

South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe

Pre-Departure Information



*Although your journey with us may end
Africa will forever be inscribed in your heart*

Southern Africa is a wonderful combination of several great countries for visitors and has a degree of diversity not seen anywhere else in Africa in this proximity. Crossing these borders is so easy too. Johannesburg is normally the starting point for a regional safari, and all the major airlines will be found landing and departing from here. All the regional capitals are linked with Johannesburg too.

South Africa is the most sophisticated country in Africa and of course has an infrastructure to match it. The roads, telecommunications, banking and air transport systems are all 'First World', and naturally the accommodations in South Africa are world class too! Oliver Tambo International Airport receives international air carriers from every major airline in the world! There are a delightful variety of lodges, camps and hotels that are available depending on budget and preference too. The capital of South Africa is Pretoria, although Johannesburg is the commercial heart of the country. Cape Town and Bloemfontein are administrative capitals in their own rights. There are several famous National Parks and equally important, a growing number of private conservancies and reserves too, catering for a growing demand by international and local tourists to get into the bush!

Zimbabwe is the northern neighbor of South Africa and travel there by air (on a daily basis) and is easy to undertake, with Harare and Victoria Falls being the two common destinations for commercial flights. Private charters create several more options particularly in the west in Hwange and south in Ghona re zhou. Zimbabwe has several outstanding wildlife destinations and national parks too, but is probably best known for Great Zimbabwe, Mana Pools, Hwange National Park, Ghona re zhou and Victoria Falls. Harare is the capital city and all international flights land there or Bulawayo, and at the Victoria Falls.

Botswana is a very stable and progressive country with a very positive wildlife conservation policy. Gaborone is the capital, and is located in the far south of the country, near the South African border. The major attractions are the Okavango delta, Chobe National Park, the Kalahari Desert and the Makgadikgadi. Maun is 'THE' safari town, located at the base of the Delta and it now has a new international airport, to support the travelers heading into the delta or south to the Kalahari and other places. Botswana has been the most innovative of all these regional countries as regards Rhino Conservation, forming partnerships with NGO's to translocate these animals to safer areas and adopting a firm stance against transgressors!

Namibia is included in this region, as it south of the Zambezi-Kunene line, and located on the west coast of Africa, between Botswana and the Atlantic ocean. Namibia is unlike any other country in Africa. Composed largely of dry, arid but very stark and beautiful landscapes including the unique NAMIB DESERT, it has several great national parks and conservancies. The famous dunes are in the south-west at the Namib Naukluft National Park, and there are several wild community owned wildlife conservancies in the north central region, like Damaraland. Etosha National Park in the far north is the countries' flagship park with abundant wildlife and several privately owned safari lodges on the border of the park.

CLIMATE

Due to the similar latitude that these countries have, the climate is generally the same, with some local differences because of local topography, surface water bodies (the Okavango) and Mozambique ocean currents. The **cooler months** are generally between May and June, and early morning temps may reach 32°F, but warm to 55°F by late morning. The **hot months** are February, (in summer) and then between September and mid November just before the rains arrive. Temperatures may reach 90°F around midday and early afternoon. In drier areas temperatures will be higher, like 100°F (Botswana, desert), due to local conditions. Cape Town is in a Mediterranean climatic area and is therefore a complete paradox!



The rainy season starts in mid November, peaking between December/January and ending in mid March, April.

Namibia has far less of a climatic norm than the other countries, and generally receives about 30% of the rainfall that the other three receive due to the cold Atlantic effect.

Botswana

Temperature: These are the average lows and highs

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
°C	Mean	15.32	13.31	11.31	14.31	09.28	06.25	06.25	09.28	11.33	15.35	19.34	15.32
°F	Mean	59.90	56.88	54.88	57.88	45.82	43.77	43.77	45.82	50.91	64.95	66.93	60.90

