

BOTSWANA PHOTOGRAPHY & WILDLIFE SAFARI



~ Khwai ~ Savute ~ Chobe ~

November 1 - 11, 2018

Join GrassTrack Safaris and Brenda Petrella Photography for an extraordinary safari into the wilds of Botswana. Camp in the remote African bush as you journey through the best game parks in Africa. You'll be joined by 2 professional photographers who will provide instruction and guidance on photographic technique to help you improve your wildlife photography. Come home with amazing images and stories of your African adventure!



~ GrassTrack Safaris ~

dan@grasstracksafaris.com | 603.443.0155 | www.grasstracksafaris.com

Dan Hopkins | Lebanon NH

About Botswana

Botswana is indeed one of Africa's most remarkable destinations for wildlife and conservation. It is the country with the highest concentration of elephants left on Earth, the biggest African wild dog population and one of only 9 viable lion populations on the continent. Indeed, we live in an age of extinction, quite sadly brought on by us. Botswana protects over 35% of its territory through a system of National Parks, Game Reserves, forest reserves and private concessions set aside for wildlife. Botswana also allows and supports a large network of researchers and conservation-based NGOs who conduct their studies with a view to furthering our knowledge of eco-systems and species.



How we do it

Any successful photography safari in Africa should prioritize the best light and most interesting subjects to get optimal results. We are dedicated to providing both to our clients.

Our safaris are all about the wildlife! We maximize each day by being out in the field most of the time. We like to get up early, often before sunrise to be in the best position possible for sunrise and will often spend all day behind the cameras taking short breaks for meals and a rest. Sometimes we just sit at a water hole and watch. Be assured that your time in the African bush will be optimized so that you return home with epic results.

You'll have the company of two professional photographers during the entire safari: Brenda Petrella of Norwich, VT (www.brendapetrella.com) will be your host and trip leader, and Steve Stockhall, a professional wildlife photographer and your Botswana guide. Steve is also the owner of Earth Ark Safaris. Together they will provide instruction and advice on composition, editing, and technique to help you improve your wildlife photography skills. See their biographies at the end of this itinerary.

A Typical Day on Safari

A mobile camping safari is an all-encompassing experience. Throughout your safari, you are surrounded by an incredibly unspoiled wilderness area, so even the transfers to the campsites are part of the adventure! On this photo safari you will spend the maximum time out in the bush photographing wildlife and landscapes and each day predominantly follows the same routine.



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The day starts with the rising of the sun. Your wake-up call will be between 5am and 6am – a gentle “koko” (knock-knock in Setswana) at the entrance of your tent. A camp assistant will be on hand to fill your wash-hand basin with steaming hot water and freshly made tea and coffee will be served around the campfire.



A light breakfast will be served before the early morning game drive which consists of tea, plunger coffee, juice, rusks, fruit, cereal, toast and jams. We head out as early as is permitted in the reserve to be the first on the roads to track fresh spoor left from the animal's overnight activities – we may spot fresh lion tracks walking straight past the camp or evidence of a passing herd of buffalo not far away. Your guide Steve will assess the best areas to explore depending on what calls were heard during the night as well as the tracks found on the road. He has years of experience and can assess the conditions and wildlife behavior to maximize your photo opportunities. Part of the unique appeal of Botswana is that the wildlife moves naturally and you are 'searching' for them, which can lead to the most amazing sightings and a great appreciation and respect for the bush.

Having spent the morning exploring the surrounding wilderness in search of Botswana's hidden treasures, you will return to camp for lunch under the shade of a marula tree (subject to availability). Lunch consists of salads, freshly baked bread on the open campfire, cold meats and pickles. Just as the animals retreat to escape the heat of mid-day, so will you. There will be time for your photo host, Brenda, to assist in any photo editing. Or take some time to relax and enjoy the bush!

