

BIG FIVE

TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

Enriching Lives Through Distinctive Journeys

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



ZAMBIA

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to frequently asked questions. It is not intended as a definitive guide.

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Lusaka ~ Elevation: 3785 feet / Latitude: 15 19S / Longitude: 028 27E

Average Temperature

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
°F	73	73	72	70	66	62	62	66	73	77	76	73

Average Number of Days With Precipitation

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Days	13	12	9	4	1	---	---	---	---	2	6	13

WEATHER

Although Zambia lies in the tropics, the height of the plateau ensures that the climate is seldom unpleasantly hot, except in the valleys. There are three seasons: the cool, dry winter season from May to September; the hot, dry season in October and November; and the rainy season, which is even hotter, from December to April. **Required clothing:** Lightweights or tropical with rainwear.

TIME ZONE / FLIGHT TIME

Greenwich Mean Time GMT +2 hours. There is no summer time clock change.

Approximate flight time: From East Coast, USA to Johannesburg is about 17 hours, then approximately two hours from Johannesburg to Lusaka.

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: Many countries require that travelers obtain visas prior to arrival. Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Zierer Visa Service (ZVS) to process required visas for our passengers. The Visa Application Kit is included with your pre-trip confirmation packet. You can also download the necessary forms from their website at www.zvs.com. If you enter the members section with the username [bigfive](#), and the password [55509](#), you will enter the visa section for Big Five Tours & Expeditions. Here you will find a list of country-specific forms. You will also discover useful hints such as how to obtain a passport, adding passport pages, and other tips.

Important: Please look at your passport before you submit it to ZVS 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 and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Departure tax: US\$20 (payable in cash). Transit passengers are exempt.

Duty-Free Items: Travelers may, for their own consumption, import 400 cigarettes or 500g of cigars or 500g of tobacco; 2.5 liters of wine; 1.5 liters of spirits and 2.5 liters of beer; 1oz of perfume; other goods up to the value of US\$150.

Note: Souvenirs may be exported without restriction but game trophies such as tooth, bone, horn, shell, claw, skin, hair, feather or other durable items are subject to export permits.

Prohibited Items: All narcotics (hemp, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin, etc.), firearms, obscene literature, pictures, or articles. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

CUSTOMS INTO ZAMBIA

The following items may be imported into Zambia without incurring customs duty: 400g cigarettes or 500g of tobacco; 1 bottle of spirits and wine and 2.5 liters of beer (opened); 1 oz bottle of perfume.

Note: Souvenirs may be exported without restriction but game trophies such as tooth, bone horn, shell, claw, skin, hair, feather or other durable items are subject to export permits.

US CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change. For a list of exempt items: contact your nearest Customs office or write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044.

LUGGAGE

For general international luggage information, please see information sheet provided in your pre-trip information. Remember that due to constantly changing rules, you should reconfirm with your international airlines prior to travel for restrictions.

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.

Johannesburg International Airport introduced baggage limitations (weight and size) to reduce injuries amongst airport handling staff. Scales in the terminal assist passengers with verifying their baggage weight prior to checking-in. 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.

WEIGHT ALLOWANCES ON FLYING SAFARIS

For those traveling on a flying safari, no formal clothes are needed so we recommend that you keep your luggage to the very basics.

For safety and space reasons, **26 pounds is the weight limit** on luggage due to specific restrictions for light aircraft that are strictly enforced. That 26-pound limit includes camera bag and equipment. On light aircraft, a soft carryall (instead of a suitcase) is required with the following maximum dimensions: 32 in long by 14 in wide. Please keep in mind that the light aircraft have no baggage compartments, so all

bags must be carried inside the aircraft, and space is very limited.

Additionally, a guest traveling alone who weighs 200 pounds or more, or two guests traveling together whose combined weight is 390 pounds or more, must advise us. All weight limits are due to safety factors involved in the light aircraft transfers. Please note that if these limitations are exceeded, it may be necessary to charge for an additional aircraft. If you are using only scheduled flight services on your safari, then the weight limit is a maximum of 44 pounds (plus camera equipment within reason). **Note:** passengers who bring more than allotted weight allowance may necessitate using an extra charter aircraft. In this case, clients will be charged for the extra charter costs, which can be considerable. Excess baggage can be stored.

