

REPUBLIC OF
Botswana



Travel Guide

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions, and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip. Be sure to check the reading list included here for more information.



“Two roads diverged in a woods, and I – I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

■ Robert Frost

Gaborone ~ Elevation: 3280 feet / Latitude: 24 40S / Longitude: 025 55E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	80	78	76	70	64	57	57	63	70	75	77	78
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	3.8	3.3	2.8	1.6	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.7	2.6	3.5
Francistown ~ Elevation: 3280 feet / Latitude: 21 13S / Longitude: 027 30E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	78	77	75	71	65	59	59	65	72	76	77	77
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	3.9	3.3	2.4	1	0.3	0.1	---	---	0.3	1.1	2.3	3.6
Maun ~ Elevation: 3101 feet / Latitude: 19 59S / Longitude: 023 25E												
Average Temperature												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	78	77	75	72	65	59	59	65	73	79	80	78
Average Precipitation												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	4.3	3.8	3.5	1.1	0.2	0.1	---	---	0.1	0.5	1.9	2.8

WEATHER

Botswana is very dry and semiarid. The northern two-thirds of the country lie within the tropics. Most of the country has a subtropical climate, with cooler temperatures prevailing in the higher altitudes. Winter days are warm and nights are cool, with heavy frost common in the desert. Temperatures range from maximums of 80°F-90°F (26.6°C - 32°C) from October to February to minimums of 30°- 40°F (2° to 4.4°C) from June to August. In August, seasonal winds begin and blow from the west, carrying sand and dust across the country. Summer rainy seasons run from November to March. Rain is rare between the months of May to August. Rainfall averages 18 inches but ranges from 27 inches in the north to less than 9 inches in the Kalahari. The rains, however, are extremely unpredictable, and the country suffers frequent droughts.

Summer: (Sept - April) Frequent rain and thunderstorms; days and nights are very hot, but cooling off after rain spells.

Winter: (May - July) Dry and cold days and nights especially in the early hours of the morning.

PASSPORTS / VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

Visas: U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries, consult the nearest Botswana consulate.

Important: Please look at your passport prior to travel to insure that:

- 1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments & endorsements cannot be used for visas.

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Major areas of the country are linked by air. *Sir Seretse Khama International (GBE)* is 15km (9 miles) northwest of Gaborone. No regular bus service runs to and from the airport, but several hotels run minibuses, called *combis*. Taxis are available to the city center (travel time – about 15 minutes).

Airport facilities include luggage storage (0530-1800), a bank (available for all flights), a bar, snack bar and restaurant (0800-1830), a post office (0800-1700), shops and car rental. *Amuch International Airport* at Kasane in northern Botswana opened at Maun in July 1996, receiving direct flights from Johannesburg, Windhoek, and Gaborone.

TIMES ZONES & FLIGHT TIMES

Botswana is Greenwich Mean Time GMT +2 hours. Flight time from London to Gaborone is approximately 15 hours (including stopovers).

CUSTOMS

Duty-Free Items: The following goods may be imported into Botswana without incurring customs duty: 400 cigarettes and 50 cigars and 250g of tobacco; 2l of wine and 1l of spirits; 50ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette; goods up to the value of P500.

Prohibited Import Items: The import of fruit, plants and seeds, all narcotics and imitation firearms is prohibited. International penalties for possession, use or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Botswana **STRICTLY ENFORCES** its law protecting animal trophies. Under this law, it is not permitted to possess or remove from Botswana, without a government permit or a receipt from a licensed shop, any living or dead animal or

trophy from an animal. Violators are subject to arrest and may face a penalty of up to five years imprisonment and a substantial fine.

A trophy is any horn, ivory, tooth, tusk, bone, claw, hoof, hide, skin, hair, feather, egg, or other durable portion of an animal, whether the item has been processed or not. Curio shops and vendors throughout the country sell items such as animal skins, plain and decorated ostrich eggs and egg shells, and carved bones or teeth of animals protected by this law. All souvenirs, although widely sold, are subject to the national trophy law. Travelers departing the country with a trophy must have a receipt from a store licensed to sell such items.

