

# Ultimate Botswana

With Naturalist Journeys



**Sept. 14 – Oct. 4, 2022**

866.900.1146

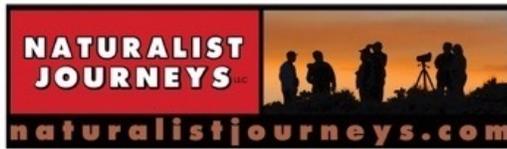
520.558.1146

[naturalistjourneys@gmail.com](mailto:naturalistjourneys@gmail.com)

[www.naturalistjourneys.com](http://www.naturalistjourneys.com)

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at Naturalist Journeys, LLC



## Tour Summary

21-Day / 20-Night Botswana Safari w/ Peg Abbott  
\$15,500, from Maun – group limited to 6 clients  
Airport is Maun International (MUB)

Embark on a true African safari to Botswana, where the wildlife is pristine and our days are timed with the rhythm of nature. Botswana is visually exciting—each of its unique habitats have distinct features, most famous of which is the Okavango Delta. This tour is limited to just six participants traveling with local experts and Naturalist Journeys' owner and lead guide Peg Abbott.

We call this one “ultimate,” not for contrived creature comforts but for the amazing opportunity we have to intimately take in the spectrum of Botswana's wildlife. Designed by Peg Abbott, who has decades of experience visiting Africa, this is an ultimate experience for seeing Africa's birds and iconic large mammals. With three nights at almost all locations, you find a marvelous sense of place at each unpacking.

We start from Maun, where we stay first at Xaro Lodge on the Okavango River, prized also by fisherman for its permanent water location. We find exciting birds and mammals in this lush realm of rivers, papyrus, and reeds. From here we can also see world-famous ancient rock art at the nearby Tsodilo Hills with a local guide. After three nights here we fly to the fascinating and vast Kalahari Desert where our lodgings are right on an active waterhole. Here we see unique birds and mammals of the arid lands and have our best chance to see Bat-eared Fox. From Nxai Pan we then fly to Moremi Game Reserve where we meet our good friends Ewan and Sallie Masson of Masson Safaris to spend six incredible nights in the world-renowned Moremi Game Reserve, a critical stronghold for several endangered species. We spend our Moremi days on the move, at two varied locations, kept comfortable by the support crew of a mobile-tented camp, complete with a mobile (RV toilet) private bathroom, bucket showers, a camp chef, and a wildlife and birding guide with an unparalleled 25+ years of experience. This mobile camp is designed to get us as close to the wildlife as safety allows. Imagine the richness of those wild nighttime sounds!

From our bush time we then fly on to Kasane in Botswana's northeast corner known as the gateway to Chobe National Park. First we explore from a fabulously comfortable hotel, and then we launch onto the river from our

## Tour Highlights

- ✓ Explore the Okavango Delta's papyrus-lined channels and lagoons, the riverine woodlands of Chobe National Park, and legendary wetlands and Mopane forests of Moremi Game Reserve
- ✓ Stay two nights at Xaro Lodge on permanent water of the Okavango River; look for Pel's Fishing Owl, White-backed Night-Heron, colorful nesting bee-eaters, and Sitatunga
- ✓ Experience the fabulous Kalahari Desert with prime lodging at Nxai Pan, where wildlife and birds congregate at our tented camp's waterhole
- ✓ Follow wildlife and elegant, colorful birds with expert guides on a six-night mobile camp in the heart of Moremi Game Reserve
- ✓ Live “National Geographic moments” in real time on morning and afternoon game drives
- ✓ Find signature birds like Slaty Egret, Black Heron, African Openbill Stork, Hamerkop, African Fish Eagle, Southern Ground Hornbill, bustards, hoopoes, and of course, the stunning Lilac-breasted Roller
- ✓ Spend three nights on the *Pangolin Voyager* cruising the wildlife-rich Chobe River, where we watch Elephant, Lion, Sable Antelope, and a host of herons and egrets, including the world's largest: the Goliath Heron
- ✓ Capture that ultimate African sunset—acacia tree, Giraffes, Leopard and more
- ✓ Revel in the grand finale at the Pangolin photo camp, prime for great game experiences, night drives, and tips from photo experts

own chartered houseboat. Pangolin photo experts are along on our boat trips and game drives to give us tips, perfect to make the most of our efforts at any level of photography throughout the trip.

