

Water for Hwange Safari



Trip Summary

Our Water for Hwange Safari is a special opportunity to be immersed into a symbiosis of incredible wildlife viewing, village life, community development, and hands-on conservation efforts working alongside rangers and scientists on the front lines of wildlife protection. Designed for travelers to venture beyond game drives and photo shoots of the big five, you'll begin to understand the opportunities of safeguarding wildlife to secure better lives for local people who used to struggle with elephants that ate their crops and lions that killed their livestock.

In addition, we've added a commitment of giving back as part of this conservation safari and are planning to raise \$24,000 for four new water pumps in and around Hwange National Park for wildlife and drinking water for local villages. The price of this safari includes a \$500 tax-deductible donation to our non-profit Travelers Conservation Trust that is dedicated 100% to support the communities you visit. So, just by coming on this trip you are already supporting conservation of Hwange National Park.

Itinerary

Day 1: Gorges Lodge

Arrive at Victoria Falls Airport where your Zimbabwe safari experience begins • Meet your shuttle vehicle for your road transfer to Gorges Lodge on the edge of the Batoka Gorge, 200 meters above the mighty Zambezi River (30-40 mins) • Gorges Lodge has arguably the most spectacular views in Southern Africa and offers a unique Victoria Falls experience from a peaceful and idyllic base on the edge of the Batoka Gorge • Gorges is also a pioneering lodge in Zimbabwe, being the first built on community land in the country • The local community directly benefits from guests' stay with contributions helping to improve schools, domestic water supplies and health clinics in the local villages • Spend the afternoon sipping delicious refreshments by the pool and enjoying the amazing view • Head off to Dibu Dibu for sundowners and snacks while you watch the lodge's resident pair of black eagles soar only meters away from you (weather permitting) • Before dinner, enjoy a short presentation by Mark Butcher (head guide) on the lodge's pioneering community and conservation work in the Victoria Falls area and Hwange National Park • Take a leisurely stroll back to the main lodge reception area where you'll be entertained by a team of talented traditional dancers and enjoy a tasty three-course dinner in the main lodge area, overlooking the gorge • Tonight's moon is nearly full which should lend itself to some great photography opportunities of the Batoka Gorge! • After some moonlight views and photos of the Batoka, enjoy a peaceful sleep listening to the sound of the Zambezi river rushing below you • *Overnight Gorges Lodge (D)*

Day 2: Victoria Falls / Hwange National Park

Today, you head into Victoria Falls town for a guided tour of Victoria Falls • One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Victoria Falls is one of Africa's greatest geographical features • At 5,600 feet wide and over 330 feet in height, you'll be inspired and amazed by the sheer size, power, and beauty of the thundering curtain of water • When the Falls are at their fullest a dense plume of spray rises 1,500 feet into the air visible from many miles away, which is why the Falls are known locally as Mosi-oa-Tunya - "the smoke that thunders" • Transfer by road (2.5 hours) to Dete Siding and board the Elephant Express railcar for a relaxed ride down the railway line across Hwange, game viewing all the way into camp • Light lunch and drinks will be served on board • The Elephant Express is a one-of-its-kind 24 seat private rail car that traverses the historic colonial-



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era railway line which runs along the edge of Hwange National Park and onward to Victoria Falls • Arrive on the Ngamo plains and disembark for a game drive to the 'Look Up Blind' to enjoy outstanding close up elephant photography, literally at toe level, and enjoy sundowners over Stoffie's Pan • Arrive at Camelthorn Lodge, a community-based lodge situated in a beautiful indigenous forest on the edge of Hwange National Park and the Ngamo plains • Hwange is famed for its huge herds of elephants (they number upwards of 45,000 in the park!) but it also attracts a variety of other plains game including wildebeest, buffalo, kudu, waterbuck and sable • Predators are regularly spotted, especially lion, jackal and cheetah and leopards and wild dog are also known to frequent the area • *Overnight Camelthorn Lodge (B, L, D)*

