswana is mostly flat. With the tarred roads, I imagined it being the fastest section of my ride, with the odd elephant encounter along the way. Little did I know that Botswana would steal my heart and even convince me to take a week off to explore it properly...

Buitepos to Tshootsha (97 km)

On my last night in Namibia, I camped at Zelda Guest Farm about 21 km from the Buitepos border. (I always tried to overnight close to a border, so that I would have plenty of time in case of a hold-up.) I arrived at Buitepos on 13 June. It was inundated with truck drivers following the Trans-Kalahari Highway.

There's always a little border banter – most people wanted to know where I was going and they could never believe that I had started my journey in Cape Town. When I told them that I was going to Kilimanjaro, my sanity was questioned!

Having no road tax to pay, my border formalities were quick and easy, as if I was a pedestrian. I just needed passport stamps, and I had to show my vaccination certificate.

Soon I was pedalling towards the village of Tshootsha. The weather was pleasant and the road was good; there was little to slow me down and I quickly covered the 123 km I'd planned for the day. I reached Jungle Light Rest Camp (also called Riana's Campsite, after the owner, Riana Jonker) in Tshootsha around 6 pm. This spot came highly recommended on the iOverlander app – it's basically an offline map with user-generated intel on places of interest, such as good eating spots and decent places to stay. iOverlander played an essential part in my trip planning.

Riana is a vibey lady who has lived in a tent for 12 years at the campsite. She's an incredible chef and I just managed to

CYCLE TOURING

Opposite page, clockwise from the top: Soon after leaving Leopard Plains tented camp, an elephant crossed the road right in front of Cally. Game viewing in Chobe National Park is even better with a St Louis Lager in hand. Cally posing for a photo with Harvest Best Bed & Breakfast owner Ludo Chifananga (far right) and a friend of hers. Cally's bicycle, the trusty Chonky Donkey, pictured at sunset at Planet Baobab. Camping at Harvest Best Bed & Breakfast.



SUPPORT CALLY'S CAUSE

On her Cape2Kili trip, she raised funds for the Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children in Cape Town. If you'd like to donate to the centre, visit saartjiebaartmancentre.org.za
Follow Cally's adventures on Instagram: @callysilberbauer

squeeze in a dinner order on arrival – a delicious stew with hearty add-ons, paired with a much-needed St Louis Lager.

It was a very cold night and I woke early to a frost-encrusted tent and ice blocks floating in my water bottles. I said howzit to my leg warmers, arm warmers and all the other layers I had!

After getting a local SIM card (something I usually did immediately when I arrived in a new country), I treated myself to a bit of brekkie and a lot of coffee before setting off.

Tshootsha to Ghanzi (117 km)

The A2 and A3 tar roads were well maintained. I had a decent amount of shoulder to myself, and the traffic wasn't too hectic. I got hoots from most of the trucks passing by, and locals would echo my calls of "Dumela!" with a smile and a wave. I saw all the Botswana roadside staples: donkeys, goats, sheep, horses and cattle, which were less responsive to my friendly greetings...

A hallmark of this trip were the people I met along the way; the new connections I made, the friends-of-friends who became friends, and the generosity of just about everyone I encountered.

In Ghanzi, I met up with friends-of-a-friend, the lovely Grant family who live about 20 km east of the town. I spent one night with them, and in the morning they drove me (and the Chonky Donkey) into Ghanzi where we hung out at a coffee shop and eatery called Hollandia, until I finally shoved off around midday.

If you ever pass through Ghanzi, make sure to pop into Hollandia – they're on the northern side of town, next to Ghanzi Butchery. The food is divine, with menu items like egg and salmon bagel for breakfast, and traditional beef *seswaa* (cooked meat pounded fine, served with seasonal veggies) for lunch. Hanri Ehlers runs the show. When she heard that I was going to Maun, she insisted that I contact her friend Jane Dwyer, who would host me and spoil me rotten. I saved the contact, said a last goodbye to the Grants and pedalled off.

Ghanzi to El-Fari (67 km)

There's a WhatsApp group for bike-packers riding the Cape to Cairo route, or variations of it, and I saw to my surprise that another bike-packer was also planning to stay at El-Fari Bush Camp that night.

Raj Phanden – from India – reached the sandy driveway to the campsite at more or less the same time as I did. He'd been on the road for *six years* and was aiming to cycle through every country on earth by 2030. You can just imagine the stories he had to share!

He was heading to Namibia. When we finally made it back onto the tar road in the morning and the obligatory selfies had been snapped, we set off in different directions.

El-Fari to Sehithwa (125 km)

Sehithwa is one of those tiny "blink and you'll miss it" towns en route to Maun. However, a bicycle really slows things down and you end up staying in unusual places.

I had two punctures during the day and a persistent headwind made for slow progress, but I reached the town by sunset. A friendly police officer led me to Monlek Lodge, the only accommodation option in town. For P100 (about R136), I was able to camp and use the bathroom in one of the rooms.

I mentioned to manager Tshepiso Lekang that I was hungry. She immediately gathered her friends and we all piled into her car to find sustenance. I was treated to a staple, *phaleche le nama* (pap and meat) paired with the village favourite, a quart of Black Label. An absolute feast.

After patching my tubes, I settled into the Saturday night lullaby of dance tunes and donkeys braying. I am blessed with the ability to sleep through noise and I nap just about anywhere, so I never pack earplugs. I was actually tempted to join in the festivities, but my eyes wouldn't stay open.

Sehithwa to Maun (98 km)

As I approached Maun, I received a panicked message from my mom: "Oh no, you're cycling into a big city today!" She

lives in Grabouw and she was constantly dot-watching my Spot GPS tracker (strapped to my helmet) to see exactly where I was. But she needn't have worried because Maun certainly isn't a "city".

I made my way to the Engen garage where Jane Dwyer (Hanri's friend) met me. Jane and her husband Mark have a café in Maun called the Dusty Donkey. It's a hub where locals meet up for their caffeine fix, and it promptly became my HQ.

Maun was meant to be a three-night stopover but I ended up staying for a week. I even had time to do a yoga class, which takes place on the lawn at Sedia Riverside Hotel every Thursday. I also watched a movie at the Motsana open-air cinema, did a light aircraft flip over the Delta, and sampled the best beer that Botswana has to offer at the Okavango Craft Brewery.

The main reason for my extended stay in Maun was a generous invite from my friend Jenny Young to be her guest at Bakwena Lodge in Kasane on the Chobe River. (The Youngs own the lodge.) I took my chances by trotting over to the airport from the Dusty Donkey to ask about flights from Maun to Kasane. Andrew Baker from Helicopter Horizons sorted out a staff seat for me on an aircraft leaving the following morning.

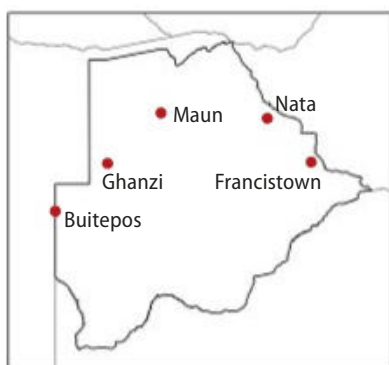
I spent two glorious nights at Bakwena Lodge, being spoilt with game drives, river cruises and all the food I could possibly want. It was hard to leave the opulence I had quickly become accustomed to, but the road was calling, and Kilimanjaro wasn't getting any closer. The flight back to Maun included a few staff and guest drop-offs at lodges along the way, and it was surreal to dip low over the Delta where elephants and zebra nonchalantly went about their business.

Jane, Mark and the Dusty Donkey team had begun to feel like family. One of the hardest parts of this trip was riding away from people who truly touched my soul. I pedalled off wearing my new Dusty Donkey T-shirt and wiping away a few tears.

Maun to Leopard Plains (98 km)

The stretch between Maun and Nata goes through proper wilderness and is known





among cyclists for sightings of elephants and even lions. I was excited for this “safari cycle” but a tad nervous as well. I planned to make it to every campsite before sunset and I wouldn’t set out before sunrise either.

One of the women I’d met at yoga in Maun ran a destination management company and she sent me a list of stopover ideas for the next leg of my trip. The first recommendation was Leopard Plains, a luxury tented camp near the A3, not far from the north-western corner of Makgadikgadi Pans National Park.

A headwind was building as I rode out of Maun, but I powered on, listening to an audiobook to distract me. A few hornbills and lilac-breasted rollers said hi as I wheeled towards Leopard Plains. While I waited for a lift to the camp (2 km into the bush), some rain fell and a massive rainbow filled the sky.

The owner of the lodge, Carina Timcke, treated me to a three-course supper that I enjoyed with her family and friends. The bar at Leopard Plains overlooks a waterhole where some kudu popped in for a drink.

Leopard Plains to Planet Baobab (123 km)

After a hot breakfast, I was dropped back at the tar, well fuelled and ready to battle the headwind again. My next stop was Planet Baobab – a famous overlanding destination and the one place that I had heard about before setting foot in Botswana.

I’d progressed around 20 km along the A3 when it happened: An elephant stepped into the road, not more than 50 m ahead of me. I stopped and gave him room to move. Suddenly I heard rustling in the bushes a helluva lot closer! Ellie number two was just off in the bushes to the left, but thankfully unperturbed by my presence. It dawned on me for the first time just how vulnerable I was.

That morning I cycled with the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park to my right, and later with Nxai Pan National Park to my left. Neither of these parks has

a boundary fence. Seven elephants crossed my path, plus a giraffe and a bunch of zebra. It felt surreal every time, and I was filled with so much respect for the animals getting on with life despite the human interference in their home.

I made it to Planet Baobab without incident, set up camp and wasted no time ordering a beer and a large portion of chicken curry. I’m not shy about replacing the calories burnt!

Planet Baobab to Eselbe Camp (106 km)

I packed up quickly the next morning, as I was eager to get going before the wind started up. After a bathroom visit, I came back to find a hot coffee waiting next to my bike. I looked around and realised that it was a gift from the friendly South African family next door. Next to arrive was a box of Eet-Sum-Mor biscuits!

I thanked them and they brought out even more snacks for the road, but I had to draw a line when the oom offered me his folding solar panel. The generosity I experienced on this trip is indescribable.

My main job that day was looking out for potholes. The road surface deteriorated exponentially and on certain sections the cars opted for the gravel on either side of the previously tarred surface, which meant I often had the road to myself.

Eselbe Camp is about 2 km north of Nata. Rupert Barstow started Eselbe in 2019 and he’s created a beautiful oasis. I arrived around 6 pm and was immediately offered a beer and a seat at the campfire.

There’s something so magical about a campfire – the warmth it generates, not just physically but also within those around it. That night I joined a farewell dinner for a German couple who had been volunteering at Eselbe’s.

I opted to sleep in a dorm room as it cost only marginally more than camping, and it saved me the effort of pitching my tent. Turns out the dorm rooms were canvas tents with comfy, big beds. I was stoked.



XAVIER BRIEL

Eselbe Camp to Dukwi (63 km)

Eselbe offers a variety of activities, like trips to nearby Nata Bird Sanctuary overlooking Sua Pan, but I unfortunately only had time for a quick sunrise paddle in one of the canoes they had at camp.

My aim for the day was to get as far as Bushbuck Agricamp, a whole 140km away. But from Nata to Francistown, the quality of the A3 plummeted. The lack of rideable verge wasn't so lekker and I was constantly launching off the road as a truck came up behind me, praying that I wouldn't get a puncture. The headwind was also back in full force. When I reached a town called Dukwi around 2pm – 70km short of where I wanted to be – I decided to call it a day.

I ended up camping at Harvest Best Bed & Breakfast run by the most amazing woman, Ludo Chifananga. She introduced me to her friends and cooked the best fish and chips for supper.

Dukwi to Francistown (130 km)

After snapping pics with the Harvest Best B&B crew, I embraced the wind and soldiered on. It felt like Botswana was telling me not to leave. The road conditions remained the same, but the traffic was more intense due to the next day being a public holiday. There were a couple of foot-and-mouth checkpoints along the way, where I had to cycle through the shallow dip just like the cars had to.

I stayed just north of Francistown with a lovely couple, Charles and Maryke Byron – another friends-of-friends connection.

As I pedalled the final 83 km towards the border post and crossed into Plumtree, my heart was filled with mixed emotions. Botswana had buried itself deep. This was certainly not a “goodbye”, more of a “see you later”.

GEAR GUIDE

- My bike was an 11-speed **Rook Scout** (R16 950 rookcycles.com) – it was sturdy and straightforward to maintain. I used **WTB tyres** (about R659 each) and swapped the back one in Zambia along with the chain and brake pads, just to keep things working smoothly. Otherwise, I had no mechanical issues on the trip.
- On the Scout's front rack I carried my **Naturehike Cloud Up 2 Ultralight 2-person tent** (R3 199 naturehike.co.za), which I kept wrapped in a **Radbag** (R790 jim.co.za) – a waterproof survival bag that can also be used as a bivvy bag.
- On the frame and handlebars, I attached locally made bags by **Pieta Designs** (R1 420 safarisusters.com) and **Mango Time** (R500 fueledathlete.co.za) for small things such as sunscreen, bike tools, and snacks. (Many, many snacks – usually biscuits.)
- I used a back rack with two **Thule panniers** (R3 299 thulestore.co.za) that held my clothes, bike spares, a Fire Maple Force gas stove, food (staples: pasta and coffee), water containers, maps and toiletries.
- I strapped a **Salomon backpack** (R3 415 salomon.com) to the top of the back rack, containing a first aid kit, my **K-Way Kilimanjaro Thermashift sleeping bag** (R4 299 capeunionmart.co.za), **First Ascent air mat** (R1 299 firstascent.co.za), my journal and a single book – *Shantaram* by Gregory David Roberts.

In search of camping nirvana

A great add-on to any Botswana road trip is the Kavango East and Zambezi regions (the old Caprivi Strip) in neighbouring Namibia. You can camp on the banks of incredible rivers and enjoy wildlife sightings to match any in Botswana.

BY VIC IVES



Popa Falls rumbled in the background as I watched a perfect sunset over the Kavango River. My partner Steph Perrin and I sipped sauvignon blanc as the sky turned orange. Hippos grunted and a fisherman in a mokoro glided through the scene.

We were in a part of Namibia that used to be called the Caprivi Strip – that odd little finger of land that stretches from the Kavango River towards Zambia. Today, the official name of the eastern half of this strip is the Zambezi Region, and the western part is called Kavango East.

For self-drive tourists, these regions offer incredible camping opportunities along rivers. Added to this, the entry fees into parks in Namibia are considerably lower than the rates of Botswana parks, which makes this a budget-friendly leg of your holiday.

But can you get a wild, Botswana-like experience on this side of the border? That's what we wanted to find out.

Camping under jackal-berry trees at
Campsite #1 in Mudumu National Park.



Opposite page, clockwise from the top: The campsite at Taranga Safari Lodge has a forest-like atmosphere. A tall fever tree on the grounds of Kaisosi River Lodge near Rundu. Shometu River Lodge as seen from a boat on the Kavango River. This alpaca seemed to man the reception desk at Kaisosi River Lodge!



POINTS OF INTEREST IN BWABWATA NATIONAL PARK

- Ruins of 32 Battalion military base
GPS: S18.10946 E21.67086
- Overgrown 32 Battalion cemetery
GPS: S18.16059 E21.73043
- Thingwerengwere waterhole (Mahango Sector)
GPS: S18.21392 E21.60713
- Ruins of Fort Doppies recce base
GPS: S17.81989 E23.31537
- Horseshoe Bend (Kwando River)
GPS: S17.90088 E23.28806

PARK FEES

Bwabwata National Park, Mudumu National Park and Nkasa Rupara National Park all have the same fees. SADC residents pay R70 per person per day, plus R50 per vehicle per day. Kids aged 8–15 pay R30 each; free for kids under 8.

Rumbling around Rundu

If you're holidaying in northern Botswana, there are two border posts that give you access to the Caprivi. In the east, you can cross from Kasane via the Ngoma border post, and in the west you can cross from Shakawe at the Mohembo border post.

We were already in Namibia – we'd come from Windhoek and driven north to Rundu, where we had to do some repairs to our Toyota Land Cruiser.

Our introduction to camping on the banks of the Kavango came at Taranga Safari Lodge, about 35 km west of Rundu on the B10. It's a well-run lodge with several luxury chalets, but we settled into one of the campsites. The stands were spacious and the ablutions were clean with hot water. The lawns and big trees made it feel like we were camping in a rainforest.

The only downside was that we didn't have a river view, but campers are allowed to use the pool at the main lodge – from there you can see the river.

From Taranga we drove to Kaisosi River Lodge, 7 km east of Rundu. It's a big lodge (16 rooms, 16 camping stands) so it pulls big crowds during long weekends and school holidays, but it was quiet during our visit. Each stand has a private bathroom, and the campsite in general is well maintained.

Kaisosi's campsite also lacked a river view, but again we went to the main area to enjoy the sunset from the deck. There were a few tame farm animals on the property, like the funky-looking alpaca that was part of the reception team and greeted us every morning. Friendly horses trimmed the lawns and an energetic Jack Russell kept the guinea fowl and peacocks on their toes.

Kaisosi has an eco-pool that doesn't use chlorine but rather filters the water through plant roots. The lodge is a good option for families with kids (there's putt-putt!) and the campsite is big enough for caravans and larger rigs.

As we drove east from busy Rundu, I could feel we were heading into the wilderness. Cars made way for trucks and fewer villages meant we saw the odd herd

of elephants crossing the B8 tar road.

After travelling about 175 km from Rundu (25 km before Divundu), we turned left towards the river and followed the signs to Riverdance Lodge. Riverdance has seven luxury bungalows and four campsites with a real classy feel about them. They're tucked away under trees high on the riverbank, and each stand has a private bathroom and kitchen area.

It's a short walk to the main area where you can chill at the pool or sit on the deck and enjoy some pretty amazing food. I had a chicken schnitzel and Steph had a chicken salad with fresh veggies from their garden. Riverdance also has a spa, so if you've been on the road for a long time and need some TLC for your bakkie-bashed back, this is the place!

A real highlight and treat, especially for Steph, was the complimentary cake and coffee that was served every day at 3.30 pm. We thought it was a great touch and this was partly why we stayed an extra couple of days...

We headed out for an afternoon fishing trip on the river, combined with a sunset cruise. We got a few bites, but our guide showed us how it's done – he caught a good-sized tiger fish.

On the subject of boat cruises... This is something you absolutely have to do whenever you stay next to one of the rivers in this region. After our cruise on the Kavango, we spoilt ourselves with a candlelit dinner on the lodge deck.

We spent the next day lazing in camp, relaxing with our books and just enjoying the peace and quiet. Riverdance is an amazing place to simply switch off.

Good, better, Bwabwata

Divundu isn't the little village it used to be 10 years ago. Back then, it was hit and miss whether you'd be able to get fuel or groceries. The Shell now has reliable fuel, a good takeaway restaurant and a well-stocked (if pricey) shop.

A cheaper place to stock up on groceries is the Metro Cash & Carry. Just before you get to the bridge over the Kavango, turn

right off the B8. They had a big frozen food section, some basic fresh fruit and veg, and an endless array of dry goods – we found everything we needed, although the fresh meat selection wasn't great.

With the Cruiser loaded up, we headed south down the C48 past Bagani to Shametu River Lodge. Their website says that you “arrive as a guest and leave as a friend”. We found this to be true!

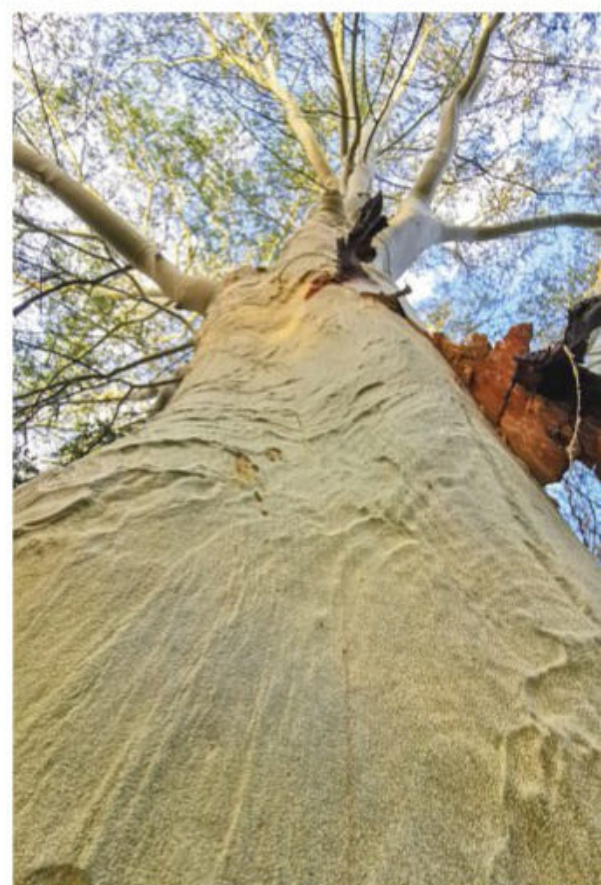
With 18 luxury chalets, four tented chalets and seven camping stands, it seemed like it would be big and busy, but we never got that “too big” feeling. Although the campsites don't have a river view, they're hidden away in the bush, which has an attraction of its own. The private bathrooms are cleaned daily, and donkey boilers supply hot water. Each campsite also has a thatched kitchen with a sink and power. Popa Falls are just far away enough so you can hear the water cascading over the rocks.

We met the co-owners of the lodge, Frith and Deon Gerber, who invited us to join them for a short cruise to the falls. Popa isn't really a waterfall, it's more like a wide set of rapids where the Kavango River takes a step down. Billy the golden retriever joined us, and we all got off the boat at a sandbank to see the rapids up close.

Back at the lodge, we enjoyed a dinner that wouldn't have been out of place at any fancy restaurant in Cape Town or Joburg. We dozed off with the falls lulling us to sleep.

It was time for game viewing, so the next morning we drove a short distance to the Mahango Sector of Bwabwata National Park – a huge reserve that stretches all the way from the Kavango River to the Kwando River. The C48 that connects Divundu to the Namibia/Botswana border cuts through the middle of Mahango, and although you can see animals here, you really want to be on the river road.

Once you've paid your entry fee at the gate (see sidebar), take the first turn-off to the left. This road follows the floodplain of the Kavango before looping back to the C48. You can usually drive it in a 4x2



Opposite page, clockwise from the top: Enjoying lunch at the Kwetchi picnic site in the Mahango Sector of Bwabwata National Park. Patrick Haccou gives a treat to the tame duiker at Riverdance Lodge, while the two lodge dogs look on enviously. Two Mahango vervet monkeys do what they do best: jolling around. Austinus Thikundeko, a guide at Riverdance Lodge, holds up a tiger fish caught in the Kavango River near the lodge.

GO! says:

*The key town in Kavango East is **Rundu**, where you'll be able to do anything from getting a tyre fixed to replacing that pair of glasses you accidentally squashed when you sat on them in the bakkie. **Divundu** is smaller – it services the tourist area along the Kavango River bordering Bwabwata National Park.*

***Katima Mulilo** is the major town in the Zambezi Region – it offers a wide range of shops and most services you'll need as a traveller.*

***Kongola** is much smaller – it's the closest place to get fuel if you're visiting the camps and lodges in the tourist area along the Kwando River. It also has a shop that sells the basics.*

It's always advisable to fill up with fuel and do all your major shopping in the big towns – Rundu and Katima Mulilo – just in case there's a supply problem in the smaller towns.

vehicle with decent ground clearance. The only other game-viewing road in Mahango is a 4x4 track that is extremely sandy and often overgrown – it's to the west of the C48 and goes as far as a waterhole called Thingwerengwere.

The river route was productive – we saw roan and sable antelope, impala, giraffe, kudu and the ever-present baboons and vervet monkeys. There are some baobabs along the route, but unfortunately the once-famous “Big Baobab” didn't survive Covid. Elephants routinely stripped its bark, which eventually led to its collapse.

We met up with Deon and Frith at the Kwetchi picnic site for some delicious jaffles under jackal-berry trees. You're allowed to get out of your car here, but be aware of your surroundings when you do so.

We drove back to the lodge for a siesta, then we made our way to the Buffalo Sector of Bwabwata on the other side – the eastern bank – of the river. Since we were visiting the same park again the same day, we didn't have to pay park fees a second time.

People interested in army history can see the remains of the old 32 Battalion base in Buffalo. The sandy roads in Buffalo are 4x4 only – they were overgrown and hard to navigate, and the animals seemed very skittish.

Steph had her hair done in Frith's salon at Shامتu the next day. She discovered, to her delight, that they also served freshly baked carrot cake in their new little coffee shop. (*Who are you kidding, Vic, we know you lined up too!* – Ed.)

More Mudumu, please!

It was time to say goodbye to Shامتu, and our new friends. We were craving some truly wild places again, so we aimed for Mudumu National Park on the eastern side of the Kwando.

The long, straight B8 tar road from Divundu to Kongola can be deceptive. Don't speed because animals can cross the road at any time. In the past, I've seen wild dogs, hyena and lion...

At Kongola, we turned right onto the

C49. You can't miss Mudumu National Park since the C49 runs through it, but it is a bit confusing when you get to the gate as there's no obvious park office. Look carefully for the signs or ask somebody to direct you – it's along a side road. The officer in charge was called Fabian, and he quickly helped us through the paperwork.

Fabian gave us directions to the campsites – you can't rely on Tracks4Africa as many of the routes are not on there yet. It was also the end of the rainy season, so a number of muddy pools remained. Some sections of road were overgrown with tall grass, so we fitted our radiator seed net. There were no clear markings on the road either, but we managed to find Nakatwa scout camp, which is close to the first of the three campsites in Mudumu.

We were booked into Campsite #2 for the night, which is about 900m from the scout camp. It was a nicely shaded stand with a termite mound between the trees. We got a good old scare around sunset when a herd of elephants came crashing through the trees behind the termite mound!

They moved off into thicker bush and we recovered sufficiently to cook some steak before heading to bed. To add to the wilderness appeal, we were woken during the night with lions roaring not far away.

We went for a drive the next morning to see if we could find the lions, but we just found their spoor. On a short loop we saw elephants, giraffe, impala and hippo. We moved to Campsite #1 for the night – it's the closest to the scout camp (about 350m) but it has a better view of the swamps than #2. The shade during the day was skimpy, and because the baboons slept in the trees, it was quite smelly. But, hey, we were here for the wilderness and the view made up for it. Fish-eagles called at sunset and elephants browsed on the other side of the water. Cheers!

Mudumu is an off-the-beaten-track type of place, with a mixture of savannah grassland and riverine forest that reminded me of the nearby Linyanti area in Botswana. Only 4x4 vehicles are

allowed beyond the tar road, making it an adventurer's paradise.

As in Botswana parks like Moremi, the campsites are unfenced and the wild animals can roam as they please. There are no facilities and you need to be totally self-sufficient.

Frith and Deon from Shametu drove to Mudumu to meet up for one last *kuier*. They booked Campsite #3, which I think is by far the best. It's 3,7 km from the scout camp and right on the riverbank with beautiful views of the Kwando.

There's a well-built hide between Campsites #2 and #3. We spent two hours there in the afternoon and made a picnic of it. We saw some crocs, hippos and elephants, while birds like fork-tailed drongo, various species of bee-eater, fish-eagle, African jacana and pearl-spotted owlet provided extra entertainment. I'd love to come visit this park again in the dry season (we were there in April 2022) because you'll see more animals around the water.

The national parks in this part of Namibia – Bwabwata, Mudumu and nearby Nkasa Rupara – are not as famous as Botswana's Moremi or Chobe, but for a fraction of the price you can experience quite sublime stretches of wilderness. There are no crowds hogging the big sightings, no lines of tourists waiting to go on a sunset cruise.

If you're looking for wild encounters unmarred by human presence, then I can really recommend Mudumu. The wild camping rivals places like Moremi and Linyanti.

Indeed, the Caprivi is ideal for self-drive tourists who are into camping. Come with an open mind, be ready to rough it, and you'll be rewarded with experiences that you'll remember for a long time.

We only scratched the surface of what this region has to offer. We can't wait to return and explore Nkasa Rupara...

For accommodation options along the Kavango, Kwando and Zambezi, see page 116–122.



Still smokin'!

Whether you fly into Vic Falls for a quick escape, or if you arrive by road from nearby Kasane in Botswana, no visit to the Smoke That Thunders will ever disappoint. **Fiona McIntosh** pulled into town after a 15-year absence.

Standing on the Zimbabwean side of Batoka Gorge, the power of the water tumbling down the cliffs is astonishing. The spray drenches us and rainbows light up the mist. No matter how many times you've seen it, Victoria Falls always takes your breath away.

