

How to Plan Your Perfect Safari in Maun, Botswana:

Expert Tips from Island Safari Lodge

Planning a safari in Botswana means preparing for the adventure of a lifetime. This vibrant country offers a wide array of unique and interesting landscapes and natural biomes to explore, from the dry Kalahari Desert to the sprawling wetlands of the Okavango Delta. There is much to explore. Whether you're a first-time adventurer or a seasoned explorer, there is always something new and magical about visiting our wild and wonderful country. And who better to guide you on your journey than Island Safari Lodge? With decades of experience welcoming travellers, they know how to help you plan your dream safari.

So, let's get into the expert tips for making your safari in Maun nothing short of spectacular!

1. When to Go: Timing is Everything

Choosing the right season for your safari can shape your experience. The Okavango Delta and surrounding areas offer year-round adventure, but different times of the year bring different experiences.

Choosing the right seasons for your trip can shape your experience. It is paramount to do some research to understand when the best time to visit is:

- Dry Season (June to October): The cool days (20-25°C / 68-77°F) with no rain make this the perfect time for game drives, walking safaris, and exploring the Okavango Delta. Because of the lack of rainfall, animals tend to congregate around watering holes and beside rivers, making it the ideal time for stunning photographic opportunities. Tip: It's the best time for seeing big game like lions, elephants, and leopards!

- Wet Season (November to April): While the days can get hot, with temperatures hovering over 40°C (104°F), the afternoon showers transform the scenery into a luscious paradise. This is the ideal time for avid bird watchers as the migratory birds flock into the Kalahari and the Okavango Delta, both within easy reach of Island Safari Lodge.

Pro tip: Island Safari Lodge is the perfect base any time of year, with activities like mokoro rides during the wet season and game drives into Moremi Game Reserve during the dry months.

2. What to Pack: Essentials for Your Safari

Packing smart is key to having a comfortable safari. Luckily, the team at Island Safari Lodge has seen it all and knows exactly what you'll need:

- Clothing: Opt for neutral earth tones to better blend into the environment, like Khaki, brown, and olive colours. Pack light, layerable fabrics, depending on when you visit, the early morning and late afternoons can get pretty chilly. Don't forget about sun protection! It is essential to look after your skin while travelling so you can spend all of your time enjoying and none of your time worrying about sunburn. Bring a hat and sunscreen.

- Footwear: Comfortable, sturdy shoes for walking and sandals for lounging around the lodge and campsites. If you are going on nature walks, be sure to wear long pants and/or high socks to avoid ticks from biting you.

- Binoculars and Camera Gear: The wildlife here can be a little far from the vehicle at times, so a pair of binoculars is crucial. If photography is your thing, pack a good camera with a zoom lens to capture those close-ups of elephants, lions, and stunning birdlife.

- Sunscreen and Bug Repellent: The African sun is no laughing matter, and neither are the mosquitoes! Keep yourself safe from both with high-SPF sunscreen and a good bug spray, especially during the wet season.

Insider Tip: Forgot something? No worries! Island Safari Lodge's staff can often point you to local shops in Maun for safari essentials.

3. Choosing Your Safari: Game Drives, Boat Safaris, and More

One of the great things about staying at Island Safari Lodge is the location, it is located right on the Thamalakane River, allowing for easy access to the Moremi Game Reserve, the Okavango Delta and the Kalahari. It's all available right on your doorstep.

- Game Drives: The most classic safari option, game drives take you deep into the heart of Moremi Game Reserve or the surrounding areas of the Okavango Delta. Expect to see elephants, lions, giraffes, zebras, and more, especially during the dry season when animals gather around waterholes.

- Mokoro Safaris: During the wet season, explore the Delta by Mokoro, a traditional dugout canoe. This peaceful, water-based safari lets you get close to nature as you glide through the reeds, spotting tiny frogs, kingfishers, and perhaps even hippos or elephants wading through the water.

- Boat Safaris: If you're visiting during the Delta's flood season, take a Mokoro trip up the Delta, and let the cool breezes waft over the river as you explore the swamp lands.

- Scenic Flights: For an unforgettable experience, take to the skies! Scenic flights offer a bird's-eye view of the sprawling Okavango Delta, giving you a chance to see its stunning layout of islands and waterways, and maybe even some wildlife from above.

Expert Tip: Island Safari Lodge can help arrange all of these experiences for you. Their knowledgeable staff can recommend the best activities based on the season and your interests.

4. Planning for Wildlife: What to Expect

The wildlife in and around Maun is some of the most diverse and exciting in Africa. Here's a quick look at some of the stars of the Okavango Delta:

- The Big Five: Lions, leopards, elephants, buffalo, and rhinos can all be found here, though rhinos are more elusive.
- Birdlife: From the colourful Lilac-breasted Roller to the majestic African Fish Birdwatching in the Delta is a treat, especially during the wet season when migratory species arrive.
- Other animals: You're likely to see hippos, crocodiles, antelopes, giraffes, zebras, and plenty of smaller creatures, from playful warthogs to curious meerkats.

Wildlife Tip: Animals are more active in the early mornings and late afternoons, so plan your safaris around these cooler times of the day.

5. Island Safari Lodge: Your Home Away from Home

Now, let's talk about why Island Safari Lodge is the ultimate base for your safari. With its prime riverside location on the Thamalakane River, it offers a peaceful retreat while keeping you close to the action. The lodge's spacious grounds are perfect for relaxation after a day in the wild, and you can even spot some wildlife right from your room!

- Comfortable Accommodations: Choose between cosy en-suite rooms or larger family-friendly options. You'll enjoy all the comforts of home while still feeling connected to nature.
- Activities on-site: Take a dip in the pool, join a boat safari, or simply relax with a cold drink at the bar as you watch the sunset over the river. The lodge is also a fantastic spot for birdwatching!
- Friendly, Knowledgeable Staff: The staff at Island Safari Lodge aren't just there to check you in; they're passionate about the Delta and can help you plan every aspect of your safari. Whether it's arranging a mokoro ride or recommending the best time for a scenic flight, they've got you covered.

6. Practical Tips for Your Safari

Before you head off on your adventure, here are some practical tips to keep in mind:

- Visas and Vaccinations: Depending on your nationality, you may need a visa to enter Botswana. It's also a good idea to check for any required vaccinations, like yellow fever, and to consider anti-malarial medication if you're travelling during the wet season.
- Travel Insurance: Make sure you're covered for any potential mishaps, especially if you're planning to do more adventurous activities like walking safaris or scenic flights.
- Stay Hydrated: It can get hot out there, so always carry water with you, especially on game drives or walks.

Final Tip: Book your safari early! Botswana is a popular destination, especially during the dry season, so securing your accommodation and activities in advance will ensure you don't miss out.

With these expert tips and Island Safari Lodge as your base, you're all set to plan the perfect safari in Maun, Botswana. Whether you're gliding through the Delta in a mokoro, spotting lions on a game drive, or simply enjoying the beauty of the Thamalakane River from the lodge, your safari adventure is going to be one for the books.

Happy planning, and we'll see you in Maun!