Chobe can get crowded (Botswana's Yellowstone) but is always special so we keep it on the itinerary. And we go beyond the crowd on a three-night houseboat trip, mooring on a quiet section of river where we can be out at dawn and dusk for the wildlife action with ease beneath skies awash with southern stars. Our grand finale is to a tented camp in one of the most remote and pristine areas of the country, at a camp selected by Pangolin to be their signature wildlife experience—our best chance at seeing Cheetah, Leopard, Wild Dog, and more. We get amazingly close views of predator and prey without disturbing their interactions and day-to-day survival. And on private reserves we can do night game drives. From this camp, we fly back to Maun.

If big game, southern constellations, a rainbow of colorful African birds, and the enchanting sounds of wild Africa beckon, this journey is sure to entice.

## Day-to-Day Itinerary

### **Wed., Sept. 14** Arrival in Maun | Flight to Shakawe

Welcome to Botswana! Depending on your travel route you may have overnighted in Johannesburg near the airport, or you may come straight through to Maun, connecting in time for our mid-day short flight from Maun (about 3:00 PM) up the Okavango River to a modern airstrip at Shakawe. From there we meet the lodge staff from Xaro, drive to their river dock and venture to the lodge by boat. The river greeting committee consists of kingfishers, bee-eaters, Goliath Heron, and more! It's a short way upriver to Xaro Lodge, a stunning location with tall trees arching over the river. This is a wonderful start to our journey, exploring a permanent water camp on the Okavango River.

Settle into your relaxing accommodations, and then gather for cocktails by the fire, watching sunset over palms and papyrus. Dinner is graciously served outside with soft lighting and night sounds as the background music. With luck we may hear calls of Pel's Fishing Owl, which we should later find on day roosts with some searching. Enjoy a welcome dinner and chance to get to know your guide and travel companions.

*Accommodations at Xaro Lodge (D)*

### **Thurs., Sept. 15** Okavango River | Xaro Lodge

Wake up to the myriad sounds of birds in the garden area. Walk to the riverbank to scan for species in the reeds and on the sandbar across from the lodge. Goliath Heron are often on patrol outside the lodge and here we may find White-backed Night-Heron. It's nice to be able to walk around the grounds and gardens before breakfast. After breakfast we walk the island with a local expert naturalist, looking for birds and learning about the ecology of the region.

The afternoon is a boat ride that takes us up to a quiet lily-lagoon where African Swampphen and African Pygmy Goose can be found. Malachite Kingfisher often perch in close view, their jewel tones just captivating. The Okavango is not unlike our Everglades, a slow moving, major river system that allows water to fan out across the Kalahari Desert, transforming it into a paradise for wildlife. It is the largest Ramsar designated site in the world, set up to protect globally important wetlands.

As sunset lingers it's back to the lodge to freshen up and join a lovely gathering for tea or cocktails and dinner by

candlelight by the river.

*Accommodations at Xaro Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Fri., Sept. 16 Tsodilo Hills World Heritage Site | Xaro Lodge**

After an early breakfast, we boat down the river and then drive over to a fascinating World Heritage Site, Botswana's archeological gem, the Tsodilo Hills. Here 3000-year old rock paintings adorn colorful rock walls and you also find Botswana's highest peak, all in a tiny inselberg mountain range visible for miles around. The birding is also good here, with possible sightings of both Barred and Pearl-spotted Owlets, close views of Meyer's Parrot and a chance to pick up Melodious Lark or other arid-land specialty birds.