I'm part of a small media group that flew in from Cape Town and Joburg. We're here to see how the Vic Falls community has weathered the Covid storm and pulled together despite tough times.

Across the 60m chasm, on the Zambian bank, is Livingstone Island. In November 1855, the missionary-explorer David Livingstone became the first European to see this spectacle. Paddling down the Zambezi River, his party could see the columns of spray from miles away. Livingstone got out of his canoe and crept to the edge of the gorge. The water exploding into a fine spray "gave the idea of snow", he noted in awe.

A statue of Livingstone looks out from the western end of the gorge. "The most wonderful sight I had seen in Africa" is how he described the view.

Our guide Tinashe Sithole explains how the waterfall was formed by geological upheaval millions of years ago, and how the constant spray has helped grow a rainforest – a biodiversity hotspot alive with monkeys, bushbuck, trumpeter hornbills, sunbirds and firefinches.

A double rainbow has us all snapping away. The daytime version is spectacular, but there's also a monthly full-moon

viewing when the moonlight bounces off the spray to create a pale lunar rainbow, or moonbow.

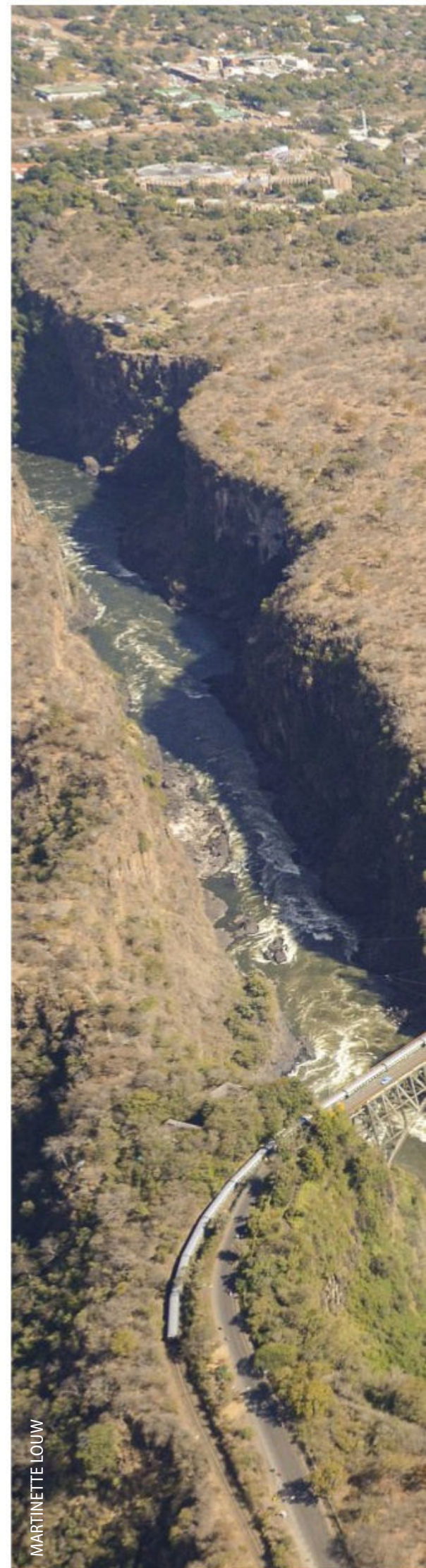
We detour off the main path to every viewpoint. We study the black basalt cliffs and the cascades of the Devil's Cataract, Main Falls, Horseshoe Falls, Rainbow Falls and the Eastern Cataract. I'm envious of the revellers in Devil's Pool on Livingstone Island – a natural swimming hole right on the edge. The view from there must be insane.

Distracted by birdsong and selfies, our contingent of journalists and photographers finally arrives at Danger Point overlooking the Boiling Pot, where the churning brown Zambezi takes a right turn into Batoka Gorge. It's November and the river is almost at its lowest. There are sections of exposed cliff between the main streams, rather than the continuous curtain you see in the wet season. I've been here in May at the height of the river flow, when the spray rises to 400m and is visible from 50km away. But even now, at low water, the experience is no less magical.

It's great to be back

After checking out the falls, we hit the town and say a toast at The River Brewing Co craft brewery. Wandering along the main drag, I'm impressed by how well landscaped everything is. It feels safe to walk around, which is great.

We poke our heads into the women's market, attracted by the colourful aprons



MARTINETTE LOUW





KAZA WHAT?

The **Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area**, or KAZA for short, is a massive collaborative effort between Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Angola and Namibia to link their various national parks and game reserves in the Kavango and Zambezi river basins. The initiative will help secure animal corridors to ensure natural migrations, and develop sustainable tourism initiatives in the long term.

 kavangozambezi.org

GET ON THE BUS

The hop-on-hop-off **Bamba Bus** links the suburbs, the main shopping areas, the falls and the eateries. A ticket costs US\$10 (R173) per person per day, which includes an evening restaurant run.

There's also the **Bamba Tram**, which runs to the bridge every morning – guests can enjoy historical talks about the bridge and the railway (US\$40/R692 per person). In the evenings there's a sundowner trip (US\$40/R692 per person) to the Jafuta Siding about 12 km from town, overlooking Zambezi National Park.

Kids under 12 pay half-price for all the above rates.

 bambabus.co.zw

and tablecloths on display, and we browse the stone and wood sculptures across the road. Then we check out all the cafés, galleries and craft shops on Elephant's Walk – Vic Falls' trendy artisanal mall.

I was once a white-water kayaker and the Zambezi was my playground for the better part of a decade, but I haven't been back in 15 years. Dubbed "the adventure capital of Africa" back then, the town is still renowned for its rafting, bungee jumping, ziplines and other extreme adventures, as well as being one of the gateways to the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Park, the biggest transfrontier conservation area in the world. (*See the sidebar about KAZA. – Ed.*)

But much has changed. The scruffy village that I remember has bloomed into a bohemian little city with a range of accommodation spots from backpacker lodges to boutique hotels, and with gastropubs, new restaurants and music venues to complement the diverse range of activities.

"Tourism is the lifeblood of Victoria Falls," says Shelley Cox, an old friend and the co-ordinator of the We Are Victoria Falls initiative. Shelley joins us for supper at PheZulu, a boutique guesthouse in the suburbs, which is our home for the next few days.

"We've always been a fairly tight-knit community here, and Covid pulled us even tighter. All the tourism operators, big and small, worked together to weather the storm of the pandemic."

We're up early the following morning to go horse riding in Victoria Falls National Park, upstream from the falls. Our guide Fawcett Mugande lifts his hand as a herd of elephants pass 50m ahead. We're all instantly a bit more focussed!

There are plenty more sightings on our two-hour ride. Curious giraffe study us through their long eyelashes, and we get close to herds of zebra and kudu. This is what makes Vic Falls so special – the town has embraced its wild surrounds and works hard to maintain its natural heritage.

Surprisingly, given how slick and

efficient everything has been so far, there's no sign of our transfer vehicle when we return to the stables. Our driver Lewis Mangaba eventually arrives covered in dust, and he has a good excuse: He'd driven to the riverbank and walked a short distance to do some birdwatching while he waited, but then elephants arrived and stopped right between him and where the minibus was parked. He had to leopard crawl through the bush to get back to the vehicle!

After a quick stop at the nearby Big Tree, a baobab estimated to be at least a thousand years old, we hop into a game vehicle for a drive through Zambezi National Park. Our guide here is Sam Mushandu and he's a natural: sharp-eyed and eared, identifying hornbills, rollers and other birds, and everything else as we go.

Into the river

Time for another upstream adventure... We're dropped off at the Chundu picnic site in the park, on a beautiful section of river about a 90-minute drive from Vic Falls. This is the start of our "mobile safari" with Victoria Falls Canoeing Company.

After a safety briefing by owner Prince Ngwenya, we board the two-person inflatable rafts, also known as "crocs". There are real crocodiles in the river, and hippos too, but the latter are territorial and if we follow the guides and listen to their instructions, we'll avoid their territories and we should be fine. It's all very reassuring, but there's still an air of nervous excitement among the group.

Being on the river is soothing. The current carries us downstream through the channels, where we navigate a few short rapids and manoeuvre around pods of yawning hippos. But it's mostly a mellow voyage – a chance to admire the kingfishers, herons and other waterbirds, and the waterberry, fig and sausage trees that line the banks.

Late afternoon, we pull out on a sandbank and scramble up to our temporary camp, a village of tents

overlooking the river, each with stretcher beds and sleeping bags. The kettle is on the fire, a bucket shower is set up, and sundowners and a bush braai are on the menu. The night sky is like a planetarium. We sit around the fire listening to owls hooting and water lapping the shore.

More confident the next morning – and more in tune with the river’s moods – we paddle downstream for four hours to a spot near Boulders Pass, an unusual hilly outcrop in the mostly flat landscape. We take out there and drive back through the park past the public riverside campsites that are happily occupied by self-drive tourists and other mobile safari companies.

On our second-last day in town, we head to House of Zulu in Monde Village south of Vic Falls via the airport road. House of Zulu was started by Brian and Monica Zulu, young entrepreneurs who returned to Zimbabwe a couple of years ago after working and travelling abroad. Their off-grid restaurant specialises in pizzas and braai cuisine, made with veggies and herbs from their garden.

After lunch, Brian gives us a crash course in how to manage a 330cc quad bike and we head into the village. We meet Mr Mpala, the headman who tells us about the challenges the community faces, including having to live and farm side by side with elephants.

And later, we meet at a “secret” bush location, which turns out to be the town’s helicopter pad. The team from Safari Butler serves a mean pop-up dinner and astronomy fundi Sisa Mathunzie gives us a tour of the night sky.

What a day!

Before we leave Vic Falls, we head down to The Lookout Café on the edge of Batoka Gorge. As part of a drive to ensure that tourism here becomes more inclusive and accessible, the railing is etched with Braille that describes the view and the history of the Victoria Falls Bridge for visitors who are sight-impaired. (Since our visit, similar Braille rails have been installed elsewhere



VICTORIA FALLS CANOEING COMPANY



THE RIVER BREWING CO



VICTORIA FALLS WOMEN'S MARKET



THE LOOKOUT CAFÉ



THE BIG TREE



BAMBA TRAM

LESANNE PHOTOGRAPHY

ZIMBABWE



QUAD BIKING WITH HOUSE OF ZULU

including the rainforest, at the airport, and in the city centre.)

The river rafts in the gorge below seem tiny because we're so high up, and I recall with nostalgia the days when I rode the ferocious rapids in my kayak. As I ran the wave trains alongside those inflatable rafts, I'd hear the excited shrieks over the roar of the water. The memory brings a smile to my face: The tourists down there are having the ride of their lives.

I sip a cappuccino and think about the last few days. The activities we did are a far cry from the high-adrenaline offerings of the past, and I'm okay with that. Maybe I'm getting old!

Vic Falls has changed and it's changed for the better. It has become a diverse destination for all sorts of travellers, with a conservation-driven ethos. And the collaborative efforts that have helped spur a quick, post-Covid recovery give hope for an even brighter future.

ACTIVITIES

See the falls: US\$20 (R346) per person for entry – it costs the same on the Zimbabwean and Zambian sides. A guided tour on the Zim side costs US\$24 (R415) per person, which excludes park fees but includes transfers to and from your hotel.

Zambezi Horse Safaris: US\$105 (R1 817) per person for 2–3 hours, plus US\$20 (R346) per person park fee.
📍 zambezihorsetrails.com

Victoria Falls Canoeing Company: US\$160 (R2 768) per person for a two-day/one-night trip, plus US\$17 (R294) per person park fee. Search Facebook for "Victoria falls canoeing company".

Safari Butler Stargazing Dinner Experience: US\$160 (R2 768) per person. 📍 safari.butler.com

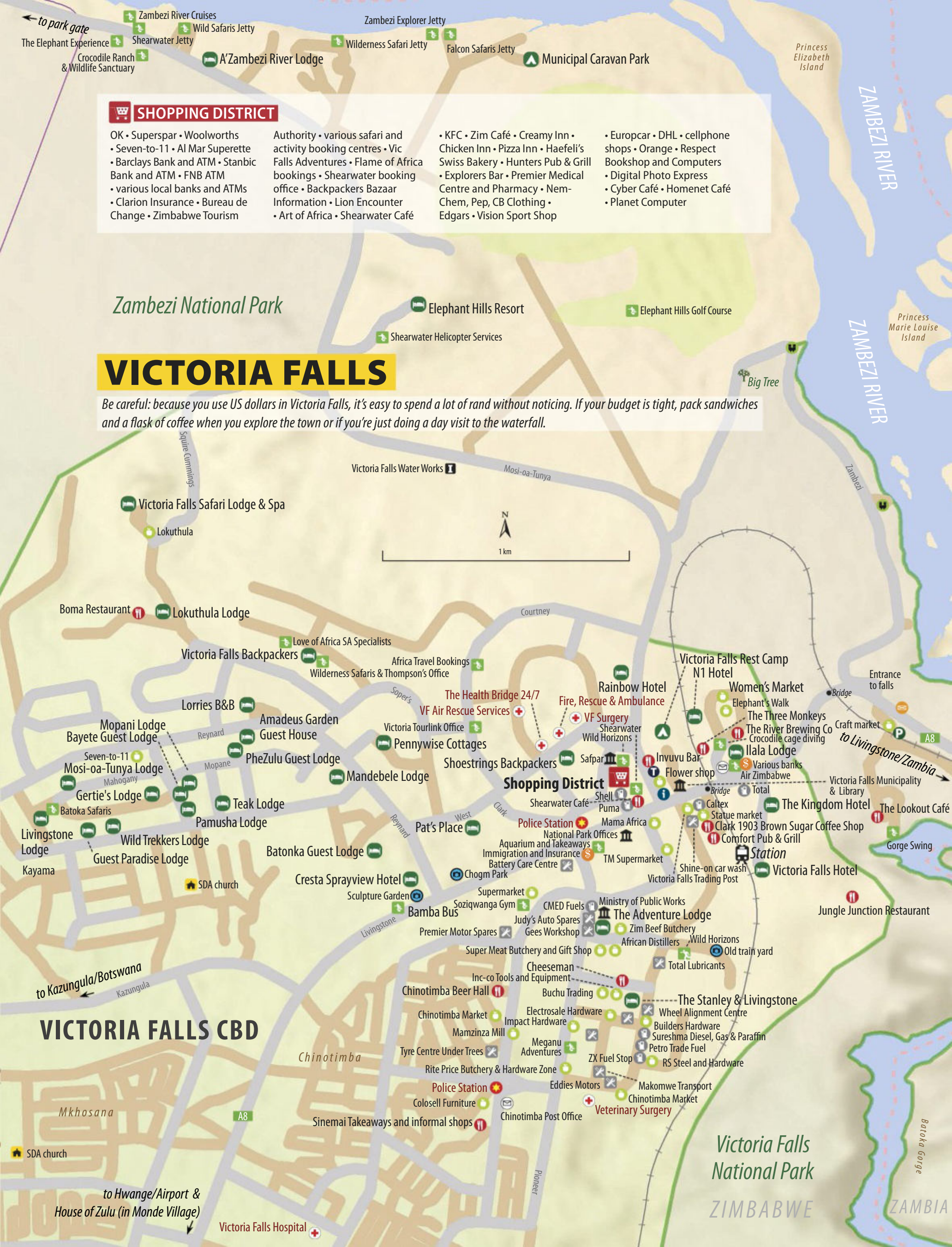
House of Zulu quad bike village tour: US\$55 (R952) per person, including hotel transfer.
📍 houseofzulu.co.zw

For accommodation options, see page 124.

Fiona was a guest of Boundless Southern Africa, working in collaboration with We Are Victoria Falls and the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.

📍 wearevictoriafalls.com





SHOPPING DISTRICT

OK • Superspar • Woolworths
• Seven-to-11 • Al Mar Superette
• Barclays Bank and ATM • Stanbic
Bank and ATM • FNB ATM
• various local banks and ATMs
• Clarion Insurance • Bureau de
Change • Zimbabwe Tourism

Authority • various safari and
activity booking centres • Vic
Falls Adventures • Flame of Africa
bookings • Shearwater booking
office • Backpackers Bazaar
Information • Lion Encounter
• Art of Africa • Shearwater Café

• KFC • Zim Café • Creamy Inn •
Chicken Inn • Pizza Inn • Haefeli's
Swiss Bakery • Hunters Pub & Grill
• Explorers Bar • Premier Medical
Centre and Pharmacy • Nem-
Chem, Pep, CB Clothing •
Edgars • Vision Sport Shop

• Europcar • DHL • cellphone
shops • Orange • Respect
Bookshop and Computers
• Digital Photo Express
• Cyber Café • Homenet Café
• Planet Computer

VICTORIA FALLS

Be careful: because you use US dollars in Victoria Falls, it's easy to spend a lot of rand without noticing. If your budget is tight, pack sandwiches and a flask of coffee when you explore the town or if you're just doing a day visit to the waterfall.

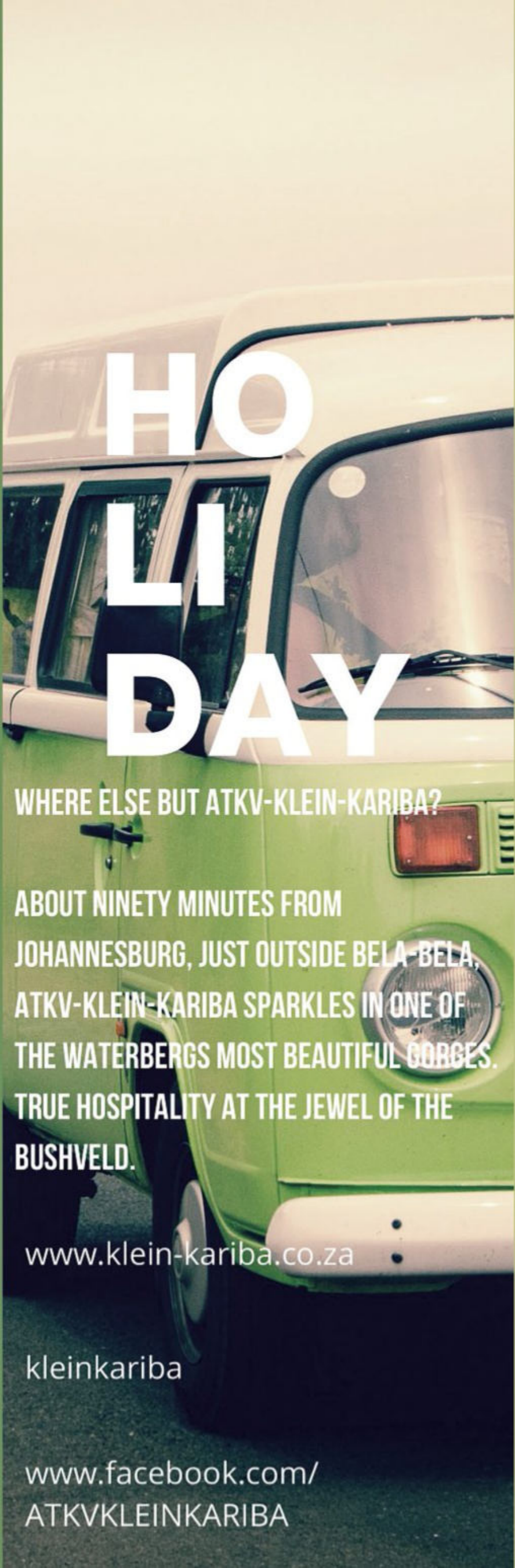
VICTORIA FALLS CBD

A photograph of two young girls with curly hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are positioned in front of a dark-colored tent with a floral patterned valance. The girl on the left is wearing a blue shirt, and the girl on the right is wearing a red shirt with a floral pattern.

FAMILY

ATKV

KLEIN-KARIBA

A photograph of a vintage car, likely a Volkswagen Kombi, painted in a light green color with a white roof and white trim. The car is parked on a paved surface, and the background is a soft, hazy landscape.

HOLIDAY

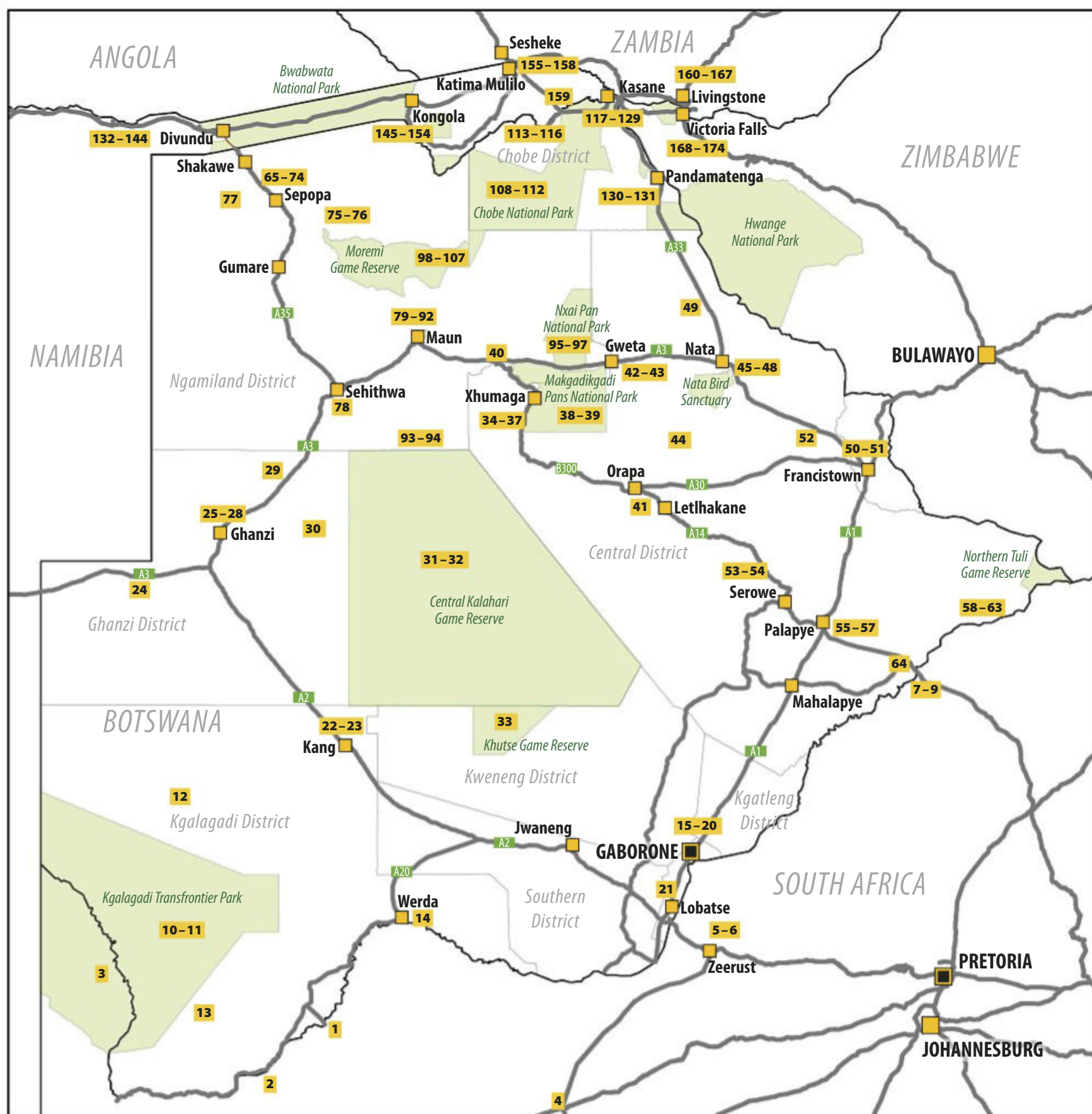
WHERE ELSE BUT ATKV-KLEIN-KARIBA?

ABOUT NINETY MINUTES FROM JOHANNESBURG, JUST OUTSIDE BELA-BELA, ATKV-KLEIN-KARIBA SPARKLES IN ONE OF THE WATERBERGS MOST BEAUTIFUL GORGES. TRUE HOSPITALITY AT THE JEWEL OF THE BUSHVELD.

www.klein-kariba.co.za

[kleinkariba](#)

www.facebook.com/ATKVKLEINKARIBA



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

RATES. The rates listed here are subject to change and vary depending on the season. In Botswana, winter is considered peak season. Summer is low season and some places drop their rates. Always contact an establishment in advance and enquire about the latest prices. When making your booking, mention that you're a SADC citizen – you might qualify for a discount. Also ask about discounts

for children. Some rates include the mandatory government “bed levy”; others exclude this.

MONEY. Rates are listed in pula with the approximate rand value in brackets. Use this as a guideline only, since the exchange rate fluctuates. In Botswana, you will mostly have to pay using pula. In Namibia you can use rand; you'll need US\$ in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

CONTACT DETAILS. Some places are difficult to reach by phone. Send an e-mail, or contact them via Facebook or WhatsApp. When you call from South Africa, use the international dialling codes as listed.

GPS CO-ORDINATES. We have used the decimal degree format throughout this guide for the GPS co-ordinates listed. Set your GPS to the same format

to avoid confusion.

If you plan to explore wilderness areas, purchase reliable GPS products from tracks4africa.co.za

MAP NUMBERS. The numbers on the map above refer to corresponding numbers in our accommodation guide for the various parks, towns and tourist areas.

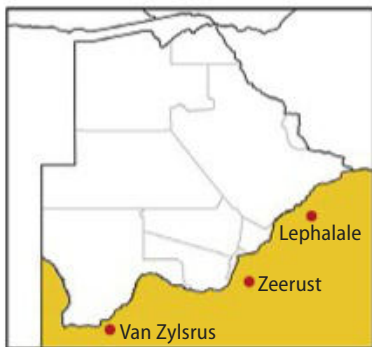
PLACES TO STAY

A holiday in Botswana means you'll be driving long distances and a good overnight spot is a necessity. Our writers recommend these places in Botswana and along its borders. Unless stated otherwise, the rates listed here are for 2023. Use them as a guideline only. Always call or e-mail to double-check beforehand.



TOAST COETZER

TWEE RIVIEREN, K GALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK



SOUTH AFRICA

NORTHERN CAPE

Middelputs and McCarthy's Rest are small border posts north-west of Kuruman. If you plan to enter Botswana through the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, you have to use the Two Rivers border post at Twee Rivieren.

1 Cullinan Guest Farm

Next to the R380, about 17 km from McCarthy's Rest border post. Three campsites with electricity: R120 per person. Four chalets: R350 per person; R200 per child under 12. The chalets sleep 10 in total; they share a communal kitchen, dining area and bathrooms. Firewood is available.

GPS: S26.33888 E22.61430

☎ 082 491 6432 (Wilma-lé)

✉ wilmaleoost@gmail.com

"Cullinan Guest Farm" on Facebook

2 Van Zylsrus Hotel

In the town of Van Zylsrus, about 40 km from the Middelputs border post. They have big rooms, a good restaurant and a swimming pool. 2022 rates: en suite rooms from R670 per person sharing, breakfast included. Family room with a double bed and a bunk bed R670 per adult and R200 per school-going child, breakfast included. There's also a self-catering flat for four people: R1 500 per night (breakfast excluded). You can have a picnic on a dune as the sun sets or organise a ride on a donkey cart.

☎ 082 777 2301

✉ vanzylsrushotel.com

3 Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

The South African side of the park is more accessible than the Botswana side and most of the major game-viewing roads are passable in a 4x2. (Make sure your vehicle has decent ground clearance and remember to lower tyre pressure a bit – the park roads can be very corrugated.) There's a variety of accommodation in the park, ranging from big rest camps (Twee Rivieren, Mata-Mata and Nossob) to smaller wilderness camps, catering to campers and those who prefer more comfort. The park is hugely popular – book at least six months in advance. You'll find all the info and pricing at sanparks.org

NORTH WEST

Many SA tourists heading to Botswana drive through Vryburg towards the Ramatlabama border post, or through Zeerust towards Skilpadshek.

4 De Hoek Guesthouse

In Vryburg. They offer safe parking, free Wi-Fi, aircon and easy access to shops. The owners go out of their way for guests, even if you pull in after dark. Double room from R750 per night. Family room (sleeps 3 – 4) R950 per night. Breakfast R100 per person. Vryburg is 185 km from the border post at Ramatlabama.

Where? Corner of Naas Raubenheimer and Harry Walker streets.

☎ 082 779 3973 (Corné)

✉ dehoekvryburg@gmail.com

🌐 dehoekvryburg.co.za

5 Tapologo Lodge

Just a kilometre east of Zeerust, next to the N4. They have 18

chalets and one bigger suite.

