

Zambia's South Luangwa National Park - Nkonzi Bush Camp

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

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

Departs

September & October.

Focus

Mammals & other wildlife.

Grading

Grade A/B – A mix of vehicle safaris & walking safaris.

Dates and Prices

Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk (tour code ZMB09) or see the current Naturetrek brochure.

Highlights:

- Seven nights in a small tented bush-camp deep within the South Luangwa National Park.
- Maximum of only 10 guests.
- Daily game drives or walking safaris.
- Night drives in search of Leopard & other nocturnal wildlife.
- 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.
- Southern Carmine Bee-eater colonies.
- Expertly guided by local naturalists.



Images from top: Leopard, Nkonzi Bush Camp tent and African Elephant, Courtesy of Paul Stanbury, Gavin Opie and Shutterstock



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Introduction

Zambia's South Luangwa National Park lies in the south-eastern corner of the country and is one of southern Africa's finest wildlife havens. The reserve is home to a wonderful variety of classic large African mammals including Thornicroft's Giraffe, Crawshay's Zebra, African Buffalo, Impala and large herds of Elephants. The permanent waters of the Luangwa River cut through the



park along its eastern fringes, attracting abundant game and their attendant predators – especially in the dry season – including prides of Lion, one of the largest populations of Leopard on the continent and several packs of rare Wild Dogs. The birdlife is equally exciting and includes dazzling colonies of Southern Carmine Bee-eaters which return each year between August and November to nest along the sandy banks of the Luangwa River. Ever since the late Norman Carr first pioneered walking safaris here in the 1950s, the South Luangwa National Park has remained one of Africa's finest safari destinations, blessed not only with an abundance of wildlife, but offering excellent accommodation, daily night drives and none of the tourist crowds that blight some of the continent's more well-known game reserves.

This new safari to the South Luangwa National Park is based for seven nights at Nkonzi Bush Camp, a small temporary bush camp that holds a maximum of only 10 guests and is set deep within the reserve. Nkonzi Bush Camp is located 45 minutes from the park's main gate and overlooks the dry white sand Mushilashi River. It is surrounded by pristine mopane woodland, grassy plains and seasonal waterholes, well away from the game drive routes that most other visitors use. This is not a luxury lodge, but a small authentic bush camp set up between June and November and featuring large walk-in safari tents with comfortable beds and ensuite bathrooms. Here they focus on the wildlife experience rather than offering luxury accommodation, although Nkonzi Bush Camp still has everything you will need for a comfortable and unforgettable stay. Being deep within the national park the wildlife is right on your doorstep, and indeed often wanders through the camp itself! As well as the usual safaris in open vehicles, the camp's friendly and knowledgeable guides will take you on walking safaris direct from the camp and



night drives in search of nocturnal animals and birds such as Leopard, Honey Badger and Pennant-winged Nightjar. Free from the light pollution that taints the heavens here in the UK, the night skies above Nkonzi Bush Camp are just breathtaking.

Itinerary

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.

Day 1

Depart London

We 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).

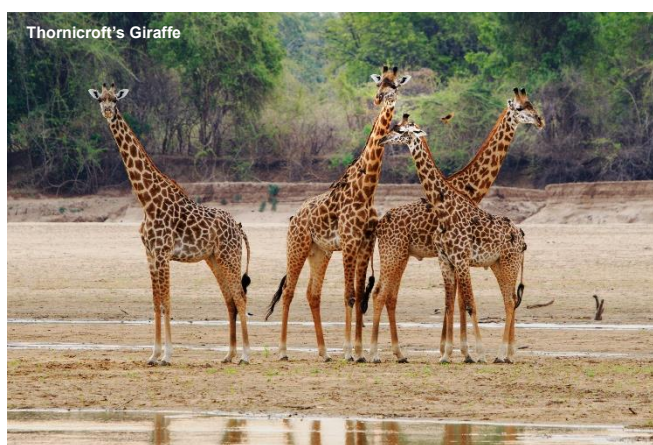
NB - please note that British Airways dropped their direct flight into Lusaka at the end of October 2013. As such, there are now no direct flights into Zambia from the UK.

