

## Okavango & Chobe

**Country(ies):** Zimbabwe , Botswana , Namibia

**Tour type:** Small Group

**Transport:** 12 seater quantum style minivan

**Group size:** Min: 4 | Max: 12

**Days:** 12 days

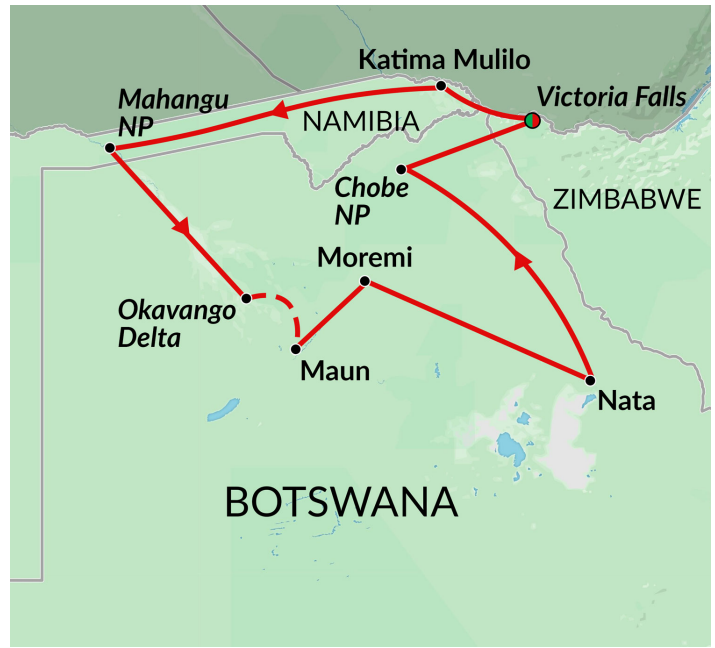
**Start Location:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

**End Location:** Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 2, Dinners - 9

### Highlights:

Victoria Falls, Zambezi Region, Remote Villages, Mahangu NP, Okavango Delta, Tsodilo Hills, Khwai Conservation Area, Moremi, Nata, Chobe NP



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Leave Zimbabwe and head to the Zambezi Region of Namibia

We'll be leaving the vibrant landscapes of Zimbabwe behind as we journey west, heading towards the incredibly lush Zambezi Region of Namibia, which you might know better by its former name, the Caprivi Strip. This drive is a real treat for the eyes, taking us across the border and into an area bursting with rivers, an abundance of wildlife, and a rich cultural heritage.

By the afternoon, we'll have arrived at our delightful riverside lodge. After settling in and taking a moment to soak up the peaceful atmosphere by the water, we'll embark on a fantastic afternoon boat cruise. As the sun begins to dip below the horizon, painting the sky with an array of colours, we'll gently glide along the Zambezi River. Keep your eyes peeled for the resident hippos and crocodiles, and be sure to look up for the incredible variety of birdlife that calls this region home.

Please note: This tour leaves from Victoria Falls on the morning of day 1. It is therefore recommended that you plan to arrive at least 1 day earlier to ensure you are ready for a morning departure today.

**OVERNIGHT:** Zambezi Mubala or similar

**MEALS:** Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 2: Journey Through the Zambezi Region to the Okavango Rive

After a delicious breakfast enjoyed right beside the majestic Zambezi River, we'll continue our journey through the remarkable Zambezi Region. This stretch of road offers a truly authentic Namibian experience. Our route to Divundu is a captivating one, leading us through a tapestry of remote villages where you can observe local life unfolding, and past verdant landscapes that showcase the fertility of this water-rich area. Keep your eyes peeled as we drive, as you might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of magnificent elephants Browse by the roadside, or even the elegant sable antelope with their striking, scimitar-shaped horns. The journey itself is an integral part of the adventure, offering continuous opportunities for wildlife spotting and cultural insights.

By early afternoon, we'll reach our destination and settle into our accommodation, perfectly situated on the tranquil banks of the Okavango River. Here, the sounds of the bush and the gentle flow of the river will provide a truly serene welcome.