2022 rates: The chalets sleep two people each and cost R950 per night, breakfast included. The bigger family unit has a double bed and a sleeper couch and costs R1 500 per night, with breakfast.

Tapologo has its own restaurant so you don't have to mission to find food – just eat, shower and go to bed. Because it's right next to the N4, you can be back on the road at the crack of dawn. (It's about 55 km to the Skilpadshek border post.)

GPS: S25.54108 E26.10824

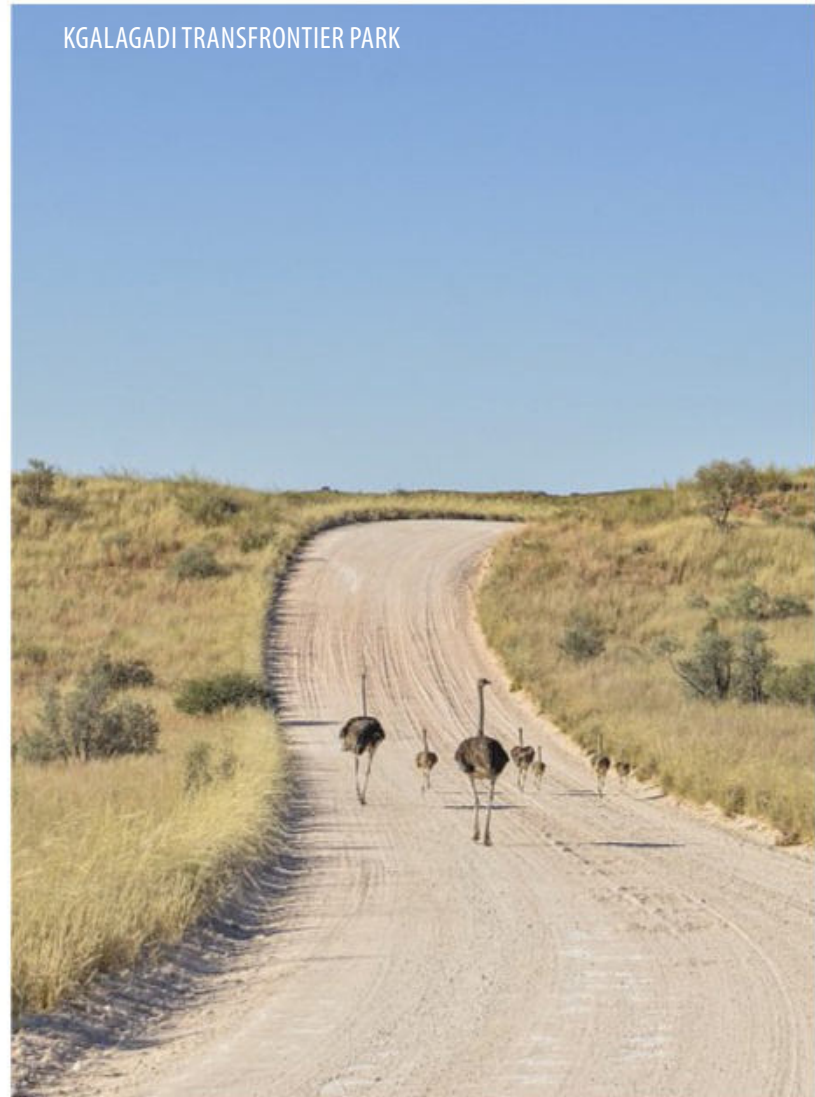
☎ 018 642 2444

🌐 tapologolodge.co.za

6 Doornrivier 4x4

The turn-off to this self-catering guest farm is about 9 km north of Zeerust along the R49 (the road to Tlokwen border post, 90 km further). They have a large farmhouse, perfect for a big tour group. There are four rooms. Three rooms can sleep three people each

KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK



TOAST COETZER

A very popular camping spot, only a stone throw away from Groblersbrug/Martins Drift border post



hello@moriticamp.co.za
www.moriticamp.co.za

Call: +27 79 515 6357
Whatsapp: +27 79 690 4432

MORITI
• BUSH CAMP •



MORITI BUSH CAMP

TOAST COETZER

GO! says: When organising your trip, budget at least three hours to cross the border. Although it probably won't take longer than an hour, it is best to plan for unexpected delays. Don't be tempted to push too hard on the first day of your holiday. Rather stay on the South African side and tackle the border post when you're fresh and rested in the morning.

(R600 per room per night); one room sleeps four (R700 per night).

There are a couple of other units on the same premises: twin-sleeper unit from R500 per night; four-sleeper from R800 per night. Camping R120 per adult; R60 per child younger than 13; free for children under 7. Stay longer and enjoy their 4x4 trails. You can also cycle, swim or just enjoy the farm.

GPS: S25.48165 E26.11916

☎ 083 596 2143 (Rina)

LIMPOPO

Grobler's Bridge, north of Lephalale, is one of the most popular border posts because it's on the N11. The smaller Stockpoort border post is a quiet option, but keep in mind that there's a gravel road waiting for you on the Botswana side.

7 Baobab's Farm Cottages & Baobab's Bushveld Rest

Baobab's Bushveld Rest is in Marnitz on the N11 (Grobler's

Bridge is 35 km away). Self-catering accommodation from R600 per night for two people. Baobab's Farm Cottages are 7,5 km from Marnitz along a dirt road, in the direction of Swartwater. Self-catering R720 per night for two people, plus R220 per extra person. *go!* readers get a special 10% discount – enquire.

GPS Baobab's Farm Cottages:

S23.10011 E28.22967

☎ 082 708 1928 (Anél)

✉ anel.malan@worldonline.co.za

✉ baobabaccommodation.co.za

8 Kokomori Birder's Lodge

Kokomori is near Tom Burke; 25 km from Grobler's Bridge. The self-catering stone chalets are next to the Limpopo River (R750 per night for two people; R900 for four). There's also a private bush campsite for one group (R350 per vehicle); no power. Discounts for big groups and if you stay more than one night – enquire when you book.

GPS: S23.07129 E27.92567

☎ 082 962 8588 (Minda)

☎ 082 893 5675 (Danie)

✉ kokomori@mweb.co.za

9 Moriti Bush Camp

This beautiful place has two small, exclusive campsites next to the Limpopo River, 3,5 km from the Grobler's Bridge border post. Max eight people per campsite. Electricity is available at Nyala Camp (R320 per person); the more rustic Matopi Camp doesn't have power (R270 per person). There are also two campsites next to a waterhole: Kingfisher and Jacana (R250 per person) can each accommodate six people and each has a donkey boiler for hot water, a power point and a braai.

Kids under 12 stay for free. Moriti is closed from 1 November to 31 March. If you book for three nights or more, or if your group is bigger than eight people, you qualify for a discount – enquire when you book.

GPS: S23.01663 E27.93847

☎ 079 515 6357 (Adele)

✉ moriticamp.co.za



MPAYATHUTLWA CAMPSITE (#2), K GALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK

SOUTHERN BOTSWANA

KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK

This park, which includes the popular Mabuasehube section, is a 4x4 destination for travellers who like their wilderness undiluted. You must be completely self-sufficient.

10 Campsites in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

Like other national parks in Botswana, the campsites on the Botswana side of the Kgalagadi are run by different concessions. Most are in Mabuasehube – the eastern section of the park. The Mabuasehube and Mpayathutlwa camps (both in Mabua) are managed by the Inter-Tourism Group.

The rest of the campsites are “public” camps, managed by the Botswana Department of Wildlife

and National Parks (DWNP): Entrance Gate, Bosobogolo, Monamodi, Lesholoago, Khiding, Matopi, Sizatswe, Thupapedi, Kaa, Swartpan, Gnus Gnus, Polentswa, Rooiputs and Two Rivers.

The three campsites used only on the 4x4 trails are also run by DWNP: Sesatswe, Lang Rambuka (Polentswa Wilderness Trail – three days) and Mosomane (Mabua-Nossob Wilderness Trail – two days).

You can enter the park from South Africa or Botswana. If you stay inside the park boundaries, you can move around on both sides without having to show your passport. However, when you enter from South Africa and exit into Botswana, or the other way around, you must get your passport stamped at the Twee Rivieren border post. If you use

this border post, or the one between South Africa and Namibia at Mata-Mata, you must stay in the park for at least two nights. Park fees: P20 (R27) per person per day; P4 (R5) per vehicle per day.

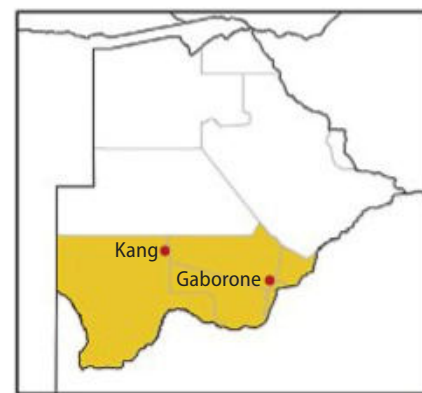
Camping at Inter-Tourism Group camps (Mabuasehube and Mpayathutlwa): P180 (R241) per adult; half-price for children aged 8–17. These are the 2022 rates but if you book this year, they’re valid for 2023. ✉ travelloptions@inter-tourismgroup.com; ✉ campsites@inter-tourismgroup.com

Camping at the public camps (all the others): P30 (R40) per person.

Wilderness trails: about P200 (R268) per person per day (camping rate is not included).

☎ 00 267 686 1265

✉ dwnp@gov.bw





BETWEEN KANYE AND GABORONE

TOAST COETZER

GPS Name Pan bush camp:

S24.20060 E21.07282

GPS Kaa Pan bush camp:

S24.34088 E20.75285

☎ 00 267 75 858 960

📄 zutshwa.com (download the PDF brochures for route info)

KHAWA

Khawa is a tiny village in the dunes – do your grocery shopping somewhere else!

13 Wolwepan Bush Camp

This camp is about 40 km from Khawa, in the adjacent KD15 concession, a pristine stretch of Kalahari. It's a special spot because no one ever comes here. A small pride of lions roams the area and gemsbok hang out in the camp. There are no facilities, only a pit toilet and a shelter. Bring your own water. Camping about P450 (R603) per night for a group of up to six people. P200 (R268) per vehicle per day. Contact the Khawa Community Trust to arrange a visit. During winter there might be hunting in the concession – check beforehand.

GPS: S25.98350 E21.49752

☎ 00 267 73 636 319 (Piet Bok)

WERDA

The filling station in Werda has closed down. Get fuel in Bray or in Tshabong.

11 Ta Shebube lodges

This group has two luxury lodges in the Kgalagadi. Both are accessible from the main game-viewing route (4x2) that runs along the Nossob riverbed from Twee Rivieren on the SA side.

Rooiputs Lodge is 25 km north of Twee Rivieren and has chalets. 2022 rates: from P2 000 (R2 680) per person, including all meals; or P2 450 (R3 283) per person including meals and game drives.

Unfortunately, Polentswa Lodge (60 km north of Nossob) was damaged by a fire in September 2021 and has not yet reopened for bookings.

☎ 00 267 75 090 254

ZUTSHWA

A small village north of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.

12 Zutshwa Stop Over & KD2 bush camps

At Zutshwa Stop Over, you can camp for P100 (R134) per person, or you can stay in a twin-sleeper room for P300 (R402) per night. The area between Zutshwa and the Kaa gate into the Kgalagadi is a Wildlife Management Area called KD2 (Kgalagadi District 2). You need a permit to drive through – get one in Zutshwa at the self-service kiosk for P50 (R67) per vehicle; 4x4 only.

There are two bush camps at Name Pan and Kaa Pan with no facilities. Camping P100 (R134) per person. Camping in the restricted area (Towe, Zonye, Kgane or Peach pans) P300 (R402) per person; pre-booking is compulsory.

GPS permit kiosk:

S24.14193 E21.24628

GPS Zutshwa Stop Over:

S24.14334 E21.24837

DID YOU KNOW?

In Otse, a small town between Gaborone and Lobatse, you can see a breeding colony of Cape vultures. If you reach the GPS point below, you'll be at the foot of the Manyelanong Hill. Look up!

GPS: S25.05999 E25.75472



CORNWALL
— SAFARI LODGE —

Easily accessible between the Werda and Bray border posts on the Botswana side of the Molopo.

Great for those on their way from South Africa to Botswana or tour groups en route to the Central Kalahari, Khutse or Moremi, Mabuaseube and Shakawi.

Glam camping, 7 showers and 6 toilets.
Rooms are comfortable and there are 2 braai areas.
Swimming pool, tennis court and 2 bushcamps.



14 Cornwall Safari Lodge

One of our southern Botswana favourites. Camping P195 (R261) per adult; P100 (R134) per child aged 6 – 16; free for kids under 6. Rooms from P995 (R1 333) per night for two people sharing. There's a restaurant.

GPS: S25.26301 E23.48600

☎ 072 798 5051 (Heather)

🌐 cornwallsafaris.co.za

Mondior Hotel is in the CBD and has self-catering suites. Both offer Wi-Fi, air conditioning, swimming pools and restaurants. From about P1 345 (R1 802) per night for two people.

GPS Walmont Hotel:

S24.64062 E25.87841

GPS Mondior Hotel:

S24.66995 E25.92775

☎ 0860 777 900 (in SA)

🌐 peermont.com

GABORONE

The capital is busy during rush hour – avoid the A1 between Gaborone and Lobatse from 4 pm to 6 pm. Wait out the traffic at the Gaborone Yacht Club. (It's a thing!)

15 Peermont Hotels

If you're dusty, tired and in need of a good meal, a stay at one of these casino hotels in town may be the solution. The four-star Walmont Hotel is at the Grand Palm Hotel Casino and Convention Resort and offers luxury rooms. The three-star

16 Mokolodi Nature Reserve

You're on a bush holiday, right? Don't stay in Gabs proper, rather go to this reserve 9 km south of the capital. The campsite has five stands – our favourites are Korwe and Blue Thorn. Sites are for a maximum of eight people. 2022 rates: P140 (R188) per adult; P70 (R94) per child aged 5 – 12. There's no power; donkey boiler for hot showers. Wood for sale: P50 (R67). A chalet for up to eight people costs P1 570 (R2 104) per night during the week or P1 770 (R2 372) per night on weekends and public holidays. Conservation levy



FRANÇOIS HAASBROEK



TLOU
SAFARI LODGE

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE CHOBE NATIONAL PARK

- Self Catering Accommodation
- Victoria Falls Day Trips
- Game Drives
- Boat Cruises
- Bird Watching
- Conveniently located near
Tlou Safari Mall & Filling Station

GIVE US A CALL: +267 75 222 272



SOUTHERN BOTSWANA



P190 (R255) per vehicle.

GPS: S24.73893 E25.81610

📞 00 267 316 1955/6

✉️ mokolodi.com

17 Mokolodi Backpackers

About 2 km from Mokolodi Nature Reserve. There's no signage in front, just the number of the plot (86) and a big wooden gate. This is not your normal backpackers where you're filed into a dorm like sardines: They have separate units with communal ablution facilities and a communal kitchen. Luxury chalet with a kitchen and bathroom P1 075 (R1 441) per night; private chalet P920 (R1 233) per night for two people sharing; wooden cabin P800 (R1 072) for two people sharing; communal cabin (four beds) P310 (R415) per person. Camping P170 (R228) per person.

GPS: S24.74065 E25.82776

📞 00 267 74 11 1165

📞 072 043 6255 (SA bookings)

✉️ backpackers.co.bw

18 Lion Park Resort

The campsite is right behind Botswana's biggest (and only) amusement park, 13 km south of Gaborone next to the A1. The view isn't great – it's more of a quick stayover option. Campsites have power and there's a well-maintained ablution block. Bring your Jurgens: The sites have concrete slabs and shade netting. 2022 rate: Camping P120 (R161) per person.

GPS: S24.78739 E25.81724

📞 00 267 396 0575

✉️ info@lionpark.co.bw

19 The Kleynhans Home

Turn off the A1 about 10 km south of Gabs. Stefan and Linda Kleynhans go out of their way to make you feel at home. Book a room in the main building and make use of the braai area and swimming pool. Rooms have en suite bathrooms, aircon, Wi-Fi and a kitchenette.

The popular Bush Camp is close

by, with three luxury en suite safari tents that share a kitchen. There's a normal braai, a gas braai and a swimming pool. Rooms and tents R1 500 per night for two people sharing. Groups get discount.

GPS: S24.76585 E25.82141 (turn-off from A1: S24.75804 E25.82976)

📞 00 267 71 377 100

📞 071 815 0015

"The Kleynhans Home" on Facebook

20 The Lazy Duchess B&B

This guesthouse is just north of Gabs in the suburb of Phakalane, off the A1 to Francistown. It offers safe parking, a swimming pool, and it's close to a mall. There are five rooms (one is wheelchair-friendly, two have self-catering facilities): P995 (R1 333) per night for two people.

Where? Plot 21532, Dille Close, Phakalane

GPS: S24.57390 E25.97645

📞 072 798 5051 (Heather)

✉️ strumper.heather@gmail.com

LOBATSE

If you want to overnight near the Skilpadshek border post, Lobatse is your best option.

21 Lord Cumberland Hotel

Standard room from P1 350 (R1 809) per night for two people. Weekend special: P950 (R1 273) per room; breakfast included. For dinner, order a proper Botswana steak in the restaurant. If there's a party going on in the bar, join in.

GPS: S25.20738 E25.67708

📞 00 267 533 0281

✉️ lch.co.bw

KANG

Kang might be tiny, but it's an important halfway stop on the Trans-Kgalagadi highway and therefore has filling stations and shops.

22 Kalahari Rest

This is a great place to spend your first or last night in Botswana. It's about 25 km north of town. Pitch your tent on soft sand under camel thorn trees. Camping with power P170 (R228) per adult; P85 (R114) per child under 12. Chalet for two to three people P960 (R1 286) per night. Standard twin room P850 (R1 139). Game drives can be arranged. Swimming pool, restaurant.

GPS: S23.52175 E22.60788

📞 00 267 73 774 009

✉️ bmhe@it.bw

✉️ kalahariest.com

23 Nkisi Guesthouse

In Kang, behind the Ultra Stop filling station. 2022 rates: double rooms from P910 (R1 219) per night. Family room from P1 251 (R1 676) per night. Safe parking, braai spots, a pool and a restaurant. Contact them for ZAR rates.

GPS: S23.68103 E22.76577

📞 00 267 651 7374

✉️ nkisiguesthouse25@gmail.com

CENTRAL BOTSWANA

TSHOOTSHA

This small town, previously known as Kalkfontein, is just off the A2 in the Ghanzi district.

24 Jungle Light Rest Camp

This camp on the outskirts of Tshootsha is also known as Riana's Campsite. It's right next to the A2. Camping costs P150 (R201) per person. Twin-sleeper safari tent P660 (R884) per night. Single rate is the same. Meals are available.

GPS: S22.13995 E20.86667

☎ 00 267 76 549 800

(Riana, WhatsApp)

GHANZI

This Kalahari town is the focal point of a lively farming community. Ghanzi is a good overnight stop on your way from Maun to Namibia (or the other way around), but thanks to the excellent guest farms, you might end up staying longer. The area offers different

landscapes and experiences to what you'll find elsewhere in Botswana.

25 Kalahari Arms Hotel

The hotel is in town; it has a restaurant and a swimming pool. 2022 rates: twin room from P1 596 (R2 139) per night; family chalet from P1 805 (R2 419) per night for two adults and two children under 12. Rates include breakfast.

GPS: S21.69332 E21.64899

☎ 00 267 659 6298

✉ reservations@kalahariarms.co.bw

🌐 kalahariarms.co.bw

26 Tautona Lodge

This lodge is about 5 km north-east of Ghanzi, on a 10 000 ha game farm. 2022 rates: camping under trees, with power, P150 (R201) per person. Twin-sleeper tent P250 (R335) per person sharing. Twin room P410 (R549) per person sharing B&B. Twin-sleeper chalet from P535 (R717) per person

sharing B&B. Family chalet (two adults, two children) P1 625 (R2 178) per night B&B.

GPS: S21.70426 E21.70126

☎ 00 267 75 608 359

✉ tautonalodge@gmail.com

27 Ghanzi Trailblazers

The turn-off is 10 km south of Ghanzi on the A3. Follow the gravel road for 6 km. 2022 rates: campsite with water and electricity P120 (R161) per person. Twin chalet from P700 (R938) per night. You can sleep in a Bushman grass hut for P170 (R228) per person with bedding supplied, or P130 (R174) if you bring your own. Half-price for children under 12; free for kids under 5. Government bed levy P10 (R13) per person. Meals available; activities like guided walks on request.

GPS: S21.76544 E21.61044

☎ 00 267 7608 5790

☎ 00 267 7577 9314

✉ cathyabram01@gmail.com





HOLLANDIA

EAT HERE

Hollandia, Ghanzi

This great coffee shop and restaurant will floor you with its wide selection of tasty meals. And its speciality, here in the middle of the desert? Home-made ice-cream! Try the Oreo, coffee, or pecan-and-fudge flavours.

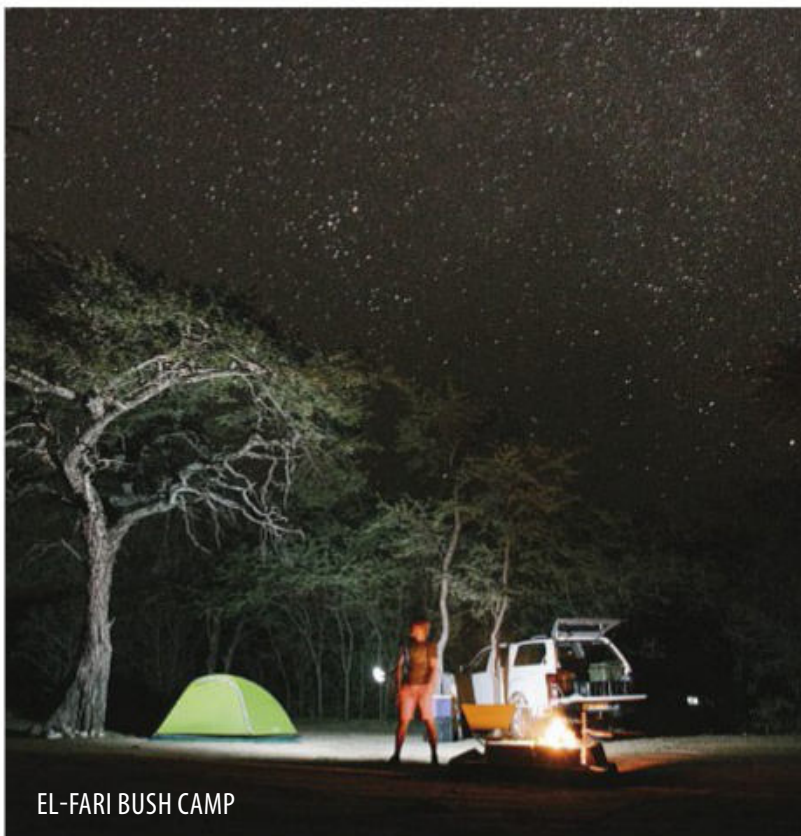
The full Hollandia breakfast (P95/R127) includes two eggs, bacon, beef sausage and baked beans; or order a hip snack like fried mac & cheese balls (P75/R101). Super hungry? Get the pork ribs and wings, which come with chips (P160/R214).

If you need braai meat for your camping trip, the Ghanzi Butchery is next door. Fill up the freezer!

Where? To the left of the A3, just before you exit Ghanzi to the north.

☎ 00 267 76 570 300 (Hollandia, Hanri)

☎ 00 267 72 811 108 (Ghanzi Butchery, Wiena)



EL-FARI BUSH CAMP

28 Palm Afrique Lodge

This private game reserve is about 15 km south of Ghanzi, off the A3. The lodge has lots of trees and a bar and swimming pool. The campsite has power, ablutions with hot showers, a scullery and braai facilities. Camping P200 (R268) per person. The lodge rooms are en suite and have Wi-Fi and fans. Double room from P1 250 (R1 675); family room from P1 700 (R2 278) – sleeps four or five people.

GPS: S21.78020 E21.69094

☎ 00 267 7675 0668 (reception)

✉ palmafriquelodge.com

29 El-Fari Bush Camp

Follow the A3 for 64 km north of Ghanzi, then turn left and drive another 1,5 km until you reach the homestead. The campsite is nearby – there are five stands under camel thorn and leadwood trees: P120 (R161) per person.

GPS: S21.35721 E22.13540

☎ 00 267 72120 800 (signal

is sporadic)

✉ web@elfari.co.za

30 Grassland Bushman Lodge

This remote lodge is 90 km east of Ghanzi, mostly along a 4x4 track. The drive takes two and a half hours and your passenger will have to open 15 farm gates! But it's a special place and well worth the trek. Cheetahs and leopards often drink at the lodge waterhole.

Camping US\$25 (R433) per person. Chalet accommodation from US\$335 (R5 796) per adult, including all meals, game drives and activities. Half-price for kids under 12.

They offer excursions into the veld with a San guide, plus a visit to the Rooibrakke community. You can drive along 4x4 tracks from the farm to the Xade and Tsau entrances into the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

GPS: S21.72228 E22.35857

☎ 087 057 1284

✉ grasslandbushmanlodge.com

CENTRAL KALAHARI & KHUTSE GAME RESERVES

These two reserves are often part of the same itinerary, which is why we've grouped them together. They're both 4x4-only destinations. You must be fully self-sufficient and take enough food, water and fuel. The reward is an unparalleled wilderness experience.

31 Campsites in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve

The public campsites are run by Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP); private campsites are run by the concession holder Bigfoot Tours. In our experience, Bigfoot doesn't respond well to general queries but if you e-mail them with a specific booking, they get to it pronto. The Bigfoot campsites are Passarge, Sunday Pan, Lekhubu Pan, Letiahau, Piper Pan and Motopi.

To book at a public site through DWNP, it's best to phone. Be ready with your list of campsites, and a list of alternative options if your preferred ones aren't available. Their sites are Deception, Kori, Leopard Pan, San Pan, Phokoje Pan, Qwee Pan, Bape, Molapo, Xaka, Xade, Kukama and Matswere.

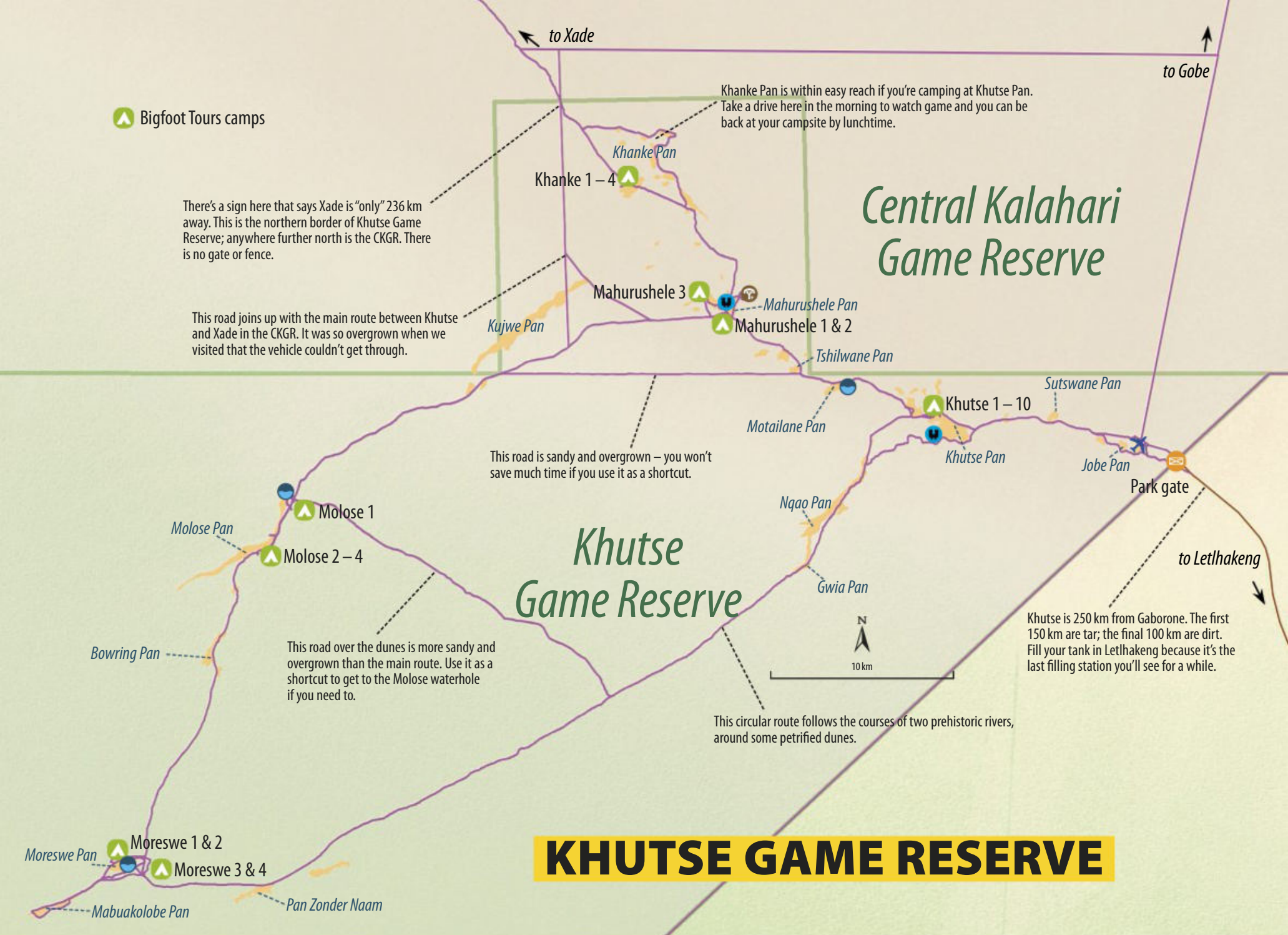
There's no difference between public and private campsites. You get a long drop and a bucket shower at both. There's no water or other amenities. Stands are not well marked, but you'll get a list of GPS co-ordinates at the gate to help you find your spot.

