

Botswana Prelude

Entrance Requirements

Most Botswana programs will require entry through Johannesburg, South Africa; a popular gateway city for international airlines. Entrance formalities below reflect the requirements of both South Africa and Botswana.

Passports

- A valid passport is required for entry.
- The passport must be valid for **6 months** after your scheduled return.
- You will need two blank pages per country for entry and exit stamps in the visa section of your passport. "Two blank pages" is defined as the front and back of a page.
- If you **need a new passport** to be issued **act now**: It can take up to 6 weeks to receive your new passport. It is no longer possible to purchase additional pages for an existing passport. If you travel frequently, please consider purchasing a 52-page passport. For more information contact the National Passport Information Center at 877-487-2778 or visit <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

Passengers traveling to South Africa or Botswana with children under the age of 18 are required to present additional documentation such as a copy of an unabridged birth certificate reflecting the particulars of both parents. Beware that securing an unabridged birth certificate can take from six to eight weeks.

All documents issued in a language other than English should be accompanied by a sworn translation issued by a competent authority in the country concerned.

In the case of one parent traveling with a child, he or she must additionally show consent in the form of an affidavit from the other parent registered on the child's birth certificate, a court order granting full parental responsibilities and rights or legal guardianship in respect of the child, if he or she is the parent or legal guardian of the child or where applicable, a death certificate of the other parent registered as a parent of the child on the birth certificate.

***Advisory:** When you travel, we recommend that you make two copies of your first passport page; keep one copy at home in the unlikely event that your passport is lost, and take one copy along to use as an ID, should you leave your passport behind in the hotel safe deposit box. Air Tickets must be in the same name that appears on your passport so make certain that you are registered on your Classic Escapes program in the same exact way.*

Visa

Visas are not required for U.S. Citizens to enter South Africa or Botswana for visits of 90 days or less.

Additional Tariffs

***Please note:** As of June 2017, a Tourism Development Levy (TDL) will be charged to all visitors entering Botswana at all ports of entry. Currently the TDL is US \$30 and payable by debit or credit card or by cash in US dollars (minted on or after 2006). Once paid, you will be given a receipt to present to Immigration*

Officials; the receipt will be stamped and should be kept with your passport until you board your international flight for home. Your stamped receipt is valid for multiple entries into Botswana.

Health & Wellness

You will be visiting a country with a rich and diverse cultural history, but is on a different continent than we are accustomed to. As a result, you may be exposed to some pathogens that you would not ordinarily encounter in the U.S. There are some preventative steps that you can take to help ensure that you do not bring back to your home more than your luggage, gifts, and experiences.

Inoculations

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for entry into South Africa for those traveling from the United States. However, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) suggest that you be up to date on routine vaccines such as:

- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Polio
- Influenza

The CDC recommends these vaccines for MOST travelers. They are NOT mandatory:

- Hepatitis A & B
- Typhoid

Malaria

Malaria is present in Botswana. Consult your doctor for a prescription for a malaria suppressant at least two weeks prior to departure as some tablets must be taken a week before you depart, as well as during and after trip. The best prevention is to avoid mosquito bites. Wear long slacks and long sleeved shirts, use mosquito nets, and a repellent with 30% DEET, Skin So Soft, or oil of citronella. Malaria symptoms can appear as few as 8 days after exposure or a year later. Do not be misled by flu like symptoms of chills and fever. Since some U.S. doctors are unfamiliar with malaria, insist upon a blood test. Delays in treatment can have serious consequences.

There is no risk of Yellow Fever in Botswana. The government of Botswana *requires* proof of yellow fever vaccination **only** if you are arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever.

Additional Information:

The CDC offers detailed information for travelers at:

- wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/Botswana

The CDC offers information regarding malaria prevention at:

- www.cdc.gov/travel/malariadrugs.htm

Please consult your physician, local health authority or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) or via their web site at www.cdc.gov/travel

for any additional health precautions. For outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's web site at www.who.int/en.

