



AFRICA
ODYSSEY

A Guide to Botswana



Africa Odyssey

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A guide to the guide

The idea of this guide is to help you decide where in Botswana you should go. We know that clients can easily get bamboozled by too much information. We hope this short guide will be enough to set you on the right course, without being too detailed, and as such it is not meant to be definitive. For further details we strongly recommend that you look at our vast website which discusses all the game reserves, national parks and all the different camps and lodges, with in depth reviews, prices, and often a video. Since we have personally visited every lodge in Botswana we can really give you the best advice!

So saying, nothing beats the personal touch so we strongly recommend you either pop into our offices in Putney, London or phone to discuss. Alternatively we can give you a 'virtual presentation' which simply requires that you have access to a computer anywhere in the world!

Important considerations

When to go?

The climate in Botswana is similar to that of all Southern Africa countries, although it has very low rainfall - you would be unlucky for rain to hinder your safari. There may be an odd afternoon shower during the summer months from October to March. December to February has the highest rainfall, although that still isn't much. The best time to travel is from mid-May to October, during the winter, when it is cool and sunny with low humidity, and the game viewing is at its best. All in all, Botswana is good all year round.

Where to stay?

The next consideration is which areas will offer the best game viewing and activities for your travel dates – this is especially critical with regard to the floods that reach Botswana from Angola. In recent years the country has developed a decent range of accommodation to choose from according to your budget and personal taste, from small tented camps to larger resort-type lodges. This wide range allows for varied itineraries covering all the best areas.

Budget

Safaris are not cheap anywhere, and especially not in Botswana, but you do get some of the best safari opportunities of any to be found in Africa. In high season safaris start at about \$680 per person per night at the more basic end of the accommodation scale, upward to \$2,600 pppn. The low and shoulder seasons do offer incredibly attractive rates, considering the game viewing is still very good at these times.

For the Okavango Delta - water, land or mixed activity camps?

In water activity camps you will experience the quiet lagoons and fast-flowing channels of the delta. Much of the time will be spent reclining in a mokoro (dug out canoe). The deep waterways of the delta do not support a huge number of mammals, though elephant, buffalo and other animals do appear, along with fantastic birdlife. The land activity camps do not have the typical watery 'delta scenery', though these are the best camps from which to view big game. There are also a number of mixed activity camps which potentially offer the best of both worlds, with water-based and land-based activities available.

We strongly recommend that you stay in a combination of camps, but confusingly whether a particular camp offers predominantly land or water based activities varies according to the flood levels - so please call us to discuss!

Getting there and getting around

All flights to Botswana route through Johannesburg. From here you connect by light aircraft to Maun, Kasane, Victoria Falls or Livingstone to begin your Botswana safari. These internal light aircraft flights are usually between 20 and 40 minutes long, very scenic and a great experience in themselves.

Further afield – Namibia

Namibia might be thought to be an obvious Botswana extension as it is right next door. However, it's ridiculously expensive, involves long internal light aircraft flights and it takes about 7 to 9 days to do Namibia properly. So Namibia only really works if you are unconstrained in terms of time and budget.

Further afield – South Africa

Cape Town is a day's journey away from Botswana or Victoria Falls, via Johannesburg. An iconic, cosmopolitan city with plenty to see and do for everyone, Cape Town is well worth a visit. We recommend about 4 nights there, which is sufficient to see the best of the city including Table Mountain, the winelands and some of the Cape peninsula.

The Kruger National Park contains some of Africa's most prestigious lodges and offers outstanding game viewing - but it is fenced and the safari experience here feels very different from that of Botswana. A few nights here would offer an interesting complement to a Botswana safari.

Further afield – beaches

For the best beaches, it's worth mentioning the islands in the Quirimbas archipelago of Northern Mozambique and the Bazaruto Archipelago in Southern Mozambique, which offer a truly 'barefoot luxury' experience with a real frontier feel and amazing untouched reefs. Mauritius and the islands of the Seychelles are also worth considering, and Mauritius in particular is very family-friendly. Of all the beach options, the best variety and value for money are to be found on Zanzibar. All of these beach options are accessible from Johannesburg, and a 'dead night' in a city hotel is often required.

Special occasions

Whether it is your honeymoon, holiday of a lifetime, birthday celebration, or a family reunion, we will plan it with you, and ensure that it is a memorably superb trip. Botswana is famous for its exclusive unfenced private concession areas, making it ideal for honeymoons, family safaris and even large group trips. Whatever your dream holiday comprises, we can make it happen.

