



HARTLEY'S SAFARIS

FINDING YOUR AFRICA



Zimbabwe

Lake Kariba
Victoria Falls
Hwange National Park
Canoeing in the Zambezi
Mana Pools National Park
Gonarezhou National Park
Matobo Hills National Park



INTRODUCTION

The Victoria Falls, white water river rafting and elephants photographed against the backdrop of the steep slopes of the Zambezi Valley are all images commonly associated with a visit to Zimbabwe. Although these are indeed some of the defining images of Zimbabwe's wild places there are numerous other game reserves and attractions that enrich any visit to this landlocked southern African jewel.

Hwange National Park has a large elephant population, lions, buffalo, cheetah and many other species and Mana Pools National Park in the middle Zambezi Valley is a spectacular UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Environmental Organization) World Heritage Site.

The ancient ruins at Great Zimbabwe near the town of Masvingo tell the story of past civilizations from an earlier time and are a popular destination for visitors. Most of Zimbabwe lies on a relatively high plateau, averaging about 1 000metres (3 300 feet) above sea level, with vegetation that consists mainly of mixed woodland and grasslands.

The mountains of the Eastern Highlands form the border with Mozambique to the east and to the north the broad Zambezi River forms the border with Zambia.

The Zambezi Valley and the "Lowveld," which covers a strip across the southern and south eastern part of Zimbabwe, lie at a much lower altitude than the rest of the country and can be very hot.

There are a variety of top class lodges near some of the better known national parks and Victoria Falls has a very well established tourism industry.





HISTORY

Rock art scattered across Zimbabwe testifies to the presence of hunter gatherer communities who moved throughout the region centuries ago. Some moved to the south-east when Bantu settlers from central Africa moved into the area in about the 10th century and began establishing a society based on agriculture and cattle herding.

By the fifteenth century the Monomotapa Kingdom was firmly ensconced and dominated life in the region.

The stone city of Zimbabwe was established between 1300 and 1500 and people there traded with merchants from the Indian Ocean basin, some of whom travelled by dhow up the Lunde River as far as the current border between Zimbabwe Mozambique in the Gonarezhou National Park.

Portuguese traders based in Mozambique also conducted business with the Monomatapa Kingdom.

The 1830s saw the arrival of Ndebele people fleeing tribal conflict in South Africa. Most settled in the south west of the region and by the middle of the century the Ndebele King Mzilikazi had established his capital at Bulawayo.

Many European hunters and businessmen explored the area in and in 1889 the British South Africa Company, run by Cecil John Rhodes, was given a mandate to colonise what later became known as southern Rhodesia.

This led to a series of fierce conflicts, known as the first war of Chimurenga, during which Ndebele and Shona people attempted to resist colonization but these efforts were suppressed. Under white rule

various laws restricting black ownership of land and other repressive measures were instituted. In 1965 Ian Smith made a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) from Britain sparking international sanctions.

Soon thereafter a long guerilla war, sometimes known as the Second war of Chimurenga, began as nationalist armies fought to overthrow the Smith Government. After an increasingly bloody war Robert Mugabe won elections in 1980 and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe.

PEOPLE, CULTURE AND ECONOMY

The vast majority of Zimbabwe's population is Shona (80%) with Ndebele people comprising about 15%.

Many people depend on subsistence farming although some have work in the cities or at mines and factories. Many Zimbabweans work in South Africa and visit relatives at home a few times a year.

Cattle play an important role in Zimbabweans life, both from the point of view of providing meat and milk and also from a cultural perspective.

In traditional societies cattle represent wealth and are also slaughtered at traditional ceremonies, weddings and funerals. Zimbabwe has a small organized agricultural sector and several large mines.

ZIMBABWE IN BRIEF

- Capital City: Harare
- Area: 390 751 km² / 149 295 mi²
- Population: 12.6 million
- Time zone: GMT +2
- Currency: US Dollar (USD)
- Electricity: 220V
- Geography: Landlocked country separated from Zambia by the Zambezi River, home to the famous Victoria Falls
- Language: English is the official language; Shona and Ndebele are the first languages of 98% of the population



CLIMATE

Victoria Falls	Temp °C		Rainfall mm
	Min	Max	
Jan	18.2	29.7	167
Feb	17.9	29.4	126
Mar	17	29.7	69
Apr	13.9	29.2	24
May	9.5	27.4	2
Jun	6	25	0.6
Jul	5.6	24.8	0
Aug	8.2	27.8	0.3
Sep	12.8	31.8	1.9
Oct	17	33.4	26.6
Nov	18.2	32.4	63.6
Dec	18.1	30.2	173.5



WHEN TO GO

- November to March: Good game viewing although dispersed due to the good availability of water and grazing. Long summer days can be warm to hot, with spectacular afternoon thunderstorms, bush becoming lush and green, beautiful photographic light, migratory birds, good fishing, baby animals, flowers blooming from January, incredible sunsets, few tourists.
- April: Good game viewing, bush green and beautiful, lovely warm days, Mana Pools National Park opens, Victoria Falls very full and impressive.
- May to June: Good game viewing, warm days, cool nights.
- July to September: Best game viewing, warm days, cold to cool nights, most tourists, good sunsets.
- October: Best game viewing, hottest month, humid, bush very dry and dusty, Zambezi Valley extremely hot, good fishing, Victoria Falls very low.







