

big 7 african safari

The wildlife photographic expedition of a lifetime: great white sharks, gorillas, lions, leopards, cheetahs, cape buffalo, and elephants

Trip Date:

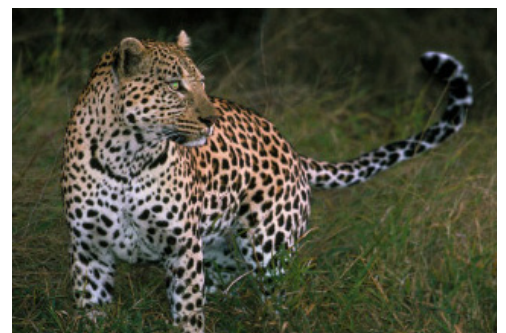
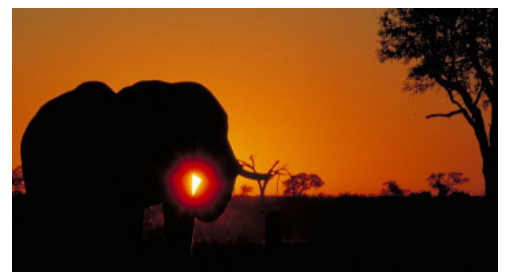
July 24 – August 20, 2011

ON THIS EXPEDITION, we take twenty eights to dry out a bit (but not completely). After half a dozen trips to South Africa to dive with great white sharks, whale sharks, and billions of sardines (the phenomenal annual Sardine Run), Amos realized there was an incredible wealth of Big Animals right up there on the other side of the beach.

This, of course, is not a new observation. Visitors to Africa have been marveling at the rich diversity of its wildlife for centuries. At the turn of the last century, they even had a name for the most important animals to see (and hunt): the 'Big 5.' Well, we can improve on their concept: we are proud to present to you our African photography safari: the 'Big 7.' Elephants? Naturally. Lions? Absolutely. Tigers? Nope, wrong continent. Mountain gorillas, cheetahs, leopards, cape buffalo, giraffes, zebras, countless antelopes, plus great white sharks! Hey, nobody else throws in great white sharks!

Fortunately, it's possible to see all these animals in one trip because travel in 2011 is so much more doable than it was 100 years ago. Unfortunately, now really is the time to see these animals because the pressures on their survival are greater than ever.

In search of world-class photographic opportunities, we'll range over savannah and river delta, through open grassland and dense forest. We'll stay at established safari camps and set up our own mobile camps. And of course, making



daily itinerary

Day 1 June 24: DEPART home for Cape Town, South Africa.

Day 2 ARRIVE in Cape Town. After clearing customs and immigration, our representative will meet you at the airport. You'll transfer to Simonstown (a 30 minute drive from Cape Town) and get situated in our private B&B.

Day 3 – 7 We begin five days of intense great white shark observation: cage diving, breaching/predation, and of course, coached photo sessions. Each morning, we'll head out around 6AM and cruise to Seal Island at False Bay, a place also known as the 'Ring of Death.' Here, we'll tow a seal dummy behind us to entice the GWS to launch out of the water, taking the seal dummy in its powerful jaws.

While the rising sun is still low, we'll have a good chance to witness natural predation by great white sharks leaping out of the water for seals returning to Seal Island after a night of fishing.

We return to the wharf every afternoon by sunset (weather permitting) and transfer back to our lodgings. Operating with such an intimate group of 4 guests allows you excellent photo opportunities and coaching.

Day 8 DEPART Simonstown to the airport in Cape Town (only 60 minutes away) for our flight to Victoria Falls, and the start of our safari. A

RRIVE Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe where you will be met

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daily itinerary (continued)

and transferred across the border to Kasane Airport, Botswana. From Kasane Airport you will be transferred by light aircraft to Xakanaxa in the Moremi Game Reserve (where we will meet you), arriving in time for a late lunch. Immediately after lunch we will set off on our first afternoon wildlife viewing. We will operate from our own remote bush camp at an exclusive campsite for four nights.

Day 9 – 12 Each day will be devoted to wildlife viewing in the Xakanaxa area, surrounded by both the permanent and seasonal waters of the Okavango Delta, with a mix of habitats ranging from lagoon, malapu's (seasonally flooded plains) and grassy areas to various woodlands which showcase a wide variety of wildlife in one of the most scenically beautiful areas of Botswana. Many antelope species, buffalo, elephants, prides of lion, and leopard can be seen here.