Park fees: P190 (R255) per person per day; P75 (R101) per vehicle per day.

Camping at public camps: P40 (R54) per person. ☎ 00 267 686 1265
✉ dwnp@gov.bw

Camping at Bigfoot Tours camps: P255 (R342) per adult; half-price for kids aged 8–15; free for kids under 7.
☎ 00 267 73 555 573

✉ bigfoottours.co.bw



32 Lodges in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve

There are two luxury lodges – Tau Pan Camp and Kalahari Plains Camp. They're in concession areas and the roads that lead to them are for lodge guests only. No "having a quick look"... Check their websites for details.

Tau Pan Camp: ☎ 00 267 686 1449
🌐 kwando.co.bw

Kalahari Plains Camp:
☎ 021 702 7500
🌐 wilderness-safaris.com

33 Khutse Game Reserve

Although Khutse is tiny compared to the CKGR, you can see just as many lions. The added bonus is that it's "only" a five-hour drive from Gaborone, which makes it more accessible for a shorter holiday.

Adventurous? Head north to the CKGR directly from Khutse, but be warned – it's far! (CKGR is best accessed from Ghanzi in the west, or from Rakops in the east. Khutse is best approached from the south.) All the campsites in Khutse are operated by Bigfoot Tours.

Park fees: P190 (R255) per person per day; P75 (R101) per car per day.

Camping: P255 (R342) per adult; half-price for kids aged 8 – 15; free for kids under 7.

Bigfoot Tours: ☎ 00 267 73 555 573
🌐 bigfoottours.co.bw

BOTETI RIVER

Most of the places to stay along the Boteti are accessible in a 4x2 – the B300 tar road runs parallel to the river from close to Mopipi,

to Motopi. This area is a good springboard for visits to the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Makgadikgadi Pans National Park.

34 Meno a Kwena

This luxury lodge is 20 km south-east of Motopi. Rates from US\$550 (R9 515) per person in summer (meals and game drives included).
☎ 021 001 1574

🌐 reservations@naturalselection.travel

35 Leroo La Tau

Twelve luxury thatched units on the banks of the Boteti, about 15 km north of Xhumaga village. Contact them for rates.

☎ 00 267 680 1494
🌐 desertdelta.com

36 Boteti River Camp

This neat camp is on the banks of the Boteti, on the edge of Xhumaga village. Camping (eight stands with power) US\$20 (R346) per adult; US\$15 (R259) per child aged 2 – 12. Chalet accommodation (eight units) from US\$105 (R1 816) per adult sharing DB&B; meru tent from US\$35 (R606) per adult sharing. Children under 12 get a discount.

This is the best place to base yourself if you want to explore the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, which is just across the river. There's a swimming pool and bar; book meals in advance.

GPS: S20.469404 E24.514594

☎ 00 267 686 3763

🌐 botetirivercamp.com



MAKGADIKGADI PANS NATIONAL PARK

2022 SADC rate: Entrance fee P190 (R255) per person; vehicle P75 (R101) per day. Pay in cash at the gate. Makgadikgadi's entrances are at Kumaga (south) and Phuduhudu (north, next to the A3 tar road). To cross the Boteti River from Xhumaga (the village) to Kumaga (entrance gate) you need to use the pont. It costs about P150 (R201) per car, one-way, or P250 (R335) if you're towing something. The pont operates from sunrise to sunset.

37 Rakops River Lodge

About 400 m from the B300 tar road; 7 km north of Rakops. Camping P130 (R174) per adult; P100 (R134) per child aged 4–14. Chalet accommodation from P700 (R938) per night for two. Family room (two adults, two kids) from P1 000 (R1 340) per night. Self-catering house with four rooms, each of which can be booked individually, from P1 250 (R1 675) per night for two people; P4 000 (R5 360) for the whole house (eight people). Meals are available in the restaurant – book in advance. They have a swimming pool and there's electricity available at the lodge and campsite.

GPS: S20.98664 E24.36260

☎ 00 267 71 434 129

✉ rakopsriverlodge.com

MAKGADIKGADI PANS NATIONAL PARK

This 4x4 park is a treat for anyone in search of peace and quiet. The game viewing can often be surprisingly good.

38 Kumaga

This campsite is next to the Boteti River, at the park's southern gate, also called Kumaga. SADC rates: Camping R250 per adult; R125 per child aged 8–17; R60 per child aged 5–7; free for kids under 5. They have showers and toilets, but that's it.

GPS: S20.45577 E24.51687

☎ 00 267 686 5365

✉ reservations@sklcamps.co.bw

✉ sklcamps.com

39 Njuca Hills & Tree Island

It's properly wild here! These camps are about 50 km east of the Kumaga

entrance gate, about 10 km apart from each other. You're going to be lonesome, tonight... Each camp has two stands and no water, but there are bucket showers (bring your own water) and long drops. 2022 rate: camping P175 (R235) per person.

GPS Njuca Hills:

S20.43075 E24.87337

GPS Tree Island:

S20.49017 E24.91743

☎ 00 267 318 0774

✉ dwnp@gov.bw

40 Leopard Plains Lodge

This eco-friendly tented camp is near the park, next to the A3. SADC rates: double tented room P2 900 (R3 886) per night, DB&B. Children 12 and older pay the adult rate unless they share with their parents – then it's P1 450 (R1 943) per child. P725 (R972) per child aged 6–12, sharing

ACCOMMODATION

with parents (max two adults and two children). Children under 6 sharing with their parents pay for meals only.

The camp runs on solar power, so the rooms don't have air conditioning, but there's a swimming pool to cool down in. You can go for a bush walk or a game drive or do an outing to Makgadikgadi Pans and Nxai Pan national parks.

GPS: S20.18424 E24.17027 (turn-off)
☎ 00 267 73 481 590 (lodge)
☎ 00 267 73 261 9724 (reservations)
🌐 leopardplains.com

LETLHAKANE

Letlhakane is a good place to refuel and buy supplies on your way to the Boteti River or Kubu Island. Remember, nearby Orapa is a closed diamond mining town – you can't drive in without security clearance.

41 Tuuthebe Lodge

Tuuthebe is 5 km north-west of Letlhakane, next to the A14. Camping (with power) P100 (R134) per person. Small safari tent with two single beds P310 (R415) per night; big safari tent with a double bed P410 (R549) per night. The self-catering units sleep four people: P775 (R1039) per night. Government bed levy P10 (R13) per person. They sell good braai packs and other meat products, as well as readymade meals. Order in advance. They offer self-drive 4x4 tours and tours to Kubu Island – enquire when you book.

GPS: S21.39748 E25.51623
☎ 00 267 72 121 913
🌐 tuuthebe.com

GWETA

Don't expect bright lights and a drive-thru. Rather refuel and shop in Maun or Nata.

42 Gweta Lodge

In town. Camping P120 (R161) per person; four-sleeper family room P1330 (R1782) per night. Five-sleeper family room (bunk beds) with aircon P1640 (R2198). Twin room with aircon from P1030 (R1380) per night. Government levy P10 (R13) per person per night. Meals are available and day outings can be arranged. Visit Ntwetwe Pan and a meerkat colony for P900 (R1206) per person for a half day or P1595 (R2137) per person for a full day, including a packed breakfast and lunch.

GPS: S20.20944 E25.25794
☎ 00 267 621 2220
🌐 gwetalodge.co.za/accommodation

43 Planet Baobab

Planet Baobab is 5 km from Gweta. The lodge is laid out among a cluster of baobabs. January to March 2023: camping P115 (R154)

per person or P98 (R131) on an overlander site. Twin-sleeper hut from P1160 (R1554) per person sharing. Four-sleeper family unit from P1225 (R1642) per adult sharing, breakfast and dinner included. Conservation fee P100 (R134) per person per night. Discounts for children and SADC residents – enquire when you book.

If you don't have a 4x4, stay here and book a guided day tour of nearby parks.

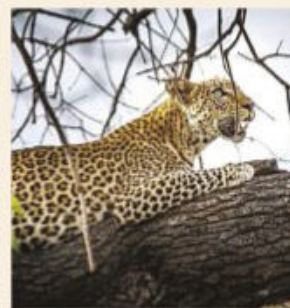
GPS: S20.18909 E25.30631
☎ 00 267 684 0931
🌐 planetbaobab.travel

KUBU ISLAND

Also known as Lekhubu Island. This is for 4x4 drivers only. Travel with someone who knows the way or get Tracks4Africa for your GPS.



Chobe Safari Lodge



Perched on the banks of the Chobe River beside the world-famous Chobe National Park, CHOBE SAFARI LODGE is northern Botswana's top heritage stay.

We've been sharing this precious environment with our guests (and elephants) for over 60 years. Safari is in our soul. Established in 1959, decades of guest experience make this the ideal expedition base for iconic game viewing by boat or a game drive vehicle, tiger fishing adventures or visits to the nearby Victoria Falls. We also provide private boat hire, scenic flights, and candle-lit dinner cruises. **CHOBE SAFARI LODGE** is an easy ten-minute drive from Kasane International Airport and the entrance to the celebrated Chobe National Park in the town of Kasane. The Lodge has **60 luxury rooms**, all facing the Chobe River, 16 spacious family rooms plus a **sheltered campsite**. Our facilities consist of a **restaurant, pool, cocktail bars, dinner cruises, room service, Wi-Fi, activity center.**

KWANDO SAFARIS & UNDER ONE BOTSWANA SKY

Web.: www.underonebotswanasky.com • marketing@underonebotswanasky.com

Tel.: +267 6250 336

CENTRAL BOTSWANA



44 Kubu Island

The campsite here is run by the Gaing-O Trust. Camping P100 (R134) per adult; half-price for children aged 10–14; free for kids under 9. Day visitors P35 (R47) per person. These rates exclude 12% VAT and P10 (R13) per person per night tourism levy. Take all your own drinking and washing water and remove your rubbish when you leave. They offer guided walks to a flamingo nest site and to Little Kubu Island – P150 (R201) per person.

GPS: S20.89105 E25.82175

☎ 00 267 73 109 996

☎ 00 267 75 494 669

✉ kubu.island@btcmil.co.bw

NATA

Explore Sua Pan – the eastern part of the Makgadikgadi system – from here.

45 Nata Lodge

This popular lodge is about 10 km south of Nata and just far enough from the traffic on the A3. From the deck of your chalet, scan the trees for rollers, Hartlaub's babbler and even Meyer's parrot.

There are 22 chalets and 10 safari tents. The stands in the

campsite are private and sheltered by makalani palms. The lodge also has a restaurant built around a big swimming pool.

Chalet accommodation P1 290 (R1 729) per night for two people; family chalet P1 385 (R1 856) for two adults and two children under 12. Safari tent P990 (R1 327) per night for two people. Camping P85 (R114) per adult; P50 (R67) per child under 12.

GPS: S20.22456 E26.26711

☎ 00 267 620 0070

✉ underonebotswanasky.com

46 Pelican Lodge

This thatched lodge is 5 km south of Nata. The chalets are arranged around a big swimming pool in the shape of Africa. The campsite is at the back of the lodge. There are five stands; each has a private bathroom. The lodge offers a tour to Sua Pan for P410 (R549) per person (min four people). Twin chalets (en suite with an outdoor shower) from P1 455 (R1 950) per night. Camping P150 (R201) per adult; P70 (R94) per child under 18. Motorhomes and caravans P90 (R121) extra per day. Note: These rates exclude the tourism levy.

GPS: S20.21752 E26.23415

☎ 00 267 713 95 526

✉ thewildlodges.com

47 Nata Bird Sanctuary

This small reserve offers direct access to the edge of Sua Pan. You'll want to be here for sunset but come a bit earlier and do some birding. (You'll see plains game, too.) The pan is usually bone dry, but in late summer it might be filled with water to the horizon. The roads in the park are traversable in a 4x2, but if it has rained you might need a 4x4 – rather book a guided trip with the lodge you're staying at if you don't want to risk it.

The community-run campsite near the gate has basic facilities and needs some TLC. 2022 rates: camping P80 (R107) per person; P35 (R47) per vehicle per night. Day visitors P100 (R134). Gate times 7 am to 7 pm.

GPS: S20.28939 E26.30173

☎ 00 267 71 544 342

48 Eselbe Camp

This friendly spot is 2 km north of Nata on the Nata River. Budget backpacking accommodation P175 (R235) per bed. Camping P125 (R168) per person. Double en suite chalet from P490 (R657) per night; P175 (R235) for an extra bed. Meals are available by prior arrangement; kitchen and braai facilities are

available. Canoes are provided and included in the rates.

GPS: S20.19240 E26.18635

☎ 00 267 76 057 089

✉ eselbecamp.com

49 Elephant Sands

Elephant Sands is about 50 km north of Nata. It's a popular overnight stop en route to Kasane. The lodge is built around a waterhole where elephants come to drink during the dry season. The 1,3 km stretch of sandy road between the A33 tar road and the lodge might be tricky in a 4x2. If you get stuck, someone will come to your aid. (What's a holiday without a little adventure?)

Twin chalets P1 540 (R2 064) per night. Family chalet (four people) P2 040 (R2 734) per night. Camping P180 (R241) per adult; P90 (R121) per child aged 6–12.

GPS: S19.74947 E26.08391

☎ 00 267 73 445 162

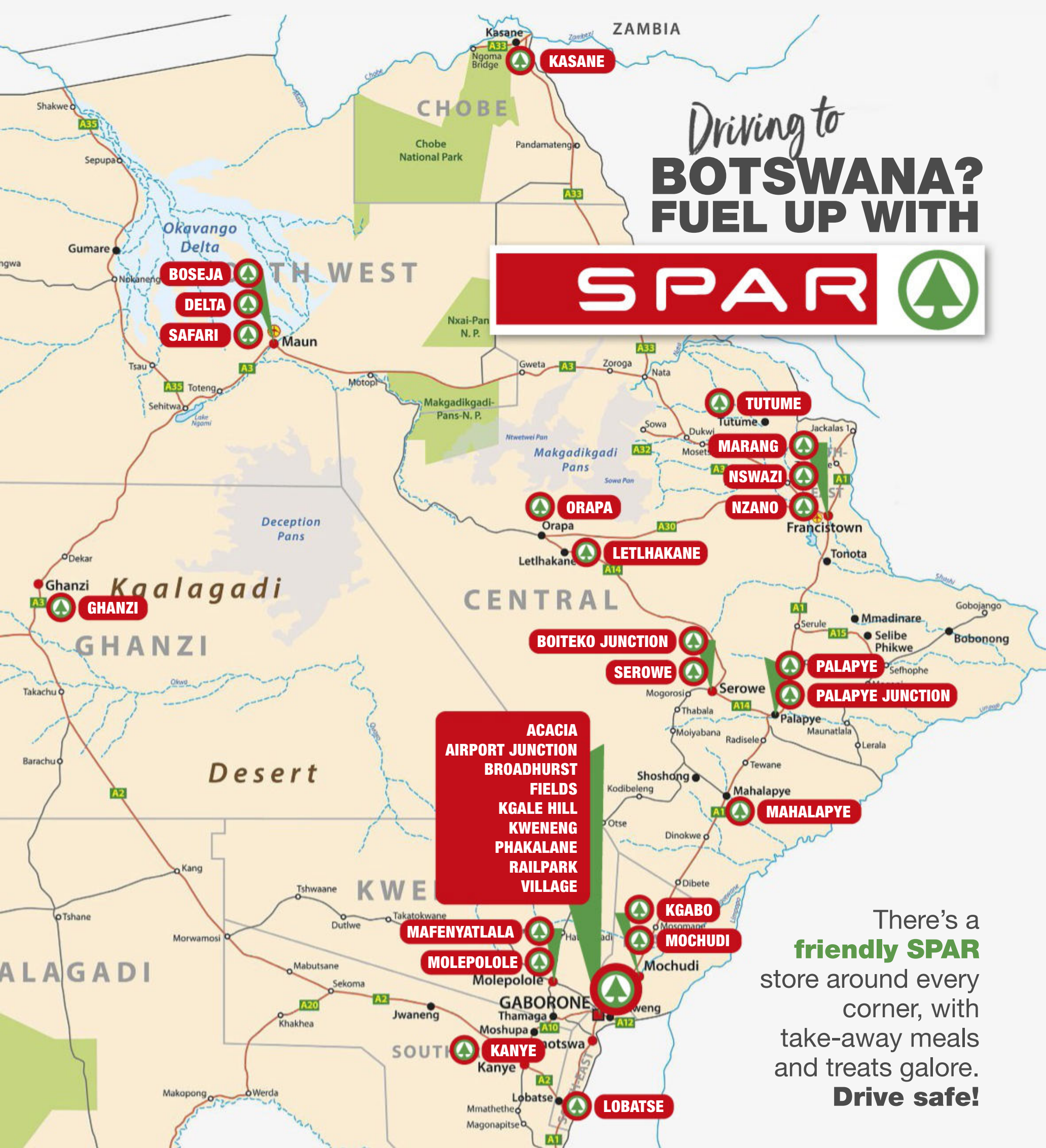
✉ bookings@elephantsandsbotswana.com

"Elephant Sands" on Facebook

FRANCISTOWN

This big town has shops and all other services you might require.





Driving to
BOTSWANA?
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There's a
friendly SPAR
store around every
corner, with
take-away meals
and treats galore.
Drive safe!



CENTRAL BOTSWANA



50 Peermont Metcourt

This three-star hotel is in the heart of town. It offers comfortable rooms, ample parking and Wi-Fi. It's right next to the Sedibeng Casino. From P1 260 (R1 688) per night for two people.

GPS: S21.17288 E27.51301

☎ 0860 777 900 (in SA)

📧 peerfont.com

51 Woodlands Stop Over and Lodge

Woodlands is about 15 km north of town, in the direction of Nata. It's popular with *go!* readers. The service is great, the place is well maintained and you can buy braai meat, readymade meals and wine and other drinks at reception.

Camping on grass P210 (R281) per adult; P165 (R221) per child aged 3 – 12. Extras: P50 (R67) per off-road caravan; P50 (R67) per power point in busy season. There's also a swimming pool.

Riverview Rooms from P920 (R1 233) per night for two people sharing. Woodlands Cottage P1 840 (R2 466) per night for four people; P260 (R348) per extra person.

Ask them to help you plan day trips to nearby attractions like the Domboshaba Ruins and Mantenge Well.

GPS: S21.08122 E27.46405

☎ 00 267 244 0131

☎ 00 267 73 325 912

📧 woodlandsbotswana.com

52 Bushbuck Agricamp

Located just off the A3, about 50 km north-west of Francistown. The camp is part of a livestock and crop farm where you can slow down to a rural pace while enjoying the natural scenery.

There's a campsite with shared ablution facilities, a kitchen area and an entertainment area. Some of the stands have power. Camping P100 (R134) per person. Stand with private bathroom, kitchenette and braai P150 (R201) per person.

There are also five twin-sleeper tented units away from the main camp, overlooking a dam. Each has a braai, water point and power: P500 (R670) per night. Do a short nature walk, make use of the canoes or fish in the dam.

GPS: S20.86921 E27.16694

☎ 00 267 7600 9591

☎ 00 267 7606 5588 (WhatsApp)

📧 bushbuckcamp.com

SEROWE

This sprawling town among the koppies has grocery stores, fuel stations and tyre-repair outlets.

53 Khama Rhino Sanctuary

This small reserve is about 30 km north of Serowe. There are 22

camping stands at Mokongwa Camp, each with a big tree, braai stand, water pipe and soft sand. Camping (no electricity but hot showers) P121 (R162) per adult; half-price for children under 12.

Twin-sleeper chalet P776 (R1 040) per night; four-sleeper chalet P891 (R1 194) per night; two-bed apartment/dorm P517 (R693) per night. All the units have electricity.

Entrance fee P97 (R130) per adult per day; half-price for kids under 12; plus P119 (R159) per vehicle per day.

GPS: S22.23474 E26.71999

☎ 00 267 463 0713

📧 khamarhinosanctuary.org.bw

54 Serowe Hotel

Next to the main road as you enter from Palapye. Rooms from P662 (R887) per night for two people, breakfast included. There's safe parking, delicious meals at the restaurant (stop for lunch to break your journey) and you can watch rugby on the TV in the bar.

GPS: S22.40601 E26.71849

☎ 00 267 75 150 906

📧 warrick@serowehotel.com

📧 serowehotel.com

PALAPYE

Palapye is close to the Martin's Drift/Grobler's Bridge border post. You might need to sleep over here.

55 Palapye Hotel

The oldest hotel in Botswana. Visit Charlie's Arms Cocktail Bar and see the collection of historic photographs on the walls. There's a pretty garden, safe parking and Wi-Fi. Double room P700 (R938) per night, breakfast included. Meals to order in the dining room.

GPS: S22.55745 E27.12731

☎ 00 267 494 0277 (Cindy)

☎ 00 267 714 665 22 (Lynn)

📧 plcfreeman@gmail.com

Chobe Game Drive/ Boat Cruise



DOP EN TJOP
P1 950
half day or
P2 950
full day

DOP EN TJOP The only real way to fish! Need we say anymore with a name like Dop en Tjop? Onboard is a three-burner braai and all your braai utensils you will need. Simply grab your Dop en Tjop and hop onboard for a real day of fishing. We supply the boat, skipper who knows the waters along with the fuel and fishing setup for 6! You can rent the boat for a half or a full day on the river. There is a toilet on board and a kitchen sink with running water. While there is fishing equipment for 6 people, bring your mates along as the boat takes 10 pax.

Of course we do them, **But** fancy something a bit different?



Our luxury CHOBE STYLE cruiser offers two decks of couch-style seating. No matter if you are topside or below you have a 360-degree viewing platform. Whether you are looking for the vast herds that comprise Africa's greatest collective gathering of elephant, or that "lifer" if you are twitcher, this option will tick all the boxes. The Chobe Style is the most luxurious Day boat on the Chobe River by far, our guides and barman will look after your every need. Our well stocked bar is included along with a gourmet snack platter. With a maximum capacity of just 18 passengers your comfort is insured, a pop up toilet if needed is available. Twin 115 Yamaha Engines means you can get further into the park away from the crowds. Why not add on a fishing and Pamper Package for the ultimate couples "Spoil"? There is no better way to spend your day than Chobe In Style!

Our unique CHOBE EXPLORER is often described as a 'cruising lounge'. Gliding along the fabled Chobe River in search of all that raw Africa has to offer with a G&T in hand is an experience that will etch itself in your memory for the rest of your life. The middle deck is a veritable 'comfort zone' of soft couches, laid out for maximum interaction with your fellow cruisers. A glass of tempting 'bubbly' sets the tone as we set off from behind Spar at Hunter's Arcade. Meanwhile, below in the galley splendid aromas begin to waft upwards, signalling an imminent Braai-style lunch that awaits you on the lower dining deck. Later, relax topside in suspended loungers, soaking up the unique colours, aromas, sounds and scents of the truly magnificent, one-and-only Chobe National Park.



Durban Office:
0027 793 959542



Kasane Office:
00267 737 50380



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CENTRAL BOTSWANA

VISIT OLD PALAPYE

At Old Palapye, you can see the ruins of a London Missionary church and a pretty grove of makosho trees. It's free to visit, but you must first ask permission at the chief's office in the village of Malaka. There's a scenic back road you can take from here to Goo-Moremi Resort.

GPS makosho trees:
S22.66688 E27.22346

GPS chief's office in Malaka:
S22.61544 E27.33223

GPS Old Palapye:
S22.64555 E27.29268

56 Itumela Rest Camp

2022 rates: camping with power P105 (R141) per adult; P85 (R114) per child under 10. Budget double room P350 (R469) per night for two people sharing. Twin-sleeper chalet P350 (R469) per night. There's a restaurant, bar and swimming pool.

GPS: S22.55967 E27.127355
☎ 00 267 71 806 771 (Isabella)
✉ campitumela@gmail.com

57 Goo-Moremi Resort

An hour's drive (68 km) from Palapye. The tar road ends at the village of Moremi, after which it's a couple of kilometres of sandy gravel road. 2022 rates: entrance fee P80 (R107) per adult; P55 (R74) per child aged 6–15;

P55 (R74) per vehicle. Do a guided walk into Goo-Moremi Gorge.

The campsite has five stands and excellent bathroom facilities: P160 (R214) per adult; P70 (R94) per child aged 6–15. Twin-sleeper chalet P1 155 (R1 548) per night; four-sleeper P1 575 (R2 111). Meru tent for two people, including breakfast: P1 680 (R2 251) per night.

GPS: S22.58262 E27.43094

☎ 00 267 712 472 25

✉ goomoremiresort@gmail.com

TULI BLOCK & LIMPOPO RIVER

The Tuli Block is close to South Africa and great for

a long-weekend trip from Gauteng. Most of these lodges and camps are along the Limpopo River.

58 Tuli Safari Lodge

The Northern Tuli Game Reserve has several excellent luxury lodges. Check out the website notugre.com for more info about the reserve in general, and other lodges and activities.

Rates at Tuli Safari Lodge start at US\$295 (R5 104) per person if your group consists of 10 or more people. The rate includes all meals and two game drives per day, as well as transfers to and from the Pontdrift border post, where you park your car.



GPS Pontdrift: S22.21300 E29.13740

☎ 031 761 3440

🌐 tulilodge.com

59 Serolo Safari Camp

Five luxury safari tents with power; they also have a splash pool. The camp overlooks a waterhole. Self-catering accommodation P1 195 (R1 601) per adult, discount for children under 12 (rates include two game drives). A full-board option is available: P1 915 (R2 566) per person. This includes four meals and two game drives. SADC residents can enquire about specials. Also enquire about their ZAR rates.

GPS: S22.274240 E28.992223

☎ 078 391 4220 (Julie)

🌐 tulitrails.com

60 Limpopo River Lodge

The lodge is only 5 km from the Platjan border post, but it's in a private nature reserve so keep your eyes peeled for animals.

They have four rondavels and two chalets near the water. The campsite and bush camp are downstream, in the shade of a riverine forest. Self-catering rondavels and chalets P780 (R1 045) per person. Bush camp unit (sleeps four) P325 (R436) per person. Camping P210 (R281) per person.

GPS: S22.45055 E28.76998 (reception)

☎ 00 267 72 106 098

🌐 limpoporiverlodge.co.za

61 Wild at Tuli

This luxury option is on the same farm as Limpopo River Lodge and shares a reception office. The rate of P1 980 (R2 653) per person includes all meals, plus tea, coffee, cake (yay!) and two game drives per day with a professional guide.

They also offer luxury accommodation at Mopani Lodge in the same area: P850 (R1 139) per person self-catering, or P2 195 (R2 941) per person fully catered.

GPS Wild at Tuli:

S22.45171 E28.77072

GPS Mopani Lodge:

S22.29714 E28.91213

☎ 079 526 2746 (WhatsApp)

🌐 wildattuli.com

"Wild at Tuli" on Facebook

62 Kwadiwa Ranch

2022 rates: standard twin room P1 490 (R1 997) per night. Twin safari tent P760 (R1 018) per night. Fish Eagle Lodge chalet P2 110 (R2 827) per night for two people.

GPS: S22.52382 E28.69988

☎ 00 267 76 475 132

🌐 kwadiwaranch.com

63 Stevensford Game Reserve

This reserve is about 20 km downstream from the Martin's Drift border post. It closed down during the pandemic but is set to reopen early in 2023. There are nine neat chalets – P950 (R1 273) per person per night.

