



# ~ Zambezi Explorer ~

## *The Zambezi River*

Matabeleland, Zimbabwe & Botswana, Africa

~ World-Class Rafting ~ Canoe Safari ~ Victoria Falls ~ Wildlife Viewing ~  
~ National Parks ~ Sunset Cruise ~ Exotic Cuisine ~



## Table of Contents

Trip Summary .....	3
Itinerary Snapshot.....	3
Packing List .....	7
Immunizations .....	10
Water .....	11
Food .....	11
Digestive Worries .....	11
Prescriptions.....	11
Voltage .....	11
Safety .....	12
Fitness Levels .....	12
Country Facts .....	12
Recommended Reading / Viewing .....	13
Helpful Phrases.....	14
Pre-Departure Checklist .....	16
Map of Zambia & other countries .....	17

## Trip Summary

Explore the Zambezi River and the game parks of Zimbabwe & Botswana. We spent many seasons working as full time guides on the Zambezi River and have expert knowledge of its world-class whitewater. The warm water makes for even more-enjoyable rafting. Fall has the best months to see game and experience the Zambezi as it is the end of the dry season and all of the animals come down to the banks of the river to drink, swim and frolic in the shallows. Also, the bush has been either eaten or has died down, so seeing the animals is much easier. (In the wet season there is so much fresh green foliage that the animals hide in the thicket or scatter to drinking holes hidden away).

Zimbabwe has all the infrastructure of a modern country and has a highly developed and protected national park system. This has allowed the wildlife to thrive and the elephant herds of Botswana and Zimbabwe are among the largest and most protected of Africa. The game viewing in Zimbabwe is simply the best, and you will not be overrun by the herds of tourists often found in Kenya!

### Itinerary Snapshot

<b>Day 1</b>	Arrive at Victoria Falls Airport (VFA), Zimbabwe. BBX airport transfer to Imbabala Safari lodge. Group briefing, and 4PM Sunset Cruise. Welcome! (D)
<b>Day 2</b>	Guests can choose morning, afternoon or evening game drives to get their first look at the abundance of African wildlife. Overnight at Imbabala Safari lodge(B,L,D)
<b>Day 3</b>	Day trip to Chobe National Park in Northern Botswana. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 4</b>	Game activity at Imbabla followed by breakfast/brunch. Transfer to Victoria Falls and participate in optional activities. Lunch at Wild Horizons Look Out Café followed by a leisurely drive to the park to start the canoe safari. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 5</b>	We paddle downstream and hope to see abundant wildlife along the river, and enjoy safe-to-bathe swimming holes. Overnight Camping. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 6</b>	We paddle all morning watching for more game and running more fun rapids! Take out upstream from Devil's Cataract. High tea at the Colonial Victoria Falls Hotel followed by optional adrenaline activities. Overnight at the Old Drift Lodge, one of Zimbabwe's newest and more luxury lodges. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 7</b>	Time to raft the big river! Boiling Pot just below the Falls to our beach camp below Rapid Number 10. Overnight Camping. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 8</b>	Continuing down the Zambezi, we enjoy the Oblivion and Overland Truck Eater rapids. Overnight camping. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 9</b>	Now we are "self-supported" as we raft deeper into the Batoka Gorge, running Wake up call, Open and Closed Season, and upper Moimba Falls. Overnight Camping. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 10</b>	Early wake up to take advantage of cool morning air and float down to the second waterfall we have to portage, known as Chibango Falls. On the trip back, we will get to see the remote countryside and small villages. Overnight at Elephant Camp. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 11</b>	Enjoy a motorboat and short hike to Livingstone Island. Jump into the Devil's Pool! Afternoon activities at Elephant camp or take a trip back to Victoria Falls for some adventure activities and/or souvenir shopping. (B,L,D)
<b>Day 12</b>	Transfer to Victoria Falls Airport for travel home, or to another destination in Africa! (B)

