

## ZIMBABWE

As a guest of Wilderness Safaris, the following information has been compiled to provide you with guidelines and interesting facts about the country you will be visiting. Further information is available to you on our website [www.wilderness-safaris.com](http://www.wilderness-safaris.com) or the official Zimbabwe Tourism Authority's website on [www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw](http://www.zimbabwetourism.co.zw).



At 390 757 square kilometres, Zimbabwe is about the size of California. It is a landlocked country blessed with fertile soils, mineral wealth and wonderful wildlife and natural scenery. Two major rivers form its northern and southern boundaries: the great Zambezi River cuts along its northern frontier, while the more languid Limpopo forms the southern border with South Africa.

### INTERESTING FACTS



Green in the Zimbabwean flag represents the agriculture and rural areas of Zimbabwe, yellow the wealth of minerals in the country, red the blood shed during the first and second Chimurenga (wars) and black the heritage and ethnicity of the native Africans of Zimbabwe. The white triangle on the side represents peace, while the Zimbabwe Bird is the national symbol of Zimbabwe and the red star denotes the nation's hopes and aspirations for the future.

## Government

The United Kingdom annexed Southern Rhodesia from the British South Africa Company in 1923. UN sanctions and a guerrilla uprising finally led to free elections in 1979 and independence (as Zimbabwe) in 1980. Zanu-PF has since dominated the country's political system until the formation of a unity government between ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 2009.

## Economy

Despite Zimbabwe's mineral wealth, the government of Zimbabwe faces a variety of difficult economic problems. Its 1998 – 2002 involvement in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo drained hundreds of millions of dollars from the economy. The government's chaotic land reform programme has badly damaged the commercial farming sector, traditional source of exports and foreign exchange, turning Zimbabwe into a net importer of food products. Until early 2009, the Reserve Bank routinely printed money to fund the budget deficit, causing hyperinflation. The economy is now registering its first growth in a decade due to the elimination of the Zimbabwe dollar and removal of price controls, however, is reliant on further political improvement for greater growth.

## Currency

With the removal of the Zimbabwean Dollar in 2009, the country has adopted a multi-currency system, with the US Dollar being the most widely used.

## Language

English is the official language. Other widely spoken languages are Shona and Sindebele, which also have various dialects and other minority languages.

## Time

Zimbabwe shares the same time as all southern Africa, except Namibia, which is Greenwich Mean Time – (GMT) + 2 hours.

## Climate

The weather in southern Africa is generally pleasant throughout the year – warm to hot days, and cool to warm nights. During our winter months however (May to August), it can get really cold at night and in the early morning, particularly when on safari, so we would like to suggest that you pack accordingly – very warm clothing including an anorak/winter jacket, a beanie, scarf and gloves are recommended. Please also refer to our packing suggestions list.

Generally, the days are bright and sunny and the nights clear and cool. November to April are the summer months (which is also the rainy season) while winter is from May to August (which usually brings dry weather). September and October are very hot and very dry. The winter months from May to August inclusive, can bring freezing temperatures (below 0°C sometimes) in the early morning and evenings.

### Temperature (°C) – These are the average lows and highs:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
VFA	17/32	17/30	18/31	14/29	10/29	7/25	6/25	8/28	14/33	18/34	18/31	17/31

### Temperature (°F) – These are the average lows and highs:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
VFA	63/89	63/86	64/88	57/84	50/84	44/77	43/77	46/82	57/91	64/93	64/87	63/87

### Average Rainfall (mm) – This varies according to the year and location:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
VFA	215	185	100	45	5	3	1	3	4	20	100	190

### Average Rainfall (inches) – This varies according to the year and location:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
VFA	8.5	7.3	3.9	1.7	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.8	3.9	7.5

VFA = Victoria Falls

## Public Holidays

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year – refer below. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday.

