



*Terra Nova Tours - Your ultimate African DMC partner
with unmatched expertise in Southern Africa*

Travel Advice - Botswana

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Travel Advice - Botswana

Intro

Botswana is, without a doubt, one of the most incredible places on Earth. With its endless palm-fringed islands in the Okavango Delta to the moonscape saltpans of the Makgadikgadi region, it is ideal for those looking for pristine, undisturbed surroundings. Its eastern and southern parts have breath-taking views of the Kalahari Desert and lunar-like pans of Makgadikgadi while the northern and western areas are defined by the spectacular vistas of the Chobe River ecosystem. Irrespective of how many times you visit Botswana, one of Africa's friendliest nations never ceases to give you something new to experience.

Languages & Local Lingo

Languages

Botswana's official languages are English and Tswana. Due to colonial history, English has become the language of official business and most written correspondence. The majority of the population speaks Tswana and more than twenty other, more minor languages such as Setswana, Kalanga, Kgalagadi, Shona, Mbukushu, Tuu, and 0.1% of the population speak Xóõ. However, some of the country's languages are in danger of extinction.

Local Lingo

Eitada/Hallo	hello, hi
Cheri-	a girl
Jari	home
Makhola	a slang name for policemen
Sgoti	a bar
Spoto	a place where alcohol is sold and where groups hang out to drink
Zaka	money

(Many slang words used in Botswana are very similar to those used in South Africa and Namibia)

Food & Beverages

- Botswana has a huge variety of traditional dishes, including meats, cereals, nuts and fruit. Among the varieties of meats are beef, goat and deer, and you can also find giraffe, ostrich meat and oryx meat.

- Phaphatha: This is the bread of Botswana. It is cooked in a dry pan, and it is often eaten alone or filled with meat. You will also find it as breakfast or a snack in most places around the country.
- Bogobe: This is Botswana Porridge. Made with sorghum, corn or millet flour, it is placed in boiling water, turns into a soft paste, and slowly cooks. Milk and sugar are often added. If it isn't served with milk and sugar, it is sometimes eaten with meat or vegetables for lunch or dinner.
- Dikgobe: This dish consists of beans, corn, and lamb. Once the bean mixture has cooked over low heat for a few minutes, the lamb is roasted. Afterwards, everything is mixed together in a single dish, which is topped with parsley sprigs.
- Mogodu: This traditional dish is prepared with tripe. A stew is prepared with sliced tripe, accompanied by potatoes and peas. It is flavoured with chilli, ginger, and garlic.
- Seswaa: Like a stew, beef, goat, and sheep are cooked slowly until they become completely tender. You can serve it alone, or with beans or rice, and one can also use it to fill sandwiches or other types of bread.

Botswana Beverages:

- Bojalwa: Traditional beer made from the fermentation of sorghum.
- Madila: One of the most popular drinks of the people of Botswana. It is made of African yoghurt and sour or cultured milk.
- Khadi: This is a homemade liquor, from a base of distilled sugar and mushrooms.
- Tho Tho Tho: This is a traditional strong beer and can reach 80% alcohol content.

Money

Currency

The official currency of Botswana is the Pula.

Botswana Banks accept the following foreign currencies: US Dollars, Pounds Sterling, Euro and South African Rands in cash. Credit and Debit Cards, including international Visa and MasterCard are accepted at most lodges.

The value-added tax is charged at a rate of 14% at the point of sale. Vacationers from outside the country can claim VAT on holiday purchases. However, VAT on goods and services that are consumed cannot be refunded.

Average Expenses

95% of all Game Lodges in Botswana are Fully Inclusive of meals and drinks. Therefore, there are very little additional costs for you to any of our Terra Nova itineraries.



Gratuuity / Tips

Most Southern and Eastern African employees are paid a low base salary and are therefore reliant on tips. You are welcome to leave a tip for the good service received during your Terra Nova visit. But how much is appropriate? This is what we would recommend our Terra Nova clients:

- Overland Guides and Safari Guides: USD 10 p/p and per day (EUR/GBP 10)
- Private Guides: USD 20 p/p and per day (EUR/GBP 20)
- Mokoro Polers, Trackers and/or Butlers: USD 5 p/p and per day (EUR/GBP 5)
- Lodge Staff: USD 5 p/p and per day (EUR/GBP 5)
- Assistance at Petrol Station (only for self-drives): USD 0,30 (EUR/GBP 0,30)

We include as many fees and expenses as possible in your Terra Nova program, so you do not have to worry about them while travelling. It's important to note, though, that some fees and levies are not pre-bookable and must be covered at the time of entry to a park, etc.

