

Cultural Zimbabwe Trip

For those intrepid travellers who have been several times to Africa and wish to experience more.... More of the cultural side of things; the people and how they live their daily lives, archaeology and unique sights not normally visited when you go on an Africa Safari. Here is a 9nt trip showcasing something entirely different to anything you have probably ever done in Africa! With Zimbabwe back on the radar, it is time to see some amazing sights.

Itinerary at a glance

Day 1 - 2	Somalisa Camp, Hwange National Park
Day 3 –4	Big Cave Camp, Matobo Hills National Park Including 3 hour Trip to Khami Ruins
Day 5 – 6	Great Zimbabwe Hotel, Masvingo Town
Day 7 – 10	Holiday Inn, Harare City Including Half Day Trip to Domboshava Rock & Cave Tour Day Trip to Chinhoyi Caves, 135km out of Harare City

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 - 2 Somalisa Camp, Hwange National Park

You will be met at the Victoria Falls Airport and transferred to Hwange National Park you will spend the first two nights of your safari.

Somalisa Camp is set in the heart of Hwange National Park, known as the land of the giants for its big elephant herds. Somalisa is an authentic bush camp, a blend of old African charm and elegance together with an exclusive safari experience. Its stunning location tucked away on an acacia island along the edge of an ancient seasonal flood plain gives it breath taking views of the savannah plains of the famous Kennedy Vlei line. At Somalisa Camp, you will experience the heightened romance of the African Bush in one of the most natural environments in Africa. This is the way Africa was meant to be explored.

Only six elegantly furnished canvas tents with en suite bathrooms, flush toilet and romantic alfresco bush shower make up this camp. The décor echoes of an old era, from colonial to the ancient tribes of Africa, telling the story from all corners of this magnificent continent. It's stunning main area and pool lends to complete relaxation, whether it be with a cup of tea or one of our refreshing cocktails; overlooking the pan where the herds of game congregate in large herds, offering rare moments of outstanding nature.

Your senses will be awakened and you will feast on our sumptuous cuisine, a balance of organic produce and innovative gourmet meals complemented by a choice of South African and Australian wines. Our meals are inspired by the Far East, Europe and Africa. You will discover new and seasonal flavors, which our imaginative chef will present you with.

The use of solar lighting ensures your comfort without interfering with the environment and the area's natural surrounds. The lounge and dining area is at the forefront of the camp, tucked under a soaring

canopy of trees. Wide and well-traversed Elephant paths make up the paths connecting your room to the main area.

Activities include guided walks lead by qualified and passionate guides who will share their knowledge and love of the bush with you, game drives and spot lighting as well as game viewing from hides. Walking and game drives will allow you the opportunity to observe elephant, kudu and sable antelope, zebra, wildebeest, gemsbok, the rare and endangered roan antelope, buffalo, giraffe, white rhino, lion, leopard, hyena, and many other wildlife species. The Kennedy vlei is littered with flamboyant colors from all its seasonal wild flowers that emerge as the first rains begin, and as the grass dries out, the large herds of buffalo, zebra and elephant are in abundance.



You will leave Somalisa Camp after an early breakfast and take a leisurely 2-hour game drive through the park to Hwange Main Camp for a tour of the Village outreach programme.

Hwange National Park: The Village and Cultural Outreach organized by ABC Foundation:

Because we operate Somalisa Camp and Somalisa Acacia camp in this area we now have ties with the community and are able to organize the following out reach for clients wishing to learn more about the Nambya culture of the people who are native people in this area.

Typical programme is as follows:

You will leave Somalisa Camp after an early breakfast and take a leisurely 2-hour game drive through the park to Hwange Main Camp.

