

# Zambia in Style!

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

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### Outline itinerary

<b>Day 1</b>	Depart London.
<b>Day 2/8</b>	South Luangwa National Park, based at Chikunto Safari Lodge
<b>Day 9</b>	Depart Lusaka.
<b>Day 10</b>	Arrive London.

### Departs

July & October.

### Focus

Mammals, birds & other wildlife.

### Grading

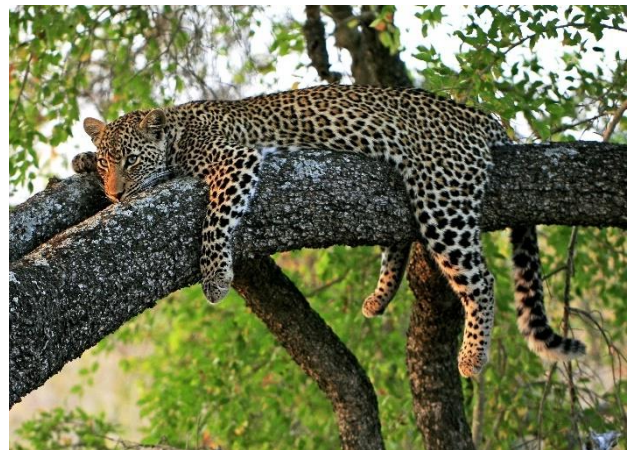
Grade A/B – This is a traditional safari with a mix of vehicle game drives & optional walking safaris.

### Dates and Prices

Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code ZMB10).

### Highlights:

- Seven nights in a small luxury bushcamp deep within the South Luangwa National Park.
- Maximum of only 12 guests.
- Daily game drives in open vehicles or walking safaris.
- Night drives in search of nocturnal wildlife.
- Abundant mammals including Elephant, Thornicroft's Giraffe, Greater Kudu & Lion.
- One of the best places in Africa to view Leopards!
- Abundant birdlife.
- Southern Carmine Bee-eater colonies between late August & November
- Expertly guided by local naturalists.



Images from top: Chikunto Safari Lodge, Leopard & Southern Carmine Bee-eaters Courtesy of Shutterstock Images & Gareth Jones.



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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 late 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 1960s, 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 reserves.

This exciting safari is based for seven nights at Chikunto Safari Lodge, a stylish bush camp offering a unique mix of luxury lodging and rustic bush camping, set deep within the national park. Accommodation here consists of just five large and spacious tents pitched on raised decking, each containing a comfortable bed with mosquito nets, seating area and ensuite bathrooms. The lodge is located an hour from the park's main gate and sits on the banks of the magnificent Luangwa River, surrounded by pristine mopane woodland, grassy plains and seasonal waterholes, and is far from the game drive routes that most other visitors use. The wildlife is right on your doorstep, and indeed often wanders through the camp itself! As well as the more typical game drives in open vehicles, the camp's expert friendly and knowledgeable guides will take you on walking safaris direct from the camp and on night drives in search of nocturnal animals and birds including Leopard, Honey Badger and Pennant-winged Nightjar. Free from the light pollution that taints the heavens here in the UK, the night skies above the South Luangwa National Park are just breathtaking, indeed the camp even has its own stargazing platform!





## 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 early-evening on an Emirates Airlines flight to Lusaka (changing in Dubai). There are currently no direct flights between the UK and Zambia.

### Day 2 – 8

### South Luangwa National Park

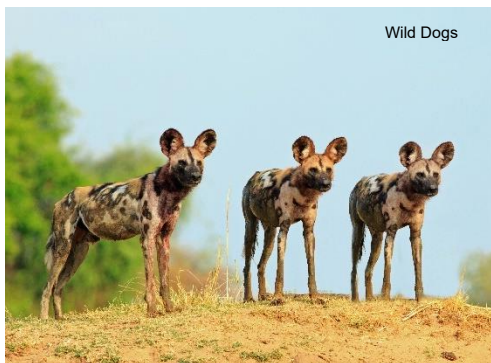
We are due into Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, in the early afternoon from where we transfer to our one-hour Proflight Zambia flight to Mfuwe, the small airport which services the South Luangwa National Park. On arrival in Mfuwe, you will be met by your local guides and drive into the heart of the reserve to Chikunto Safari Lodge (a journey of around 90 minutes) for your 7-night stay.

