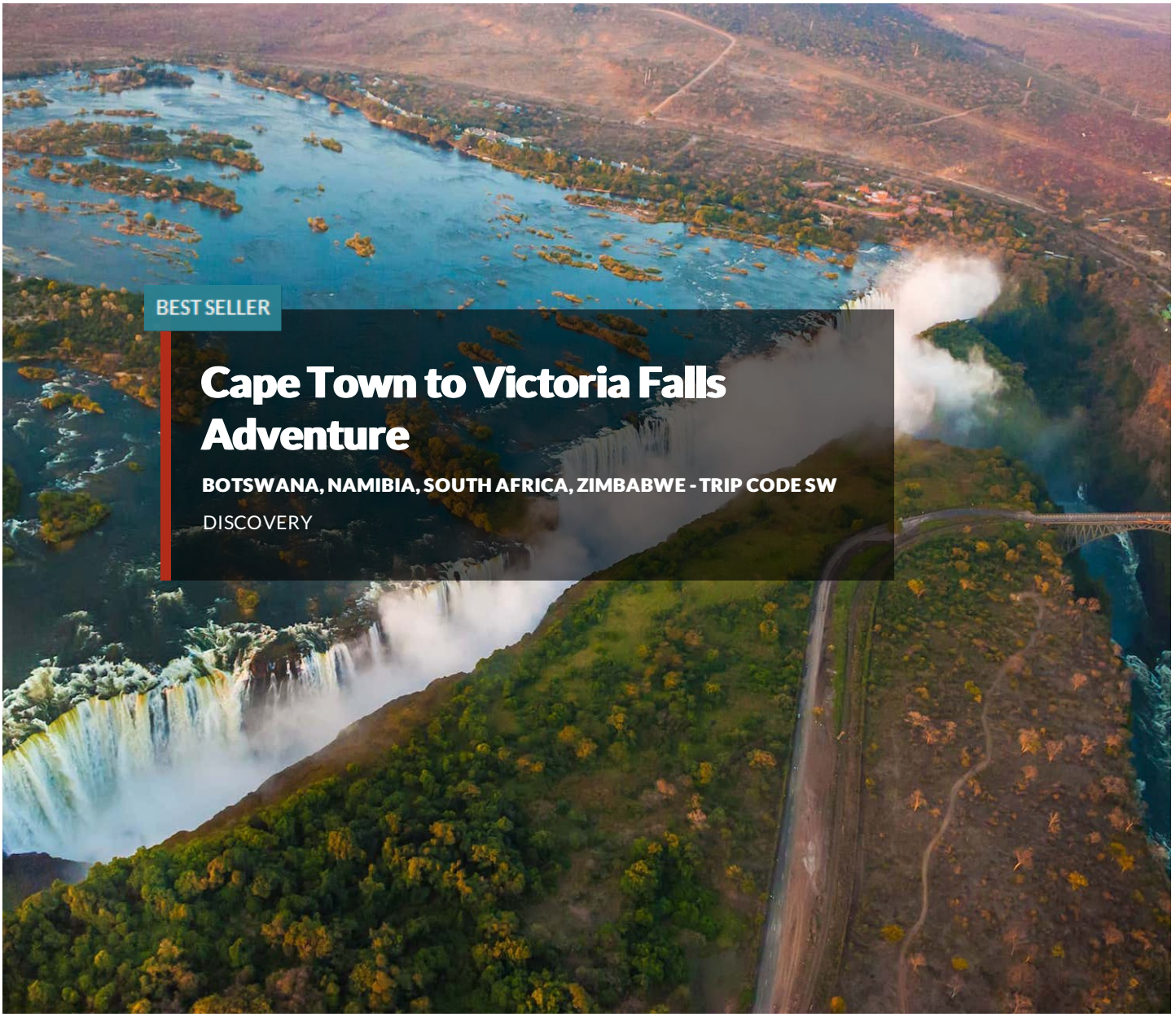
EXPLORE!



Why book this trip?

An adventurous journey through the heart of Southern Africa, starting in Cape Town, South Africa travelling to the 'Smoke that Thunders', Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, via three magnificent countries in search of the Big Five and remote wilderness.

- **Etosha National Park** - Game viewing in one of Africa's unique wildlife settings
- **Okavango Delta Panhandle** - Explore a natural wonderland via a maze of waterways teeming with wildlife
- **Hwange National Park** - One of Zimbabwe's premier national parks.

INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 22
Lunch: 18
Dinner: 16

TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Cook
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)

TRANSPORT
4WD
Boat
Ferry
Truck

ACCOMMODATION
3 nights comfortable cabins
2 nights comfortable chalet
3 nights comfortable hotel
14 nights comfortable lodge

TRIP PACE:
Moderate

GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Cape Town

One of the most vibrant and beautifully located cities on the planet, Cape Town, set before the iconic backdrop of Table Mountain, has grown to embody the true feelings of energy and hope that South Africans feel for the future of their country. Founded by the Dutch East India Company in 1652 as a refuelling point along the trading routes between Europe and the spice rich lands to the east, Cape Town grew over the next century to become a thriving town. Over the intervening years it has absorbed the cultural influences of the Dutch, French and British settlers, as well as the freed Muslim slaves, and all have left their mark on this city in one form or another. Today it is a rich fusion of spectacular natural assets, modern high-tech city centre and a mixed population that lives relatively peaceably together, whilst still retaining the unique diversity of their own customs and traditions. During your free time this afternoon there may be an opportunity to ascend Table Mountain by the Aerial Cableway (optional), please note the cableway closes for 2 weeks for maintenance each year roughly from the end of July. This is our first encounter with some of the unique and colourful flowers from the Cape Floral Kingdom - which has more indigenous plant species per square metre than anywhere else on earth. Views from the top are simply stunning and a network of trails crisscross the plateau, providing a variety of vantage points.

ACCOMMODATION:
Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Full day's sightseeing around Cape Town

We spend the whole day enjoying a comprehensive sightseeing tour of some of the many highlights that the Cape Peninsula has to offer. One of the highlights of today's tour is a visit to the Cape of Good Hope, first seen by a European in 1488 when Diaz sailed round it on his search for a sea route to the East Indies. A century later Sir Francis Drake described it as 'the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth'. But it was another century before the Dutch East Indies Trading Company established a permanent settlement to supply ships with the cattle and water traded from the indigenous Khoi herders. We will also visit the African Penguin colony at Boulders Beach, just on the outskirts of Simon's Town. This is one of only two mainland colonies anywhere in the world for these amazing, and sadly endangered creatures, commonly known as Jackass Penguins because of their donkey-like braying. We will then return to Cape Town via Hout Bay, an attractive fishing port once flanked by dense forest and in sight of nearby Seal Island, home to some 1000 Cape fur seals and guarded by the impressive 'Sentinel', a towering mountain that dominates the harbour.

ACCOMMODATION:
Lady Hamilton Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Drive to Cederberg

If not done already there may be another opportunity this morning to enjoy an early ascent of Table

Mountain by cable car, before we leave Cape Town behind and head for our camp lying in the shadow of the imposing Cederberg Mountains. Note: Departures in September and October (Spring) may well coincide with the blossoming of wild flowers, though this cannot be guaranteed as it is quite unpredictable.

ACCOMMODATION:
Trawal Highlanders Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 4 - Drive to Gariep River (Namibia) via Springbok and Okiep

Continuing north through Namaqualand this morning we pass through the small mining settlements of Okiep and Springbok en route to the Namibian border. Seemingly barren and desolate though this landscape might appear, the traditional heartland of the Nama people is actually home to the greatest diversity of succulent flora on the planet. The day sees us traversing this unique desert landscape of granite rocks and sweeping dunes as we head for the Gariep River (Orange River), which forms Namibia's southern boundary with South Africa. Beginning in the highlands of the Drakensberg Mountains, the river flows for some 1800km, finally ending its epic journey amongst the waters of the Atlantic and this evening we will stay close to its meandering course, as we enter our second country in this remarkable odyssey. Tonight our crew will provide a barbecue dinner.

ACCOMMODATION:
Felix Unite Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 5 - Drive to Fish River Canyon and explore on foot

After breaking camp this morning we head for the world-renowned Fish River Canyon, one of the great natural wonders of Africa and the second largest canyon in the world after the Grand Canyon. Measuring some 161km in length, up to 27km in width in some places and over 500m in depth it is one of the world's most grandest natural creations. On arrival we will have some time to explore the canyon, with a walk this afternoon around the upper rim that will afford us an opportunity to appreciate this stunning landscape. San legend has it that the canyon was carved by a great serpent, Kouteign Kooru, however less romantic theories put its creation down to the action of erosion and glaciers. The plains are sometimes dotted with steenbok and springbok, whilst the rocky slopes above tend to be a favoured haunt of Chacma baboons and klipspringer. The richer vegetation close to the river also attracts a number of birds, including raptors such as rock kestrels and lanner falcons.

