

Botswana Safaris

With Brian Gibson & Ashley Boon



Have you ever dreamed of a really genuine African safari? Well, it's still out there.

Imagine waking in your comfortable bed at first light, roused from sleep by the liquid calls of Coppery-tailed Coucals and the raucous chatter of Red-billed Spurfowls, the camp chorus is joined by babblers, hornbills, drongos and as the Cape Turtle Dove's hypnotic repeated call that sounds like "Botswana, Botswana, Botswana" gets into full swing, you may hear the last piping calls of Pearl-spotted Owlets as they settle down to roost for the day.

As you come to the dining tent to sip your early morning tea or coffee, you might spot impala or water buck grazing on the other side of the river in the soft light of dawn. Or maybe elephants coming to drink or hippos heading back into the water for the day. Ahead of you is the prospect of exploring a unique landscape, encountering more of the most wonderful wildlife on the planet, and ending your day around the camp fire under African stars.



Impala

My name is Ashley Boon. I am a wildlife artist and I've been travelling to Botswana since 1999. In 2001 my dear friend Brian Gibson who ran that first safari, invited me to team up with his company "Capture Africa", to joint-lead safaris and we have never looked back. This November, 2023, will be our twenty-first and twenty-second Boon/Gibson safaris. Together we arrange tailor-made safaris for completely private groups staying at completely private mobile campsites.

The Okavango Delta is huge. Botswana is about the size of France and the delta itself is about two and a half times the size of the county of Cumbria. We camp at favourite designated sites which will have been booked long in advance.



Hemingway Style Tent

As one of the longest and most well-established mobile safari operators in Botswana, Capture Africa specialise in old-style, luxury, mobile tented safaris. But don't think for a moment that there is any element of roughing it, far from it!! Tents are large, comfortable "Hemingway" style, with proper beds, bedside tables, hanging space for your clothes and a self-contained shower and ablutions room at the rear of each tent. Tents are serviced daily and your laundry will be done each day as required.





On safari you will be called early each morning. After a quick, light breakfast it's into the game drive vehicle and we head into the bush looking for tracks and whatever we might have heard in the night.





Brian's skill as a tracker is awe-inspiring and his knowledge of the hundreds of game trails and how the landscape changes each year and season with the annual floods is encyclopaedic.



Red Lechwe & African Elephant

The Okavango Delta is rightly known as the “Jewel of the Kalahari”. Rain water that fell in the highlands of Angola finally forms the Kubango River, which becomes the Okavango River as it flows into Botswana. A little further south the river reaches the dry sands of the Kalahari and splits into hundreds of different waterways and forms the Okavango Delta, one of only two inland deltas in the world. When that water finally joins the Thamalakane and Boteti rivers in the south, it will have taken six months to pass through the delta.



Lilac-breasted Roller



Pied Kingfisher



The Okavango Delta

All this water creates one of the greatest wetlands in the world. The Okavango Delta is made up of permanent savannah, permanent water, woodlands and seasonal floodplains. It is teeming with wildlife. Antelope of every kind share this unspoilt environment with lion, leopard and other large predators. You will certainly see giraffe and warthogs and with luck hyenas, and with a lot of luck you might see some of the other harder to see inhabitants like serval, aardwolf or honey badger.



Serval



Impala



Lion



Northern Botswana has the greatest density of African Elephants anywhere. With so much wildlife around you will, at times, be hard pushed to know where to look next!

Our clients are frequently surprised at the colours, number and variety of spectacular birds that we find on safari.



Bateleur Eagle



African Paradise Flycatcher



Yellow-billed Stork

With so much water around you can expect to see storks, herons, kingfishers and wildfowl.



African Fish Eagle

You will see a number of different birds of prey, exquisite little waxbills, noisy wood hoopoes, different species of lapwings from our own, hornbills, bee-eaters, rollers, barbets, nightjars, owls and owlets.



Yellow-billed Hornbill



Little Bee-eater



Pearl-spotted Owlet

There are also a number of smaller animals which you might not have expected to see, such as several different species of mongoose.



Slender Mongoose

But the bigger animals are the main attraction. The local saying about Cape Buffalo is that, “They always look at you like you owe them money!”.



