

Botswana Information

General Information

Botswana is one of the premier wildlife destinations in the world. There are few other areas where you can get so close to the call of nature. Imagine sipping cocktails on the deck of the lodge overlooking a lagoon in the Okavango delta or the excitement of tracking lion on foot during a game walk. Imagine the fantastic photographic opportunities on game drives in open four wheel drive vehicles or the adventure of driving yourself through the rugged terrain in the national parks of Botswana. This is the true Africa.

Formerly known as Bechuanaland, a British protectorate, Botswana gained independence in 1966. Four decades of civilian leadership, progressive social policies, and significant capital investment have created one of the most dynamic economies in Africa.

Botswana is located in Southern Africa and covers approximately 600 000 km² . In relative terms this is only slightly larger than Texas. Botswana is bordered South Africa in the south, Namibia in the west and north and Zimbabwe and Zambia in the East.

There are approximately of 1.5 million people making up the population of Botswana. The vast majority are Tswana. The country's official language is English with Setswana being the second most spoken. Most of the population follow traditional ethnic religious beliefs.

Botswana has maintained one of the world's highest growth rates since independence. Through fiscal discipline and sound management, Botswana has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of \$8,800 in 2003.

The dominant economic activity is diamond mining, but with the natural abundance of wildlife, wonderful game reserves and national parks and a proven wildlife conservation department tourism is a growing sector.

Botswana's offers something to everyone. From luxury lodges, fine dining and cocktails at sunset to adventurous camping safaris. Unique natural features like the Okavango River inland delta which forms the western edge of a migration route that stretches northeast from Moremi Game Reserve through the Savuti to Chobe National Park on the Chobe River and beyond into Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. The Central Kalahari with it's wide open spaces and wonderful wildlife. The San Bushman paintings adorning rocks of Tsodilo Hills. Botswana is wonderful.

It is semi arid country, the southwestern areas are dominated by the Kalahari Desert. Most of the Kalahari (or Kgalagadi, which is its Setswana name) is

covered with vegetation including stunted thorn and scrub bush, trees and grasslands It is home to the San people “Bushman”. Their knowledge of fauna and flora in the desert has allowed them to survive in a most inhospitable area.

Botswana is a relatively flat country with it’s highest point being Tsodilo Hills on the western side of the Okavango Delta, soring to a massive 1,489 m

The international country code is code +267 followed by the number. Internet is available in major towns and cities.

Moremi

Botswana’s Moremi Wildlife Reserve lies in the centre of the Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta in the world. Named after the chief of the Batawana tribe who declared the reserve in 1963, it consists of permanently swamped areas, seasonally swamped areas and dry land, and covers an area of 3000 km².



The reserve encompasses a wide range of habitats – from wetland, floodplain and reed beds to forest and savannah woodland. The fauna inhabiting the park is abundant and equally diverse, ranging from exotic birds, zebras, buffalo, wildebeest and giraffes to hippos and lions; the only large African mammals not found here are rhino. Boats take visitors to various lagoons, such as Xakanaxa, Gcobega and Gcodikwe, to view game and birdlife.

Lodges around Moremi Game Reserve have a variety of activities and facilities. Most of the lodges have game drives, mokoro rides, and game walks.

[Click here to view lodges in the Moremi Area](#)

Chobe

Chobe National Park offers one of the most concentrated wildlife experiences in Southern Africa. The Chobe River forms the border with Namibia and forms the northern boundary of the National Park. The river meanders through flood plains which offer good grazing to the herbivores through the year. Starting out as a proclaimed non-hunting area it was eventually enlarged and gained national park status in 1967. It has slowly increased in size to 10 000 square km, as the farming on the edges gives way to conservation.



Chobe is famous for it’s large herds of elephant. During the dry season, in the late afternoons, herd after herd of elephants emerge from the Mopane woodland and make their way to the water to quench their thirst. An afternoon spent

watching these magnificent creatures is a wonderful experience. During the wet season some of these herds migrate almost 200 km towards the pans in the southern park.

The herds of impala, lechwe, sable antelope and buffalo that live along the river attract large carnivores, and regular sightings of lion, leopard and hyena occur. An afternoon spent on one of the game viewing cruises gets you close to the herds of elephant, the birdlife, hippos and crocodiles. The colours of river, elephants in the golden light of the late afternoon creates fantastic photographic opportunities.

The **Linyanti** river in the north west is a seldom visited part of the park. The river floods along a fault creating a swamp. During the dry season it offers exciting concentrated game viewing.