Day 3: Hwange National Park

Today you'll explore and learn about the successes and challenges of community-based tourism and conservation from the front-line villages located directly on the border of Hwange National Park • Historically, indigenous rural communities received very little direct benefit from Zimbabwe's booming tourism industry • For the rural villager living next to a national park, wildlife was by no means an attraction: elephants ate their crops and lions killed their livestock • The animals were problematic and something to neither encourage nor protect • Tourists were just people that traveled past in buses who sometimes waved but spent their money elsewhere • Mark Butcher and his team of guides and lodges have worked for 20 years to change that paradigm • The goal and long-term vision is that by building safari lodges and camps within the communal lands and peripheral areas around parks and by bringing people closer to nature, a symbiotic relationship between conservation, responsible tourism and local communities can grow • This in turn promotes conservation of the local wildlife and natural resources and encourages sustainability for these village communities while at the same time adding significantly to the experience for the responsible safari enthusiast • You will visit several villages, both of which have benefited from tourism and those which are only beginning to • Head to Ngamo School, in a nearby village, and walk to school with the local kids, arriving to attend school assembly • Meet with the local village headman, Johnson Ncube as well as the school headmasters to hear more about the what village life is like on the border of Hwange National Park • Embark on a game drive through the park to Mfagazana pan to christen the new solar/diesel hybrid pump, which provides water for thousands of elephants and other wildlife in southern Hwange • Visit the neighboring Vulushaba village and christen their new solar pump, providing water for the villagers • This village has played an important role in identifying two international poachers who were apprehended thanks to their help • The hybridization of both pumps will be funded by the participants on this safari • Return to camp with sundowners en route and then dinner under the stars at Bomani pan • *Overnight Camelthorn Lodge (B, L, D)*

Day 4: Hwange National Park / Ndodana Village

Enjoy early morning tea or coffee and prepare for a full day trip into the park for a one of a kind 'pump run.' Hwange's famous elephant herds and all wildlife in the park are sustained during the dry season on a pumped water program started in the 1930's • These 'pump runs' combine game viewing in remote areas of the park with practical hands-on conservation • Participate in supply and maintenance support to the wells and pump attendants that are the heartbeat of Hwange and its water dependent wildlife • Your efforts today will directly support thousands of elephant and other wildlife • Game drive from pan to pan, weaving between the throngs of jostling elephant that come pouring in for the water, which makes for a fun, memorable and extremely rewarding day • A pop-up picnic lunch at Mandiseka pan will allow for a midday break and another hybrid pump visit funded by this safari • Leave the park

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and visit the neighboring Ndodana Village outside of Dodana gate to see their new village solar pump, also funded by this safari • You'll then arrive at the base of the Cobras' anti-poaching unit, where you'll be fly-camping for the night • Share a meal with the members of this unit and learn more about the lives of these heroes of conservation on the front lines of Hwange National Park • The fly camp setup is simple and authentic, harkening back to early safari days • Sleep under the stars with comfortable but basic bed rolls – a 2" foam mattress with sheets/blankets and a pillow - and mosquito nets around a big campfire • Scouts will 'stand guard' and keep the fire stoked up through the night • *Overnight Fly Camp at Mandiskea (B, L, D)*

Day 5: Jozibanini Camp

Wake up to an early breakfast over the campfire and depart on a patrol with the Cobras en route to the most remote part of the National Park and an exclusive adventure camp, Jozibanini • Located in the far south-west of Hwange National Park, a five-hour drive through sandy 4x4 country from the nearest civilization, Jozibanini ranger station had been abandoned and frequented by elephant poaching • After these incidents, Mark and his team decided to establish an outpost at Jozibanini which staff and a privileged few guests could use as a base for both management of water resources and a safari experience unlike any other • The camp's presence in the area deters poachers and is even staffed by ex-poachers who have turned over a new leaf • Keeping the experience truly wild, the six tented rooms at Jozi sit on raised wooden decks, all fully en suite • Dine al fresco with nothing but the African sky above as befits the ambience • The ecosystem here is semi-desert, akin to the Kalahari in neighboring Botswana • Ancient windblown fossil sand dunes are separated by shallow valleys where elephant paths have compacted the terrain, providing the opportunity for game viewing by mountain bike • The Jozi project has helped protect and conserve hundreds of acres of remote park, and regular traffic on the route has translated into reliable support for both the parks pump attendants and about 25% of Hwange's thirsty wildlife in the dry season • Arrive and attend a debriefing and settle into your tent before venturing out for a game drive and picnic lunch overlooking the Jozi waterhole • Join your professional naturalist guide for a walking safari, exploring the region around camp and track elephants and other game which frequent the waterhole • Dinner is under the stars before retiring to your tent for the evening • The beds can be rolled onto the deck of the tents, so you can drift off gazing skyward at millions of stars in the dark Hwange sky • *Overnight Jozibanini Camp Imvelo Safari Lodges (B, L, D)*

