

Botswana

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Eagle Island Camp | Okavango Delta Botswana

A Belmond Property

Personal Impression

Eagle Island Camp is an interesting place to visit. The game viewing is limited to boats, either a mokoro, speed boat or sundowner cruiser. A helicopter is based at the camp that will take you game viewing over the Delta and fly low at about tree line height. This is a wonderful experience. This was our helicopter - note the elephant in the background.



Camp Location and Game Viewing



The camp is located in the Central Delta. The camp is shaded by a canopy of indigenous trees and the area is known as Xaxaba (island of tall trees). A mokoro ride is pictured above as you glide slowly through the reeds in front of the camp.

Bird life in this region is prolific and it is a bird watchers paradise. This is not the traditional safari camp as all the activities are centered around the water. It makes a nice addition to an itinerary for something slightly different. Particularly if you like helicopter rides this is a flight you will always remember. They take the doors off the side of the helicopter so you can take photographs, it is wonderful to see the area at this height by helicopter.



Accommodations

The tents feel more like a standard permanent structure, with nicely polished wood floors and a large outdoor deck. The tents also feature air conditioning. The rooms are a nice size and have a nice bathroom, double sinks, large shower only, no bathtub. The tents are all raised above the ground and you walk on the ground between the tents. There is a large swimming pool on the grounds.



Internet access

There is internet access.

Dining and wines

A covered dining room offers excellent cuisine. You can also dine outside close to the pool. A starter, choice of meat or vegetarian dish, dessert and cheeses are offered each evening. Of course, a fully stocked bar in a covered area is offered for pre-and post-dinner drinks. After dinner sitting around the fireplace is the traditional activity.

The Fish Eagle Bar has been named as one of the most beautiful bars in the world by the New York Times. They feature special cocktails at sunset. It is spectacular as you look over the water to the sun setting with a myriad of colors. Pictures below.



Spa

All types of spa treatments are available.

Summary

This is a very luxurious air-conditioned option with a unique atmosphere with all the activities featured around the water. The helicopter ride being the highlight of a visit.

Website: [Eagle Island Camp](#)

Jao Camp - Okavango Delta - Botswana

Personal Impression

When driving in from the airstrip you feel as if you are in the Caribbean not Africa. As you cross over a bridge made of logs constructed to cover the water that surrounds this area, you see the Palm trees, white sand, amount of bird life and the water. You know you are experiencing something truly unique. The best word to describe the camp itself is Zen like. The rooms are really beautiful, the camp has a really peaceful and out of this world ambiance. The property decor was influenced by an artist who has some of his work in the small shop at Jao. The second you arrive you feel at peace with the world.



Location of the camp

The camp is located in a private reserve bordering on the Moremi Game Reserve in the Okavango Delta that floods each year. The flood has a lot of influence on the animals and can be quite a different experience depending on when you visit. Each season has its beauty. The floods normally come in April but in 2004 they came in February. How you see the animals depends on the season. When the water levels are high you see more animals by boat and when it is drier you see more by land rover. The camp offers diversity from standard game drives, night drives, bird watching, guided walks, boating, fishing and mokoro's (small canoes for game viewing) swimming pool and massages. Access is by airplane only.

Accommodations

There nine guest rooms in the complex one is a family room. The maximum capacity of the camp is 22 people with most of the time the camp being considered full at 18 guests. Each room is a tent but that is not a fair description of the luxurious and contemporary accommodations you will find when you enter your "tent". Huge beds, wonderful vanities and every luxury you can imagine. The main lodge has rooms on either side. There is a huge expanse of raised decking around the lodge which makes getting around very easy.



Internet Access

Very limited and slow but always improving the speed and service.

Dining and Wines

A delightful dining area with a magnificent view sets the stage for wonderful meals. The fish I ate here was truly remarkable and one of the best I have had the pleasure of consuming in a long time. They offer a choice each evening of 2 starters, 3 mains, dessert, cheeses and a plate of petit fours. Breakfast and lunch feature a buffet with plenty to choose from. Of course, these are accompanied by excellent wines. After dinner sitting around the fire with the big drum from Bali, you feel quite removed from reality.