COMMUNICATION

Languages: English (official), major language groups include Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja, and Tonga as well as about 70 other indigenous languages.

Telephone system: Facilities are among the best in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Domestic:* high-capacity microwave radio relay connects most larger towns and cities; several cellular telephone services are in operation. Internet service is widely available. *International:* Satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 1 Atlantic Ocean)

BUSINESS HOURS

General Office hours: 0800-1300 and 1400-1700 Mon to Fri.
Shopping hours: 0800-1700 M to F and 0800-1300 Sat.
Banks: Hours of operation vary from bank to bank, but most are open from 0900 to 1430, Mondays to Fridays, and 0900 - 1130 on Saturdays. Some Banks open the first and last Saturday of the month. **Government hours:** from 0800 to 1700, Monday to Friday, but closed from 1300 to 1400 for afternoon break.

BANKING / CURRENCY

Currency: Kwacha (K) = 100 ngwee. Notes are in denominations of K10,000, 5000, 1000, 500, 100, 50, and 20. Coins are in denominations of K1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 ngwee.

Currency exchange: Exchange of foreign currency is carried out at authorized banks and change bureaus.

Credit cards: American Express is widely accepted, with more limited use of MasterCard, Diners Club, and Visa. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other available services.

Traveler's checks are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, however, visitors are advised to take traveler's checks in US Dollars or Pounds Sterling.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

A yellow fever certificate is mandatory if you are traveling from an infected area.

Vaccinations for cholera, tetanus and yellow fever are advised. Malaria is virulent in the low lying areas of the country which include most of the good wildlife destinations. Take prophylactics two weeks before arrival and continue two weeks after leaving. Your doctor or local health department can advise you of the most suitable drug available as certain

drugs lose their effectiveness.

Tap water in the major towns is purified and perfectly safe to drink. In the more remote areas always boil it first, except if you're staying at a lodge or hotel where drinking water is boiled already. Bottled water is readily available in the bigger towns.

1. A **yellow fever** vaccination certificate is required from travelers over one year of age arriving from infected areas. All passengers must hold an 'International Certificate of Vaccination' booklet even if no vaccination is required. Travelers arriving from non-endemic zones should note that vaccination is strongly recommended for travel outside the urban areas, even if an outbreak of the disease has not been reported and they would normally not require a vaccination certificate to enter the country.
2. Following WHO guidelines issued in 1973, a **cholera** vaccination certificate is not a condition of entry to Zambia. However, there are chances of cholera breaking out especially during the rainy season. Precautions are therefore essential. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccinations, as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness.
3. **Malaria** risk exists, predominantly in the malignant falciparum form, in the whole country throughout the year. The malignant form is reported to be 'highly resistant' to chloroquine.
4. **Water** used for drinking or making ice should be boiled or sterilized. Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are generally safe for consumption. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Swimming pools which are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe.

Health care: Health service is not free and health insurance is advisable. Adequate health care cannot be assured outside main towns. It is advisable to carry basic medical supplies. A **yellow fever** vaccination certificate is required from travelers over one year of age arriving from infected areas. **All passengers must hold an 'International Certificate of Vaccination' booklet even if no vaccination is required.** Travelers arriving from non-endemic zones should note that vaccination is strongly recommended for travel outside the urban areas, even if an outbreak of the disease has not been reported and they would normally not require a vaccination certificate to enter the country. Zambia requires an International Health Certificate showing proof of a yellow fever vaccination within the past 10 years. Health risks in Zambia are cholera, malaria, polio, typhoid, yellow fever.

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

It is very important that you drink plenty of water especially during the warmer months. It is generally recommended that one drink at least 2 to 3 liters of water per day to limit the effects of dehydration. This excludes tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages, which act as diuretics and can actually contribute to dehydration. Be prepared to take precautions against sunburn with sunscreen and lip protector.

