



# **RIDE WORLD WIDE**

## **The Okavango Delta 2019**

### **Horse Safari Information Sheet (RAW Botswana)**

#### **Motswiri Camp**

We offer three different horse safari options in Botswana's Okavango Delta region. This information relates to safaris run by RAW (Ride & Walk) Botswana from Motswiri Camp in the Selinda Reserve. Please see separate information sheets for details of other trips.



Motswiri is in the north east of the Delta, on the banks of the Selinda Spillway, an ancient watercourse that links the Okavango to the Kwando-Linyanti river system further east. The local landscape combines the Okavango's open floodplains (to the west and immediately north of the camp), with dense riverine forest bordering the Spillway and permanently dry grassland further to the east. Motswiri has exclusive operating rights over 120,000 acres of pristine bush. The area is home to a wide variety of game and, with its great diversity of vegetation, is also a superb choice for birding. Its wonderful location make it a fabulous option for a small group safari but in addition to this, the ethos of its dedicated and highly experienced management team, is attention to every detail. Their enthusiastic, personal service and 'can do' attitude make every safari special and it is a place you will want to return to again and again.



**Overview of the Delta** The Okavango Delta region covers close to 15,000 square kilometres. Roughly one third, the central and eastern side stretching to Chobe National Park, has been designated a protected area, the Moremi Game Reserve. The rest is sub-divided into huge unfenced private wildlife concessions, all very carefully monitored and managed with strict guest quotas enforced to help protect and preserve the natural environment for wildlife. The terrain over the whole region varies from the permanent water of the Okavango River which joins the Delta to its northwest, papyrus swamps, reed beds and flat, open floodplain to thickly wooded date palm islands, riverine woodland and forests of mopane trees. Depending on the time of year, on rain that has fallen locally and in the river's main catchment area, the Angolan Highlands, 500 kms to the north, the floodplains (which look rather like a grassy fairway on a golf course when not flooded) may be covered with a layer of surface water ranging from a few inches to several feet deep in places. When rain in Angola flows into the Okavango River as it journeys south, the river gradually swells; as it meets the dry Kalahari basin, it divides like fingers on a hand into narrower waterways, spreading, saturating and flooding out over once-dry grassland to form marshy swamp and water meadow. The flood usually arrives in the main Delta region between late March and May each year and subsides in August

**Dates** Safari dates at Motswiri are flexible and safaris can be arranged for anything from 3 to 10 (or more) nights year round. We generally suggest an optimum of 7 nights between March and October and at least 5 at other times to best experience the area. To discuss plans, check dates and availability please contact us at Ride World Wide.



**The Horses** There are around 22 horses at Motswiri, a good range from about 14hh to 15.3hh, including some TBs, Boerperds, Arab and Kalahari crosses. They are well mannered, extremely well cared for and well acclimatised to the area. They are also responsive and reliable but forward going to ride making long hours in the saddle a real pleasure. Grooms look after the horses under the careful and experienced eye of the horse manager.





**Riding** Riding at Motswiri is exciting but it is also flexible and need not be overly strenuous. For those who go to ride, there can be up to 5 or 6 hours in the saddle a day, broken up with refreshment stops and breaks to watch game (hours may vary if game movements or local weather conditions require). Rides are generally limited to a maximum of 6 guests, accompanied by a qualified guide with back-up / support rider who also helps 'spot' game. Saddles are a choice of good quality English or 'Maclellans' (similar to a western style and comfortable for long hours). There is a general rider weight limit of 95kgs (15 stone) - although experienced heavier riders may be taken by arrangement. Please contact us if you are close to 95kgs to ensure suitable horses are available.



**Pace** Riding at Motswiri is generally at a medium and well varied pace, although this always depends on water levels, game and riders' experience. Morning rides often include lots of long and exhilarating trots and canters across open floodplain or splashing through shallow waters of the Spillway. Evening rides, when the light is excellent for photography, are often at a slower, more relaxed pace. When the flood is highest, you may find your horse has to wade or perhaps even swim across waterways and lagoons to get from island to island, but even at high flood the going around the edge of the woodland is normally good to firm and there are usually chances for long trots and canters.

**Riding Experience** Motswiri is in an unfenced, open area where there is big (and potentially dangerous) game including elephant and lion. To ride here you must be reasonably competent – beginners are not accepted. Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition, you should be comfortable, confident and in control on a horse at all paces (including long trots and canters) and used to riding in open country, over varied terrain with a group of horses. It is important to be balanced, relaxed and secure in the saddle so you can stay on if your horse reacts suddenly, or needs to move quickly out of trouble. Children who are strong, competent riders are accepted on a case-by-case basis, but this is at the Camp's discretion and the usual minimum age for riding is 12 yrs. Anyone over 65 needs to be both riding and medically fit - and at any age you will enjoy your safari much more if you are riding fit. If you do not ride regularly, you should accustom yourself to time you will spend in the saddle with regular training before you go.