We generally exclude:

- Additional meals not specified in the itinerary
- Additional Entrance fees and Conservation Levies
- Fuel & toll fees (for self-drive tours)
- Personal extras such as tips, laundry services, Roaming etc.
- Private Expenses
- International and/or domestic flights (we of course ensure that all necessary flights are included in all of our Fly-in programs)
- Visa and Visa Fees (if applicable)
- Travel Insurance
- Any new government taxes, levies or industry increases that are beyond Terra Nova's control.

Safety & Health

Safety

Botswana is one of the safest countries in Africa, and criminal activity is generally minor. Most tourism is centred around Gaborone and Maun, along with the many Game Lodges and National Parks. The good news is that Maun experiences very little criminality and the lodges and parks have little if no crime. As you would in any country, be careful of your valuables and take only what you need. Occasionally, people have encountered crime in and around the cities, so be cautious in these areas, especially between dusk and dawn. Always be aware of your surroundings and avoid walking alone at night or in poorly lit areas.



Health

When visiting Botswana, you'll find that its health care facilities are of the highest quality. Private hospitals offer excellent services, given that you have travel insurance. In the absence of travel insurance, upfront costs may be incurred.

Please keep in mind that tourism in Botswana is focused around National Parks and Game Lodges, and many, if not all of them, have emergency medical procedures in place. Whether it is immediate medical attention on-site or helicopter access to nearby world-class health facilities.

It is essential to stay up to date on your vaccinations when you travel, such as Polio, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis A/B, etc. You should consult your doctor, pharmacist, or travel clinic to determine what precautions and/or vaccinations you need when travelling. Contact them before departing as preventative measures may take a while.

During the rainy season, between November and March, Malaria is particularly prevalent in the north. To protect yourself from insect-borne diseases:

- Be sure your accommodation is insect-proof.
- Invest in some bug spray.
- Wear light-coloured clothes that are long and loose.

If you are travelling north of Gaborone, you should take medicine to prevent Malaria.

Travel Insurance

Generally, travel insurance is not mandatory. However, it's a good idea to look into insurance - in the event that you must cancel or interrupt your trip due to illness, or medical expenses occur whilst travelling and/or your luggage gets damaged, etc. Travel insurance for a year may be the best option if you are a frequent traveller. We are sure you will find the best option for you to ensure a memorable Terra Nova trip. You might also want to check with your bank. Travel insurance is included in most credit cards nowadays.

Entry Requirements

The validity of your passport must remain valid for at least six months after the return date. It should also have four blank visa pages.

Visa

By providing us with your nationality (which is why we ask for it), we can correctly inform you about the documentation specifications you need for your Terra Nova experience. It is generally necessary to have a minimum of two consecutive free pages for entry into each country you are travelling to, including the visa and stamp (four for Botswana). If your



itinerary includes more than one country, your passport must always have enough blank visa pages (not endorsement pages) for all required visas, excluding the country of departure and return. A passport with insufficient blank pages could prevent entry into a country. If a visa payment is needed at arrival, a cash payment will usually be requested. It is sometimes necessary to know the exact amount payable as change may not be readily available. Travellers' Cheques and Credit Cards are not usually accepted for this purpose. Be sure you check with the Department of Home Affairs before travelling to avoid any disappointments.

Accommodations

Accommodations Types

We have prepared an overview of the various Terra Nova accommodations for your convenience:

Frequently used accommodations:

- (Game/Safari) Lodge
- Tented Camp / Safari Camp
- Hotel
- Resort (mainly Mozambique and Tanzania)
- Campground (especially Namibia)

Lodge

A lodge is an accommodation facility designed and situated to enhance the sense of being close to nature. Various natural materials such as wood, stone and thatch are often used as building materials. Lodges usually provide outdoor experiences, such as guided hikes and game drives.

Hotel

In general, a hotel is the largest type of accommodation. Typically, there is a common reception area, and rooms often open straight into a passageway. There is usually a restaurant and other facilities on-site that are easily accessible to the public. In addition to the standard amenities, there may be room service and spa's available. Some hotels belong to larger hotel groups, and the experience may be similar across all the locations. The hotels we work with usually range from 3 to 5 stars.

Check-in / Check-out

Check-in at your Terra Nova accommodation typically takes place between 14h00 and 15h00. On the day of departure, check-out is generally between 10h00 and 11h00. In case of a late check-in, please notify the property. Lodges often schedule shuttle services from the park entry into the Reserve. To avoid delays, please arrive at the meeting point at the time indicated on your travel documents.