rainy months

South Africa

Temperature: These are the average lows and highs

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
°C	JHB	15.26	14.25	13.24	11.22	08.19	05.16	05.16	07.19	09.22	14.24	13.25	14.25
°F	JHB	59.79	57.77	55.75	52.72	48.66	41.61	41.61	46.66	48.72	54.75	55.77	57.77
°C	DBN	21.28	21.28	20.28	17.26	15.24	10.23	10.23	12.23	15.23	17.24	15.25	20.27
°F	DBN	70.82	70.82	68.82	63.79	59.75	50.73	50.73	54.73	59.73	63.75	64.77	68.81
°F	CPT	16.26	15.26	14.25	12.23	10.20	08.18	07.17	07.18	08.19	10.21	13.24	15.25
°F	CPT	61.79	59.79	57.77	54.73	50.68	46.64	45.63	46.64	46.66	50.70	55.75	59.77

rainy months

Zimbabwe & Zambia

Temperature: These are the average lows and highs

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
°C	Vic Falls	17.32	17.30	18.31	14.29	11.29	07.25	06.26	08.28	14.33	16.34	18.31	17.31
°F	Vic Falls	63.90	63.86	65.84	58.84	45.77	43.77	46.82	46.82	57.91	64.93	64.88	63.88

rainy months



CURRENCY

When travelling in Southern Africa, it is best to arrive with US Dollars cash, which can be exchanged at many of the Bureaux de Change in the OR Tambo International Airport and the main towns. You will be able to use US\$ cash in all bush camps as gratuities, BUT if shopping in the cities, local cash or credit cards are welcome.

- The currency in **South Africa** is Rands (ZAR). The notes are in Rands and the coins are in cents.
- **Zimbabwe** uses the United States Dollar (US\$) as its currency, even though it has relaunched the 'ZIMBABWE BOND NOTE', which is supposed to be equal in value. The country is 'Cash short', and USD therefore carry about 25% greater value than stated.
- **Botswana** uses the Botswana Pula (BWP), which is slightly stronger in value to the the rand.
- **Namibia** uses the Namibian dollar, (NAD) which is pegged at the same value as the South African Rand, which may be used in Namibia.

The ATM's in the larger centers all of these countries will only yield the currency of that country.

CREDIT CARDS

When traveling in Southern Africa, VISA or MASTERCARD is widely accepted. DINERS and AMERICAN EXPRESS are NOT recommended. Gratuities in the form of US dollars are preferred, in smaller denominations like \$20's and less.

*United States Dollars

Please note that ONLY POST 2006 notes are accepted; so only bring the newer notes, in small denominations, fifty dollar notes and less.

The bigger banks and Automatic Teller Machines will advance local currency against a credit card, converted at the daily exchange rate.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

It is up to the guest to ensure that passports and visas are valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. There should be SIX blank VISA pages for any visa as well as for entry stamps on arrival. Please note these are visa pages, NOT endorsement pages. This is important as IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS WILL BE STRICT about this, especially if you are travelling between several countries during your trip.

All passport holders should verify with their travel agent or relevant consulate concerning visa entry requirements. If you are extending your journey to other countries, please establish entry requirements for those countries as well.

Please ensure that you have all the necessary visas prior to departure (unless available on entry).

Travel in Southern Africa is normally conducted in English and it is therefore beneficial for guests to have knowledge of English and be able to communicate in that language.



EMERGENCY "Paper work".

Please photograph the Face page of your passport, as well as all Credit Cards, and any vital travel documents so that you have copies of these on you.

Scan air tickets as above. Leave a copy of these documents at home as well, with a contactable friend.

VERY IMPORTANT

NEW TRAVEL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR CHILDREN TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SOUTH AFRICA**

From 1st June 2015, new regulations aimed at improving the safety of children travelling in and out of South Africa have been implemented. Children under the age of 18 will require an **original** or **certified copy** of their unabridged birth certificate together with a valid passport when travelling through South African borders.

- **What is an unabridged birth certificate?**

It's a birth certificate that reflects the particulars of both parents of the child. Those from countries, who do not automatically issue unabridged certificates, must apply for the document well before their travel date.

- **Child Travelling with Both Parents**

Parents must produce an unabridged birth certificate and a valid passport.

- **Child Travelling with One Parent**

Parent must produce an unabridged birth certificate and a valid passport and a court order / death certificate of second parent/ affidavit confirming the absent parent has given permission for the child to travel.

- **Child Travelling with Guardian**

Guardian must produce an unabridged birth certificate and a valid passport and a court order / and death certificate of missing parents/ or affidavit confirming the parents have given permission for the child to travel.