Note: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

Malaria Precautions: Malaria prophylactic is recommended for travelers to most areas in southern Africa. It is important to bear in mind that malaria may be contracted despite taking tablets, especially in areas where chloroquine resistance has been reported. Please remember that the best insurance against contracting malaria is to try to prevent being bitten, so use mosquito repellents liberally.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers or slacks in the evenings. You should spray your room prior going to dinner with an insecticide that will kill any mosquitoes. Mosquito coils are also effective. If you become ill on your return, while still on prophylactics or even once you have stopped, make sure that your doctor does everything necessary to establish that your illness is not malaria. Malaria is not a serious problem if people are sensible and take basic precautions.

Cholera: Inoculation recommended. Cholera is reported in areas of the country

*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, visit the CDC Internet home page at <http://www.cdc.gov>.*

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, remember that lodges and camps are located in or near wildlife parks and reserves, and you may find wildlife wandering onto the grounds after dark. **These are not amusement parks, these animals are wild.** Always follow guidelines of each property with regard to safety. 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's 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 cities here as in cities at home, be aware! During the day and in crowds, be careful when carrying purses or cameras. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Take taxis from hotels and do not accept rides from unauthorized cabs. 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 North American cities. Common sense is the best defense.

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

ELECTRICITY

The electrical voltage in Zambia is rated as 220-240 V-AC, 50 Hz. Zambia actually has excess power and generally exports electricity to neighboring countries. **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 recharged, 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.

FOOD & DRINK

Drink bottled water and beverages. If you use ice in your drink, make sure it was made with purified water. But it's best to do without ice all together if you can. Also, please remember that if you are drinking bottled water on any tour, use that water to brush your teeth and clean contacts.

Zambia's staple food is maize (corn), and Zambians eat it in several ways. When corn is ripe but still green, it is roasted and boiled; when dry and hard, it can be fried or boiled. Maize is also pounded slightly to remove top layer, and boiled either by itself or mixed with beans or groundnuts (peanuts). It is ground to a size slightly larger than rice and is cooked like rice. Finally, fine cornmeal, called mealie-meal, is used for making **nsima**, steamed cornmeal that is the most popular meal in Zambia. **Nsima** is usually prepared for lunch and dinner.

Meat from cows, goats, sheep, and fish are used in sauces over **nsima**. Many vegetables are also added in sauces, such as leaves from beans, okra, cow peas, pumpkins, and cassava. Other vegetables eaten almost daily include onions and tomatoes. Fruits available include paw-paw, mango, lemon, bananas, and groundnuts.

Locally brewed Chibuku (Shake-Shake) is fairly popular among people, although commercially brewed beers such as Rhino, Mosi, and Castle lager are more dominant.

CLOTHING ON SAFARI

Winters are usually mild to warm, which call for light clothing in the middle of the day. As it can become cold at night and in the early morning so bring a warm sweater and jacket along.

We recommend that you keep your luggage to the basics. Bright colors and white are NOT advised for safaris. Cotton clothing and natural materials, cooler than synthetics, are recommended.

Laundry can be done at some camps. Ask about charges. Most camps that do laundry charge a nominal fee for this service but some do not charge. The camp staff will not, however, wash underwear because of local traditions prevailing in the country.

Please refer to luggage restrictions and our clothing list for other suggestions.

SHOPPING

Lusaka has modern shops, supermarkets, and open-air markets. Special purchases include African carvings, pottery and copperware, beadwork, and local gemstones. You will also find inviting souvenirs during your journey. Shop for local handicrafts (tribal art, paintings and carvings), gems, pottery, Zanzibar chests, Makonde carpets and sculptures, Tingatinga paintings (a cartoon-like, uniquely Tanzanian style of painting that developed in the 1960s), colorful fabrics, cheap soapstone carvings, cloth paintings of

Mt. Kilimanjaro and suede. Bargaining is expected anywhere the prices are not marked.