Day 6: Jozibanini Camp

Head out for a guided mountain bike ride through the elephant paths along the inter-dune troughs around Jozibanini (this is a slow, non-technical ride) • Your guide will set up a lovely picnic lunch for you under a shady tree where you can have a siesta before riding back to camp in the afternoon • Head into the underground blind for a few hours of spectacular 'toe nail' level photographic opportunities of wildlife at the waterhole • This unique perspective makes for amazing photos and videos • Once the sun has set, enjoy a drive back to camp for a tasty dinner under the glorious night sky • *Overnight Jozibanini Camp Imvelo Safari Lodges (B, L, D)*

Day 7: Hwange National Park

Depart Jozi for a full day game drive through the remote southwestern Hwange to Nehimba Camp • Nehimba is situated right on the edge of the mopane woodlands of northern Hwange and the Kalahari sandveld of the west and offers a full spectrum and diversity of fauna • The topography here is entirely different from the south of the park, with kopjes, some rolling hills and thick mopane forests • In addition, the elephant hunting lions of this area are famous • The area is well watered so is host to



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large numbers of animals throughout the year but particularly during the dry season • *Overnight Nehimba Camp (B, L, D)*

Day 8: Hwange National Park

One of the unique features of the Nehimba area is the famed Nehimba seeps • The seep is an ancient source of water once used by the San Bushmen historically as well as being a place where elephants still dig for water and minerals • The sunset photography opportunities with elephants is second to none in this unique and peaceful spot • For those who would like to view Hwange in a different 'light', you can accompany one of the guides on a night drive through the concession • Filtered spotlights are used to pick out the various nocturnal species that can be found such as hyena, porcupines, civets, genet cats, and if you're lucky, perhaps even a leopard on hunt! • *Overnight Nehimba Camp (B, L, D)*

Day 9: Zambezi Sand River Camp

Road transfer via 3hr game drive to Mbala and 4hr transfer on tarmac to Zam Sands (last 1hr game drive in Zambezi NP) • Zambezi Sands River Camp is set on the banks of the thundering wild waters of the Zambezi River, inside Zambezi National Park • Settle into your luxury tent and enjoy a tasty late afternoon snack on the main lodge deck while the mighty Zambezi rushes past • Head out on a game drive, stopping off at a scenic spot to watch the sun set with sundowners and mouthwatering canapés • Night drive back to the lodge and indulge in a superb 3 course meal under the stars before retiring to your tent • *Overnight Zambezi Sands River Camp (B)*

Day 10: Zambezi National Park

Start the morning on foot, exploring the shoreline and enjoying its wildlife • Park rangers and staff routinely patrol this section of Zambezi National Park for illegal snaring or signs of poaching by Zambians from the north bank – your group will provide extra eyes to these teams and get some hands-on experience in detecting cross border poaching activity in support of Park Rangers • Return to camp for a light lunch, a dip in your private plunge pool or take a short siesta • After a safety briefing, float the Zambezi in stable inflatable canoes through gentle rapids and lazy channels past small islands • The trip will culminate in a last sunset on one of the sand bars to enjoy a cool drink and tasty snacks • Return to the lodge via a 'night eyes' game drive before enjoying a farewell dinner around the boma fire • *Overnight Zambezi Sands River Camp (B, L, D)*

Day 11: Victoria Falls

Enjoy your last morning sipping tea or coffee on your private deck as the sun rises over the river and the mist settles and then breakfast on the main lodge deck, taking in the sights and sounds of your Zimbabwean safari one last time • Transfer to Victoria Falls Airport to catch your departing flight • *No overnight (B)*

***Trip itineraries are subject to change without notice due to road, weather and other factors outside of our control, for the safety and enjoyment of our guests, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Austin Adventures.*

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Activities

- Tour of Victoria Falls, Elephant Express, look-up blind at Stofie's Pan, conservation presentation after dinner.
- Community visit and meeting with village headman, pump visit, game drives.
- Visit with anti-poaching teams, full day pump-run game drive, village visit, fly camp.
- Mountain biking along elephant paths, underground blind, game drives.

Discovery – You will be immersed into a symbiosis of incredible wildlife viewing, village life, community development, and hands-on conservation efforts working alongside rangers and scientists on the front lines of wildlife protection.

Your guides will take the time to explain the details of each activity, answer any questions and demonstrate the use of all equipment. Each activity has been carefully planned to include options for all levels. Most importantly, your guides will help you select the distance that's right for you.

Meals

The hallmark of an Austin Adventures vacation is our exceptional dining. All meals: breakfasts, lunches, snacks, dinners, refreshments, and receptions are included as indicated by the itinerary. (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner). Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities are sometimes included in the trip price on this particular adventure.