Your visits will start at Hwange Main Camp Primary School. The school is located in the compound where the people who are employed by National Parks live. The school caters for the children of the parents of National Parks. The school has a very talented Marimba Band which will perform whilst being accompanied by the schools choir. There are 142 students at the primary school from grade 1 – 7. The African Bush Camps Foundation supports the school in several ways. We assist with school fee's for the 42 orphan's and vulnerable children at the school as well as holding events at the school, assisting with fund-raising for the school, assisting them with an organic nutrition garden and providing an additional teacher for the school as they only have 3 official teachers for the 7 grades. In March 2012 we also assisted a group of 10 women who are all parents and guardians of children at the school to start a chicken raising project called the Vukuzenzele Chicken Project which provides the women with a much needed income. The parents and students can experience the direct benefit of tourism through our support and through education and income generating projects these custodians of the National Park are being taught to conserve our natural resources.



The second part of the visit would be to see the village of Dete which is the centre of a total of 17 villages making up the area surrounding the national park. The 17 villages have a population of approximately 30,000 people of which Dete is the hub. The majority of our staff at Somalisa come from Dete and through our needs assessments, we have identified certain groups who are vulnerable, who have no official income and are struggling to pay school fee's and get by on a day to day basis. Apart from the safari industry and a few Government posts such as the police, there are no other employment opportunities in and around Dete. The African Bush Camps Foundation have assisted various groups to start income generating projects such as the Thandanani sewing project made up of a group of 8 women, predominantly widows and the Vukani Project, a group of 14 people who have an organic vegetable garden project, make chili sauces and make recycled paper beads which they fashion onto jewelry.



From the village of Dete you will proceed to a local homestead where you will be welcomed by a family who live a traditional rural subsistence lifestyle, plowing their fields and herding their livestock of goats and cattle. You will be served a traditional meal prepared for you by the family. The people in this area are of the Ndebele tribe, the second largest tribe in Zimbabwe and traditionally they are very welcoming and it is a part of their culture to welcome visitors and share a meal with them. After your visit to the homestead you will return to Main Camp for a 2 hour game drive through Hwange National Park to Somalisa Camp, enjoying a picnic along the way.



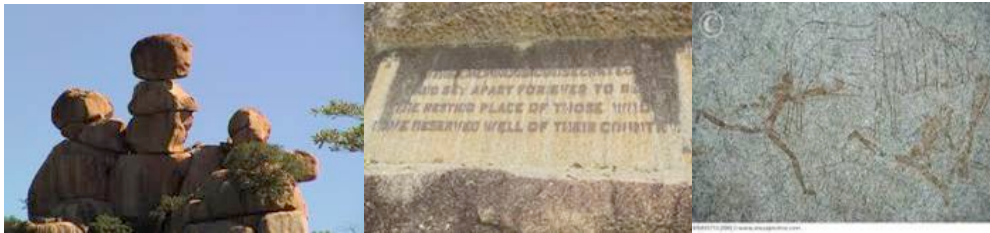
Day 3 – 4 Big Cave Camp, Matobo Hills National Park Including 3 hour Trip to Khami Ruins

You will embark on an early morning drive from Somalisa Camp to Main Camp, from where you will drive to the Khami Ruins in Bulawayo City for a 3 hour tour before proceeding to Big Cave Camp in Matobo Hills National Park.

Bulawayo (1 hour from Matobo Hills): The Khami Ruins. Khami was the capital of the Torwa dynasty for about 200 years from around 1450 and appears to have been founded at the time of the disappearance of the state at Great Zimbabwe.



Matobo Hills National Park: The ancient rock paintings at the Matobo Hills are over 700 years old and of a unique paint and design and are records of the history of the people that lived in that area. The area is also home to a lot of the Colonial History of Zimbabwe including Cecil John Rhodes' grave on the World's View.



Retire at a day's end to the natural rock-pool and sundeck, the Leopard's Lair lounge and bar, a cave-style boma for pre-dinner drinks or the popular lodge library. The seven thatched A-frame cottages, each with en-suite bathroom and private balcony resonate African creative flair. Find solitude within an intimate retreat as secluded as the original Kalanga grain bins that nestle amongst the rocks.