- **Child Unaccompanied**

Child must produce an unabridged birth certificate and a valid passport and a court order / death certificate if parents have died/ affidavit confirming permission to travel, from both parents or legal guardian. A letter from person who is to receive the child in South Africa including their full contact details and a certified copy of their ID / passport must be produced.

LANGUAGE

The dominant language used by officials in Southern Africa is ENGLISH. However, there is such a variety of languages that will be heard, that it is not possible to list them all.

TIME & INTERNATIONAL DIALING CODES

South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana are 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

Telephone codes:

South Africa: +27

Zimbabwe: +263

Botswana: +267

Namibia : +264



SAFETY

Visitors landing in Johannesburg, Maun, Windhoek or the Victoria Falls are met and walked through the airport building to meet their pilot and flown straight out to the safari camp or lodge. Please note that traveling in any City carries safety risks. Please exercise the same caution as regards personal safety as you would when traveling in any foreign city anywhere in the world. When traveling by vehicle, always lock your doors, and place handbags, tablets, laptop computers, cell phones etc. out of sight, in the trunk or on the floor. In the rural areas and bush there is no risk to be concerned about.

As regards personal items, most lodges, hotels and camps either provide safes in the rooms, or a central safe in 'the office' to secure passports, tickets and money.

NB: DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

We do ask that on making your booking you inform us of any special dietary requirements. The camps can cater for special diets *when given prior notice*. Due to the camps remote locations, prior notification is important.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

When making your booking with us we need to know if there are any medical conditions or allergies that may affect your safari or that we need to be aware of to facilitate transfers and movements between camps. Many of the camps and lodges are located in remote areas, so prior notice is required for particular medical needs.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Please advise us if you will be celebrating any special occasions, such as a birthday or anniversary during your trip.

IMPORTANT

PLEASE NOTE: There is considerable difference in luggage allowance on International flights 'inbound' and internal or local flights. International flights allow 44lbs, excluding hand luggage. Internal transfer flights and regional flights allow only 33lbs, INCLUDING hand luggage.

ZIMBABWE: If travelers are just going to the Falls, having landed off an international flight at the Falls, or Harare International Airport, then 44lbs of luggage is fine. If travelers are going onward to safari camps by air charters then, ONLY 33LBS OF LUGGAGE MAY BE CARRIED!

LUGGAGE ON SCHEDULED FLIGHTS - 44lbs EXCLUDING HAND LUGGAGE

Scheduled airlines in SOUTHERN AFRICA generally carry a weight restriction of 44lbs (20kg's) on checked luggage per economy class traveller, and a carry-on, which may include your photographic equipment. Please ensure that you comply with the applicable restrictions (further details regarding number of luggage pieces and exact dimensions, for the particular carrier can be obtained from your ticketing agent).

Please note when combining scheduled airline flights and air transfers (as specified below), then restriction will apply unless alternative arrangements have been made for the storage or separate transfer of excess luggage, which will be at an additional cost.

Sufficient locks or baggage ties for baggage safety, is advised. Sometimes a colored ribbon will identify YOUR luggage more easily if it is just a black bag!



LUGGAGE ON INTERNAL AIR TRANSFERS - 44lbs, INCLUDING HAND LUGGAGE

There are strict weight restrictions in place on any itinerary, which includes light aircraft transfers for the following reasons:

- The aircrafts are designed with a maximum bodyweight and luggage weight allowance.
- Most of our airfields are over 1000 metres above sea level and are located in the tropics, and therefore the permissible aircraft carrying capacity is reduced.
- The aircrafts also have physical space restrictions.

Some important issues must please be noted for air transfers:

Luggage, including hand luggage, is restricted to 44lbs per person. Only soft bags will be accepted, no hard suitcases can be transported, as they physically cannot fit into the aircraft. The maximum dimensions of the soft bags that can be accommodated are as follows: 10 inches wide x 12 inches high and 24 inches long.

Please keep in mind that the baggage compartments on the light aircrafts are only 10 inches high, so the pilots must have the ability to manipulate the bag into the compartment.



Passengers weighing 220lbs or more, or two guests travelling together whose combined weight is 440lbs, must please advise us in advance as an extra seat for the additional weight will have to be costed into the package for safety purposes. If we are not advised of this information prior to arrival, this can cause a problem on the ground and could result in a private charter, which will be billed directly to the guest.

