

Zambia's South Luangwa National Park

Christmas Birds & Mammals Tour

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London.
Day 2	Arrive Lusaka, Fly South Luangwa
Day 3/8	South Luangwa National Park.
Day 9	Depart Lusaka.
Day 10	Arrive London.

Departs

December

Focus

Mammals, birds and other wildlife

Grading

A general wildlife safari suitable for all levels of fitness

Dates and Prices

Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk (tour code ZMB02) or see the current Naturetrek brochure

Highlights:

- 7 nights in a small luxury lodge on the edge of the South Luangwa National Park
- Daily morning game drives
- Daily optional afternoon/night safaris
- Fully open vehicles, excellent for photography
- Abundant mammals including Elephant, Thornicroft's Giraffe, Greater Kudu and Lion
- One of the best places in Africa to view Leopards!
- Abundant birdlife
- Expertly guided by local naturalists



Images from top: Leopard, African Elephant, Thornicroft's Giraffe. Courtesy of Paul Stanbury and Shutterstock



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Introduction

This is a single-centre holiday based at Kafunta River Lodge, a small and exclusive lodge situated on the edge of the South Luangwa Valley and overlooking the Luangwa River. Kafunta can accommodate up to twenty guests in ten twin-bedded thatched chalets, each having private facilities and a private veranda. A thatched, open-plan bar and dining area, provides meals and service to an excellent standard. There is also a swimming pool and patio where guests can relax overlooking the Luangwa River.

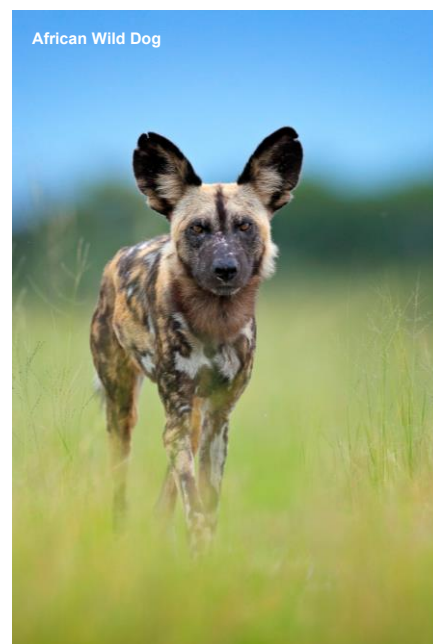


The aim of the holiday will be to gain a thorough appreciation of the mammals, birds and other wildlife of one of the most famous and best national parks in all of Africa. By concentrating only on this one park during this relatively short holiday, we will maximise our time in the field, minimising wearisome overland travel. Those tours which fall within Zambia's 'green season' from December to April, may have to put up with the occasional rain shower, but are likely to be more than compensated by the beauty of this time of year and the lack of other tourists. Even in Zambia's high season, however, tourists are never as thick on the ground as in other parts of Africa, due to the limited accommodation in the South Luangwa, the small size of the lodges and the generally high cost of this destination.

The South Luangwa National Park also has other advantages over many other African national parks. Here, we may do some game-viewing walks in the Game Management Area (GMA) – grass levels permitting – on the edge of the park and within the area of our lodge grounds, and are able to go on night drives each day in search of nocturnal mammals and birds not normally seen in other African countries, where night driving is forbidden.

Please note, however, that such night drives are not included in the cost of the holiday, though they are offered each day at a cost of around \$50 per person per excursion. See Page 5.

In all, during our stay, we hope to see around 30 species of mammals, and perhaps nearly 200 bird species; a truly unforgettable week of wildlife!



Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Depart London

You depart London's Heathrow Airport mid-evening on an Emirates Airlines flight to Lusaka (changing aircraft in Dubai). NB - Please note that there are no direct flights into Zambia from the UK.

Day 2

South Luangwa National Park

We are due into Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, in the early afternoon from where we transfer to our one hour Proflight Zambia flight to Mfuwe, the small airport which services the South Luangwa National Park. On arrival in Mfuwe, you will be met by your local guides and transferred to Kafunta River Lodge (a journey of around 40 minutes) for your seven night stay.



The South Luangwa National Park comprises 9,050 square miles of unspoilt wilderness that makes up one of Africa's finest national parks. Herds of Elephant, Plains (Crawshay's) Zebra, Thornicroft's Giraffe, Puku and Impala dot the open savannahs whilst Bushbuck, Grey Duiker, Vervet Monkeys and troops of Yellow Baboon tend to stay within the acacia scrub, or amongst the woodlands of Strangler Figs, Sausage Trees and Combretums. Groups of Hippo laze in the waters of the Luangwa River alongside huge Nile Crocodiles whilst careful searching on the river banks

may yield a family party of Greater Kudu, Common Waterbuck or perhaps a herd of African Buffalo. With such a large population of game, it is not surprising that the South Luangwa holds good numbers of predators such as Lion and Spotted Hyena and one of the world's highest densities of Leopard. Although the more luxuriant vegetation in December makes them a little trickier to find, both Lion and Leopard are regularly seen, indeed one group saw no less than four Leopards on a single night drive!

Several of our Naturetrek groups have even had the ultimate thrill of coming across a pack of African Wild Dogs, an increasing sight in the Luangwa Valley, especially in the 'Green Season'.



