

BOTSWANA FAQ'S

When to Visit to visit Botswana?

Botswana known as the premier game-viewing destination throughout the year. The winter months (May to September) are dry, with warm and sunny days (26°C average) but temperatures do drop to below freezing at night. The summer months (October to April) are hot (25°-45°C) and humid although welcome relief is received from magnificent afternoon showers. The main rains fall between December and March, in the form of brief but intense thundershowers that last an hour or two. The summer rains also bring spectacular migrant birds to Botswana for all those twitchers in the world, and if you not Botswana is sure to change that.

Getting around in Botswana?

The road network in Botswana is good but limited to the outskirts of the game viewing regions. Private charter flights are the only way of reaching the majority of camps in the Chobe, Moremi, the Central Kalahari and Okavango Delta area. Scheduled light aircraft flights depart from Maun and Kasane and handle all inter-camp transfers in this area.

Can you tell me about my passports and visa requirements ?

International visitors require a valid passport together with onward travel documents. All passport holders should verify with their 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 as this is solely the responsibility of the client.

Is Botswana a good wedding/ honeymoon destination?

Yes, of course. The primal nature of the bush and the luxury of camps combined to offer an exceptional blend. Botswana's wilderness areas offer many romantic and spectacular wedding and honeymoon locations. We will take care of every detail to ensure you a wonderful and memorable wedding and honeymoon.

Is Botswana a good family destination?

The recommended age for children on safari is six years and older. Some lodges do not take children under 12 years. As we have children ourselves, we can advise you on the best options for you and your family according to the ages and interests of your children

What can I expect to experience during different months on safari in Botswana?

The Safaris calendar is designed to highlight the benefits of a safari during every month of the year. We are often asked "which is the best time of the year ?"- the calendar will help you answer that question properly, as it really depends on what you wish to experience. Each month is different and special in it's own way. However, what we have set out here is only a guide - weather and therefore viewing patterns are different each year, so there are no facts - only trends and tendencies and game viewing will always remain a combination of guide skill and good luck.

January:

Peak breeding time, for many of the colourful migrant birds species. Excellent wild flowers, brilliant green foliage, constant sounds day and night - from insects and birds - the bush is very alive. January is in the middle of the rainy season with spectacular afternoon thunder storms and warm days (average 30°C plus) and nights (20°C plus). Game viewing is average with active predators still chasing the fast developing young of their prey species. An ideal photography month for all the colours and dramatic skies.

The contrasts of the predators natural winter camouflage, with the summer colours makes for dramatic photos. More easily spotted by their prey species the predators have to work hard while the prey have a time of plenty

February:

Ripe figs are eaten by many species including the fruit bats who make interesting night sounds while feeding. Water lilies flowering peak - colourful and noisy reed frogs - the Okavango Delta is brilliant, noisy and alive. With the rainy season all plants are growing actively, butterflies, birds, frogs and all the small creatures are at their most active and at their best. The rains continue in afternoon thunder storms with dramatic skies and sounds. Temperatures range up to 40°C but average above 30°C with warm nights (20°C plus). Can have both wet and very dry spells within the month. The giant bullfrog emerges from months and sometimes years of hibernation to indulge in nocturnal feeding frenzies. The resident game species do not have far to go for water and the young are almost as tall as the adults.

March:

The Marula trees fruit attracting their attendant bull elephants who wonder from tree to tree in search of their favourite meals. The start of the rutting season leads to the sleek and fat impala males snorting and cavorting to attract females. Temperatures are still warm both day and night but the air is drier and the rains less frequent.

April:

The first signs that the times are changing - night temperatures drop to below 20°C on average but day temperatures continue to rise up to 40°C on some days. The cooler mornings with high relative humidity lead to wonderful early morning misty magic especially over the waters. The Impala rut is in full swing and the impala noises continue right through the night with dramatic clashes between rival males. Baboon and impala are often together assisting the safety of the busy Impala. The trees have completed flowering and fruit is ripening all over with the massive sausages hanging from the Sausage trees. The reptiles are actively breeding and feeding in anticipation of the dry season about to start.

