

ZIMBABWE

Beautiful & Wild

This unforgettable 6-week journey begins and ends in Johannesburg, taking you on a clockwise loop through Zimbabwe's stunning landscapes.

With minimal tourism in many of the national parks, you'll enjoy secluded campsites, tracks, and roads—offering a truly wild and intimate experience.

The route avoids main roads, favouring remote backroads and 4x4 tracks, ensuring a unique and adventurous exploration of Zimbabwe's natural beauty. The secret is out—now's the time to experience this incredible destination before it gets busier!

42 Days

28 May - 08 July 2027

4x4 Adventure



Self Drive
ADVENTURES
GUIDED TAGALONG TOURS

www.selfdriveadventures.com

The Route



Highlights include

- Great Zimbabwe – UNESCO world heritage archaeological site
- Matopos / Matobo National Park – home to the resting place of Rhodes and we will do some Rhino tracking on foot here
- Hwange National Park – the country's biggest and most biodiverse protected area
- Kazuma National Park – a hidden gem tucked away in the north-west of the country
- Victoria Falls
- The hidden gorges of Chizarira National Park
- Matusadona National Park on the shores of Lake Kariba
- Vehicle ferry crossing of Lake Kariba
- Two nights relaxing and fishing on our exclusive houseboat on Lake Kariba
- Mana Pools National Park camping on the banks of the Zambezi River
- Hidden dinosaur footprints in Chewore Safari Area
- Ancient rock art at Kopje Tops and near Harare
- The remote Eastern Highlands including a stay at the historic Leopard Rocks Hotel which has hosted royalty in the past like Queen Elizabeth, the Queen mother and Princess Diana
- Gonarezhou National Park "the home of elephants" with its impressive pink sandstone cliffs and thousands of elephants

Your Host

You will be hosted by Gus Le Breton. We were able to travel with Gus recently through part of Zimbabwe that only a local would be able to share with you. His deep knowledge of Zimbabwe is always shared with passion and enthusiasm. As you can see from his bio below, Gus is an expert in indigenous plants and their medicinal uses, but that doesn't mean you will be bombarded with botanical names of plants 24/7. Gus will share his full knowledge of Zimbabwe with you with a balance of humour, history, culture, scenery as well as flora and fauna. Rest assured your evenings around the campfire will be entertaining!



Learn more about Gus Le Breton:
<https://africanplanthunter.com/about-me/>

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Itinerary

Day 1: Johannesburg, Guest House

Arrival transfer from Johannesburg Airport to the guest house. Meet your tour escort that will be with you for the duration of the tour as well as the other participants of the tour for a tour briefing. Dinner in the guest house.

Day 2: Johannesburg, Guest House

Today we collect our vehicles, receive a demonstration of all their features and afternoon to start packing. Dinner in the guest house.

Day 3: Johannesburg to Louis Trichardt, Camping

We will leave early and head north towards Louis Trichardt where we will shop for provisions before heading to Camp Africa. Here we will have the chance to pack our groceries and will have a "welcome braai" now that we are really started on our adventure.

Day 4: Louis Trichardt to Lion and Elephant Hotel, Camping

Today we head for the border and into Zimbabwe. We don't have a great distance to travel today, but the border crossing can be slow. We'll camp the night at a 1950's iconic hotel which is located around 80km from the border near the Buby River.

Day 5: Lion and Elephant Hotel to Great Zimbabwe, Camping

An easy "tar road" adventure today to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Great Zimbabwe. The stone structures here are the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. In the afternoon we will take a walking tour with a local guide through this impressive archaeological site.

Day 6: Great Zimbabwe to Matopos / Matobo National Park, Camping

Today into the boulders of the Matopos / Matobo National Park. We'll stay in the "world's view" campsite with views as expansive as they sound. This campsite is on a private farm and giraffe, zebra and other game can be seen wandering around perhaps even interrupting your view.

Day 7: Matopos / Matobo National Park, Camping

Today we can leave our 4x4s in camp and will be collected by a local guide in a safari vehicle for a full day tour within the National Park, including rhino tracking and a visit to the summit of Malindidzimu, the "hill of benevolent spirits" where Cecil Rhodes, Dr. Leander Starr Jameson and several other leading early white settlers, including Allan Wilson and all the members of the Shangani Patrol killed in the First Matabele War, are buried. Malindidzimu is also the spiritual home for the Ndebele people.