*(Meals included: B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner)*

### Itinerary in Detail

#### Day 1 – Arrival

Arrive in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe early afternoon. We meet you at the airport and drive you 40 K up river to the Imbabala Safari lodge. Right on the banks of the upper Zambezi river. You will have a chance

to rest and freshen up before we rendezvous at the bar for a welcome drink and briefing. Our trip leader will give us an overview of what excitement lies ahead! We enjoy a toast after flying halfway around the world to converge on the incredible Victoria Falls or the Mosi-o-Tunya, the smoke that thunders! At 4 pm we will board our vessel for a relaxing sunset cruise to enjoy a few drinks while navigating amongst the islands that dot the wide and calm upper Zambezi River. We will be looking for game and will enjoy the beautiful and abundant bird life. Our first African sunset to be enjoyed with our fellow Zambezi explorers while we gently drift amongst the Hippo pods will be unforgettable! (D)

### **Day 2 – Game drives and walks**

Guests can choose morning, afternoon or night drives to get their fill of the wonderful game viewing that is available here. All drives are conducted in open-backed 4x4 vehicles that are suited to the terrain and are perfect to afford the best views of the game. We also have a chance to offer guests a walking safari. Your professional guide will show you some of the large and small wildlife of Imbabala's private concession area, highlighting species that might get missed if on a drive. The chance to get up close and personal with the larger species is also very exciting and who can ever forget their first elephant encounter while walking. The walks usually last for 3 hours and guests will normally walk for about 5km during that time. The fully qualified professional guides are armed and experienced with the animals that occur on the concession. Overnight Imbabala Safari Lodge. (B,L,D)

### **Day 3 Day trip to Chobe National Park**

Chobe National Park, in northern Botswana, has one of the largest concentrations of game in Africa. Often described as one of, if not the best, wildlife-viewing area in Africa today. Chobe boasts one of the highest concentrations of wildlife left on the African continent. Animals are present during all seasons, and at certain times of the year their numbers can be staggering. A major feature of Chobe National Park is its elephant population currently estimated at around 120,000. Overnight Imbabala Safari Lodge. (B,L,D)

### **Day 4 – Canoe safari**

Morning Game activity at Imbabala followed by breakfast / brunch. Then, we will transfer to Victoria Falls where you can store your luggage and participate in activities at Vic Falls (such as gorge swing, bungee jump, etc). We will then enjoy a leisurely lunch at The Wild Horizons Look Out Café. After lunch, we will transfer by 4 x 4 vehicles into the park to start the canoe safari.

We'll see elephant, zebra, bushbuck, kudu, Cape buffalo, ubiquitous baboons, impala, and the occasional bush duiker. The bird life is an ornithologist's dream come true, with the various ibises and Trumpeter Horn Bill standing out. Of course, a glimpse of a Lilac Breasted Roller would be welcome! Then, in the river, which is roughly a mile wide at times and often channels around sand banks and reed islands, lies the choice habitat for the hippopotami and the patient crocodile. The nocturnal creatures we might also see, or hear, are lions, leopards and the rare wild dog, just to mention a few. Chances are better that we'll hear the lionesses as they return from the dawn hunt.

At dusk we'll gather around and sit high on the bank overlooking the river. We'll hear the deep, low decibel grumbles and burps of the hippos as they call out to announce their night time grazing fete. The bush will be alive with sound as night falls and we inch closer to the fire. (B,L,D)

## **Day 5 – Canoe safari**

We paddle further downstream in the morning until we have a picnic lunch on one of the islands, or on the main land supplied by our land support team that will shadow us with vehicles. After lunch we run class 2 rapids doing our best not to capsize. We will hope to see abundant wild life along the river and enjoy certain safe to bathe swimming holes! We spend another night at our riverside comfortable camp! (B,L,D)

## **Day 6 – Canoe safari**

We paddle all morning watching for more game and running more fun rapids! We will take-out upstream from the Devil's Cataract At Old Drift Lodge.

Upstream of the iconic Victoria Falls, on the banks of the Zambezi River, lies Old Drift Lodge. The lodge boasts luxury accommodation overlooking the pristine Zambezi National Park, a mere 7 kilometers from the mighty Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Old Drift Lodge is nestled within a wild paradise frequented by elephant, buffalo, herds of sable, eland, zebra, giraffe, kudu, waterbuck and impala. The main lodge area has 360 degree views, North facing onto the Zambezi & South facing onto a water hole. A 7 kilometre stretch of river flows between the camp and the town of Victoria Falls, making Old Drift Lodge the closest lodge within the National Park to Victoria Falls. The symphony of birdsong and calls of wildlife create a choir that enraptures all listeners and accompanies guests on this idyllic African experience.