Day 13 A full morning of wildlife viewing en route to the Khwai River area of the Moremi Game Reserve, where we should arrive in time for lunch. After lunch we will set off on our first afternoon of wildlife viewing in this area, arriving at another of our exclusive campsites by sunset.

Day 14 – 15 Two full days of wildlife viewing in the Khwai River Area, one of the Okavango Delta's furthest reaches of water. The surrounding woodlands, open floodplains, and a fluctuating river make this area different from others in Botswana. Wildlife along the river include hippos, reedbucks, and plentiful water birds while the floodplains attract zebra, tsessebe antelope, impala, and warthogs. In the woodland areas we'll see elephant, giraffe, kudu, roan and sable antelope. This is another good area for leopard sightings as well as prides of lion and packs of African Wild Dog.

Day 16 Early morning wildlife viewing will continue along the tail-end of the Khwai River, over the sand-ridge into the Mababe Depression, and on to the Savuti area of the Chobe National Park, arriving in time for lunch. After lunch we'll continue our wildlife viewing, ending the day watching the sunset at one of the waterholes so vital to the wildlife of this dry area. We'll spend the next three nights based at another of our exclusive campsites.

Day 17 – 18 Full days of wildlife viewing in the Savuti area, famous for its prides of lion, and also cheetah, hyenas, and wild dog. It's also the best place to see, photograph, and learn about the large number of bull elephants that are special to this area.

Day 19 Our morning wildlife viewing will take us out of the Savuti area and on through thick Kalahari sands and

beautiful teak woodlands. After a short stretch driving through villages (where we can buy traditional hand-made baskets and crafts from the local village co-operative), we'll come to the Chobe River area of the Chobe National Park, with its own wildlife populations, ending by sunset at another of our exclusive campsites.

Day 20 – 21 Full days of wildlife viewing in the Chobe National Park. This area has good year-round wildlife viewing thanks to the permanent waters of the Chobe River. The mornings are best spent in search of lions and other exotic animals and birds. This river attracts a huge variety of wildlife and is the only place in Southern Africa where the puku antelope can be seen. The afternoon highlight is viewing the breeding herds of elephant and buffalo that come down to the river to drink. One afternoon we'll take a boat trip on the river to view the animals from a different perspective.

Day 22 Our last morning of wildlife viewing in Botswana, followed by a picnic lunch before heading to Victoria Falls. In the afternoon we'll visit the world-famous Victoria Falls itself. One will soon see where it gets its traditional name — "Mosi oa Tunya" — the smoke that thunders. We'll have dinner at Victoria Falls Safari Lodge and overnight at Lokuthula Lodges. Lokuthula Lodges is a beautiful brick and thatched building compound that overlooks the Zambezi National Park. Warthogs, monkeys, and baboons are frequent visitors to the grounds, and elephant and buffalo can often be seen in the valley below. There's a swimming pool on the grounds and a floodlit waterhole enabling you to watch the animals coming for a drink at night.

Day 25 – 27 Three days with the mountain gorillas of the Parc National des Volcans. Early each morning, we'll head out with our guides, who are actually members of a specially-trained military unit with the mission of protecting Rwanda's gorillas from poachers. By the time we hit the trail, our military escort has already located the gorillas we'll be observing for the day, and will stay with them until we arrive. Our gorilla family groups (typically one dominant silverback male, his harem of three or four mates, several younger adults and juveniles of both sexes, and a few infants) will spend the day foraging, playing, basking in the sun, and generally providing amazing poses for your camera. Pretty good for non-professional models.

Day 27 At the end of our third day, we return to the Lodge, pack up, and take our private car back to Kigali, about a two-hour drive.

Day 28 August 22: DEPART Kigali for home, your adventure quotient now off the charts. With our Big 7 tour un-

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Accommodations

Our mobile camp is your full service residence in the bush, with comfortable 10 x 10 foot walk-in dome tents that are insect-proof and furnished with camp beds, mattresses, duvets, pillows, and a few other items for your personal comfort. Washstands, toilets, and hot showers are also provided. Our camp can be thought of a scaled-down version of a permanent tented camp, but without losing any of the standards and comforts. Freshly prepared meals of a high standard fit around the game-driving schedule, so as not to be a detriment to possible wildlife viewing experiences and opportunities. You will have exclusive use of our specialized open safari vehicle, which is designed for maximum wildlife viewing and comfort, and is ideal if you are interested in photography. This enables us to concentrate on your special interests.