**OVERNIGHT:** Rainbow River Lodge or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 3: Exploring Popa Falls and Mahangu National Park

This morning, we'll kick off the day with a scenic boat cruise upriver to the famous Popa Falls. Now, don't expect towering plunges like Victoria Falls; these are more a series of beautiful cascades and rapids where the mighty Okavango River tumbles gracefully over rocky outcrops. It's an incredibly tranquil and photogenic spot, perfect for capturing some stunning memories. As we glide along, keep your eyes peeled on the lush riverbanks which are

absolutely teeming with life. You're likely to see crocodiles sunning themselves on the sandy shores, hippos merrily bobbing in the water, and a vibrant array of bird species flitting through the reeds and overhead.

After returning to our lodge, you'll have some well-deserved time to relax and perhaps enjoy a spot of lunch before the afternoon's adventure truly begins.

In the late afternoon, we'll set off on an exhilarating game drive in our comfortable 4x4 safari vehicles, heading into Mahangu National Park. This compact yet incredibly wildlife-rich park offers excellent opportunities for sightings. Mahangu is renowned for its large herds of elephant and buffalo, and you'll also likely spot more hippo, as well as the elegant sable and roan antelope. Keep an eye out for other plains game too!

As night falls, you'll drift off to sleep knowing you've witnessed one of Namibia's most biodiverse and special corners – the very place where the magnificent Okavango River begins to fan out into its legendary delta, a truly vital ecosystem.

**OVERNIGHT:** Rainbow River Lodge or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 4: From Namibia to the Okavango Delta

Today, we bid farewell to Namibia and cross the border into Botswana, continuing our journey south towards the legendary Okavango Delta. Our drive is a fascinating transition; we'll pass through charming rural villages and expansive open savannah, gradually noticing the landscape transform as it gives way to the lush, watery channels that define the delta's edge.

Our lodge for the night is beautifully tucked away on the remote fringes of the northern delta. Upon arrival, you'll immediately find yourself immersed in a true delta haven, surrounded by towering trees, winding waterways, and the soft symphony of bird calls. After settling into your accommodation, take some time to unwind on the deck or wander along the water's edge, soaking in the serene atmosphere.

As the late afternoon light softens, we'll embark on a magical sunset boat cruise. This is just the beginning of your delta immersion—a slow-paced, serene, and deeply connected experience with nature. As evening falls, we'll gather for a peaceful dinner, with the gentle sounds of frogs and night birds setting the rhythm for a truly magical night in Botswana's northern frontier.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nguma Island Lodge or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 5: Tsodilo Hills: The Louvre of the Desert

After an early breakfast, we'll embark on a truly remarkable day trip to Tsodilo Hills, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and undoubtedly one of the most spiritually significant locations in all of Botswana. Often referred to as the "Louvre of the Desert," these dramatic quartzite hills rise unexpectedly and majestically from the otherwise flat Kalahari landscape, providing a striking contrast to their surroundings. Tsodilo Hills is not just a geological wonder; it's also home to an astonishing collection of over 4,500 ancient rock paintings, making it one of the most concentrated sites of rock art in the world.

The drive to Tsodilo will take us through arid bushveld and past remote villages, offering fascinating glimpses into traditional life in this secluded northwest corner of Botswana. It's a journey that sets the scene for the ancient

wonders awaiting us. Upon arrival, we'll spend our time exploring one of the well-maintained walking trails, allowing us to get up close to the incredible rock art – some of which dates back thousands of years, offering a profound connection to humanity's past.

We'll return to our comfortable lodge in the late afternoon, with ample time to reflect on the ancient history and profound beauty witnessed at Tsodilo Hills.

**OVERNIGHT:** Nguma Island Lodge or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 6: Journey to Maun: Gateway to the Okavango Delta

Today, we embark on a scenic journey from the tranquil northern reaches of the Okavango Delta, heading towards the vibrant gateway town of Maun. This drive offers a fascinating transition from the wilderness to more settled areas. As we travel, you'll pass by several smaller towns and villages, providing authentic glimpses into everyday life and the local culture of Botswana. It's a wonderful opportunity to observe the rhythm of rural existence before arriving in the bustling hub of Maun, the main starting point for explorations deeper into the delta.