ACCOMMODATION:
Ais Ais Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 6 - Drive to Sesriem, Namib Desert

Today's journey brings us into the magnificent setting of the Namib Desert and the Namib-Nakluft National Park. As we head north, crossing the Namib gravel flats and the awe-inspiring landscapes of some of the oldest desert on the planet, we have our first opportunity to watch the sun cast its shadows over the red dunes of some of the most spectacular vistas on earth. Covering some 50,000 sq km this is

one of the largest national parks on the continent, encompassing an area of truly magnificent desert scenery that is credited with being home to some of the strangest flora and fauna on the planet.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hammerstein Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 7 - Full day in Namib-Naukluft National Park

We spend the day exploring this majestic landscape in all its glory, firstly with a morning visit to the towering dunes of Sossusvlei, some of the highest on earth. The area itself is a vast depression or clay pan, dominated by sand dunes that can reach up to 300m in height. In the early morning the first rays of the rising sun turn these towering sand giants a deep orange, presenting us with a landscape of overwhelming grandeur that is truly a photographer's dream. It is a wild, beautiful and romantic spot, with sparse vegetation edging the few watercourses that flow in from the Tsauchab River. Here springbok and ostrich are often seen and the occasional acacia tree stands out in stark contrast against the golden sands. Lying amidst this harsh and barren world we come across the surreal landscapes of the Dead Vlei, an ancient salt pan of dazzling white, filled with the skeletons of long dead acacia trees, their gnarled and twisted carcasses presenting an incredible spectacle against the softer tones of the surrounding desert. This afternoon our tour takes in the cooler confines of the Sesriem Canyon, which we will explore on foot. Small, but very picturesque, the canyon presents a marked contrast from this morning, with numerous plants growing in the shade and shelter offered by the canyon walls and water pools attracting several species of birds and animals. Sesriem translates as 'six thongs\ , referring to the six lengths of rawhide rope (from a wagon) needed to haul a bucket of water up to the canyon rim from the stream below. It may also be possible later to climb the Elim Dune for sunset this evening, presenting the stunning spectacle of the Naukluft Mountains in the distance.

ACCOMMODATION:
Hammerstein Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 8 - Drive to Swakopmund via Kuiseb Canyon and Walvis Bay

Travelling via Solitaire and through the spectacular Kuiseb Canyon, we then pass more fascinating landscapes as we head to Walvis Bay. Here a large spit forms a natural deep-sea harbour, which attracted the first navigators in the late 1400's. Today the shallows located where the spit joins the mainland are home to a diverse collection of birds, the most spectacular being the flamingos and pelicans that feed here seasonally (May to November usually). From here it is just a short drive to our final destination for the day, the coastal town of Swakopmund.

ACCOMMODATION:
Alte Brucke Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

DAY 9 - In Swakopmund

Initially founded by German settlers at the end of the 19th century, Swakopmund was intended to serve as the main harbour for German Southwest Africa. Over the next few years it saw a steady increase in maritime traffic, eventually handling all the export and import traffic for the entire territory and this importance is reflected in the array of German architecture that still makes up a large percentage of the old town. Swakopmund is a fascinating mix of Bavarian grandeur, Herero traditional and African colour, all set between the pounding waters of the Atlantic and the vast expanses of one of the largest areas of unspoilt wilderness on the planet. Today has been left free to enjoy this eclectic hotchpotch of cultural

mores. You may like to pay a visit to the town's excellent museum, or take a wander through the stately grandeur of its colonial architecture. The town is also a popular resort area and there are a number of optional activities available to make the most of its natural delight. There may be an opportunity to take a half day cruise in Walvis Bay in search of dolphins and seals, or perhaps enjoy a scenic flight over the desert and coast. This evening you may like to round off the day watching the sunset across the coastal dunes.

ACCOMMODATION:
Alte Brucke Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Drive to Southern Damaraland via Cape Cross and Brandberg Mountain

Today we head along the coast, where we visit the Cape Cross Seal Colony. It is here that between 80,000 and 100,000 Cape fur seals bask in the sun or swim playfully in the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The seals are quite big, an average male weighing-in at anything up to 187kg (501lbs). The females give birth to a single pup around late November to early December and are considered pregnant for most of the year. Driving into Southern Damaraland we'll pass the majestic sight of Brandberg Mountain (2,573m). The Brandberg is Namibia's highest peak, located in the Damaraland region of the northwestern extremes of the Namib Desert, and its imposing presence on the gravel plains makes it an easy landmark to spot from miles away. The Herero call this majestic peak Omukuruvaro (The Mountain of the Gods) and within its craggy granite folds lie the famous White Lady rock paintings. To the ancient San Bushmen this site was sacred and this ancient image has been attributed to these indigenous peoples, although its interpretation has been open to debate for decades since its discovery in 1917 by a German explorer. Harsh as these landscapes are they are also rich in life, and although numbers are small most of Namibia's desert dwelling wildlife live in the area, including desert elephant and the rare black rhino. To reach the rock paintings we will walk via mostly flat terrain between rock formations and it will take us approximately 1 hour to reach. Do remember to wear comfortable walking footwear and have a hat, suntan lotion and plenty of water with you today. Our final destination for today is the lowlands of Damaraland's Brandberg Mountain, close to the famous area of rock engravings at Twyfelfontein.