The spacious canvas en-suite rooms exhibit an air of elegance that blends in seamlessly with the natural environment. The suites are resplendent with stylish furnishings and fittings, accentuated by an indoor and outdoor shower, private plunge pool and bath with a view. (B,L,D)

## **Day 7 – Rafting - Boiling Pot just below the Falls to our Beach Camp below rapid number 10**

Time to raft the big river! At 8:30 am we begin our journey into the gorge right below the Victoria Falls. We hike down a steep trail to meet our waiting rafts. We launch and will begin our 60 km river journey as the river flows east toward the Indian Ocean. With both paddle and oar boats, our day is spent navigating some of the world's biggest and most dynamic rapids. The river gorge starts out deep and steep, twisting and bending to form a series of sinuous goosenecks. The canyon rim looms overhead as we come face to face with what some would call "Nyami-Nyami", the Zambezi river god, more easily recognized as the heart pounding and enormous rapids (about one per mile)! The air is hot and dry, the river water a mild 62 degrees, and the breeze that sweeps up the canyon is fragrant with the wilds of Africa. Our first night's camp is where we meet our gear as porters carry it into the gorge for us. This beautiful big white sand beach camp is truly fantastic to unwind from a super exciting day of white water with a cold beer in your hand and your guides cooking over an open fire for you. The gear boat guides will meet us here as we bring everything downriver with us from this river camp once we actually head further downstream. (B,L,D)

## **Day 8 – Self-support rafting to middle of nowhere...deep into the Batoka Gorge**

The rapids we ran yesterday were only a warm up for the rapids today. Enjoy rapids such as Oblivion and Overland Truck Eater. Camp on a beautiful sandy beach, no bugs and perfect temperatures. (B,L,D)

## **Day 9 - Moving down stream**

Now we are “self-supported” as we raft further into the Batoka gorge, running Wake up call, Open and Closed Season, and upper Moimba Falls. Many say upper Moimba rapid is the most exciting and fun rapid on the river. We camp on yet another fantastic big sandy beach and relax after a moderately intense day of rafting. More calm sections and time to just soak in being in a place few people get to see with their own eyes. As we travel downstream, the rapids spread out and we enter some big open valleys with lush vegetation. (B,L,D)

## **Day 10 - Moimba camp to the Batoka Dam Site**

We get up early to take advantage of cool morning air. Today we come upon two un-raftable waterfalls. The first, lower Moimba, is a fairly easy portage as we lower the rafts over a 30-foot vertical cliff into an eddy-pool below. We then float down to the second waterfall we have to portage, known as Chibango Falls. This is also the proposed dam site for the Batoka gorge dam. We can then look at the falls are a 3-step staircase of explosive whitewater. We will then take a short hike to our transportation back to Victoria Falls. On the trip back we will travel through remote countryside, through villages. We will stop at a rural school and meet the kids and hopefully they will sing us a song. Please bring any school supplies you can fit in your luggage to donate to the kids! Overnight Elephant Camp – one of the top 25 luxury hotels in Africa!

This deluxe safari camp perched on a private game reserve will be a decadent treat after an exciting descent of the Zambezi. Hot showers, a dip in the plunge pool and sundowners before dinner. (B,L,D)

## **Day 11 - Devils Pool**

After breakfast we will head out by vehicle, cross into Zambia to the boat jetty on the Zambezi where a small motor boat will ferry us out to the middle of the Victoria Falls and take us to Livingstone Island. From here we hike a short distance to the upstream edge of the Victoria Falls and from there will traverse a pool of calm water by swimming and then we climb onto a rock outcropping that allows us to jump into the famous Devil's pool! This natural "tea cup" allows you to literally sit on the edge of the falls as water spills over the edge of the cup where you jumped in! It is a truly amazing and unforgettable experience that will set the tone for the exciting fun held in store for you! After the refreshing "dip" we swim, hike back to the tented “tea room” for a light, late morning snack of crumpets and tea. We return to the lodge for lunch and rest. In the afternoon, we can enjoy more of what the Elephant Camp has to offer and meet some of the rescued wildlife up close and personal, or take a trip back to Vic Falls for some adventure activities, souvenir shopping ...the choice is yours, but we're betting you are not going to want to leave. Tonight will be our farewell dinner as we share great stories and make plans for our next adventure. (B,L,D)