Later in the afternoon you will head out into the wilderness once more as the animals awake from their day's slumber and gather at the watering holes. As the sun sets on the horizon, one can only marvel at the sheer splendor of an African sunset. You'll stop to photograph and enjoy the sunset with a drink in hand (the classic African sundowner).

On your return to camp, enjoy a hot shower under the starry night sky and gather around the warmth of the campfire to relive the day's events and excitement. A three-course dinner is served with South African wines against the magical backdrop of the African night sky. Retreating to the comfort of your tent after enjoying a nightcap around the campfire, you can fall asleep to the calls of the African wild.



On moving days, the safari team will pack down the camp, then travel to the next camp site and prepare the camp at the next location. When travelling between locations, the route is most commonly through the parks and reserves and is therefore an extension of your daily game drives. A picnic lunch will be served en-route.

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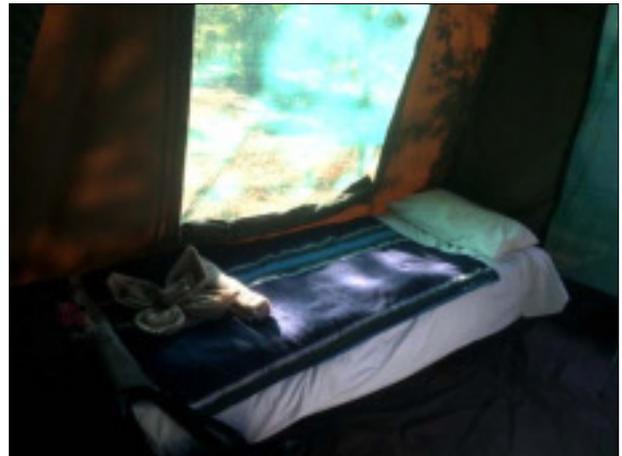
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Our safaris are fully-supported, and our guests do not participate in any of the camp chores. Our camp crew will take care of all cooking, setting up camp, and will make sure that you are comfortable on your journey. We do this by providing healthy meals with plenty of tea, coffee, and water available (as well as a selection of local beers and wines). Vegetarian meals can be requested along with just about any dietary requirement you can think of!

Accommodation

Accommodation is in spacious 3 x 3 meter tents each with a made-up stretcher bed. Two basins are located outside each tent. We use bucket showers (best experience!) and long drop loos for ablutions. Remember that each of our private sites have no amenities other than what we bring. This means that we truly only leave our footprints – a good way to be!

Our vehicles are ones adapted to carry 6 people. Each person has a window seat to maximize their experience. The vehicles carry bean bags to support camera equipment, a tea box for morning break and a cooler box or fridge. Each vehicle has a charging facility to recharge cameras, iPads, iPods and laptops. Our guides and staff are, above all else, passionate about the wilderness we work in, the animals we spend time with and the people who travel with us. The most important part of our job is to send everyone home with an amazing experience, epic photos, and inspiration to help us spread the word to conserve!



Detailed Safari Itinerary

November 1, 2018 | Arrive Maun, Botswana | Rivernest Cottages

Upon arriving at the Maun Airport and clearing customs formalities, you will be met by your private guide, Steve Stockhall, and transferred to your hotel for the night. You can rest up from your flight and prepare for the early departure tomorrow. There will also be time for a scenic flight over the Okavango Delta for a unique view of this enormous wetland (extra expense and pre-booking required).

The Rivernest Cottages in the frontier town of Maun, Botswana. Enjoy an exceptionally peaceful and tranquil environment under indigenous trees on the banks of the Boronyane River. The Rivernest offers simple and comfortable lodging with a quiet garden area, pool, restaurant and bar.

Overnight | The Rivernest Cottages

Meals | Bed & Breakfast

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November 2-4, 2018 | Khwai River Concession | Wild Camping

This morning you'll depart Maun and travel by road to the Khwai River Concession, located on the border of the Moremi Game Reserve (4 hours), enjoying a picnic lunch along the way. You'll spend three nights camping in this area with full days of photography, game drives and an afternoon mokoro (a traditional dug-out canoe) excursion into the Okavango Delta. Since there are no fences separating Khwai, Moremi, Chobe, and the Okavango game is free to wander throughout this vast territory. Taken together these areas are essentially one contiguous area designated for wildlife conservation.