We take a picnic lunch, and then return to the lodge to relax for the rest of the afternoon. If there is interest we may take a shorter sunset boat trip to search for a few more species or some special photographic opportunity.

Dinner is at the lodge; be sure to take a look at the stars—this is a superb place to watch the brilliant night sky.

*Accommodations at Xaro Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Sat., Sept. 17 Flight to Nxai Pan National Park | Explore the Kalahari**

Botswana is very well organized for getting around by air. We book you from one lodge to the next, a wonderful way to make the most of our field time. After a morning outing today we head to the airstrip, then greet the wonderful guides from our next lodge as we head to lunch there. Your first experience of the Kalahari and its vastness is from the air.

Experience the arid Kalahari Desert from the comforts of one of our favorite lodges. This camp features nine beautifully crafted casitas on the edge of a large salt pan, replete with birds and wildlife. The camp is 100% solar powered, with a spacious and impressive central area dining and bar. Rooms face the permanent waterhole, which draws in numerous mammals and birds.

Nxai Pan is part of the greater Makgadikgadi/Nxai Pan National Park. From our comfortable base, enjoy birding and wildlife drives with lodge naturalists. Little has changed there since 1862, when the British adventurer and artist, Thomas Baines, explored the area and made famous its enormous Baobab trees. Watch for breeding larks that are active at this time, including Sabota, Rufous-naped, Red-capped, and Fawn-colored.

We take an afternoon game drive watching the sky for raptors such as Pale Chanting Goshawk, Martial Eagle, or Lanner Falcon. Capped Wheatear, White-quilled Bustard (Black Korhan), and Kori Bustard can be found in open country; watch for barbets and hornbills and possible Bat-eared Fox starting to consider their den sites.

Gather around the campfire for tea or a cocktail (drinks are included) and then enjoy dinner at this lovely lodge, with a view of the night sky and the camaraderie of your travel companions.

*Accommodations at Nxai Pan Lodge (B,L,D)*

### **Sun., Sept. 18 Nxai Pan National Park**

We have the full day to explore this arid-land national park and we take both a morning and afternoon game drive. Star attractions here are two waterholes, one by the lodge and the other along our drive.

Elephant frequent the waterhole; their presence against the immense silence of this remote location is memorable. We should see family groups and also huge bachelor males. We may also see Gemsbok and

certainly many Springbok, desert adapted animals that are rare and typically not seen in Moremi. Lion, Giraffe, Impala, and Wildebeest are here too, as are some of the more elusive species: Bat-eared Fox, Honey Badger, or (rare) Cheetah. Photographically, the edge of the waterhole provides unending beauty as species line up to drink, multiple species shots are prized!

A coffee/tea break is enjoyed at the South Campground which has rest room facilities and large trees that can make it a very active place for seeing songbirds. Kalahari Scrub Robin may venture out of a brush pile with its cocky tail alert, Cape Crombec are vocal and alert us to a mixed flock that may have Common Scimitarbill, Green-winged Pytilla (a beauty!), Southern Cordonblue, and Golden-breasted Bunting.

For those that wish, the lodge provides a unique experience. Many of their staff members are people of the Kalahari, the San or Bushman. You can go with one of the San trackers to enjoy an informative walk that takes place within the camp's footprint. Learn about how the San lived nomadically, how they hunted, gathered food, their water sources, and which plants were used for medicinal purposes. Their wealth of true bush knowledge is unparalleled, and one of our guests' favorite experiences at our desert camps.

Coffee around the campfire starts your day and social time around it, under the beautiful African night sky ends it. You are on safari!

*Accommodations at Nxai Pan Lodge (B,L,D)*

## Mobile Safari – An Overview

### **Mon., Sept. 19 – Wed., Sept. 21 First Mobile Camp | Moremi Game Reserve**

This morning we enjoy a last game drive to the waterhole in Nxai Pan, have brunch, then mid-day head to the airstrip for our small plane flight into Moremi Game Reserve. Here we meet Ewan Masson for our amazing six-night mobile safari.