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOUR CAMERA EQUIPMENT IS EXCESSIVE, THEY WILL NOTICE AND ASK TO WEIGH IT, AND LIMIT YOU ACCORDINGLY.

LOST LUGGAGE

Luggage that goes missing on scheduled flights is beyond our control or the airline concerned. The airport controls what happens to passengers' luggage from when it is checked in or out until it is put on or taken off the aircraft.

We suggest that you take the following precautionary action: pack a small bag with your essentials including **any life sustaining medication, which can be carried with you as hand luggage**. If your luggage goes missing, you will still have your essential items on hand to see you through the first couple of days while we try and recover your lost baggage.

LOSS OF ARTICLES

Please note that we cannot accept any responsibility for the misplacement of any articles whilst on your travels. Naturally, we will endeavor to reunite you with your misplaced items.



CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES

CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING IS FORBIDDEN IN MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES

We suggest that when in Safari Camps/lodges you wear 'bush' colors such as olive green, khaki, gray and brown. Bright and light colors should be avoided, except at night. Some Cape Town properties do require men to wear long trousers to dinner. In safari camps it is advisable to wear light colored clothes at night, as insects tend to avoid light clothing. Avoid wearing black and dark blue during the day as these absorb heat & attract insects.

Remember to pack the following items:

Generally, most folk only need 4 changes of clothing for a safari.

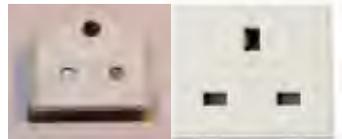
- Long sleeved shirts for day and evening can reduce sunburn and insect bites; however short sleeves are fine as well.
- Pants, with zip-off legs ideal; alternatively shorts are great for daywear. Bush colors for daywear, light colors for night wear.
- Underwear and sleeping attire or tracksuit
- Scarf/Pashmina/Buff for keeping the neck warm
- Personal toiletries and medication (most camps do supply reputable branded shampoo & conditioner)
- Insect repellent is provided by the camps
- Comfortable closed walking shoes like trainers (Avoid big heavy boots). X 1pr.
- Light shoes or sandals. X 1pair of each.
- Warm layers for cold evenings, and lightweight water proof/wind proof jacket
- Sunglasses & hat with brim or peak cap
- Sun block and lip balm (Recommended to bring minimum factor 30 SPF)
- Anti-malarial prophylactics are essential all year round
- Last of all take a pen for those important postcards home

Do not bring any jewelry and perfumes

Most of the Hotels, Lodges and safari camps provide a daily laundry service. Some camps will require travellers to wash their own underwear, and provide soap in the rooms for that purpose.

ELECTRICITY

Camps and Lodges in the more remote areas generally all have electricity. These usually rely on generator or solar power for lighting and charging electrical equipment. Please be aware that you are unlikely to find plug sockets in your room or tent. It is recommended that guests bring their own international adaptors. Generally, electrical outlets in Southern Africa are the round 3-pin type,(South Africa and Namibia) however ALL the rest tend to use the square 3-pin type. ALL countries in southern and east Africa use 220/240 Volt AC.



HEALTH

There are a few basic health matters that require care and attention. The following points are recommended guidelines only. Please consult your doctor and also check with your health department prior to departure for any changes in health regulations.

1) Malaria

Malaria is common within Africa. Although not widespread, it is encountered anywhere where wet conditions prevail and settlements exist. It is also strongly affected by seasonal conditions; therefore it is best to be prepared any time one travels to Africa.

Malaria prophylactic recommendations for travellers:

Expert opinion differs regarding the best approach to malaria prophylaxis. It is important to bear in mind that malaria may be contracted despite chemoprophylaxis, especially in areas where chloroquine resistance has been reported. Both chloroquine-resistant and normal strains of malaria are prevalent in Africa.

Please remember that the best precaution is the preventative kind:

- Avoid being bitten by using mosquito repellents liberally.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers/slacks in the evenings.
- Please use the mosquito net over your bed where supplied/available.
- If staying in a bungalow or tent, spray with a suitable insecticide to kill any mosquitoes that may have flown into your room.
- Mosquito coils are also effective.