Spa

Of course, this environment lends itself to all types of spa treatments. I could not see into the treatment room as it was in use but the young lady who offers the treatments was delightful and they have a full array of options for you to choose from.

Summary

This is a unique camp; no other camp has the atmosphere of Jao. If you enjoy a Zen like atmosphere, you will be in heaven staying in Jao. A stay here will be well remembered.

Website: [Jao Camp](#)

Kanana - Botswana - Ker & Downey Camp | Private Game Reserve

Personal Impression

Kanana offers a personal safari experience. A small camp where you instantly meet people and form friendships. The game drives and the water provide a diversity of activities. Not plush but comfortable, with some of the warmest staff you can find.



Accommodations

It is a tented camp with very comfortable tents with all the features you would expect. Hot and cold running water, shower. Suited to those that want the true safari experience in comfort but do not need excessive luxury.



Dining and Wines

A small dining area off the bar is the scene for meals and the camaraderie is evident right away. A small community brings closer relationships. The food was excellent with special attention paid to people dietary needs. For lunch one day we had an array of quiches with the freshest salad and a great South African wine. Amazing considering how far in the bush we were.



Spa

There is no spa at Kanana.

Internet

There is no cellphone reception and just limited Wi-Fi at the camp. There is a guest computer connected to the internet in the central area. Kanana uses radios to communicate with both its head office in Maun and its sister camps.



Game Drives

The highlight of Kanana is for bird lovers. The camp is close to the one of the best nesting areas around and it is truly a spectacular sight. Of course, the game in this area is also excellent and there is a board at the front of the lodge where guests' pictures are displayed and the shots here are really fantastic. Above is a picture of a Jackal. These are very hard animals to get really close to and this was a wonderful experience.

Website: [Kanana Camp](#)

Khwai River Lodge | Okavango Delta | Botswana

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Personal Impression

Khwai River Lodge is the only game park that offers accommodations with air conditioning in this area of Botswana. The main lounge area is comfortable with big chairs, dark woods and a great view on the banks of the river. This is the realm of the predator and its prey. Large swimming pool and great air-conditioned tents make this a good choice for those that prefer an air-conditioned accommodation and want to spend time in this game rich area of Botswana. When entering the "tents" you are not aware really that this is a tent. They are all raised off the ground and have the feeling of a more traditional hotel. This hotel is part of the Orient-Express Hotels.



Location of the camp and game viewing

The camp is located on the borders of Moremi Game Reserve on the river bank. Lots of diversity of animals here offering superior game drive viewing. Of course, activities center around the traditional game viewing and also night game drives. You can drive off road on the private game reserve. Your guide may also take you to the Moremi Game Reserve and drive this area as well.

Accommodations

The tents feel more like a standard permanent structure, with nicely polished wood floors. Particularly since they also feature air conditioning. The rooms are a nice size and have a nice bathroom, shower only, no bathtub. The tents are all raised above the ground and you walk on the



ground between the tents. The grounds are well manicured and this property definitely feels like a more traditional hotel. There is a large swimming pool on the grounds. Room number one at an extra charge features a plunge pool and an outdoor bath tub. Pictures below. Right outside this room is a pond area which is frequented by hippos usually by around 1:00 pm in the afternoon. Sit on your deck and watch the hippos at play, a nice way to pass the afternoon.



Internet access

They did not have internet access when I was there, however it has since been added.

Dining and Wines

Covered dining room offers excellent cuisine. A starter, choice of meat or vegetarian dish, dessert and cheeses are offered each evening. Of course, a fully-stocked bar in a covered area is offered for pre-and pos- dinner drinks. After dinner sitting around the fireplace is the traditional activity. The Boma at Khawai is really a special treat. Located off the property you arrive in the BOMA to a walkway lighted by flames and it is really neat effect. This is a new BOMA and is certain to please all guests. Laundry and local alcoholic beverages are included in the rate.