We dive right into our adventure! For six nights at two camps, our Ultimate Botswana safari goes mobile! There is no better way to get close to prime wildlife areas. Being this close to wildlife is almost impossible anymore in many of the big game areas. It's truly an incredible experience to hear the night sounds, sit around a campfire, jump in the vehicles to be out at dawn, and see predator and prey in their realm.

Our hosts and guides are from Masson Safaris, an ecologically friendly, family-run small safari company. We have been with them many years now and consider them good friends. They provide safaris aimed at wildlife viewing, bird watching, and spending quality time in nature. They have over 25 years of experience, and a marvelous camp staff and chef. They operate with a fully-mobile set up so we are comfortable, and with unparalleled access to wildlife. Our camps are private and set up in remote areas. Tents are large enough that you can stand, with a private bathroom equipped with bush (chemical) toilets. Hot water is brought to you each morning to freshen up, and hot water for showers is set up as needed (most often mid-day since mornings are quite chilly). This is as authentic as it gets—with a strong focus on seeing birds and wildlife. We are out early and back after watching sunset with the game.

Our safari vehicles are open, extended Land Rovers that offer the very best photographic opportunities and are great for binoculars and scopes. They have a fridge in which we stock a good variety of fruit juices, bottled waters, and for evening sundowners, mixers, beer, and wine. And be assured of a good system for charging your camera and other batteries.

Learn the rhythm of safari; an early morning game drive, followed by a hearty brunch, and then time for a siesta, in-camp viewing, and photography or relaxing. This is a great time to take a refreshing camp shower. We then have an afternoon game drive lasting until sunset. Dinner is after dark, under an airy tent with candlelight and stars. It is served with fresh-baked breads and wine, as desired.

Moremi Game Reserve borders Chobe National Park. Within its boundaries lies about a third of the land area that makes up the Okavango Delta. It is a spectacular place where desert meets water. Landscapes of Moremi reveal upland tracts of Mopane forest, open savanna, and papyrus-lined water channels, lagoons, and mature riverine forests. Aquatic animals and water birds abound, along with herds of plains game and predators. It has an amazing combination of vegetation types, animal species, and bird life. One of the treats is seeing Yellow-billed and Red-billed Hornbills calling from the crowns of trees. Birdlife abounds and there are babblers, shrikes, coucals, rollers, barbets, and the gaudy and comical African Hoopoe. Black-backed Jackal, Warthog, Kudu, Impala, and Red Lechwe are often observed here.

Our days start with the call, "Morning, morning, time to get up," as our lead guide gets us ready for an early start. A quick field breakfast with coffee and tea gets us ready to go out searching for wildlife at first light. Our group is usually the first one out and that always pays dividends. Nocturnal hunters like Lion and Hyena are finishing their hunts, while browsers and grazers (Waterbuck and Kudu) are breathing a sigh of relief as daylight offers them better visibility. It is also the time when the diurnal predators such as African Wild Dog and Cheetah start their hunting forays.

After our mid-day siesta, we head out again, this time looking for those same animals finishing their hunts while the nocturnal predators are starting theirs. Elephant and Giraffe appear out of nowhere, and it is not uncommon to have Lion and other wildlife laying in the shade of a Mopane tree along the road. We are the eyes and ears for our drivers as they take us deeper into the heart of this game preserve. It takes a bit of getting used to, but after a while you are picking out Zebra in the dappled shade that makes them seemingly disappear.

Each evening we gather around the fire for drinks and light appetizers before dinner (and after dinner around the campfire) where we all discuss our day's sightings, photographs, and experiences. Then the kitchen staff arrive carrying serving dishes filled with different foods that just taste so good after our drives.