2) Tick Bite Fever

Ticks can be found in the wilderness of Africa, tick bites can possibly lead to tick bite fever. Symptoms of tick bite fever include, headache and painful, enlarged lymph glands in the area of the bite. The bite site may also form a small boil with a blueish scab. If you experience any of these symptoms after returning home from your travel, please visit your doctor and advise them of the possibility of tick bite fever. Precautions can be taken to avoid being bitten when going on bush walks; these precautions include wearing long trousers, socks and boots.

LYME'S DISEASE DOES NOT POSE A THREAT IN AFRICA.....YET!

3) Water

It is very important that you drink plenty of water especially during the warmer months. It is generally recommended that guests drink at least 4 to 6 pints (2 to 3 litres) of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and therefore can actually contribute to dehydration. It is recommended that you drink bottled water throughout Africa.

4) Medical Conditions

Please make us aware of any medical conditions you have prior to your arrival. This includes any allergies e.g. bee stings, nuts, shellfish etc.

5) Inoculations

Please consult your doctor or local travel clinic with regards to any other suggested inoculations for your travels.



INSURANCE

It is a condition of booking, that the sole responsibility lies with the guests to ensure that they carry the correct comprehensive travel and medical insurance to cover themselves, as well as any dependents/travelling companions for the duration of their trip to Southern Africa.

RESPECTING WILDLIFE & SAFETY WHEN STAYING AT SAFARI CAMPS/LODGES

Safety is of utmost concern to us and we request you take note of the following guidelines:

- The wild animals found in and around safari lodges and camps are not concerned about human scent and movement. THIS does NOT mean they are tame or tolerant of close approach by humans. They are still wild. Elephant, warthogs, monkeys and baboons particularly.
- Most of the safari camps are unfenced and dangerous animals wander through the camps. Many of the animals and reptiles you will see are potentially dangerous. Attacks by wild animals are rare. However, there are no guarantees that such incidents will not occur.
- Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors.
- Please listen to the camp staff and guides. The safety precautions need to be taken seriously, and strictly adhered to.
- Never walk on your own without a guide, particularly at night – even to your rooms. After retiring to your rooms at night, **do not** leave them.
- Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten the animals away.
- Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Don't imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle or throw objects.
- Please respect your driver-guide's judgment about proximity to lions, cheetahs and leopards. Don't insist that he take the vehicle closer so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal.
- Litter tossed on the ground can choke or poison animals and birds and is unsightly.
- Smoking is generally not permitted on game drives. Apart from the anti-social aspect, discarded cigarettes are considered a fire hazard.

COMMUNICATION IN THE CAMPS/LODGES

Telecommunications in the urban areas is possible, and even some cell phone access is found. BUT in the less accessible areas do not expect there to be cell phone coverage. Many camps and lodges do have satellite-link Internet access on a restricted basis however. If this is important, enquiries should be made beforehand.



TIPPING / GRATUITIES

Tipping is customary, but not compulsory. If, however, you want to tip because you have received good service, we have enclosed a brief guideline to assist you:

- **The General Safari Camp / Lodge Staff**
We recommend about US\$10 to US\$15 per guest per day for safari camps. This should be placed in the communal tipping box to be distributed equally amongst all the staff.
- **Transfer Driver for long transfers**
US\$10 per person
- **Camp/Lodge Guides**
US\$15 to US\$20 per person in the group, per day, depending entirely on service!
- **Personal Butler (Only in &Beyond camps)**
US\$10 to \$15 per person per day
- **Private Guides**
Normally these individuals make all the difference to a safari, and their roles are more involved than just guiding. Guests generally use their own judgment in this regard.
- **Porterage**
We recommend about US\$1 per bag, per movement.
- **Restaurants / Hotels**
15% is customary on meal accounts if you are satisfied with the service.

FLIGHT CHECK-IN TIMES

Please check in early at all airports (at least one hour prior for domestic flights, two hours prior for regional flights and three hours prior for all international flights) due to additional security which now affects international travel around the world.

Please be aware that during peak season, delays are often encountered on scheduled flights. Remember that you are on holiday... relax and enjoy the ambience, which sometimes has no sense of urgency at all!