## **Day 12 - Departure**

By now, your new home in the bush will feel so comfortable that you will begin to ponder ditching the real job back home and opening your own lodge in Africa. But while you are fantasizing we will transfer you to the Victoria Falls Airport for a mid-day flight out. You will connect with your international flight home, and you will still be dreaming and reflecting on one of the best experiences in your life and the new friends made. You might already be scheming a timely return to the African wilderness and its supreme whitewater – the inimitable Zambezi... (B)

## Visas and Passports

Visa costs can often change at the last minute. It's best to have adequate US cash on you in small denominations. You should also check the country's embassy / consular website before leaving your country.

### Zimbabwe

Entry requirements: A passport, return ticket, and adequate funds. Americans are required to pay visa fees at point of entry. A multi-day entry visa is US\$60.

[zimbabwe-embassy.us/index.html](http://zimbabwe-embassy.us/index.html)

[travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/zimbabwe.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/zimbabwe.html)

### Botswana

A passport with at least six months of validity remaining is required.

[botswana.usembassy.gov/](http://botswana.usembassy.gov/)

[travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/botswana.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/botswana.html)

### Zambia

Your passport must be valid for at least six months after the intended date of departure from Zambia and have at least two blank pages. The multiple-entry visa fee is \$80. Bring exact change whenever practical as change may not be available.

To date, there have been no reported cases of yellow fever in Zambia, although the **Zambian government requires proof of yellow fever vaccination or a valid waiver certificate for all visitors.**

[zambia.usembassy.gov/](http://zambia.usembassy.gov/)

[travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/zambia.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/zambia.html)

*Please note: it is your responsibility to check with embassies to verify any passport and visa requirements for entry and exit requirements for the countries you will be visiting.*

## Flying In and Out

You will be flying in and out of Victoria Falls Airport (VFA), Zimbabwe. The first day of the trip is an arrival day. The last day of the trip is your departure day. Be sure to email Bio Bio your entire flight itinerary and we will arrange an airport pick-up.

For tickets, you can call Karell air travel agent or use your own: [www.karellair.com](http://www.karellair.com)

\*There is an airport departure tax, payable in US dollars.

## Packing List

It is going to be hot and dry! That and the getting wet on the relatively warm Zambezi River are what you should pack for. For the most part you will live in shorts and a t-shirt. For sun protection and to help keep you cool while on the river, we recommend a long sleeve button down shirt made of a light colored, light and quick-drying fabric. September and October are the dry months so there should be very few

mosquitoes to worry about! There are certain dining rooms in Victoria Falls that require “smarter” attire - for men, long pants and a button down shirt, and a dress for women.

### General

- Passport** - and copies and visas
- Airplane Tickets** - and copies
- Important **phone numbers**, addresses
- Money**, cash, credit card
- Sunscreen**: High SPF that is sweat resistant
- Sunglasses & straps** (Chums)
- Bug repellent**: Deet, garlic, Vitamin-B
- Toiletry kit** (Medications) and lotion
- Wide brimmed **hat**, strap
- Safari clothing**: cotton button down shirt, khaki trousers & shorts - the best colors are those that blend in with the Bush, don't scare away the animals! Also, avoid blues and dark colors to avoid the tsetse flies and heat.
- T-shirts**, white or earth colors
- Comfortable **walking shoes** (boots)
- Socks**
- "**Smart Casual**" attire for Hotels
- Sweater** or fleece for cool mornings

### Camping

- Flash light and or **headlamp** (spare batteries)
- Book, magazine, journal**
- Camera**, extra batteries
- Lightweight, summer **sleeping bag**
- Small **tarp, ground cloth**
- Cards, **fun & games**, a favorite poem etc.
- Music**, or instruments
- Baggy pants**, comfort clothing
- Binoculars**, Bird book
- H2O bottle**, cup
- Toiletry kit**, medications, lotion, band aids

A sleep kit for the trip is available for \$40 and contains sleeping bag, liner, pillow, pad and chair. Pads and chairs are supplied for all guests.