Further health information for travelers is available at:

- www.who.int/topics/en/.

Water & Food

Food, even in remote camps and lodges, is carefully prepared, and the local produce is refreshing. Bottled water is readily available, so please do not allow yourself to become dehydrated. In remote areas water is usually boiled or bottled and is safe to drink but not from the tap. It is very important that you drink plenty of water especially during the warmer months. It is generally recommended that guests drink at least 2 to 3 litres (4 to 6 pints) of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and actually contributes to dehydration.

Physical Conditioning

To enjoy your trip to the fullest, you should be in good physical and mental health. Your safari will not include strenuous activity. Your biggest workout may be at the buffet table at dinner! It is an easy climb into the safari vehicles and your game drives allow you to sit back and take in the view around you. Rough roads and driving "off road" in game reserves and parks may bounce you around so you should be prepared. Walking safaris (when available) are given at a decent pace in order to closely examine the flora and fauna of the area.

Travel Insurance & Medical Evacuation

We recommend that you consider a Trip Cancellation policy that also includes medical coverage and evacuation against unforeseen circumstances.

Climatic Conditions

Altitude

There are no specific factors such as age, gender, or physical condition that correlates with susceptibility to altitude sickness. Some people get it and some people don't, and some people may experience it one visit and not the next time. Symptoms include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, lack of concentration, nausea, swelling of ankles, and in extreme cases, hallucination. Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, heavy food and strenuous physical activity. Citrus fruits and bananas may diminish the effects. If you do not feel well, take it easy. Put your feet up and drink plenty of clean water. People with respiratory problems may be affected by the air pollution of the larger cities, although the local government has taken recent steps to curb emissions.

Altitude Chart: (Feet)

Botswana	
Maun, Botswana	3,000
Chobe National Park	3,300
Makgadikgadi National Park	2,920 – 3,100

Botswana enjoys a semi-arid temperate climate. The summer season begins in November and ends in March. It usually brings very high temperatures and rains. Cloud coverage and rain can

cool things down considerably, although only usually for a short period of time. Morning humidity ranges from 60 to 80% and drops to between 30 and 40% in the afternoon.

The winter season begins in May and ends in August. This is also the dry season when virtually no rainfall occurs. Winter days are invariably sunny and cool to warm. Evening and night temperatures can drop below freezing point in some areas, especially in the southwest. The in-between periods – April/early May and September – still tend to be dry, but the days are cooler than in summer and the nights are warmer than in winter. October is very hot.

Average Temperature (°F)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chobe National Park	66/86	66/87	64/86	60/86	52/82	46/78	45/78	50/83	59/91	67/95	68/92	66/87
Maun	66/90	66/88	64/88	57/88	48/82	43/77	43/77	48/82	55/91	64/95	66/93	66/90
Makgadikgadi	66/90	66/88	64/88	57/88	48/82	43/77	43/77	48/82	55/91	64/95	66/90	66/91
Average Rainfall (Inches)												
Chobe National Park	6.3	5.5	3.7	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.9	2.8	5.9
Maun	4.3	3.9	2.8	1.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.7	1.9	3.3
Makgadikgadi	4.3	3.1	2.8	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	2.0	3.7

Recommended Packing List

Clothing

- Long-sleeved shirts, slacks and socks to protect you from insect bites and sunburn
- Shorts/skirts
- Long trousers/slacks
- Socks
- Good quality sunglasses (preferably polarized).
- Sun hat with a brim
- Good walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine)
- Sandals and/or water shoes for poolside and water activities
- Swimsuit with light cover-up garment
- Lightweight jersey for cooler mornings
- Light raingear for summer months (late November to April)
- A set of smart casual evening wear

Toiletries

- Personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by many establishments)
- Moisturizing cream & suntan lotion
- Insect repellent e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, OFF, etc.

