

NORTHERN BOTSWANA MAP
AND SAFARI CALENDAR



JANUARY
The bush is alive with activity

January is the middle of the rainy season with spectacular afternoon thunderstorms. Daytime temperatures are warm, averaging 86°F (30°C). Night time averages are 68°F (20°C).

- Peak breeding time for many colourful migrant bird species
- Excellent wildflowers and brilliant green foliage abound
- Constant sounds day and night from insects and birds
- Game viewing is average with active predators chasing the fast-developing young of their prey species
- An ideal month for photography enthusiasts with brilliant colours and dramatic skies
- Predators are more easily seen by their prey species and have to work hard for a meal, while prey species enjoy a time of plenty

FEBRUARY
The Okavango Delta is brilliant, noisy and alive

The rains continue in the form of afternoon thunderstorms with dramatic skies and sounds. Daytime temperatures can reach up to 104°F (40°C) but average around 86°F (30°C). The nights are also warm, averaging 68°F (20°C). There can be both wet and dry spells during this month.

- Ripe figs are eaten by many species including fruit bats, who make interesting night sounds while feeding
- Water lilies are at their flowering peak
- Colourful and noisy reed frogs are abundant
- All plants are growing actively due to the rain
- Butterflies, birds, frogs and small creatures are at their most active
- The giant bullfrog emerges from months and sometimes years of hibernation to indulge in nocturnal feeding frenzies
- The resident game species do not have far to go for water and the young are almost as tall as the adults

MARCH
Visit now and see the migration moving North through the Savute

Temperatures are still warm both day and night but the air is drier and rains less frequent.

- Witness hundreds of zebra and wildebeest moving through the Savute marshlands
- Hear the calls of the last of the migratory birds before they move to the northern hemisphere
- In Moremi the Marula trees are fruiting which attracts bull elephants who wander from tree to tree in search of their favourite meals
- The start of the rutting leads to the sleek male impala cavorting to attract females



APRIL
The first signs of the changing season appear

Night time temperatures drop to below 68°F (20°C) on average but daytime temperatures continue to rise up to 104°F (40°C) on some days.

- Cooler morning temperatures with relatively high humidity leads to early morning mist – especially over the water
- The impala rut is in full swing and the impala noise continues right through the night with major clashes between rival males
- Baboons are often seen with impala as they assist with the safety of the preoccupied antelope
- The trees have completed flowering and fruit is ripening over with massive sausages hanging from the Sausage Trees
- The reptiles are actively breeding and feeding in anticipation of the dry spell ahead

MAY
Flood waters from Angola start to reach the top of Okavango Delta and begin their slow, deliberate progress through the Delta.

The rains are over and the nights are cooler with temperatures averaging 59°F (15°C). Daytime temperatures remain warm but have lost their edge with maximum temperatures seldom exceeding 95°F (35°C) – jackets are advisable for night drives.

- The buffalo begin to group into large herds and visit the permanent waterholes more often as the seasonal pans begin to dry
- Breeding herds of elephant increases in density daily as they visit the permanent waters
- Green colours start to fade into the duller dry season colours
- The predators begin to thrive again as their colouring blends in with their surroundings
- Migratory birds begin their arduous flights to winter feeding and breeding grounds



JUNE
Winter – an exciting time in Botswana.

Temperatures have dropped to their coldest by the end of the month with night temperatures reaching as low as 41°F (5°C). It is very cold on early morning and night drives due to wind chill. Daytime temperatures rise up to a comfortable 77°F (25°C) and dusty dry conditions begin to dominate the region.

- The African wild dogs begin to search for their dens. Once they have denned these endangered animals are easy to view for
- 3 – 4 months
- Some green bushes and trees persist, however most are beginning to lose their leaves
- Animals and their predators now concentrate at the permanent waterholes
- Pans are drying up across the region

JULY
An abundance of animals congregate near the water and floodplains making it a special time of the year.

The nights are still cold but the days are marginally warmer and the weather becomes typical of Botswana – sunny and clear.

- The floods arrive in the Okavango Delta and other areas after a slow path from the wet Angolan highlands thousands of kilometres away
- Water makes its way into areas that were dry the day before
- Mekoro and boat trips become more exciting as new places can now be accessed
- Soft early morning and evening light combines with dust to provide excellent photo opportunities



AUGUST
There is plenty of action around – with patience and perseverance, the rewards are great.

The weather is warming, even at night, with daytime peaks averaging near 86°F (30°C) and night time averages rising to 50°F (10°C).

- Animal herds are getting larger
- Limited space near the water leads to tension between breeding herds of elephant
- The nights are filled with elephant sounds
- The bush is bare and dust pervades throughout the region
- Birds such as herons and storks start to concentrate at the Godikwe heronry and begin nest-building
- The floods have passed through the Delta and reach as far south as Maun

SEPTEMBER
The climate has changed again and winter is all but gone.