The South Luangwa National Park comprises 14,500 square kilometres of unspoilt wilderness that makes up one of Africa's finest national parks. Herds of Elephant, Plains (Crawshay's) Zebra, Puku, Impala, and the endemic Thornicroft's Giraffe dot the open savannahs, whilst Bushbuck, Grey Duiker, Vervet Monkeys and troops of Yellow Baboon reside 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 excellent numbers of predators such as Lion and Spotted Hyena, and one of the world's highest densities of Leopard. Both Lion and Leopard are regularly seen, indeed it is possible to have multiple Leopards sightings on a single night drive! We also hope to have the ultimate thrill of coming across a pack of African Wild Dogs. Several packs now roam the national park, and, fortunately, this rare predator is being seen with increasing regularity.



White-browed Robin-chat

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, Broad-tailed Paradise Whydahs, Spotted-backed Weaver and many more. Southern Carmine Bee-eaters arrive to



breed along the Luangwa's exposed riverbanks in late August or early September and the sight of hundreds of these gaudy birds wheeling over their nesting colonies is sure to be one of the highlights of our October safaris. Around the lodge it is possible to find Collared Palm Thrush, White-browed Robin-chat and Terrestrial Bulbul, whilst along Luangwa River feed Marsh Sandpipers and African Skimmers. 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.

Once the heat of the day starts to kick in we will return to the lodge for brunch, after which you are free to relax, or enjoy some birdwatching or game-viewing from the camp which is set near the banks of the Luangwa 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.



## Day 9

## In Flight

Depending on the time of the return flight back to Lusaka, we may 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 return flight to London's Heathrow Airport, via a change of aircraft in Dubai.

## Day 10

## Arrive London

You are due to arrive back at London's Heathrow Airport in the early afternoon.



## 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 safaris. Game walks usually last two to three 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.

## Food & accommodation included in the price

This safari includes all meals and accommodation with the exception of any meals necessary in Lusaka. We will be based for seven nights at Chikunto Safari Lodge, a stylish hybrid lodge/bush-camp that holds a maximum of 12 guests in five very comfortable and spacious tents situated on raised wooden platforms. Each tent has an ensuite bathroom, wardrobe and both an indoor and outdoor seating area. One of the tents is connected by a wooden boardwalk to a raised stargazing platform out on which guests can sleep for the night under the stars. Additional information on this unique experience follows.



Delicious meals are served in the main communal area of the lodge and your stay includes breakfast, lunch, afternoon cake and a three-course dinner, as well as soft and alcoholic drinks (excluding premium brands). All game drives and walking safaris are also included.

Chikunto Safari Lodge is located within the South Luangwa National Park, around one hour from the main gate and sits upon the banks of the wide Luangwa River. Surrounded by pristine mopane woodland, grassy plains and seasonal waterholes, well away from the game drive routes that most other visitors use, this lodge offers a unique, luxurious and secluded safari experience. An air of relaxation and comfort can be found throughout, yet the feeling of being in the heart of the Zambian wilderness is not lost with Elephants, giraffe and other animals regularly wandering past – or pausing to drink from the waterhole out front – and only the sounds of the African bush to lull you to sleep.



One of the tents is attached by a short wooden walkway to a raised stargazing platform on which it is possible to sleep out for the night (see photographs below). This 'suite' can be booked on a first come first served basis for an additional supplement of £295 per person which includes two opportunities to sleep out overnight on the platform. Please be aware that the whole group will be taken to the platform on a couple of evenings for a stargazing session with drinks.



Chikunto Lodge also has one large family suite that has two separate sleeping areas (enclosed by curtains) either side of a spacious lounge and shared toilet/shower. This tent can be reserved by a group of four friends or a family of four wishing to sleep under the same roof. It can also be used for two single travelers (of the same sex) wishing for a little more privacy than is available when sharing the other tents. Single occupancy is not available on this safari.





## Extra expenses

The cost of the holiday includes economy class flights from London, accommodation on a full board basis at Chikunto Safari Lodge, park fees and all game drives/walks. Tips and premium drinks are excluded from the cost of the safari as are any necessary meals in Lusaka or in transit.

## Transport

Chikunto'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!).

## Weather

Zambia has three main seasons. Summer between September to April (temperature range from 26°C to 40°C); a dry winter from May to August (temperatures range from 15°C to 30°C, but fall much lower in the early mornings and evenings so take a fleece); and a rainy season between mid-November and early-April. In 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. Midday temperatures can climb into the upper 30s°C (or higher), but activities take place during the cooler morning and late afternoon hours. During this season, many mammals congregate around waterholes and shrunken rivers. July sits earlier in the dry season. Water is more widespread and so the game is a little more spread out. There is still lots to see, however, and temperatures are lower and more comfortable, climbing the high 20s°C or low 30s°C during the middle part of the day.

## 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 one on arrival into Lusaka.

## 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](http://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.

## 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](http://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](http://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.

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### Location of Chikunto Lodge

