



SANCTUARY  
RETREATS

*Your holiday guide to*

# BOTSWANA



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BOTSWANA HOLIDAY GUIDE



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# BOTSWANA

Botswana is a landlocked nation, bordered by South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is dominated by the Kalahari Desert, which covers up to 70% of the country's land surface, the Okavango Delta, the world's largest inland delta and the Chobe National Park in the north.

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Vast and untamed, a country with thousands of square miles of exquisite wilderness, Botswana offers exceptional game viewing as well as a varied safari experience across its broad and flat expanses of savannah, desert, salt pan and wetland.

Blessed with both diamonds and water, Botswana is an economic success story. All Sanctuary Retreats' properties in Botswana are set far into the wilderness for the best game viewing, but are also well-served by all weather

airstrips so that guests spend more time in the bush and less time in transit.

## **National Parks and Principal Sights**

Botswana is blessed with some of the finest game viewing in the world due to the incredible concentration and diversity of mammals and bird life. The two key areas for game viewing are the spectacular Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park.

## **The Okavango Delta**

Over 80% of this landlocked country is made up of the Kalahari Desert, the vast sponge into which the swollen Okavango River disappears each year, creating the largest inland delta in the world – the Okavango Delta. The delta forms part of the Kalahari Basin, situated at the southern periphery of the Great Rift Valley and covers an area of 22,000 square kilometres home to an estimated 9,000 species of flora and fauna – as such the delta is widely regarded as one of the premium destinations for game viewing. Although the periphery is semi-arid, the delta itself is a patchwork of cool clear streams, lagoons, floodplains and forested islands. In the dry winter season vast numbers of wildlife flock to where the floodwaters infiltrate the delta – providing one of the natural world's most spectacular sights.



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### **Moremi Game Reserve, Chief' s Island**

In the centre of the Okavango Delta is the Moremi Game Reserve, renowned for its concentration and diversity of mammal and bird life. Elephant, hippo, lion, giraffe and most other game can be seen in abundance, even rhino. The northern reaches house healthy populations of the rare wild dog, otherwise known as the Cape Hunting Dog or Painted Wolf, the most endangered predator in Southern Africa. The Moremi was the first wildlife sanctuary created by an African tribe (1963), the Batawana. Later in the 1970s the park was enlarged to include Chief 's Island, historically the hunting grounds of the great Batawana chiefs. In 1991 a section between the Ngoga and Jao Rivers in the northeast was added, increasing the total surface area of the reserve to 4,800 square kilometres.

### **NG 32 Private Concession**

NG 32 is a "Community Based Natural Resource Management Area" situated within the Okavango Delta. Sanctuary Stanley's Camp and Sanctuary Baines' Camp are the only two camps located on this pristine 260,000 acre private concession. The camps are owned and managed by Sanctuary Retreats, while the NG 32 community manages the land. This community consists of six villages on the concession borders. Many of the staff at the camps are employed from these villages and receive housing, food and employee benefits, as well as Aids Awareness training.

### **Chobe National Park**

In the country's northwest, on the border with Namibia, immense teak forests grow and it is here, in Chobe National Park, that the largest population of elephants (estimated at 100,000) in the world live a

protected and secure existence. Lions, leopards and rare wild dogs roam the broad plains that shrink and grow with the change of the seasons as the rivers and streams flood. Kasane, at the northern tip of the park, is the gateway to the area as well as its administrative centre. The lush Chobe riverfront is noted for the large concentrations of mega fauna (elephant and buffalo) that gather on its banks in the dry season. In the dry season (April - November) the Chobe is the only major source of water north of the Okavango, hence the number of game attracted from great distances. Like the Okavango, the river originates in the highlands of Angola and flows into the mighty Zambezi. The Chobe boasts Bushbuck and Puku antelope, as well as a variety of birds, in addition to elephant and buffalo. It is also famed for its majestic sunsets.



## STAYING HEALTHY

We advise all travellers to take precautions against malaria and we recommend speaking with your GP or personal physician four to six weeks before departure.

All travellers coming from or going through countries which have been declared yellow fever infected areas must provide an international health certificate of vaccination for yellow fever upon arrival into Botswana.

## GETTING TO BOTSWANA

### Visa Information

For most passports, a visa is required. Please check with local authorities for details. Two blank passport pages are required when travelling to Southern Africa. Check the number of days given on arrival at the immigration desk as there are steep fines for overstaying the number of days given. Departure tax is dependent upon which airline you are travelling with.

### Visas Not Required

Foreigners from most Commonwealth and European Union countries, as well as the United States, are not required to obtain visas for entering Botswana, except in cases where the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs has directed otherwise.

### Visas Required

Please visit [www.botswanaembassy.org](http://www.botswanaembassy.org) for a full list of nationalities requiring visas for entry into Botswana. Please note this information serves as a guide only. Travellers should check for visa requirements pertaining to their citizenship, as entry requirements can vary. Visas are to be obtained in advance and cannot be issued at port of entry.