## River

- Quick drying shorts**
- Swimsuit**
- River footwear**, Aqua socks, old tennies, Tevas, or Alps. (A carabiner to clip them on)
- Long sleeve shirt**; sun and heat protection
- Bandana**
- Fanny or **dry pack** for stuff, Zip lock Bags.
- Power Bars or similar **energy bars**. (one per day)
- Gatorade powder packets** (@15 liters worth), and perhaps your favorite spirit in a bottle.

If you have additional gear that you want to bring, please give us a call. Any items not used on the river trip can be stored at the Hotel. Remember that everything that you have for the rafting trip will travel down river with us and will have to fit in a dry bag.

Tents are optional. It is usually hot and star-gazing is great under the Southern Cross! Most people just sleep out on a ground cloth. However, a tent for privacy and for mosi-free nights can be arranged.

Additional things you might consider bringing: If you like strong coffee, perhaps bring a pound of gourmet grounds. Gatorade powder flavor packs will help keep you hydrated and mask the iodine taste of treated water. Power Bars are always handy to have. When you are in duty free, you might pick up your favorite bottle of spirit for the rafting trip. Bring clothes that you are planning to discard and trade in for curios in Vic Falls. For example, trade old T-shirts for fine woodcarvings. Also, the fishing is quite good. A telescopic rod and reel with some spoon spinners and a steel leader will allow you to land some feisty Tiger Fish!

**We stop at a rural school on our return trip from the river. Please bring as many school supplies as you can muster to donate to the kids! You will really enjoy seeing these kids faces light up when you donate the supplies. Pens, pencils, notebooks, solar calculators, are just a few examples of things to donate.**

## Money Matters

### Tipping

While tipping is optional, most people will tip the various guides on your trip: River guides, Safari guides, porters, hotel staff. Bring about 10-15% of your trip cost to cover these tips along the way.

### Cash

There is an ATM machine Victoria Falls, however it is not reliable. You should therefore be prepared for this. You should bring plenty of US dollars. Crisp, clean, new bills are best. Small bills come in handy for tipping hotel staff, taxis and buying small things off the street. Some things you'll need cash for:

- Tips
- Crafts you want to buy
- Extra activities in Victoria Falls – bungee jumping, gorge swing, entrance to the Falls, etc. *(Please call us so we can update you on these costs.)*

Travelers Checks are not recommended as they are hard to cash.

## Money Belts

You should have a money belt that is worn under your clothes.

## Immunizations

Bio Bio Expeditions suggests you check with your family doctor to find out the latest requirements for shots when traveling to Africa. See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect. Recent information on required vaccinations can be obtained by calling the Centers for Disease Control international travelers' hotline at 877.394.8747. You can access their website by directing your browser to <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

Here is a list of CDC suggestions:

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B - if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Rabies - if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- **Yellow fever** - mandatory when traveling to Zimbabwe, Botswana & Zambia if traveling from or through countries where yellow fever is a risk.
- Malaria
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.

## Malaria

Transmission and Symptoms:

Malaria is a serious disease that is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected female Anopheles mosquito. Symptoms may include fever and flu-like illness, including: chills, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue. Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Malaria can often be prevented by using anti-malarial drugs and by using personal protection measures to prevent mosquito bites. However, in spite of all protective measures, travelers may still develop malaria. Travelers who become ill with a fever or flu-like illness while traveling in a malaria risk area and up to one year after returning home should seek prompt medical attention and should tell the physician their travel history.

Prevention:

- Malone is the drug of choice for Malaria prevention as it has fewer reported side effects than other drugs and, according to various studies, is more effective.