**OVERNIGHT:** Maun Lodge or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 7: Okavango Delta Mokoro excursion

As we depart for Maun today, it's important to note that you'll be separated from your main vehicle for the next two nights. With limited time in Maun for repacking, please pack lightly and gather only the personal belongings you'll need for the upcoming two nights.

Our accommodation in Khwai can best be described as a rustic mobile fly camp. You'll be staying in a comfortable Meru-style tent, equipped with two single beds. Each tent features adjoining en-suite amenities, including a bucket shower system and a chemical toilet, offering a true safari experience under the stars.

Today, we make our way towards the iconic Okavango Delta. For those who are early risers, there's an exciting opportunity to embark on an optional scenic flight over the Delta, offering breathtaking aerial views of its intricate waterways and abundant wildlife (this is dependent on time and weather conditions).

After your optional flight, you will be collected from Maun and transferred to the Khwai Conservation area in smaller, specially adapted safari vehicles. Upon arrival at the camp, our experienced guide will provide a comprehensive briefing on what to expect during our afternoon mokoro excursion into the Okavango Delta. These traditional dugout canoes offer a unique, serene way to explore the delta's channels.

(Please be aware: Depending on the season, it is possible that the mokoro activity might take place on the following morning instead of this afternoon).

**OVERNIGHT:** Khwai Tented Camp or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 8: Moremi Game Reserve

Today is dedicated to an exhilarating full-day game drive as we spend most of our time on safari in the renowned Moremi Game Reserve. Get ready for an adventure; we'll be traversing this incredible wilderness area in our sturdy 4x4 vehicles, so expect some bumpy roads as we go.

Moremi is a truly special place, boasting a remarkable diversity of habitats – from vital wetlands and shimmering open water to expansive grasslands and dense Savannah woodland. This variety means it supports an astonishing array of wildlife. We'll be actively searching for the numerous species that roam these plains, with hopes of spotting as many different species of fauna and flora as possible. Keep your cameras ready for elephants, big cats, various antelope, and a myriad of birdlife!

As the day draws to a close, we'll make our way back to our camp in Khwai this evening. It's the perfect opportunity to relax, share stories, and compare all the amazing sightings we've had while on safari in this pristine corner of Botswana.

**OVERNIGHT:** Khwai Tented Camp or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 9: Farewell Khwai, Hello elephants in Nata

After a final, memorable sunrise in the heart of Khwai, we'll bid a fond farewell to the untamed beauty of Botswana's wilderness and begin our journey southward. Our route takes us through Maun, where we'll happily reunite with our Nomad vehicle, ready for the next leg of our adventure.

From Maun, we continue northeast towards Nata and our overnight lodge. This isn't just a stopover; it's a truly unique destination. Here, elephants roam freely through the unfenced lodge area, a truly incredible sight! You'll often see them drinking from the natural waterhole, sometimes just metres from your chalet.

As evening descends, we'll enjoy our dinner, surrounded by the quiet hum of the bush and the soft, majestic sounds of these gentle giants passing through. It promises to be an unforgettable night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Elephant Sands or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 10: Bush Walk & Chobe River Cruise

This morning, we'll start our day early with an invigorating bush walk, giving us the incredible chance to get truly up close to nature. It's a wonderful opportunity to spot animal tracks, identify different plant species, and observe other subtle signs of the wilderness that are often hidden from view when you're in a safari vehicle. This immersive experience allows for a deeper connection with the environment.

Once our walk is complete, we'll embark on our journey from the Kalahari sands of Nata, travelling north to Kasane. We aim to arrive in time for lunch and perhaps even a quick siesta before our afternoon adventure begins.

In the late afternoon, we'll head out to explore the magnificent Chobe National Park from the river, enjoying a leisurely boat cruise. This offers a uniquely tranquil and intimate perspective of the park, allowing us an up close and personal experience with the countless elephants that famously frequent the river in the afternoons, coming down to drink and bathe. Keep your cameras ready for spectacular photo opportunities!

