AFRIQUE UNIE · TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Botswana in 12 days: a day-by-day itinerary

Botswana is one of Africa's great safari countries, with abundant wildlife and uncrowded parks. In twelve days, this route links the Okavango Delta, explored by mokoro, Moremi Game Reserve, the vast salt pans of Makgadikgadi and the elephant herds of Chobe, before a day at Victoria Falls. Here are the stages, the driving times and the choices to make between light-aircraft flights and 4x4 roads.

Day by day

Day 1 · Maun, gateway to the delta (night : Maun)

Most travellers arrive in Maun on a flight from Johannesburg or Cape Town. This small, dusty town on the Thamalakane River is not a destination in itself, but it is the starting point for every trip into the delta. Use the afternoon for a scenic flight over the delta by light aircraft or helicopter: from the air, the maze of channels, islands and lagoons makes sense, and you can spot elephants and buffalo. If you are hiring a 4x4, stock up here on fuel, water and supplies. In the evening, have dinner by the river and double-check the details of the next day's transfers.

Days 2-4 · The Okavango Delta by mokoro (night : Okavango Delta)

The delta is usually reached by light aircraft, to a camp on an island or in a private concession, or by road and boat for simpler options. The mokoro, a traditional dugout canoe pushed by a pole, glides silently between papyrus and water lilies: it is the best way to take in the stillness of the delta and watch reed frogs, kingfishers and elephants crossing the channels. Guided walks on the islands let you approach wildlife on foot, with care. Camps also offer game drives. Water levels vary through the year: check which activities are possible on your dates.

Days 5-6 · Moremi Game Reserve and the Khwai concession (night : Moremi or Khwai)

East of the delta, Moremi Game Reserve combines mopane woodland, floodplains and lagoons, with one of the best concentrations of wildlife in the country: lions, leopards, wild dogs, hippos and lechwe. Allow three to four hours of sandy track from Maun by 4x4, or a short flight to a camp. Right next door, the community-run Khwai concession allows night drives and walks, which are not permitted inside the reserve. Set out at dawn, when predators are active. If you are driving yourself, book campsites well in advance, as they are in high demand, and never ignore the rules: the campsites are unfenced.

Days 7-8 · The salt pans of Makgadikgadi (night : Gweta or Makgadikgadi)

Head back to Maun, then two and a half hours' drive east to the Makgadikgadi Pans, ancient lakes turned into vast expanses of salt. In the dry season, you can meet habituated meerkats, which sometimes climb onto visitors to scan the horizon, and sleep under the stars on the salt with an organised camp. In the rainy season, the nearby plains of Nxai Pan National Park and the Boteti River host a zebra migration. Do not miss Baines' Baobabs, a group of ancient trees on the edge of a pan. Never venture onto the salt alone: the crust can give way under a vehicle.

Days 9-11 · Kasane, Chobe National Park and Victoria Falls (night : Kasane)
Allow five hours' drive via Nata to Kasane, watching out for elephants crossing the road. Chobe National Park has one of the largest elephant populations in Africa: at the end of the dry season, hundreds come down to drink at the river. Alternate game drives along the riverfront with late-afternoon boat cruises among hippos, buffalo and crocodiles at sunset. On the third day, make the trip to Victoria Falls, on the Zimbabwean side, about an hour and a quarter by road via the Kazungula border post. Check the visas you need in advance and carry your passport.

Day 12 · Departure from Kasane (night : Flight home)
Depending on your flight, enjoy a last cruise or early-morning game drive on the Chobe River before heading to Kasane airport, which has flights to Johannesburg and Maun. Another option is to fly out of Victoria Falls airport, on the Zimbabwean side, which has more connections and is about an hour and a half away by road including the border crossing: leave a comfortable margin. If you are returning a 4x4 hired in Maun, ask about one-way fees to Kasane, which are often high. Use your last hours to buy traditional basketry, a speciality of the north of the country.

Getting around

There are two approaches. Delta camps and many lodges are reached by light aircraft, with luggage limited to a soft bag of a few kilos. The other option is a self-drive trip in an equipped 4x4 with a rooftop tent, for experienced travellers: the tracks in Moremi and Chobe are sandy and the campsites unfenced. Traffic drives on the left, and driving at night should be avoided because of animals on the road. The tarred roads between Maun, Nata and Kasane are good, but long and monotonous.

When to go

The dry season, from May to October, is the best for safaris: vegetation thins out and animals gather around water. Paradoxically, the delta's floods, fed by rains in Angola, peak between June and August. September and October are very hot. The rainy season, from November to April, is the green season: storms and difficult tracks, but newborn animals, migratory birds and the zebra migration in Makgadikgadi.

Practical information

Botswana

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/botswana/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	in some areas
Currency	Botswana pula (BWP)
Languages	English, Setswana
Plugs	type D, G, M · dialling code +267 · UTC+2
Emergencies	police 999 ou 112 · ambulance 997 ou 911 ou 112 · fire 998

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

Notebook made from visiterafriqueunie.com/en/itineraries/botswana-in-12-days/ · information checked in November 2026 against official sources. Entry, health and safety rules change: check them again before you leave (your country's official advice, the embassy of the country you visit).