01 January	New Year's Day
Varies	Good Friday
Varies	Easter Monday
18 April	Independence Day
01 May	Workers' Day
25 May	Africa Day
11 August	Heroes Day
Second weekend August	Defence Force's National Day
22 December	National Unity Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Visas

Visas are the responsibility of the traveller. Those nationalities that require visas to enter Zimbabwe may have to apply for these in advance, however, some nationalities are able to obtain these on arrival at the port of entry. Costs vary depending on the nationality of your passport so please contact your travel consultant for exact details relevant to you. Zimbabwe have recently launched an online facility that travellers may use to pre-apply for visas. For further information, please refer to the website [www.evisa.gov.zw](http://www.evisa.gov.zw). Alternatively, please visit the following website for additional information – bearing in mind that Wilderness Safaris is not responsible for the content thereof: [www.zimbabwe-embassy.us](http://www.zimbabwe-embassy.us).

### Please Note:

- If possible and required, our recommendation is to obtain your Zimbabwe visa prior to arrival, as this will expedite the immigration process at both airport and border crossing.
- If visas are required, please ensure you have the correct **cash** amounts (US Dollars) available as credit cards and Travellers Cheques are not accepted.
- You must advise the relevant official of the **total** number of days that you are spending in Zimbabwe otherwise you may be charged to obtain an extension/additional visa later on.
- If you arrive in Zimbabwe before continuing with your safari in another country (such as Botswana, Namibia or Zambia) and then return to Zimbabwe prior to departure; or will be staying in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and doing some touring across the border into Botswana or Zambia, then a **double-entry** visa must be obtained on arrival from the immigration official.

### Currency & Credit Cards

As the country has adopted a multi-currency system for payments, hard currencies such as US Dollars, GBP Sterling, Euros and South African Rand are accepted widely and you are encouraged to carry small denominations for ease of trade. Though credit cards are generally not accepted as a form of payment, there are some hotels that will – Visa is most widely accepted, while MasterCard and American Express are less so. Please check with your travel consultant for specifics prior to travel.

Credit card facilities are not available at the Wilderness Zimbabwe camps – payment can be made in cash only.

### Banks

Banking hours in Zimbabwe are Monday to Friday: 08:00 – 14:30 and Saturday: 08:00 – 11:30.

### Shopping

Zimbabwe sells a wide range of locally made soapstone statues, wooden carvings, baskets, crotchet-ware and hand printed African sarongs.

### Value Added Tax (VAT)

Most goods and services in Zimbabwe are priced to include value added tax (VAT) of 15%, however, this is not refundable to visitors.

## Departure Taxes

Major airlines include Departure Taxes in their ticket costs. However, if you are travelling on cross-border private charter flights ex Zimbabwe, you must pay this directly at the airport. In addition to the Departure Taxes, there is an AIDEF tax which has been introduced in Zimbabwe to fund the upgrading of its airports. This tax needs to be paid either directly by the client on departure per light aircraft/private charter or will be included in the costs of any scheduled/commercial airline ticket. Currently, and subject to change, these taxes are:

- Domestic flights – US\$ 10.00 departure tax plus US\$ 5.00 AIDEF fees (Aviation Infrastructural Development Fund), total of US\$ 15.00 per person
- International flights – US\$ 35.00 departure tax plus US\$ 15.00 AIDEF fees (Aviation Infrastructural Development Fund), total of US\$ 50.00 per person

This is applicable on departure from any registered, manned airports which include Harare, Bulawayo, Kariba, Hwange and Victoria Falls airports. This fee, currently US\$ 15.00 per person, must be paid direct at the airport in US\$ cash or the equivalent in previously mentioned hard currencies.

Small denominations of US Dollars are encouraged for easier and quicker transactions and it helps to have the exact amount to hand as change is sometimes not provided. Travellers Cheques and credit cards are also not accepted for this purpose.

## Driving in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe one drives on the left hand side of the road. The speed limit is usually 60 kilometres per hour in built up areas, 70 kilometres per hour on gravel roads and 120 kilometres per hour on major tar roads. Safety belts must be used at all times. The driver or any authorized co-driver must produce a valid driver's license at time of rental and must not have been convicted of any criminal offence which resulted in the endorsement or cancellation of his/her driving license.