The design of the lodges is A-frame granite under thatch, which ensures they are cool in summer and warm in winter. The seven lodges each with en-suite bathroom and private balcony resonate African creative flair. Included is a honeymoon suite as well as family rooms for those with small children. The central living areas are set against a backdrop of massive boulders that form a part of the design of the structures. The Leopards Lair includes a teak bar, lounge and communal dining area. The adjacent library is a cosy retreat for those wishing to spend a quiet moment learning more about the history of the area. Outside, the natural rock pool and sundeck is a cool contrast to the warm granites that surround the pool. Refuge can also be taken at midday in the nearby pool Boma area where ice cold drinks are served.

At sundown the cave-style Boma is illuminated by lanterns as guests sit around a traditional fire while recounting stories of the day's activities.

Matobo Hills gained its World Heritage Status principally on the rich cultural diversity of this area. The Matobo Hills boasts one of the highest concentrations of rock art anywhere in the world. This ancient Khoisan art can be viewed in the both the National Park and even within the immediate vicinity of Big Cave Camp. These famous rock art galleries can be visited on foot or by 4x4.

One of the more famous sites is Nswatugi cave, which is normally combined with a trip to Rhodes Grave, World's View, which is a beautiful drive through the Recreational Park.

Tours to the nearby Ndebele village and Whitewaters Secondary school provides an insight into the lives of the local people. The school in particular has been supported by guests of Big Cave Camp for many years. To date a library has been constructed, and school fees, science equipment, desks, chairs, sporting goods and building materials have been donated. In times of real hardship a guaranteed meal has also been provided for all the school children. In addition a number of children have had their education sponsored by guests of Big Cave Camp



Day 5 – 6 Great Zimbabwe Hotel, Masvingo Town

After breakfast at the Big Cave Camp, you will embark on a 3 hour drive to Masvingo Town, where you will spend 2 nights at the Great Zimbabwe Hotel.

The word "Zimbabwe" is probably a short form for "ziimba remabwe" or "ziimba rebwe", a [Shona](#) (dialect: ChiKaranga) term, which means "the great or big house built of stone boulders". In the ChiKaranga dialect of the Shona language, "imba" means "a house" or "a building" and "ziimba", or "zimba", means "a huge/big building or house". The word "bwe" or "ibwe" (singular, plural being "mabwe") in the ChiKaranga dialect means "a stone boulder". The ChiKaranga-speaking Shona people are found around Great Zimbabwe in the modern-day province of Masvingo and have been known to have inhabited the region since the building of this ancient city

A second theory is that Zimbabwe is a contracted form of "dzimba woye" which means "venerated houses" in the Zezuru dialect of the Shona language. This term is usually reserved for chiefs' houses or graves. It should also be noted that the ChiZezuru-speaking Shona people are found to the northeast of Great Zimbabwe, some 500 km away.

Construction starting in the 11th century and continuing for over 300 years the ruins at Great Zimbabwe are some of the oldest and largest structures located in Southern Africa, and are the second oldest after nearby Mapungubwe in South Africa. At its peak, estimates are that Great Zimbabwe had as many as 25,000 inhabitants. The ruins that survive are built entirely of stone. The ruins span 1,800 acres (7 km²) and cover a radius of 100 to 200 miles (160 to 320 km).

In 1531, Vicente Pegado, Captain of the Portuguese Garrison of Sofala, described Zimbabwe thus:

Among the gold mines of the inland plains between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers there is a fortress built of stones of marvelous size, and there appears to be no mortar joining them.... This edifice is almost surrounded by hills, upon which are others resembling it in the fashioning of stone and the absence of mortar, and one of them is a tower more than 12 fathoms [22 m] high. The natives of the country call these edifices Symbaoe, which according to their language signifies court. The conical tower inside the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe

The ruins can be broken down into three distinct architectural groups. They are known as the Hill Complex, the Valley Complex and the Great Enclosure. The Hill Complex was used as a temple, the Valley complex was for the citizens, and the Great Enclosure was used by the king. Over 300 structures have been found so far in the Great Enclosure. The type of stone structures found on the site gives an indication of the status of the citizenry. Structures that were more elaborate were probably built for the kings and situated further away from the center of the city. It is thought that this was done in order to escape sleeping sickness.

