



TRIP ITINERARY

Distinctive Zambia and Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe / Zambia



This bespoke itinerary takes in and focuses on the essence of both Zambia and Zimbabwe – neighbouring countries that boast some of the greatest nature areas in Africa. Mana Pools National Park, a recognised World Heritage Site, protects one of the greatest wildlife spectacles on the continent. The expansive Busanga Plains of Zambia's Kafue National Park retains the charm of Africa undiscovered – a timeless sense of remoteness. The trip's grand finale is the impressive and mesmerising Victoria Falls. Undertaking this safari will leave you with a yearning for more and ensure some phenomenal safari memories!

Day 1

Overnight flight to Victoria Falls, via Johannesburg

Days 2-4

On arrival at Victoria Falls, connect by scheduled charter flight to the Mana Pools for 3 nights accommodation at Ruckomechi Camp on a fully inclusive basis. Ruckomechi Camp accommodates up to 22 guests in ten spacious en-suite tented units, including a honeymoon suite and family room. All of these units maximise views of the Zambezi River and the escarpment beyond. Each tent has both indoor and outdoor showers, and the camp boasts an outdoor 'bath-with-a-view' in a secluded, scenic spot. A central dining, bar, library and main area completes the camp offerings. There is a separate deck with infinity pool for swimming and sun bathing, and an inviting, cushion-strewn sunowner and star gazing deck.

This camp is idyllically located, overlooking the Zambezi River in Mana Pools National Park and the imposing Great African Rift Valley. Comprising 14,600km² (5,600 sq. miles) this park is located in the heart of the Zambezi Valley and is famed for the rich and varied mammal life. Ruckomechi Camp is situated in an exclusive concession of Mana Pools, nestled amongst a large grove of acacia and ebony trees. This wondrous setting in allows for exploration of the National Park in total seclusion.

There is an intoxicating blend of wildlife and bird species abound. The dry season sees large herds of elephant and buffalo together with hippo, waterbuck, kudu, nyala and eland all seeking to slake their thirst along the banks of this mighty river. Predators follow with lions frequenting the floodplains and adjacent woodland, while leopard stalk the thickets and cheetah and endangered wild dog are also often seen. The area is equally famous for its superb birdlife offering over 350 species including collared palm-thrush, African skimmer, racket-tailed roller, purple-banded sunbird and western banded snake eagle.

Activities include early morning walks with an experienced guide, morning and afternoon game drives, night drives and canoeing.

Days 5-7

Today is an early start from Ruckomechi on a boat transfer to Chirundu, a scenic hour long journey, followed by a four hour road transfer to Lusaka. Depart Lusaka by scheduled flight to the Kafue National Park for 3 nights accommodation at Busanga Bush Camp on a fully inclusive basis. Busanga Bush Camp lies hidden in an island thicket. This camp accommodates eight guests in four comfortable tents. The main and bar area of the camp is under a large canopy canvas and has a sweeping view out over the plains and the dramatic sunrises. The dining area is further shaded under the leafy branches of a sycamore fig tree from which a unique lantern chandelier hangs, romantically lighting up dinner.

At 22,500km² (8 600 sq. miles), Kafue National Park is one of the largest protected expanses in Africa. The Busanga Plains is one of Zambia's most important wetland and grassland resources and is untouched by development and human activity – the jewel in the Kafue crown. The landscape here is in complete contrast to that of Mana Pools, thereby providing a complementary experience. The amazing landscapes of the Busanga Plains comprise a web of estuaries, grassy plains and island thickets. Comprising 750km² (290 sq. Miles) of untouched Africa, this massive private concession is centrally located on the Plains – ensuring seclusion and optimal wildlife viewing in a truly remote setting.

Owing to the diverse ecology, this area of the Kafue offers fantastic opportunities to see plains game, predators and water-loving animals. This camp is perfectly situated to see large numbers of puku and red lechwe as well as herds of buffalo and wildebeest. The most notable predators in the area are lions, with up to four prides moving around the Busanga area. Their tree-climbing antics are quite unique and allow for amazing photographic opportunities. Cheetah and side-striped jackal also roam the grassy areas as do the rare roan antelope which are locally common. For birders, Busanga boasts over 400 species, including over half the world's wattled crane population. Other notable species are black-backed barbet, rosy-throated longclaw and red-throated twinspot.