Lodges in the area range from opulent to comfortable family accommodation. All offering a wide range of activities including game drives and the fantastic afternoon river cruise.

Alternatively for the adventurous, a mobile camping safari or self drive safari through the parks is a life experience. Drive your own four wheel drive or tag along with the security of our professional guides.

[Click here to view lodges or mobile safaris in the Chobe NP area.](#)

Savuti

The Savuti region forms part of the Chobe National Park. Located on the eastern side of the Okavango Delta and south of Chobe River. The famous Savuti channel stretches south from the Chobe River through to the Mababe depression. For long periods of time the channel is dry and the only water in Savuti is from seasonal rainfall.



The concentration of wildlife and birdlife not to mention the open plains surrounded by the dry camel thorn trees on the Savuti marsh are a wildlife photographers dream. Savuti is famous for its big game and particularly it's predators. Lion and the Spotted Hyena live in constant battle for survival. Other commonly sighted species are zebra, elephant giraffe, kudu and buffalo. If you are lucky, you might see cheetah or wild dog.

Birdlife includes Abdems Stork, Carmine beeaters, Kori Bustards, and secretary birds. Regular A variety of raptors are also regularly spotted.

Lodges in Savuti have a variety of activities and facilities. Most of the lodges have game drives, and game walks. For those that want a little more activity, we offer a range of mobile luxury or participation safaris that explore the Savuti area.

[Click here to view lodges or mobile safaris in the Savuti area.](#)

Okavango Delta and Panhandle

One of the largest Inland water systems in the world, the Okavango Delta covers an approximate area of 16 000 square km of the Kalahari. The Kavango river rises in the Angola's highlands and flows through Namibia before flooding onto the soft sands of the Kalahari creating the inland delta.



The flood waters of Angola take approximately 3 months to reach the borders of Botswana and may only reach the southern end of the Delta in June. This creates a unique source of water in this region during the dry season. As the surrounding game reserves are drying out the Okavango's waters are rising attracting wildlife which remains in the area from May to October.

One of the best experiences in the Okavango Delta is to be poled along the reed lined channels in a Mokoro (dug out canoe). Sit back and relax as the water gurgles tranquilly under the mokoro while your skilled poler points out the fauna and flora. The Okavango offers fantastic wildlife and birdlife. Red lechwe, wild dog, buffalo, elephant, wattled crane, and kingfishers are often seen.

Lodges in the Okavango offer a wide range of accommodation and activities. Poling on mokoros, game walks and game drives get you closer to the wildlife. A cool drink as the sun sets over the Okavango will create memories that last a lifetime.

[Click here to view lodges in the Okavango Delta area](#)

Central Kalahari and Khutse

Central Kalahari covers a massive area of 58 000 square km about the size of Switzerland and Denmark. Sand dunes and shrubs in the north and Mopane woodlands in the south compliment the open grassy plains of the central reserve. Ancient riverbeds cross this harsh and beautiful landscape.



The Central Kalahari was made famous by Mark and Delia Owens and the story of their research on large predators in the park makes fascinating reading in "Cry of the Kalahari".

Wonderful lodges are located around the reserve and these all offer game drives, game walks and a wide range of luxuries.

Wildlife in the reserve includes wild dog, brown hyena, lion cheetah, leopard, blue wildebeest, gemsbok, kudu and red hartebeest. Best game viewing is between December and April when the game congregates at the pans and valleys.

Birdlife includes vultures, raptors, and grassland bird species.

Khutse is a 2500 square km Game Reserve that lies on the southern boundry of the Central Kalahari. It was proclaimed in 1971 from Tribal land of the Bakwena people. The landscape is primarily undulating Kalahari bush savannah with very little surface water in the park.

An system of natural pans fill during the rainy season attracting herbivores to graze on the grass lands. These in turn attract the predators lion, hyena, leopard and cheetah. As the season evolves the pans dry up leaving behind important mineral deposits and salt licks for the herbivores.

Waterholes have been set up to encourage wildlife to remain in the reserve throughout the year.

Wide range of birdlife including Ostrich, Kori Bustard, various korhans, large gatherings of vultures and other raptors.

[Click here to view safaris and lodges in the Central Kalahari and Khutse area](#)

Makgadikgadi

A vast flat shimmering salt pans provide the incredible back drop to the Makgadikgadi Pans Game Reserve. These pans provide much needed minerals in the form of salt licks for the herbivores in the area.