### Travelling with children

Guests travelling to Botswana need to be aware that parents travelling with children would now be requested to provide the following information for all travelling children. Any children under the age of 18 will not be allowed to enter the country without these documents.

#### Child and both parents

- An unabridged birth certificate
- A valid passport for the child

#### Child and one parent

Parent must produce

- An unabridged birth certificate
- A valid passport for the child
- A court order / death certificate / affidavit confirming the absent parent has given permission for the child to travel

#### Child and guardian

Guardian must produce

- An unabridged birth certificate
- A valid passport for the child
- A court order / death certificate / affidavit confirming the parents have given permission for the child to travel
- Copies of parents / guardian ID documents
- Contact details of parents/guardian

### Child unaccompanied

- An unabridged birth certificate
- A valid passport
- A court order / death certificate / affidavit from both parents or legal guardian confirming permission to travel
- A letter from the person who will receive the child in Botswana including their full contact details and a certified copy of their ID / passport.
- Contact details of parents / guardian

## TIPPING

You are travelling on an independent itinerary and the cost of your program does not include gratuities. Tipping is a very personal matter and should only be considered when our staff have gone above and beyond for you. Should you feel you would like to acknowledge their service, the below serves as a rough guide. An amount equivalent to the below scale is in US dollars, per person per day.

### Local guides

- US\$ 10 per person per half day tour
- US\$ 12 per person per full day tour

### Ranger

- US\$ 15 per person per day

### Tracker

- US\$ 10 per person per day



## MONEY

The unit of currency in Botswana is Pula, divided into 100 thebe. Notes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50 and 100 pula. Coins come in 5, 10, 25, and 50 thebe, and 1, 2 and 5 pula.

There will be little access to ATMs or banks while on safari. We suggest guests travelling with cash in small denominations for tipping.

### Foreign Exchange

Accepted currencies in Botswana are US Dollars, British Pounds and Euro's however change will be given in the local currency of Pula.

Cash should be locked away in the safes provided in all of our lodges and camps.



Our lodges and camps in Botswana accept MasterCard and Visa credit cards. Unfortunately Diners and American Express are not accepted. Travellers cheques are accepted as payment in camp, however change will be given in local currency.

## TALK THE TALK

The official language of Botswana is English. Setswana is spoken by around 78% of the population. There are over 20 much smaller languages, the largest of which is Kalanga (Sekalanga), while other languages include Sarwa (Sesarwa) and Ndebele.

<i>Hello</i>	<i>Dumela</i>
<i>How are you?</i>	<i>O tsogile jang? Le kae?</i>
<i>I am fine</i>	<i>Ke seame</i>
<i>I am not fine</i>	<i>Ga keikotle sentle</i>
<i>Thank you</i>	<i>Ke lebogile</i>
<i>Beautiful</i>	<i>Montle</i>
<i>Goodbye</i>	<i>Sama sentle</i>





## WEATHER

Botswana's climatic pattern is typical of southern Africa, although its rainfall is less than countries further east.

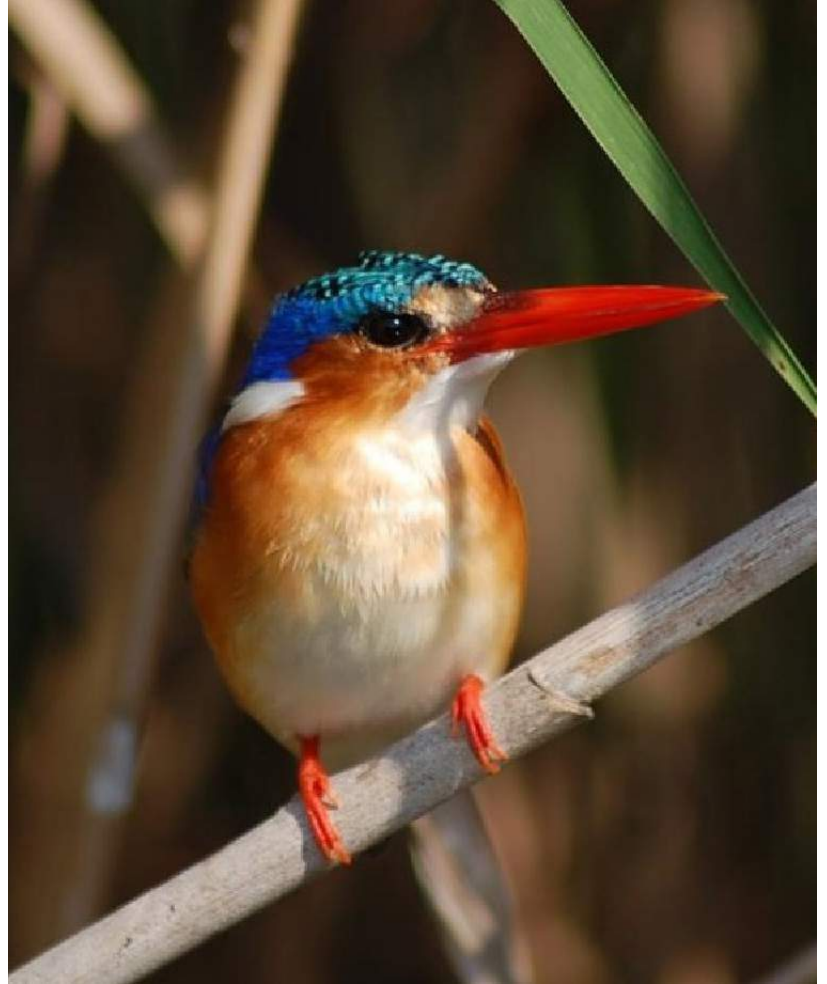
April and May in Botswana are generally lovely, with the sky clear and the landscape green. Night temperatures start to drop during these months, especially in the Kalahari. Note that places in and around the Okavango tend to have less extreme, more moderate temperatures than the drier areas of the Kalahari.