**OVERNIGHT:** Thebe River Safaris or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 11: Exploring Victoria Falls

With the incredible memories of our recent wildlife encounters firmly etched in our minds, we cross the border into Zimbabwe this morning and travel the short distance to the iconic Victoria Falls.

Today, you'll have the fantastic opportunity to visit the spectacular Victoria Falls at your leisure, also known by its evocative local name, "Mosi-oa Tunya" – "the smoke that thunders." While much of the day is dedicated to witnessing the sheer power of the mighty Zambezi River as it plunges into the dramatic Batoka Gorge below, the bustling adventure town of Victoria Falls also offers a diverse range of optional activities for those wanting a dose of adrenaline in the afternoon. You could consider white-water rafting, bungee jumping, or a thrilling helicopter flight for unparalleled views.

For those seeking a more relaxed pace, there are vibrant craft markets to explore, offering local artistry and souvenirs, as well as charming coffee shops where you can simply unwind and soak in the atmosphere.

This evening, you have the option to join the group for an optional dinner at a local restaurant. It's a perfect chance to enjoy a delicious meal, share stories, and reflect on the day's awe-inspiring adventures. Your guide will be happy to arrange a booking for those who wish to participate.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phezulu or similar

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

## Day 12: Tour ends in Victoria Falls

Your tour officially comes to an end after breakfast today. With a wealth of activities on offer in Victoria Falls, this is the perfect day to tailor an adventure that most suits your style. Whether you're keen to experience the thrill of white-water rafting on the mighty Zambezi River or prefer to enjoy a breathtaking scenic flight over the iconic Victoria Falls, today is yours to make the most of the many attractions this vibrant town offers.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:**

**Included:**

- 11 nights accommodation either hotels/lodges/guesthouses and tented camps
- Transportation in a Quantum style minivan and 4x4 safari vehicles
- Qualified Crew
- Local guides for sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- National Park entrance fees
- Zambezi boat cruise
- Popa Falls boat cruise
- Mahangu National Park Game Drive
- Okavango boat cruise
- Tsodilo Hills Day Trip
- Okavango Mokoro Excursion
- Moremi Game Drive

- Chobe Bush Walk and boat cruise
- Free time in Victoria Falls
- Meals as outlined in the itinerary

**Excluded:**

- International Flights (available on request)
- Visa fees if required
- Optional activities (see itinerary)
- Travel insurance (mandatory, [get quote here](#))
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides & drivers
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned above
- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

## Departure airport transfer in Victoria Falls

Min numbers: 1

This option adds a departure airport transfer in Victoria Falls to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of post-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer.

**Note:** We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

## Arrival airport transfer in Victoria Falls

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an arrival airport transfer in Victoria Falls to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of pre-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer.

**Note:** We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

## Single room supplement accommodated (SAOVOC)

Min numbers: 1

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

**Note:** The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

## Extra day in Victoria falls post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## Extra day in Victoria Falls - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Airport transfers are not included, but are available as an additional option. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

**Note:** Single room and peak season supplements apply.

## **Afternoon Game Drive in Mahangu National Park**

Min numbers: 1

Go on a guided game drive for 4-5 hours to explore the diverse wildlife and scenic landscapes of Mahangu National Park. This is your chance to experience the beauty of this vibrant ecosystem.

## **Okavango Delta scenic flight**

Min numbers: 1

Experience breathtaking aerial views on a 45-minute scenic flight with Mac Air. Soar above the winding river channels and lush landscapes of the delta for a truly unforgettable perspective.

Flights are available from either 07:00 to 08:00 or 08:00 to 09:00. You must arrive one hour prior to your scheduled flight, and a valid passport is mandatory.

## **Chobe National Park Game Drive**

Min numbers: 1

Enjoy an exciting three-hour guided 4x4 safari through Chobe National Park. Spot diverse wildlife, including elephants and lions, while exploring the stunning landscapes of this iconic park.

## **Historical Bridge Tour**

Min numbers: 1

Journey through over 100 years of history on this engaging, theatrical, and educational tour. You will learn about the history of a remarkable structure, from its design and prefabrication in England to its construction in Africa. This engineering masterpiece was central to Cecil John Rhodes' vision of a "Cape to Cairo" railway, and its history is both entertaining and tragic.