The Khwai River is the eastern most extremity of the Okavango Delta. The Okavango itself is a large alluvial fan spreading out over the Kalahari sands. It is the single largest intact ecosystem in southern Africa and recently was awarded the World's one-thousandth World Heritage site. The Khwai River Concession sits on the northern border of the Moremi Game Reserve. These two areas protect a wide diversity of habitat and boasts some of the best game viewing in Africa. You'll search for game on the dry land rising between vast wetlands and crystal-clear water channels on the edges of endless mopane and Kalahari Apple-leaf woodlands. Game viewing takes place alongside waterways and flood plains, but you'll also explore the clear channels, lagoons and rivers of the Okavango Delta by mokoro, going upstream through a myriad of crystal clear waterways lined with African mangosteen, waterberry trees, and swaying seas of papyrus.

Khwai River is noted as an extremely game rich destination with plenty of predator action. Here, leopards are frequently sighted as well as excellent opportunities to see African wild dog packs denning and hunting. There are many bull elephants in the area, large pods of hippopotamus, aquatic antelope like red lechwe and water buck and good populations of giraffe and zebra. As the area is on the edge of the Okavango Delta, bird life is prolific with raptors, kingfishers, fish eagles, ducks and beautiful pygmy geese regularly seen.



Khwai Community Area is on concession adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of Moremi along the banks of the Khwai River. This community run reserve is managed by the Khwai Development Trust and is an excellent example of community conservation. The villages benefit from the campsites and lodges on their concession, creating an incentive for the local people to conserve the land and wildlife. The reserve protects 700 square miles of wilderness and with the river being the only source of water for miles, it is a magnet for wildlife.

Overnight | Wild Camping

Meals | All meals & drinks

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November 5-7, 2018 | Savute, Chobe National Park | Wild Camping

This morning you'll leave the Khwai River area and continue the journey north into Chobe National Park and the region known as Savute (4 hours). Crossing the Khwai Bridge to the northern bank of the Khwai River, here is a quick opportunity for a cold drink in the small village, before making our way to Chobe National Park. Since none of Botswana's wildlife areas are fenced, game can move freely between these two wilderness areas. Hippo, elephant and sometimes lion are often found along this route. Moving through the Mababe depression through deep, sandy tracks, you'll relocate to Savute. You'll spend three nights camping in this area with full days of photography and game drives.



Chobe National Park encompasses an area of over 4000 square miles and in combination with surrounding forest reserves provides a major sanctuary for northern Botswana's wildlife. Chobe is one of Botswana's most diverse parks and protects a rich variety of habitats including teak, mahogany, and mopane forests, wetlands, flood plains, grasslands, savannahs and thorny bush. These habitats support vast herds of game including the largest elephant herds in Africa.



Savute lies in the arid heart of the Chobe National Park and has a much different feel than the other sections of the park. With long sand ridges, remnants of an ancient lake, providing elevation in the otherwise flat landscape, Savute provides stunning backdrops for photographers. Bushman rock art can be seen in the Gubatsaa Hills surrounding the Savuti region. The main attraction is the Savuti Marsh

which sits in the Mababe Depression. The marsh is the remains of an ancient lake whose water source was cut off by tectonic activity. The marsh is now fed by the erratically flowing Savuti Channel whose source is the Linyanti Swamps. For unknown reasons the Savuti Channel cycles between periods when it's in full flood and periods when it's dry. The green landscape of the Savute Marsh is dotted with skeletons of trees that died when the marsh dried.

Savute is famous for its large population of old bull elephants and large prides of lion that patrol the banks of the enigmatic Savute Channel. Hyena, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, and leopards are common and it's possible to see the endangered wild dog. A number of larger birds inhabit the plains around Savute, including various bustards and ostriches. Game viewing takes place along the fringes of the Savute Marsh and surrounding water holes.