TIPPING

In some areas, tipping is discouraged as it is included as service charge on your bill. In other areas such as Victoria Falls, tipping is routine. Tipping is at the sole discretion of the guests and is not compulsory. 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 a brief guideline to assist you. 10% is customary, but for the following, we recommend:

Guides: If he/she has done a good job, we recommend US\$5 or more per person per day.

Camp Staff: Staff should be tipped communally, and we recommend US\$3 per person per day to be distributed by the staff. Camps usually have a communal tip box.

Pilot: If your pilot has done a good job – again, we recommend US\$5 or more per person a day.

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.

TRAVELER'S ETIQUETTE

You are guaranteed to come up against cultural differences between our modern society and that of Africa. Other cultures think and act in ways often baffling to us. Different traditions and philosophies, some of which are ancient, govern attitudes toward time, business, social meetings and politics. But this is at the heart of why we travel -- to experience the world through other societies, other people.

African culture and traditions remain prominent. For example, wives do all cooking, and boys from the age of seven eat with the men. Traditional dancing is popular and there are many colorful annual ceremonies that take place throughout the country. Visitors to the outlying areas should expect to be met with curiosity. Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting

Wherever you travel, always approach local residents with an attitude of respect. Do not take photograph people without permission. Many times it is necessary to negotiate a fee beforehand. Never take any photos of airports, police or government buildings, military installations, or borders.

ON SAFARI

Numerous national park regulations govern the behavior of visitors. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the animals. Be considerate of the habitat as well. Many of the heavily visited parks prohibit driving off-road, but this is seldom a problem in getting up close to the animals, as there is an intricate pattern of roads throughout the parks.

Keep your head and arms in the vehicle area, don't make sudden moves or wave to try to attract attention. 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.

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. 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.

RESPECT FOR WILDLIFE

- Observe animals silently and with a minimum of disturbance to their natural activities. Loud talking on game drives can frighten animals away.
- 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 judgement about proximity to lions, cheetahs, and leopards. 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. **Big Five drivers are strictly prohibited from harassing or chasing the animals.**
- **Never Litter!** Litter tossed on the ground can choke or poison animals and birds. It is unsightly and ruins the experience for others.
- Never attempt to feed or approach any wild animal on foot. This is especially important near lodges or in campsites where animals may have become accustomed to human visitors.
- **Refrain from smoking** on game drives. The dry African bush ignites very easily, and a flash fire can kill countless animals.

OVERVIEW OF ZAMBIA

The territory of Northern Rhodesia was administered by the South Africa Company from 1891 until it was taken over by the UK in 1923. During the 1920s and 1930s, advances in mining spurred development and immigration. The name was changed to Zambia upon independence in 1964. In the 1980s and 1990s, declining copper prices and a prolonged drought hurt the economy. Elections in 1991 brought an end to one-party rule, but the subsequent vote in 1996 saw blatant harassment of opposition parties. The election in 2001 was marked by administrative problems with at least two parties filing legal petitions challenging the results. Opposition parties currently hold a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

GEOGRAPHY & TERRAIN

Zambia is a vast plateau bordered by Angola to the west, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the north, Tanzania to the northeast, Malawi to the east, Mozambique to the southeast, Zimbabwe and Botswana to the south and the Caprivi Strip of Namibia to the southwest. The Zambezi River together with Lake Kariba forms the frontier with Zimbabwe. Victoria Falls, at the southern end of the man-made Lake Kariba, is one of the most spectacular sights in Africa (if not the world). In the east and northeast the country rises to a plateau 1200m (3937ft) high, covered by deciduous savannah, small trees, grassy plains or marshland. The magnificent Luangwa and Kafue National Parks have some of the most prolific animal populations in Africa.