U.S. CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change. For the most current information, go to the homepage for Customs & Border Protection: www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Johannesburg International Airport introduced baggage limitations (weight and size) to reduce injuries amongst airport handling staff. Scales will be placed in the terminal, to assist passengers with verifying their baggage weight prior to checking-in. From September 1, the following standard, per baggage piece restrictions will apply:

- 900mm length = 36 inches
- 720mm height = 29 inches
- 450mm width = 18 inches
- 32 kg in weight per piece = 70 lbs

The maximum weight limit relates to single items of luggage and does not affect passengers' overall baggage allowance and excess baggage, which individual airlines determine. Should the above parameters be exceeded, baggage should be processed through the 'out of gauge' route or through cargo.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. For charter flights on small planes in Costa Rica and Southern Africa, for example, the total **including** carry-on is usually 11 to 15 pounds, depending on the destination. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size

by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside.

Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the even one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

CAMERAS & FILM

Approach Africans with an attitude of respect. Do not take anyone's picture without permission. Some people, especially villagers, religious people, and women may find it offensive while others will want to be paid. You may have to negotiate a fee beforehand. Do not photograph airports, official residences, defense establishments, police / government buildings, or borders.

Equipment: Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out any problems.

Lenses: A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. A zoom lens in the 70 to 200 mm range will help you capture the sights. Although guides get you quite close to the animals, avid photographers will want to bring telephoto lenses in the 300-500mm range. A macro lens is helpful for close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean. Also, keep equipment covered when not in use to protect it from dust and dirt.

Film: We recommend that visitors bring plenty of film. You will undoubtedly shoot more pictures than you planned. Film is expensive overseas when it can be found. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot one 36 exposure roll of film per day, and enthusiastic shooters will far exceed that. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated or, at least, cool. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is excellent for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speeds. There is a noticeable difference in quality than higher speed films. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight and ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 for lower light and nighttime situations.

Batteries: Use fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment. Bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Batteries can be expensive.

Video: If you plan to shoot video, bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Videotape is not affected by airport x-ray, only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat damage videotape. Battery charger should be capable of adjusting to 240 volts, but be prepared with plenty of batteries.

Note: Recent news reports warn that new explosive detectors used in more than 100 US airports to scan checked baggage will ruin unprotected, unexposed film. This technology will eventually be in place at all airports worldwide. Experts suggest either carrying film in carry-on luggage and/or in safety, lead-lined bags to prevent X-ray damage.

GETTING AROUND

Please note that as a client of Big Five Tours, you will not use public transport under normal conditions. We provide the information below for informational purposes only.

RAIL: There are rail links between Ramatlabama, Lobatse, Gaborone, Palapye and Francistown. Work on extending and improving the network continues. In Botswana, children under seven travel free and children aged 7-11 pay half fare.

ROAD: Tarmac (asphalt) roads cover some 1,500 miles throughout Botswana, including on the following routes: from Lobatse in the south to Francistown and north up to Ramokgwebana; from Lobatse to Kanye; from Francistown to Kazungula via Nata; and from Kanye to Jwaneng. Other roads are either gravel or sand tracks. There are plans build more major highways into the network.

BUS: Bus services run between Gaborone and Francistown and from Francistown to Nata and Maun. Buses from Francistown to Maun run every day, leaving every hour from 0730 to 1600. The journey takes about six hours.

URBAN: There is no public transport within towns except shared taxi or minibus services operating at controlled flat fares. Exclusive use of taxis is sometimes available at a higher charge although fares should always be agreed before setting out.

HEALTH

Inoculations: No vaccinations are currently required to enter Botswana from the United States, Canada, or Europe. All visitors, however, arriving from other African nations require a Yellow Fever vaccination. Your International Certificate of Vaccination for Yellow Fever must be carried with you at all times as proof that you have fulfilled the health requirements.

Visitors to Africa should be in generally good health. Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters that are recommended. Tetanus and polio vaccines should be up to date.

Dust and heat may cause a problem for asthmatics and people with allergies to dust. Those with sensitive skin should take precautions. Botswana's altitude, 1000m (3300ft) above sea level, reduces the filtering effect of the atmosphere. Hats and sunscreen are advised.

- **MALARIA** risk exists from November to May / June in the northern part of the country (Boteti, Chobe, Ngamiland, Okavango and Tutume districts / subdistricts), predominantly in the malignant falciparum form. A weekly dose of 300mg chloroquine plus a daily dose of 200mg proguanil is the recommended prophylaxis.
- **RABIES** is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.
- **BILHARZIA** (schistosomiasis) is endemic. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water. Swimming pools which are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe.

- **TRYPANOSOMIASIS** (sleeping sickness) is transmitted by tsetse flies in the Moremi Wildlife Reserve, Ngamiland and western parts of the Chobe National Park. Protective clothing and insect repellent are recommended.
- **TICK-BITE FEVER** can be a problem when walking in the bush. It is advisable to wear loose-fitting clothes and to search the body for ticks. The disease may be treated with tetracycline, although pregnant women and children under eight years of age should not take this medicine.
- **HEPATITIS A** occurs. **HEPATITIS B** is hyperendemic.