Spa

All types of spa treatments are available and the spa is housed in a separate area in the middle of the complex.

Summary

This is a very luxurious air-conditioned option with a more traditional hotel feel for those who want those conveniences.

Website: [Khwai River Lodge](#)

Savute Elephant Camp Chobe National Park Botswana

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Personal Impression

On arrival you are greeted by the sight of elephants right in front of the swimming pool and lodge area. An incredible sight! A watering hole is in this area and the elephants frequent it almost all day. The day before we were there a pride of lions approached the watering hole and the elephants vacated very quickly. A beautiful lodge, with a true feeling of being in the bush. There is a fountain in the middle of camp where they rake the sand each evening. In the morning the excitement is to see what tracks have been left during the night.

Location of the camp and game viewing

Savute is located in the heart of the Chobe National Park in Botswana. This is a dry and arid country with the ground being mostly sandy. You are in a National Park and you cannot go off road for game viewing - so this is something you do need to know. Game viewing varies here tremendously as the camp is in the path of a migration that takes place each year. As it gets drier in the winter months of April - August a lot of game moves to the river areas of Botswana and then returns again when the rains come in late November.



This is an area densely populated by elephants, and the lions have evolved and specialize now in killing elephants. Large prides are required to bring down an elephant. It is not uncommon to see prides of 40 lions at Savute.

Accommodations

The tents feel more like a standard permanent structure, with nicely polished wood floors and a large outdoor deck. They also feature air conditioning. The rooms are a nice size and the bathrooms have double sinks, large shower only and no bathtubs. The tents are all raised above the ground. Many of the rooms have a good view of the elephant watering hole. There is

a large swimming pool on the grounds right outside the main lodge area and raised above the elephants watering hole.



Internet Access

Wireless Internet available

Dining and Wines

The open-air lodge is the scene for wonderful meals as you watch the elephants in play at the watering hole right in front of you. Talk about live entertainment. It is fascinating as they lumber in one by one and as you watch the hierarchy of the group. The elephants are primarily bull elephants as the females and babies are ever aware of the danger from lions and stay hidden most of the time. A starter, choice of meat or vegetarian dish, dessert and cheeses are offered each evening along with a fully stocked bar. After dinner, sitting around the fireplace is the traditional activity.



Spa

All type of spa treatments is available.

Summary

This is a very unique camp which offers luxurious air-conditioned tents with a feeling of being deep in the bush in Chobe National Park. If you like elephants - you have found the perfect safari destination.

Website: Savute Elephant Camp

Shinde | Ker and Downey Camp | Botswana Private Game Reserve

Personal Impression

Shinde offers a truly personal experience, with friendly staff, excellent guides and a diversity of activities. This is the way they carry your bags to your tents. We asked them to stop so we could take a picture. The game drives coupled with the boat rides gives an extra bonus to this delightful camp. The main lodge area is on different levels with dining on the top level under a barrel ceiling. The camp has a family of genets (see above) that frequent the camp and often play in the trees right in view of the dining table. This took place on our visit and they are the most incredible small cat with incredible markings. It was a neat experience.



Accommodations

It is a tented camp with very comfortable tents with all the features you would expect. Hot and cold running water, shower, double sinks with toiletries and in the enclave (the private area with newer tents and a private lounge and boma) a toilet with a view. Shinde camp is not to the standard of Mombo or Jao, but they are comfortable and offer an excellent value for the money. Suited to those that want the true safari experience in comfort but do not need excessive luxury.



Dining and Wines

As mentioned above, dining in Shinde is a great experience. The table is set under a huge barrel ceiling with a view into the trees which you hope are visited by the resident family of genets. These have been around Shinde for about 7 years and about 7 years and have granny, daughter and grandchildren in attendance. They are really beautiful and you see them often. A picture above. Food was outstanding and served perfectly accompanied by excellent wines.