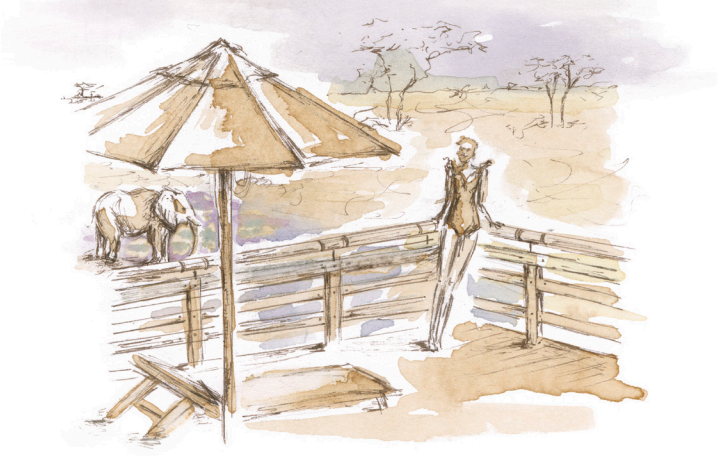
Night time temperatures rise rapidly within the month and by month's end, with averages reaching 59°F (15°C) and daytime temperatures soaring well into the 80's (high 20's).

- The sun shines, the skies are clear and it is extremely dry
- The elephant and buffalo concentrations are still great
- The predators are busy as the season takes its toll on prey species – a time of plenty for the lions
- Carmine bee-eaters and other migrant birds return from winter grounds
- Water levels slowly start to drop as the waters from Angola subside
- Fish begin to get active again

OCTOBER
Temperatures soar and game viewing is exceptional.

Day time temperatures rise regularly above 104°F (40°C) and nights are warm with averages in the high 60's (high teens Celcius).

- Morning game viewing activities begin very early and night drives depart later to avoid the heat of the day
- The pervading dust makes all scenes dramatic
- Predator chases erupt into clouds of dust as the eternal game of “eat or be eaten” plays out daily on the wide open plains
- There are fishing frenzies with the annual catfish run in the rivers
- The Godikwe heronry is in full activity with thousands of birds breeding and nesting



NOVEMBER
A wonderful time for photographers as there is excellent colour, action and visibility:

Temperatures remain high both day and night.

- Game viewing continues to improve until the day of the first rains, normally around mid November
- The animals all seek an end to the dryness and dust. Once the rain comes, they disperse to feed on the new vegetation and drink from the seasonal pans
- The antelope birthing season begins with tsessebe, followed by impala and lechwe
- Predators seek out the vulnerable young and kill many times a day to get their fill – which means plenty of action
- Trees burst into life and short green grass begins to appear
- Excellent visibility

DECEMBER
The pans remain full and the colours shine in brilliant green.

The rains become more regular with thunderstorms every few days.

- The impala complete their lambing
- The wildebeest finish calving within a few weeks
- Protein-rich grasses feed mother antelopes while the lambs and calves grow at astounding speed
- While grazers enjoy the green, tender mouthfuls, the predators are vigilant. With their winter camouflage making them stand out, they have to work harder for their catch
- The bush becomes denser providing more hiding places from which predators can stalk their prey
- All the migrant birds have returned



WELCOME TO BOTSWANA

As a tribute to the precedent already set by the Batawana Tribe, natural custodians of the great Okavango wilderness, Belmond Safaris intends to make a material contribution to the environment and all of its inhabitants.

Through investment of capital and, most particularly, considerate management, we aim to help the people of Botswana preserve this place of peace and perfection as a bountiful heritage for all people, for all times.

And, with our extraordinary game lodge's extensive itinerary of this exotic Delta, we hope to open a window onto Africa to travellers who understand that man and nature have complementary roles to play in the preservation and enhancement of this enchanted land.

Botswana is the old Africa, one of the world's last great wilderness areas. It is a place of harsh contrasts and untamed beauty, parched expanses of sand, savannah and teeming game. Here the mighty Okavango, one of the major rivers of Africa, flows south from Angola, not into the sea but straight into the sands of the Kalahari Desert, to create that ecological marvel - The Okavango Delta.

The Delta is an ever-changing labyrinth of clear channels, lakes, lagoons and swamps, 18 000km' of blue water, dense papyrus reed beds and tree-covered islands - an oasis for wildlife and lovers of unspoilt Africa.

Botswana is one of Africa's most democratic countries. Here, the peace-loving Tswana people, who measure wealth in terms of cattle, have reserved nearly one quarter of their country as national parkland. The best known of these are the Central Kalahari, the Gemsbok in the south, and Moremi and Chobe in the north. Botswana's national currency is the Pula which, appropriate to this vast, dry territory, is the Setswana word for rain.