## **Victoria Falls Helicopter Flight**

Min numbers: 1

Experience an exhilarating 12-minute helicopter flight over the majestic waterfalls. You'll enjoy breathtaking aerial views of cascading water and the lush surroundings.

## **Victoria Falls Sunset Boat Cruise**

Min numbers: 1

Enjoy a two-hour sunset boat cruise on the Zambezi River. You will be provided with local drinks and snacks during the trip. Please note that a park fee of \$10 USD is not included and is payable on site.

## **Victoria Falls Guided Tour**

Min numbers: 1

Explore the majestic Victoria Falls National Park, Zimbabwe, with a knowledgeable guide. This tour takes you to up to 16 different viewpoints, offering a comprehensive look at the falls.

## **Options available while on tour (NAOVNB | SAOVOC | SAOVWW)**

Min numbers: 1

These options are available while you are on the tour from local activity providers who your booking will be with. Prices are given as a guide and are subject to change.

### **Botswana**

- **Maun**
  - 1hr Scenic Delta Flight (min 4) | \$80 to \$200
- **Chobe NP**
  - Game Drive | BWP400 to BWP600

### **Zimbabwe**

- **Victoria Falls**
  - Bungee Jump | \$150 to \$170
  - Helicopter Flight over the Falls (min 3) | \$160 to \$180
  - Full day White Water Rafting (High water) | \$150 to \$170
  - Zambezi Sunset Cruise (inc transfers) | \$40 to \$70

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## 1. Accommodation

On this tour, your accommodations are thoughtfully chosen to complement your immersive journey through Southern Africa's wilderness. You'll stay in a mix of comfortable lodges, many of which are beautifully situated on the tranquil banks of rivers, offering serene settings and often providing opportunities for wildlife viewing right from the property. A truly unique experience awaits at one lodge where elephants roam freely through the unfenced grounds and often visit a natural waterhole. During your time in the Okavango Delta, you'll experience a rustic mobile fly camp, staying in comfortable Meru-style tents equipped with single beds and en-suite amenities like bucket showers and chemical toilets, providing an authentic safari experience under the stars.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

**Note** - Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice. The properties listed are our preferred options, but sometimes due to availability or other issues with the property, we may substitute another property of similar standards.

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## 2. Transport

Our 12-seater Quantum vehicle has been specifically chosen and designed with your comfort and optimal viewing pleasure in mind, making it the ideal choice for small group safaris. Capable of accommodating up to 12 clients, it ensures a more intimate and personal travel experience.

Step inside and you'll find spacious individual seating, providing ample room to relax during your journey. We understand the importance of a comfortable environment, which is why the vehicle is equipped with climate control air-conditioning, maintaining a pleasant temperature regardless of the outside conditions.

Crucially, the Quantum features large windows throughout, offering truly unobstructed views of Africa's breathtaking landscapes and the incredible wildlife you'll encounter. Whether you're scanning the horizon for distant herds or observing an elephant just metres away, these expansive windows ensure you won't miss a moment of the action. It's the perfect blend of comfort and functionality for an unforgettable African adventure.

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## 3. Group Size / Tour Leaders / Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. As one of our Southern Africa small group tours, this tour is limited to a maximum of 12 passengers.

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## 4. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 5. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## 6. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## 7. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](http://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

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## 8. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient

cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

### **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.**

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## **9. Before you travel**

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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## **10. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles**

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

#### **How Water-to-Go Technology works:**

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

#### **The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:**

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

#### **Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide**

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

#### **Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!**

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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### **11. Private & Tailor-made Tours**

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

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## 12. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**South Africa:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Namibia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Botswana:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

**Zimbabwe:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Zambia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Malawi:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Tanzania:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Kenya:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Uganda:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Sudan:** Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

**Morocco:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

**Tunisia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information

detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have. If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

**Health Declaration:** As many of our Africa tours travel through very remote regions, where medical facilities are limited, we are asking all of our travellers 65 years and over who are joining one of our Africa Overland Adventures to complete the attached medical questionnaire. The information provided to Encounters Travel and our local operational partners will be held to the strictest confidence and will be used only to the extent to provide necessary emergency medical care and/or evaluate physical health and fitness for travel.