The three camping stands are spacious – two can accommodate 10 people and the third can take a group of 20. Camping P220 (R295) per person. They offer guided bush walks and game drives. Meals are available.

GPS: S22.90369 E28.04029

☎ 083 415 0320

☎ 00 267 71 850 380

🌐 sgrbw.com

"Stevensford Game Reserve" on Facebook

64 Kwa Nokeng Lodge

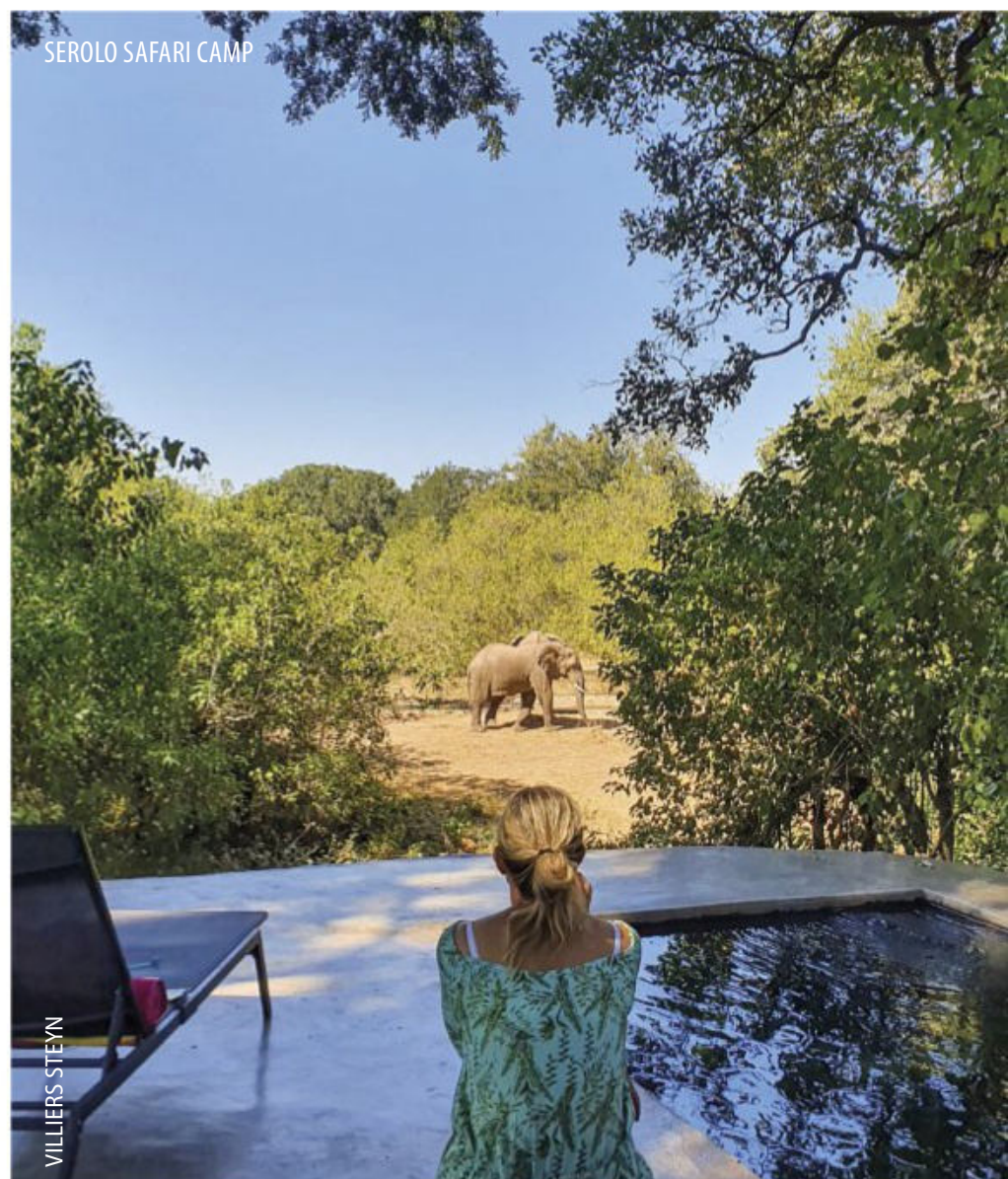
At the Martin's Drift border post. If you feel that you need help with the paperwork required at the border, contact them and they'll assist.

Twin safari tent P760 (R1 018) per night. There are also chalets and luxury tents, both with en suite bathrooms: P1 300 (R1 742) per night. The chalets sleep two adults and two kids; the tents sleep two. Four-sleeper river cottage P1 800 (R2 412) per night. Meals are available.

GPS: S22.99949 E27.94023

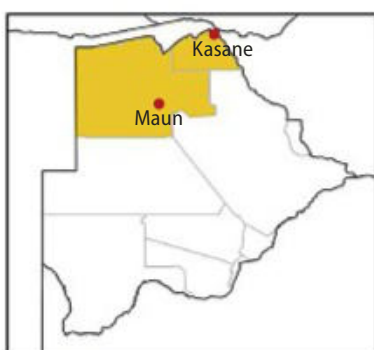
☎ 00 267 491 5908

🌐 kwanokeng.com



SUNRISE OVER THE PANHANDLE AS SEEN FROM ASKIESBOS

TOAST COETZER



NORTHERN BOTSWANA

OKAVANGO
PANHANDLE

The tar road that connects all these places needs a little TLC, but you can drive it in a 4x2. The Panhandle is the best place to get a taste of the Okavango at budget rates, although there are also more luxurious options.

65 Xaro Lodge

This luxury tented lodge just south of Shakawe is a birder's dream. Rates start at US\$360 (R6 228) for a twin-sleeper tent, with breakfast and dinner. You're transferred to the lodge by boat.

☎ 00 267 72 807 476

🌐 xaro-lodge.com

66 Shakawe River Lodge

Close to Shakawe, this popular lodge has recently been spruced up. The campsite has 10 stands. There are 10 chalets in riverine forest. 2022 rates: chalet P950 (R1 273) per person B&B. Camping P200 (R268) per adult; P100 (R134) per child under 12.

They offer boat cruises from P200 (R268) per hour for a minimum of three people.

GPS: S18.43384 E21.90567

☎ 00 267 75 373 920

🌐 info@shakawelodge.com

67 Askiesbos

This awesome place is on the farm Klipsop just north of Shakawe River Lodge. They have a campsite, two forest tents on decks, and three river tents on decks. Camping P150 (R201) per person; safari tents from P1 000 (R1 340) for two people sharing. Meals are available at extra cost. A houseboat, *Delta Belle*, can be booked through them. It costs P14 500 (R19 430) per day for the whole boat (up to 10 people) on a self-catering basis, or P14 500 (R19 430) plus P550 (R737) per person per day, all inclusive. They offer boat cruises, fishing, day trips to Tsodilo Hills and a variety of cultural experiences in the district, involving and supporting the local community.

GPS: S18.42941 E21.89424

☎ 00 267 73 505 170

☎ 00 267 73 505 193 (Hettie)

🌐 samochimabushcamp.com

68 Drotsky's Cabins

This classic spot is also near Shakawe and popular with birders and anglers. Chalet accommodation P1 985 (R2 660) per night for two people. Meals available at extra cost. Camping P255 (R342) per adult; half-price for children under 12. Contact them directly for ZAR rates.

GPS: S18.41522 E21.88144

☎ 00 267 683 0226 (Piet)

🌐 drotskys.com

69 Nxamaseri Island Lodge

This luxury lodge is close to Ncamasere. They're big on fishing, especially fly-fishing. Contact them directly for rates.

GPS: S18.63548 E22.04674 (turn-off from the A35)

☎ 00 267 680 1494

🌐 desertdelta.com

70 Swamp Stop

A lekker place! There are riverfront campsites under the trees with water, power and braai facilities. It costs P178 (R239) per adult; half-price for children under 12. At night your neighbours might be hippos. You're not in Sandton any more!

En suite, air-conditioned room P1 050 (R1 407) per night for two people. Riverfront en suite tent P750 (R1 005) per night for two. Rates exclude VAT and government levy.

There's a restaurant with a viewing deck above, which is a great spot to have breakfast and watch the river. There's also a lounge area and there are swimming pools. Swamp Stop offers boat rides and fishing outings.

GPS: S18.74633 E22.197934

📞 00 267 72 610 071

📧 swampstop.co.bw

Instagram: @swampstop

71 Nguma Island Lodge

Nguma Island Lodge is north of the village Etsha 13 on the banks of Guma Lagoon. Camping P228 (R306) per person. Meru tents from P1 765 (R2 365) per person, including breakfast and dinner (rate valid for November and December 2022; includes VAT and bed levies).

GPS: S18.95396 E22.37329

📞 00 267 73 560 120

📧 ngumalodge.com

72 Guma Lagoon Camp

Turn off the A35 at Etsha 13 and follow the signs to Guma Lagoon Camp. During flood season you'll need a 4x4 for the final few kilometres. If you're driving a 4x2, you can park your vehicle safely near Etsha 13 and someone from Guma Lagoon Camp will come and pick you up.

The camp has 16 safari tents with views of the water. Unit for two: P1 323 (R1 773) per night. Family unit for four: P1 874 (R2 511) per night.

There are also five camping stands with private ablution facilities on grass with shade, and

one stand with a private bathroom near the water. It costs P180 (R241) per adult; half-price for children under 12.

GPS: S18.96280 E22.37332

📞 00 267 77 570 658 (call

or WhatsApp)

📞 00 267 75 446 244

📧 guma-lagoon.com

73 Okavango Houseboats

This company owns two houseboats on the Okavango River, moored near Seronga. An experienced skipper will pilot the boat and you can bring your own food for the on-board staff to prepare. (Or pay extra for the catered option.) Rate until end of March 2023: from P10 750 (R14 405) per houseboat per day.

The boats vary in size: One can sleep 12; the other up to 23. Get a group together to make it more affordable. Life on a houseboat has a different tempo: very chilled.

GPS: S18.81781 E22.41625

📧 houseboat@okavango

houseboats.com

74 Carmine Rivercamp

A brand-new place, still under construction – contact them in 2023 to check whether they're open yet. Carmine Rivercamp is 44 km south of Mohembo, on the eastern side of the Panhandle – the new bridge at Mohembo is open so it's easy to get here. The plan is to have a few luxury tents and eventually a campsite, too. Activities will include tiger-fishing (the camp is close to an area called Red Cliffs – a prime fishing spot), boat cruises, birdwatching and mokoro trips.

GPS: S18.48598 E22.08569

📞 00 267 74 334 337 (Charlie)

📞 00 267 75 335 570

📧 info@carminerivercamp.com

SERONGA

This village is on the northern edge of the Okavango Delta. With the opening of the new bridge at Mohembo, Seronga will increasingly become a

focal point for self-drive tourists. Go check it out while it's still a "secret"!

75 Jumbo Junction

About 23 km east of Seronga. As the name suggests, this camp is located at the junction of two elephant corridors – wildlife sightings guaranteed! The camp has six safari tents and two chalets. All the units sleep two and have en suite bathrooms, power and a private deck or veranda overlooking the floodplains. SADC rate: P1 050 (R1 407) per person sharing accommodation only; P2 250 (R3 015) per person sharing with three meals and two activities a day.

Campsites are in the pipeline – contact them to check. They offer a range of activities, including game drives, guided walks and boat and mokoro rides.

GPS: S18.82527 E22.60574

📞 00 267 73 106 501

📧 jumbojunction.com

76 Kadizora Camp

This camp is in the Okavango Delta, so you can't drive there. They have an airstrip and most guests fly in from Maun. (*Read Toast Coetzer's feature on p 30 – Ed.*)

Kadizora has nine luxury tents and four standard tents. Each sleeps two people, with an en suite bathroom. There's a bar, lounge, dining area, fire pit and a swimming pool. Contact them directly for rates. They offer game drives, walking safaris and mokoro excursions. You can even go for a hot air balloon flight over the Delta.

📞 011 568 4264 (SA reservations)

📧 anthology.co.za

TSODILO HILLS

This is a World Heritage Site thanks to the incredible rock art. More than 2 000 paintings and engravings have been discovered. It's a place of spiritual importance for many people. Treat it with respect.

77 Tsodilo Hills campsite

About 35 km west of the A35, along a dirt road. The hills tower over the Kalahari landscape like three stone temples. Although you can visit Tsodilo on a day outing from one of the lodges on the Panhandle, we recommend you stay for a night and hike one of the four guided trails early in the morning when it's still cool.

2022 rates: camping P130 (R174) per adult. Flush toilets and showers; no power. Entrance fee P50 (R67) per person, plus P120 (R161) for your guide (per group). If you go on a longer walk, the guide fee goes up. Kids under 15 get a discount.

GPS: S18.78815 E21.74731

📞 00 267 680 0419

SEHITHWA

If you have time, find the track that leads to Lake Ngami. The lake is usually quite empty, but interesting to see.

78 Monlek Guesthouse

At Monlek, they've turned cement garden statues into an art form. Camping stands and twin rooms P450 (R603) per night. Breakfast P150 (R201) per person.

GPS: S20.47849 E22.70014

📞 00 267 71 668 447

(WhatsApp)

MAUN

This safari town offers all the shops and services you might need before you head to Moremi or up the Okavango Panhandle.

79 The Tshilli Farm Lodge

This lodge has chalets in a leadwood forest on the edge of the Okavango Delta – it's about 30 km north-west of Maun. Each chalet has an en suite bathroom, fan and veranda. 2022 rates: twin-sleeper chalet from P1 200 (R1 608) per night for two people; family unit (sleeps four) from P1 400 (R1 876) per night. There's Wi-Fi, a swimming

NORTHERN BOTSWANA

pool, a bar and a restaurant.

GPS: S19.90087 E23.28302

📞 00 267 71 407 379

✉️ tshillifarm@gmail.com

“Tshilli Farm” on Facebook

80 The Bell Frog Inn

Overnight on this hydroponic farm next to the Boro River. Guest chalet US\$120 (R2076) per person B&B. Tented accommodation US\$100 (R1730) per person. SADC residents get a 20% discount – enquire when you book.

GPS: S19.85296 E23.42042

📞 00 267 75 116 886 (WhatsApp)

✉️ tbfi.botswana@gmail.com

“The Bell Frog Inn” on Facebook

81 Sitatunga Camp

This camp is about 13 km south-west of Maun towards Sehithwa, accessible from the A3 tar road. Like most camps near Maun, there's a kilometre or so of dirt or sand road to the camp, but you don't need a 4x4. If you do get stuck, help is close by.

2022 rates: camping P140 (R188) per adult. Discounts for children under 12. En suite safari tents P780 (R1045) for two people. Small but cosy en suite chalets P850 (R1139) for two people. This rate includes the government bed levy.

There's a lively sports bar, a restaurant and a swimming pool. You can also book day tours to Nxai Pan, Moremi and the Okavango Delta.

GPS: S20.07463 E23.35490

📞 00 267 680 0380

✉️ bookings@deltarain.com

82 Maun Waterfront Guest House

Great views and birdwatching opportunities – along with occasional sightings of hippo – from the eight rooms of this guesthouse. Each room has a veranda or balcony overlooking the Thamalakane River.

Rate until 31 March 2023: twin room from P1990 (R2667) per night, B&B. Government bed levy P10 (R13).

GPS: S19.96302 E23.47530

📞 00 267 680 0584

✉️ maunwaterfront.com

83 Sedia Riverside Hotel

This popular hotel is newly renovated and has rooms, cottages and a riverside campsite. 2022 rates: twin room from P1405 (R1883) per night, including breakfast. Camping P120 (R161) per person. Children under 12 stay free. There's also a great restaurant and a big pool.

GPS: S19.95216 E23.47752

📞 00 267 686 0177

✉️ sedia-hotel.com

84 The Maun Studios

In a quiet residential area, less than 10 minutes from the airport. This small guesthouse has three en suite studios equipped for self-catering, and a meru tent. Over 50 years of loving care by the green-fingered family has resulted in a stunning jungle garden, and there are lovely walks along the Thamalakane River. There's air conditioning, a plunge pool and Wi-Fi. It's somewhere you can easily hole up for a few days.

Meru tent from P1320 (R1769) per night for two people B&B; studios from P1540 (R2064) per night for two people B&B. These rates are valid until 31 March 2023.

GPS: S19.94875 E23.48212

📞 00 267 74 189 266

✉️ themaunstudios.com

85 Old Bridge Backpackers

This place is near the historical Matlapaneng Bridge over the Thamalakane River. The bridge was built in the 1940s so people heading to the Witwatersrand to look for work on the mines could safely cross the river. Camping P110 (R147) per person. Standard twin-sleeper safari tent P550 (R737) per night. En suite twin-sleeper safari tent from P770 (R1032) per night.

GPS: S19.94458 E23.48857

📞 00 267 686 2406

✉️ maun-backpackers.com

86 Audi Camp

Next to the Thamalakane River, about 12 km north-east of Maun on the road to Moremi. The campsite has soft sand and shade. Camping

P140 (R188) per adult, plus P80 (R107) for a power point, per day; half-price for children under 12. En suite, twin-sleeper tents from P825 (R1106), including breakfast. Self-catering house from P800 (R1072) per night for two people; P1550 (R2077) for four and P3500 (R4690) for 10 people sharing B&B. There's also a swimming pool and restaurant. They offer mokoro trips (including overnight trips) and affordable mobile safaris.

GPS: S19.93383 E23.50910

📞 00 267 686 0599

✉️ info@audisafaris.com

✉️ audisafaris.com

87 Crocodile Camp Safari & Spa

Opened in 1946, Croc Camp features large in Maun history. It has grassy, riverside campsites, plus chalets and a spa.

2022 rates: camping P220 (R295) per adult; P110 (R147) per child aged 6–11; free for kids under 5. Chalets from P1250 (R1675) for two people.

GPS: S19.93109 E23.51252

📞 00 267 684 0830

✉️ sklcamps.com

88 Island Safari Lodge

This lodge is on the banks of the Thamalakane River, for that Delta feeling. There are large trees in the campsite, and the ablution facilities are good. Camping P190 (R255) per person; family room for two adults and two children P2020 (R2707) per night B&B. Book directly with the lodge (✉️ enquire@africansecrets.net) to receive a special discount.

GPS: S19.92474 E23.50871

📞 00 267 686 0300

✉️ islmaun.com

89 Discovery Bed and Breakfast

Situated 20 minutes out of town, on the road to Moremi, this quiet guesthouse has traditional rondavels and modern chalets, as well as a small pool. Twin-sleeper rondavel from P1050 (R1407) per night, breakfast included. Twin chalet from

P1250 (R1675) per night, breakfast included. Discounts for children. These are low-season rates, valid from January to June and October to December. Dinner is available by prior arrangement: P195 (R262) per person.

GPS: S19.91166 E23.52340

📞 00 267 74 360 198

✉️ discoverybnb.com

90 Thamalakane River Lodge

This luxury lodge is 19 km from Maun, next to the road to Moremi. Twin-sleeper chalet US\$155 (R2682) per person; four-sleeper family chalet US\$225 (R3893) per adult – two children under 13 can stay free of charge. Both rates include breakfast and dinner (SADC special). Free Wi-Fi.

GPS: S19.88433 E23.55481

📞 00 267 680 0217

✉️ trlmaun.com

91 Raintree Camp

This small camp in a raintree forest has a lovely, quiet bush feel. Opened in April 2022, it's 30 minutes from Maun near Shorobe, just before the tar ends on the road to Moremi. There's a campsite and safari tents with shared ablutions. Camping P180 (R241) per person. Twin-sleeper safari tent P600 (R804) per night. There's a pool and a little bar. Thamalakane River Lodge (a 10-minute drive away) has a good à la carte menu.

GPS: S19.77977 E23.65082

📞 00 267 72 857 398

✉️ raintreecamp.co.bw

92 Drifters Maun Lodge

One of our favourites. Although the odd elephant can come through, there isn't usually a lot of dangerous game around, so you don't have to take the spotlight along when you walk to the bathroom. Drifters is a laid-back, value-for-money lodge about 30 km from Maun on the A3 to Gweta/Nata, next to the Boteti River. Further downstream, the Boteti often dries up, but at Drifters



NXAI PAN CAMP

there's almost always water. Camping on grass is R200 per person. Safari tent R675 per person sharing, breakfast included.
GPS: S20.17106 E23.67350
 ☎011 888 1160 (SA bookings)
 🌐drifters.co.za

HAINAVELD

The Hainaveld is 4x4 country. You can drive through this area to get to the northern part of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

93 Evolve Back Gham Dhaô Lodge

Previously known as Haina Kalahari Lodge, this private game farm is about 170 km from Maun, bordering the Central Kalahari Game Reserve – you can see lions. It's plush – SADC rates start at US\$320 (R5 536) per adult and US\$160 (R2 768) per child aged 3 – 11. Valid until 30 June 2023.
GPS: S20.94970 E23.67805
 🌐ghamdhaolodge.evolveback.com

94 Deception Valley Lodge

Another luxury option. Rates from US\$500 (R8 650) per adult, all inclusive. Half-price for children aged 2 – 12.
GPS: S20.95303 E23.64946
 ☎00 267 686 3763
 🌐bushways.com

NXAI PAN NATIONAL PARK

This 4x4 park (sandy roads) has epic, Etosha-like landscapes. Park fees P190 (R255) per person per day, plus P75 (R101) per vehicle per day.

95 South Camp

Close to the permanent waterhole, so excellent for game viewing. There are 10 stands: numbers 3 – 7 are under the biggest trees with the most shade. Solar-powered geysers supply hot water. It costs US\$25 (R433) per adult; half-price for kids aged 8 – 17; free for kids under 8. It's expensive for basic camping, but

you're not paying for facilities, you're paying for the wilderness experience.
GPS: S19.936430 E24.776350
 ☎00 267 686 2221
 🌐xomaesites.com

96 Baines Baobabs

The three camping stands are spread out and only one actually has a view of the famous baobabs. It costs US\$30 (R519) per adult, half-price for children aged 8 – 17; free for kids under 8. There's a bucket shower and long drop, so bring enough water. The road might be too muddy to drive during the rainy summer.
GPS: S20.13948 E24.77011
 ☎00 267 686 2221
 🌐xomaesites.com

97 Nxai Pan Camp

The only luxury accommodation in the park – from US\$350 (R6 055) per person, all inclusive. Contact the camp for last-minute SADC rates when booking up to 60 days before travel.
GPS: S19.877688 E24.707332

☎00 267 686 1449
 🌐kwando.co.bw

MOREMI GAME RESERVE

This is one of Botswana's most popular reserves. Book well in advance if you want to camp, especially if you're travelling in a big group. The campsites aren't fenced and dangerous animals can walk through at any time. Keep an eye on your kids.

98 Mochaba Crossing

This camp is between Maun and South Gate, just south of the village of Shorobe. Camping US\$20 (R346) per person. There are six stands; power points are available. They offer meals and you can book a mokoro trip. You can also stay in one of their standard tents – rates from US\$60 (R1 038) per person – or choose an en suite tent for US\$100 (R1 730) per person. Double room from US\$250 (R4 325) per night B&B. There's

NORTHERN BOTSWANA



THIRD BRIDGE IS A BRIDGE AGAIN!

**Jannie Rykaart, tour guide
(Protea 4x4)**

When we visited Moremi during the winter of 2022, we witnessed the completion of the new Third Bridge. This bridge has always been an issue in the past – in 2021 it was completely washed away.

It took a team about two months to finish the work, and I could see that good materials and properly treated poles were used in the construction, which means it will last longer. The poles are solidly planted, about two or three metres into the ground, and the bridge stands clear of the water by over a metre. I think this bridge will last for decades!

Second Bridge, however, has not been fixed up – our group did some running repairs to cross over safely.

a swimming pool.

GPS: S19.78242 E23.64436

📞 00 267 686 4087

✉️ mochabacrossing.com

99 Kaziikini Campsite

If you left it too late and you couldn't get a campsite booking in Moremi, don't worry – Kaziikini is a great option. It's 67 km from Maun and only 26 km from Moremi's South Gate. That puts the reserve within easy range for day visits.

They have 13 big stands and hot showers. Camping costs P260 (R348) per person and they also have permanent safari tents for P475 (R637) per person sharing. Kids 8 – 12 years pay half-price; younger kids stay for free.

GPS: S19.58902 E23.80327

📞 00 267 680 0664

✉️ kaziikinistmt@btcmail.co.bw

100 Maqwee (South Gate)

Like the other camps in the reserve, this one isn't fenced – don't leave anything outside that a hyena, jackal or honey badger might mistake for food. Always be aware of your surroundings, especially when walking to the bathroom at night. A powerful torch is a must.

2022 rates: camping P175 (R235) per adult; P90 (R121) per child aged 6 – 17; free for kids under 6. There are 10 stands that accommodate a maximum of eight people and three vehicles each. Ablution facilities include flush toilets and hot showers.

GPS: S19.42583 E23.64429

📞 00 267 686 5551

✉️ kwalatesafari@gmail.com

101 Xakanaxa

This camp has one of the best locations in Moremi: right next to the water of the Okavango Delta. Tall trees tower over the stands. You can book a boat cruise here. There are eight stands that accommodate a maximum of eight people and three vehicles each.

2022 rates: camping P175 (R235) per adult; P90 (R121) per child aged

6 – 17; free for kids under 6. There's an ablution block with flush toilets and hot showers.

GPS: S19.18358 E23.41577

📞 00 267 686 5551

✉️ kwalatesafari@gmail.com

102 Third Bridge

The camp is sometimes hard to access, especially when the pole bridges are broken. There are 10 stands, each accommodating a maximum of eight people and three vehicles. US\$30 (R519) per adult. There's also one twin-sleeper, self-catering safari tent: US\$120 (R2076) per adult sharing. Half-price for children aged 8 – 17; free for children under 8.

Third Bridge is managed by the Xomae Group, which also manages wilderness camps Gcudikwa and Gxhobega on a nearby island – only accessible by boat. These wilderness camps can each sleep 20 people and cost US\$85 (R1 471) per person; plus P4 500 (R6 030) for the boat ride.

GPS: S19.23930 E23.35635

📞 00 267 686 2221

✉️ xomaesites.com

103 Khwai

This camp is on the banks of the Khwai River at North Gate. Camping R250 per adult; R125 per child aged 8 – 17; R60 per child aged 5 – 7; free for kids under 5. There are 10 stands, each with its own tap, braai facilities and bin.

GPS: S19.17284 E23.75152

📞 00 267 686 5365

✉️ reservations@sklcamps.co.bw

✉️ sklcamps.com

104 Magotho Camp

This campsite is run by the Khwai Development Trust and has no facilities. The stands are far apart from each other, in the veld under beautiful trees. Wild animals can wander through, so be alert. We couldn't get hold of them to check their prices – the 2021 rates were P350 (R469) per adult; P175 (R235) per child under 12. It's expensive, but

you'll experience the wilderness at its finest.

GPS: S19.12226 E23.86692

📞 00 267 72 256 278 (Ronald)

📞 00 267 73 553 106 (Banks)

✉️ khwai@btcmail.co.bw

105 Sango Safari Camp & Khwai Guest House

These two luxury places are close together and run by the same company. Sango Safari Camp offers en suite safari tents from US\$285 (R4 931) per person, including all meals. Khwai Guest House has bungalows from US\$150 (R2 595) per person DB&B.

GPS Sango Safari Camp:

S19.16326 E23.76256

GPS Khwai Guest House:

S19.15856 E23.76098

📞 00 267 686 3763

✉️ bushways.com

106 Trails of Botswana

Trails of Botswana (part of the Sun Destinations group) has a handful of exclusive lodges in Moremi and Chobe. Check out their website for information about Camp Savuti and Camp Linyanti.

✉️ sundestinations.co.za

107 Mankwe Campsite

Mankwe is in a private wildlife concession just outside Moremi. The secluded campsites are not fenced and wildlife roams freely. You need a 4x4 to access the campsites – there's thick sand.

Camping P325 (R436) per adult; P245 (R328) per child aged 2 – 11; max eight people and four vehicles per stand. Prices exclude bed levy of P10 (R13) per person. Bring your own drinking water; no electricity. First bundle of wood is free.

GPS: S19.38125 E23.89755 (turn-off)

📞 082 413 9499 (WhatsApp)

✉️ reservations@wab.co.bw

CHOBE NATIONAL PARK

This park is huge and almost impossible to take in during one



MABABE
DEPRESSION

*Chobe
National Park*

CHOBE NATIONAL PARK

This enormous park (11 700 km²) was proclaimed in 1968. The Chobe riverfront section near Kasane is the most accessible part of the park, while the Linyanti and Savuti sections are for true wilderness and 4x4 enthusiasts. Game viewing is best during the dry winter when animals congregate near the water. Park fees: P205 (R275) per person; P115 (R154) per vehicle.

