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Routing:

Maun to Kasane.

Access:

Maun Airport.

Accommodation:

Fully serviced en-suite Tented Camping.

Highlights:

- The Moremi Game Reserve
- Exploring the fringes of the Okavango Delta by mokoro
- The tranquil freedom of the Mababe Private Reserve
- Chobe National Park (Central Chobe & Chobe River Front)
- Boat cruise on the Chobe River



Itinerary Outline:

3 Nights Letaka Tented Camp - Moremi Game Reserve.

Activity guide: Game drives

3 Nights Letaka Tented Camp – Mababe Private Reserve

Activity guide: Game drives, night drives, guided walks, mokoro excursion

3 Nights Letaka Tented Camp - Chobe National Park

Activity guide: Game drives (Central Chobe)

2 Nights Letaka Tented Camp - Chobe National Park

Activity guide: Game drives, boat cruise (Chobe Riverfront)

Optional Safari Extensions: Popular requests include the Makgadikgadi Pans, Kasane, Victoria Falls and Livingstone. Please email reservations at info@letakasafaris.com for further info.

Your Safari Includes:

- Spacious and comfortable tented accommodation, including beds, bed linen and towels, with a private bathroom en-suite.
- Services of a professional guide, safari chef and camp assistants, complete with a supply vehicle.
- Game drives and local transfers in customised safari vehicles
- Exclusive camping in private campsites within the national parks and reserves
- All entrance and camping fees within the national parks and reserves
- All meals and drinks (filtered water, soft drinks, beer, wine and G&T) whilst in Letaka Tented Camps
- All activities as specified in the itinerary
- 14% Value Added Tax

Your Safari Excludes:

- Travel Insurance
- All flights unless otherwise indicated
- Items of personal nature
- Staff gratuities
- Optional safari extensions
- Any drinks at lodges or accommodation other than Letaka Tented Camps.

Payment Options:

20% Deposit to confirm booking. Balance due 6 weeks prior to departure. Payment by bank transfer or credit card (card payments carry 3.5% surcharge).

Day 1: Maun to Xakanaxa / Travel Day / 140km (4 hrs)

We will depart by vehicle from Maun by **08h00**, if staying in Maun, your guide will collect you from your accommodation at this time for the drive into Moremi.

If staying at a lodge elsewhere or arriving with SAA or BP today, you will need to organize a charter directly into Xakanaxa Airstrip and ensure arrival is for after 14h00 (the guide will not be able to collect earlier).

Our first three nights are spent in the Xakanaxa region where we explore the surrounding wilderness on morning and afternoon game drive excursions.

Wildlife: Every type of mopane habitat is well represented in this drive from the towering cathedral woodlands Xakanaxa to the classic climax mopane woodland and in the drier and harsher habitats, extensive stretches of scrub mopane. The San-ta-Wani region has scattered ephemeral water pans with large floodplains and camel-thorn woodlands. 40 km of the drive is in Moremi Game Reserve with a further 40 km in areas designated for wildlife management where animals roam freely to and from the Game Reserve.

Birding: A good day for raptors with African Hawk-Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Shikra, Little Sparrowhawk, Dark Chanting Goshawk, Tawny Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle* and Steppe Eagle* all inhabiting the mopane and adjacent woodlands. Other birds common along this route includes most of Botswana's hornbills including Red-billed, Southern Yellow-billed, African Grey, Bradfield's and the Southern Ground Hornbills. A large number of brood-parasites may also be seen. Diederick Cuckoo*, Levallant's Cuckoo*, Jacobin Cuckoo*, Great-spotted Cuckoo*, African Cuckoo*, Common Cuckoo*, Shaft-tailed Whydah, Pin-tailed Whydah, Eastern Paradise Whydah, Greater Honeyguide, and Lesser Honeyguide.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drives



Days 2 & 3: Xakanaxa Exploration Days - Moremi Game Reserve

Habitat: Moremi lies on the eastern extremity of the Okavango Delta. Habitats here range from wide-open floodplains, marshes, lagoons, papyrus fringed channels, vast stands of *Miscanthus* and *Phragmites*, woodland and savannah. As a result of the extremely variable habitat the diversity of both wildlife and birdlife is excellent.

Wildlife: Moremi is amongst the best game reserves in Africa for viewing the endangered African wild dog. Xakanaxa is home to a resident herd of several hundred buffalo whose range covers the territories of at least 4 prides of lion which may often be seen flanking the ever moving herd. Breeding herds of elephant move between their browsing areas in the mopane forests and the fresh water of the Okavango. Red lechwe are one of the more unusual antelope species and commonly found here.

