

ALL DRIVERS OF 4x4s

- Engage 4WD
- Select Lowrange
- Lock all hubs+diff
- Cross your fingers

Every one else drive normally

(Don't worry 4WD is not needed but it helps them justify the cost of buying or hiring one)

WELCOME TO



RAW
REAL AFRICAN
WILDERNESS

NEWSLETTER

September 2026

PERSONALISED, UNIQUE SAFARI ADVENTURES ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA

www.realafricanwilderness.com

contact@realafricanwilderness.com

RAW's FOOD & WINE SAFARI – Gastronomic Indulgence

RAW's Food & Wine Safari is designed with the epicurean in mind, offering a gastronomic two-week feast through the magnificent Western Cape of South Africa. This region boasts world-class dining in exceptional venues such as Fyn and Seebamboes, where guests are treated to gourmet dishes created from local, seasonal produce and paired with the region's truly exceptional wines.

This safari starts in the historic town of Stellenbosch, founded in 1679. Also known as the “Town of Oaks”, after the magnificent oak trees lining its streets, Stellenbosch is the historic heart of the South African wine industry. Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinotage are household names here, with the latter being a uniquely South African signature variety. Wines from this region are considered world-class, offering exceptional quality and remarkable value, complemented by stunning vineyards and spectacular mountain backdrops.

The safari is designed around tastings at boutique vineyards such as Waterford, Ernie Els, Babylonstoren, Tokara and Delaire Graff, while also including historic estates such as Vergelegen, dating from around 1700, and Groot Constantia, established circa 1685.

Interspersed among the wineries are some outstanding fine-dining experiences. The restaurants featured in the itinerary are truly world-class, offering seasonal menus with a distinctive African cultural influence. Whether you prefer meat, seafood or vegetables, these restaurants cover all bases and more. Unique local ingredients combine with refined preparation techniques, complex flavours and meticulous presentation to create a truly memorable gourmet experience.



Accommodation for this safari is provided in two stylish and carefully selected Airbnbs in Stellenbosch and Camps Bay, offering comfortable and sophisticated bases from which to explore the Cape's wineries, restaurants and spectacular surrounds. RAW is delighted to offer this 14-day gastronomic indulgence to discerning bon vivants at **A\$7,950 per person** sharing, with everything included. Visit realafricanwilderness.com for more details.

RAW's Zambia Expedition — Exploring the West and North

After farewelling our Botswana crew in late July, 'Stella' and 'The Pup' crossed into Zambia to explore the country's western and northern regions and assess whether these lesser-known areas might have a place in future Real African Wilderness itineraries. Alex knows eastern Zambia well, having previously guided safaris through South Luangwa National Park, but had never had the opportunity to properly explore western and northern Zambia as a tourist destination. So, with a healthy dose of optimism and a spirit of adventure, the RAW team set off on an expedition to see whether we could uncover Zambia's next tourism jewel.

We started with high expectations. Reality, however, arrived fairly quickly — in the form of Zambian roads. The expedition became as much a lesson in logistics, driving and patience as it was in exploring new wilderness areas. The conditions tested every member of the team in different ways and provided some valuable insights for anyone considering travelling these remote regions.

Lessons from the Expedition

1. Border crossings still take time

Even with the impressive new Kazungula Bridge spanning the Zambezi and modern computerised processing at the border, getting vehicles through customs remains a slow process. Allow around three hours if you are lucky. The combination of bureaucracy, paperwork and the inevitable application of "African time" can test even the most patient traveller. The lesson is simple: never schedule a tight itinerary around an African border crossing.

2. A sealed road doesn't necessarily mean a fast road

We quickly discovered that a road being officially classified as "sealed" says little about the speed at which you can actually travel. One particularly memorable section between Kazungula and Sesheke took us approximately six hours to cover just 80 kilometres. Much of the problem can be attributed to the enormous volume of heavy trucks transporting copper from Zambia's mining regions towards Namibia and the port of Walvis Bay. The combination of heavy freight traffic and inadequate road infrastructure has taken a considerable toll, leaving sections of the highway badly damaged and painfully slow.

3. Eventually, the road gives way to sand

Conditions improved as we travelled north towards Liuwa Plains National Park — at least until the sealed road ended. Once inside Liuwa Plains, the deep Kalahari-type sand presented a completely different challenge. Progress became an exercise in momentum, tyre placement and careful throttle control, with several unavoidable stops along the way. Driving through deep, soft sand is demanding enough, but it also creates an unexpected safari dilemma: stopping to look for wildlife is not always an option when stopping means potentially digging yourself out. On several occasions, the concentration required simply to keep the vehicles moving safely took precedence over wildlife viewing.



The Route

Our expedition took us from Kasane, Botswana, across the Kazungula border into Zambia and onwards through Sesheke and Mongu to Liuwa Plains National Park. From Liuwa Plains we turned east towards Kafue National Park, before continuing south towards Lake Itzhi-Tezhi and then further south to Livingstone. From Livingstone, we eventually completed the loop back to Kasane, Botswana. It was a challenging route, but that was precisely the point. We weren't simply looking for an easy safari — we were exploring areas that remain largely off the conventional tourist circuit to determine whether they have the ingredients required for future RAW expeditions. That said, this route presents some challenges as a safari destination and is best suited to the discerning traveller with the time to embrace its slower pace and appreciate the journey as much as the destination.

