

# ADVANTAGE

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VOL 17 ➤ 2022

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The background of the page is a photograph of several tall palm trees silhouetted against a bright, orange and yellow sunset sky. The trees are dark against the light background, creating a strong contrast. The sky transitions from a pale blue at the top to a deep orange near the horizon. The palm trees have large, fan-like fronds and some have clusters of fruit hanging from their trunks. The overall mood is serene and tropical.

# TRAVEL

10 Safari Pursuits  
Through Botswana

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Travel Gems

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Experiences

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Galápagos Islands



*Set out on a life-altering safari to discover abundant wildlife, rich culture, ultra-luxury lodges and the wild beauty of Botswana. Read more on pages 10-15.*

# THE WILDS OF AFRICA

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Botswana's diverse landscapes, rich heritage and prolific wildlife entices adventurous first timers and safari traditionalists on a journey to discover an ancient desert, vast salt pans and one of the last existing wetland wilderness areas on Earth

**F**ew places can elicit the feeling of being in the wilds of Africa—an inimitable sensation one must encounter to understand. With rolling savannas, deserts, forests, and waterways, a safari through the wilds of Botswana reveals an immersive experience that will leave visitors longing for more. “Guests are seeking out restorative safaris that make a positive impact on conservation and communities, as well as intimate and authentic experiences that can be life-changing,” said Hadley Allen, Chief Commercial Officer at Wilderness Safaris. With a plethora of ultra-luxury lodge stays, specialist safaris, starlit sleepouts, conservation, and meaningful cultural exchange, Botswana truly is Africa's diamond.

The spectacular creation of the Okavango Delta is renewed each year by the life-giving floodwaters flowing from the Planalto Highlands of Angola. Fed by heavy annual rainfall, the mighty Kavango River fills and flows over 990 miles southeast, where it reaches Botswana's ancient Kalahari Desert around April each year. Here, covering over 5,800 square miles, an alluvial fan creates the world's largest inland delta, beckoning safari enthusiasts to discover a paradise of endless channels, floodplains, lagoons, and islands.

“There is, quite simply, nowhere else like it,” noted Andrew Bridge, Head of Marketing at African Bush Camps, an owner-run safari company, specializing in extraordinary wildlife experiences. Nearly 40% of the country comprises national parks, wildlife management areas and private game reserves, allowing enormous herds of animals to roam freely across the contrasting landscape and follow ancient evolutionary tracks visible from the air. Protected for over 60 years, Moremi Game Reserve covers almost one-third of the Delta, surrounded by private concessions and reserves leased from local communities and managed by safari outfitters.





WORDS Amber Müller, IMAGE © African Bush Camps

*The spectacular creation of the Okavango Delta is renewed each year by the life-giving floodwaters flowing from the Planalto Highlands of Angola*



### EMBRAER TIP

The fastest and longest-ranged single-pilot business jet in production—the **Phenom 300E**—will get you to Botswana from Cape Town in a little over two hours.



*Top: While exploring the community-run Khwai Concession, guests can set off on a game drive, walking safari or peaceful mokoro ride to discover the Okavango Delta*

*Bottom: In the heat of the day, guests at Khwai Leadwood can luxuriate in the serene ambiance of the lodge with a gin and tonic while spotting passing wildlife*

## KHWAI LEADWOOD, KHWAI COMMUNITY CONCESSION

To begin your wilderness pursuit, board a 30-minute scenic flight from Maun flying northeast over the fringes of the Okavango Delta to find Khwai Leadwood. Set on the papyrus-strewn banks of the Khwai River, African Bush Camps' newest luxury offering in Botswana exists in equilibrium with the water, land, wildlife, and people, promising a life-enriching safari. "Safaris are a perfect opportunity to disconnect from the stresses of everyday life and simply to soak up the majestic wildlife and surroundings," explained Bridge. Extending over 700 square miles, the Khwai Community Concession is run on behalf of the Khwai Village and encompasses some of the richest wilderness areas in Botswana. "We operate in a fragile ecosystem and therefore the camp is run with the lightest ecological footprint possible," said Bridge.