Day 2 – 8

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 drive into the heart of the national park to Nkonzi Bush Camp (a journey of around 90 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 Mopani, 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; indeed it is not unusual to see multiple Leopards on a single night drive! An increasing number of Naturetrek groups have even had the ultimate thrill of coming across a pack of African Wild Dogs, an uncommon, but increasing, sight 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-



Southern Carmine Bee-eaters

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. Southern Carmine Bee-eaters arrive to breed in August or September and should still be around during the latter part of the year, whilst around the lodge it is possible to find Collared Palm Thrush, White-browed Robin-chat and Terrestrial Bulbul.

Each day will start with an early wake-up call and shortly after first light we will be heading out of the camp on a game drive or walking safari in search of the park's abundant animals and birds (N.B. Walking Safaris require a minimum of three participants).

Once the heat of the day starts to kick in we will return to Nkonzi Bush Camp for brunch, after which you are free to relax or enjoy some birdwatching or game-viewing from the camp which is set on the edge of the seasonal Mushilashi River. Your safari guides will then offer an afternoon game drive or walk, the former of which can be extended with a night safari (sunset is shortly after 1800 hours) which provides a great opportunity to see such nocturnal mammals as African Civet, Large-spotted Genet, South African Crested Porcupine, Southern Scrub Hare, White-tailed, Bushy-tailed and Slender Mongooses and Honey Badger. 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. A full day's game drive, with a picnic lunch, will also be offered during the week.



Lion

Day 9

In Flight

Depending on the time of the return flight back to Lusaka, we should have time for a last morning game drive or walk before transferring back to Mfuwe Airport in time to catch our Proflight Zambia flight to Lusaka. On arrival we will transfer to an Emirates Airlines or South African Airways return flight to London, via Dubai or 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/B. This is a traditional safari-style holiday that includes wildlife viewing by vehicle or on foot on regular morning and afternoon safari drives or walks. Game walks usually last a couple of hours and cover several kilometres. Although the terrain is mostly flat, it is often sandy underfoot and by mid-morning it will get hot. Walks are optional and please note that all walking safaris are dependent on the height of the vegetation. Walking safaris take a maximum of six people at a time.

Weather

Zambia has a pleasant climate and three main seasons. Summer between September to April (temperature range from 26°C to 38°C); a dry winter from May to August (temperatures range from 15°C to 27°C but fall much lower in the early morning and evening); and a rainy season between mid-November and early-April.

In September and October, the weather should be mostly dry and hot with the possibility of the occasional heavy afternoon shower leading up to the start of the rains in mid-November. During this season, many mammals congregate around waterholes and shrunk rivers.

Food and accommodation included in the price

This safari includes all meals and accommodation with the exception of any necessary meals in Lusaka. We will be based for seven nights at Nkonzi Bush Camp, a small temporary bush-camp that holds a maximum of only 10 guests in five twin-bedded tents. Nkonzi Bush Camp is located within the national park, 45 minutes from the main gate and overlooks the dry white-sand Mushilashi River. It is surrounded by pristine mopane woodland, grassy plains and seasonal waterholes, well away from the game drive routes that most other visitors use. This is not a luxury lodge, but a small authentic bush camp set up between June and November and featuring large walk-in safari tents with comfortable, wooden-framed, beds and ensuite bathrooms. Here they focus on the wildlife experience rather than offering luxury accommodation, although Nkonzi Bush Camp still has everything you will need for a comfortable and unforgettable stay.

Each tent has an ensuite bathroom with a warm water bucket shower with plenty of water, mixed to the temperature you prefer by the camp staff. The flush toilets are eco-friendly and specially designed to minimise water use. Each tent also has charging facilities for camera batteries and other electronic equipment. Meals are served in the main camp area under the shade of a grove of mature trees. The camp staff may also arrange a 'Milky Way Braai' which is cooked and served in the dry river bed underneath the stars! Being so deep inside the national park means the camp is not connected to mains electricity. They rely on solar powered lamps and candles, but do have a small solar charging unit for camera batteries.



Extra expenses

The cost of the holiday includes economy class flights from London, accommodation on a full board basis at Nkonzi Bush Camp, park fees and all game drives/walks. Drinks, laundry and tips are excluded from the cost of the safari as are any necessary meals in Lusaka.

Transport

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

Entry requirements for Zambia

UK passport holders no longer need to purchase a Visa to enter Zambia, but will be issued with a free single entry tourist Visa on arrival into Lusaka. Those not holding a UK passport should check requirements with their nearest Zambian High Commission.

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.

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 & 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 & G Opie