*Accommodations in a Mobile Tent Camp (B,L,D)*

## **Thurs. Sept. 22 Moving Day | Second Mobile Safari Camp at Khwai River, Moremi Game Reserve**

As we move from our first camp of three nights to our second camp, there are several routes we can take to traverse the park. Depending on what we have already seen, we may enjoy a morning boat trip from Xakanaxa. Tall papyrus and reeds line the channel and we often have Elephant feeding on the river margin. We watch for a deep-water tolerant antelope, the Sitatunga. And we listen for Chirping Cisticola and on an island lunch stop, have a chance at seeing the rare Pel's Fishing Owl.

Returning to our vehicles, we head on with a lunch break/rest stop, finally arriving at our second camp. It is a full and rewarding day, often we see over 100 bird species between the driving route and boat tour. Our tents await and we are now well-trained on the routine. On to drinks, dinner, night-sky viewing, and sleep!

*Accommodations in a Mobile Tent Camp (B,L,D)*

## **Fri., Sept. 23 & Sat., Sept. 24 Khwai River, Moremi Game Reserve**

“Morning, morning.” We are up at dawn as adventure calls. Riverine forests line the Khwai River channel and in this mosaic of habitats we look for Leopard, Red Lechwe, Kudu, and Giraffe. Lion of the Okavango have taken freely to hunting in the water—a behavior rarely seen in other areas. Wild dogs also find a stronghold here and with luck (and persistence) we may find them! Leopard enjoy resting in massive, often flowering Sausage Trees.

This is our guide’s favorite part of the park as game animals and their predators abound. We should find ample numbers of Blue Wildebeest, various antelope species, Common (Burchell’s) Zebra, Warthog, Lion, and Elephant. We make every effort to see as many mammals as possible. Birds are also plentiful (often up to 250 species) and some are huge, such as Ostrich, Kori Bustard, and Southern Ground Hornbill. Some of the birds bear spectacular colors—Carmine and Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters and possible Narina Trogon to name just a few. And each bend of the river makes for good shorebird and wading bird habitat, with many to inspect at close range!

Khwai has had active Wild Dog packs on both sides of the river in recent years, and at least one of our groups has spotted two species of otter! It’s a scenic area and memorable. Time goes quickly here.

*Accommodations in a Mobile Tent Camp (B,L,D)*

## **Sun., Sept. 25 Flight from Khwai to Kasane | Chobe River**

After a final game drive and brunch, we pack up and head to the airstrip. In just an hour and half or so, we land at Kasane’s modern commercial airport. The friendly staff of the Pangolin Hotel greet us and it’s a short drive to the lodge.

After six nights in the bush, we enjoy the modern, fabulous lodgings at the Pangolin Chobe Hotel. Settle in, take a dip in the pool, use the Wi-Fi, and by mid-afternoon we head out for our first boat trip on the Chobe River where we are literally surrounded by wildlife almost immediately. Elephant, Buffalo, Impala, and Puku feed on lush grass of the river islands. Malachite and Half-collared Kingfishers patrol the banks and dazzling Carmine Bee-eater fly overhead. We are always in earshot of African Fish Eagle, and a host of wading birds stand with lovely reflections in the water as we feed. It’s just hard to take it all in!

Our hotel is intimate, only 14 rooms, and is close to the park gates—perfect for being first on the scene in the morning. Rooms are air-conditioned with private balconies. The dining area and lounge, pool, and fire pit are a part of the hotel’s gracious hospitality and it’s a great contrast to mobile safari to have pleasant creature comforts and connections so readily available.

Dinner is under the stars, and the food is memorable!

*Accommodations at Pangolin Chobe Hotel (B,L,D)*

## **Mon., Sept. 26 Chobe National Park | Chobe River**

This morning we head out for our first game drive in Chobe National Park. This route has many more vehicles than in Moremi, but the wildlife are used to it and we see a surprising array of amazing things here—Leopard resting in trees, scavengers on carcasses, even a group of Lion on the hunt. This hotel caters mainly to photographers and it’s fun for our group to have some personal instruction. They also have keen eyes and the day to day experience of where to find special species—including some new and exciting birds up in this corner of the country.