We will request this from you approximately 30 days before your trip starts, so that your GP can sign your form based on your current health conditions. Please don't submit this several months in advance, as it is important for us to know you are fit for travel just before the trip departs.

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### **13. Passports and Visas**

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. Encounters Travel will not be held responsible if travellers are denied entry because they are not in possession of the relevant visas. We therefore recommend you re-check requirements with the relevant embassy/consulate around 4 weeks before travel.

You should also be in possession of a valid onward or return flight ticket, or proof of other means of transport enabling you to leave the country that your tour passes through or finishes in. In addition you should carry proof of sufficient funds to cover you during your time in the country (eg. credit card).

Should your tour be re-entering a country, please ensure that you have a multiple entry visa that allows this. Some countries have a visa on arrival service which can be more convenient and cheaper. However, for peace of mind and to speed up the border crossing process, Encounters Travel advises that you to get your visas prior to your trip if possible.

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### **14. Tipping**

In general tipping in restaurants is expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides. It is expected to tip porters and car guards etc. Ask your guides how much is appropriate in local currency. The recommended amount for Serengeti and Masai Mara guides is around USD5-7 per client per day.

Our guides do work hard but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty. The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. On Small Group & Shoestring tours we recommend around USD 3-5 per person per day per guide as a fair tip. On longer Overland tours we recommend USD1-2 per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 2-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 2 envelopes are used and each crew member's name written on one. Place what you feel is fair into each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

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### **15. Meals on Overland tours**

Due to the nature of the overland trip, the majority of your meals will be cooked by our crew and eaten beside the vehicle. Meals will not normally be eaten within the accommodation. The reason we run our trips in this way is that we feel it fits in better with this type of trip and it also helps to keep our prices competitive with other companies offering similar tours.

**Breakfast:** As breakfast is served very early in the morning (if there is driving or activities to be done) it is a simple but filling breakfast: Tea and coffee, breads and spreads, cereals, yoghurts, fruits and on occasion, when there is time for a later breakfast, we'll will serve a hot breakfast of scrambled eggs, porridge, bacon or beans.

**Lunch:** Lunch is generally served at a picnic spot next to the road en route to a destination. As the tour leaders only have approximately 45 minutes to get everyone off the truck, prepare lunch and then get everyone back on the truck again, lunches consist of sandwiches and salads (rice salad, pasta salad, tuna salad and green salad) which are quick and easy to prepare but which are quite filling. They do have meal plans which they should stick to, to ensure that there is variety on a day to day basis.

**Dinner:** This is when your crew get time to prepare a delicious meal and they focus on a substantial protein, vegetable and carbohydrate dinner. We serve traditional cuisine consisting of braais (BBQ), potjie (stew), bobotie (mince), spaghetti and fish and chicken dishes. All meals (on both accommodated and camping tours) that are included in the itinerary are prepared at the full service adventure truck. This is a unique adventure in itself where you get to dine under the stars with your new found friends and experience the real sights and sounds of Africa!

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## 16. International Flights and Airport Transfers

**International Flights:** We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people living in different places and with varying travel plans, except on some Escorted Tours and package promotions, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

The vast majority of our tours are designed such that you can arrive and depart at any time on the first and last days of the set tour itinerary, with your arrival and departure airport transfers included in the tour price. However, on our **Overland tours**, you should not arrange your onward international flights or other travel for the day the tour is due to end (unless the final day does not involve any travelling and finishes after breakfast). Similarly, many of our Overland tours depart their first port of call on the first morning, and you will therefore need to plan for any flights to arrive at least one day beforehand.

### **Airport Transfers:**

Arrival and departure airport transfers are included on most of our Small Group, Shoestring (excluding the 5 & 6-day Garden Route tours where Airport Transfers are not included, however a pickup from a Central Cape Town location is included on day 1 of the tour) and Tailor-made tours but available as extra options on all our African Overland tours, as long as you have accommodation booked with us on that day. If you add extra accommodation before and/or after the tour that you do not book with us, then you will also need to arrange your own airport transfers.