Khwai Leadwood's contemporary take on a classic-style camp features six tents and one family unit, each with an outdoor shower and lounge nestled under a canopy of leadwood trees. Inside, woven baskets and ebonized timber furniture give the distinctly African camp a true sense of place in the wild. Embark on a sunrise and sunset game drive through the concession to discover over 500 species of birds and an abundance of wildlife—elephant, buffalo, zebra, lion, leopard, cheetah, wild dog, giraffe, eland, sable, hippo, and hyena. In the heat of the day, guests can luxuriate in the serene ambiance of the lodge while sipping Okavango gin and tonics by the glistening pool. For an exhilarating perspective, jump aboard a helicopter for a soaring sky safari to explore the vast reaches of the Delta where wallowing hippos, large herds of elephants and scattering lechwe pepper the amber-hued waterways.

For a rare glimpse at the wild from the water, take to the pristine channels of the Okavango Delta for a slower safari. Pole through masses of flowering water lilies in absolute peace and silently glide closer to endangered kaleidoscope-colored birds, drinking elephants and troops of bathing baboons. Traditionally, mokoros were hand carved from the enormous trunks of ebony and sausage trees and used for transport and fishing on the Delta. At nightfall, meander back to camp and pause for an astrology lesson under the diamond-dusted African sky. African Bush Camps recently pioneered a Female Guide Project to upskill local women with accredited safari guide training at the camp. "By hiring locals exclusively, we empower communities. No one knows the area and wildlife better than those raised in Botswana," noted Bridge.



*Left: Traditionally, mokoros were hand carved from the enormous trunks of ebony and sausage trees and used for transport and fishing on the Delta*

*Below (top): Tuludi's sophisticated interiors reference contemporary safari styling and showcase original artworks throughout*

*Below (bottom): For a night under the stars, Tuludi's only Sky Suite is a wildly romantic sleepout for two nestled on the banks of a hippo pool*

## TULUDI, KHWAI PRIVATE RESERVE

Tuludi is located within Khwai Private Reserve, on the north-eastern fringes of the Okavango Delta, with Moremi Game Reserve to the south and Chobe National Park to the east, in an area characterized by floodplains, savanna and woodlands. Tuludi—a Tswana word used to describe the color of a leopard—boasts six tents and one family suite, replete with heavenly bush baths and outdoor rain showers, and a private pool set amongst apple leaf trees. The luxurious tents sit above ground, with great canvas sides that simply roll away to take in the sights and sounds of the bush. The main camp connects by a series of elevated boardwalks, allowing roaming animals to pass freely under the wooden structure without impeding their ancient natural paths. Designed by Tracy Kelly, Tuludi references the area's distinct flora and fauna with splashes of color, paired with floating nest chairs, a recycled glass bar and original artworks throughout. Perched high above camp is Tuludi's library, where guests can savor afternoon aperitifs and spot passing game in the glow of the African sun.

For a night under the stars, reserve Tuludi's only Sky Suite, a wildly romantic sleepout for two nestled on the banks of a hippo pool. Available from March to November, the lantern-lit hideaway in the bush features an outdoor bathroom, hot shower and a cozy king-sized bed swathed under mosquito netting. Sit by a smoldering fire and stargaze all night as distant lion calls and echoes of hyenas rock you into a blissful slumber. At sunrise, wake to coffee and breakfast before scouring sandy tracks for spoor (footprints) and chance encounters with lions or leopards.



## SAN CAMP, MAKGADIKGADI SALT PANS

Deep in the Kalahari Desert is Ntwetwe Pan, the third largest salt pan in the world, covering more than 11,600 square miles near Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. Easily reached by road and air, the ancient lake is home to the second largest migration, after the Serengeti, with hundreds and thousands of wildebeest and zebra descending in search of fertile grazing. For centuries, elephants have traversed the country by memory, depositing palm fruit that grows into towering palms scattered across the sparse savanna. Despite its stark appearance, the salt pans transform each year into great soda lakes as flocks of lesser and greater flamingos journey from Namibia's Atlantic Coast and East Africa to nest, painting the horizon with dots of pink and white.