ACCOMMODATION:
Uis White Lady Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 11 - Drive to Khorixas; visit Twyfelfontein rock paintings and Petrified forest

This morning we drive towards Khorixas and pay a visit to the San Bushmen paintings and engravings at Twyfelfontein and view the so-called Petrified Forest. The massif of Twyfelfontein contains a spectacular record of the rock art of the Khoisan people, painted and incised into the sandstone of the mountain over a thousand years, presenting us with one of the richest areas of rock engravings in Namibia. The barren surroundings and rock-strewn slopes seem a most unlikely place for any human habitation, but there is a small spring near the base of the hill and this has been providing water to animals for millennia. The water and abundance of game also attracted Stone Age people and indications are that they inhabited the area for centuries. The extraordinary Petrified Forest, with its huge fossilised tree trunks, was declared a National Monument in 1950. It is estimated to be about 200 million years old, and both the bark and the tree rings are perfectly preserved, providing a unique insight into a bygone age millions of years ago.

ACCOMMODATION:
Khorixas Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 12 - Game viewing in Etosha

This morning we continue our journey into Etosha National Park, the 'Great White Place', ranked as one of Africa's great game parks and offering some of the best game viewing on the continent. An immense, saline desert, covering over 12,400 square miles, and offering a haven for 114 species of animals and

some 340 species of birds, Etosha has been described as the best game reserve in Africa. At the very heart of Etosha is the Etosha Pan, which geologists believe was formed some 12 million years ago from an inland lake about the size of Holland. Shrunk to its present dried-up size, it is now a gigantic depression in the ground - flat, saline and silvery, a mysterious place of mirages and dust-laden images, that after heavy rainfall converts back to a lake again. Today sees us exploring the area along the southern and eastern edge of the Pan, where we should see elephant, rhino and hopefully lion. The terrain ranges from dense bush to large open plains where animals roam freely and we will drive along a network of gravel roads that criss-cross the park, visiting the various viewpoints and the permanent waterholes around which animals congregate. There is something enigmatic about the vast silent grey-white pans that cover this remarkable reserve. Numerous waterholes and underground springs attract large herds of animals including springbok, zebra, wildebeest and giraffe, making for some exceptional encounters. July to October are generally the best months for game viewing, during Etosha's dry season.

ACCOMMODATION:
Okaukuejo Rest Camp (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Cabins

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 13 - Game Drives in Etosha National Park

Today we continue our game drives in Etosha, travelling across the park and taking in more of the abundant wildlife.

ACCOMMODATION:
Namutoni Bush Chalets (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 14 - At the Kavango River

Today we drive towards Rundu and our accommodation situated on the banks of the Okavango river where you can enjoy the natural serenity of the area. In the late afternoon there may be an opportunity for a walk along the river and a spot of birdwatching.

ACCOMMODATION:
Nkwazi Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 15 - Drive to Shakawe via Bwabwata National Park

Crossing into Botswana today we head along the western edge of the Delta (better known as the Pan Handle). The Okavango is the third largest river in Africa and its delta area covers 16,000 square kilometres of crystal clear channels, a myriad of ephemeral lakes and ever changing islands surviving at the northern limits of the Kalahari Desert. The river flows south east from the Angolan highlands over 1,000 km away, taking up to six months to reach the delta area which floods on an annual cycle. Our journey takes us through this fertile and captivating landscape. This afternoon we will have a short stop at Bwabwata National Park before continuing on into Botswana.

ACCOMMODATION:
Drotskys Chalet (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Cabins

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 16 - Half day boat cruise in the Okavango Delta Panhandle

The Okavango Delta is thought to be the country's most beautiful game region, and is rated as one of Africa's greatest wildlife sanctuaries. It covers an enormous wilderness area composed of permanent swamps, islands, forest and dry land and is an ornithologist's paradise. Exceptional though the geography of the delta may be, it is the amazing wildlife of the waterways that draws us and we plan to set out on a half day's boat trip. Thick beds of papyrus block many of the waterways and make much of the region impenetrable except by motorboat. We'll spend our time exploring the waterways as we cruise slowly through a maze of interconnecting channels, allowing us to get superb close-up pictures of the wildlife. Here, we'll experience one of Africa's most natural and unspoiled wonderlands - hippo, crocodile, red lechwe, and a great variety of birds have made their home in the delta, as well as the elusive Sitatunga antelope, whose elongated hooves allow it to walk on the marshy ground without sinking. Bird lovers

may spot fish eagle, jacana, kingfisher, heron, stork, egret, weaver and bee-eater - just some of the magnificent species found here.