RECONFIRMING FLIGHTS

Please ensure that your onward flights are reconfirmed, when applicable, at least 72 hours prior to flying. The camp managers will be responsible for reconfirming your local onward flights between camps, but INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS should be your responsibility.



RECOMMENDED READING

We recommend the following books for all travellers to southern Africa:

- Scramble for Africa - Thomas Pakenham (General historical text on Africa)
- Moving to Save Rhino – Clive & Anton Walker
- Okavango – Jewel of the Kalahari – Karen Ross
- 20 Chickens for a Saddle – Robyn Scott
- Botswana Time – Will Randall
- The Power of One – Bryce Courtenay
- David Livingstone – Rob MacDonald/ Tim Jeal
- The Elephant Whisperer - Lawrence Anthony
- When the Lion Feeds – Wilbur Smith. A prolific author on Southern Africa. Adventure novels with a thread of fact!
- The Ladies Detective Agency series – Alexander McCall Smith

Birding

1. Sasol Birds of Southern Africa. E-version available.
2. Newman's Birds of Southern Africa
3. Roberts Birds of Southern Africa. E-version too.

Mammals

1. Mammals of Southern Africa - Chris & Tilde Stuart
2. Field guide to Mammals of Southern Africa - R.H. Smithers
3. Mammals of Southern Africa, E-version available.

Films

1. Okavango – Jewel of the Kalahari - BBC series
2. Invictus
3. Tsotsi
4. Cry, the Beloved Country
5. The Gods must be Crazy
6. Red Dust
7. Zulu (1964)

Most Safari companies carry a set of reference material on all their vehicles. However, if you are a keen birder we recommend that you bring your own bird book (Everyone should bring their own pair of BINOCULARS in order to get the most out of the safari).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Please note that photography of government buildings, many airport buildings, State House and officials in uniform is normally strictly prohibited. Be courteous, polite and always ask permission.



POACHING

PLEASE BE AWARE: POACHERS ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS TO TRACK AND POACH ENDANGERED WILDLIFE (RHINOS & LARGED-TUSKED ELEPHANTS). SO PLEASE DO NOT POST PHOTOS OF THESE ANIMALS ON YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS. POACHERS WILL USE EVERY MEANS POSSIBLE TO FIND THESE ANIMALS, INCLUDING USING THE GEO TRACKER AND LOOKING THROUGH EVERY PHOTO TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION.

Example: If a photo of a rhino or a larged-tusked elephant is posted on social media, the poachers will look at every photo in that particular photo album to determine what reserve that animal is located on. Therefore, even if the geo tracker is turned off, a photo of the lodge or any mention of the lodge in the post will give away the location of the photographed animal.

CAMERAS & BINOCULARS

WHAT CAMERA SHOULD I HAVE ON SAFARI?

Cameras are a way of ensuring that we can record a moment in time. Sights and scenes of persons, places and in our case, wildlife and safari camps!

We take a photo as a form of a non-violent benevolent trophy. A reward and proof of a successful chase.

Photographs tell it in colour! 100% of our safari guests bring a camera on safari.

Choosing a camera is fraught, as the camera industry has thrown itself into this arena wholeheartedly and made it difficult. ***This short brief is to try and help you make the right choice.***

Any safari to Africa is a significant investment of thousands of dollars. It seems worthwhile to invest a few hundred in a camera that will record the event for life!

Although camera choice is a *personal one*, I have included some pointers to assist with this choice.

There are frankly FOUR main types of camera.

1. The small '**POINT & SHOOT**' variety. They are small, palm size and convenient to carry in a pocket or purse with essentially an automatic function that guarantees a good picture - in a room, a car, or when taking fairly close-up pictures of friends and family.
2. The second variety are the typical **DSLR** (Digital Single Lens Reflex) cameras that can take interchangeable lenses and photographic enthusiasts will use these. They come now with a full gamut of electronic settings to facilitate taking photos in a variety of light conditions and generally have a video setting as well. There are a number of really good brands and models on sale, BUT the lenses come at a price.
3. The third variety is '**COMPACT**' cameras. These have been built to bridge the gap between the Point & Shoot, and the DSLR's! These incredible cameras weigh about 30% of the DSLR's, and yet have built-in lenses that easily rival the 'big' lenses used typically for sports and wildlife photography. They are truly amazing!