HIGHLIGHTS

VICTORIA FALLS

Known to the local Kololo people “The Smoke that Thunders” the Victoria Falls are a spectacular sight to behold, especially if the river is in full flood and a kilometer wide sheet of water plunges into the gorge below.

The spray from the cascading water rises so powerfully that the slopes around the edges of the falls are covered by a rain forest.

The rising spray provides a welcome relief to the heat of the day and when the river is full tourist guides provide ponchos or other rain gear to keep one dry.

Victoria Falls town - just minutes away from the Falls and on the outskirts of the game rich Zambezi National Park - is a bustling center of activity and companies here arrange flights over the Falls, white river rafting in the gorges downstream, bungee jumping off the Victoria Falls Bridge and game viewing and sundowner cruises on the Upper Zambezi.



LAKE KARIBA

The 5 200 sq. km (2000m²) Lake Kariba was created in 1958 when engineers dammed the Zambezi River to allow for the generation of hydro power.

Many wild animals had to be rescued from the rising floodwaters that spread across the broad valley. The Matusadona National Park and a number of other protected areas border on Kariba which provides for excellent game viewing from the water.

The dam attracts a vast amount and variety of game with Nile crocodiles and many hippos inhabiting the lake. It is not uncommon to stumble across a herd of elephants on the lakeshore.

It is the continent’s third largest dam after Aswan in Egypt and Cahora Bassa in neighbouring Mozambique. It is a popular lake resort with an airport, harbour, lakeside hotels and lodges, and a wide selection of luxury houseboats. Activities are centered mainly on game viewing and fishing.

Summer can be very hot and humid but the winter months of June to August are probably the ideal time to visit.

MANA POOLS NATIONAL PARK

Mana Pools National Park is a World Heritage Site situated at the northern tip of Zimbabwe on the Zambezi River and is one of the country’s best wildlife areas. The river and several large permanent pools of water in the reserve support an abundance of big game and numerous bird species.

Elephant, buffalo, kudu, eland, sable, zebra and waterbuck are all common with lion, leopard, cheetah, hyena and wild dog often encountered. The park protects large numbers of hippo. The Lower Zambezi National Park lies directly across the river in Zambia helping create a vast wildlife area.

GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK

This remote park is situated in the south east of Zimbabwe. It is known for its’ elephant and large herds of buffalo and the majestic sandstone Chilojo Cliffs which tower above the Save River Valley. Large baobab trees are scattered across this wild and hot landscape.

The Save, Runde and Mwenzi rivers become vital lifelines during the run season, attracting large game from long distances away. More than 147 mammal species, 500 bird species and 116 species of reptile occur in the park.



HWANGE NATIONAL PARK

The 14 650 sq. km Hwange National Park is one of Africa’s finest refuges for wildlife with vast herds of elephant, buffalo, and zebra plus a very large concentration of giraffe.

It is also home to lion, leopard, cheetah and other predators, including the endangered African wild dog. More than 100 species of mammal occur in the park.

There is a rich birdlife in the region, with over 400 species having been recorded, due to a variety of habitats overlapping in the area. These include mopane woodland, miombo woodland, open grassland and mixed savanna.

Features of the southern region of the parks area are the fossil sand dunes ancient sand dunes held together by vegetation.

Man-made waterholes were introduced decades ago to help sustain wildlife through the dry season attracting great numbers of game.

Walking, driving and horseback safaris are a popular way of seeing the wildlife. There are a number of luxurious lodges in the Park.



MATOBO HILLS NATIONAL PARK

The Matobo Hills are an area of rugged beauty, a jumble of exposed granite hills and boulders cut by valleys. The Park, which is small by Zimbabwean standards, (44 500 hectares – 106 800 acres) is a UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage site.

The Motobos are of great spiritual importance to the Ndebele people and King Mzilikazi who lived in the early part of the 19th century is buried there. Bushmen hunter gatherers once lived in these hills too and they left a rich record of paintings in caves and overhangs that explain their way of life.

The park protects a variety of antelope species, baboon, rock hyraxes and a large population of leopard and black eagles.

The Matobos can be visited all year round, but it is probably better to avoid the summer heat and the rains of November through to March.



CANOEING

A variety of canoeing trips are run on the Zambezi River taking paddlers through the big game country of Mana Pools National Park and some of the surrounding concession areas. Paddlers overnight in tents erected along the banks of the river.

Most trips take several days, starting at Chirundu and ending in Mana Pools or continuing further downstream to Chewore or Kanyemba. Other trips begin in Mana Pools and end in Kanyemba.

All trips are conducted by expert field guides and stable inflatable or “Canadian” style canoes are used.



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

For a truly unique holiday experience, there are few better ways to discover the real heart and soul of a country than to travel away from the traditional tourist destinations and go ‘off the beaten track’. With the wealth of experience we have gained through our many years creating bespoke safaris into Africa, Hartley Safaris offers an extensive portfolio of experiences that allow you to embrace the true spirit and adventure of this magnificent country in a safe and secure manner. A holiday in Zimbabwe should always include a visit to Victoria Falls, Game viewing in Hwange, Matusadona (Kariba), Mana Pools or Motobo Hills National parks



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