Botswana Overview

There are 5 main areas in Botswana; **the Okavango Delta** (including **Moremi Game Reserve**), **the Linyanti**, **the Makgadikgadi Pans**, **the Kalahari Desert** and **Chobe National Park**. Moremi Game Reserve is an unfenced area within the Okavango Delta, surrounded by a string of unfenced private concessions which are home to some of Africa's very best safari camps. Just across the border from Chobe are Livingstone in Zambia and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Botswana has a wide variety of camps, and this chart gives a rough idea of approximate costs (prices per person per night in US\$). The best operators are Kwando and Wilderness Safaris, then Great Plains, then Sanctuary and &Beyond. Botswana's best value safaris are from Desert and Delta and Under One Botswana Sky.

Operator	Camp	High PPPN	Low PPPN
Wness Premier	Mombo, Kings Pool, Jao, Vumbura Plains, Abu	\$2,150 to \$2,650	\$1,200 to \$1,800
Wness Classic 1	Chitabe, Little Vum, Tubu, Duma Tau, Chitabe Lediba, Little Tubu	\$1,450	\$900
Wness Classic 2	Kalahari Plains, Savuti, Kwetsani, Xigera, Jacana, Seba	\$1,325	\$750
Great Plains	Duba Plains, Selinda, Zarafa	\$1,400 to \$2,250	\$880 to \$1,400
Kwando	Kwara, Lebala, Lagoon, Little Kwara, Nxai Pan, Tau Pan	\$470 - \$1,130	\$470 to \$550
Sanctuary	Chiefs, Stanleys, Baines, Chobe Chilwero	\$1,190 to \$2,220	\$630 to \$1,160
&Beyond	Xudum, Xarana, Nxabega, Sandibe	\$1,200 to \$1,940	\$570 to \$940
Desert and Delta	Chobe Game Lodge, Savute Lodge, Camp Moremi, Camp Okavango, Xakanaxa	\$873	\$495
Under One Botswana Sky	Pom Pom, Moremi Crossing, Chobe Safari Lodge	\$550 to \$890	\$365 to \$680
Kerr and Downey	Kanana, Shinde, Okuti	\$850 to \$950	\$495 to \$695

The Okavango Delta

The Okavango Delta is without doubt Botswana's best safari destination, with an incredible eco-system and an abundance of wildlife, birds, flora and fauna, all sustained by the remarkable delta. Flood water from Angola runs down the Kavango River into Namibia and then into Botswana, where it becomes the Okavango River. As Botswana is extremely flat, the water fans out over a wide area, creating the world's largest inland delta. Some flood water heads north to the Linyanti through the Selinda Spilway and pushes down the Savuti Channel, and some runs down to the Makgadikgadi salt pans through the Boteti River.

Moremi Game Reserve

Located within the Okavango Delta, Moremi Game Reserve has public camping areas and allows self-drive safaris. In general, it's best to avoid Moremi as it can get pretty busy. However, some camps here do offer great value for money. In addition, Moremi does have one private concession area which is home to the world-famous Mombo Camp – probably the best safari camp the world!

Where to stay

If budget permits, the private concessions are the best areas to stay in the Okavango. These are huge private tracts of land with masses of game. The private concessions allow activities such as night drives, fishing and walking safaris as well as the usual boat rides, mokoro trips (dugout canoes) and game drives. Each concession area has a limited number of beds which is why Botswana offers the most exclusive safaris in the world.

The Okavango has dry and wet areas with a wide variety of camps in each. We recommend spending some time in both a dry and a wet area in order to get the full range of experience. Moremi offers a good mix of camps but as it is a public reserve, the range of permitted activities is limited.

The pre-eminent safari operators in Botswana are **Wilderness Safaris** and **Kwando Safaris**. These two operators really deliver the best safari product and have camps in all right areas. Kwando has a concession area called Kwara in the north east of the Okavango Delta, with Kwara Camp and Little Kwara Camp, which together arguably offer the

best variety in game and terrain in the whole Okavango. Wilderness Safaris have 3 tiers of camp: Premier, Classic 1 and Classic 2, all excellent and all offering camps in the best areas. The premier tier includes Vumbura Plains, Kings Pool and Mombo, Classic 1 includes Chitabe and Little Vumbura, and Classic 2 includes Kwetsani and Xigera.

Great Plains' Duba Plains Camp is famous for its lion and buffalo interaction - but if the lion aren't around, you've really wasted a few days. You can only do game drives here.

Strangely **&Beyond** and **Sanctuary Lodges** are similarly priced to Wilderness and Kwando, but their products are in sort of no man's land. The game areas are poor, the camps are good but nothing to rave about and for the same price there are better places to stay.

The mid-level choices are lovely and superb value for money. **Under One Botswana Sky** has **Pom Pom**, **Gunns Camp** and **Moremi Crossing**, all with great locations, stunning camps and good guiding. **Desert and Delta** also offer an amazing safari circuit with great Okavango Camps such as **Camp Moremi**, **Xakanaxa** and **Camp Okavango**.