Medical Facilities: Medical facilities in Gaborone and Francistown are adequate, but available facilities in other areas are limited. For advanced care Americans often choose to travel to South Africa. Most prescription drugs are available. There are pharmacists in all main towns and pharmaceutical supplies are readily available. There is a government medical scheme and medicines supplied by government hospitals are free. Health insurance is strongly advised during any foreign travel.

Please check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or their main telephone number in Atlanta, 404-332-4559, or you can visit the CDC Internet home page at www.cdc.gov.

HINTS FOR DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness.

Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored. But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

Consider the following for your next scheduled trip:

- Start your trip rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure.
- Drink plenty of fluids — water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, however, just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.

- As much as possible, create a dark environment on the plane. Bright lights have been shown to have a strong effect on individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eye shades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Get adequate rest before starting on your journey to help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. Pilots report that taking a shower helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

SAFETY

Common sense safety precautions you normally observe when traveling anywhere should be followed to minimize the risk of personal injury or property loss. While on a safari, lodges and camps are located in or near wildlife parks and reserves, and be aware that you may find wildlife wandering onto the grounds after dark. Remember that this is not Disneyland, these animals are wild. Follow the guidelines for each individual property with regard to safety guidelines. Incidents involving animals in East Africa are rare and are almost always the result of someone doing something they have been advised not to do.

Leave jewelry at home! Do not leave cash, traveler checks, airline tickets, etc. in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase. Most of the lodges, hotels, and camps have safe deposit facilities at the front desk for your valuables. Use them. In big cities here as elsewhere, be careful when carrying purses or cameras. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Do not walk around unfamiliar cities alone at night. Be wary of entering into conversation with unknown people on the street. These are the same precautions a visitor would observe in large cities anywhere in the world, including home. Common sense is the best defense.

Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Bureau of Consular Affairs' website: <http://travel.state.gov/> or the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

ABOUT WILDLIFE

Please keep in mind that Africa is not a giant theme park. The animals you will encounter here live and die in this land, and many of them are potentially dangerous to humans. Attacks by wild animals are exceedingly rare, but no one in Africa can guarantee that such incidents will not occur. Please follow all rules and regulations established by the camps and your guides and drivers. This will help insure a satisfying and safe safari.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten animals away. The less you impact environment of the animals you want to see, the longer they will stay in your presence, and the better you'll be able to observe their natural behavior.
- Never attempt to attract an animal's attention. Do not imitate animal sounds, clap your hands, pound the vehicle or throw objects.
- Please respect your driver-guide's judgment about proximity to lions, cheetahs, and leopards. ***Big Five drivers are strictly prohibited from harassing or chasing the animals.*** Don't insist that he take the vehicle closer so you can get a better photograph. A vehicle driven too close can hinder a hunt, or cause animals to abandon a hard-earned meal. * Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals get accustomed to human visitors.
- Refrain from smoking on game drives. **Fire is a very real danger.** The dry African bush ignites very easily, and a flash fire can kill countless animals.

Walking: On safari, we walk where possible, but local area and national regulations will determine the extent to which we can do this. NOTE: Walking is at your own risk as these walks can take you close to dangerous wild animals.

Flashlights: As the grounds of all lodges/camps in Botswana are unfenced, it is essential that you bring a small flashlight as you may encounter wild animals in camp at night. You should also bring a spare bulb as well as batteries as they will be difficult to obtain outside the cities. Most camps can supply a flashlight, but it is good to have your own backup.

Driving Conditions: African roads are frequently rough and bumpy, and occasionally we will travel "off road" and it is possible that injuries may occur if for example a hidden pothole or other obstruction is struck. This also means that much traveling is done on dirt roads, so conditions do become dusty.

Power in the Camps: Camps are situated in remote areas and must generate their own electricity. Generally, each camp has a generator that runs for about 6 hours per day – two, three- hour sessions – in the morning and in the afternoon when guests are out on activities. These generators then charge batteries located at each tented room, which, in turn, provide good 12v lights all night if used sensibly. There are no 220v or 110v power points in camp. If you need to have your video battery re-charged, we can do so while you are out on an activity, so bring a spare to use while the other is being charged. These systems are simple but perfectly functional.