**Non rider-Other activities** Motswiri is a perfect choice for both riders and non-riders. As well as riding, walking, canoeing and boating are highlights, as are game drives with an experienced guide and trackers. Walking is a wonderful way to see the bush and can be exciting and adventurous or serenely peaceful, depending on guest wishes and what happens at any particular time! The camp employs some fantastic walking guides who are experienced, good company and passionate about what they do. Mokoros (canoes) offer a different aspect - views of game coming to water to drink from this angle are always fascinating and they are a superb way to get close to some of the aquatic birds, to see colourful kingfishers, jacanas as well as brightly painted tree frogs. The camp has a mix of powered boat, canoes and mokoros and in recent years, the Delta's high water levels and permanent water in the Spillway, mean boats have been one of the best ways to explore (although this always depends on water levels when you travel - at low water, generally between late September and April, power boats will not be an option). Another popular way to spend late afternoons is to take a rod and local expert out to one of the bigger pools or Spillway itself, to cast for Tilapia or Tiger fish. The Camp has a selection of equipment and fishing with a fly or spinner is always fun.

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**Other activities cont** Whether your preferred mode of travel is horse, your feet, a vehicle or boat, an overnight stay in a simple “fly camp” (only usually possible between June and September and at an extra charge on special request) is another highlight - an exciting way to really get to know the bush. After an exhilarating afternoon ride, walk or game drive, you arrive at a remote camp in a picturesque spot, where hot bucket showers and drinks around the fire, set the scene for an atmospheric night out, listening to the night sounds of the bush before waking to sunrise over the lagoon.



**Terrain** Motswiri is on the northern fringes of the Delta region in an area with diverse vegetation - floodplain interspersed with a mix of mopane scrub, woodland and bigger trees that line the Spillway. The area is less open than the central delta, with smaller floodplains and more scrubland. In recent years the Delta has seen high flood levels (recently highest in May, June and July) and the once dry Spillway has returned to running, meaning plenty of water in the area around the camp at high flood. As water levels recede (in late August / September), expanses of dry grassland open up between the wooded islands and belts of bigger evergreen trees. In late October and November, before the annual rains, water levels around the camp have (in recent years) been low, too shallow for power boats but with enough water to allow some exploration by mokoro canoe.

**Game** The Delta has huge numbers of game year round and is a gloriously wild, unfenced and unspoiled, environment for game viewing. Some game species are permanent residents (antelope such as the characteristic water antelope - red lechwe - also sable, roan, shy sitatunga, water lovers such as hippo and crocodile and many of the larger predators) moving around locally as water levels rise and fall; others migrate inwards from the drier Kalahari borders, then move around as water levels change. Unlike in East Africa, there is no single mass-herd migration, with game such as elephant, giraffe, zebra and wildebeest, wandering through year-round in mid-sized herds, social or family groups. During any safari at Motswiri you can usually expect to see zebra, wildebeest, many species of antelope such as impala, perhaps kudu, roan, reedbuck, lechwe and tsessebe, giraffe and also crocodiles, monkeys, baboons and warthogs. Elephant and buffalo are often seen and if lucky you may see sitatunga, hyena, lion, perhaps leopard, cheetah and the endangered wild dog. The Delta is famous for birds with over 400 recorded species and keen birders may well see fish eagles, cranes, storks, vultures, kingfishers, ostrich, jacanas, bee eaters and many more.

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**Game cont** It is generally considered one of the world's finest wildlife viewing areas both because of the overall density and variety of game but also because it is such an unspoilt pristine environment - however it is important to remember that animals are free to roam across a vast, unfenced area, there may be more of one species than another in a particular place at a particular time and environmental factors such as long grass or high water can (and do) effect game viewing. The range of vegetation around Motswiri provides habitat for many different species but recent experience at high water is that game can be sparse with animals tending to take cover in thick mopane scrub where they can be hard to see or follow safely and plains game such as zebra and wildebeest favouring drier areas. In the dry season, the area has been particularly good for wild dog with a large pack frequently visiting camp over the last few years.



Even though game sightings can vary considerably with local conditions, access to vehicles and boats and an emphasis on highly personalised walking as well as riding to explore, ensures that guests at Motswiri usually have some fantastic, close up game experiences and above all, because it is in a private area, a wonderfully exclusive safari experience, guaranteed against interruption by other visitors or game viewing vehicles.