Birdlife is equally abundant. Species include Dwarf Bittern, Saddlebill, Abdim's, Yellow-billed, Woolly-necked and Openbill Storks, Tawny, Wahlberg's and Martial Eagles, Gymnogene, Lizard Buzzard, Allen's Gallinule, Three-banded Courser, White-crowned Plover, Lilian's Lovebird, Grey and Purple-crested Louries, various

cuckoos such as Jacobin, Striped, Black, and the beautiful Emerald Cuckoo, Woodland Kingfisher, White-fronted Bee-eater, Paradise and Broad-tailed Paradise Whydahs, Spotted-backed Weaver and many more. Most of the Southern Carmine Bee-eaters will have left by late December but there may still be a few birds around, whilst around the lodge it is possible to find Collared Palm Thrush, White-browed Robin-chat and Terrestrial Bulbul.

Days 3 – 8

South Luangwa National Park

Each day will start with an early wakeup call and by 0600 hours we will be heading into the national park on a game drive in search of its abundant animals and birds.



The majority of safaris will be done between 0600 hours and 1100 hours after which we will retire to the lodge for "brunch". After brunch you are free to relax or enjoy some birdwatching or game-viewing from the lodge's thatched bar which overlooks the Luangwa River. African Skimmers are occasionally seen from here, whilst Elephant, Thornicroft's Giraffe, Puku and Impala frequently venture down to drink. Afternoon game drives into the park can also be organised and these are usually combined with a night safari (sunset is

shortly after 1800 hours) which leaves around 1600 hours and returns between 1930 hours and 2000 hours (Zambia being one of the few countries that permit night safaris within their national park boundaries) and provides a great opportunity to see such nocturnal mammals as African Civet, Large-spotted Genet, South African Crested Porcupine, Honey Badger, Southern Scrub Hare, Elephant Shrew, White-tailed, Bushy-tailed and Slender Mongooses, Lesser Bush-baby and, if very fortunate, perhaps the bizarre Aardvark. Above all, such drives offer the best chance of seeing the elusive Leopard and perhaps a pride of hunting Lions or a clan of scavenging Spotted Hyena. Nocturnal birds include Mozambique and Pennant-winged Nightjars, Spotted and Giant Eagle Owls and, occasionally, the rare Pel's Fishing Owl.

NB - Please note that the afternoon game safaris/night safaris are not included in the cost of the holiday but are available at US\$50 per person per excursion (payable direct to the lodge).



Day 9

In Flight

Depending on the time of the return flight back to Lusaka, you may have time for a last morning game drive before transferring back to Mfuwe Airport in time to catch your Proflight Zambia flight to Lusaka. On arrival you will transfer to an Emirates Airlines return flight to London, via Dubai.

Day 10

Arrive London

You are due to arrive back into London's Heathrow Airport early afternoon.

Grading

Grade A. This is a traditional safari-style holiday that includes wildlife viewing by vehicle on regular morning, and (optional) afternoon/night-time safari drives. Please note that walking safaris are dependent on the height of the vegetation. They are offered at the discretion of the lodge manager and may not be possible in late December.

Weather

It will be hot throughout your stay with daytime temperatures climbing up to the mid to upper 30s degrees centigrade. December lies at start of the rainy or 'Green' season, when you must expect some rain, though this is likely to come in short sharp bursts, with sunshine in between, and is not likely to cause a problem to British clients used to British weather!

Entry requirements for Zambia

British nationals visiting Zambia for less than 90 days do not need to purchase a Visa in advance and can now obtain a free Visa on arrival.

Food and accommodation included in the price

All accommodation and meals are included in the price, except for any lunches and evening meals in Lusaka. This is a single-centre holiday based at Kafunta River Lodge, a small and exclusive lodge situated on the edge of the South Luangwa Valley and overlooking the Luangwa River. Kafunta can accommodate up to 20 guests in ten twin-bedded thatched chalets, each having private facilities and a private veranda. A thatched, open-plan bar and dining area, provides meals and service to an excellent standard. There is also a swimming pool and patio where guests can relax overlooking the Luangwa River.



Transport

Kafunta Lodge's own open-top four wheel drive game viewing vehicles will be used for the safaris within the park (designed with three stepped rows of seats - completely open and great for photography!).



NB – During the dry season when the river levels are low, the safari vehicles directly access the national park by driving across a pontoon over the Luangwa River. Once the river levels start to rise in December, the park is accessed by driving for around 20 minutes through the GMA (game management area) to a bridge over the river at Mfuwe. There is, however, usually plenty of birds, mammals and other wildlife to enjoy in the GMA enroute to the official border of the park.

Luggage Restrictions

Please note that the internal Proflight Zambia flights between Lusaka and Mfuwe have a strict weight limit of 23kg of luggage per person plus 5kg hand baggage. Please refer to Proflight Zambia's website at www.proflight-zambia.com for additional information on baggage restrictions and the cost of purchasing additional weight.

Additional information on how to safely transport heavy photographic equipment on the flight from Lusaka to Mfuwe is contained within our pre-departure notes, which are sent to all group members after booking.

Extra expenses

The following expenses are not included in the cost of this holiday and are paid locally during the course of the tour.

- US\$50 per person for each afternoon / night drive, or US\$300 if you wish to do all six.
- The tour price includes South Luangwa National Park entrance fees for 6 days (Day 3 to Day 8 of the tour). Flight times between Mfuwe and Lusaka on Day 9 of the safari, however, often allow an additional game drive that morning. Any group members wishing to enter the park for a final game drive that morning will be charged US\$40 per person park entrance fees by the lodge.
- Drinks, tips for local staff and souvenirs.
- Dinner in Lusaka (the equivalent of about £25 should cover this).

Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Zambia. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/zambia or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

How to book your place

In order to book a place on this holiday, you will need to read the Naturetrek terms and conditions in the back of our brochure or on our website, and then book either online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, by calling us on 01962 733051, or by completing and returning the booking form in the brochure together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost. If you do not have a copy of this brochure, please call us on 01962 733051.

Images courtesy of Shutterstock Images, F Mairs & P Stanbury