Birding: The swampy areas of Xakanaxa are home to African Rail, Coppery-tailed Coucal, Black Coucal*, Red-chested Flufftail, African Crake*, Black Crake, Chirping Cisticola, Luapula Cisticola, Purple Swampphen, Allen's Gallinule to name but a few. The open waters attract African Skimmer, Saddle-billed Stork, Yellow-billed Stork, Intermediate Egret, Goliath Heron, African Fish Eagle as well as the globally threatened Slaty Egret and Wattled Crane.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drives

Day 4: Xakanaxa to Mababe Private Reserve / Travel Day / 90km (full day of extended game drive and journey time with picnic lunch between camps)

Following an early morning breakfast you take a slow drive through Moremi Game Reserve north-east towards the Khwai and Mababe Areas. On this moving day we shall do a mokoro excursion in the calmer back-waters of the Khwai and Mbudi channels as opposed to doing the mokoro in the quicker moving section of the Khwai River that runs through Mababe.

Habitat: The Manuchira Channel is known as the Khwai River at its eastern most extremity. The day's journey follows this water course, with the track weaving from the riverside and floodplains into the mopane veld and the woodlands that to the Mababe Private Reserve where we camp on the banks of the Khwai River before it flows out and into the Mababe Depression. We pass the magnificent Dombo Hippo Pools in the morning stopping to enjoy the scenery and the antics of the resident hippo and shall game drive through Khwai until we reach Mababe.

Wildlife: The south-east mopane veld is home to mostly breeding herds of elephant whilst the more northern reaches of Mababe is home to some impressive old bulls. The mature bulls revel in the cool waters of the Khwai River and are far more approachable while drinking and bathing than the breeding herds. The river has an unusually high density of

hippo as well as some huge crocodile. Leopard- (western part of NG41), cheetah, serval and lion are common predators along this route and both Xakanaxa as well as Mababe are included in the home ranges of different packs of wild dog. General game includes southern giraffe, Burchell's zebra, tsessebe and red lechwe with roan and sable antelope being less common residents.

Birding: In the mopane woodlands African Hawk-Eagle, Tawny Eagle, Gabar Goshawk, Little Sparrowhawk, African Harrier Hawk and Shikra are common raptors. Mixed bird parties move through the canopy and include Red-headed Weaver, Stierling's Wren-Warbler, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Neddicky, Yellow-breasted Apalis, Chin-spot Batis, Diederik Cuckoo* to name but a few. The verges of the swamp form breeding grounds for the Rosy-Longclaw, Black Coucal*, Long-legged Bustard and the African Crane*

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game drive and night drive, and mokoro excursion on moving day to Mababe



Days 5 & 6: Mababe Exploration Days.

The Khwai River meanders through the concession giving ample riverside routes to explore. We spend the following two nights camping at an exclusive campsite in the Mababe concession that has a strict max of 20 vehicles for the whole concession at any given time, exploring the river banks, Kalahari shrub to the east, cathedral mopane to the south on game drives both during the day and at night. Exploring after dark with spotlights offers you an opportunity to experience some of the nocturnal animals that are rarely encountered during the day.

We will also have the opportunity to explore the surrounding wilderness on foot (please note that this activity is seasonal based on rains and grass height, your guide will determine the safety of walking in Mababe) to enjoy an up close and personal encounter with Botswana's flora and fauna. It is important to note that night drives and guided walks are not permitted within the national parks and reserves. These activities are conducted outside the boundaries of the Moremi Game Reserve in the Mababe Private Reserve.

Habitat: We spend our time between the dry-land habitats of the lead-wood and camel-thorn woodlands and savannahs and the riverside banks of the Khwai River, as well as the "mini-CKGR" habitat in the western parts of the concession.

Wildlife: The Mababe region boasts excellent populations of both bull elephant as well as breeding herds. Lion, leopard, serval and African wildcat are common predators of the region with wild dog and cheetah being less common. Buffalo use this area seasonally with large herds moving in during the summer rains. Other ungulates include tsessebe, blue wildebeest, giraffe, kudu, sable antelope, roan antelope and impala, and even eland and oryx in the western parts.