**Guides and Staff** Motswiri is owned and managed by a small team of very experienced safari operators who have been running safaris in the Delta for over 20 years. The camp employs some of Botswana's best freelance riding guides as well as excellent walking guides and the whole team are fun, enthusiastic and love nothing more than sharing their knowledge of the area and its game with you to ensure your holiday is a really special experience.





**Accommodation** Motswiri is a comfortable tented camp, stylishly rebuilt in 2010. It is small and intimate, sleeping up to 10 guests in 5 very comfortable, airy and spacious, walk-in safari tents. These are double or twin bedded (one is a specially designed family tent with 2 bathrooms attached, one is adapted for disabled guests and one is a honeymoon tent with outside shower). They have attached shower room with hot shower and flush loo and a decked veranda. All are well spaced for privacy and views across the Spillway, have proper beds with comfortable mattresses, cotton sheets, pillows and duvets, wardrobes and bedside tables. The camp, which is largely solar powered, with a generator that is switched on from time to time to re-charge batteries etc, also has a spacious and comfortable central dining tent with sofas to relax on, a plunge pool and discreet sunbathing area.



If you wish to “fly camp” (possible for an extra charge during the cooler / dry season and on request only) this is a more rustic affair. Tents are smaller, though still with space to stand up, with stretcher beds, bucket showers and long drop loos. Accommodation is based on two sharing - however in most cases those booking alone will be allocated a tent to themselves. Single guests will only be asked to share (with a guest of the same gender) if safari numbers / group mix requires.

**Meals** You will be extremely well fed during your stay with three wholesome meals a day as well as snacks to keep you going. Delicious brunches after early morning activities, home baked cakes for tea, and three course dinners with carefully chosen South African wines, served by candlelight at a beautifully laid table. There is always plenty of freshly baked bread, fresh meat, vegetables and salads. Vegetarians or those with special diets will be well catered for (although please let us know in advance). Drinks are kept well chilled and carefully chosen wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks are all included.



**Safety** You will be given an introductory talk on all aspects of the safari, including safety procedures with big game, on arrival. Each ride is lead by a licensed guide equipped with a rifle and accompanied by a back-up rider. Guides carry a hand held radio, satellite ‘phone and first aid kit for emergencies. There is also a comprehensive medical kit, radio contact with Maun and satellite ‘phone in camp.

**Sustainable Tourism** RAW Botswana supports and upholds the principles of sustainability and responsible eco-tourism; the development of low-impact tourism as the most viable way to provide local employment opportunities alongside conservation of the remote, wild Okavango region. The camp has been built in accordance with Botswana’s latest exacting environmental standards, and using only canvas and timber, has a lower footprint than many others. Consumables are sourced locally wherever possible, all waste products are removed for recycling in Maun and with safaris primarily by horse or on foot, the camp’s overall impact on the environment remains low.



**Weather** Summer months in the Delta are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, with midday temperatures up to about 38 or 40 degrees C. The area experiences summer rain and the rainy season is usually December to February although it can rain in October and November. The coolest winter months, when it is also dry (no rain) are May to August when midday temperatures reach about 28 degrees C. During these months, and in early September, it can be quite cold in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to about 4 or 5 degrees C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm. Confusing to many guests, the 'dry' winter months are when the Delta has its seasonal flood – caused when rain that has fallen a few months before in the Angolan Highlands, flows down the Okavango River which then floods out over the Delta region.

**What to bring** We will send you a clothing list with suggestions of what to bring when you book.

**Itinerary** Safaris are very individualized and the structure of each day depends on game movements, weather and guest preferences. The following is an example itinerary of a 7 night safari - but this serves only as a guide; all scenarios depend on the season, weather and flood levels. "Fly camps" are possible on request (at an additional charge), though not an option during the hotter months when rain is possible (October to May). During cooler months one long ride may replace the normal morning and evening rides. Local weather conditions may also affect game concentrations and the guides reserve the right to alter activities and itineraries in any way at their discretion.



