

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



Naturetrek Mingedown Barn Wolf's Lane Chawton Alton Hampshire GU34 3HJ UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

NB. 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.

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 and birds of one of the most famous and best national parks in 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. By travelling within Zambia's 'Green Season', we may have to put up with some rain, but are likely to be more than compensated not only by the beauty of this season, but also by the lack of other tourists. Even in Zambia's high season, tourists are never as thick on the ground as in other parts of Africa, due to the limited accommodation in Zambia's National Parks, and the generally very high cost of this destination.

The South Luangwa National Park also has other advantages over most 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 permitted to go on night drives 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 about \$50 per drive)

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!

Day 1

In Flight

You depart London's Heathrow Airport mid-evening on an Emirates Airlines or South African Airways flight to Lusaka (changing in Dubai for Emirates or Johannesburg for South African Airways).

NB - please note that British Airways have dropped their direct flight into Lusaka as of the end of October 2013. As such there are now 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. An increasing number of Naturetrek groups have even had the ultimate thrill of coming across a pack of African Wild Dogs, a rare sight indeed in Zambia!

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.

Days 3 – 8

South Luangwa National Park

Each day will start with an early wake up 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, 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 \$50 (approximately £30) per person per excursion.

Day 9

In Flight

Depending on the time of the return flight back to Lusaka, you should 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 or South African Airways return flight to London, via Dubai/Johannesburg.

Day 10

Arrive London

You are due to arrive back into London's Heathrow Airport at around 0630 hours if travelling with South African Airways or early afternoon if flying with Emirates.

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. Most of our limited walking will be done from our lodge in the Luangwa Valley. The country is flat and easy-going, although after a couple of hours walking it does tend to get very hot. Please note that walking safaris are dependent on the height of the vegetation and are generally not available in the 'Green Season'.

Weather

It will be hot throughout your stay with daytime temperatures climbing up to the mid 30s degrees centigrade. December marks the 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

UK passport holders now require a Visa to enter Zambia. The Visa can be obtained on entry into Lusaka for US\$50, or from the Zambian High Commission in London before travel for £35 (single entry).

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!).

Food and accommodation included in the price

All accommodation and meals are included in the price, except for 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 rooms, 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.

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.

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, laundry, tips for local staff and souvenirs.
- Dinner in Lusaka (the equivalent of about £25 should cover this).

Your safety & security

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 and Commonwealth 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.