Day 8: Matopos / Matobo to Hwange, Camping (upgrade to lodge available)

We'll drive north to Bulawayo and stop in for some shopping before heading to our camp in a private concession just outside Hwange National Park. Optional afternoon game drive with local guide in a safari vehicle (must be pre-booked). Here we will meet with our local Zimbabwe host Gus Le Breton who will travel with our group until we leave for South Africa after the Gonarezhou National Park visit.



Day 9: Hwange National Park, Camping

Early start leaving our camp not far from the entrance gate to Hwange. We will drive "the long route" to through the park. We will stop at picnic spots along the way as we will drive through some of the prime game viewing regions of the park. We will spend the night in one of the picnic spots/campsites within the park.

Day 10: Hwange Picnic Spot to Robins Camp, Camping (upgrade to accommodation available)

It's just a short drive to our next camp so we have time for a morning game drive near our camp before moving on. We may also drop in at Deteema Picnic spot enroute before arriving at Robin's Camp for two nights. There are optional game drives available here with local guides and safari vehicles or you can take in a few of the local waterholes driving at your own pace or just relax by the pool and enjoy the bush.



Day 11: Hwange Robins Camp, Camping (upgrade to accommodation available)

Day free. Optional game drives.

Day 12: Hwange - Kazuma Pan National Park, Camping

Today we approach Kazuma Pan from a lesser used route. Not that many people come to this hidden gem of a park in any case. It is a bit of a "secret" right on the border with Botswana. We will arrive in the afternoon in time to watch the game stroll in and out of the waterhole that we have for our exclusive use during the evening.



Day 13: Kazuma Pan - Victoria Falls, Camping (upgrade to accommodation available)

After enjoying the morning in Kazuma we make our way to Victoria Falls "the smoke that thunders". We will stay for two nights to give us time to see the falls and perhaps take in an optional activity like a flight over the falls, a sunset cruise or a special dinner at Dusty Roads where the focus is on paddock to plate meals using many indigenous ingredients. We will camp within walking distance to the falls.

Day 14: Victoria Falls, Camping (upgrade to accommodation available)

Free day for activities and to restock vehicles.



Day 15: Victoria Falls to Maabwe Bay, Camping

An early start and we take the track parallel to the Zambezi River through the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. We will spend the night on the banks of Lake Kariba at Maabwe Bay.

**Day 16: Maabwe Bay to Chizarira National Park, Camping**

Chizarira is a lesser known and infrequently visited park. There are spectacular views, whether looking out across the Zambezi Valley and Lake Kariba, south across the park itself, or into the dark depths of the gorges. We will spend two nights here.

Day 17: Chizarira National Park, Camping

Day free in camp. There are walking tour options as well as a day drive within the park.

Day 18: Chizarira National Park to Matusadona National Park, Camping

We'll drive a less travelled route to our campsite for two nights with absolute waterfront views of Lake Kariba. Everywhere you look you will see the expanse of the largest manmade dam in the world. Game wanders through camp and the sunset is certain to be spectacular.

**Day 19: Matusadona National Park, Camping**

As long as he is available on the day, we'll take a tour with the Park Manager of the operations of Matusadona Park which has been run in association with African Parks since 2019. In 2025 Rhino is planned to be reintroduced to the park. Optional game viewing activities by safari car or by boat.

**Day 20: Matusadona National Park to Kariba, Houseboat**

We have around an hour and half drive through the park to where we will load our 4x4s onto ferry that will take us on a 3 hour sail across the lake to Kariba. Here we will meet our houseboat for the next two nights and leave our 4x4s. Our houseboat will be catered for meals and BYO drinks. For two days we will explore the lake, and yes, fishing equipment will be supplied on board!

Day 21: Lake Kariba, Houseboat

Day free on houseboat.



Day 22: Kariba, Camping

The houseboat will bring us back to our 4x4s and we have the afternoon to shop and get provisions for the next leg of our adventure. We'll camp on the shore of Lake Kariba.

Day 23: Kariba to Mana Pools National Park, Camping

It's around a half day drive from Kariba to the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Mana Pools National Park for two nights alongside the Zambezi River. Epic sunsets and a tranquil setting with wildlife roaming through the park. There is a good chance to see wild dog here as well as elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard, cheetah, spotted hyena, hippo, Nile crocodile, kudu, bushbuck, nyala, sable antelope, 350 bird species including Nyasa lovebird, yellow-spotted nicator, rock pratincole, banded snake-eagle and Livingstone's flycatcher.

Day 24: Mana Pools National Park, Camping

Day free to relax in camp or take a drive along the tracks through the national park.