ACCOMMODATION:
Drotskys Chalet (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Cabins

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 17 - Drive along the Caprivi strip

Today we have a long drive crossing the border into Namibia and drive to the eastern Caprivi strip towards Chobe National Park. The Caprivi Region has a colourful and interesting history. The Caprivi, known lby local tribes as Itenge, was under the rule of the Lozi kings until the end of the 19th century, but it was administered as part of the British protectorate of Bechuanaland, now known as Botswana. As a result of the European superpower political manoeuvring, Germany laid claim in 1890 to the British administered island of Zanzibar to which Britain strenuously objected. The Germans were keen to link their colonies in German East Africa (now Tanzania) with German South West Africa (now Namibia). The dispute was settled by the Berlin Conference in 1890 when Queen Victoria acquired Zanzibar and Germany acquired the territory which became known as the Caprivi Strip. This strip of land was named after German Chancellor General Count Georg Leo von Caprivi di Caprara di Montecuccoli. Say that after a beer...

ACCOMMODATION:
Thebe River Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 18 - Game Drive in Chobe National Park, boat trip on the Chobe River

Chobe National Park comprises a variety of habitats of flooded grassland, thicket and salt pan. The banks of the Chobe River, one of the Zambezi's main tributaries, is home to an abundance of wildlife. A major feature of Chobe is its elephant population and is considered to be the largest surviving continuous elephant population. It is currently estimated at 120 000 strong. This population covers most of northern Botswana plus northwestern Zimbabwe and has been built up steadily from a few thousand since the early 1900s when massive poaching at the height of the illegal ivory trade decimated other populations in

the 1970s and 1980s. The Chobe elephants in this area have the distinction of being the largest in body size of all living elephants, but the ivory is brittle and there are no more of the huge tuskers from a bygone era. This morning we take a game drive in the park and this afternoon we enjoy a boat safari on the Chobe River. The river is brimming with hippo and crocodile and its waters teem with bream, barbel and tiger fish (freshwater barracuda), making it an angler's paradise. This area is also famed for its beautiful scenery and magnificent red and gold sunsets and offers a wonderful experience at the end of the day. Tonight is a barbecue dinner prepared by our crew.

ACCOMMODATION:
Thebe River Lodge (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 19 - Drive to Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe

This morning we drive across the border into Zimbabwe to one of the country's largest game reserves, the Hwange National Park on the edge of the Kalahari Desert. This afternoon we will pay a visit to the Painted Dog Conservation Centre, a vital refuge that is working to protect the endangered African wild dogs from the devastating consequences of illegal poaching. At one time these phenomenally successful predators ranged across the entire continent and numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Sadly today those numbers are estimated to be as low as 3000-5000, placing them on the verge of extinction.

ACCOMMODATION:
Gwango Elephant Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Chalet

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 20 - Full day game drive Hwange National Park

Today we have a full day's game drive in Hwange NP which covers some 14,600 square kilometres and is home to over 100 species of mammals. The park is blessed with a rich assortment of game that includes large numbers of gemsbok, brown hyena and elephant, as well as one of the largest populations of African wild dogs on the continent. Encompassing a variety of landscapes, from desert sands and sparse woodland to open savannahs and granite outcrops, the park is one of Africa's finest wildlife refuges and we will have an opportunity to discover something of its natural treasures.

ACCOMMODATION:
Gwango Elephant Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Chalet

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

DAY 21 - Drive to Victoria Falls; tour of the falls

Today we transfer to Victoria Falls where we spend the final nights of our tour. The thundering cascades of Victoria Falls, one of the planet's most spectacular natural wonders is called Mosi-oa-Tunya by the indigenous peoples (The Smoke that Thunders). The falls of the Zambezi River plummet over a sheer cliff wall that spans more than 1676m, dropping some 100m into the abyss below. This afternoon we take a tour of Victoria Falls, located on the southern bank of the mighty Zambezi, seeing for ourselves one of the most breathtaking sights on earth. Whilst neither the highest nor the widest set of falls in the world, it is the largest, and at its peak an astonishing 550,000 cubic metres of water cascade into the Zambezi Gorge every minute.

ACCOMMODATION:
The N1 Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

DAY 22 - Free in Victoria Falls

Today is left free for you to follow your own interests. You may choose to take advantage of some of the many optional activities on offer such as whitewater rafting on the Zambezi or a scenic helicopter flight. You could also take an optional half day game drive into Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park to search for white rhino. Your leader will be on hand to advise you and to assist with any bookings.

ACCOMMODATION:
The N1 Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Lodge

SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE

SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE

MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 23 - Tour ends Victoria Falls

The tour ends today after breakfast. Depending on the schedule of your flights, you may be able to spend some additional time at leisure in Victoria Falls.