Preventing Insect Bites:

In addition to using drugs to prevent malaria, travelers should protect themselves from mosquito bites by wearing clothing that covers most of the body, using bed nets, and applying insect repellent to exposed skin, particularly

between dusk and dawn. The most effective repellents contain the active ingredient DEET (N, N-diethyl meta-toluamide). When using DEET, follow these precautions:

- Always use according to label directions.
- Use repellent only when outdoors and wash skin after coming indoors.
- Do not breathe or swallow repellent or get it in the eyes.
- Do not put repellent on wounds or broken skin.
- Adults should use DEET at a concentration of 30% to 35%.
- DEET should not come in contact with rubber elements for they will melt.

For greater protection, clothing can be soaked in or sprayed with permethrin. Permethrin will repel insects for several months. Repellents containing DEET, and Permethrin can be purchased in hardware, camping, and military surplus stores.

## **Water**

Although it takes a little extra caution when drinking fluids in Africa, it is essential to stay well hydrated. We advise that you not drink any of the tap water in most of Africa. Bottled water is fine to drink and can be ordered at most restaurants. When ordering sodas, it is best to request them without ice as the ice can be made from tap water. We highly recommend a personal water pump or iodine so you may never have to worry about not having enough water.

## **Food**

Avoid rich food until you acclimatize. If you are wary of getting sick, then play it safe and eat only cooked foods or fresh fruit that you have peeled yourself. The best hotels and restaurants have high standards for hygiene and food preparation. In general, stay cautious, eat what appeals to you and trust your senses.

## **Digestive Worries**

Traveling to Africa is going to be a big change on your body. Despite the many precautions we all take to stay healthy, occasionally one may experience diarrhea. The major problem associated with diarrhea is fluid loss leading to severe dehydration, so it is important to maintain plentiful fluid intake. Avoid caffeine and alcohol because they further dehydrate you. The best drinks are weak tea, mineral water, and caffeine-free soft drinks. Although ideally it is best to let diarrhea run its course, on a trekking trip this is uncomfortable. You may want to bring an over-the-counter diarrhea cure to minimize your discomfort or talk to your doctor about prescribing an antibiotic for traveler's diarrhea such as Cipro. We also advise that you carry your own supply of toilet paper, as some of the restrooms in Africa may not have TP.

## **Prescriptions**

If you take prescription medications that you need to bring, be sure to have a plentiful supply and the doctor's prescription in case something happens to them. Along those lines, it is best to carry medications in your carry-on bag in case of lost luggage. If you wear prescription glasses or contacts, we advise that you bring a spare set.

## **Voltage**

Electrical current in Africa is 220 volts AC. Weights and measures are Metric.

## Safety

Although the locals are a warm, friendly, fun-loving people, poverty and therefore thievery, is a problem. Always keep your wits about you and be aware of your surroundings. When with other people, watch out for each other. Large crowds are prime locations for pick-pocketing to occur. Keep your money in a money belt or hidden pouch that you wear around your neck and under your shirt. When purchasing items, do not pull out lots of money. We advise that you leave all valuable jewelry, including fancy watches, at home. Thieves often work in pairs or groups - one tries to distract you (eg: by squirting food or paint on your clothing) and in your ensuing confusion, another one makes off with your belongings.

## Fitness Levels

Your upcoming expedition is not overly strenuous. Although there will be lots of time to relax, read, and rest, we will be doing some very physical activities as well. In terms of the rafting trip, the hardest part is dealing with the hot days. Keeping yourself protected from the sun and hydrated will help keep you healthy!

## Country Facts

### The Zambezi River

The Zambezi is Africa's fourth largest River system, after the Nile, Zaire and Niger Rivers. It runs through six countries on its journey from central Africa to the Indian Ocean. Its unique value is that it is less developed than others in terms of human settlement and many areas along its banks enjoy protected status.

The Zambezi's power has carved the spectacular Victoria Falls and the zigzagging Batoka Gorge. The Zambezi has been harnessed at various points along the way including the massive Kariba Dam between Zambia and Zimbabwe and Cabora Bassa Dam in Mozambique. Plans for another dam at the Batoka Gorge have fortunately been shelved. The river's beauty has attracted tourists from all over the world providing opportunities for a myriad of water sports and game viewing.