ETIQUETTE

You are guaranteed to come up against cultural differences between our modern society and that of Africa. Africans think and do things differently from the way we do them. Different traditions and philosophies, some of which are very old, govern attitudes toward time, business, or politics. But this is at the heart of why we travel — to experience the world differently through other cultures and other people.

As most people in Botswana follow their traditional pattern of life, visitors should be sensitive to customs that will inevitably be unfamiliar to them. Outside urban areas, people may well be unused to visitors. Casual clothing is acceptable. In urban centers, normal courtesies should be observed.

A safari is a very spiritually and emotionally stimulating experience. Even though many of the roads are rough and dusty, you will end each day tired but content.

Travel necessitates being a good-natured realist as well as a romantic. Being a genial traveling companion makes for an enjoyable travel experience for everyone and a great safari. Observing simple rules of common courtesy will better assure the success of your travel.

ELECTRICITY

Current: 220/240 volts, outlets are round 3-pin, 15-amp type.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST – MAXIMUM 26 LBS IN ONE SOFT SPORTS BAG

(Includes camera equipment within reason)

- Good-quality sunglasses, UV protected and preferably polarized. Tinted fashion glasses are not much good in harsh light, and can damage eyes.
- Bush hat
- T-shirts & one long-sleeved cotton shirt
- Shorts and skirts
- Long trousers
- Track suit
- Underwear and socks
- Good walking shoes
- Sandals / flip-flops
- Swimsuit
- Sweater / parka (important for cold winter mornings)
- A dust-proof camera bag is highly recommended.
- Extra glasses and contacts. If you usually wear contacts, bring a pair of glasses in case your eyes get irritated from the dust.
- Lightweight rain gear & scarf in Jan - April, and gloves in winter
- Head scarf for the dust.
- Basic medical kit (aspirins, Band-Aids, Imodium, antiseptic and antihistamine creams, etc)
- Binoculars - **ESSENTIAL!**
- Malaria tablets
- Moisturizing cream & suntan lotion
- Playing cards, chess, book, etc.
- Personal toiletries, tissues, insect repellent
- Visas, air tickets, money, travelers checks & credit cards.
- Passport. **Bring copies of passport and tickets, etc. in case originals are lost.**

CLOTHING

Winters (June, July & August) are usually mild to warm, which call for light clothing in the middle of the day. Layers are most practical for the fluctuating day/night temperatures of Botswana. Dull and/or neutral colors are more suitable for safari than bright colors; and white is not practical. Khaki is fine. It is best to pack hardy, durable clothing. As it can become cold at night and in the early morning, a warm sweater and jacket should be brought along. Weather conditions at the coast can be quite cold and windy, for which warm clothing, including a windbreaker, are necessary.

As no formal clothes are needed, we recommend that you keep your luggage to the basics. **Army camouflage uniforms or army hats are forbidden.** Cotton clothing and natural materials, which are cooler than synthetics, are recommended for hot Namibian summers. They can be bought at shops in Windhoek that specialize in lightweight safari garments.

Laundry can be done at all camps. Most camps charge a modest and nominal fee for this facility but others do provide this service for free. The camp staff will not, however, wash underwear because of local traditions prevailing in the country.

FOOD & DRINK

Water: Throughout Botswana at hotels, inns, lodges, and other public places, tap water is purified and safe to drink.

While tap water is considered safe, drinking water outside main cities and towns may be contaminated and need sterilization. Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are safe for consumption. Other beverages include forms of soured milk, bottled or canned soft drinks, and lager beers. The traditional beer, called *kadi* or *bojalwa*, is made from sorghum or millet.

Please remember that water is a scarce resource, especially in a drought-stricken area such as Botswana so please be respectful and help to conserve water.

Local Cuisine: Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. Meat is the basis for the traditional diet in Botswana as well as agricultural staples such as millet, sorghum, maize (corn), and beans. Often these foods are combined with tomato, greens, potato, cabbage, and onions in stews and other dishes. Wild berries and the wild morula plum are also popular.

Beef is becoming more available (though cattle remain a source of wealth rather than a food in many places) along with mutton and goat, but such dishes as antelope or ostrich stew are also popular. Phane caterpillars from the mopane wood and are considered a delicacy and are eaten as relish or snacks. The caterpillar is found in mopane trees in dry bush areas of Southern Africa.