Cape Buffalo

You will see Nile Crocodile & Hippopotamus for certain.



Botswana is arguably the best place to see African Wild Dog, the second rarest predator in Africa. There may be as few as four thousand of these fascinating predators left.



African Wild Dog



One of the best things about being on a private safari is that we can spend as much time as we like with the wildlife we find. *We* decide when game drives are over and we won't drag you away from an exciting sighting because it's lunchtime!

With regard to mealtimes, clients are always impressed by the wonderful feasts that the camp chefs, like the "Amazing Flo" will serve you.



The "Amazing Flo"



Dining Tent



After lunch you can siesta in your private tent or sit under the shade tent to read, write your diary or just see what passes by camp until it's time to head out for afternoon game drive.



Moremi Game Reserve



Camp in Khwai Reserve



Lion Cub



African Jacana



Crested Barbet

Afternoon game drives end with “Sundowners”, drinks, often at places chosen for the views they offer.



Just think of sipping a cold beer, gin & tonic or a glass of wine while watching the wildlife around you!





After “Sundowners” we will make our way back to camp for dinner. In some of the places we camp we are allowed to “Night Drive” home in the dark. Using a spotlight, we’ll look for nocturnal animals and birds such as Springhares, bushbabies, owls and nightjars.



Southern White-faced Owl

Back in camp our friendly staff will serve you pre-dinner drinks around the camp fire before the chef calls you to the dining table.



It is a truly special experience to dine in our own private camp, reliving the highlights of the day while listening to the sound of the African bush all around us!



Any safari in Botswana would be incomplete without time in the Okavango Delta, but there are other magnificent areas to explore. We can also arrange safaris in Savuti, which is north of the Delta, in Central Kalahari or Nxai Pans, or on the Okavango or Chobe Rivers. You may like to add a visit to the Victoria Falls just over the border from northern Botswana in Zimbabwe.

A quick word about what is and isn't included in the cost of a "Boon/Gibson" safari. Included:

- all transport from when you land at Maun in Botswana
- all accommodation
- all park entry fees
- all guide fees
- all meals and all drinks.

Flights to and from Botswana are not included.



Savuti Pride



Southern Giraffe



Savuti



Burchell's Zebra



Khwai River



Greater Blue-eared Starling



Leopard & Cub

Here are a few of the reviews that some of our previous clients have given Boon/Gibson Safaris.

“It is not very often that one chooses to go on the same safari twice in one year but such was the excellence of the Boon/Gibson experience that that is exactly what I did.

My first love was bird watching and having seen the winter birds in Botswana I wanted to see the summer ones also, but there was far more to the safari than just bird watching, the two of them make a team of experts that appear to conjure up the best that Africa has to offer, whether it be big game, small game, flowers, insects, even stars at night. Thrown in was the food, the tents, the service, all of the highest possible quality and, most importantly, the charm of the staff looking after me. How lucky was I!”

Liz Gibbs, Yorkshire



“As frequent safari travellers we found Capture Africa to be amongst the very top safari operators in Africa!

The service they provide is professional, personal and very reliable.

We travelled to Okavango Delta and fly camped in some truly stunning locations.

Brian Gibson, ably assisted by wildlife artist Ashley Boon, ensured that on our trip we had a truly exceptional wildlife experience.

The camp team were efficient, cooked well and are well trained. They can even sing!

We have no hesitation in recommending Capture Africa for a trip that will leave you with memories for a lifetime!”

Alan & Felicity Down, Somerset.



Mbudi River, Khwai Game Reserve



Orange-breasted Bushshrike



Honey Badger

“We went to the Okavango Delta in Botswana with Capture Africa on our first-time safari.

Brian Gibson runs a first-class private safari operation in Botswana and as well as finding wild dog after wild dog pack, he even had supplementary supplies of gin flown in!

Ashley Boon is one of the most knowledgeable ornithologists in Africa and charming. They make a good team and the combination resulted in a fantastic holiday with great hosts and great fun.”