Birding: Botswana's national bird, the Kori Bustard, is a resident in the lower reaches of the Mababe Depression. The western reaches are prime habitat for the uncommon Rosy-throated Longclaw. The entire length of the river is hunting domain for the Bat-Hawk. Other interesting raptors here are Cuckoo Hawk (rare), Long-crested Eagle and Black Sparrowhawk. More commonly Tawny Eagle, Steppe Eagle*, Lesser-spotted Eagle*, Martial Eagle, Bateleur and African Hawk-Eagle. The waterways host Africa Rail, African Crane*, Greater Painted Snipe, Allen's Gallinule*, Lesser Jacana and Lesser Moorhen*.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drive, Walking Safaris (conditions permitting) Night Drives.

Day 7: Mababe to Central Chobe / Travel Day / 80km (full day of extended game drive and journey time with picnic lunch between camps)

We head further north en-route to Central Chobe region, exploring the dessert-like landscape of game drives.

Habitat: A fascinating days drive looking at some of the evidence of the Paleo-Lake Makgadikgadi that dried up some ten thousand years ago. The most challenging part of the trip is crossing the Magwikhwe Sand-ridge that formed the shoreline for this massive inland sea. The winding track through this deep sand makes for interesting travel in the early summer! The old lake bed is now the Mababe Depression. The dense clay floor of the depression result in high protein feed for wildlife and the area teams with game after the rains. During the rainy season the depression is impassable due to the “cotton soil” and alternative routes must be used.

Wildlife: A day when anything could happen. The range of habitat that is covered encompasses most of the habitat types of northern Botswana. We pass through excellent lion country and some of the best cheetah country that our safari will cover. Elephant occur throughout the drive but are more common at the start and end of the drive where permanent surface water can be found.

Birding: The Mababe Depression is a birder's paradise. The nutritious grasses that grow on the rich soils provide excellent seed for an impressive array of estrillids and viduids. Among these are the magnificently coloured Violet-eared Waxbill, Black-cheeked Waxbill, Village Indigobird, Shaft-tailed Whydah and Paradise Whydah. These in turn provide a good food source for small raptors such as the Little Sparrowhawk, Shikra, Gabar Goshawk, Red-necked Falcon and Lanner Falcon. It is not only the small birds that feed on the grass seeds, but rodents too. There are annual outbreaks of huge numbers of rats and mice. As a result huge numbers of Secretary Bird, Tawny Eagle, Black-shouldered Kite, Steppe Eagle*, Lesser-spotted Eagle*, Wahlberg's Eagle* and Steppe Buzzard* can be found.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Morning and Afternoon Game Drives



Days 8 & 9: Central Chobe Exploration Days

Habitat: Unlike the vast majority of the country, Central Chobe is not a totally flat landscape. Large outcrops of volcanic rock reach up out of the Kalahari sands, towering over the endless savannah. These hills provide habitat for a completely different array of small wildlife, birds and plants. The Savuti Marsh has been the stage for many of the most dramatic wildlife documentaries in Africa. The wide open country, good ungulate populations and particularly strong prides of lion and hyaena clans make for dramatic wildlife interaction and excellent viewing opportunities. The now dry Savuti Channel runs through this landscape linking the dry sand-veld, the waterholes, the hills and the grassland that was the Savuti Marsh.

Wildlife: Undoubtedly it is the interaction between lion and elephant that is the most interesting aspect of Savuti. The area is inhabited by a huge pride of lions with numbers fluctuating from 20-30 members. These remarkable lion have learned over the years how to hunt these massive pachyderms that are supposedly above predation. Launching their attack under darkness and using their numbers, they manage to kill adolescent and even young adult elephant.

The marsh is prime cheetah country and in the wet season it is not unusual to have the wild dog hunting here in Central Chobe.

Birding: The surface water that is pumped by the Government here provides a major attraction for birdlife. In the dry season thousands of dove and sandgrouse come down to drink in the mornings and are under constant surveillance by Yellow-billed Kite*, Tawny Eagle and African Hawk-Eagle. Red-crested Korhaan are common in the Kalahari Apple-leaf (*Lonchocarpus nelsii*) veld. The marsh is the summer home for good numbers of Caspian Plover* and Montague's Harrier* as well as Chestnut-backed Sparrowlark, Grey-backed Sparrowlark, Northern Black Korhaan, Rufous-naped Lark, African Pipit and Desert Cisticola. Dickenson's Kestrel, Amur Falcon* and Red-necked Falcon are found along the perimeter of the marsh.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drives and Bushman Painting Walks



Day 10: Savuti to Chobe River / 170km (full day of extended game drive and journey time with picnic lunch between camps)



We will leave Savuti early to travel north towards the Chobe River stopping along the way for lunch before arriving at our final campsite near the Chobe River.