NATIONAL PARKS

The Zambian government has long recognized the economic importance of its wildernesses and is acutely aware of environmental concerns: almost one third of the country is given over to national parks and game reserves. Most tourism is concentrated in nine of the 19 parks – Sumbu, Kafue, Lochinvar, Luangwa, Mosi-oa-Tunya (Victoria Falls), Lower Zambezi, Kasanka and Sioma Ngwezi – the remainder, as yet, having fewer facilities. In general, safaris are limited to six to eight persons per vehicle (always accompanied by experienced guides), permitting the animal/bird lover to appreciate, in uninterrupted peace, African wildlife roaming through an unspoiled natural environment. Herds of buffalo, elephant and antelope are easily spotted and there are plenty lions and zebra. Here are a few of the most well-known parks.

SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

Experts have dubbed South Luangwa one of the finest wildlife sanctuaries in the world. The concentration of game around the Luangwa River remains among the most intense in Africa.

The park hosts a wide variety of wildlife birds and vegetation. The 'walking safari' originated in this pristine wilderness. Sixty species of mammals and more than 400 different bird species. The only notable exception is the rhino, which tragically became extinct here through poaching.

KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

Kafue is Zambia's oldest park and by far the largest. It became a park in 1950 and is spread over 22 400 square kilometers - the second largest national park in the world and about the size of Wales.

Despite the park's proximity to both Lusaka and the Copperbelt, it has remained underdeveloped until the most recent years. The park survives in spite of poaching and lack of management and offers a slice of African wilderness with excellent game viewing and fishing. Large prides of lion, solitary leopards and cheetahs are the prime predators as well as a host of smaller carnivores from the side-striped jackal, civet, genet and various mongoose.

Bird watching, especially on rivers is superb. See wattled crane, purple crested loerie and Pel's fishing owl.

LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK

This is Zambia's newest park and as such is still relatively undeveloped, but it's beauty lies in it's absolute wilderness state. The diversity of animals is not as wide as the other big parks, but the opportunities to get close to game wandering in and out of the Zambezi channels are spectacular. The park lies opposite the famous Mana Pools Reserve in Zimbabwe, so the whole area on both sides of the river is a massive wildlife sanctuary.

Most of the game is concentrated along the valley floor. Enormous herds of elephant, some up to 100 strong, are often seen at the rivers edge. Island hopping buffalo and waterbuck are common. The park also hosts good populations of lion and leopard.

MOSI-O-TUNYA ZOOLOGICAL PARK

The Mosi-O-Tunya National Park is situated along the upper Zambezi stretching from and including the Victoria Falls for about 12kms up the Zambezi River above the Falls.

It is only 66-square-kilometres but there are plans to extend the park further up river. Because the park is small, it affords a wonderfully relaxing drive alongside the river for

much of the circular route and the wide variety of species can be easily seen.

LOCHINVAR NATIONAL PARK

Lochinvar, although not abundant in the larger mammals, is nonetheless a park of exceptional beauty and outstanding birding opportunities with over 420 recorded species in it's 428 square kilometers.

It is situated on the southern edge of the Kafue Flats, a wide floodplain of the Kafue River between Itzhi dam in the west and Kafue Gorge in the east. The varying vegetation makes it an interesting park to visit with floodplains, woodlands and termitaria

The park is well known for large herds of Kafue lechwe, unique to Kafue flats. Other antelope are blue wildebeest, kudu, oribi and buffalo. Water birds are especially abundant. Kafue. Some 30,000 Kafue lechwe make the flats their home and move seasonally according to the flood level.

Sebanzi Hill is an archaeological site which has been excavated. It was the site of an iron age village, inhabited for most of the last century. Look out for The Baobab Tree with a hollow trunk large enough for several people to sleep in. Historically the tree was said to boast special powers which would protect passing travelers from wild animals.

NSUMBU NATIONAL PARK

On the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika in the northern tip of Zambia, Sumbu National Park covers an area of just over 2000-square-kilometers and includes pristine shores of this vast lake. Its beauty ranges from sandy beaches, vertical cliffs, rocky coves and natural bays to the rugged hills and deep valleys of the interior. The Lufubu River winds its way through a valley flanked by 30-meter escarpments.