The Linyanti

The Linyanti is located to the north of the Okavango Delta, no more than a 30 minute scenic flight away, and should always be visited in conjunction with the Okavango. Famous for its cheetah and wild dog and home to a wide variety of game and birdlife, this area has vast grassy plains and tall forests and is a very different environment to the Okavango. A channel from the Okavango Delta flows north to the Selinda Spillway which is also fed by the Linyanti Channel; together these rivers fill up the Selinda Spillway which in turns spills over into the Savuti Channel creating the Savuti, one of Africa's most abundant safari areas.

Just as for the Okavango, the two pre-eminent safari operators in this area are **Kwando Safari** and **Wilderness Safaris**. The Kwando concession area is Botswana's largest privately-owned concession and home to **Lebala Camp** and **Lagoon Camp**. Wilderness Safaris has **Kings Pool** (Premier), **Duma Tau** (Classic 1) and **Savuti Camp** (classic 2).

Great Plains has the Selinda Reserve concession, with **Selinda Camp** and **Zarafa**. Both are lovely camps; Zarafa is certainly the more luxurious. Desert and Delta have the **Savuti Safari Lodge** which is actually located on the western side of the Chobe National Park.

Chobe National Park

Chobe National Park offers the most affordable safari in Botswana. It's busy, it's like the Masai Mara in Kenya, but it delivers a world-class game experience and arguably the best big river experience in Africa. With habitats ranging from the waterways and floodplains of the Chobe River itself to the dry sands of the Kalahari desert and dense acacia woodlands, Chobe offers day safari along with some fantastic boat safari. There are an estimated 60,000 elephants, large herds of buffalo and good numbers of plains game. Predators are round every corner - but so are vehicles! The best operators like Kwando, Wilderness and Great Plains don't operate here for a reason.

The best camp here is **Muchenje Safari Lodge** which is independently-owned and located on the far side of the park away from the people. **Chobe Safari Lodge** is the cheapest and best-value option, and works very well with a budget safari. Inside the park itself, **Chobe Game Lodge** is by far the best option with the best views and location.

The Kalahari Game Reserve

A massive expanse of grassy plains, rolling topography and shrubby desert fauna, the Kalahari is totally underrated and merits much more safari interest than it gets. It is home to desert game like gemsbok, eland, hartebeest, brown hyena and of course all the usual predators. There are only 2 camps in the park; **Tau Pan** owned by **Kwando Safaris** and **Kalahari Plains** owned by **Wilderness Safaris**.

Why Africa Odyssey

Independent advice from experts

We really know our stuff. We have been arranging luxury travel to Africa since 1999, and we have close relationships with all the suppliers. We have stayed at all the lodges many a time, so we can match an itinerary to your requirements very precisely. You may have come across a fabulous lodge on [TripAdvisor](#) – but if there's an even better (more intimate, more authentic, less expensive) one just round the corner, we'll tell you about it. And if anything goes wrong during your trip, we know who to call and how to get things sorted.

Independently owned and operated

We are not accountable to anybody but you. We don't work on commission. Our only objective is to arrange the best possible trip for you, within your budget, and to ensure that you have a wonderful time.

Industry credentials

Our MD, Marc, is a board director of the [Africa Travel and Tourism Association](#), the UK trade body covering all aspects of travel and tourism to Africa. He is also a judge of the highly respected [Good Safari Guide](#). One of our consultants, Annie, has written the [Cadogan guidebook to Tanzania and Zanzibar](#), now in its 2nd edition. Most importantly we pride ourselves on the quality of our consultants, many of whom are native to their specialist country, and all of whom know the countries backwards.

Testimonials

Countless thousands of clients have been delighted with our service. [Here](#) is what some past clients have had to say about their trips and about us, and we receive regular reviews on [Trust Pilot](#).

Your Money

Our price promise

Booking through us will cost no more - and often considerably less - than booking the same trip with all the individual suppliers directly. We are able to negotiate excellent rates with suppliers, which results in savings for you. In the very unlikely event that you get a cheaper quote for the same trip from a reputable UK bonded tour operator, we will match that quote.

Financial protection

We are [ATOL](#) bonded (ATOL 5397) so whatever might happen to us, your money is protected.

No surcharge for currency fluctuations

Once your itinerary is confirmed and your deposit has been paid, we guarantee that we will make no surcharge for currency fluctuations, whatever happens to exchange rates before you actually travel.

In summary, we are able to package a holiday for less than you will be able to arrange directly, without any exchange risk, and you will benefit from our decades of experience in arranging similar trips, our impartial opinions, and the financial security that our ATOL bond offers!