Activities include morning and afternoon-into-evening game drives as well as early season (June and July) boat trips. Included on a complimentary basis from August through October, magnificent hot air balloon rides provide a very different perspective of the Plains. The giant 8-person balloon floats for approximately an hour above this unique landscape with uninterrupted views of the floodplains and its game.

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Day 8:

Depart Kafue on your flight to Livingstone Airport. On arrival, transfer by road to Toka Leya for overnight accommodation on a fully inclusive basis. The last camp, Toka Leya, is located on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River in the secluded Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, and on the outskirts of Livingstone. This historical town was founded by the first European explorers to 'discover' the impressive Victoria Falls, and is today the tourism capital of Zambia. This contemporary but warm camp consists of 12 climate-controlled units on elevated wooden decks. Each unit has inside and outside showers as well as sweeping views of the Zambezi River from a comfortable balcony. Extending out onto the Zambezi River is the main area with novel pizza oven, bar and infinity pool and spa area. The camp also has a wellstocked curio shop selling arts and crafts made by local villagers.

Mosi-oa-Tunya is directly translated as 'the smoke that thunders', the local name for the Victoria Falls which is found 12km (7.5 miles) from camp and forms one of the main activities. This small but very important national park of the same name is 63km² (24 sq. miles) and is host to a wonderful variety of habitat types from mopane woodland to a rich riverine fringe. The Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park is home to a variety of herbivores such as impala, giraffe, white rhino and buffalo. In the drier season, herds of elephant come down through the camp to drink from the river and even swim across to the other side. The camp dawn chorus includes the comical 'laughter' of hippo which are often seen from the various camp vantages during the day. The bird life along the Zambezi is just wonderful – African finfoot, half-collared kingfisher and Schalow's turaco are some special finds.

Activities include guided tours of Victoria Falls, cultural, museum and market tours, morning or evening game drives in Mosioa-Tunya and morning or evening boat cruises on the Zambezi River. Livingstone is also rated as one of the world's top destinations for adrenaline and river activities. The most popular of these (at additional cost) include seasonal white water rafting, bungee jumping, gorge swing, microlighting over the Victoria Falls, brunch and breakfast canoe trips on the Zambezi and falls-edge dining.

Day 9

Depart by road for Livingstone and connect with a flight back to London via Johannesburg.

Day 10:

Arrive London

This trip only operates between mid-June to the end of October is on a bespoke basis: we can amend duration or extend the itinerary to suit individual requirements. Please contact us for details.

We are ATOL bonded. Our ATOL number is 9709.

GENERAL INFORMATION – PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE FOLLOWING

Passports: Please ensure these are valid for travel and that you are in possession of valid visas (if required see below). You are required to take out comprehensive travel insurance to safeguard against cancellation and curtailment, medical expenses, repatriation expenses, damage/theft/loss of personal baggage, money and personal belongings.

Visas: Not required for South Africa, Namibia or Botswana for UK or Irish nationals for stays of up to 90 days. An onward or return ticket is required, as well as sufficient funds and documents needed for further travel. Please note that visitors to South Africa must have a MINIMUM of two blank/empty VISA pages in their passport each time entry is sought. Visitors to South Africa with foreign passports who do not comply with these requirements will either be stopped from boarding their aircraft at their point of departure or risk deportation on arrival in South Africa. Visas required for Zimbabwe, but can be bought on arrival. Visitors to Zimbabwe must have a minimum of THREE blank/empty pages in their passports.

Health: The World Health Organisation (www.who.int/en/) recommends that all travellers to Southern Africa are inoculated against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio as well as for Hepatitis B. Inoculation against Hepatitis A and Typhoid is also recommended for travel in South Africa. Depending on the area visited, anti-malarial drugs may also be recommended. All travellers should seek advice from their local GP or travel clinic for up-to-date advice on vaccinations and different malarial options. Travel insurance is part of the Terms and Conditions of your trip with Native Escapes it is essential that you purchase comprehensive travel insurance for your trip. Your insurance should be inclusive of full medical cover including costs of emergency repatriation, cancellation and travel delay.

Native Escapes complies with the UK Package & Travel Regulations 1992. Holidays with flights included are covered by the company's ATOL Bond (Air Travel Organisers' Licence) held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This means that in the unfortunate event that our company should fail, the CAA will arrange any necessary repatriation and any refund of monies paid to Native Escapes in advance. Our ATOL number is 9709. We have testimonials on our website: visit www.nativeescapes.com/aboutus for more information.