Our Partner –Imvelo Zimbabwe & New Frontiers

Imvelo Safari Lodges isn't just about luxury and spectacular safaris. They believe in enriching the lives of those who live around their camps as well as their visitors'. They ensure that the local people and wildlife directly benefit from tourism. Guests who stay at Imvelo's unique, owner-run lodges enjoy incomparable wildlife and photographic safaris with fully qualified and highly experienced guides, guided game walks, bird watching, spectacular views and surroundings, adrenaline-packed activities, luxurious accommodation, and thoughtful, friendly and attentive staff.

New Frontiers South Africa's premier DMC/tour operator specializing in up-market, tailor-made arrangements in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and St. Helena Island. Specializing in both tailor-made FITs and group travel, the company prides itself on combining properties in memorable locations with extraordinary experiences, complemented by full on-the-ground support and their own bespoke touring brand, New Frontiers Escapes, in the Cape region.



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Distinctive Accommodation

Nights 1: Gorges Lodge

Perched 200 meters above the roaring Zambezi River, Gorges Lodge offers spectacular views and a quiet respite from the busy activities near Victoria Falls. The lodge is about a 30-minute drive from the falls on community land that it shares in partnership with local villages. Ten stone and thatch chalets sit on wooden platforms, each one facing an impressive skyline with views out over the gorge and river below. Activities from the lodge include visits to the falls and nearby Chisuma Village to gain insights into some of the real-life daily activities of a typical Zimbabwean rural community. Additional activities at Gorges include walks into the gorge and birding treks to see the pair of Verreaux's Eagles that also call the lodge home or head into Victoria Falls to participate in any number of the adventure activities available such as white-water rafting, bungee jumping, and helicopter or microlight flights over the falls.

Nights 2 & 3: Camelthorn Lodge

Nestled deep in a woodland of camelthorn and ebony trees bordering Hwange National Park, Camelthorn Lodge is a striking bush retreat unlike any other in Hwange. In harmony with its surroundings, the main lodge has been built around a massive camelthorn tree. The expansive dining and living areas feature a bar, teak lounge deck, and splash pool decorated in earthy hues and textured fabrics that create an atmosphere of relaxation and sophistication. The secluded Forest Villas feature cozy log fireplaces and ceiling fans whilst large glass windows and sliding doors keep you feeling at one with nature. Bathrooms with tub, shower, double vanity, and separate toilet are en-suite. An upstairs covered patio, which is accessed via an outside spiral staircase, provides an intimate glimpse into life in the treetops.

Night 4: Fly Camp at Mandiskea

Our fly camp setup is a simple and authentic African experience, hearkening back to the early days of safari, when travelers slept surrounded only by the wide-open expanses of the bush, and the night sky glittering overhead. We'll sleep with comfortable bed rolls – a 2" foam mattress with sheets/blankets, a pillow and mosquito nets, around a crackling campfire. Fall asleep in the crisp night air to the sounds of the bush, as scouts 'stand guard' with a weapon and keep the fire stoked up through the night.

Nights 5 & 6: Jozibanini Camp Imvelo Safari Lodges

Settled in a remote part of Hwange National Park, Jozibanini used a wilderness area that has been unused for almost 20 years. Enjoy tranquility and solitude on this exclusive camp that offers guests overlooks of Jozibanini Pan. Your beds situated on raised decks in tents are tucked underneath Shepherds bush and Camlethorn trees, providing privacy on the open plain. Mosquito nets, a bucket shower, and flush toilets are available en suite. Find peace in the quiet that awaits you at Jozibanini Camp that lies four hours away from any other tourism facility.

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Nights 7 & 8: Nehimba Lodge

Deep in a private concession tucked inside the remote northern region of Hwange National Park hides Nehimba Lodge. By combining luxury living with ultimate elegance and African charm, this lodge is designed to create the most exceptional safari experiences. The main guest area and seven spacious guest accommodations are thatched tents built on teak decks overlooking the magnificent lodge pan – a favored spot frequented by a variety of wildlife and large numbers of elephants, particularly in the dry season. Each thatched tent has a private balcony, en-suite bathroom with an outdoor shower, hot running water, and electricity provided by the camp's generator. The main lodge includes a swimming pool and free Wi-Fi.