### Winter in Botswana

From June to August the night-time temperatures in drier areas can be close to freezing, but it warms up rapidly during the day, when the sky is usually clear and blue. It's now very much 'peak season' for most safari areas: the land is dry in most areas so the animals congregate around the few available water sources.

### Summer in Botswana

During September and October, temperatures climb, drying the landscapes and concentrating the game even more. This is the best time for big game safaris – although October can feel very hot, with maximum temperatures sometimes approaching 40°C. The rains in Botswana come mostly between December and March, when average minimum temperatures are in the low 20's. Some days will be bright and sunny, some will have afternoon thunderstorms, and some will just be grey.



## WHAT TO PACK

Clothing on safari should be comfortable and colours should blend in with nature as much as possible. Greens, browns and khaki coloured clothing are advisable. Evening dress in the lodges and camps is 'smart casual,' there is no formal wear required. We advise guests to dress in a way they feel most comfortable.

The most practical items to pack for safari are:

- Fleece, sweater or warm jacket for morning and evening game drives
- Light cotton shirts and T-shirts; Blouses or shirts with long sleeves
- Comfortable walking shoes for walking safaris
- Swimwear (for lodges and camps with swimming pools)
- Shorts, trousers and chinos
- Sun hat and sun block
- Camera and Binoculars
- For winter (May – September) pack a warm jacket and a scarf and gloves

A complimentary laundry service is available from all of our camps.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

The main rule when visiting the Botswana is "take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints". If you wish to take photos of the local people it is customary to ask for their permission before taking any photos. Please do not use flash photography for close-up animal shots.



## LOCAL FOOD & DRINK

The cuisine of Botswana is unique but also shares some characteristics with other cuisine of Southern Africa.

Examples of Botswana food include Pap, Samp, Vetkoek and Mopane worms. Unique to Botswana and loved by the locals is seswaa, a heavily salted mashed-up meat.

A large quantity of high quality beef is raised in Botswana which makes Botswana beef some of the best in Southern Africa and their most popular meat, followed by goat meat. River fish are also part of Botswana cuisine.

Lamb, mutton, chicken and other meats are also plentiful. Sorghum and maize are the main crops grown in Botswana. Wheat and rice and other kinds of cereals not grown locally are imported. Many different kinds of beans are grown, including cow peas, ditloo, lethodi and peanuts.

Many vegetables are grown, such as spinach, carrots, cabbage, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and lettuce. There are some vegetables that grow in the wild that are available seasonally. Dried bean leaves are a popular Setswana food.

Many fruits are locally available, including marula Watermelons, believed to have come originally from Botswana, are plentiful in season. Many vegetables are seasonal and are often dried or salted for preservation. Local drinks include fermented milk to make madila (sour milk) - eaten on its own or added to porridge. Another Botswana favourite is fresh homemade ginger beer - very refreshing especially during the warm summer days. The locals also enjoy beer.

Our lodges and camps serve a variety of fresh produce and traditional western cuisine. Local beers and a wide selection of wines imported from South Africa are also available.

With prior notice, our camps are able to arrange halaal meals, however, please note our kitchens aren't strictly halaal and our chefs are not trained in halaal food preparation. Unfortunately, we are unable to arrange kosher meals.



## BAGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

A maximum of 20kg of luggage per person is allowed for light aircraft flights, including hand luggage and camera equipment.

Please ensure that all luggage is soft-sided. Only bags without wheels are permitted as hard covered, rigid bags make it exceptionally difficult to load and unload in the aircraft luggage compartments. For further information, please refer to the Mack Air's guidance.

It is highly recommended that you lock your luggage if travelling through Southern Africa. It is also advisable that you do not pack valuable items in your checked luggage. Luggage dimensions should not exceed 25cm (10 inches) wide, 30cm (12 inches) high and 62 cm (24 inches) long.

Passengers weighing between 110 – 120 kg (242 – 264 lbs.) please need to advise us when making a booking, so that we can in turn advise Mack Air for scheduling purposes. Passengers weighing over 120 kg (264 lbs.) will be expected to purchase an additional seat.



## TIME ZONE

Botswana standard time is GMT + 2 hours