Transportation & Luggage Restrictions

Transportation

Travel itineraries in Botswana generally operate as so called “Fly-in Safaris”. Propeller driven light aircraft transfer you from camp to camp, where professional guides lead you through the parks and game activities. This is a form of luxury enjoyed by tourists visiting the country. However, this is partly due to these lodges being far apart with roads travelling between them either unsuitable for driving or having no roads at all. Also, the Okovango Delta offers excursions on Mokoro boats. A unique experience unlike anywhere else.

Public transport in Botswana is not exceptionally reliable or widespread, especially outside Gaborone and other big cities. For this reason, most of the population drive themselves around.

Trains

The railroad network is not as developed as the road network. There is one passenger train that operates in Botswana, known as the BR Express.

Buses

Coach buses are an essential mode of transport in Botswana for travelling between cities and to other countries.

Taxis

Within cities and towns, public transport mainly consists of taxis. These are minibus taxi's which seat 15 people, and the taxis travel along fixed routes and are hailed from the street. Taxicabs are another common form of transportation. This is a safe choice, but we do advise passengers to agree on a price before departing.

Luggage Restrictions

The amount of luggage you can carry on an international flight depends on the airline. Typically, a flight's maximum allowance is listed in the booking confirmation. The standard amount is 20-23kg, excluding your hand luggage. National / domestic flights might have a slightly more restrictive luggage allowance, only permitting 20kg per person. This is important to keep in mind before your Terra Nova trip. Occasionally, charter flights allow only 15kg per person in soft bags and luggage has to be added to the booking. Don't worry about this too much because we, at TERRA NOVA, always guarantee ticket fares that include at least one checked luggage bag per person. For all flights booked through TERRA NOVA, we will provide you with information regarding baggage allowance and other air travel-related matters.



Stay Connected

Electricity

In Botswana, there are two associated plug types - types D and G. The standard voltage is 230V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Internet availability

Even though internet access has become a necessity for most people worldwide, it remains a luxury in Botswana. The country remains at the bottom of lists of countries with the fastest and best internet. There are still a lot of internet cafes in Botswana because, for some people, this is the only way they can access the internet. However, free, fast internet and WIFI are available at most Game Lodges.

Important Telephone Numbers

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance: 997 (Toll-Free)

Police: 999 (Toll-Free)

Fire Brigade: 998 (Toll-Free)

Medical Rescue: 911 (Toll-Free)

Medical Air Rescue: 390-1601

Terra Nova Contact

We have your back! Our Emergency / Service Phone is available 24/7, Monday through Sunday. Depending on who is on shift, we can also help you in Afrikaans, German, and/or Spanish. You can find all Terra Nova contact details in your Travel Documents. Our team is happy to assist you with this, and we will also provide all of the contact details for the services you have booked with your Travel Documents.

Rental Car

Driving in Botswana

As mentioned before, Botswana is a country where Fly-ins are generally recommended. However, there is always the option of doing a self-drive through the country. Botswana drives on the left-hand side of the road, and all road signs are in English. Botswana accepts British licences or any other licence printed in English - however, if the licence is not printed in English, an international driver's license must be obtained. Generally, the roads are long, straight and flat. In some sections of the country, the road conditions can be terrible, with



many potholes that may slow down your journey. Animals roam freely throughout the country, so be aware of them crossing the road at any given time. Keep in mind that petrol stations are few and far between, so don't forget to fill up whenever you encounter one.

Speed limits (if not otherwise indicated)

Freeways: 120km/h

Public Roads: 100km/h

Towns: 60km/h

Car Rental Terms & Conditions

- The renter must have a valid British or international driving license.
- A renter must be 23 years of age or older.
- You cannot take the rented vehicle outside of Botswana without prior permission from the rental company. A "Letter of Authorization" will be provided to the renter.

Integrity and transparency are essential to us at TERRA NOVA. We provide you with complete details of all included and/or excluded services without any hidden fees when you book with us.

For your rental car, we usually include - (unless otherwise stated):

- Vehicle of booked category
- All taxes and fees
- Contract fee
- Airport charges
- Unlimited kilometres
- Accident and theft insurance
- Tyre and windshield insurance
- Third-party liability insurance
- Additional driver
- GPS (if booked)
- Baby/child seat (if required)
- One-way fees (extra fee)
- Cross-border papers (if needed)
- Google Maps links to all destinations
- 24-hour emergency hotline

Excluded services are usually (unless otherwise stated):

- Petrol
- Security payment/deposit
- Surcharge for drivers under 23 years of age
- Luggage insurance
- Costs for overdue rental fees
- Delivery/collection of the rental car

- Cancellation/no-show fee
- Breakdown assistance (except for mechanical failure)
- Additional fees such as fines etc.