Northern Botswana is renowned for its vast herds of Elephant, African Buffalo, and other plains animals. At this time of year they congregate along the Chobe River, especially as the rain-filled pans become dry. Northern Botswana is also known for its very healthy African Lion population and Leopard sightings are frequent. In the lush river-associated wetlands, Hippo and Crocodile abound. The Chobe River supports the largest concentration of Elephant in all of Africa. These Elephant migrate here and depend on the river during the dry season. Some groups that use the river area number in the hundreds and they often feed and come to cool off in the water.

Today we most likely have one boat trip and one game drive, giving you ample opportunities to witness and capture images of wildlife and birds. If you are a photographer, there is an editing room at our lodge and experts at the lodge can share processing tips between the outings. If you are a keen birder, we can offer a half day option for birding in the local area.

Spend another magical evening here and enjoy the hotel amenities.

*Accommodations at Pangolin Chobe Hotel (B,L,D)*

## **Tues., Sept. 27 Chobe National Park or Option to Visit Victoria Falls**

As we are so close to the World Heritage Site of Victoria Falls, some may wish to do a day trip over there. This is easy to do; you do a border crossing but all paperwork can be done at the time. This is a side trip with a local business in Kasane and they take care that you have a good experience and make the best use of your time there. The falls themselves are extraordinary, and to get to the various viewpoints you walk through a moist forest that has evolved along the canyon rim, well-watered by the constant spray. Here beautiful hornbills and turacos may be seen, as well as a few other specialties. There is a lovely small café in the park, a loop walk with multiple viewpoints and a visitor center with informative displays and an extensive gift shop.

Those that prefer to stay and not venture to the falls can enjoy more safari time by boat and vehicle with our photo experts. Not a photographer? No worries, you can borrow equipment here and play with it for a few days or simply enjoy animal behavior and birding as we explore.

*Accommodations at Pangolin Chobe Hotel (B,L,D)*

## **Wed., Sept. 28 Morning in Chobe | Houseboat Cruise the Chobe River**

Enjoy breakfast at the lodge and a morning outing. Mid-day we head to the Pangolin dock river from which we do a simple border crossing (the river is the dividing line) into Namibia, where after doing the entry paperwork, we embark on a grand adventure: a three-night cruise on the *Pangolin Voyager* houseboat. We actually board our boats from the Namibia side of the river, so we check out of Botswana, boat over to clear customs and immigration on the other side before heading downriver to settle onto the houseboat.

This is very special, a Naturalist Journeys charter (we have the boat to ourselves), to explore the Chobe River! The crew is very knowledgeable and they know where to help us find Sable Antelope and a host of birds and we get beyond the boating crowds of day-trips from Kasane. Our route is within and alongside Chobe National Park, though technically we are in Namibia. Each night we enjoy the sunset from the boat, often with Elephant or other species in the foreground.

The boat has an upper deck where we gather after dinner to listen to nightjars and watch the stars. Sleep comes easy after our full days and so much fresh air and fun.

*Accommodations aboard the Pangolin Voyager (B,L,D)*

## **Thurs., Sept. 29 & Fri., Sept. 30    Aboard the *Pangolin Voyager***

This is a fabulous river cruise with almost non-stop wildlife action. Elephant abound and love the river margin. In addition to large herds and family groups, we should get good looks at African Buffalo, Chacma Baboon, Vervet Monkey, Impala, Giant Kingfisher, and African Fish Eagle. One of the opportunities along the Chobe River is seeing bank-nesting birds such as White-fronted or Little Bee-eaters and Malachite Kingfisher in good numbers and at close range. Odd-looking Hamerkop sit perched on their massive stick nests and we do get quite close to herds of African Buffalo. From our houseboat we take smaller skiff excursions for close up views of wildlife and birds. We look for Puku, an antelope that loves the river areas, and Sable Antelope. Best of all, we get past the many people who cluster near Kasane, and while that is still a good experience, it's nice to extend and get away from the admiring crowds.