The driver's license needs to be in English with a photograph. If not, an International driver's license will be required. In addition, please check with your travel consultant regarding the minimum age.

Whilst conducting your own self-drive itinerary, there are many factors beyond our control, e.g. parking of a vehicle/s at a meeting point or pick-up/drop-off point will be at own risk. Wilderness Safaris or Wilderness Adventures will therefore not accept any liability, responsibility or claim for compensation, for any incident or accident involving you (the client), your vehicle and/or any third party.

Vehicles must have two reflective triangles for putting up in the event of a breakdown, one fire extinguisher, one reflective vest, two white reflective strips on the front bumper and two red reflective strips on the rear bumper.

## Excess Luggage

If you need to bring luggage in excess of your allowance, you may have the option of buying an extra seat. This "seat in plane" allows for a maximum of 70 kg (154 lb) excess weight, on the proviso that the bag/s conforms to the dimensions 40 x 40 x 80 cm (16 x 16 x 31 inches); soft bag, i.e. no frame or rigid structures; no wheels for safety reasons; is able to physically fit onto a light aircraft seat; able to be physically secured with one seatbelt; will not impact on the comfort of other guests on the flight. The additional cost of this varies depending on your flight schedule so please contact your agent for further details.

Should guests have excess luggage which does not need to accompany them throughout their safari, and they are arriving as well as departing from Victoria Falls, we can make arrangements for the excess luggage to be stored in our Victoria Falls operations office at an extra charge per bag. The luggage can then be returned to the guest either at their hotel in Victoria Falls (if they are staying overnight) or by luggage transfer to the airport. This service, which is normally the most practical method of handling excess luggage in Zimbabwe, is charged for at a nominal rate and you are advised to pre-book it through your agent prior to travel. We do not anticipate any problems with stored luggage being damaged or stolen, however, guests must ensure that they are in possession of full travel insurance including luggage cover. Wilderness Holdings and its subsidiary companies, and any person or agent acting for, through or on behalf of said companies, will not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from any cause whatsoever.

## Power Supply

All Wilderness Safaris camps are situated in remote areas and in some instances we have to generate our own electricity. Generators are used as a main power source, while at Little Makalolo Camp and Ruckomechi Camp, solar units charge the batteries located at each tented room, providing good 12V lights all night (if used sensibly). There are only 220V power points in camp. If you have an item that runs on 110V, please bring a converter.

At Little Makalolo Camp and Ruckomechi Camp, electrical plug outlets are not available in the rooms and therefore it is not possible to use appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers during your stay there. Camera and video batteries are charged in the main area or office while you are out on an activity so please bring spare batteries for use.

At Davison's Camp, which is now linked to the national power grid, it is possible to charge batteries in your room. While due to the limited amount of power available, it is possible to use appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers in your room, this is dependent on the national power grid being on. Should the mains power not be on and generator power is being used in camp, then the use of hairdryers and electric shavers will not be possible.

Linkwasha Camp is linked to the national power grid. 220V power points available in the rooms for the charging of camera and video batteries.

Sleep apnoea machines can be accommodated by arranging for a battery and an inverter to be placed in the rooms, however, please note that prior warning is required. Please ensure that you bring a spare battery/ies as a back-up as power outages may occur.

In cities and towns, all electrical appliances run on 220V/240V AC accessible via 14-amp alternating current and outlets are square 3-pin plugs. While some camps can supply adaptors (3-prong round, 3-prong square, 2-prong round, 2-prong flat) it is advisable that you carry your own.

As a responsible ecotourism operator with conservation as our core value we strive to reduce our own energy use. Please help us save energy by using appliances sparingly.

### **Sightseeing**

If you are visiting Victoria Falls, there are many optional tours available. Please contact your travel consultant for further details and we do recommend that these are pre-booked to avoid disappointment.

### **Please Note:**

- The Victoria Falls/Zambezi River experiences low water levels between August and January (subject to rainfall).
- In order to participate in a white water rafting excursion, you will need to spend a minimum of two nights in Victoria Falls.