Trip information

Country information

Botswana

Climate

Botswana's regional characteristics, from fertile areas in the east to waterless desert in the centre and south, and a vast delta in the north-west, make for extremes of temperatures and highly variable rainfall. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	3 Pin Round	Christians. Anglicans, Methodists	English, Setswana

Namibia

Climate

With a staggering 300 days of sunshine each year, Namibia is a year-round destination, although some may prefer to avoid the heat of high summer. The cold Benguela current keeps the Atlantic coast of the Namib Desert cool and rain-free for most of the year, with a thick coastal fog that lends a mysterious edge to the area. January and February are the hottest months, when daytime temperatures in the heart of the Namib can exceed 40°C (104°F), but nights are usually cool. Winter nights can be fairly cold, but days are generally warm and pleasant.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+1	3 Pin Round	Christian	English, Afrikaans, German

South Africa

Climate

Mild throughout the year and can thus be visited year round. The Western Cape has a Mediterranean-type climate, with warm, dry summers and cold winters with rainfall. Summer runs from November to March, with temperatures averaging 22oC to 34oC. The months of April and October are generally warm and sunny. Winter is also a good time to visit as towns and sites are not so crowded and the countryside is more verdant, but it can be cold. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	3 Pin Round	Christian	Afrikaans, English

Zimbabwe

Climate

Zimbabwe has a moderate climate, in the summer months (November to April) you can expect highs of 30 C° and lows of 20 C°. The wet season is from November to May when the days are typically dry and sunny with afternoon/evening thunderstorms. The best time for game viewing is September to October when days are dry and the temperatures are still relatively cool.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Christian	English

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Cape Town - Table Mountain Cable Car ZAR293pp return or ZAR151pp one way.
Swakopmund - Living desert tour N$ 750; Museum N$ 30pp; Aquarium N$ 45pp; Township tour N$ 500pp; Half day dolphin cruise in Walvis Bay N$ 750pp.
Etosha NP - Night game drive N$ 730pp.
Victoria Falls - Whitewater rafting 6.5 hours US$ 130pp, (low or high waters are seasonal); Upper Zambezi canoeing 7 hours US$ 160pp; Zambezi river cruises sunset US$ 55pp, sunset & dinner US$ 85pp; Helicopter for 25 mins flight US$ 290pp (+ US$10pp park fees, minimum 3 persons); Game drives US$ 100pp for 4 hours; Cultural village tour US$ 61pp (including transfers).
(The Zambezi river rafting, canoeing and cruise prices include the US$10pp park fees.)

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight, however a warm fleece and jumper/thick shirts are essential, as nights (and daytime) can be cold, especially from May to September, and game drives tend to take place at dawn and dusk. A waterproof and windproof jacket is recommended during these months. Please note that brightly coloured clothing is not suitable for game viewing. Laundry can be done at Cape Town, Swakopmund and Victoria Falls. Don't forget your swimming costume!

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or robust trainers with a good grip, and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage (a kitbag or soft holdall) plus daypack.

Equipment

Accommodated departures - We advise you bring a head torch, water bottle, sunhat, sunglasses and high factor sunscreen. Binoculars are essential for game viewing and a 300mm lens is recommended for photography.

Camping departures - Bring a 2-season sleeping bag (Nov- Mar; temperature 0°C to 5°C) or a (3-4 season from Apr-Oct; temperature -10°C to -5°C), a silk sleeping bag liner, a towel, a fitted sheet (single sized for the foam mat), a head torch, a water bottle, a sunhat, sunglasses and high factor sunscreen. Good, thick foam sleeping mats are provided. Binoculars are essential for game viewing and a 300mm lens is recommended for photography. Tents have sewn-in mosquito screening so nets are not required. Bring a battery recharger for your digital batteries on the truck, or alternatively a supply of batteries for the duration of the tour.

While tap water in South Africa's urban area is drinkable, some people may take a few days to acclimatise and thus may experience traveller's tummy. Therefore we recommend for you to travel with a reusable filtered water bottle such as the ones featured at Water-to-Go: http://www.watertogo.eu/

Tipping

Explore leader
Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

Local crew
Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US$60.00 per person for group tipping.

Local fees
Please Note: Allow US$ 30 for airport departure tax, payable when leaving Victoria Falls.
Security Charge - With effect from 1 January 2011 the National Airports Corporation has added a Security Charge to all departing passengers payable at all NACL airports in Zambia. Cost is US $5 per person for international flights. Fees can be paid in US Dollars or Kwacha equivalent or any other major currency.

Botswana

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8.00	£15.00	£1.50	£0.75

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Botswana Pula

Recommended Currency For Exchange
We suggest that you take your spending money is cash as US Dollars. Please note that the banks and Forex Bureaus do not accept US Dollars pre-2002. NB: you may find it useful to bring smaller denominations of US Dollars for tips.