May:

Flood waters from Angola start to reach the top of the Okavango Delta and begin their slow and deliberate progress through the Delta. The rains are over and the nights are cooler with temperatures averaging 15°C while day temperatures still warm have lost their edge and maximum temperatures seldom exceed 35°C. Jackets are sensible for night drives. The buffalo begin to group into large herds and visit the Kwando river more often as the seasonal pans begin to dry. Breeding herds of elephant increase in density daily as they visit the permanent waters. The greens starting fading to the duller dry season colours and the predators begin to enjoy themselves again as their colours blend with the surroundings again. The migratory birds begin their flights to winter feeding and breeding grounds in far away places.

June:

June - what an exciting time - the African Wild Dogs begin to search for their den and our guides search for them to discover their den. Once they have denned these endangered species will be easy to find for 3-4 months as they operate from their dens. Dogs den in both the Kwando and Kwara concession and the Kwando area offers some of the best dog viewing in Africa. Exciting hunts playful puppies - what more could you wish for! Temperatures have dropped to their coldest by the end of June with night temperatures reaching as low as 5°C (very cold on night drives due to wind chill). Day temperatures rise up to a very comfortable 25°C and dusty dry conditions begin to dominate. Some green bushes and trees persist but leaf drop commences and pans dry up. Animals concentrate at the permanent water as do their predators.

July:

The floods arrive, in the Okavango Delta area, after a slow path from the wet Angolan highlands thousand of kilometres away. The paradox is obvious - the flood arrives when dust and dryness pervade and the rains have long gone. The leaves are falling off the trees the grasses are getting shorter every day and visibility is excellent. The nights are still cold but the days are marginally warmer and the weather typical Botswana - sunny and clear. More and more animals congregate near the water and flood plains - a special time of the year. Water spreads into areas where there was none the day before and the mekoro and boat trips become more exciting as new places can be accessed. Soft early morning and evening light combined with dust produces many photo settings.

August:

The herds are getting larger and space near the water leads to tension between the breeding herds of elephant and the nights are filled with elephant sounds. The bush is bare and the dust pervades but the action is around and with patience and perseverance the rewards are great. The floods have passed through the Delta and now reach Maun - leading to excitement for the locals in town and water related speculation is at a peak - how high, when will it stop? How far will the water go? The weather is warming even at night with daytime peaks averaging closer to 30°C now and night time averages rising to around 10°C. Another special time and peak visitor season.

September:

The climate has changed and winter is all but gone. Night temperatures rise rapidly within the month and by month end the averages reach 15°C plus and day temperatures soar well in the 30's°C. The sun shines, the skies are clear and it is really dry. Unbelievably the elephant concentrate in still greater numbers as do the buffalo keeping the predators busy as the season takes its toll on the prey species - a time of plenty for the lions. The colours explode as the carmine bee eaters return from their winter grounds and the other migrants begin to arrive. The water levels have slowly started to drop as the waters from Angola have completed their trek. The fish begin to get active and some trees start to get the first green shoots - fed by the flood waters and temperatures and not by any rain as it is still some 6 weeks to the first rains

October:

It is hot - really hot but never will you experience game viewing like this - well worth the sweat. Day temperatures rise regularly above 40°C and nights are warm with averages in the 20's°C. Start early and leave late - that is the solution. There is no place to hide everything is bare and the grasses are eaten or trampled. Night drives are at their best and the pervading dust makes all scenes dramatic. Predators chases erupt into clouds of dust as the eternal game of eat and be eaten plays out daily in the very open plains. Fishing frenzies with the annual catfish (barbell) runs in the rivers.

November:

The expectation - in fact - desperation for rain dominates all discussions - the residents and the animals all seek an end to the dryness and dust. Temperatures remain high both day and night and the game viewing improves - until the day of the first rains -

normally around mid November. The rain comes, the animals relieved, disperse to eat on new vegetation and drink from the seasonal pans. The birthing season begins with the Tsessebe, followed by the impala and Lechwe. The predators seek out the vulnerable young and kill many times a day to get their fill - plenty of action and great visibility and short green grass - tress bursting into life - a wonderful time for the photographers - action - colour and visibility.