Running for a length of 2700km, the river's journey begins as an insignificant little spring in the corner of Northwest Zambia in the Mwinilunga District. It bubbles up between the roots of a tree, very close to the border where Zambia, Angola and Zaire meet. It enters Angola for about 230kms, where it accumulates the bulk of its headwater drainage, and re-enters Zambia again at Cholwezi rapids flowing due south but substantially enlarged by the entry of various tributaries.

It passes through the flat sandy country of the Western Province, then traverses the broad, annually flooding Barotse Plains, where much of the water is lost to evaporation, then over more rocky country where it's tranquil course is interrupted by the Ngonye Falls and Rapids. Pastoralists, farmers and fishermen thinly populate this upper part of the river. Wildlife is sparse it is remarkably free of pollution. This is also the scene of the remarkable Ku-omboka Ceremony where thousands of inhabitants move annually to higher ground as the Zambezi floods into the low lying plains.

As it turns in an easterly direction it forms the border between Zambia and Namibia and eventually joins up with the Chobe River in the Caprivi Swamps, briefly forming a border with Botswana. For the next 500km it serves as the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe thundering over the Victoria Falls and through the narrow, steadily deepening Batoka Gorge, which flattens out at the broad Gwembe Valley. From here it flows into the Kariba Dam for 281km - it's width at one point being 40km. From the dam wall the river travels due north, heading east again at Chirundu. Here it is flanked by the Lower Zambezi National Park on the Zambian side and Mana Pools National Park on the Zimbabwean side. This middle zone supports one of Africa's most important wilderness areas. After the Luangwa Confluence, it's a much larger Zambezi that flows into Mozambique and out towards the Indian

Ocean, having provided power, food, pleasure and transport for many and a home for untold numbers of wildlife along its journey.

The Bundu people of Zambia believe the Zambezi River has a spirit called Nyami Nyami. This spirit brings them water to grow crops and fish to eat so they call the river "the river of life". Perhaps the most spectacular spot along the river is in Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls. These falls are two times the size of Niagara Falls at 355 feet high and 5500 feet wide!

The Zambezi River is widely used by wildlife and humans alike. Hippos, crocodiles, baboons, elephants, hyenas and lions are some examples of wildlife you might find along the Zambezi. Humans use the river for transportation, irrigation, tourism and hydropower. The people who live along the river differ from country to country. English is the official language of the area though the different tribes along the banks of the Zambezi speak more than 70 other languages. Currently the countries along the river are at odds as to how to manage the river. In the future these countries must agree to manage "the river of life" so that its people can survive and its spirit can thrive.

## **Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in south-central Africa. It lies between the Zambezi River in the north and the Limpopo River to the south. The country has land borders with Mozambique to the north and east, South Africa to the South, Botswana to the southwest and Zambia to the northwest and north.

Most of Zimbabwe is rolling plateau, with over 75% of it lying between 610m (2000 ft) and 1,525m (5,000 ft) above sea level, and almost all of it over 305m (1,000 ft).

The area of high plateau, know as the High Veld, is some 400 miles long by 50 miles wide, and stretches northeast to southwest at 1,220m (4,000 ft) to 1,676m (5,500ft). This culminates in the northeast in the Udizi and Inyanga mountains, reaching the country's highest point at Mt. Inyangani at 2,596m (8,517 ft). The middle veld is a plateau ranging from 610m (2,000 ft) to 1,220m (4,000 ft) high. Below 610m (2,000ft) are areas making up the Low Veld, wide and sandy plains in the basins of the Zambezi and the Limpopo.

The steep mountain ranges cut Zimbabwe off from the eastern plains that border the Indian Ocean. The High Veld is a central ridge forming the country's watershed, with stream flowing southeast to the Limpopo and Sabi rivers and northwest into the Zambezi. Deep river valleys cut the Middle Veld. Only the larger of the many rivers have an all-year-round flow of water. Most of rivers have falls and rapids.