Day 25: Mana Pools National Park to Chewore Safari Area, Camping

Secret dinosaur business today...we will visit some dinosaur tracks with our local scout in a remote part of the Chewore South Safari Area before heading to camp for the night.

See Gus explain the footprints:

https://youtu.be/tPMpOE0Qnlw?si=T7lDFEdv0_FfoIfT

Day 26: Chewore Safari Area to Kopje Tops, Self Catering Chalet

We drive through a remote part of the Zambezi Valley. We drive up the escarpment approximately 1,000m up the steep, quiet tar roads and then on to our self catering chalets for two nights in a local conservancy near the town of Guruve.

Day 27: Kopje Tops, Self Catering Chalet

Optional walks to see bushman cave paintings and the "pot cave" where two hundred year old storage pots lie undisturbed in a remote location.

Day 28: Kopje Tops to Outside Harare, Camping (upgrade to accommodation available)

Today we will be close to civilisation passing close to Harare and staying at a campsite on our local host's family property. We will be able to stock up on provisions here.



Day 29: Harare to Hidden Rocks, Camping

Today we will see more remote bushman rock paintings at Diana's Vow. Our campsite just outside of the small town of Juliasdale will have one of the most stunning views of the entire trip - a great place for a happy hour.

See Gus explain Diana's Vow:

<https://youtu.be/yGAovE9sh90?si=bmFfITEXwhrQJnUl>

Day 30: Hidden Rocks to Nyanga National Park, Camping

Today might feel a little bit like a "holiday" from our adventure. We will travel on good tar roads for most of the day through some stunning landscapes. We will visit "world's view" lookout, have lunch at a farm stall called "froggy farm", tea and scones at the famous Troutbeck Inn before entering Nyanga National Park and our campsite overlooking Mare Dam.

Day 31: Nyanga National Park to Mtarazi Falls, Camping

An epic day of scenery as we drive through the moorland plains of the Rhodes-Nyanga National Park. This was once owned by Rhodes but gifted back to Zimbabwe. We will pass Zimbabwe's highest mountain before camping by Mtarazi Falls - the second highest in Africa with sweeping views over the Honde Valley far below.

Day 32: Mtarazi Falls - Vumba, Leopard Rock Hotel

Our exploration of the Eastern Highlands today takes us from the Mtarazi Falls into Vumba, which means "misty" in the local language. You can expect some refreshing cool weather here in these beautiful hills. We will spend two nights at the grand colonial hotel "Leopard Rocks" that has hosted royalty like Queen Elizabeth, Princess Diana and the Queen Mother.

Day 33: Vumba, Leopard Rock Hotel

Free day to take up optional activities like game viewing in the private game reserve, golf or just relaxing and enjoying a sundowner in the afternoon.

Day 34: Vumba to Chikukwa, Camping

Cashel's scenic drive is a rarely used track. We will probably have the views all to ourselves as we wind along through the hills and camping at a remote campsite near the permaculture village of Chikukwa.

Day 35: Chikukwa to Chipinge, Camping

Morning visit of the village of Chikukwa. Then on through Chimanimani mountains on the tar road to an interesting campsite at the Chipinge Polo Cross fields.



Days 36-39: Chipinge to Gonarezhou National Park, 1 night self catering accommodation, 3 nights camping

We leave the Eastern Highlands and its cooler weather today and travel into the Gonarezhou National Park. This is "Place of Elephants" and plenty of other game two and it is legendary for its red sandstone Chilojo Cliffs. We will have 4 nights exploring this beautiful, remote gem of Zimbabwe.

See Gus explain driving in Gonarezhou (we'll see some but not all of this and current conditions will affect the route taken but this will give you a great idea about this amazing park): <https://youtu.be/r-FrZ6rFBqc?si=juy4YwzrhxZBpqMK>

Day 40: Gonarezhou National Park to Louis Trichardt, Camping

We will say goodbye to our local Zimbabwe expert this morning and head for the border crossing back into South Africa and to our last night of camping at Camp Africa.

Day 41: Louis Trichardt to Johannesburg, Guesthouse

Back to the city of Johannesburg to drop off our 4x4s and have our farewell dinner in the guest house

Day 42: Depart

Transfers to the airport.



Please Note: Itinerary subject to change dependent on availability and the support team decides on final route as per current conditions on day of travel.



Prices, Dates....

Prices...