TIPPING

Tipping is at the sole discretion of the guests and is not compulsory. Service is not usually included in the bill. Provided the service is good, it is usual to tip porters, waiters, taxi drivers, room attendants, golf caddies, game rangers, and trackers. Tipping should only be done if you have received good service and you want to tip. Guests, however, often want to know what is appropriate, so we have included this guideline. Generally speaking, gratuities to waiters and taxi drivers should amount to around 10% of the cost of the

service. Porterage is usually P1.50 per bag, and golf caddies usually around P20 a round.

Guides: If they have done a good job, US\$5 or more per person per day.

Camp Staff: At camps such as Wilderness Camp, staff should be tipped communally, about US\$3 per person per day to be distributed amongst the staff. The camps usually have communal tip box.

Pilot: If your pilot has done a good job - about US\$5 or more per person per day.

Others: 10% is customary.

SHOPPING

Botswana crafts people make excellent woodcarvings, handcrafted jewelry, woven goods and baskets. Basketry, in fact, is the most famous craft in Botswana. Baskets have been made and used in Botswana for thousands of years. Closed baskets are traditionally used for storing grain, seeds, and sorghum beer. Open bowl-shaped baskets are used primarily by women for carrying items on their heads or winnowing grain. Today, these baskets are among the finest in the world. Some of the larger more intricate baskets can take months to make.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BARGAINING

- Bargain, bargain, bargain! This should be fun! Sometimes it is helpful to establish prices before going out to bargain.
- When bargaining, your first offer should be much lower than the asking price. Establish a price in your own mind how much the item is worth to you and what your top dollar price will be.
- Their first offer will normally be high; your first counteroffer should be low. The game is your move up in what you offer, while the seller moves down.
- Do not be afraid to walk away. The seller may drop the price.
- You will also get a better price per item if you buy several items from the same vendor.
- Again, remember, this is a game. Make it fun, and both sides will have a good time and be satisfied with the transaction.

INTRODUCTION TO BOTSWANA

Formerly British protectorate of Bechuanaland, Botswana adopted its new name upon independence in 1966. The economy, closely tied to South Africa's, is dominated by cattle raising and mining.

Capital: Gaborone

Independence: 30 September 1966 (from UK)

National Holiday: Independence Day, Sept.30

Constitution: Mar 1965, effective 30 Sept 1966

Population: 1,591,232

Note: estimates for this country explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Botswana has maintained one of the world's highest growth rates since independence in 1966. Through fiscal discipline and sound management, Botswana has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of \$7,800 in 2001. Two major investment services rank Botswana as the best credit risk in Africa. Diamond mining has fueled much of expansion and currently accounts for more than one-third of GDP and for four-fifths of export earnings. Tourism, subsistence farming, and cattle raising are other key sectors. On the downside, the government must deal with high rates of unemployment and poverty. Unemployment officially is 21%, but unofficial estimates place it closer to 40%. HIV/AIDS infection rates are the highest in the world and threaten Botswana's impressive economic gains.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The main ethnic groups are the Batswana (descendants of Iron Age immigrants from Central West Africa), the Basarwa (San, indigenous hunter gatherers, pre-Iron Age), and the Herero (pastoralists).

The Batswana, a term also used to denote all citizens of Botswana, also refers to the country's largest ethnic group -- the Tswana in South Africa that came into the area from South Africa during the Zulu wars of the early 1880s. Prior to European contact, the Batswana lived as herders and farmers under tribal rule.

In the late 19th century, hostilities broke out between the Batswana and Boer settlers from Transvaal. After appeals by the Batswana for assistance, the British Government in 1885 put "Bechuanaland" under its protection. The northern territory remained under direct administration and is today's Botswana, while the southern territory became part of the Cape Colony and is now part of the northwest province of South Africa. The majority of Setswana-speaking people today live in South Africa.

Despite the pressure of South Africa, inhabitants of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Basutoland (Lesotho), and Swaziland in 1909 asked for and received British assurances that they would not be included in the proposed Union of South Africa. An expansion of British central authority and the evolution of tribal government resulted in the 1920 establishment of two advisory councils representing Africans and Europeans. Proclamations in 1934 regularized tribal rule and powers. A European-African advisory council formed in 1951, and the 1961 constitution established a consultative legislative council.

In June 1964, Britain accepted proposals for democratic self-government in Botswana. The seat of government was moved from Mafikeng, in South Africa, to newly established Gaborone in 1965. The 1965 constitution led to the first general elections and to independence in September 1966. Seretse Khama, a leader in the independence movement and the legitimate claimant to traditional rule of the Batswana, was elected as the first president, re-elected twice, and died in office in 1980. The presidency passed to the sitting vice president, Ketumile Masire, who was elected in his own right in 1984, then re-elected in 1989 and 1994. Masire retired from office in 1998. The presidency passed to the sitting vice president, Festus Mogae, who was elected in his own right in 1999.

