

LEON VARLEY WALKING SAFARIS

Hwange National Park is Zimbabwe's premier and largest wildlife area. It encompasses 14,500 square kms of which only the northern third is used for commercial purposes. As Hwange lies on the eastern edge of the Kalahari Desert much of the park is of a flat, arid, thornscrub character, especially in the south west. Further north the flat sandveld gives way to low hills scattered rocky kopjes and well established water courses.

Hwange National Park

Besides the more interesting nature of the landscape the north also features numerous permanent water holes, natural springs, mineral and salt licks and underground water sources which are utilized by the wildlife especially in the dry season, June - November, when the resources become scarce in the south.



The northern central area, around Sinamatella, is the most prolific in these natural features and is where Leon Varley concentrates his safari operations. It is not as accessible as the east of the park and so is less utilized by the tourist industry, ensuring a more satisfying wilderness experience.

Hwange has a healthy population of the main southern African game species such as buffalo, giraffe, lion, leopard, kudu, sable, rhino, impala, wildebeest, zebra, eland and the smaller mammals but as an elephant viewing destination it stands on its own. The elephant population is conservatively estimated at over 35 000 and during the dry season, June - November, it is not unusual to count over 1000 animals at some waterholes over a 24 hour period.

Other attractions for the Sinamatella area are that it contains the largest concentration of Black Rhino in the Park and a number of White Rhino have also been translocated there.

Camps

There are a number of camps in the Sinamatella area that are used by the safari company. They all overlook the Lukosi River and are chosen because of their proximity to either pools or underground water sources that are used by game during the dry season.

These camps are known as Eco Camps where there are no permanent structures and everything must be taken in and then removed after every safari. During the safari they are exclusive and reserved to a single party. One night on the safari is spent at an established waterhole, also exclusive between sundowns to sun up, where a rotating watch system is used to ensure the best possible opportunity to view nocturnal species.

Fully Backed up Hwange Trail

The camps are comfortable with traditional large walk in tents with bush bathrooms en-suite and proper beds and bedding. Dining is either around the campfire or in a dining tent well placed to overlook the river.

All camp chores, food preparations and laundry service are carried out by experienced camp staff.



5 days - Hwange Trail

Zimbabwe

Victoria Falls – Victoria Falls

Transport

The transport is by open game viewing vehicle and each safari is taken by Leon Varley and a traditional Matabele tracker. The guide is fully licensed armed and carries a well-stocked first aid kit and satellite phone. The tracker carries a backup weapon and extra water.

Walks

Walks are taken in the morning after an early breakfast and late afternoon when it is cooler and participants must be fit enough to be able to cover 15 -20 kms in a day split into two or three separate walks. Much of the time on the ground is spent tracking and stalking large game, mainly Rhino and lion as they are the more elusive and unlikely to be come across by chance. Leopard is notoriously hard to track but is an animal of habit and tends to be found in the same areas. Other game is prolific enough to chance on or see at the water holes.



The middle of the day is spent either in camp or at a waterhole where lunch will be served. We return to camp 30 minutes after sunset for sundowners, a hot shower, dinner and drinks around the fire.

Day to day sample itinerary

Day 1

You will be picked up from your hotel at 8.00 for the start of your safari. The drive to Hwange National Park takes about 2 hours.

Once you enter the park you take a slow drive deeper into the park game viewing along the way Until you reach Vikani, our campsite on the edge of Lukosi river. The Vikani camp is a great location with a small cliff overlooking favorite waterholes for elephants and other wildlife and it is not unusual to have elephants digging and drinking directly below the dinning tent. Before your arrival a full camp will have been erected by camp staff and on arrival you have a chance to settle in your tents and have lunch.

After lunch and relaxing a short walk will be taken along the river bed to see what wildlife is around. You will return to camp just after sunset where you will be greeted by snacks and sundowners around the campfire. Time for a hot shower before you have dinner.

Day 2 - 3

An early start after a light breakfast. The day's activities will depend on what could have gone on during the night. You could have possibly heard lions calling close to the camp during the night and will go on a walk in search of them. The river bed will be checked for Rhino spoor that could possibly have been drinking there during the night and if they are found you will spend the morning tracking them.

Late morning you will return to camp in time for lunch and a siesta over the heat of the day.

In the afternoon you will take a short drive to one of the spring lines and mineral licks and continue walking, game viewing and tracking along the way. Your return to camp after sunset.

Day 4

Today after a morning walk you move camp to Musumo pan camp. As water is pumped into this pan it



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has permanent water throughout the year and draws in huge herds of Elephants, buffalo and other wildlife.

Another long walk is taken in the afternoon in the areas surrounding the pan returning to camp at Sundown.

At night will have the opportunity to view by spot light during the night as the area is open and creates great visibility, generally there is lots of action at this pan at night and the noises of elephants and other animals continues through the night.

Day 5

Early start and a walk depending on game activities of the night. After lunch you take a slow drive out of the park returning to Victoria Falls late afternoon.

**Please note this is only a guide and the itinerary remains flexible depending on conditions and movement of Game.*



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