**Day 1** After a charter flight of about 40 minutes from Maun, a wonderful opportunity to see the entire Delta and game from the air, land amongst the floodplains on the airstrip closest to camp. Met by an open topped 4X4 game drive vehicle and driven a short distance to Motswiri Camp. An introductory talk over lunch or tea in camp and time for a rest before meeting the horses. Time permitting, a late afternoon ride to get to know the horse and see the surrounding area. Dinner and night in camp. (L,D)

**Day 2** Woken just before dawn with tea and coffee brought to your tent. A light breakfast before riding out at dawn, following the Spillway where you can hope to see elephant, giraffe and if lucky the rare and beautiful roan and sable antelope. Ride back to camp by a different route for lunch and a siesta by the pool. The evening ride is usually gentler, with a sundowner out in the bush before riding back to camp for hot showers. Drinks around the fire and a well earned dinner. (B,L,D)

**Day 3** Leave camp early setting off to explore the 120,000 acres of uninhabited wilderness, tracking game where it takes you, crossing grassy floodplain and water courses. Perhaps stop in a shady spot for brunch, cooked for you over a camp fire then ride back to Motswiri for a swim and siesta. After a rest in camp, a late afternoon ride, maybe exploring the delta region to the east of the camp. Return to base as the sun sets for drinks around the fire and dinner. (B,L,D)



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**Day 4** Different country again today as you make your way through the riverine forest close to the Selinda spillway. The mopane forests are a good place to find giraffe and zebra as well as providing cover for numerous smaller antelope, troops of baboons, monkeys and colourful birds. Ride back to camp by a different route, where you could enjoy a wonderful exhilarating canter as the going opens out onto floodplain. Arriving back at camp, there is time for a dip in the plunge pool before a late lunch, then the afternoon perhaps watching game coming to the waterholes. In the evening you might decide to walk, try a mokoro (canoes) trip - or ride again if you wish. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

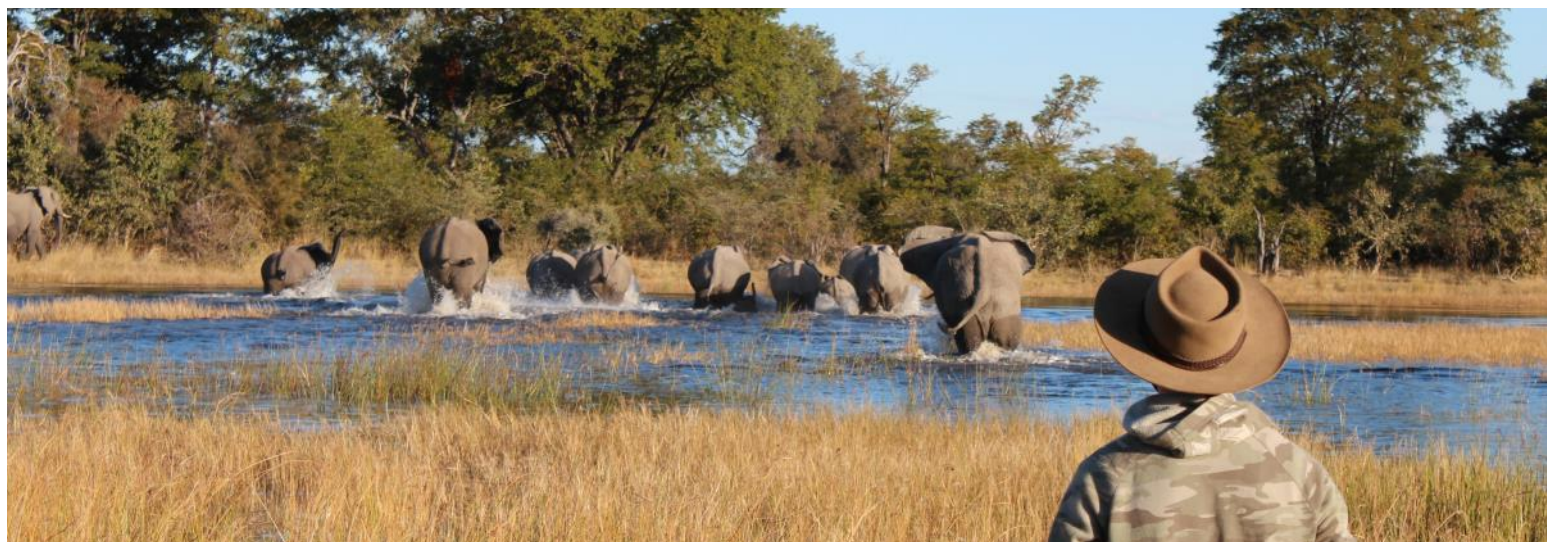
**Day 5** Ride east along the Selinda Spillway, perhaps stopping for a rest in a shady spot overlooking a breath taking pool where you may see the resident pod of hippo and wonderful birdlife. Return to camp for lunch and then perhaps enjoy sundowners and a spot of fishing from the boat or ride again if you wish. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)



**Day 6** This morning you may splash through water along the false spillway to the North of the Selinda Spillway, which is home to the elusive roan and sable antelope. En route, you may be lucky and see elephant, giraffe, zebra and impala. Head back to Motswiri camp for lunch and then ride out again in the afternoon. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

**Day 7** Your last full day's riding in this magical place - perhaps ride east today, towards the huge flood plains along the boundaries of the concession area where there are good chances to move on with long canters across the plains. Lunch back at Motswiri before a gentler evening ride and surprise sundowners. A farewell dinner and final night Motswiri camp. (B,L,D)

**Day 8** A final early morning ride at dawn, perhaps with a last exhilarating gallop before returning to camp for brunch. Farewell to the horses and then transfer to the airstrip to meet the charter plane that will fly you back to Maun for your onward journey (B).