- Basic medical kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream, and Anti-histamine cream, etc.)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Packaged wet tissues ("Wash & Dry" "Wet Ones")
- If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation

Other Things to Pack

- Visas, tickets, passports, money, etc.
- Backpack to use during the day as you tour
- A small flashlight with extra batteries
- Adapter plugs & converters for electrical appliances
- A tiny calculator for estimating cost while shopping
- Binoculars
- Journal with pen

Camera Equipment

- Camera, memory cards and chargers
- Lenses, cleaning fluid, lens tissue
- Waterproof/dustproof bags/cover for your camera

Tips on Clothing

Three changes of clothes at the minimum is recommended and should be lightweight, breathable, and versatile. Pack items that layer well together as the mornings will be cooler and you will want to be able to shed them as the day heats up. Supplex pants and chinos travel better than jeans, which take forever to dry. Additionally, dark colors, such as black, dark brown, navy, dark gray/charcoal can attract insects and tsetse flies. Camouflage clothes are often illegal. We recommend traveling with khaki which can mix and match easily and avoids all issues.

Your primary footwear should be closed toe and comfortable. Open toes can “open” you up to insect bites, stubbed toes, splinters, thorns, et cetera, which can make walking very uncomfortable. Flip flops should be limited to poolside, or a shower stall. Take care of your feet and they will take care of you.

Power & Connectivity

At a Glance

Voltage	220-240 Volts / 50Hz
Adapter Type D	

Adapter Type G



The camps are situated in remote areas and have to generate their own electricity, which is done in a number of ways. Each camp has a generator that runs for about 6 hours per day (3 hours in the morning and 3 in the afternoon when guests are out on activities).

Cell Phones

Many travelers bring along their cell phones, not only for connecting to the internet and making phone calls, but for the easy to use camera functions for quick snapshots. If you plan on using it as a phone keep in mind North American phones may not work in Botswana. Check with your service provider to determine if you can purchase a plan, or if your phone can be “unlocked”. If it can, you should be able to purchase inexpensive prepaid SIM cards.

***Advisory:** As most people travel to “get away from it all,” some limitations on the use of these phones when on tour need to be set. We suggest the following guidelines on the use of cell phones:*

- 1. Keep the ring tone at a low volume to avoid disturbing other guests.*
- 2. Use your phone in the privacy of your room and not any of the common areas: dining room, bar/lounge area, or on any of the vehicles.*
- 3. Use your phone for outgoing calls and to check messages only. Incoming calls, and the loud ringing that ensues, should be curtailed.*

Time

Currently, the United States begins Daylight Savings Time (DST) on the 2nd Sunday of March, and DST concludes on the first Sunday of November. Botswana and South Africa are in the same time zone and none of these countries observe DST. When it is noon in Southern Africa, it will be 7:00pm in New York (EST) and 6:00pm during Daylight Savings Time.

Cameras

From smartphones to SLR cameras, digital photography has now made it simpler than ever to preserve the memories experienced during once-in-a-lifetime adventures. Most digital cameras use either an SD (secure digital) card or a CF (compact flash) card that comes in a variety of storage capacities ranging from 2–128 GB (gigabytes). Depending on the megapixel size of your particular camera and the format in which you choose to shoot your images, an 8GB card can hold as few as 200 images shot in RAW format (normally shot by pros and serious amateurs) to just over 2000 images shot as JPEGs (most common format shot by enthusiasts). For those cameras with megapixels higher than 12, it is recommended that at least 4-8GB cards are used and that you should always bring more than one card in case of card failure or corruption (rare but possible). If you are bringing a laptop, external USB hard drives of 1–2 TB (terabytes) are compact, relatively inexpensive, and an excellent way to store tens of thousands of images. In addition to ensuring that you bring the charger and adaptor/converter for the location to where you are traveling, it is highly recommended that you bring at least one spare, fully charged battery for your camera. There may be locations where dependable power is not available for

charging and spare batteries may prove to be invaluable and help ensure that you don't miss any photo opportunities.