Travelling with Children

African destinations are great for children, such is Botswana. Considering we are mothers, fathers, and sisters as well, we would not recommend taking children anywhere if we had even the slightest doubt. However, Botswana is known as a high-end tourism destination as the main attraction in the country is its Game Lodges and National Parks. Due to the remote location of many of the Game Lodges, Fly-ins in small aircrafts is the recommended way to travel in Botswana. This way of travel is more suited to couples or parents wanting to travel with their teenagers. Game Drives in open vehicles as well as some of the lodges are not always recommended for small children/kids.

Some advice while travelling with kids/teens:

- Aim to arrive at your destination before noon to allow your children to burn off their excess energy.
- Even in the middle of winter, it is warm enough to go swimming during the day.
- Our recommendations are to include fewer destinations, providing you with more time to enjoy the activities.
- If you are interested in conservation, consider places that have educational facilities, rehabilitation programs, or other conservation efforts.

Travel Responsible

How can I travel responsibly?

Be conscious of your carbon footprint:

This is where it all starts. Travel provides an estimated 8% of global carbon emissions each year, making it one of the worst contributors. Flying is the only way to get to Africa. So, understanding your carbon footprint and how to offset it, is important when planning your travel. If you want to be more precise, you can use a free online carbon emissions calculator, such as Carbon Footprint. The easiest way to offset your flight is by contacting the airline directly when booking. Several airlines have carbon offset programs where travellers can pay an additional fee on top of the flight cost to support carbon offsets. These airlines include Qantas, KLM, Air Canada, and Austrian Airlines. Put yourself on the road to responsible travel by doing this.

Be Waterwise:

- You probably already know that plastic water bottles are a no-no. Instead, fill up your stainless steel or glass bottle whenever you can.
- Rather than throwing out hot water after a day of travelling, decant it somewhere valuable (like in a garden) or re-purpose it for something else (like washing your hands, clothes, etc.).
- Make sure you take a shower rather than a bath to save the environment. Be sure to turn it off while you lather up with soap, shampoo, or shave.
- Reduce the amount of toilet flushing. Depending on the type of toilet, a flush can use between 6 and 14 litres.
- As opposed to running the tap while brushing your teeth, use a cup instead.

Say no to plastic bags and straws:

We live in a culture where plastic is everywhere. It's convenient, fast, and inexpensive. Nonetheless, it also ranks among the most pressing environmental problems. Plastics kill millions of animals every year, so reducing how much we use is imperative. Use reusable bags while shopping, carry your water bottle rather than buying water, and avoid plastic straws.

Sunset /-rise

January:	05:39 – 07:11
February:	06:02 – 06:58
March:	06:13 – 06:33
April:	06:29 – 06:02
May:	06:43 – 05:41
June:	06:57 – 05:36
July:	06:48 – 05:46
August:	06:41 – 05:59
September:	06:11 – 06:11
October:	05:41 – 06:23
November:	05:20 – 06:41
December:	05:20 – 07:02

(Please note that National Park's self-drives times differ throughout the year depending on the season and the sun, as you need to be back at your lodge before sunset.)

Time Zone/ Time Difference

Central African Standard Time (CAST) is the time zone used by Botswana and most Southern African countries. The zone is two hours ahead of GMT (GMT+02:00) and is the same as South African Standard Time.



Public Holidays

New Year's Day	01 Jan	Ascension Day	May/June	Christmas Day	25 Dec
Good Friday	30 March	Sir Seretse Khama Day	01 July	Boxing Day	26 Dec
Easter Monday	02 April	President's Day	July		
Labour Day	01 May	Independence Day	30 Sep		

Taking pictures of local people

May I take pictures of local people?

- To take pictures of people in their environment, it is always best to have a local guide accompany you to communicate with the locals and overcome the barriers between you and them.
- Before taking someone's picture, be sure to ask. By doing so, you can avoid any conflict when taking photographs.
- It is common for people to expect payment for their pictures. Among these people are those still wearing traditional clothing.
- Even though young children enjoy taking their pictures, asking their guardians or parents first is always a good idea.
- It's important to show someone your digital photo after you take it. Most people are not familiar with cameras but are amazed at what they can do.
- Photographing men and women in uniform is illegal, except for situations such as public parades.