Masame

NORTHERN BOTSWANA

visit. Savuti and Linyanti can be linked on a 4x4 tour. The river section near Kasane is the most accessible – if you don't have a 4x4, book a game drive with the lodge or camp where you are staying. A cruise on the Chobe River is also a must!

108 Savuti Public Camp

Camping R250 per adult; R125 per child aged 8–17; R60 per child aged 5–7; free for children under 5. There are 14 stands, each with a tap and braai facilities.

GPS: S18.56562 E24.06407

☎ 00 267 686 5365

✉ reservations@sklcamps.co.bw

🌐 sklcamps.com

109 Linyanti Public Camp

Only those who really love the wilderness will ever make the trek to Linyanti. Camping costs R250 per adult; R125 per child aged 8–17; R60 per child aged 5–7; free for children under 5. There are only five stands, each with a tap, braai and a bin.

GPS: S18.29487 E23.90938

☎ 00 267 686 5365

✉ reservations@sklcamps.co.bw

🌐 sklcamps.com

110 Ihaha Public Camp

Ihaha is a good option if you want to camp in Chobe but you don't want to be too far from Kasane. The campsite has 10 stands, maximum of eight people and three vehicles each, with views of the Chobe floodplain.

2022 rates: camping P175 (R235) per adult; P90 (R121) per child aged 6–17; free for children under 6. The ablution block has flush toilets and hot showers.

GPS: S17.83910 E24.87839

☎ 00 267 686 5551

✉ kwalatesafari@gmail.com

111 Chobe Game Lodge

An iconic Chobe lodge since the 1970s. Enquire directly for rates.

GPS: S17.84105 E25.07621

☎ 00 267 77 000 854

✉ chobegamelodge.co.bw

112 Nogatsaa Pans Campsite

This unfenced campsite is at Kabunga Pan in the rarely visited Nogatsaa part of the Chobe, about 80 km (4 hours; 4x4 only) south-west of Kasane. It costs P255 (R342) per person per night, which includes firewood for the donkey boiler so you can have a hot shower. Bring your own firewood to braai – buy outside the park beforehand. Maximum two vehicles and four people per site. The campsite is operated by a luxury lodge company which also runs Nogatsaa Pans Chobe Lodge nearby and Ghoha Hills Savuti Lodge in Savuti. Check their website for lodge prices.

GPS: S18.27018 E24.90574

☎ 063 613 9144

✉ ghohahills.com

CHOBE FLOODPLAIN

This section of the Chobe River is outside the park, upstream

from the Ngoma Bridge border post. Most of these places are accessible via a tar road.

113 Chobe Elephant Camp

This luxury lodge is very close to the Ngoma Bridge border post. It's on a koppie and looks out over the floodplain. Rooms from US\$305 (R5 277) per person, all meals included (low-season rate).

GPS: S17.94778 E24.702509

☎ 00 267 686 3763

✉ bushways.com

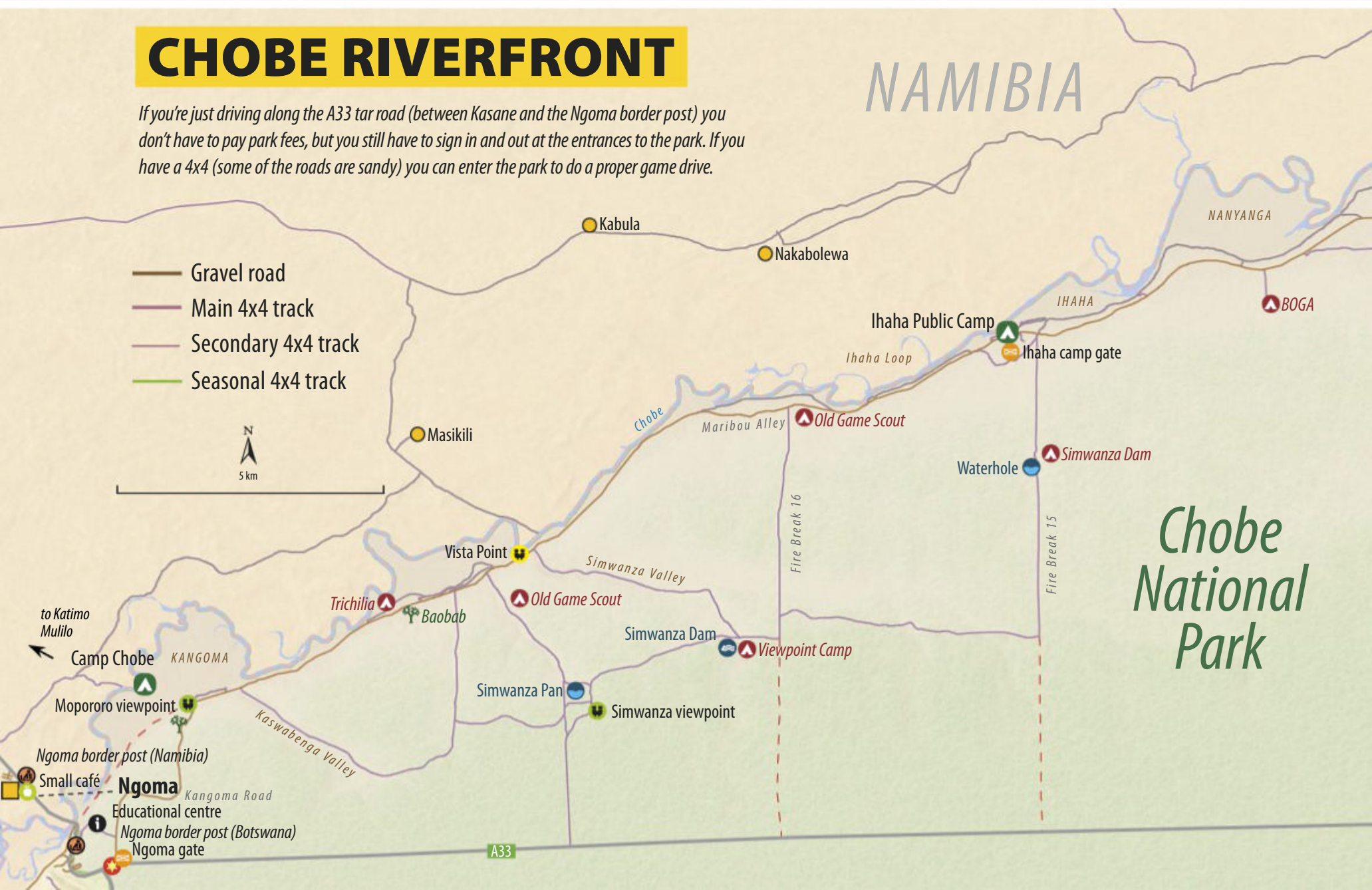
114 Muchenje Camp & Cottages

Our favourite in this area. Muchenje has 10 camping stands: P210 (R281) per adult; children get discount. There are also three self-catering cottages – P1 065 (R1 427) per night for two people – and three self-catering tent units: P680 (R911) per night for two people. They have a pool, and the shop at reception sells some snacks and essentials.

GPS: S17.944029 E24.70341

CHOBE RIVERFRONT

If you're just driving along the A33 tar road (between Kasane and the Ngoma border post) you don't have to pay park fees, but you still have to sign in and out at the entrances to the park. If you have a 4x4 (some of the roads are sandy) you can enter the park to do a proper game drive.



ACCOMMODATION

☎ 00 267 75 007 327

📍 muchenje campsites.com

115 Mwandi View

A little further south (in the direction of Kachikau) along the same road as Muchenje. They have a restaurant, bar and a pool, plus Wi-Fi. The eight elevated twin-sleeper tented units cost P1 450 (R1 943) per night. There's one bigger family unit for four: P1 950 (R2 613) per night. The campsite has 12 grass stands with power: P210 (R281) per adult and older kids; free for children younger than 4. Meals are available; book in advance.

GPS: S18.04571 E24.60086

☎ 00 267 75 579 025 (Amelia)

📍 mwandiview.com

116 Thobolo's Bush Lodge

The tar road running south-west from the Ngoma border post ends at Kachikau and becomes a sand track towards the Ghoha gate into Chobe National Park. Thobolo's is 12 km from Kachikau along this

road. It's a luxury lodge with a private waterhole, which attracts good numbers of game year-round. Camping US\$40 (R692) per person; chalets US\$265 (R4 585) per person; breakfast and dinner included.

GPS: S18.20474 E24.39129

☎ 00 267 744 12251

📍 thobolosbushlodge.com

KASANE & KAZUNGULA

Kasane is on the banks of the Chobe River, near Chobe National Park. Nearby Kazungula is on the main access road to the border posts with Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some of the lodges listed here are on the Namibian bank of the Chobe, but you access them via boat from Kasane.

117 Chobe Safari Lodge & Chobe Bush Lodge

Chobe Safari Lodge is Kasane's best-known and oldest lodge. Even if you

don't sleep here, eat at the restaurant or book a boat cruise (P350/R469 per person), or a day trip to Vic Falls (P995/R1 333 per person). The campsite borders Chobe National Park. The warthogs are a hazard (zip up your tent and keep food packed away), but the rest is nice.

Low-season rates: camping P120 (R161) per adult; P80 (R107) per child under 12. Rooms P2 530 (R3 390) per night for two people; P2 700 (R3 618) for two adults and two kids under 12.

Chobe Bush Lodge is across the road and their rates are the same, but they don't have a campsite.

GPS: S17.80582 E25.14678

☎ 00 267 625 0336

📍 underonebotswanasky.com

118 Kasane Self-Catering

These three self-catering units have garden views and direct access to the Chobe River. One unit has a double bed, one has two single beds and one is a family unit with a sleeper couch. There's safe parking, air conditioning, a fully equipped

kitchen and a small gym. P1 100 (R1 474) per unit, even if you're in the family unit (two adults and two children). Within walking distance of everything important in town.

GPS: S17.79339 E25.15530

☎ 00 267 625 0114

📍 chobeselfcatering.com

119 Chobe River Cottages

In town. Six self-catering cottages on the river. Each sleeps four people. 2022 rate: from P1 750 (R2 345) per cottage; plus a government bed levy of P10 (R13) per person.

GPS: S17.79318 E25.15396

☎ 00 267 625 2863

📍 choberivercottages.com

120 The Old House

Even if you don't sleep here, it's a great place to visit for a meal. Rates from P1 200 (R1 608) per adult sharing; kids get a discount. It's next to President Avenue, Kasane's main drag.

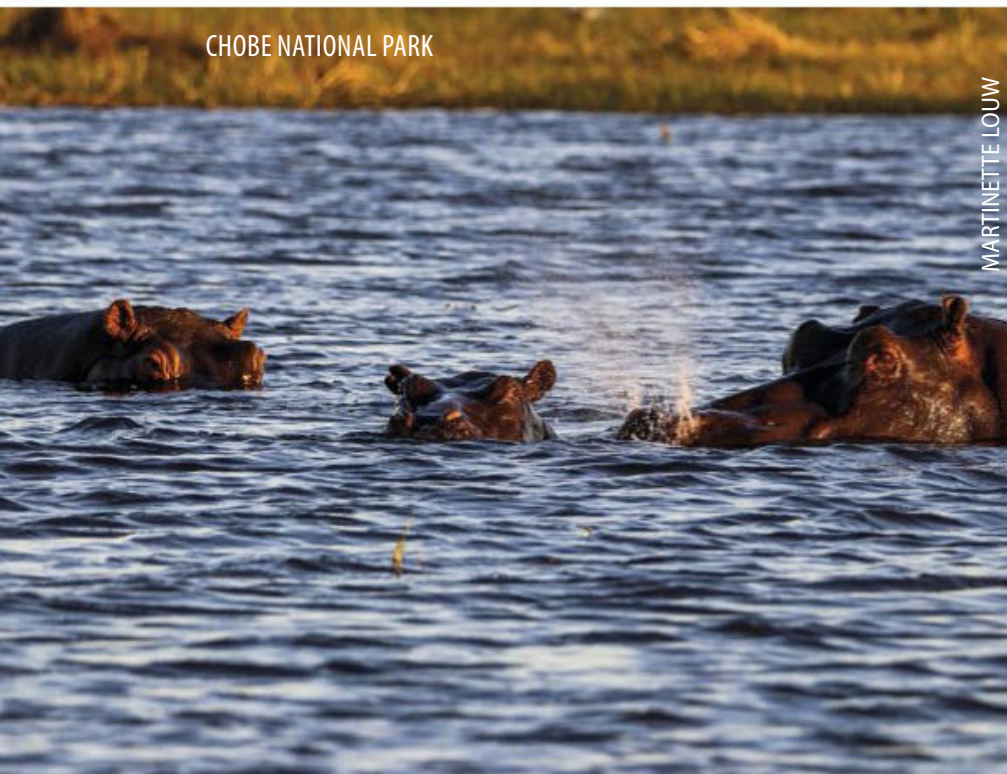
☎ 00 267 625 2562

📍 oldhousekasane.com



NORTHERN BOTSWANA

CHOBE NATIONAL PARK



MARTINETTE LOUW

THINGS TO DO IN KASANE

CRUISE ON THE CHOBE

Drink a beer and watch the animal kingdom float past. The cost varies from one operator to the next – enquire at the place where you're staying.

Flame of Africa offers three-hour cruises for P380 (R509) per person, excluding park fees. They also have a full-day cruise of nine hours: P1 140 (R1 528) per person, including an on-board braai and some drinks. They offer game drives in the park, day trips to Vic Falls, tiger-fishing (P1 495/R2 003 per person for a full day on the water) and a unique visit to Impalila Island. (These are the 2022 rates.) They even have a floating restaurant, The Raft, where you can have a big braai lunch. Their booking office is at the Superspar Centre (Hunters Mall).

📞 031 762 2424 (SA bookings) 🌐 flameofafrica.com

VISIT THE PARK

A game drive along the riverfront section of Chobe National Park is a must. Book a guided drive with the lodge where you are staying. The best time is early morning, but you'll see animals throughout the day. Flame of Africa offers a twist on the usual game drive – their Chobe Chow outing combines a bush lunch with a game drive. It costs P1 295 (R1 735) per person (2022 rate).

📞 031 762 2424 (SA bookings) 🌐 flameofafrica.com

CARACAL CENTRE

A perfect outing if you have children. You can see birds, mongooses, tortoises, warthogs and more. Guided tour P65 (R87) per person. Self-guided tour P35 (R47) per adult; P25 (R34) for children under 12; free for children under 6. 📞 00 267 625 2392 🌐 caracal.info

REMEMBER

Park fees aren't always included in activity prices, such as game drives and boat trips (you enter the park on a boat trip, even if you're just on the river). Fees are P205 (R275) per person, plus P115 (R154) per vehicle per day.

121 Cresta Mowana Safari Resort & Spa

This lodge has a great location on the Chobe, next to the golf course. Come have a meal or a sundowner on the deck. 2022 rate: B&B from US\$270 (R4 671) per adult sharing; discounts for children under 12.

GPS: S17.78291 E25.15920

📞 00 267 625 0300

🌐 crestamowana.com

122 Thebe River Safaris

Situated near the eastern edge of Kasane. The Van Wyk family has run this establishment since 1994. They offer activities like visits to Vic Falls and Chobe, and sunset cruises and game drives.

Camping P122 (R164) per person; twin room P1 688 (R2 262) per night B&B; four-sleeper family room from P2 520 (R3 377) per night B&B. They also have a lively restaurant. Enquire about their luxury tented lodge, Jackalberry Chobe Lodge.

GPS: S17.78628 E25.18143

📞 00 267 625 0995

🌐 theberiversafaris.com

123 Pangolin Chobe Hotel

This hotel is situated on the plateau as you drive up Airport Road. It caters to the wildlife photography market with rates from R9 000 per person, including meals, use of D-SLR cameras and lenses, guides, two Chobe excursions per day and more (low season rate).

Pangolin also accepts walk-ins for their Chobe photo trips: You go out on a boat with chairs that can swivel and a photography guide to help you with your camera. (Cameras are provided, with decent zoom lenses.) Morning or afternoon trips from US\$130 (R2 249) per person, excluding park fees. A trip takes three hours and is subject to availability.

If you arrive with a copy of this magazine, you'll qualify for a 25% discount for the trip. Bookings must be made in person at the hotel. (This offer is valid until the end of 2024.) Call the

hotel a few days before to check availability.

GPS: S17.81080 E25.15469

📞 021 418 2312 (SA bookings)

📞 00 267 625 1945 (hotel)

🌐 pangolinchobehotel.com

124 Kubu Lodge

The lodge is in Kazungula, on the banks of the Chobe River. Their 11 chalets are spread out in a big garden. From US\$365 (R6 315) per night for two people sharing B&B. They have seven spacious campsites with ablution facilities and a plunge pool: US\$24 (R415) per adult; US\$14 (R242) per child aged 4–11. Book in advance to eat at their restaurant and soak up the atmosphere – it's worth it! SADC rates are available on request.

GPS: S17.79735 E25.22785

📞 00 267 625 0312

📞 00 267 71 265 000 (cellphone)

🌐 reservations@kubulodge.net

125 River View Lodge

This friendly spot is next to Kubu Lodge in Kazungula, also on the Chobe. B&B rates for a double chalet from P3 000 (R4 020) per night; from P4 370 (R5 856) per night for four people sharing in a family chalet; children under 12 get a discount.

Their inclusive packages offer good value: from P1 680 (R2 251) per person sharing in a double chalet, including meals; or from P2 220 (R2 975) with meals, a morning game drive and a sunset river cruise each day.

A complimentary light lunch is offered to all guests and you can book activities like day trips to Victoria Falls and cultural tours.

GPS: S17.79419 E25.23267

📞 00 267 625 0967

🌐 riverviewlodgchobe.com

126 Chobe Bakwena Lodge

This lodge is only five minutes from the Kazungula border post. They offer river-view and treetop chalets and one family room for two adults and two children. All units have Wi-Fi and air

conditioning. US\$502 (R8 685) per adult sharing; half-price for children aged 3 – 11; free for kids aged 2 and under. Minimum two-night stay; the rate includes all meals, two activities per day and park fees for Chobe National Park.

GPS: S17.79370 E25.23511

☎ 082 318 9308 (reservations)

✉ chobebakwena.com

127 Senyati Safari Camp

About 20 km south-east of Kasane, in the game-rich Lesoma Valley. Elephants congregate to drink at their waterhole in large numbers, especially in winter. You access the camp via the A33 tar road, and along a 1,6 km sandy track.

Camping (power and private bathroom) P250 (R335) per adult; P110 (R147) per child under 12. Chalets P2 190 (R2 935) per night for four people; P4 150 (R5 561) per night for a unit that sleeps 10. Family unit for two adults and two kids P2 190 (R2 935) per night. Enquire about rates in ZAR.

GPS: S17.87286 E25.23533

☎ 00 267 7188 1306

✉ senyatisafaricampbotswana.com

128 Chobe Water Villas

On the Namibian side of the Chobe, just upstream from Kasane. All-inclusive luxury

accommodation from R27 314 per night for two people.

✉ chobe.res@ol.na

✉ chobewatervillas.com

129 Zambezi Queen Collection

They offer luxury options. Ichingo Chobe River Lodge is also on the Namibian side of the Chobe, on Impalila Island. Their 2023 rates start at R6 794 per person sharing, including meals, fishing excursions and game-viewing trips. The collection also has houseboats: *Chobe Princess* from R7 932 per person; *Zambezi Queen* from R11 104 per person for two to four nights.

☎ 021 715 2412 (SA bookings)

✉ zqcollection.com

PANDAMATENGA

This small village has a shop, a filling station and grain silos. It's an agricultural hub, serving the busiest crop farming area in Botswana.

130 Panda Rest Camp

Don't drive between Kasane and Nata at night – you don't want to run into an elephant. Rather overnight in Panda. Camping P130 (R174) per adult; P90 (R121) per child under 12 – rate includes bed levy. The rooms have air



CHOBÉ RIVER CRUISE

TOAST COETZER

conditioning, en suite bathrooms, fans and Wi-Fi.

Double room P1 470 (R1 970) per night, including breakfast. The camp has a restaurant, a bar and a swimming pool. They offer a special 15% discount to readers of this magazine – enquire when you book. The owners also operate Chase Africa Safaris (✉ chaseafricasafaris.travel) – they can plan a mobile safari for you.

GPS: S18.53623 E25.62870

☎ 00 267 71 622 268 (Angie)

✉ pandarestcamp@yahoo.com

131 Wildtrack Safaris Eco Lodge

About 7 km from Pandamatenga, on the border with Zimbabwe. It costs US\$247 (R4 273) per person sharing, full board. Mention you're a *go!* reader when you book and you'll qualify for a 10% discount – US\$222 (R3 841) per person sharing. These rates are valid until 31 March 2023.

GPS: S18.51056 E25.64862

☎ 00 267 73 162 073

✉ wildtrack-safaris.com

KUBU LODGE *in the heart of Africa...*
CHOBÉ - BOTSWANA

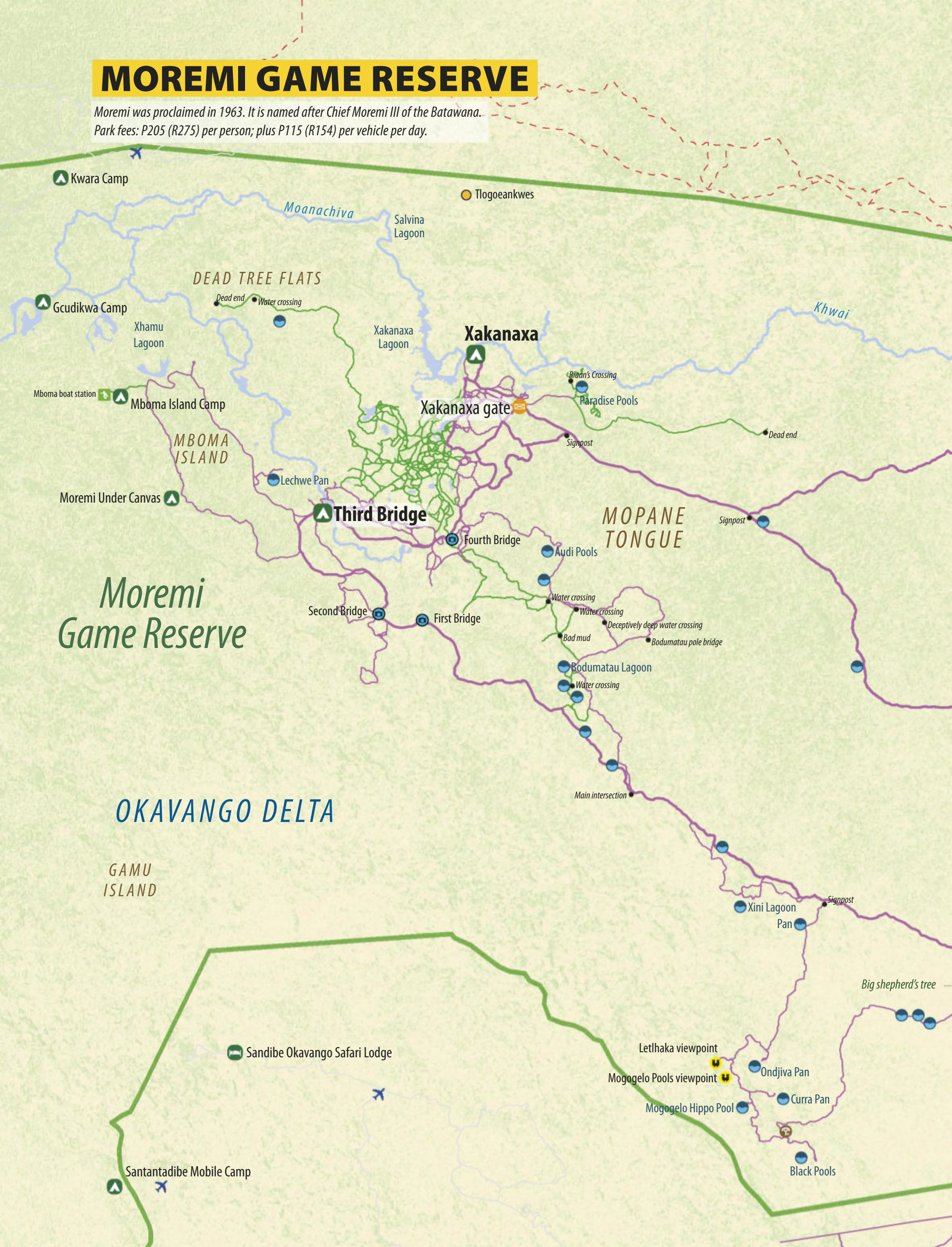
SET ON 30 HECTARES ALONG THE BANKS OF THE CHOBÉ RIVER IN NORTHERN BOTSWANA, this small owner operated lodge epitomises the hospitality of Africa. 11 thatched en suite chalets on raised decks beneath the spreading canopy of trees on expansive lawns extending down to the river's edge. Saltwater swimming pool set down by the river, bar, restaurant, curio shop and reading lounge, are available for guests' use. World renowned Chobe National Park – home to Africa's single largest population of elephant is nearby. Experience this reserve's amazing wildlife by boat cruise on the Chobe River or game drive into Chobe National Park. A short cruise to the confluence of the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers where 4 countries meet; day trip to Victoria Falls; visits to a working crocodile farm and guided tours of a Wildlife Centre are also available.

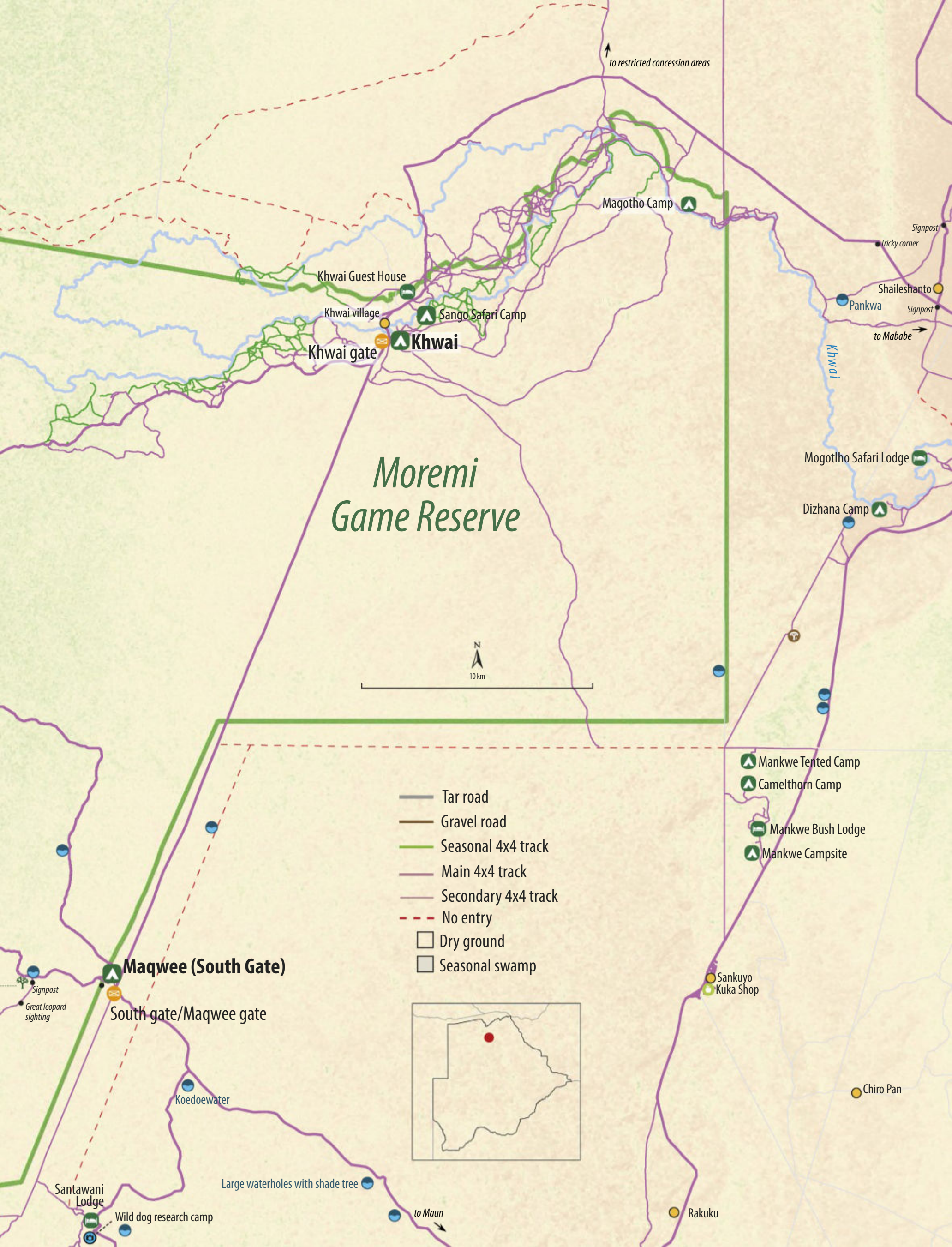
Welcome - Goroga Sentle

Tel: +267 6250312 | Email: reservations@kubulodge.net | Website: www.kubulodge.net

MOREMI GAME RESERVE

Moremi was proclaimed in 1963. It is named after Chief Moremi III of the Batawana.
Park fees: P205 (R275) per person; plus P115 (R154) per vehicle per day.