Liuwa Plains NP - Vast Wilderness, Remarkable Potential

Vast, quiet and wonderfully remote, Liuwa Plains National Park was a beautiful surprise. The landscape is classic African grassland, stretching seemingly forever to the horizon and occasionally broken by isolated “wooded islands” that add character to the otherwise expansive plains.



Liuwa Plains is managed by African Parks, a non-profit conservation organisation that works in partnership with governments and local communities to rehabilitate and manage protected areas over the long term. It was therefore somewhat surprising to find approximately 12,000 local people living within the park, going about their daily lives much as they would in any village. While this is an interesting and important conservation model, it does detract somewhat from the feeling of being in a remote wilderness area and, in our view, from the overall wildlife experience.

Wildlife was relatively scarce during our visit. November is considered one of the best times to experience Liuwa Plains’ famous wildebeest migration — the second-largest wildebeest migration in Africa after the Serengeti. Traditionally, however, the dry winter months are regarded as the best period for general wildlife viewing. According to the park’s visitors’ book, we were the only tourists in the entire park during our stay, which certainly added to the sense of isolation.

The campsites are new, clean and pleasantly shaded. A campsite attendant welcomes you on arrival, makes sure you are comfortably settled in and even provides free firewood — a thoughtful touch that was much appreciated.

Unfortunately, the wildlife was the major disappointment. During our stay, the only significant mammals we encountered were a small herd of zebra, fewer than 40 wildebeest, several oribi and five buffalo. The birdlife, on the other hand, was excellent, with large numbers of Wattled and Crowned Cranes providing some memorable sightings.

Liuwa Plains has enormous potential. The scenery, remoteness and conservation story are all compelling, and the wildebeest migration could eventually make it a major safari destination. For now, however, the park simply lacks the wildlife density and overall safari experience required to rank it alongside Zambia’s more established wildlife destinations.

Kafue National Park — A Different Side of Zambia

Our next destination was Kafue National Park, Zambia's largest and oldest national park. Reaching Kafue was a two-day journey east, taking us through a succession of villages and towns along the heavily travelled main road towards Lusaka.

Kafue is an enormous wilderness area, broadly divided into northern and southern sectors and centred around the Kafue River, which became a particular focus of our visit. Two separate boat excursions on the river produced some excellent wildlife encounters and offered a completely different perspective of the park. The riverbanks were alive with activity, and the opportunities for close-up viewing of hippos and crocodiles were particularly memorable.

For birders, the area is exceptional, with an impressive diversity of species making the river system and surrounding wetlands a genuine birding paradise. Personally, however, I was quite happy watching the hippos and crocodiles — preferably from a safe distance!

Kafue also provided a striking contrast to the vast open grasslands of Liuwa Plains. Here, the landscape is characterised by extensive miombo woodland, interspersed with open plains, wetlands and a well-developed riverine system. The diversity of habitats gives the park a considerably different character and a broader range of wildlife-viewing opportunities.

Perhaps most appealing of all was the lack of other visitors. Once again, we encountered remarkably few tourists, allowing us to explore the park at our own pace without the crowds and vehicle congestion found in some of Africa's better-known safari destinations.

Kafue reminded us that Zambia still has something increasingly rare in African tourism: space. The combination of enormous wilderness, diverse habitats, good river-based wildlife viewing and very low tourist numbers makes Kafue a compelling destination for travellers looking to experience Africa away from the established safari circuit.



SAFARI NEWS HEADLINES

- **Black rhino charges tourist vehicle in Namibia's Etosha NP.** A black rhinoceros repeatedly rammed a tourist's car in Etosha National Park on September 19, 2026. The animal smashed the vehicle with its horn and caused heavy bodywork damage while tourists stayed inside instead of backing away. This is yet another example of inexperienced tourists getting too close to the wildlife and not knowing how to handle the situation by keeping a safe distance between yourself and the wildlife. You can view the footage here https://www.youtube.com/shorts/xJ7jzrx_f50
- **Turning vulnerable livestock into four-eyed beasts helps protect them.** An innovative idea turned into a useful deterrent for sparing livestock from predators such as wild dog, leopard and lion in Zimbabwe. A local farmer, after consulting a game ranger, drew crude but effective eyes on the rump of his livestock. To his surprise, since he introduced drawn eyes, attacks on his livestock have shrunk significantly. Edson Mabika paints decoy eyes on his animals to confuse predators in the same way as some moths' wings display 'eyes' as a deterrent. Keep it simple as they say!



- **Botswana receives 20 Black Rhino from South Africa.** WWF-South Africa's Black Rhino Range Expansion Project (BRREP) has been working to expand the range of rhinos in South Africa since 2003, and recently announced the successful translocation of 20 black rhinos from South Africa to Botswana, effectively doubling Botswana's black rhino numbers. This not only marks an exciting example of cross-border collaboration between range states, but the 18th new rhino population created through the BRREP. A key aspect of this project was identifying secure areas of at least 20,000 hectares, echoing the minimum habitat size rhinos need to thrive.