The park is dissected from west to east by the sizeable and perennial Lufubu River, which also demarcates the eastern boundary of the Park up to the river's discharge into Lake Tanganyika. Nkamba and Chisala Rivers are ephemeral and smaller than the Lufubu, draining Tondwa Swamp into Nkamba and Sumbu Bays respectively, the former through an attractive valley with abundant wildlife in relation to other parts of the Park.

Although wildlife numbers have declined, there is still a wide range of species present in the park. Sightings are not guaranteed. Species include potted hyena, side-striped jackal, serval, impala, waterbuck, reedbuck, roan, sable, eland, hartebeest as well as buffalo and zebra; occasionally elephant, lion and leopard. Bushbuck, warhog and puku often frequent the beaches. The rare blue duiker, a small forest antelope, is found here along with the shy swamp dwelling sitatunga.

SIOMA NGWEZI NATIONAL PARK

This 5000-square-kilometer park in the south western corner of the country has been completely undeveloped and rarely visited until recently. It is surrounded by a 35,000-square-kilometer Game Management Area. The park is unfenced allowing free movement of the animals, and allows access to the Zambezi River. The park and surrounding area form an important link in the migratory route of elephants from the bordering national parks of Botswana and Namibia. Although heavily poached, the park does offer a better refuge for elephants migrating from Angola where poaching and illegal hunting is rampant.

There are no permanent facilities and very few roads in the park.

A word about our global commitment

Big Five is dedicated to projects around the globe that address the critical relationship between healthy local people and their environments. We actively seek partners who reinforce our philosophy of renewable resources and responsible tourism. These eco-alliances stand witness to Big Five's on-going commitment to support the well being of local peoples and environments in our host destinations. We are proud to support the following partners, organizations and projects as well as others across the globe.

In Africa

St. Nicholas Community Development Center and Children's Home, Nairobi, Kenya

St. Nicholas Community Development Center was founded in 1986, under the auspices of the Anglican Church of Kenya. The center, located on 12 acres, has become home to more than 168 orphaned and abandoned children; some fresh from living on the streets, others victims of abuse, still others whose families have been devastated by AIDS. Children range in age from two to 20. Big Five and its staff in Nairobi have worked closely with the center over the years. Most recently, the company donated money to help build two new dormitories, which opened last year and now house 80 children.

In addition to food, shelter and medical care, the center also provides educational opportunities for both residents and children of community. The center runs a primary and secondary school, and is working to expand a vocational training center. St. Nicholas Center is also involved in a variety of outreach programs to help reintegrate children back into their communities. The center offers hope and help to some of Kenya's most forgotten children.

Mountain bongo repatriation project, Florida & Kenya

The Rare Species Conservatory Foundation, Florida, launched a project to restore a critically endangered flagship species – mountain bongos -- to self-sustaining levels in the wild of Kenya from captive U.S. zoo stock. The mountain bongo repatriation project represents a rare milestone in wildlife conservation. The repatriated bongos are founders for a long-term breeding effort at the Mt. Kenya Game Ranch, whose descendants will be gradually acclimated to the wild over future generations. Ultimately, the program seeks to restore a sustainable wild population within the Mt. Kenya World Heritage Site via close coordination with the Kenya Wildlife Service.

Children in the Wilderness, Botswana & Namibia

Big Five's long-standing partner in southern Africa, Wilderness Safaris ranks among the most professional and upstanding operators in Africa. They recognize that children are the key to the long-term survival of both the land and its animals. Thus, the company launched Children in the Wilderness, a program designed to allow underprivileged African children to experience, many for the first time, the amazing natural beauty of their own countries. First established in Botswana and expanded into Namibia, Children in the Wilderness hosts a series of five-day camps for kids, ages 12 through 16, who are orphans or who come from the poorest families. Under the care of Wilderness Safaris staff, they learn about environmental and conservation issues through activities such as games, art projects and nature walks. The children see how eco-tourism plays a vital role in their countries' economies, as well as in the survival of animals in the wild. And, perhaps more importantly, they begin to understand how eco-tourism might offer them future careers and better lives.