Moremi Game Reserve

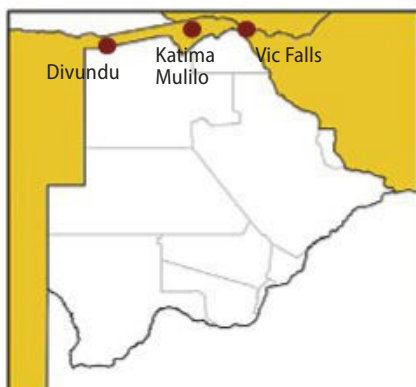
- Tar road
- Gravel road
- Seasonal 4x4 track
- Main 4x4 track
- Secondary 4x4 track
- No entry
- Dry ground
- Seasonal swamp





JON MINSTER

NGEPI CAMP



NAMIBIA

KAVANGO RIVER

The major Namibian towns in this area – with fuel, shops and ATMs – are Divundu and Rundu.

132 Taranga Safari Lodge

On the B10, about 35 km west of Rundu. The campsites are on grass and each stand has a light, power point, tap and braai. Camping R250 per person. Twin-sleeper tented chalet with en suite bathroom and private deck from R4 250 per night, DB&B. There's a restaurant and a floating river bar. Enquire about SADC discounts.

GPS: S17.87119 E19.45368

☎ 00 264 81 169 2186 (reservations)

📧 taranganamibia.com

133 Kaisosi River Lodge

About 7 km north-east of Rundu. The 16 camping stands are on grass and each has its own bathroom, power point and braai. Camping R165 per adult; R95 per child under

12. The lodge rooms have showers and air conditioning. Standard twin room from R1 555 per night B&B; family room (double bed, bunk bed) R2 100 B&B.

GPS: S17.87452 E19.83251

☎ 00 264 81 249 5090

📧 kaisosiriverlodge.com

134 Shamvura Camp

Shamvura has one cottage, four tent units and six campsites. All units have power, as does the campsite. Rates from R210 per person for a normal stand; R230 for a private stand; R260 for a private stand with a kitchen. Tent unit costs R550 per person. Two of the tent units sleep four people; two are twin-sleepers. Tree Top Cottage sleeps four and is equipped for self-catering: R650 per person.

GPS: S18.03507 E20.86079

☎ 00 264 81 241 7473

📧 shamvura@iway.na

📧 campinginnamibia.com/space/shamvura-camp

135 Camp Ndurokoro

This place is 55 km west of Divundu. A great value-for-money camp. Campsite stands have power and river views: R150 per person for a stand with shared ablutions; R190 per person for a stand with a private bathroom.

Safari tent from R450 per night for two people sharing. Family unit with private bathroom and river view from R700 per night. Cabin with private bathroom and kitchen from R450 per night for two people. At the swimming pool, there's a shared kitchen area with a fridge and stove. (For all options, the rate includes a bundle of firewood per day). Camp Ndurokoro is pet-friendly and they offer fishing trips and sundowner boat trips.

GPS: S17.94752 E21.10831

☎ 00 264 81 124 1051

(Leon Nederlof, WhatsApp)

136 Mobola Island Lodge

About 30 km north-west of Divundu, on a beautiful part of the river. 2022 rates: camping R180 per person. Twin-sleeper bungalow or luxury safari tent from R1 600 per night; four-sleeper bungalow from R3 200. No card machine – pay upfront via EFT or bring cash. There's no restaurant but you can request breakfast (R180 per person).

GPS: S17.99130 E21.33048

☎ 00 264 81 230 3281 (info only)

✉ booking@mobola-lodge.com

🌐 mobola-lodge.com

137 Riverdance Lodge

This immaculate lodge is 25 km north-west of Divundu. Their campsite has four stands, each with a bathroom, power point, picnic table and braai place: from R180 per person (max four people). Lodge rooms from R3 100 per night for two people, DB&B. SADC special: 20% discount on room rates.

GPS: S17.98704 E21.35424

☎ 00 264 66 258 401

☎ 00 264 83 783 7075

☎ 00 264 81 288 6005

✉ riverdance.com.na

138 Popa Falls Resort (NWR)

At Popa Falls, just south of Divundu. Ten stands with power: R140 per person (max eight people). Rooms from R1 130 per person sharing B&B. Look out for hippos. Day visitors to Popa Falls: R25 per person; R15 for Namibians.

GPS: S18.12178 E21.58316

✉ ct.bookings@nwr.com.na

🌐 nwr.com.na

139 Shametu River Lodge

This place is just downstream from Popa Falls. Camping R235 per person; chalets, tented chalets and villas from R2 115 per person sharing, DB&B. Children aged 4–12 get a 50% discount; children under 3 stay for free. The campsites are secluded and have excellent facilities. Book a game drive to nearby Mahangu, or a boat ride –

even a mokoro trip to Popa Falls.

GPS: S18.11690 E21.58827

☎ 00 264 61 237 294

☎ 00 264 81 127 4584

✉ shameturiverlodge.com

140 Rainbow River Lodge

Father-and-son team Deon and Geon de Waal run this lodge, both former Namibian freshwater anglers. It's on the banks of the Kavango River about 300 m downstream from Popa Falls.

The campsite has 11 stands on the riverbank. Camping R190 per person for a stand with power, grass and shade. Chalets from R2 550 per night for two people sharing B&B. Lunch and dinner also available. They offer game drives, river cruises and fishing.

GPS: S18.11253 E21.59082

☎ 00 264 81 124 2633 (Deon)

☎ 00 264 81 210 6678 (Geon)

✉ rainbowriverlodgenamibia.com

141 Nunda River Lodge

This well-run lodge is 7,5 km south of Divundu. The campsite has nine stands with power. SADC special until 31 December 2022: camping R190 per person; formal accommodation from only R950 per person – including dinner and breakfast! (They might extend the special into 2023; enquire.)

Regular rates for 2023: Camping R190 per person. En suite meru tent from R1 150 per person sharing B&B or R1 445 DB&B. Bungalows from R1 410 per person sharing B&B or R1 710 DB&B. They offer sunset cruises (R340 per person), fishing trips, mokoro trips, game drives and birding and cultural walks.

GPS: S18.10547 E21.59431

☎ 00 264 81 310 1730

☎ 00 264 66 259 093

✉ nundaonline.com

142 Ngepi Camp

On the banks of the Kavango River, 16 km south of Divundu. Ngepi is one of our favourite camps in the area. The camp has good river

frontage – almost all the campsites have a river view. Ngepi is known for its croc-proof swimming pool in the river, but they also offer game drives, mokoro trips, fishing and excellent birding walks.

Camping R180 per person (solar power from 10 am until 10 pm), plus R100 per day extra if you want to park your vehicle or trailer on grass. Bush hut R910 per person sharing B&B; tree house R1 030 per person sharing B&B.

GPS: S18.11686 E21.67027

☎ 00 264 66 259 903

✉ ngepicamp.com

143 Ndhovu Safari Lodge

Ndhovu is 19 km south of Divundu. They have three campsites: two with space for four people each and one for 10 people – R204 per person. Other accommodation (chalets and tented rooms) from R1 513 per adult sharing, DB&B; R890 per child aged 7–12 when sharing with parents.

The River Tent Suite floats on the Kavango and sleeps two people – R2 550 per person sharing DB&B, cheaper if you stay longer. Book via the e-mail address below and ask about SADC discounts. These rates are valid until 30 June 2023.

GPS: S18.13596 E21.67877

☎ 00 264 61 224 712

☎ 00 264 66 259 901

✉ ndhovu@resdest.com

🌐 ndhovu.com

144 Mahangu Safari Lodge

About 19 km south of Divundu. The campsite has six stands, all with power. Camping R220 per person; safari tent R1 385 per person sharing DB&B. Bungalows R1 570 per person sharing DB&B. SADC rates available on request.

GPS: S18.13841 E21.68066

☎ 00 264 66 259 037

✉ mahangu.com.na

KWANDO RIVER

The main town here is Kongola, where you'll find a shop, fuel

and an ATM. It's also where you'll find the best curio shop in the region, selling statues and bowls carved from wood.

145 Nambwa Campsite & African Monarch Lodges

African Monarch is the only lodge group with facilities within Bwabwata National Park, along the western bank of the Kwando River.

Wild and wonderful Nambwa is one of the all-time classic campsites in Namibia. You need a 4x4 to get to the camp from the park entrance gate, as the road is deep sand. There are four unfenced campsites (take care, you may encounter elephant or hippo) and an ablution block with hot water. Rate: R250 per person.

Nambwa Tented Lodge is next door, with luxurious safari tents on decks in the canopies of huge trees, overlooking the Kwando: from R5 040 per person sharing, DB&B.

Kazile Island Lodge is downstream from Nambwa – you're taken there by boat and it feels like you're in the Delta. Rates from R4 310 per person sharing, DB&B. Contact them for SADC and low-season specials.

GPS Nambwa Campsite:

S17.87499 E23.31760

GPS Boat station for Kazile

Island Lodge:

S17.90445 E23.32664

☎ 00 264 81 125 2122

✉ africanmonarchlodges.com

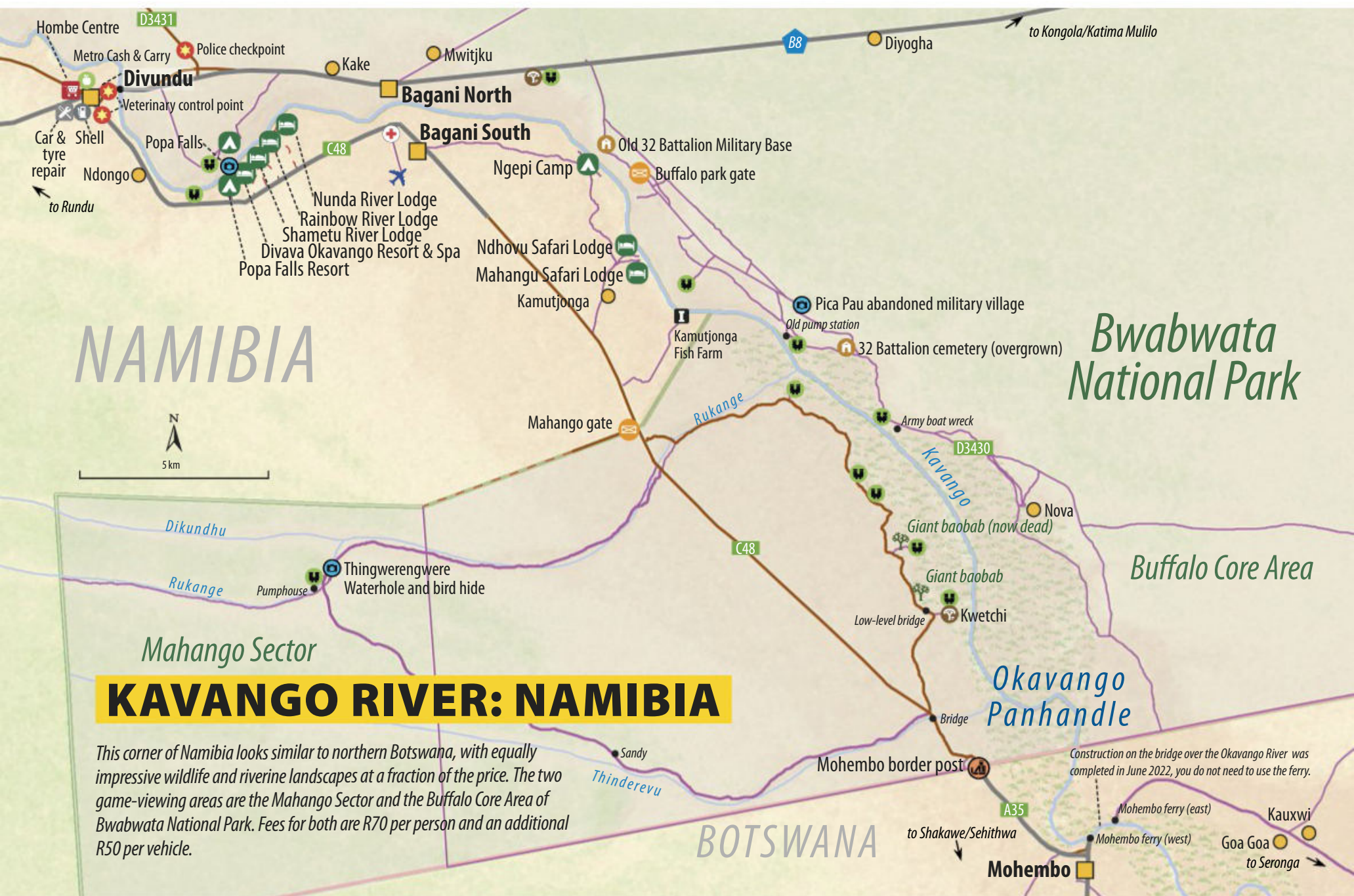
146 Bush Camp by Camp Kwando

Although operated by Camp Kwando (#151), this campsite is in a different location. It's accessible from the B8, 5 km west of Kongola, making it a good stopover if you're just passing through the region. Camping R330 per person for a stand with a private bathroom and electricity. They have a bar and a swimming pool, and you can book a river cruise.

GPS: S17.80921 E23.34606

☎ 00 264 81 149 1435

✉ campkwando.com



147 Mukolo Camp

Turn off to this spick-and-span camp from the C49 tar road, about 8,5 km south of Kongola. Owners Hennie and Veronica Köhne will give you personal attention. Their good service and value for money has made Mukolo a firm favourite.

Six camping stands, each with a private bathroom and power: R250 per person. There are six self-catering cabins: R920 per person sharing. Their river cruises are excellent, and they offer game drives (closed vehicle; max three people), fishing, mokoro trips and bird- and wildlife photography boat tours. New on offer: exclusive photography tours with a professional photographer.

GPS: S17.87531 E23.34121

☎ 00 264 66 25 0408

☎ 00 264 81 124 0403

✉ mukolocampnam@gmail.com

✉ mukolocamp.com

148 Mavunje Camp

Looking for something different? Come to Mavunje, a camp owned by guide Dan Stephens from Mashu River Safaris. Turn off the C49 about 13 km south of Kongola. Each camping stand has a private bathroom and awning: R300 per person. Rate includes firewood.

Dan offers some of the most unique activities in the area: Book a three- to four-hour river cruise for R550 per person, or a full-day cruise (recommended) for R1 500 per person. Overnight river trips (wild camping on an island in the Kwando!) and wilderness

walks are also available.

GPS: S17.91918 E23.31798

☎ 00 264 81 461 9608

✉ mashiriversafaris.com

149 Namushasha

River Lodge

About 25 km south of Kongola. It's part of the Gondwana group. Six campsites, each with a private bathroom and power: R287 per person. There are also four safari tents, each with four beds, a bathroom and a kitchen – perfect if you like a camping vibe but a bit more luxury. Rate: R825 per person. Chalets from R2 509 per person sharing B&B.

Have a beer on the deck above the Kwando River, fish and watch birds. If you don't mind mid-summer

(it gets sweaty), enquire about discounted low-season rates.

GPS: S17.98616 E23.29548

☎ 00 264 61 427 200

✉ gondwana-collection.com

150 Sharwimbo River Camp

Turn-off the C49 at the sign. Camping (five stands, shared ablutions) R250 per person. Self-catering chalets (15 units) from R1 000 per person. Chalet guests can also book to use a fully equipped kitchen and lapa area – the rate depends on the size of your group. Children aged 5 – 13 get a 50% discount on accommodation; children under 5 stay for free.

They have a swimming pool for the campsite and another for the chalets. A boat cruise costs R250 per

person per hour; game drive to Mudumu National Park R350 per person.

GPS: S18.02580 E23.31558

☎ 00 264 81 293 2734

✉ kwikben@mweb.com.na

🌐 sharwimbo.com

151 Camp Kwando

An excellent lodge and campsite, 30 km south of Kongola. Camping with private bathroom and electricity R330 per person. B&B options: double tented river chalet from R1 190 per person sharing; tree house from R1 765 per person sharing. Restaurant, boat rides and game drives.

GPS: S18.04298 E23.32226

☎ 00 264 81 149 1435

🌐 campkwando.com

152 Livingstone's Camp

Right next to Nkasa Rupara National Park, along the main access road. The five stands look out over part of the Linyanti wetland. Camping with private bathroom: R340 per adult; half-price for children aged 4 – 11; free for kids under 3. Limited solar power available. They offer guided walks in the adjacent Wuparo Conservancy, mokoro trips (seasonal) and game drives into Nkasa Rupara National Park. It's a birder's paradise.

GPS: S18.29933 E23.65276

☎ 00 264 81 288 3808

🌐 livingstonescamp.com

153 Rupara Rest Camp

Just outside the border of Nkasa Rupara National Park. The Kwando River flows into the Linyanti marshes here – from the camp, you have a view of the Harubandi channel.

Seven standard camping stands with power and shared ablutions – R200 per person. Two stands with private ablutions – R250 per person. Self-catering unit R940 per night for two people.

From Kongola, follow the C49 tar road for 75 km and turn off to Sangwali. Follow the signs for another 10 km.

GPS: S18.31778 E23.66188

☎ 00 264 66 686 101

☎ 00 264 81 486 5268

🌐 rupara.com

154 Nkasa Lupala Tented Lodge

This luxury lodge is on the border of Nkasa Rupara National Park. From R5 400 per night for two people, DB&B. Enquire about SADC discounts.

GPS: S18.32965 E23.67147

☎ 00 264 66 686 101

✉ info@nkasalupalalodge.com

🌐 nkasalupalalodge.com

ZAMBEZI RIVER

Katima Mulilo is the main town here, offering any service you might require. The best lodges and campsites are all on the riverbank, downstream from the town. Catch a tiger fish, look for a lifer or relax at your camp.

155 Caprivi River Lodge

Only 4,5 km east of Katima Mulilo. En suite double chalet from R2 880 per night for two people, B&B. En suite family room from R3 330 per night for three people, B&B. Meals and Wi-Fi are available, and they serve tea to guests (free) in the afternoon. SADC residents get a 20% discount on accommodation.

GPS: S17.49133 E24.31581

☎ 00 264 66 252 288

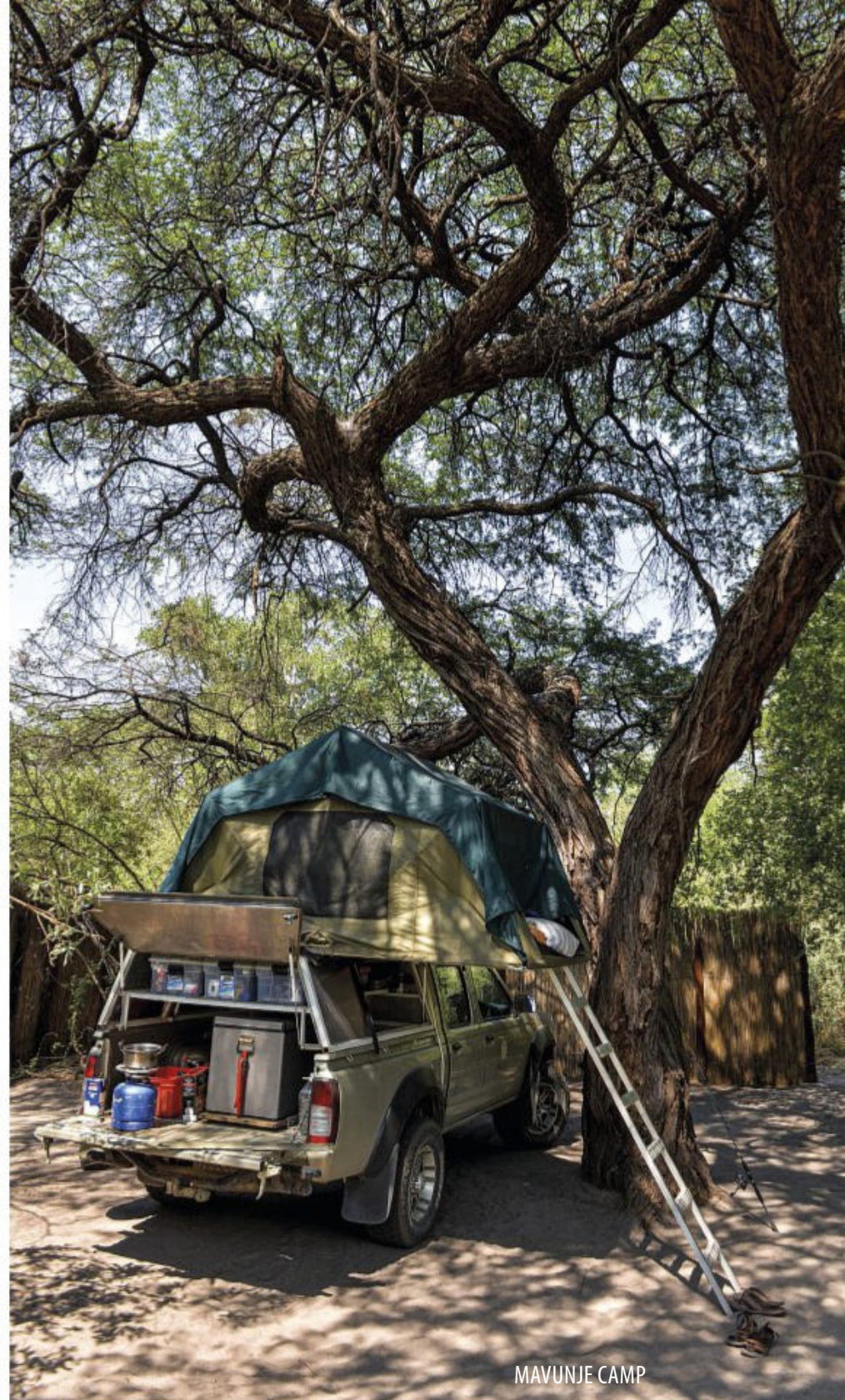
🌐 capriviriverlodge.com.na

156 Caprivi Houseboat Safari Lodge

About 6 km east of Katima Mulilo and an excellent birding spot. Camping (two stands, each with power) R170 per person. Glamping unit in tented camp R400 per person with private bathroom. Safari tent from R600 per person sharing; R700 B&B. Other units from R700 per person sharing, or R800 with breakfast.

They offer incredible multi-day Zambezi and Chobe river trips. Get

TOAST COETZER



MAVUNJE CAMP



EAT HERE

GREEN BASKET CAFÉ, KATIMA MULILO

You can buy sauces, jams and olives for your pantry, or sit down for a cappuccino or a milkshake. The menu includes breakfast, toasted sarmies, burgers and salads. Meals are hearty and well priced. It's next to the B8 as you drive into Katima from Kongola, on the left just before you reach the T-junction.

It's also HQ for Caprivi Adventures, a local tour company that can organise pretty much any adventure you can dream up.

Opening times: Monday to Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 2 pm.

☎ 00 264 81 206 1514 (Riaan)

☎ 00 264 66 252 739 (Travis)

🌐 capriviadventures.com



NAMIBIA

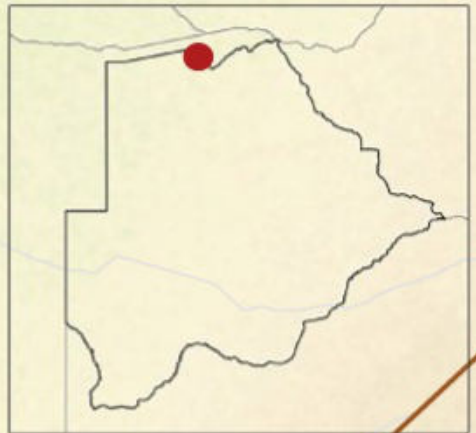
Susuwe Triangle

Kwando Swamps

Bwabwata National Park

KWANDO RIVER

The area around this “forgotten” river of the Zambezi Region is prettier than you’d think, and some of it is easy to explore, even in a 4x2. The C49 is tarred: Follow it south from Kongola for access to great lodges like Namushasha River Lodge, Camp Kwando and Mukolo Camp. If you have a 4x4 and want some serious adventure, follow the C49 further south to Mudumu and Nkasa Rupara national parks.



Sachona

- Tar road
- Gravel road
- Main track
- Secondary track
- Seasonal track

BOTSWANA





TOAST COETZER

KWANDO RIVER CRUISE



TOAST COETZER

six people together for their Zambezi Stop-Over (you sleep out one night), for only R1 100 per person (not including fuel).

GPS: S17.49515 E24.32406

☎ 00 264 66 252 287

📍 caprivihouseboatsafaris.com

157 Caprivi Mutoya Lodge & Campsite

A great spot 24 km east of Katima on a tar road. Camping (four stands) R220 per person, plus R60 per day for a power point. Four budget safari tents (twin-sleepers) R300 per person sharing. The lodge also has luxury tents (from R840 per person sharing B&B) and chalets (from R1 230 per person sharing B&B). Meals are available; some rooms also have self-catering facilities and air conditioning. Contact the lodge for SADC discounts.

GPS: S17.55645 E24.47403

☎ 00 264 81 287 5438

📍 caprivimutoyalodge.com

158 Zambezi Mubala Lodge & Camp

This spot is 40 km (all tar) east of Katima and one of the best options in the region. The camp part has 10 stands and eight self-catering safari tents (each sleeps four). Camping R287 per person; safari tents from R825 per person sharing. There's a restaurant, camp shop and swimming pool.

The lodge is a few kilometres downstream from the camp. Lodge visitors are transported by boat. Luxury chalet R2 396 per person sharing B&B.

GPS Camp: S17.54306 E24.52289

GPS Lodge: S17.54036 E24.56663

☎ 00 264 61 427 200

📍 gondwana-collection.com

CHOBE RIVER

On the Namibia side of the river, this is the only lodge easily reached by road (most others are reached

by boat from Kasane on the Botswana side).

159 Chobe River Camp

The camp is 4 km from the Ngoma border post. Six stands with private ablution facilities but no power (R284 per person). Luxury tented chalet from R985 per person sharing B&B. There's a swimming pool and a bar.

GPS: S17.89806 E24.72809

☎ 00 264 61 427 200

📍 gondwana-collection.com

ZAMBIA

LIVINGSTONE

This big town is Zambia's adventure tourism HQ. The Smoke that Thunders is so close you can hear it!

160 Jollyboys Backpackers & Camp

Jollyboys is smack-dab in the centre of town, directly behind the Livingstone Museum. It's ideal for independent travellers, small groups and adventurous families. There's off-street parking, a swimming pool, bar, restaurant and self-catering kitchen. Camping is US\$10 (R173) per person; dorm accommodation from US\$18 (R311); three-sleeper room with shared ablution US\$63 (R1 090); double en suite room US\$75 (R1 298) and four-sleeper en suite room US\$88 (R1 522).

GPS: S17.848009 E25.85422

☎ 00 260 213 324 229

☎ 00 260 978 571 100 (WhatsApp)

📍 backpackzambia.com

161 Baobab Camp & Cottages

This quirky spot is laid out around an old quarry, now filled with water. It's 5,7 km from the centre of Livingstone; helicopters take off from here for flips over Vic Falls. There are four campsites, each with private bathroom and kitchen facilities: US\$15 (R260) per person. There are also three self-catering cottages from

US\$100 (R1 730) per night for two people, or US\$150 (R2 595) per night for the family room, which sleeps four. The cottages are small but well equipped.

GPS: S17.89839 E25.86755

☎ 00 260 213 323 095

☎ 00 260 977 873 863 (WhatsApp for reservations)

📍 uaczam.com

162 Maramba River Lodge

This lodge is about 5 km south of town, along the tar road that goes to the border post and to Vic Falls. It's on a tributary of the Zambezi River and elephants often move through. 2022 SADC rates: camping US\$20 (R346) per adult; US\$10 (R173) per child aged 6 and older; free for children under 5. Safari chalet US\$153 (R2 647) per night for two people B&B. Family chalet US\$239 (R4 135) per night – two rooms, sleeps four. You can also book activities here.