Among the reed beds of isolated lagoons along the river we can look for Lesser Jacana, African Crake, Long-toed Plover, Pygmy Goose, and Dwarf Bittern. There are many species of kingfishers to find, both on the water and in the woodlands! Some of the birds we may encounter include the threatened Wattled Crane, Painted Snipe, a variety of waders including Rufous-bellied Heron and the rare Slaty Egret (endemic to Okavango). Overhead we watch for African Fish Eagle, Pink-backed Pelican, and near the river, African Skimmer.

The rhythm of our days is to be out in the skiffs early and late in the day, and take some down time with viewing from our air-conditioned rooms as we go. The boat's dining deck has floor to ceiling windows so we never miss a sighting. Up top there is a shade and sun deck for open-air viewing. There is also a chance to walk among Baobab trees on a safe river island, and if you wish, you can schedule a visit to a local village.

*Accommodations on the Pangolin Voyager (B,L,D)*

### **Rooms**

On the lower level, the houseboat has five well-appointed en-suite cabins with double or twin beds available depending on the required configuration. The beds are fitted with the finest linen and specialist mattresses. The cabins have built-in cupboards, a cooling fan, and the windows are fitted with a mosquito net to allow the gentle breeze from the river and the nighttime sounds of Chobe National Park to permeate the rooms.

### **Communal Areas**

The middle level is home to the lounge and dining area along with a deck at the rear, which accommodates the braai (barbeque). The comfortable lounge area is stocked with reference books and binoculars, which are yours to use as we drift between our private mooring points. Meals are served on the large dining table and the menu varies depending on which ingredients can be locally sourced throughout the seasons. There is a comprehensive selection of alcoholic and soft drinks for you to enjoy throughout the day from the bar. Local wine and spirits are included.

The upper level hosts a viewing deck equipped with chairs, sun loungers, and a table perfect for topping up those tans in between activities and for witnessing the majestic African sunsets that grace us every evening. Watch a video about the Pangolin Voyager [here](#).

## **Sat., Oct. 1    Grand Finale: The Pangolin Photo Camp**

It's hard to leave our idyllic mooring, but we have more adventures ahead!

Fortified by our wonderful stay at Pangolin Chobe Hotel and time on the river, we take a short flight on to one more amazing safari camp—one on a private concession where we have great wildlife viewing and the chance

for night drives. We fly from the Kasane Airport, getting a grand view of the Chobe River as we follow its course to the west. This birds-eye view gives quite a perspective. We are met by hosts of the camp, and even from the airstrip to the Camp we start to see birds and mammals. Once again we have our photo coach available to help us capture the best possible images. We end our trip with time in one of the most pristine areas of the Okavango Delta, a place where we have a chance to see predators in action, and to find animals that are often quite difficult to see with our local Bushman guides. This intimate camp is a perfect grand finale.

*Accommodations at Pangolin Photo Camp (B,L,D)*

## **Sun., Oct. 2 & Mon., Oct. 3 Two Full Days at Pangolin Photo Camp**

Our daily rhythm is very much like that of our mobile camp, with early outings, back for brunch, down time mid-day, and out again when afternoon activity stirs wildlife and birds into action. We are also able to explore at night, spotlighting for active animals. We love the idea of using the Pangolin Photo Camp because of its authenticity and because, like us, the owners prioritize the experience over the unnecessary. We value our relationship with Pangolin Safaris and know they choose a location that is a gem!