Habitat: The habitat on today's drive takes us through the stunted mopane scrub of the Goha clay basin, across the sand-ridge and through the wonderful Zambezi teak woodlands of the Chobe Forest Reserve and along the Chobe River itself. The Chobe floodplain is tens of kilometers wide and in years of exceptional rains the water stretches as far as the eye can see.

Wildlife: While there are community areas that we pass through that are settled by local tribes, for the vast majority of the day's drive we pass through

wild country where wildlife moves un-inhibited by fences or man. Roan and sable antelope thrive in the teak woodlands where the low density of predators and lack of competition for food by other ungulates makes this prime habitat for these large ungulates. Leopard occur in these woodlands in low numbers but they are highly secretive and seldom seen. The Goha region has natural waterholes that hold water well into the dry season and herds of buffalo, Burchell's zebra, greater kudu and elephant come down to drink.

Birding: The most unusual species are to be found in the teak (*Baikia plurijuga*) woodlands. This broad-leaved woodland, or miombo as it is locally known, provides good pickings for insectivorous birds that favour canopy habitat. Grey Tit-Flycatcher, Ashy Flycatcher, Paradise Flycatcher, Pallid Flycatcher, Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Amethyst Sunbird, Yellow-throated Petronia, Red-headed Weaver and Violet-backed Starling are only some of the species that move around in the "bird parties" in the canopy. Dickenson's Kestrel, Red-necked Falcon, Peregrine Falcon* and Lizard Buzzard are some of the raptors to keep an eye out for, while the diminutive White-faced Owl can often be seen roosting in the road-side vegetation. Flappet Lark, Fawn-coloured Lark, Dusky Lark*, Olive-Tree Warbler* and Neddicky are species more likely to be enjoyed by the birding enthusiast.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drives

Day 11: Chobe Exploration Day (Chobe National Park)

Habitat: The Chobe River is presided over by an impressive sand-ridge. Along this sand-ridge broad-leaved woodland is the dominant vegetation. As you move into the valley the impact of the high elephant population is felt with the paucity of large trees that typically line the rivers of sub-tropical Africa and the dense tangled masses of knobbly combretum *Combretum mosambicense* and wooly caper bush *Capparis tomentosa* that appear impervious to the constant onslaught of browsers. The river itself is broad and meandering and in the flood season it is an impressive sight. To the east, outside of the park lie the riparian forests that are home to so many of the more tropical species whose ranges end abruptly in north-eastern Botswana

Wildlife: Much of the Chobe's wildlife come to drink in the latter half of the morning and early afternoon when the heat excites their thirst. This is one of the best places to see roan and sable antelope. Breeding herds of elephant seem to be around every corner here in the dry season and the massive herds of buffalo are constantly flanked by the ever-hungry lions of the Chobe. This is one of the highest lion densities of any National Park or Game Reserve in southern Africa. Puku antelope occur nowhere else in southern Africa except here on the Chobe floodplains. With the diminishing woodlands and thickets the magnificent Chobe bushbuck is becoming ever-more scarce. The western Chobe supports strong herds of Burchell's zebra.

Birding: Bat-Hawk, Cuckoo Hawk, Eurasian Hobby Falcon* and Ovambo Sparrowhawk are some of the more interesting raptors. Corncrake*, African Crake*, African Rail, Luapula Cisticola, Malachite Kingfisher, Quail Finch and Rosy-throated Longclaw are found on the edges of the floodplain. Large flocks of Great White Pelican investigate the drying pools as the floodwaters recede. Much larger flocks of the nomadic Red-winged Pratincole and also Black-winged Pratincole, numbering in their thousands, can be found on the drying floodplains. The woodlands support Racket-tailed Roller, Stierlings Wren-Warbler, Tree Pipit* and Miombo Rock-Thrush.

Accommodation: Letaka Tented Camp

Activities: Game Drives





Day 12: Kasane - Safari ends

Your last day on safari will find you up early to make your way towards Kasane for a 3 hour boat cruise on the Chobe River. From here, your guide can drop you at Kasane Airport in time for checking in for the Johannesburg flight or transferring across to Victoria Falls.

Activities: Game Drives

*denotes migratory species

NOTE: Although we make every effort to adhere to schedules and itineraries, these are subject to change subject to weather (specifically with current flood conditions, the driving times may differ between the areas quite considerably depending upon the time of year), roads, and animal movements and availability. You will be notified of any changes.

Please look on our website: www.letakasafaris.com for the latest availability.