THE AREAS OF BOTSWANA

Okavango delta: The Okavango Delta is Botswana's main tourist attraction. In a strange reversal of the usual order of things, the development of the Rift Valley across the course of the Okavango River, seventh largest river in Africa, gave rise to the Okavango Delta, which is one of the most fascinating places in Africa. The 15,000 km² inland delta (the largest in the world) is a result of the Okavango River and others flowing inland and forming a sea in the Kalahari Desert. Each year, heavy rainfall in Angola, the source of the Okavango River, results in the river breaking its banks and creating what is known as the Okavango Swamps as it flows into Botswana. The swamp waters are crystal clear, clean and free of bilharzia. This Eden is home to a vast array of animal, bird and plant life. Mid-May to mid-September, when the water levels are neither too high nor too low, is the best time to visit. To get the most out of the Okavango Delta experience, it is advisable to use the services of professional and experienced tour operators able to convey you through the complicated waterways, to lead you to the best game viewing, birdwatching or fishing spots. Contrary to some tourist literature, the whole delta does not teem with game - its attraction lies more in bird watching, fishing, solitude, tranquility and unforgettable sunsets.

For anybody visiting, this natural wonder of beautiful channels, lots of pristine landscapes, and islands inhabited by lots of wildlife, is a must. Access is by road and air. No big hotels can be found in this area which instead is characterized by a few excellent lodges and small camps. The policy is in line with keeping the habitat as natural as possible.

The Kalahari Desert: The Kalahari, or Kgalagadi, covers almost two-thirds of Botswana. It is a sandy desert with very little vegetation. Beneath the dunes are a complex and fascinating system of pans, depressions and river beds. Wildlife was once abundant, and remains so in certain areas. These include hartebeest, wildebeest, springbok, gemsbok, eland, giraffe and ostrich. The various game reserves in the Kalahari offer a variety of attractions which range from geological to the said wild animals including big game. Traveling through the Kgalagadi offers one the ultimate wilderness experience, almost out of this world.

Chobe National Park: 11,000 sq. km. in northeastern Botswana. Habitats range from swamp and flood plain to dead lake bed, sandridges and forest. This is Botswana's second tourist attraction. It has varied game populations. There is no development and remains a natural wilderness. Access is by gravel and sand roads, and by air. The two main entrances to the park are at Kasane (an hour's drive from Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls) and at Mababe (an hour's drive from Maun). The riverine areas to the west of Kasane are accessible by saloon car. Main attractions are large herds of elephant and buffalo, hippo, lion, leopard, rhino, giraffe, eland, zebra, tsessebe, waterbuck, puku, lechwe, crocodile, sable antelope, wild dog, warthog, baboons, impala, hyena, roan, kudu, and many others. Entry and camping tickets can be purchased in both Kasane and Maun. Accommodation is provided in lodges and park camping sites at Serondela, Savuti (the Savuti area is closed from January to March), and Noatsau. Camping sites are administered by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, PO Box 17, Tel. 17, Kasane and PO Box 11, Tel. 230, Maun.

Moremi Wildlife Reserve: 3,900 sq. km. Established 1965 when Chief Letsholathebe Moremi and the Batawana became

so convinced of the need to conserve wildlife that they set aside 3,000km² of their ancestral lands for this purpose. Lies on the northeast side of the Okavango Delta. With habitats ranging from dry savanna woodland, through semi-desert-like knobthorn and Mopani forests, riparian woodland, floodplain and reedbeds to permanent papyrus swamp, it is reputed as one of Africa's most beautiful protected areas, with a diversity of ecologies. The main attractions are the enormous range of birds and game. Some of the finest sights are the heronries on tiny islands which consist of little more than gomoti figtrees which grow from termite mounds with their roots below the water. Clustered at night in the tops of these thickets at Cakanaca, Gcobega and Gcodikwe are large colonies of night herons, ibis and egrets, marabou and other storks. The moremi flood plains are home to buffalo, lechwe, zebra, waterbuck, loin, cheetah, wilddog and hyena. Crowned and wattled cranes are also common. The use of boats for game-viewing and fishing is permitted. Access to the reserve is from Maun. Roads are not good and it is advisable to use 4-WDs. The South Gate is at Maqwe, just over 100 km north of Maun; the North Gate is on the Khwai River about 170 km from Maun. At times the reserve closes during the rains. There are several tour operators serving the Reserve, and accommodation is at camps and lodges.