Video

Charging facilities for video AND digital cameras should be available in every camp or lodge on the safari, as long as you have a standard charger that will plug into 220 volts. Please bring along enough batteries to last you at least three days of filming.

Binoculars

Although many species of wildlife will be seen up-close, binoculars will add immeasurably to your viewing enjoyment. Preferably, binoculars should be at least 8 power (8x) and have a wide field of view to allow you to quickly find whatever it is you want to see, whether a bird flitting through the brush of a distance cheetah chasing an antelope. Some binoculars have the added advantage of "gathering light", making objects brighter in dim morning and evening conditions. This light-gathering capability is determined by a measurement called the "exit pupil", which is calculated by dividing the diameter of the front (objective) lens in millimeters by the power (i.e. 8x).

These two measurements are commonly designated on binoculars as a measurement such as 8x42, which translates to 8 power with a 42 mm objective lens. The exit pupil in this instance is $42/8$, or 5.25. The human eye can process light delivered by an exit pupil of about 4.0 and these binoculars will appear bright even in dim light.

Some very small binoculars are relatively inexpensive, such as 8x21. With a very narrow field of view (usually about 400 feet at 1,000 yards) and an exit pupil of only $21/8 = 2.6$, these binoculars are designed for viewing stationary objects in bright light, such as at the opera and are poorly designed for looking at wildlife. You will be far happier with binoculars designated in the range of 8x40 to 10x50.

Flashlights

It is a good idea to pack a small flashlight when you travel. You may be walking down paths that do not have any lighting whatsoever.

There are a number of brands to choose from but you should select one that uses an LED bulb and is waterproof. Tactical style torches are designed to withstand heavy use. Also because of the advancement in LED flashlight technology, many of the smaller sized (micro to mini) torches produce anywhere from 85 to 600 lumens, respectively.

Head mounted lights offer hands free illumination and many of these diminutive torches come with a clip that makes attaching them to a baseball style hat very easy. You can find headlamps, complete with harness, at most sporting goods stores.

Currency

U.S. dollars are welcome for most things, including tips. The standard unit of currency for Botswana is the Pula (BWP), which is divided into 100 Thebe (t). Bank notes come in denominations of P10, 20, 50 and 100 with coins in the denominations of 5t, 10t, 25t, 50t, P1, P2 and P5.

Cash/Credit Cards/ATMs

Some major credit cards are accepted such as MasterCard and Visa, but American Express and Diners Club are often **not** accepted. Please note that Discover Card is basically unknown in Botswana.

Be sure to notify your bank and credit card company when and where you will be traveling and ask what fees, if any will apply.

Note: As there is a potential for fraud anywhere in the world, we highly recommend that you do not use your debit cards overseas and exercise caution when using your credit cards. Do not let the card out of your sight and if a vendor tries to take the card into a back room, ask for your card back immediately and refrain from using it. Keep your valuables on you, including passports and credit cards, or locked in the safety deposit boxes when provided.

Shopping

This is one of the best places to buy baskets, with unusual patterns and weaves. Other possibilities include weavings, stamps, Herero dolls (partly female figures adorned in the bright Victorian hoopskirts brought to Herero by German missionaries), colorful tapestries and Bushmen-made ostrich-eggshell necklaces.

Etiquette

When meeting someone, you generally bow your head, and grasp the other person's right wrist with your left hand; greet the eldest person first, and greet women with a kiss on the cheek. You should avoid eye contact on first greeting and never point with your index finger or use your left hand.

Respecting Wildlife

- The wild animals are not like those found in theme parks – they are **not** tame.
- Many of the safari camps are unfenced and dangerous animals can (and do!) 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.
- Please listen to the camp staff and guides. The safety precautions need to be taken seriously and be strictly adhered to.
- Don't go wandering off on your own without a guide – even to your rooms. After retiring to your rooms at night, don't 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.
- 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.
- Refrain from smoking on game drives. The dry African bush ignites very easily and a flash fire can kill animals.