Our photo camp is at the edge of a seasonal island (depending on the floods) and is situated in the southern section of a vast private concession occupied by a handful of other lodges. The area directly around the camp is one of the best game viewing areas in the whole of Botswana and the safari experience is hugely enhanced when you add the tracking skills of the local Bushman driver guides and trackers. The camp itself harks back to the days of early safaris before places started adding unnecessary embellishments forgetting that the core reason for being there is the wildlife experience and not a “hot rock massage” or “champagne filled free-standing baths!” It’s a good, old-fashioned honest bush camp.

We have exclusive use of the camp. There are spacious personal tents that are configured either as doubles or twin beds. Each has a veranda and sitting area overlooking the plains (which flood from around May to October) as well as an en suite toilet and shower with hot water behind. The communal areas of the camp comprise a dining tent, a lovely fire under a Jackalberry tree, and a separate tent set up as an editing suite. Being on a thickly wooded island, there is plenty of shade throughout the year that keeps the camp nice and cool even in the height of summer. The food is good and wholesome and sometimes enjoyed around the fire in traditional manner—without cutlery! There is a well-stocked bar and a tea and coffee station throughout the day. What more do you need?

What really is five stars though is the time spent on the game viewers looking for photo opportunities. The innate tracking abilities of the guides really comes into its own on these drives and the passion and enthusiasm shown by the guides for their ancestral home really shines through. Not only are the guides excellent at locating the key species but they know them and their behavior to a point of almost being telepathic. Often what seems like a strange decision to move the vehicle at a sighting results in the most amazing piece of behavioral understanding as a great photo opportunity gets even better.

*Accommodations at Pangolin Photo Camp (B,L,D)*

## **Tues., Oct. 4 Departures**

It’s hard to let go of the wonderful focus and rhythm of safari life. Our drive this morning is to the airstrip, from which we return to Maun in the morning in time to catch flights out mid-day to Johannesburg that connect to outbound international flights. If you are not ready to go straight home—you can overnight in Maun, relax, repack, and travel the following day at your leisure. (B)



## Guide Peg Abbott

Peg Abbott is the owner and lead guide of Naturalist Journeys, LLC. She has been designing, guiding, and organizing natural history tours for more than 25 years, working for the National Audubon Society and other organizations before launching Naturalist Journeys, LLC in 1998. Her work has taken her from Alaska to Africa and Argentina, as well as many other locations around the world. She has conducted research on several bird and mammal species and keeps a close interest in Yellowstone and Mexican wolf reintroduction projects. Her interests include all aspects of natural history and geology. After 20 years in and around the Yellowstone area, Peg relocated in 2003 to the birding mecca of Portal, AZ. She has made over 20 trips to various countries of Africa and over the last five years grown more and more enamored with Botswana as a totally amazing experience!

## Cost of the Journey

### Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

### Travel Information

Please arrive in Maun (MUB) on September 14 in time for a 3:00 PM flight to our first lodge. Most flights arrive in the morning, and route through Johannesburg, South Africa. There are now several carriers with direct flights from Atlanta and Washington DC. Please plan to depart from Maun any time after 1 PM on October 4.

The short in-country flights are included with your tour cost and are arranged for you. These are small charter aircraft. Weight restrictions for luggage do apply.

### Cost of the Journey

Cost of the journey is \$15,500, subject to costs of internal flights.

Singles are limited, please inquire. Cost includes airport transfers, 20 nights' accommodations, meals as noted in the itinerary, professional guide services, park and preserve entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. Internal flights are included. Several of our lodges and camps are all-inclusive, providing beer and wine, bar drinks, and laundry service.

Cost of the journey does not include airfare to and from Maun, or items of a personal nature, like drinks from the bar, telephone, a local guide and lodge gratuities (at your discretion – we will provide a guideline).

### Photo Credits

Male Lion, Greg Smith (GS); Wild Dog, Peg Abbott (PA); Vervet Monkey, PA; White Rhinoceros, GS; Carmine Bee-eater, GS; Marsh Owl, GS; Yellow-billed Hornbill, PA; Saddle-billed Stork, PA.

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