What little evidence exists suggests that Great Zimbabwe also became a center for trading, with artifacts suggesting that the city formed part of a trade network extending as far as China. Chinese pottery shards, coins from Arabia, glass beads and other non-local items have been excavated at Zimbabwe.

The site was not abandoned but rather the court of the king moved further north as his empire declined in order to gain more direct access to trade revenues. The Great Zimbabwe was left in the care of a local tribe.



Day 7 – 10 Holiday Inn, Harare City

After breakfast at Great Zimbabwe Hotel, you will be road transferred to Harare City for a 4 hour tour of the Domboshava Rock & Cave.

Day 8 Day Trip to Chinhoyi Caves, 135km out of Harare City

You will be picked up from the hotel after breakfast for your transfer to Chinhoyi Caves National Park.

Chinhoyi Caves:

This pool is popularly called Sleeping Pool or Chirorodzira (Pool of the Fallen). Divers have discovered a submarine passage leading from the Bat Cave, a sub chamber of the Dark Cave to another room known as the Blind Cave. Diving is possible in the caves all year round, with temperatures never beyond the 22 to 24 °C (72 to 75 °F) range with zero thermocline. The cave system is composed of limestone and dolomite, and the descent to the main cave with its pool of cobalt blue water is very impressive. The limestone caves were first described by Frederick Courtney Selous in 1888. The caves are named after a local chief who used them as a refuge from Ndebele raiders. These caves are the most extensive cave system in Zimbabwe that the public can access.



Day 9 Day Trip to Domboshava Rock & Cave

After breakfast at Holiday Inn, you will be transferred to Domboshava Rock & Cave for a half day trip.

The site can be found about 35km north-east of Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe. Domboshawa Hill is a “kopje”, which means an isolated hill that stands above the surrounding plain. In this case it is the remains of an ancient volcano that has been extinct for millions of years. Geologically, it forms part of the Chinamora Igneous Complex. The name “Domboshawa” comes from two Chisona words, “dombo”, meaning a large stone or rock, and “shava”, meaning red.

The hill is of interest for the wind-eroded rock formations found at the top and also for its botany. It is of international importance for the varieties of lichen that grow on the granite outcrops.

However, the feature that draws most visitors is the cave on one side of the side of the hill, and the rock paintings to be found inside. These paintings date back some 6,000 years, having been put there by the Khoisan people who lived in this area before the Bantu pushed south. The term “Khoisan” actually refers to two distinct groups, the Khoi who were pastoral farmers and the hunter-gatherer San.

Visitors who are familiar with European cave paintings, notably those at Lascaux in southern France, will be struck by the similarity between the images, although the Lascaux paintings are considerably older (being about 17,000 years old). The emphasis in both sets of images is on animals, the assumption being that hunters gave themselves power over their quarry by capturing it as an image on a wall. However, many different explanations have been proposed for cave art, which is a worldwide phenomenon.

Some 150 images have been distinguished, many of them being recognisable as pictures of animals that are still to be found in the area, such as rhinos, kudu antelopes, warthogs and buffalo. Sets of images such as these are useful for the study of historical ecology, for seeing which species were prominent at the time the paintings were made and whether there are any species which have left the area or become extinct.

It would be surprising if the Domboshawa images did not have a religious significance,

Given that the cave and the hill have been used for religious purposes down to modern times. The main function of the ceremonies that have been held in historical times was rain-making. One traditional rite was for a sheep to be sacrificed in the cave, from which a fissure led to an opening at the top of the hill. The people would stand at the foot of the hill, ululating and whistling as they waited to see the smoke emerge at the top. If it did, they knew that their ancestors had heard their prayers and that the rains would come. The hill and the surrounding area are regarded by local people as having special powers. For example, rice is reputed to grow in a pool near the hill, despite not having been planted by anyone. Trees in a nearby wood are said to be difficult to cut down, and that, if anyone succeeds, the tree will grow back the following day.



Day 10 Holiday Inn – Harare International Airport

Your driver / guide will pick you up in the morning and take you to Harare International Airport for your onward travel arrangements.

End of Safari