December:

Protein rich grass feed the mothers of the antelope while the lambs and calves grow at astounding speed. The impala complete their lambing, the wildebeest start and complete in a few weeks. The rains become more regular with thunder storms every few days. The pans remain full and the colours shine in brilliant green and the grasses begin to get away from the hungry mouths. While the grazers enjoy the green tender mouthfuls the predators are ever watching and stalking but their winter camouflage lets them down and they have to work harder - however, the bushes become more dense allowing more hiding places for them to observe their prey. This ensures that the predators devote much of their time to hunting the young impala and wildebeest – producing plenty of predator prey action. All the migrant birds have arrived. Temperatures have cooled on average but hot days still occur and nights are still warm and humidity can rise after rains. Good colours - dramatic skies and lightning at night in the distances all add to the magic of December.

Can I use my credit card ?

Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted throughout Botswana but American Express and Diners Club are often not accepted.

What currency must I bring with ?

Botswana currency is known as Pula. Botswana banks will only accept US Dollars, Pound Sterling, Euro and South African Rand cash. Therefore, any cash payments to camps for curios, or gratuities to guides or staff, need to be in one of these currencies. Travellers' cheques in any of the above currencies are also acceptable.

What are Botswana's banks opening hours ?

Major hotels normally have foreign exchange facilities and most shops, lodges and travel agencies accept travellers cheques. However; if you are in either Maun or Kasane, here are the main Botswana banks opening hours:
Barclays Bank (Maun and Kasane) Mon - Fri 08h30 - 14h30. Sat 08h15 - 10h45
First National Bank (Maun) Mon - Fri 09h00 - 12h45 and 14h15 - 15h30. Sat 08h30 - 11h00
Standard Chartered Bank (Maun) Mon - Fri 08h15 - 14h00 and Wed 08h15 - 13h00. Sat 08h15 - 10h45

Do the people speak English in Botswana?

Botswana's official language is English although most of the population also speaks Setswana. You do not need to worry as game drives and other tours are normally conducted in English

What are the opening hours of the local shops?

Shops in cities and towns are normally open between 8:30 and 17:00 Monday to Friday, and 8:30 to 13:00 on a Saturday. Most camps and lodges have curio shops. A really good buy is the baskets that are made in Botswana, a lot of time and effort is spent on each one

What about power to charge batteries and oh my the hairdryer?

Most safari camps are situated in remote areas and have to generate their own electricity. 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). These generators then charge batteries located at each tented room, which provide good 12v lights all night (if used sensibly). There are no 220v or 110v power points in camp. If you need to have your video battery re-charged they can be so while you are out on an activity. Therefore, please bring a spare battery for use while the other is being charged. These systems are simple but perfectly functional. Electrical plug outlets are not available in most safari lodges therefore it is not possible to use such appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers during your stay there.

Should I take anti -malaria precautions before entering Botswana?

Anti-Malaria tablets are a must. As a rule we recommend Malarone as the prophylactic of choice, please discuss this you're your physician though. Please speak to your doctor in this regard. No vaccinations are required as yet but check for latest info at time of booking.

How much should I tip my guide?

If not included, it is customary to tip 10% to taxi drivers, waitresses, waiters, stewards and delivery persons. On safari, approximately US\$ 5.00 - 25.00 per person per day, or more if service is above average.

What is the weather like in Botswana?

Subtropical climate with hot, humid, wet summers (September to April) and warm to cool, dry winters (May to August). Daytime summer temperatures may rise above 35°C/95°F, and winter nights rarely drop below 10°C/50°F.

Temperature (°C) - These are the average lows and highs

January	February	March	April	May	June
19 / 32	19 / 31	18 / 31	14 / 31	9 / 28	6 / 25
July	August	September	October	November	December
6 / 25	9 / 28	13 / 33	18 / 35	19 / 34	19 / 32

Rainfall (mm). This varies according to the year and where you are.

January	February	March	April	May	June
110	80	70	25	7	3
July	August	September	October	November	December
0	0	0	30	50	95