From a distance, the white Meru-style tents of San Camp beckon arriving guests along a single sandy track in a mirage that's just as dreamy up close. San Camp is impossibly romantic, with just seven billowing tents dispersed along the pan's edges. Grand four-poster beds, antiques and artifacts, copper-accented bathrooms, Persian rugs and rich mahogany furniture set the scene for a nomadic desert escape of a bygone era. Discreetly powered by solar, San Camp's otherworldly landscape and closeness to nature bring into focus an authentic African safari. When you're not traversing the salt-crusted pans, opt for a meerkat encounter, a yoga session in the dreamy meditation pavilion or browse the camp's collection from the Natural History Museum for an intriguing look into Botswana's past.

"Apart from wildlife, what you find in its natural habitat is the culture, people and food—this is the essence and spirit of Botswana," described Gorapetswe Nonfo Lebang, Botswana's Ambassador for the African Tourism Board. To really grasp Botswana's soul, walk with the Kalahari's Zu/'hoasi Bushmen for a rare insight into the fascinating and ancient culture of Africa's (and possibly the world's) first people—an experience central to the mission of local travel outfitter Natural Selection to preserve the Botswana culture and share their traditions with the world.

## LITTLE MOMBO, CHIEF'S ISLAND

Wilderness Safaris partners with Wilderness Air to charter guests between Botswana's most exclusive and remote destinations, inaccessible by road. Nestled on Chief's Island in the heart of the Okavango Delta, Little Mombo is delightfully intimate. With just four tented suites, the tranquil setting creates an ideal hideaway for an ultra-luxury honeymoon or reuniting with loved ones. Fresh from a recent rebuild, Little Mombo exists in a true garden of Eden, with a profusion of game and sprays of wildflowers at every turn. Designed in homage to its magnificent surrounds, the tents rest gently on the floodplain, with leisurely lounges inside and out, a cloud-like king bed, a grand bathroom, and a lavish bar. Drift between your

*"Apart from wildlife, what you find in its natural habitat is the culture, people and food—this is the essence and spirit of Botswana."*







private pool and sun-dappled cabana, cocktail in hand, as elephants calmly rumble past and vervet monkeys play in a tangle of jackalberry trees. Grab your in-room Olympus camera set and take off on a thrilling sunset game drive or dedicate a morning to wellness with a day spa treatment set in nature. Little Mombo's Earth-to-table menu highlights sustainable plant-based ingredients and tempts guests with traditional beef seswaa and magwenya donuts with Amarula ice cream.

## SAVUTI CAMP, LINYANTI WILDLIFE RESERVE

Linyanti Wildlife Reserve, adjacent to Chobe National Park, is home to Africa's largest population of elephants. Boasting nearly 27 miles of exclusive access to the Savuti Channel, Wilderness Safaris' Savuti Camp is accessible year-round with a diverse landscape that changes from marsh habitat to lush mopane woodlands. In years of plentiful rain, the channel holds water throughout the dry season, attracting large herds of buffalo, zebra and predator species to its banks. "We offer restorative and immersive experiences that not only present exciting wildlife encounters and superlative local hospitality but also give

back to our planet and empower our people," explained Allen. As custodians of the African wilderness for the past 40 years, Wilderness Safaris is committed to reducing its environmental impact. "By using our high-end, low volume conservation tourism model and crafting life-changing journeys for our guests, we have helped conserve 5.7 million acres of precious intact ecosystems and biodiversity," she added.

With an authentic African atmosphere, iconic wildlife species and all-inclusive land-based activities, Savuti Camp is a quintessential family safari experience. Don't miss the chance to learn Tswana from local guides or take a traditional basket weaving lesson at camp. For young eco-enthusiasts, Wilderness Safaris' Bush Buddies program keeps curious children safe and entertained with interactive bush expeditions and illustrated field guide packs.

In a country that prizes diamonds as its most valuable commodity, a journey through Botswana's compelling wilderness reveals that the true treasure of Botswana lies in the peaceful symbiosis of its people, the richness of its culture and abundance of wildlife. ◀

*Left (top): To really grasp Botswana's soul, walk with the Kalahari's Zu'hoasi Bushmen for a rare insight into the fascinating and ancient local culture*

*Left (bottom): Close to San Camp, guests can sit on the salt pans as the sun sets, and watch the planetarium of stars unfold*

*Above: With just four suites tucked away under the trees and overlooking a game-rich floodplain, Little Mombo is delightfully intimate*