**SAFARI PRICES 2019** - Safari rates are charged per person per night and depend on the season.

**Green Season: 1st January to 31st March (incl):**

**Rate:** £415 per person per night sharing

**Mid Season: 1st April to 30th June and 1st to 30th November (incl):**

**Rate:** £550 per person per night sharing

**Peak Season: 1st July to 31st October (incl):**

**Rate:** £620 person per night sharing

Children under 12 per night : Green season £208; Mid season £275; Peak Season £310

**Fly Camp** - by prior arrangement for an additional fee of £235 per tent per night. This is only usually possible for guests staying 3 or more nights between June and September .



**Please note** You need to add the cost of air charters (see below) to **ALL** rates.

**Air charters** - The meeting point for the safaris is Maun in Botswana. The above rates **EXCLUDE** transfers from Maun to the camp and you need to add the cost of these. Transfers are by private air charter of about 40 minutes to the airstrip which is just a 5 minute drive from camp. 2019 transfer rates are £215 per person each way (£430 return) Maun / Motswiri.

It is also possible to fly by charter between the camp and Kasane on the Botswana side of the Botswana / Zimbabwe border (about 45 minute charter flight) and this works well if you are visiting Victoria Falls before or after your safari. 2019 charter rate Motswiri / Kasane is £265 per person one-way. **Please note that all** charter rates are subject to variation with increases in fuel costs and can change at short notice so please confirm when you book.

**Please also note** that charter rates are based on at least two people travelling together and there may be a 50% supplement on charter fares for solo travellers - please check when you book.

**\*\*Example inclusive safari rates for 2019\*\***

**7 night safari in Peak season**, including charter transfers Maun / Motswiri at current rates, is

£ 4770 per person;

**7 night safari in Mid season**, including charter transfers Maun / Motswiri, is £4280 per person;

**7 night safari in the Green season**, including charter transfers Maun / Motswiri, is £3335 per person.

**Single accommodation** - If you are booking alone you will be allocated a tent to yourself and a single supplement will not be charged. However, in certain circumstances those booking alone may be asked to share a tent (with a guest of the same gender) if safari numbers / guest mix requires.

The above rates **INCLUDE** all riding and other activities such as boating, walking and game drives, accommodation in twin bedded safari tents, all meals, drinks (including alcohol except premium wines and champagne), Concession fees, government taxes and also laundry and ironing service in the main camp.

They **EXCLUDE** International flights to Maun and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, champagne and premium wines, personal items such as shopping, satellite telephone calls etc and any tips you wish to leave the staff.



**International Flights to Maun** - Maun is the safari meeting place. The best way to travel there from London is generally via Johannesburg in South Africa - there are no direct flights from London to Maun. You can also fly to Maun via Windhoek in Namibia, via Harare in Zimbabwe and via Gaborone in Botswana, but Johannesburg is the most convenient and easiest connection point.

Travelling from London, you should plan to take an overnight flight to Johannesburg (British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all fly direct London to Johannesburg every day, leaving London at about 19.00 / 21.00 and arriving JHB at about 07.00). Once in Johannesburg, you need to change planes and take an Air Botswana or South African Airways flight to Maun. These flights are daily with one (occasionally two) morning departures from Johannesburg to Maun taking around 1 hr 40 mins. Due to connection times, to avoid an overnight stay in Johannesburg, British Airways or South African Airways are usually the best international carriers to use. On the return, daily flights from Maun to Johannesburg will connect with overnight return flights to London.

**Please call us if you would like more flight information, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or if you would like us to book flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213**

**General visa and health information** (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

**Visas** If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Botswana for a holiday only and staying less than 30 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

If you plan to fly via South Africa please note that there are special requirements for those travelling with children, requiring provision of birth certificates and other documents, which are strictly enforced, particularly if only one parent is accompanying.

**Health** No inoculations are legally required for Botswana but Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A are recommended and you will also be advised to take malaria precautions and anti-Malaria tablets - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 19/09/2018)