George and Jill Chamberlain, Cumbria



Yellow-billed Oxpecker

“My wife Carol & I have been on three different tented safari holidays to Botswana with Ashley as our guide in conjunction with Capture Africa. We have immensely enjoyed his and Brian’s company and benefited from their extraordinary wildlife spotting and identification skills. We have been fortunate to have travelled fairly widely with a number of excellent guides, and I can say that Ashley and Brian excel by comparison. Our holidays with them are always everything we hoped for and more. They are attentive, enthusiastic, capable, amusing, respectful, kind, and polite. Africa is a challenging environment, our holidays have usually been luxury tents, and together with Capture Africa they have been able to cater for all guests’ reasonable and often unreasonable needs, and always with a smile. Brian & Ash love what they do, they love wildlife, and it is infectious. I am very happy to recommend Boon/Gibson Safaris, you won’t be disappointed!”

Ross & Carl Haddow, Notts



African Wild Dog



Spotted Hyena

“I have been on Safari with Ashley Boon and Brian Gibson four times in Botswana and each Safari has been simply wonderful. The amount of animals we saw was amazing, the result of our guides special knowledge and ability to track and spy what we were looking for. Ashley Boon’s knowledge of birds is excellent and Brian Gibson knows the country like the back of his hand. The camps are very well run, the food and drink are delicious and Flo’s cooking is legendary. The camps are always in beautiful spots and away from other people. Ashley and Gibbo make the Safari a trip to be remembered and the greatest fun.

Some unforgettable memories. A pride of about twelve lionesses swimming a river to meet a very handsome lion on the far side only to run into a crocodile and five different leopards in a nine-day trip, not to mention the Wild Dogs!

Ashley and Brian are the best!”

Jill Edwards, Yorkshire

“I wanted to treat my daughter to a special occasion as part of her 21st birthday, her interest in nature made a safari a no-brainer. But which one and with whom? The number and types of safaris available can lead to confusion. I contacted Ashley Boon of Boon/Gibson Safaris, and how glad I am I did!

Ashley’s interest and understanding of what I was looking for, along with his own deep love of nature and knowledge of Botswana gained over years of joint-leading safaris made it a very easy decision to choose Boon/Gibson Safaris. The entire process was not only easy, it was huge fun! The whole thing worked like (Swiss) clockwork. From transfers, to meet and greet in Maun, to our fabulous accommodation at the river lodge on our first night. Watching the sun set over the Thamalakane River while hearing hippos, frogs and multitudes of birds was truly enchanting and set the scene for the next nine exciting days. Ashley and his safari partner Brian Gibson run a truly professional operation. Brian’s knowledge of the bush and all elements of the ecosystem is impressive and compelling, even extending to astrology!!

On arrival at camp, we were met by Eddie and Flo (our chef) and the delightful camp team who all made us feel warmly welcome and at home.

Our tented accommodation which overlooked the river was very comfortable and the sturdy camp beds made for restful sleep.

Flo and the kitchen team turned out fabulous food, and catered for my daughter’s vegan diet, nothing was too much trouble to Flo to make us feel at home, well fed and watered. From sundowners at dusk to a beer around the warm and welcoming campfire at night the whole experience was one we will never forget. Oh! Did I mention the wildlife? Animals and birds of all shapes and sizes including charming bat-eared foxes and that most shy and elusive of animals the aardwolf. Despite not being ‘the right time’ for birding we managed 184 species in 10 days - not bad for a bunch of amateurs! I cannot recommend Boon-Gibson safaris highly enough. Thank you for a truly life enhancing experience.”

Stuart Martin, Hants



Brian and I feel truly blessed to have made so many lasting friends through our time guiding together and to have shared so many thrilling adventures, sightings and experiences in the Botswana bush. More than once, having been told by clients as we head off on their first safari experiences that this will be a once in a life time trip, we find ourselves welcoming them back again. Our most returned safari guest was 87 when she came on her fourth safari with us! Very flattering.

We hope to see you in Botswana and promise that should you choose to come on a Boon/Gibson Safari we will do our very best to show you as much of the wildlife and natural world in this truly wild place that we love so much, and to help you feel the adventure, magic and excitement of a **real** safari experience.



For more information or help planning your safari please contact me at ashley.boon@btopenworld.com or call 0044 7717 363595.