In years with good rainfall the pans can fill with water from mid November and can hold the water till the following April. This water attracts flocks of flamingoes and pelicans, and can trigger massive migrations of Zebra and Wildebeest.

During the dry season the pans hard surface offers a totally different experience. In certain conditions it is possible to drive (a 4x4) on the pans and visit the islands of Baobab trees that grow on the edges of the pan. The endless skies and endless horizons create a surreal experience.

[Click here to view lodges in the Makgadikgadi area](#)

Nxai Pan and Baines Baobabs

Nxai Pan National Park covers 2500 square km situated between Maun and Nata about 40 km north of the main road. The Nxai Pan National Park was proclaimed in 1970 and later extended to it's present size including Baines Baobabs.

One of the few National Parks in Botswana where the rainy season adds to the attraction. Once the rains start elephant, zebra and gemsbok migrate to the area. The springbok and zebra drop their young at this time, attracting predators. A rich area full of wildlife activity. The small waterhole situated close to the gate offers permanent water to the variety of wildlife found in this park.

Baines Baobabs, made famous by the explorer / painter Thomas Baine in the

last century. These seven enormous Baobab trees are clustered on a small rise next to a dry pan. The pan usually fills with water after the rainy season which lasts from December through to April.

The Baines Baobabs have been incorporated into the Nxai Pan National Park to protect the trees for future generations.

This area is best explored on one of our mobile camping safaris or our tag along tours. Wildlife viewing and fantastic photographic opportunities.

[Click here to view safaris that explore the Nxai Pan NP and Baines Baobab area.](#)

Tsodilo Hills

The quartzite cliffs of Tsodilo rise out of the Kalahari on the western side of the Okavango Delta. A marked feature in the otherwise flat landscapes of Botswana. Tsodilo is divided into four hills, The "male", the "female", and the "child" and a further off unnamed knoll. The bushman believe that the unnamed knoll was the "males" first wife only to be discarded when the "male" found the taller "female" hill.

The bushman believe that there is great spiritual importance in these hills. They have lived in the area for thousands of years and believe that the hills are a resting place for the deceased spirits and that the caves on the female hill are sacred. Legend goes that the first spirit knelt here to pray after the world was created and that the impressions made by the knees are still visible today. It is also believed that these spirits will bring misfortune to any that hunt or kill close to the hills.

Studies have shown that the area has been inhabited for approximately 100 000 years, and paintings adorn the rocks on the northern side of the female hill. What makes it more remarkable is that the paintings of Tsodilo are separated by almost 250 km from the nearest known sites. These paintings differ in style and content from other known sites, with many isolated figures and geometric patterns. Tsodilo is a world heritage site.

Recommended reading: Sir Laurens van der Post's "The Lost world of the Kalahari."

The Tsodilo hills are best visited on one of our mobile camping safaris or from one of the lodges on the edge of the Okavango delta. It is well worth spending the night camping under the stars in this spiritual area.

[Click here to view mobile safaris that explore the Tsodilo Hills or lodges in the area.](#)

Lake Ngami

A shallow lake that is fed by water from the Okavango River. The Okavango river

loses most of its flow in the sands of the delta, and only during periods of heavy rain in Angola will the water reach the lake. When water reaches the lake it attracts huge flocks of quail that number in the millions.

Antelope and ostrich will be found in the area. The lake is best explored by four wheel drive from Maun.

[Click here to view mobile safaris that explore the Lake Ngami area or lodges in Maun](#)

Tuli Block

The Tuli block is a narrow strip of land that lies along the south eastern border of Botswana. Consisting mainly of private owned game reserves and concessions. A historically interesting area as it formed a buffer to the encroaching boer farmers from South Africa. Cecil Johan Rhodes identified it as a perfect route to Rhodesia to further his dream of building a railroad from the Cape to Cairo.



The area rocky rugged landscape proved to be of little use to commercial farmers and soon the potential as a natural conservation area was realized.

An area of outstanding natural beauty, abundant wildlife and birdlife and a rich archaeological heritage. With over 300 species of birds recorded in the area Tuli is a true birdwatchers destination. Mashatu has the largest elephant population on private land.

Lodges in the Tuli area offer a wide range of activities including game drives, horseback riding, game viewing from mountain bike trails, game walks and birdwatching.

[Click here to view lodges and mobile safaris that explore the Tuli Block safari area](#)