## **General Description of Zimbabwe's Climate**

Zimbabwe is a land locked country, which lies wholly within the tropics, extending from about (15 1/2S to 22 1/2S), and from (25 1/2°E to 33°E). The main physical characteristics of the country are the high watershed areas, mostly between 1200m and 1500m, which roughly divide the country into two halves the southeast and northwest. In general, the altitude falls from the central watershed and escarpments towards the main river valleys, interrupted by secondary plateau, ranges and valleys which may be localized but do have a noteworthy effect on the local climate. Lake Kariba, covering over 5000km along the northwestern border has created significant climatic changes in its vicinity. The low lying main river valleys, Zambezi, Limpopo and Sabi are below 500m and some areas in these valleys may fall below 300m. Rainfall generally increases from south to north, since winds of a northerly origin are much moister than winds of a southerly origin. However, the gradient may be distorted by elevation.

## **Recommended Reading / Viewing**

- Out of Africa, I. Dineson (or rent the video)
- River Gods, R. Bangs
- The Power of One, B. Courtenay

## Helpful Phrases

- Just now = Pretty soon, or later.
- Now now = Immediately, on the double!
- Make a Plan = I don't quite know yet.
- Kun-Jhani = Good morning!
- Siya Bonga = Thank you.

## Online Information

Below we have compiled a list of web sites that will help you find answers to all of those uncommon questions!

### Money

[www.xe.net/ucc/](http://www.xe.net/ucc/) - This is a universal currency converter site  
[www.oanda.com/](http://www.oanda.com/) - Exchange rates and currency forecasts  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator/index.jsp](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator/index.jsp) - A list of ATM machines world wide

### Clothing / Gear

[www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com) - Expedition clothing.  
[www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) - Expedition gear and clothing.  
[www.mountainhardwear.com](http://www.mountainhardwear.com) - Tents, sleeping bags, expeditions wear.  
[www.exofficio.com](http://www.exofficio.com) - Lightweight travel clothes - Great for Safaris!  
[www.eaglecreek.com](http://www.eaglecreek.com) - Excellent travel gear and packing tips from the experts  
[www.cameraworld.com](http://www.cameraworld.com) - The best prices on camera and video gear!  
[www.nrsweb.com](http://www.nrsweb.com) - Anything you could ever want for the river.  
[www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com) - Gear and clothing for any adventure.

### Health

[wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel) - All the latest recommendations on vaccination and important information on health concerns worldwide.

### Passport and Embassy Information

<http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/english.html> - How to get a passport fast! - List of Embassies worldwide.

### Weather

[www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com) - Find out the weather anywhere in the world!

### Travel Warnings

[travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html) - State department warnings for overseas travelers.

### Conservation

[www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org) - Help save rivers worldwide  
[www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org) - Protecting the environment for our families and our futures  
[www.edf.org](http://www.edf.org) - Stay current on all environmental issues - Environmental Defense Fund

[www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org) - The Nature Conservancy - Saving the last great rivers

[www.irn.org](http://www.irn.org) - International Rivers Network - Supports local communities working to protect their rivers and watersheds. They work to halt destructive river development projects, and to encourage equitable and sustainable methods of meeting needs for water and flood management.

## Pre-Departure Checklist

Please keep this sheet handy and check off each item when completed.

- Passport, yellow fever vaccine card and valuable documents.*** Money and credit cards (Keep these close to your body in a well concealed place)
- Make photocopies of plane tickets, credit cards, travelers cheque receipts, and passport.
- Make sure you carry-on essentials that you cannot live without. Don't check them through!
- Medications and prescriptions (Keep in your carry-on)
- Eyeglasses or contacts and prescriptions (Keep in your carry-on)
- Reading material for plane and relaxing in Africa.
- Reconfirm flights (72 hours in advance)
- Make sure you have a ride to the airport.
- Leave Bio Bio Expeditions contact phone numbers with a responsible person.
- Find someone to water your plants, feed your dog, and pet your cat.
- Do not forget to tell work you will be gone a few days!
- Travelex travel insurance \* forms filled out and sent in.
- Spending money for trip to cover meals, taxis, tips, gifts, and any incidentals not covered by Bio Bio. Please check itinerary to see where meals are not covered.

***(Please get to the airport at least 3 hours before any International flight!)***

**We look forward to seeing you in Africa!**

## Map of Zambia, Zimbabwe & other countries