The exclusive campsites that we use are for the use of members of HATAB (Hotel and Tourism Association of Botswana) only, and only one company is allowed in each site at any one time. This means that only our group will be in the sites for a totally exclusive safari. All these sites are set within the prime wildlife areas of the National Parks and Game Reserves, and are set away from the public campsites and the permanent camps and lodges. There are no fences and so animals can wander freely through the camp. The hyena is a regular night time visitor, with elephant and buffalo occasionally wandering through. When in these sites you feel as though you have Africa to yourself, and it is an experience that cannot be forgotten. The vehicle used and the mobile safari camp will be for your exclusive use, with Amos on hand as your personal guide and photo expert.

Tour price includes:

- 28 nights on expedition
- All meals except dinners while in South Africa (diving program)
- Four days cage diving and shark breaching, 24 days safari in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda
- All diving services, weights, private charter vessel
- Private safari vehicles, tents and guides
- All entries fees, park and special permits
- Photography seminar/photo coaching by Amos Nachoum
- Only four guests

- All local taxes

Not included in Tour Price:

- International and domestic airfare and charter flight during the safari
- Overweight luggage or excess baggage
- Overnight stays in Johannesburg and transfers
- Meals which aren't specified, drinks and dinners in South Africa
- Personal charges such as laundry, bar, and telecommunication charges
- Insurance – we strongly recommend you buy your own travel, health, and diving insurance
- Loss of dive gear and equipment
- Gratuities
- Additional costs incurred due to independent travel arrangements

Payment Policy & Deposit:

When we receive your deposit, with your confirmation we will send you a comprehensive and detailed Trip Preparation Bulletin about the experience and the destination. All trip costs are subject to change without prior notice until your reservation is confirmed.

- A non-refundable deposit of 33 % is required to secure a place on the trip.
- Full payment is due no later than 90 days before departure.
- We reserve the right to sell any space that is not paid in full 60 days before departure.
- A refund will be made if the space can be filled in time, less unrecoverable costs of sales, administration, or special promotion.
- Cancellation must be made in writing. Deposits are non-refundable if cancellation is made 180 days or less before departure.
- No refunds for unused part of the itinerary.

A note on preparation

We'll be in South Africa, Botswana, and Rwanda during the Southern Hemisphere's fall season. Outside temperatures can range from 50 – 65 degrees, so

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bring warm clothes – Polartec jacket, raincoat, and windbreaker are recommended. Casual clothing is fine throughout South Africa. Jeans and/or khakis, and layering options are a traveler's best choice. Also recommended are a hat, sun glasses, sunscreen, etc. Please remember all of your medical requirements, and consult your doctor for any medication or inoculations necessary for this part of the world. Malaria preventative measures are highly recommended. Phone cards and credit cards are widely accepted throughout the country. Visitors are required to have a valid passport and roundtrip air ticket.

On safari

Botswana is at the northern border of South Africa and inland, therefore the safari portion of the expedition is not affected as much by the winter season as the diving program. Days will be warm, perhaps even hot when the sun is up. Nights are cool to cold.

Layers of clothing are best during the safari. Keep colors muted — khakis and whites work best to keep us camouflaged, and also reflect the heat of the sun. Dark colors absorb the heat which will make you uncomfortable.

Colorful clothing is easily spotted by wild animals and will scare them away. No aftershave, colognes, or perfume while on the safari since the animals have a very keen sense of smell. Bring a hat, good sunglasses which block UV and glare. Sunblock, at least 30SPF.

Diving equipment

You must bring your own exposure suit. We strongly recommend that you bring a dry suit. If you decide to use a dry suit, it is required that you have at least 50 dives with the suit. If you do not have experience in dry suit diving you must take a course and/or a refresher course. Bring a Polartec undergarment for your dry suit, dry gloves, and sweat shirt and pants. Regulator, mask (bring spare mask), fins, BC and snorkel. Weight belt, (weights will be provided) and ankle weights. Diving gloves and diving hood. Spare parts and tools.

A general note

Although we're confident about what you'll experience in Africa, we'd like to remind you that we're in the wilderness and despite all our careful preparation, Mother Nature may not cooperate with us exactly as we'd wish. Remember, the wild animals are not on contract with us. When we're at sea, we're not at Sea World, and the Okavango Delta is not the zoo. We trust our previous experiences, and so far our record is excellent. We believe that with good planning and a realistic approach, you'll have a wonderful time with us in Africa as we seek out photographic encounters with 'the Big 7.'

All information is current as of May 2010. Dates and prices are subject to change without prior notice.

For Booking and/or further questions, please contact LiveAboard Vacations:

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