SELECTED READING LIST

In addition to the many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, and others, here are a few other titles that might interest you. These books may be obtained through most bookstores or on the World Wide Web.

BESSIE HEAD

Craig MacKenzie

When the depredations of apartheid forced most of her contemporaries into exile in Britain, Europe, and the United States, the South African writer Bessie Head (1937-1986) chose to move to neighboring Botswana, by South African standards then a dry, dusty, and undeveloped backwater. And where her fellow writers chose apartheid's depredations as the subject for their searing social indictments, Head turned for inspiration to local sources, recording in stories of parable-like intensity the daily lives of people in a remote African village. She is perhaps the only black African writer who has successfully dealt with the tensions and torments of her own life - madness, guilt, vexed personal relationships, loneliness, exile - and the often haunting results have won her a growing following in critical circles, most notably among feminists, who see her as having been victimized not only by South Africa's brutal racial politics but also by patriarchal attitudes among African men. In this overview of Head's work, Craig MacKenzie argues that the physical journey Head took from South Africa to Botswana has a special resonance in her writing, in which she moves from disintegration to wholeness.

FAR AND BEYON', VOL. 1

Unity Dow

"For Mara, mother of four, sole provider for her family, life has never been easy. In a community that relies upon traditional magic to cure AIDS, and blames bad luck upon a bewitching curse, women carry a heavy burden as the world changes around them. But in modern Botswana, the tensions are growing as more and more young people adopt white ways and challenge the heavily divided structure of African society." For Mara, it is her children's dismissal of all the ancient magicks that have held families together for

generations; for her son Stan it is the opportunities represented by his white teachers and the education system; and for daughter Mosa it is her burgeoning awareness of the inequality of her home, and community. Together they will develop new strengths and define new goals, enabling them all to triumph and travel 'far and beyond'.

OKAVANGO: AFRICA'S LAST EDEN

Frans Lanting, Christine Eckstrom, Editor

Okavango is the first major celebration in text and photographs of Africa's last Eden. More than 130 extraordinary photographs, taken during a year-long assignment in the region by award-winning photographer and naturalist Frans Lanting, capture with powerful immediacy the beauty and drama of Africa's breathtaking Okavango Delta. Spreading over 8,600 square miles, this vast wetland in the heart of the Kalahari supports an unparalleled diversity of wildlife. From its origins in the highlands of Angola, the Okavango River descends to the near-desert of northern Botswana, where it fans out as the world's largest inland delta; an ecosystem of a size and complexity rivaling any on earth, a rare place where desert and swamp dwellers meet.

MORTALS

Norman Rush

The greatly anticipated new novel by Norman Rush—whose first novel, *Mating*, won the National Book Award and was everywhere acclaimed—is his richest work yet. It is at once a political adventure, a social comedy, and a passionate triangle. It is set in the 1990s in Botswana—the African country Rush has indelibly made his own fictional territory. *Mortals* chronicles the misadventures of three ex-pat Americans: Ray Finch, a contract CIA agent, operating undercover as an English instructor in a private school, who is setting out on perhaps his most difficult assignment; his beautiful but slightly foolish and disaffected wife, Iris, with whom he is obsessively in love; and Davis Morel, an iconoclastic black holistic physician, who is on a personal mission to “lift the yoke of Christian belief from Africa.” The passions of these three entangle them with a local populist leader, Samuel Kerekang, whose purposes are grotesquely misconstrued by the CIA, fixated as the agency is on the astonishing collapse of world socialism and the simultaneous, paradoxical triumph of radical black nationalism in South Africa, Botswana's neighbor. And when a small but violent insurrection erupts in the wild northern part of the country, inspired by Kerekang but stoked by the erotic

and political intrigues of the American trio—the outcome is explosive and often explosively funny.

Along the way, there are many pleasures. Letters from Ray's brilliantly hostile brother and Iris's woebegone sister provide a running commentary on contemporary life in America. Africa and Africans are powerfully evoked, and the expatriate scene is cheerfully skewered.

Through lives lived ardently in an unforgiving land, *Mortals* examines with wit and insight the dilemmas of power, religion, rebellion, and contending versions of liberation and love. It is a study of a marriage over time, and a man's struggle to find his way when his private and public worlds are shifting. It is Norman Rush's most commanding work.