Nights 9 & 10: Zambezi Sands River Camp

Located on the sun-drenched shores of the mighty Zambezi River inside Zambezi National Park, Zambezi Sands is ten luxuriously spacious canvas tents set on wooden platforms, each with a private view of the river and connected to the main lodge by elevated walkways. Each tent is opulently furnished in an Arabic-Bedouin-type ambiance featuring double or twin beds with a lounge area, en suite bath as well as outside toilet and shower. Outside each tent is a massive deck and private splash pool to cool off and relax with drink in hand in complete privacy. Transfers in and out of camp can be by boat. Located 40 minutes from Victoria Falls, Zambezi Sands has the advantage of being in an isolated, pristine wildlife habitat. This calm section of river allows for many activities including canoeing, fishing, game walks and wildlife safaris, a sunset cruise, and excursions to Victoria Falls. Experience real ecotourism visiting a Zimbabwean village and school supported by the camp.



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Arrival & Departures

An Austin Adventures representative will meet you upon arrival at the Victoria Falls Airport. Upon clearing customs, transportation to the Gorges Lodge will be provided. On Day 11 you will be transferred to the Victoria Falls Airport in accordance with your afternoon or evening flight schedule.

Trip Price

\$7,350 + \$500 per person tax deductible donation

Trip Length

11 days / 10 nights

2022 Dates

July 11-21 2022

Host City

Victoria Falls (Airport Code: VFA)

Reservations & Availability

1-800-575-1540

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Trip Reservations

Reservations, Deposits and Balances Due

International Trip Deposits: Reservations are accepted when the initial deposit including our trip planning service fee is received.

- Africa, South America, Galapagos, Polar Regions: 25% of total trip cost which is non-refundable unless indicated

Full payment is required at the time of booking if your trip departs within 90 days. We accept most major credit cards and personal checks (U.S. funds made payable to Austin Adventures). There is no surcharge for using credit cards at the time of deposit. Please contact your Adventure Consultant directly to make a deposit, or choose one of the following contact methods:

Toll free: 800-575-1540

Phone: 406-655-4591

Online: www.austinadventures.com

Mail: Austin Adventures, P.O. Box 81025, Billings, MT 59108

Final Payment: Final Payment is due at 90 days before travel. There is a 2% surcharge to use credit cards for final payments. If you wish to avoid this 2% surcharge, please make arrangements for your final balance to be paid by check or ACH payment.

Included in the Trip Price

- All transfers and transport as per program\All accommodation as per program (based on double/twin sharing room)
- Service of English-speaking station guides
- All meals as mentioned (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- All entrance fees on tour
- Evening cooking Class in Hoi An (join-in class: 2-4 pax, private class, from 5 pax up)
- Cultural performance ticket
- Domestic airfare

Not Included in the Trip Price

- Gratuities.
- International air tickets
- Early check in/or late check-out is not mentioned above
- Insurance
- Personal expenses
- All drinks
- Visa fees and/or visa authorization
- Other expenses not mentioned on the itinerary

Pre-departure Information

After receiving your reservation and deposit, we'll send you a pre-trip planner with general information about the area you'll be visiting, a packing list, exercise guidelines, a guest information questionnaire and a liability release agreement for you to sign and return within 10 days.



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Cancellations

If you must cancel before departure, money will be returned less the cancellation fees charged by Austin Adventures plus any additional non-refundable cancellation fees and payments already advanced to airlines, hotels and local operators. Additional penalties for cancellations which fall on holidays may apply. The following cancellation policies and fees are in effect:

Cancellation 91 days or more before trip departure – Initial deposit amount

Cancellation 61-90 days before trip departure – 50% of total trip

Cancellation 31-60 days before trip departure – 75% of total trip

Cancellation 0-30 days before trip departure – 100% of total trip

Terms and Conditions

Austin Adventures offers, operates, and arranges travel services both directly, utilizing our own staff and resources, as well as indirectly – often utilizing the travel services of local ground operators who are independent contractors. These local outfitters, lodges, hotels and other suppliers of your travel services will make every effort to conduct this trip as described in the itinerary. It is however possible that due to transportation schedule changes, weather, delays and unforeseeable acts of God, humans or nature, this itinerary may vary from what is described. Participants must assume all risks whether identified in advance or unforeseen. All optional activities are at your own risk. Extra costs due to unexpected changes in your itinerary for reasons beyond our control are not included. We highly recommend purchasing traveler's insurance for trip delay, trip cancellation, baggage, accident or sickness. Representatives are available for assistance at any time during your trip. If preferred hotels are not available, every attempt will be made to reserve alternative accommodations of similar quality. (If upgrade is necessary, higher rates may apply.) All information and services provided are subject to our Terms and Conditions.