Spa

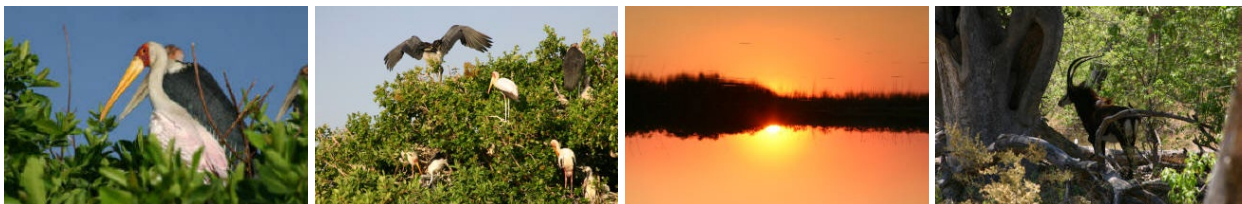
No spa at Shinde

Internet

WIFI not available. There is a laptop for guest use but access is limited and slow.

Game Drives

This is a highlight of a stay at Shinde. We saw almost every type of animal you can imagine except Rhino here. The terrain varies tremendously and the guides are knowledgeable and very friendly. This is where we finally got to see a sable (pictured below) a truly majestic animal that stays under the cover of the trees. Our guide was driving through the thick areas of the trees to find the sable, I could not believe where we went. There are also various water holes full of hippo and plains with elephants everywhere. The most interesting aspect of Shinde is the proximity of the delta and the nesting birds. Some of these rookeries were really spectacular. A view of our personal pictures below. A stop is made at sundown in this the most spectacular area for sunset. As you drink a glass of wine in the boat and watch the sunset all is right with the world. Our picture from this experience is below.



Personal pictures from our trip to Shinde. **A magical experience.**

Website: Shinde Camp

Climate For Botswana & Okavango Delta | Best Time to Visit

Botswana has a mainly temperate climate. The hottest time of year in Botswana is also the wettest. The rainy season occurs in summer between November and March. Dry and cool weather, with cold and often frosty nights, occurs between April and October, when the average daytime temperature is a pleasant 25°C (77°F).

The area that is really unique in Botswana is the Okavango Delta. This is the largest inland delta in the world. The annual flood of fresh water flows inland, spreads over 15,000 kilometers of the Kalahari sand in lagoons and channels. There are countless islands that develop from the waterways and there are diverse ecosystems that create a home for a vast number of birds, animals and the waters support many kinds of fish. The flood comes to the Delta after the rainy season - it takes months to make its way into the Okavango area. It can reach its peak anytime between February and April. The delta is at its most impressive in August when the water level is at its deepest.

The delta is accessed primarily by air and as it is an exclusive destination, it remains relatively unpopulated and wild.

Maun - Close Major Area to the Delta

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Avg. Temperature	80	80	79	76	70	65	65	70	78	84	84	82
Avg. Max Temperature	91	91	90	89	83	80	78	85	92	97	95	93
Avg. Min Temperature	70	68	67	61	54	48	48	53	61	69	70	70
Avg. Rain Days	4	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3
Avg. Snow Days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

April to October

This is the dry season when there is a concentration of game along the permanent rivers. October is the best month for game-viewing although it is getting hot by October. A consideration since most parks do not have air conditioning available. September and October are the best for bird-watching as that is the time when the migrants arrive and when herons and other water-birds breed in the Delta.

November to March

These are the rainy season months. Temperatures and the humidity rise. January and February are the peak of the rainy season. During this time, most of the roads are difficult to navigate and some impossible. Temperatures and humidity are very high. This is the peak Malaria season. A visit here during this time is only for the truly adventurous. The plant life is abundant and the animals have their young at this time so those are the advantages of visiting at this time. Many lodge shut down during this time frame.