KING KHAMA, EMPEROR JOE, AND THE GREAT WHITE QUEEN: VICTORIAN BRITAIN THROUGH AFRICAN EYES

Neil Parsons

In 1895 three African chiefs traveled to England to persuade Queen Victoria not to give their lands to Cecil Rhodes. Appealing to the middle-class morality of Victorian society, the chiefs began a tour of the British Isles for their cause. They were remarkably successful in gaining support, eventually swaying Secretary of State for the Colonies Joseph Chamberlain into drafting the agreement that secured their territories against the encroachment of Rhodesia, leading indirectly to the independence of present-day Botswana. Historian Neil Parsons has reconstructed this unusual journey with the help of African archival materials and press clippings from British newspapers, gathered by a clippings service the chiefs had the foresight to employ. A full record of an African Journey of exploration in the nineteenth century, the book provides as well a view from the other side of colonialism and imperialism, and does so with the richness and depth of a fully realized novel.

PRIDES: THE LIONS OF MOREMI

Chris Harvey, Pieter W. Kat

Illustrated with two hundred color photographs, this striking volume reveals the worlds of four neighboring prides that roam the diverse habitats of Botswana's Okavango Delta. Drawing on continuing field research begun in 1995, Pieter Kat shows how Okavango lions challenge long-held assumptions about sociability, mating strategies, and hunting techniques. Pride males readily mate with females from other prides; females often leave their offspring vulnerable to predators; and lions are more prone to hunting mistakes and scavenging than has been commonly believed.

CLOTHING / PACKING CHECKLIST

Check the items below to be taken with you on your trip. Additional items may be added in the blank spaces provided.
This is not intended as an all-inclusive list, but only as a suggested packing guide.

CLOTHING - WOMEN

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
- Sandals or casual shoes
- Walking shoes or tennis shoes
- Rubber thongs (shower)
- Hat
- Windbreaker or jacket
- Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
- Longpants
- Shorts
- Socks
- Short sleeve shirts
- Long sleeve shirts
- T-shirts
- Pajamas
- Light-weight robe / cover-up
- Swim-suit/cover-up
- Casual slacks / skirt
- Blouses
- Belt(s)
- Underwear
- Scarves
- Costume Jewelry
- _____
- _____
- _____

CLOTHING - MEN

- Comfortable outfit for air travel
- Sandals or casual shoes
- Walking shoes or tennis shoes
- Rubber thongs (showers)
- Hat
- Windbreaker or jacket
- Pullover sweater or sweatshirt
- Longpants
- Shorts
- Socks
- Short sleeve shirts
- Long sleeve shirts
- T-Shirts
- Pajamas
- Light weight robe / cover-up
- Swim trunks
- Casual slacks
- Shirts
- Belt(s)
- Underwear
- _____
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TOILETRIES

- Anti-malarial pills
- Vitamins
- Aspirin / Tylenol
- Motion sickness pills
- Short-acting sleeping pills
- Decongestant
- Antibiotic
- Lomotil/Pepto-Bismol
- Antacid
- Antibiotic ointment
- Insect repellent
- Sun screen/Sun block
- Lip balm
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Binoculars Prescription medications
- Band-Aids
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Feminine Hygiene supplies
- Dental floss
- Mouthwash
- Hairbrush / comb
- Razor
- Q-Tips / cottonballs
- Nail clippers
- Nail file
- Tweezers
- Make-up
- Hand lotion
- _____
- _____
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CAMERA EQUIPMENT

- Camera / Lenses
- Plenty of film
- Lead Protective Film Bags
- Camera bag
- Lens filters
- Cleaning Fluid / Tissues
- Lens Brush / Puffer
- Extra Batteries / Charger
- Flash & Flash batteries
- Zip-lock bags
- Camera instruction book
- Stick-on labels for film
- Blank video tapes
- Video Camera / Charger
- _____
- _____
- _____

SUNDRIES

- Passport
- International Certificate
- Vaccinations / Health Card
- Airline tickets / vouchers
- Money Pouch
- Credit Cards
- Travelers Checks
- Small calculator
- Sunglasses
- Prescription glasses
- Eyeglass case
- Small Alarm Clock
- Converter / plug set
- Binoculars
- Small flashlight
- Sewing kit
- Small scissors
- Kleenex
- Handi-wipes
- Zip-lock bags
- Travel clothes line
- Pillowcase for dirty clothes
- Small notebook or journal
- Pen
- Deck of cards
- Books / Magazines
- Address book for Postcards
- Photocopy of passport & Airline Tickets
- Hard candy
- Bandana
- Extra small, collapsible bag
- Neck pillow for airline travel

OTHER

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CLOTHING SHOULD BE COMFORTABLE