GPS: S17.88912 E25.85521

☎ 00 260 213 324 189

📍 maramba-zambia.com

163 The Victoria Falls Waterfront

This place is about 5 km south of Livingstone, on the banks of the Zambezi River. Camping US\$15 (R260) per person. Other accommodation options (all include breakfast): safari tent US\$30 (R519) per adult sharing; Adventure Village rooms from US\$75 (R1 298) per adult sharing; chalets from US\$100 (R1 730) per adult sharing; family chalet (sleeps four) US\$255 (R4 412) per night. Children aged 3 – 11 get a discount; free for children under 3.

GPS: S17.88649 E25.84309

☎ 00 260 96 832 0606

☎ 00 260 97 247 7101

📍 theexplorerclubafrica.com

164 Taita Falcon Lodge

This lodge is 11 km from Victoria Falls and 20 km from Livingstone, overlooking the spectacular Batoka Gorge and the Zambezi River at Rapid #17 – you'll sometimes spot

MUCHENJE CAMPSITE & COTTAGES

Located in the Chobe Enclave, 7.2km from the Chobe National Park Ngoma gate. We offer camping and self-catering accommodation on a peaceful, secure and beautifully treed property on the borders of the National park.

10 spacious well shaded level campsites with electric plugpoints. Each campsite can sleep between 4 and 6 campers, and each site has its own braai stand and clean running water. There are 4 separate ablutions units; each containing its own basin, toilet and solar assisted hot water showers. Outdoor wash-up and laundry areas are available. In our quest to be eco-friendly our ablutions are managed by the latest Biorock™ systems.

3 charming self-catering cottages each with a fully equipped, open plan kitchen, en suite bathroom and outdoor shower

Each cottage has an outside covered verandah and can sleep 2 people.

The nearest large grocery shops, Bureau de Changes, ATMs and petrol stations are situated 60km away in Kasane. We advise that you fill up, draw cash and resupply before you come out.



Contact us: +267 75007327 bookings@muchenjecampsite.com
info@muchenjecampsite.com www.muchenjecampsite.com
www.facebook.com/muchenjecampsite GPS coordinates: S17°57.269' E024°40.6



KASANE SELF-CATERING

Kasane Self Catering is a family owned and run business in the heart of Kasane. The bed/sit style cottages are set in the back of the property overlooking beautiful gardens. There is access to a deck built high into a jackal berry tree which gives spectacular sunset views. Guest also have use of the pool on a neighbouring property. The fully equipped cottages have Free WI-FI, air conditioning, secure parking and a small Gym. In short, all the comforts of home. It is centrally located within walking distance to the shops and restaurants and only 10km from the Chobe Park Gate. An ideal place from which to explore Chobe, Victoria Falls, Namibia and Zambia and a perfect place to start or end your Adventures.



Contact us: +267 75532117 +267 6250114 Plot 347 President Avenue,
Kasane trish@chobeselfcatering.com
www.chobeselfcatering.com GPS Co-ordinates: S 17.794020 E 25.154716



CHOBE RIVER COTTAGES

Self-catering accommodation in the heart of Kasane, Botswana

Each unit has a fully equipped kitchen, luxurious bathroom and beautifully furnished bedroom. The comfortable lounges are air-conditioned and offer DSTV. The pull-out couch can sleep two adults or two children comfortably. There are 6 cottages, and they are suitable for families. Each unit also has a secluded braai area. The Cottages are centrally located in Kasane, within easy walking distance of shops, banks, restaurants and bureau de change. You do not have to travel far to find the wildlife, as the warthogs and mongooses wander the town at will. There are many activities in the area and we would be happy to book those for you.



Contact us: bookings@choberivercottages.com Tel: +267 625 2863 Fax: +267 625 0414
Cell: +267 75 663 152
GPS: S17:47:607 E025:09:305 (h:ddd:mm:mmm)



SAND PIPER VILLAS

Beautiful self-catering accommodation on the banks of the mighty Chobe River.

Take a game drive through Chobe National Park, enjoy a view from the magnificent Chobe River from a boat or just take it easy indulge yourself in the in-house pool.

We have 20 luxury villas, each containing a private veranda, with a built-in braai and a garden ideal for making memories with friends and families. Each unit is air-conditioned, has DSTV, WI-FI, en suite bathrooms and fully equipped kitchenette, all a stone through away from the mighty Chobe River.

Eight of the Villas have River front views, which has 2 bedrooms each with their own bathrooms. All the rooms have river view with a larger veranda with 180-degree view of the river.

For those who do not feel like preparing their own food can have a meal at our Boma which offers breakfast, lunch and dinner, while enjoying the conversations around the fire



Contact us: info@sandpipervillaschobe.com www.sandpipervillaschobe.com Tel: +26771473513
+267 6240218 Fax: +267 6240219
GPS Co-ordinates: -17.786185, 25.183471

NAMIBIA, ZAMBIA & ZIMBABWE

white-water rafts down there. As the lodge name suggests, you can scan the skies for the rare taita falcon – they nest against the cliffs.

The lodge has seven full-board chalets and three stands in a nearby campsite called Peregrine's Nest Bush Camp. Each stand has a private bathroom, and you get one bundle of wood per day. Camping: US\$20 (R346) per adult; US\$10 (R173) per child under 12. Lodge rates from US\$240 (R4152) per adult, which include all meals, sunset snacks, tea and coffee, Wi-Fi, guided bush walks and a cultural village tour. Half-price for kids under 12. Enquire about SADC rates. Day visitors welcome at their restaurant from 9 am to 4 pm.

GPS: S17.98043 E25.91025

📧reservations@sundestinations.

co.za (lodge bookings)

📞00 260 213 327 046 (lodge)

📞00 263 771 399 265

(cellphone/WhatsApp)

📧info@taitafalcon.com

(campsite bookings)

📧taitafalcon.com

165 Kubu Camp

Kubu is about 25 km west of Livingstone, on the Zambezi. The campsite is right on the water. There's grass and plenty of shade, and while the ablution facilities aren't the fanciest, they work perfectly fine. Caretaker Kebby Mutemwa looks after you. Camping costs US\$15 (R260) per person.

GPS: S17.83081 E25.64691

📞00 260 97 736 0469 (Kebby)

166 Camp Nkwazi

This well-run camp is on the Zambezi River, about 25 km west of Livingstone. The campsite has 13 stands of various sizes (2 – 8 vehicles) with power, braai facilities and hot showers. Camping US\$25 (R433) per adult; US\$20 (R346) per child aged 5 – 12. Self-catering chalet US\$135 (R2336) per person sharing. Options with meals included also available.

When you book, they'll send you a "how to" document which will

make the Kazungula border crossing easier. They have agents there, who will help you cut through the admin.

GPS: S17.83046 E25.64547

📞00 260 97 304 8830

(Gawie/Salomé)

📧campnkwazi.com

167 Shackletons Tiger Fishing Lodge

If you want to catch trophy tiger fish, this is the place – they've got expert guides. It's 140 km from Livingstone – the road is decent as far as the Kazungula turn-off, after which it becomes badly potholed.

They have six double chalets sleeping 12 people in total. A typical package deal for four nights costs R18 350 per person sharing. This includes accommodation in a luxury chalet, meals, tea and coffee, unlimited fishing, a boat and river guide, 20 litres of fuel per day, fishing tackle (excluding fly-fishing) and tourism levies. Kids under 12 get 50% discount. Get a group together!

GPS: S17.49658 E24.77525

📞083 251 7257 (James)

📧shackletons.co.za

ZIMBABWE

VIC FALLS

Business is done in US dollars, so check the price on the menu before you casually order a burger.

168 Victoria Falls Rest Camp

Pretty much in the middle of town, fenced in with security. It's a short walk to the shops and also to the waterfall. There's a pool and a decent restaurant. Camping: US\$15 (R260) per adult; US\$8 (R138) per child, plus US\$8 (R138) per vehicle. Twin-sleeper chalet from US\$45 (R779) per night; four-sleeper chalet from US\$75 (R1 298). Four-sleeper self-catering house from US\$200 (R3 460) per night (with aircon). Rates are higher during certain peak holiday times.

GPS: S17.92533 E25.83775

📞00 263 780 100 395

📞00 263 83 284 0678

📧reservation@restcamp.co.zw

169 Lorries Bed and Breakfast

Lush gardens are a feature of Vic Falls because of the subtropical climate. The garden at Lorries is one of the best – there's also a pool. Four-sleeper room from US\$175 (R3 028) per person; twin-sleeper from US\$60 (R1 038) per person. Both rates include breakfast. Air conditioning costs US\$10 (R173) extra per room per night. Two-bedroom self-catering cottage (sleeps six) US\$180 (R3 114) per night; US\$195 (R3 374) with aircon.

GPS: S17.92488 E25.82331

📞00 263 712 406 584 (Lorrie/Clive)

📧lorriesbedandbreakfast.com

170 Batonka Guest Lodge

They have 27 double rooms: US\$348 (R6 020) per night for two people, breakfast included. The lodge is 2,2 km from the falls so you can walk, but bear in mind that it's uphill on the way back. Get a taxi.

GPS: S17.92939 E25.82799

📞00 263 832 846 923

📧batonkaguestlodge.com

171 Victoria Falls Backpackers

This place is about 2,5 km from the falls. Camping is well priced: US\$10 (R173) per person for a stand with a power point. There's a communal kitchen and a washing-up facility. Double room with a shared bathroom US\$50 (R865) per night; en suite double room US\$60 (R1 038) per night. Safari tent US\$30 (R519) per night for two people. Family unit (dorm-style) for six costs US\$90 (R1 557) per night; family unit for 12 costs US\$120 (R2 076) per night.

GPS: S17.92231 E25.82595

📞00 263 213 284 2209

📧victoriafallsbackpackers.com

172 PheZulu Guest Lodge

This lodge is in a quiet suburb only 3,5 km from Vic Falls – you might hear the roar of the waterfall at night. The 21 rooms are en suite with air conditioning and Wi-Fi. 2022 rate: US\$115 (R1 990) per person sharing, including breakfast. There's also a swimming pool, bar and restaurant – lunch and dinner can be served on request.

GPS: S17.92651 E25.82293

📞00 263 832 841 376

📧thebayetecollection.com

173 Victoria Falls Hotel

Accommodation here is expensive. Sit on the veranda and order tea or a Zambezi Lager. The view is awesome: Batoka Gorge, with billowing condensation from the falls in the background, and the railway bridge connecting Zimbabwe to Zambia. 2022 rate: Standard room from US\$520 (R8 996) per night. See the website for more rates.

GPS: S17.92989 E25.84190

📞00 263 83 284 4751;

📧victoriafallshotel.com

174 Zambezi National Park lodge & camping

2022 rates: Day visitors pay US\$12 (R208) per adult; US\$6 (R104) per child aged 6 – 12; US\$10 (R173) per vehicle. There's a lodge in the park, near the gate. It has four-sleeper self-catering chalets, but they are currently closed for renovations – check with the lodge for updates.

Deeper into the park are fishing camps (Kandahar, Siansimba, Mpala Jena) and wilderness camps (Chundu, Chomuza, Siamunungu). Camping US\$17 (R294) per person (max 12 people per stand). The facilities are very basic. The fishing camps have cold showers and flush toilets; the wilderness camps have pit toilets and the odd braai place.

GPS: S17.89999 E25.81710 (gate)

📧bookings@zimparks.org.zw

📧res2@zambezinationalparkchalets.com (for chalets)

📧zimparks.org.zw



An off-the-beaten-area of a sweeping expanse of grasslands with mopane and deciduous woodlands, is only 80km south of Kasane but feels like another world. The Nogatsaa area has a cluster of natural clay-bottom pans which fill during the rainy season – with the Nogatsaa Pans Campsite positioned at Kabunga Pans with a hide overlooking the Pan.

With 6 campsites, all spaced for privacy, ablutions with hot water and a clean camp in a very remote area – spending a couple of nights in true Botswana fashion is a must. Large herds of elephants, a growing pride of lion, wild dogs are all visitors in and around the area.

RATES INCLUDE:

- Campsite – 2 vehicles, max 4 pax per site
- Firewood will be provided for the hot water system
- Each site has a firepit
- Receptacles for your refuse – we will collect and dispose
- Clean ablutions for male & female

RATES EXCLUDE:

- Firewood – Please ensure you have firewood before entering the park.
- Park fees

BOOKING DETAILS: reservations@ghohahills.com / +27 63 613 9144

 Paul Kilian 083 626 49 65
info@trolleycompany.co.za
www.trolleycompany.co.za

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 Bucket size 106cm x 58,5cm x 30cm

Baby HOPPER
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 Bucket size 97,5cm x 52,5cm x 22,5cm

Tipper Trailer
 Load capacity 500kg
 Bucket size 120cm x 95cm x 30cm

Mesh XL
 Load capacity 350kg
 Bucket size 122cm x 60cm x 31cm

Mesh
 Load capacity 200kg
 Bucket size 97cm x 52cm x 25cm

WOODY STORECART
 Capacity 100kg
 Size 41,5cm x 34,5cm x 140cm

FLATBED Trolley
 Weight 12,5kg
 Load capacity 300kg
 Bed measurements 89cm x 60cm x 28cm

Mule
 Weight 3kg
 Load capacity 50kg
 Seat capacity 90kg



We invite you to come experience the beauty of the Kgalagadi and the warmth of its people, while staying with us at Nkisi Guest House. Relax and unwind at the Upperdeck Boskos Restaurant, or treat yourself to room service. Enjoy the tranquil outdoor spaces, and have a good night's rest in one of our lovely decorated air-conditioned rooms, equipped with DSTV.

Upperdeck Boskos-restaurant

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www.nkisiguesthouse.com








Greater Kalahari & Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

DATES AND RATES FOR 2023

1 – 8 February

10 – 17 February

19 – 26 February

Duration: Eight days; seven nights (tented accommodation).

R15 250 per adult; half-price for children under 10.

INCLUDED IN THE RATE

- Camping fees
- Park entrance fees
- All advertised activities
- Tents, cutlery and crockery
- Three meals a day, plus tea and coffee in camp
- Professional tour leader and guides as required
- Two-way radio communication

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your own vehicle (fuel, border fees and road taxes are for your account)
- Your own mattress and sleeping bag
- Camp chairs
- Drinks and snacks
- Medical emergency and evacuation insurance cover

Join us on “The Highwayman’s Adventure Route” through the vast expanse of the world’s largest continuous sand mass – the Kalahari.

THE ADVENTURE

DAY 1: TWEERIVIEREN

Our tour through the Kalahari starts at Twee Rivieren rest camp in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Go for a late afternoon game drive or take advantage of the swimming pool to cool off after a long drive. In the evening, you can look forward to a delicious meal prepared by our bush chef while getting to know your travel companions around the fire.

DAYS 2 & 3: NOSSOB

After packing up, we head for Nossob rest camp where we will stay for two nights. We visit the Auchterlonie Museum along the way to learn more about the park’s fascinating history, with a stop for lunch. By the time we arrive at our campsite, the team will have pitched the tents and tea and coffee will be waiting. Dinner is around the fire.

After early morning coffee and rusks, there is time to explore the camp or go on a game drive in the area. If you choose to stay, the waterhole at the campsite can deliver some interesting sightings. Brunch will be served later in the morning.

DAY 4: MATOPI

After breakfast, we cross the border into the Botswana section of the park along the Bosobogolo Trail (aka Boso Trail), which will eventually take us to Mabuasehube.

We break up the long drive to Mabua with a stopover at Matopi, a wild and remote campsite. Matopi 1 doesn’t overlook a pan but there is a small pan about 2 km to the east between Matopi 1 and Matopi 2. There is shade and a long drop but no water so the Bhejane team will set up camp showers that will allow you to rinse off the dust of the road. Enjoy the Kalahari sunset and fall asleep to the sound of barking geckos.

DAYS 5, 6 & 7: MABUASEHUBE SECTION

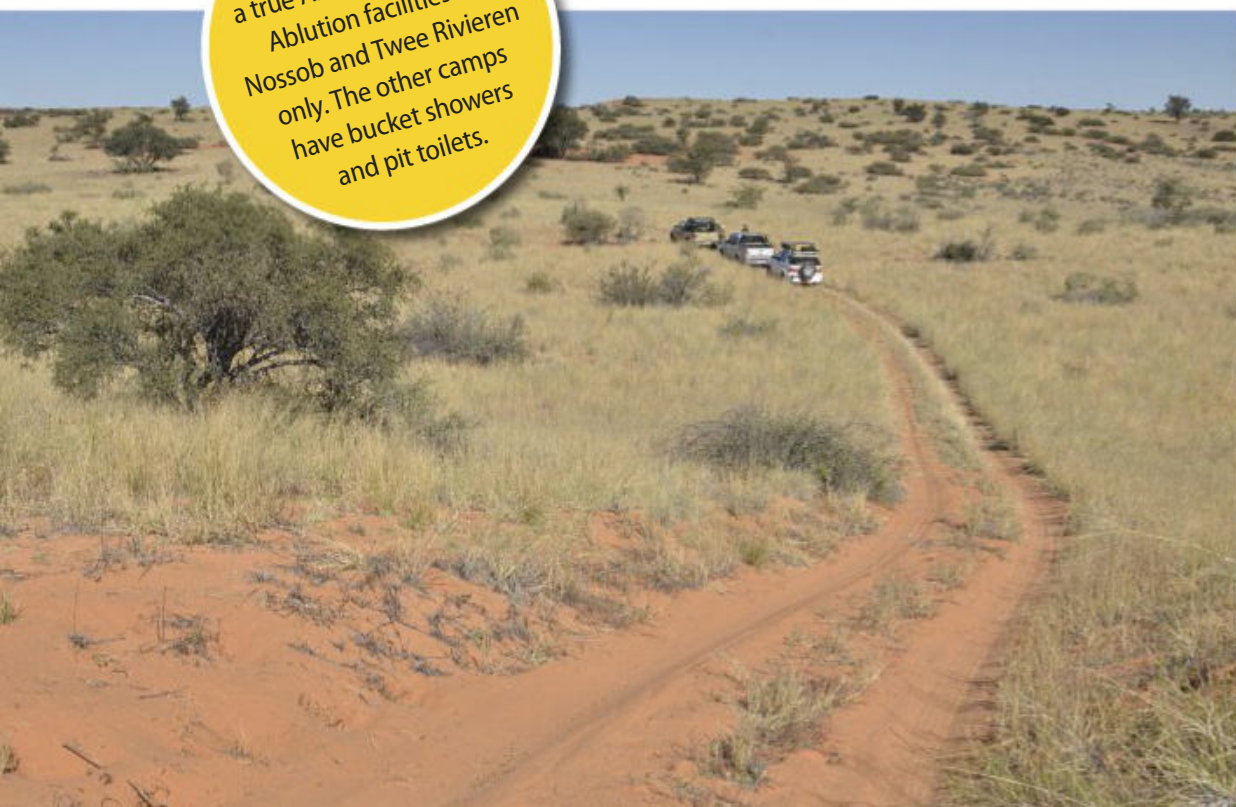
Today we head for Mabuasehube and Khiding. We will spend three nights camping on the edge of Mabua Pan, which gives us plenty of time to do game viewing. This area is known for lion, leopard, cheetah, honey badger and brown hyena sightings.

Khiding is the only campsite in the Mabua section that has two toilets, but there is no water so the Bhejane crew will again provide water for ablutions.

DAY 8: HOME

After one last breakfast, we must pack up and head for home. We will travel in convoy to the town of Tshabong before going our separate ways. From here, it is about 20 km on a tarred road to the border post and a further 215 km to Kuruman.

Please note this is a true African adventure. Ablution facilities at Nossob and Twee Rivieren only. The other camps have bucket showers and pit toilets.





Game-rich northern Botswana!

BOOK NOW!

Explore this country on the journey of a lifetime and discover some of Africa's wildest places.

Our northern Botswana tour begins at Khama Rhino Sanctuary in central Botswana, where we spend our first night. The next day, we go on an early morning game drive in the reserve.

Birders are in for a treat – Khama is home to more than 230 species.

Then we move on to the spectacular Kubu Island, a granite rock outcrop on the Makgadikgadi Pans, for a night under the stars. The next morning, after enjoying coffee and rusks against the backdrop of the iconic baobabs, we head north along the edge of the salt pans, testing our 4x4 driving on the sandy terrain.

We have a light picnic lunch en route to our campsite. We spend two days on the banks of the Boteti River, 30 km from Maun. There will be an opportunity to do a flight over the Okavango Delta (for your own expense), explore the local markets or simply chill in camp before a late afternoon cruise on the Boteti River.

Then we continue to the Khwai River, north of Moremi, for three days of camping. The area is renowned for prolific game, beautiful scenery and magnificent birdlife. Next on the itinerary is Chobe National Park, where there are excellent game-viewing opportunities. It's one of the best places to see elephants, as well

as lions, leopards, hyenas and wild dogs. (A mokoro experience is included in the tour package.)

Leaving Khwai behind, we traverse the Savuti section of Chobe National Park to our camp on the Chobe floodplain, close to Ngoma in northern Botswana. Our transit through the park is yet another chance to watch game.

By the time we arrive at our camp in the late afternoon, the Bhejane team has dinner on the fire, so the only thing left is to wash off the Savuti dust before enjoying a sundowner.

Go on a self-drive tour along the Chobe River and explore at your own pace. The area is known for its large herds of elephant and buffalo. Our camp is situated close to the Ngoma entrance to Chobe National Park, so you can easily do a drive along the riverfront and floodplains in the park – good places for birdwatching and game.

And finally, we'll spend our last night at Thebe River Camp, near Kasane. There are no fences between the park and the town so it's quite common to see wildlife wandering through town!

A visit to Chobe would not be complete without a sunset cruise on the river, watching the animals make their way to the water. It's the perfect way to round off the adventure.

DATES AND RATES

20 – 30 March 2023

R20 250 per adult;
half-price for kids under 10.

Duration: 11 days, 10 nights

Start: Khama Rhino Sanctuary

End: Kasane

INCLUDED IN THE RATE

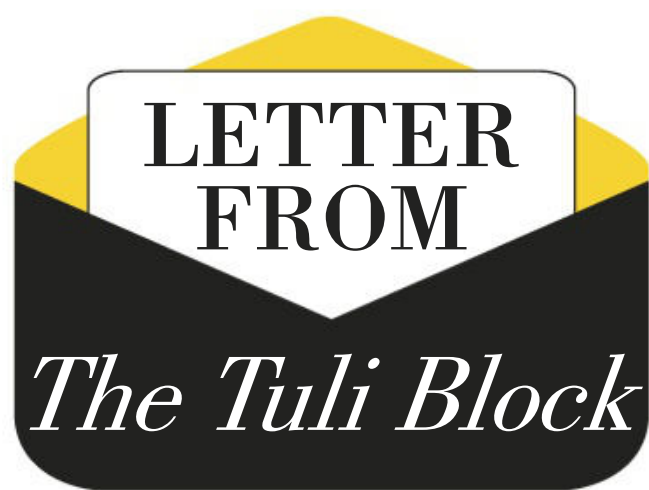
- Tented accommodation
- Specialist guide
- Two-way radios in all vehicles
- Three meals per day
- Entry fees to all parks and activities
- 4x4 assistance if required

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

- Your own vehicle – a 4x4 is essential due to the sandy terrain (fuel is for your own account)
- Your own travel insurance
- Cooldrinks, alcoholic drinks and snacks
- Personal items such as medication, sunblock, binoculars, camera etc.
- Camp chairs

Contact  bookings@bhejane.com or call  082 724 0442 for a complete itinerary and more info.


Bhejane
FOLLOW ADVENTURE



Time alone on top of a hill, after an unforgettable cycle tour through the Tuli Block, gives **Pierre Steyn** the chance to reflect.

Just before sunset, a handful of stiff-legged people clambered to the top of a koppie overlooking the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers. All those people have gone now, their thirst for a scrap of cellphone signal sated. They've sent their WhatsApp messages – “Hi sweetheart, I made it!” “I'm safe.” “See you tomorrow xx” – and they'll soon be speeding southwards and home.

But I don't want to go home. I want to hide here for a little bit longer, away from the digital tsunami that will soon swallow me whole again. I've spent the last four days doing the Tour de Tuli on my mountain bike – from Mapungubwe National Park in South Africa, through Zimbabwe and Botswana, and back again to our campsite in Mapungubwe.

I watch the sky darken from my spot on the koppie. In the distance, beyond the Tour de Tuli's temporary tented village, the “great grey-green, greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees” reflects the last bit of light. Rudyard Kipling would have been as surprised as I was to find the Limpopo flowing so strongly in July, thanks to abundant late-summer rain.

Towards the north, I can just make out the sandy floodplain of the Shashe River before it merges with the Limpopo. Zimbabwe is to the right of the Shashe; Botswana prospers to its left.

Tour de Tuli might start and end in South Africa, and you speed through Zim for a day, but these are supporting acts. Botswana is the main attraction. In Botswana, you realise that *you* are the interloper. It's a place that still belongs to the animals. There are no game fences, not even in the national parks. The Tuli Block, in Botswana's easternmost corner, is an

amalgamation of private nature reserves and agricultural land covering more than 3 000 km². It's wild.

Tuli is not as flat as the rest of Botswana, either. Sandstone koppies like the one I'm on rise above the mopane forest, and ancient baobabs, wild fig, ana and apple-leaf trees stand proudly.

For three days, we cycled exclusively through the Tuli in Botswana, and we had to detour around elephants many times. It blows my mind how quickly and silently these giants can move once they grow bored of you. You'll look at them, turn to someone next to you to say something, and when you look back, they're gone. Maybe the Tuli isn't a block at all, but a Botswana Triangle, where elephants can disappear at will...

A noisy pride of lions woke me in the early hours this morning, grunting and roaring like a gang of drinking buddies who had lost their volume control. Sound travels far at night and I snuggled deeper into my sleeping bag, reasoning they were probably somewhere way off in the distance. But later, on a jeep track, scarcely a kilometre from camp, we found their paw prints in the sand.

That said, my most exciting encounter wasn't with a throaty lion, a fed-up elephant or a kudu bull that could have knocked me off my bike just because he felt like it. Call me Adam, because it was a snake that almost brought me to the fall in this paradise...

Even before my brain could compute that a big grey shape was rapidly cutting across the path, both my hands had pulled the brake levers. The snake paused and raised its head to show a pitch-black mouth, and there was a collective murmur, almost in reverence: “Mamba!”

I considered this a close call, but the mamba skedaddled without giving us a second glance, as if saying, “Don't bother me and I won't bother you.”

I can't fault that. It's a philosophy I try to embrace even outside the Tuli's animal kingdom.

*A noisy pride of lions woke me
in the early hours this morning,
grunting and roaring like a gang
of drinking buddies who had
lost their volume control.*

Senyati Safari



Camp

Visit Senyati and see 4 countries in one go

no visas required with
South African passport

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10 km from new
Kazungula bridge

ZIMBABWE

80 km from
Victoria Falls

NAMIBIA

128 km from Katima Mulilo

BOTSWANA

15 km from Chobe National
Park gate

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water hole in Botswana with
a photographic bunker.

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IN THE WORLD!**

You can pay in Rands, and
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- No Botswana park fees & 24/7 illuminated water hole
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- 50% pensioner's and birder's discount form 4 January - 20 March annually
- Various activities:
 - Chobe sunset cruise
 - Chobe National Park game drives
 - Victoria Falls day tours
 - Swimming pool
 - Tiger fish
- Free Internet (Satellite from 5-9 pm)
- Meat, wood and ice for sale and laundry



SCAN ME

www.senyatisafaricampbotswana.com

+267 71881306 ■ Senyatisafaricamp@gmail.com ■ GPS: 17°52'20"S 25°14'9"E

BOTSWANA AT ITS BEST

Kubu Island (Lekhubu) is a rocky outcrop on the western edge of Sua Pan, which is part of the greater Makgadikgadi Pans complex. During new moon, the Milky Way provides a spectacular backdrop to the baobab trees.

This photo reminds me of the Johnny Clegg song, "Great Heart": *There's a highway of stars across the heavens / . . . A hope and a dream at the edge of the sky / And your life is a story like the wind. . .*

I took this photo with a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV camera and a Canon 16–35 mm lens mounted on a tripod. I used two LED panels to light up the baobab slightly. My shutter speed was 15 seconds at an aperture of f2.8, and ISO 6400.

The reason for the wide aperture is to have sufficient light to keep the shutter speed as fast as possible and the ISO as low as possible – both of which limit digital noise in a night shot like this.

– Elmar Venter





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