USD13,695* per person

Prices are based on 2 people per 4x4 on a double/twin share basis

*The prices above are based on the 2026 prices. 2027 pricing can only be confirmed later in 2026 when rates are available (approximately September 2026). Prices assume a minimum of 5 vehicles and a maximum of 7 vehicles (plus support vehicles). Prices are subject to exchange rate fluctuations – please see booking form for all terms and conditions. If we do not have the 5 vehicle minimum the tour may be able to operate with a small group supplement which will be advised at the time.

Please do not book flights nor pay for travel insurance until you have been advised that we have received deposits from the minimum number of participants for this adventure.

Inclusions...

Arrival and departure transfers, vehicle hire (Toyota Landcruiser or similar), vehicle insurance (standard), cross border documentation for vehicle, two-way radio in vehicle, all campsites and accommodation as per itinerary, local host with vehicle, support vehicle and support staff, activities as listed in itinerary, entry fees as per itinerary. First aid kit is in the support car, as is all recovery equipment.

Exclusions...

Airfares return to Johannesburg, alcoholic drinks, meals other than stated in the itinerary (approx. USD25 per person per day for camp groceries), local tips, travel insurance, fuel (approx. USD1,500 per vehicle), vehicle excess, vehicle cross border fees for insurance and Temporary Import Permit (approx. USD300 per vehicle), vehicle entry fees to National Parks (approx. USD40 per vehicle), activities over and above those detailed in the itinerary, visas (if required, Zimbabwe visa is purchased at the border on arrival), immunisations (if required) and any personal expenses. Vehicle and accommodation upgrades may be possible on this trip depending on availability. Car excess and car rental terms and conditions will be supplied separately.

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Other Information

Accommodation...

This is not a 5-star holiday. It is a camping based adventure. We will be staying in campsites that will usually have basic bathroom amenities like shared showers and toilets. We have some nights in guesthouses, self catering accommodation, hotels and a house boat that usually have ensuites but sometimes may have shared bathrooms. There are opportunities to upgrade to more accommodation along the route. Details to be supplied separately.

Driving Ability & Conditions...

The skills required are a driver's licence (your home country and international licence) and a good dollop of common sense. 4x4 or dirt/gravel road experience would be highly recommended. Please discuss your level of 4x4 experience with us prior to booking.

The conditions will include, good tar, terrible tar, remote dirt/rocky trails and some gravel roads or varying quality. Some moderate technical 4x4 sections.

Vehicles...

The vehicle will be a 4x4 – Toyota Land Cruiser or similar. The standard vehicle comes with roof top tent or ground tent, or both and is fully camping equipped. Upgrades to "camper style" vehicle available at an additional charge.

Convoy Size...

The minimum number of 4x4s in our convoy is 5, unless a small group surcharge is added, and the maximum is 7. This excludes support vehicles. Most vehicles tend to have just two guests, however, up to four can be accommodated. The convoy does travel together for most of the journey, so you need to be willing to be flexible to fit in with the determined start time each day, stops for breaks etc. We try to allow breaks for photos, toilet stops, sightseeing, activities, wildlife viewing, lunch, morning and afternoon tea.

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Support Team...

On this adventure you will be supported by your local host and guide Gus Le Breton as well as a Self Drive Adventures support vehicle. The decision of the host and support team is final on all matters likely to affect the safety or well-being of any person participating in the trip. Gus will join the group on day 8 when we arrive at Hwange National Park.

Activity Level...

We do recommend a reasonable level of fitness and mobility to endure some of the rough tracks and long days of driving. This trip is not otherwise physically demanding as any walking required is usually a short distance and there are longer distances optional for fitter participants. Trekking poles are useful as there can be uneven terrain and stairs. There are many days where we do activities outside of the 4x4s.

Food & Drinks...

See the itinerary inclusions for meals that are included. Food supply is currently good in Zimbabwe. We have numerous shopping opportunities to top up provisions. If you do have any special dietary requirements you may need to bring some additional items with you from South Africa. There will be a few places that we can have lunch or dinner in a cafe or restaurant.

Weather...

This is late Autumn to Winter. Temperatures could range from 0 —30 degrees C during the day depending on the location. It could rain in the Eastern Highlands (more likely to be drizzle or misty). Otherwise we are unlikely to encounter rain.

Flights...

Before booking flights and other arrangements it is your responsibility to confirm with us that we have the minimum number of cars required for this adventure to depart.

Risks & Health...

By participating you acknowledge that the nature of the trip is adventurous, and participation involves a degree of personal risk. You should discuss the risks with your doctor before agreeing to join this trip.