These cameras have *the same range* of adjustments seen on the heavier, semi- and professional cameras, AND, the lens 'reach' of the heavy glass lenses too! There is a built in flash, movie facility, screen view, viewfinder, 'Intelligent' options, Automatic, S, M, P, and A parameter functions as well. The lenses range from X20 to X60 in magnification, giving the user equivalent 300mm to sometimes 500mm!

A small number of manufacturers are producing an innovative camera without all the moving parts of a typical camera.



4. **'MIRROR LESS'** cameras. These cameras will in time compete with the traditional DSLR cameras. There is no viewfinder. One sees the image through the rear screen. There is no internal mirror and complex moving parts...hence the term 'mirror less', and significant weight reduction. These cameras are lighter, have lighter lenses, without any loss of image quality. Interchangeable lenses are available in some brands, up to 250mm, but rarely larger.

The LENS is another important factor in selecting a camera. The small 'Point & Shoot' cameras will have small, retractable lenses that work well in a room or close setting. These collect very poor wildlife images taken at a distance as they lack the necessary 'zoom' ability which magnifies the object onto the sensor plate.

The DSLR gives one the option to fit a zoom lens of different sizes to magnify the image in the camera. Essentially the greater the zoom numbers the bigger the image. For example a 18 – 150 zoom, is going to be a poor lens for wildlife photography, but great for photographing houses or portraits! A 70 – 300 zoom is far better suited for wildlife, as is any lens from 300mm onwards.

The better Compact cameras now have lenses that have a x10 up to x60 ability! These are significant 'zoom' numbers and will certainly give the user a wonderful result. We recommend a camera lens with an equivalent zoom of at least 300mm.

PLEASE BEAR IN MIND ONE CAN HIRE LENSES NOW FOR A FRACTION OF THE RETAIL COST.

Other Factors to consider:

1. Weight
2. Quality of camera
3. Who is going to use the camera?
4. What do you want to spend on this camera?
5. What are you going to do with the pictures?

Please ensure that you have enough memory cards, film and batteries for the duration of the trip, as these are not always available locally. Recharging facilities for video and camera equipment are generally available at most camps and lodges. It is advisable to bring your own adaptor and re-charging equipment. Ensure your equipment is in a padded, dust and heatproof case, as dust will get 'in' everywhere!

WHAT BINOCULARS SHOULD I TAKE ON SAFARI?

Binoculars are a vital part of every safari and should be considered as important as a camera or decent hat. Most game viewing is carried out from a vehicle and game will commonly be within 150 feet of the vehicle. Larger animals, birds (even for non-birders) and small animals form a main part of the wildlife seen on a safari.

Many people regard binoculars as an unnecessary piece of equipment, used once and forgotten. Bino's as they've become known, may be used on safari, again on the second safari, your kids safari, at the local 'ball game', on hunting & fishing trips, and for birding from the ease of your verandah. Choosing which to have needs professional help. Let me try!

- **FOR SAFARIS, we recommend 7x40; 7x50; 8x40; 8.5x42**
10 x 42 is recommended for serious birders, those with a 'steady hand' and more sedentary use from a vehicle, a hide or on a tripod.



- **The small 10 x 25 binoculars**, often touted as ‘convenient’ by sales people are of little functional use on safari as they are too small to use in a vehicle quickly and for extended periods, and limit the amount of light coming into the binocular.
- **Brands**
There are a number of very good value brands, but the better reviews mention CELESTRON GRANITE, MINOX, NIKON, BUSHNELL, PENTAX and at the top of the pile are LEICA, LEITZ and SWAROVSKY, but these are expensive.

Naturally your personal considerations such as budget and availability will play a big part in the selection process.

Again, any safari to Africa is a serious investment of resources and it seems rather shortsighted to limit ones’ enjoyment of the trip by not purchasing or borrowing decent equipment to facilitate getting the most out of the safari!

QUALITY & FEEDBACK

We pride ourselves in running quality itineraries and offering the best experience.

If you have a problem, please bring it to our attention at the time, thereby giving us a chance to try and rectify it immediately on site, as it will be more difficult to resolve later on.

YOU have chosen a fabulous way to have a holiday, and you will never forget it.

Have a wonderful safari!