ATM Availability
Cash can be drawn out on credit cards from ATM's in Kasane and Maun

Credit Card Acceptance
Limited. Some lodges may accept credit cards, however the service is very sporadic.

Travellers Cheques
Not recommended

Namibia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£15	£20	£1.5	£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Namibian Dollar. South African Rand is legal tender in Namibia.

Recommended Currency For Exchange
USD are readily exchanged in Namibia and GBP to a lesser extent. Take your money in a combination of ATM cards and cash

Where To Exchange
On arrival.

ATM Availability
Cash can be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in Windhoek and Swakopmund.

Credit Card Acceptance
Limited.

Travellers Cheques
Are difficult to exchange and should be used as back up

South Africa

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6	£12	£1.2	£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Rand.

Recommended Currency For Exchange
Take your money in a combination of cash and an ATM card. Both GBP and USD are readily exchanged at the airport.

Where To Exchange
Most towns or cities, your tour leader will advise you. If your trip is wildlife based and visits rural regions we strongly recommend to exchange money at the airport upon arrival for your trip.

ATM Availability
Cash can be drawn on debit cards from ATM's in most South African towns.

Credit Card Acceptance
In large shops and restaurants.

Zimbabwe

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£9.00	£15.00	£2.00	£0.80

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Bring new and undamaged US Dollar in small denominations. The Zimbabwean Dollar is legal tender.

Recommended Currency For Exchange
US Dollars

Where To Exchange
Your Tour Leader or local rep can advise on exchange arrangements, which may be limited.

ATM Availability
Please note that currently cash cannot be withdrawn with international bank cards.

Credit Card Acceptance
Not widely accepted, though can be used to pay for optional excursions directly with the local operator. Please do not rely on credit or debit cards for anything else.

Travellers Cheques
Travellers cheques are not being accepted by banks in Zimbabwe.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

4WD, Boat, Ferry, Truck

Accommodation notes

Accommodation information for Camping Itineraries:
South Africa, Namibia and Botswana have a good tourism infrastructure and generally good service levels. Our campsites are well set-up and maintained, often with dining areas, BBQ pits, small shop and bar, good toilet (shared) and shower blocks (shared). Like many adventures of this type, much of the team spirit and camaraderie is developed through mucking in and helping out with basic camp responsibilities which will include the setting up and taking down of camp and the loading and unloading of equipment. Camping is in two person tents, with your tour leader and driver preparing our meals. One great feature of camping is that it really gives us a sense of being in the African bush as we camp under the starry skies. Many campsites have unforgettable views. Of particular note in Namibia is our first camp in Etosha, located close to the southern entrance of the park and famous for its flood-lit waterhole, where visitors can observe wildlife at close quarters. In Botswana camping is simpler but our campsites give a perfect experience; simple enough to give the feeling of really camping out in the African bush, yet with the comforts of 'proper' toilets and bucket showers. Depending on availability we may also have campsites with ablution blocks.

Meal information for Camping Itineraries:
During the trip your Explore Leader and crew will endeavour to manage all dietary requirements when cooking at the campsites and to recommend appropriate local restaurants/facilities. Group meals prepared by our leader are pre-planned and special dietary food products can be difficult to find due to the limited selection of products in remote areas, therefore, we request advice of any dietary requirements at least 45 days prior to your trip, otherwise we're unable to guarantee that requirements will be met. For medical or allergy related dietary requirements, we strongly recommend for you to bring some snacks with you to supplement your diet during the trip. Please note variety and options may be limited in certain areas but the team will aim to provide a full experience of the country's culture and food wherever possible.

Botswana

Food and drink

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in Botswana do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

Namibia

Food and drink

Dietary requirements:
It's very important that you let us know of any dietary requirements at least 60 days prior to the departure of your trip because your Leader will pre-plan menus and shop for the majority of the food prior to departure. In Namibia there is very limited availability for specialist food products along the way and leaders will need to pre-advise accommodations of any specific requirements so they can ensure they have options. Please note, without prior notice or if your requirements change while on the trip Explore cannot guarantee all requirements will be catered for.

If you have a specialist diet, including but not limited to vegan, gluten free, lactose intolerant and/or coeliac, we strongly recommend you bring some snacks with you as options will be limited, particularly in rural parts of Namibia where specialist food products in supermarkets are very limited and restaurants will often have one or two alternative options on their menus. With prior notice our leaders will always ensure there is a meal for you, however, we must stress we cannot guarantee variety or choice.