Overnight | Wild Camping

Meals | All meals & drinks

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November 8-10, 2018 | Chobe River, Chobe National Park | Wild Camping

Today will be a long drive (7 hours, with picnic lunch) as you continue your journey north toward the Chobe River, the second biggest river in southern Africa (the Zambezi is the largest). You'll spend three nights camping along the river with full days of photography, game drives, and an afternoon on the river. For the river cruise, you'll board a boat specially designed for photography, with lens mounts, individual seats that rotate 360 degrees. Along with your photo host Brenda, you'll be joined on the boat with a specialist photographic guide.



The Chobe River is a tributary of the Zambezi River and forms the boundary between Botswana and Namibia. The river begins in the highlands of Angola and flows southeast through the Caprivi Strip of Namibia and into Botswana. Upon entering Botswana it's called the Kwando River, then the Linyanti, and finally the Chobe as it approaches the Zambezi.

As the Chobe River slowly meanders toward the Zambezi it has created a landscape of vast, open floodplains that remain green throughout the year. Birds are prolific in this section of the park. The sheer numbers of birdlife are extraordinary as islands and floodplains are home to numerous storks, egrets, herons, cormorants, ducks, and geese. Kingfishers, bee-eaters, and hammerkops are abundant as are African fish eagles and many raptors. Water loving antelopes like the red lechwe, waterbuck, reedbuck, and the endemic Chobe bushbuck can be seen grazing on the lush floodplains. It's also possible to see herds of sable antelope visiting the river. Large herds of African Buffalo, Plain's Zebra, Giraffe, Impala and Kudu are frequently sighted. Huge pods of hippos live in the river and crocodiles can be spotted basking in the sun (you'll get up close to these pods on your boat cruise).



It is along the Chobe River that one finds the greatest concentration of African elephants on Earth and is the perfect destination to spend time with elephants. Near the end of the dry season the river provides the only permanent water source and so attracts enormous numbers of animals. Breeding herds of elephants visit the river to drink and bathe. Seeing an elephant family come to drink at the river's edge while a red sun slowly descends to the horizon is a sight that will last a lifetime.

Overnight | Wild Camping

Meals | All meals & drinks

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November 11, 2018 | Depart Kasane

Following an early morning game drive, you will be transferred to the Kasane International Airport for your departing flight.

End of Services

Optional Victoria Falls Extension: If you are interested in extending your safari to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, please let us know. *Please note this safari rate does not include Victoria Falls.* The Falls is about a 1.5 hour drive (over asphalt roads) with a range of accommodation and activities.



The Victoria Falls is created by the Zambezi River which forms the boundary between Zambia and Zimbabwe. In the local Kololo language it is known as Mosi-oa-Tunya, or "The Smoke that Thunders". The name says it all for when the river is high the Falls are at their most magnificent as the towering column of spray and thunder of cascading water can be heard miles away. What makes the Falls so stunning is not only the sheer volume of water flowing over it, but also its incredible breadth. Where the river meets the cliff, the Falls is over a mile wide making it the longest curtain of water on the planet. This water tumbling across such a long expanse falls over 300 feet before crashing into the canyon below, creating what is considered one of the natural wonders of the world. Victoria Falls is a National Park and a World Heritage Site. Activities in Victoria Falls include white water rafting, bungee jumping, canoeing or sunset cruises on the upper Zambezi, elephant rides, and helicopter flights over the Victoria Falls. Or just simply walking along the Falls and enjoying the view!