On our **Sebatana Package**, airport transfers for arrival and departure are included, however these transfers operate on a schedule, so a short wait may be required after landing before the transfer departs to the accommodation. To coincide with the transfer departures, your arrival flight should land in Johannesburg before 11am on day 1 and depart after 6pm on day 8. If your flights arrive/depart outside of these times, we would recommend adding an additional night to your trip.

**Departure Taxes:** Various countries may require that you pay an Airport Departure Tax when departing on an international flight. Please note that all departure taxes must be paid in hard cash currency and US Dollars are normally the best currency to use for this. Departure taxes can vary from US\$10 - US\$60 depending on the departure point.

**Flight inclusive packages:** We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **17. What to take**

**LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES:** Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

**OVERLAND AND SAFARI TOURS:** Please keep in mind that these are adventure tours in an adventure vehicle (truck or 4x4) and luggage should not include any solid Samsonite style suitcases. On our accommodated overland tours most of our trucks have lockers for the luggage (locker sizes: 37,5 cm high, 32 cm wide, 80 cm deep). Only a soft bag will fit in these lockers. A suitcase is far more difficult to store and make secure in our vehicle and this is part of the reason we ask for a backpack or tote bag to be used as your luggage. The other reason is that you need to walk from the truck to the accommodation and often over sand or uneven terrain. Your luggage on our Overland tours is limited to ONE backpack and ONE daypack weighing no more than 20kg. As a general rule, if you cannot lift your own luggage - you've got too much stuff! Most people make the mistake of bringing too many clothes. A quick reminder - **suitcases are not suitable on our overland tours** – especially huge Samsonite-style cases! **Small** wheeled cases are OK for safari tours.

**SUGGESTED PACKING LIST:** Kit for all weather conditions including: • 2/3 shorts/skirts • 1 jacket/anorak • Tracksuit/pullover • 2 pairs of long pants/jeans • 2 pairs of walking shoes/boots/trainers • 1 pair of sandals • 3 or 4 T-shirts/short sleeve shirts or sundresses • 2/3 Long Sleeve Shirts • Smart casual change of clothes • Swimwear • Underwear & socks • Sun Hat – preferably that covers the back of your neck. • Raincoat • Kikoi/sarong

Your clothing should be easy to wash and dry and should preferably not need ironing. Avoid synthetics, which can be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Many people underestimate how cold Africa can be – remember that jersey/jacket! There are also nights that are warm but you must still wear clothes that cover arms and legs from mosquitoes. Take a set of casual but smart clothes for the occasional evening out in a restaurant or club. If you wear glasses (or contacts) it is also advisable to bring a spare pair.

While on wildlife safaris it is important to wear dull coloured clothing - olive, mushroom, brown, khaki, stone are ideal.

You should avoid white (stands out too much), black or blue (attracts tsetse flies), and camouflage (illegal in many countries for civilians)

**Additional Items:** • Towel & facecloth • Baby wipes/ Wet Wipes • Personal toiletries • Sleeping bag • Torch & enough spare batteries • Camera & spare batteries and memory cards • Water bottle. (A 2-litre Coke bottle works well...) • Penknife • Insect and Mosquito repellent • Suntan lotion, sun block & after sun lotion • Sunglasses • Watch • Biodegradable laundry detergent • Passport (plus a copy of your passport & visas) • Extra passport photos • Vaccination certificate • Money • Travel plug • Neck pillow • Small sewing kit • Plastic bags • Clothes line and pegs • Small scrubbing brush • a small padlock for your luggage locker in the truck • Small basic First Aid kit (painkillers, band aids, after-sun lotion, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea tablets etc.)

**DAY PACKS:** Please check the itinerary for your specific tour if you will need a little daypack. For example on our Cape Town to Vic Falls overland tour you will need a smaller bag, big enough to bring basic equipment (toiletries and clothes) for 2 nights. The daypack is for your Okavango Delta Excursion, where you cannot bring your entire luggage.

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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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