South Africa

Food and drink

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in South Africa do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

Zimbabwe

Food and drink

Dietary requirements: Most restaurants and hotels in Zimbabwe do not have a wide selection of vegan and vegetarian choices. There is usually a choice of salads and one main vegetarian and/or vegan main dish on the menus, but choice will be limited especially in more remote locations. If you have specific dietary requirements we do recommend for you to bring some food with you.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance
Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information.Booking Conditions

Visa and Passport Information

Travelling with Minors via South Africa (including transits) and entry into Botswana and Namibia
Regulations affecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via South Africa have been updated (Nov19). The law states that visa exempt children travelling for tourism purposes with one or both parents and/or an adult who is not a biological parent require to present a valid passport for each child on arrival. We strongly recommend you to refer to the South African House website for full information and to travel with a copy of these requirements.
Please refer to the FCO website for information on travelling with minors to Botswana:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/botswana/entry-requirements
Please refer to the FCO website for information on travelling with minors to Namibia:
https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/namibia/entry-requirements

South Africa: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US and Canadian citizens.
New Zealand passport holders do require a visa, please consult your local consulate for full information.
Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office for visa and/or transit visa information.

All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable, has a minimum of 6 months validity from

your arrival date into the country and has two blank pages when entering and leaving South Africa. The South African Immigration officials will not allow child/ infant pages to be used for this purpose and visitors without the stipulated blank pages will be denied entry.

Namibia: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.
UK passport holders will need a minimum of 1 blank page in your passport for your permission to stay stamp acquired on arrival. Other nationalities should consult their embassy or consular office.

Botswana: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens.
All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining from date of entry into Botswana.

Zimbabwe: Visas are required by UK, Republic of Ireland, Canadian, US, Australian and New Zealand citizens. These can be arranged on arrival for the current cost of US$55 (GBP 43/Euros49) for British and Irish passport holders, US$75 for Canadian passport holders, and US$30 for American, Australian and New Zealand passport holders for a single entry visa. If you are arranging your visa on arrival, please bring small new US Dollar notes only (not older than 2006) with you as immigration officers may not be able to provide change. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry and also have three blank pages.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore
Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad
Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged

from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.
Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.
If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click here

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.
Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

Flight Information
You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore
We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

Please note this trip is operated in an overland truck because many of the roads we travel on through are gravel roads. The conditions of these roads can vary depending on government maintenance and at what

time during the season you are travelling. Changing road conditions can have an impact on comfort and driving times. The roads conditions can take a toll on the overland vehicles at times and urgent vehicle repairs may be necessary throughout the trip. Our leaders and drivers are all trained in vehicle maintenance and can fix many issues caused by the rugged roads, however, in some cases we may have to change vehicles or amend travel times to allow vehicle maintenance to be carried out; your leader will brief you if this is the case.
The overland trucks are large vehicles perfect for adventures in Southern Africa. The windows are large and slightly tinted to maximise on sightseeing and protect from the sun. Seats are larger than average and have seatbelts. The driver's cab and main passenger compartment are separate but the trucks are equipped with PA systems for easy communication. Plus the trucks are equipped with a limited number of charging points for cameras and cool boxes for keeping drinks cool - your leader will advise when these can be used. Air conditioning is not guaranteed.

Ability to swim

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Botswana

Vaccinations

We do recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to immunize themselves against meningitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling. Immigration/Borders in Botswana are requesting a Yellow Fever certificate if you have previously travelled within/via an endemic country. For a list of Yellow Fever affected countries please refer to: http://www.who.int/ith/2015-ith-annex1.pdf?ua=1 . Please note that any travellers who have visited Ebola affected countries during the last 30 days will be denied entry into Botswana. These countries are: Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Liberia

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Namibia

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we do recommend protection against malaria, hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid and polio. Please note that all travellers aged over 9 months old that have travelled from or have transitted via a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission, will need to present a Yellow Fever certificate at immigration/borders in Namibia for inspection. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to immunise themselves against meningitis. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

South Africa

Vaccinations

Please note that you will be required to supply a yellow fever certificate that has been issued at least 10 days prior to arrival in South Africa if you have travelled from or via a country where yellow fever is endemic. We recommend protection against hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, polio and diphtheria. According to various travel health sources, the Western Cape is not regarded as a malaria risk area. If you are travelling to other areas in South Africa please check with your doctor about malaria requirements. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Zimbabwe

Vaccinations

Please note that all travellers aged over 9 months old that have travelled from or have transited via a country with a risk of yellow fever transmission, will need to present a Yellow Fever certificate at immigration/borders in Zimbabwe for inspection. We recommend protection against hepatitis A, tetanus and typhoid. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information

Why book this trip

This iconic journey is perfect for adventurous travellers who want to experience the best of what Southern Africa has on offer. What makes this tour so special is the ever changing landscape, from the green of the Western Cape, up through the bright orange of the Namib Desert to the blue of the Okavango panhandle. This tour is an assault on the senses and really is a once in a lifetime experience.

Reviews

AWARD WINNING EXPLORE LEADERS	PRICE GUARANTEE PROMISE	AIRPORT TRANSFERS