November 1-11, 2018

Rate: \$5285.00 (per person sharing)

*Confirmation of this safari requires a minimum of 4 guests with a maximum of 8. **Deadline to register is Aug 1, 2018.** A 20% non-refundable deposit is required to confirm booking and due within 14 days of receiving an invoice from GrassTrack Safaris. Your deposit will be refunded only if safari is cancelled due to lack of interest. Once 4 clients are confirmed, deposit will not be refunded. Full balance due by Sept 1, 2018. Other terms & conditions apply.*

INCLUDES: Lodging, meals, local drinks, activities as indicated; professional guide, camp crew, and transport in 4x4 game vehicle; Botswana park fees; Maun/Kasane airport transfers.

EXCLUDES: All flights, pre- or post-safari accommodation/extensions, premium drinks/wine, optional activities, visas, travel insurance, gratuities, personal items.

For more information, please contact Dan Hopkins (dan@grasstracksafaris.com)

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About your guides

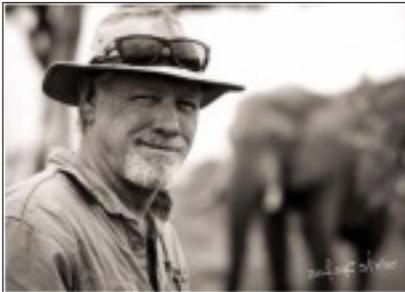


Brenda Patrella

Brenda is a molecular biologist by training, a sustainability advocate in practice, and a photographer by vocation. After pursuing careers as a cancer biologist and as a biosafety professional, she decided to honor her love of the outdoors and pursue a long-standing interest in photography. She is now a Vermont-based outdoor photographer focusing primarily in landscape, nature, night sky, natural abstract, and rural life photography. Although her camera is often pointed at the Vermont landscape, she enjoys traveling to remote areas, such as her recent excursion to the Yukon Territory to photograph the Aurora Borealis.

A natural teacher, Brenda is a contributing writer to Improve Photography, a premiere photography website with over 1 million community members world-wide. She's published articles ranging from landscape photography for beginners to how to photograph waterfalls and several other landscape and nature photography topics. She recently started a YouTube channel where she teaches photography tips and techniques in the field. Brenda is thrilled to partner with GrassTracks Safaris and Earth Ark Travel to teach photography while exploring the African wilderness for the first time.

She donates her time serving on the boards of two local non-profits: Alliance for Vermont Communities and the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, whose aim is to protect natural resources and our connection to the natural world. When she's not behind the camera, she can be found hiking with her dogs and partner, cycling, snowshoeing, gardening and taking care of her pet cows. Visit her website (www.brendapetrella.com) to view her images.



Steve Stockhall

Steve is the owner of Earth Ark Travel and is passionate about the safaris he conducts into the last wild spaces in Africa. Many people who undertake these safaris are left with a sense of awe of the natural world and often come back again and again to see and experience more of what Africa has to offer. Steve has been guiding safaris and photographing in Botswana for over 18 years. He has published two books – 'Earth Ark – A photographic safari through northern Botswana' and 'Wildlife Photography in Botswana – a practical guide'. He donates his time and photography to many conservation projects including Cheetah Conservation Botswana, The Lion Corridor Project and

Rhino Conservation Botswana as well as sitting on the board for Elephants for Africa. He's also the founder of Cameras for Conservation, a photographic platform showcasing the diverse talent and wilderness of Botswana. In September 2017 Steve received Honors in Nature's Best Africa. Along with his repertoire of songs and jokes, he provides an experience you'll want to live again and again.



Dan Hopkins

Dan is the owner of GrassTrack Safaris, an adventure travel company specializing in creating authentic journeys into the African wilderness. He first traveled to Africa in the late 1980's on expedition-style camping safaris and has returned to Africa on a dozen safaris. These early trips serve as the inspiration for the safaris he offers clients: a unique, off-the-beaten path experience of the African wilderness. The safaris Dan creates will appeal to any adventurous traveler looking to experience wild animals in wild places. Besides organizing safaris for private clients, Dan has led safaris to Botswana

and Namibia for the Osher@Dartmouth Program and is a Safari Specialist for the Seattle-based travel company, Explorer-X.

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