



January 2008 - Kruger/Vic Falls/Botswana/Cape Town

The Wonder of the Wild

I had been working for The Africa Adventure Company for almost two years. It is a very passionate position because I am working with my roots and enjoy the sharing the beauty of the country with AAC safariers. While vicariously living through each itinerary and as each country was being booked for my trip, the anticipation built up and I was finally living the vacation I had been selling.

After a fun afternoon in the Virgin Lounge in IAD, we were ready for our long-haul to Johannesburg. Eighteen hours later we were delighted to be landing in busy Johannesburg. A friendly Wilro face met and escorted us to Airport Sun which took all of 5 minutes. Friendly check-in dumped the bags, changed out of our horrible traveling clothes and flew upstairs to have a dip in the fantastically refreshing pool in the hotel. Enjoyed a couple cocktails and an even better dinner – crocodile carpaccio! Yum



Virgin Lounge – IAD



Top floor pool – Airport Sun



Quills Restaurant – Airport Sun

A quick walk back to the domestic terminal and we boarded our SA Airlink flight to Mpumalanga (55 min). Champagne and biltong (dried beef jerky) was enjoyed along the road to Djuma – what a treat! Vuyatela welcomed us with friendly smiles, wet face clothes and another cocktail! Three days of great game viewing was enjoyed with our jovial guide, Charles. His love for the bush and keen sense of adventure caused us to pop four tires during our stay.



Djuma Vuyatela

A pack of lions, waterbuck, elephants, cheetah, leopard and white rhino are just a few of our sightings. The vervet monkeys although hated by the kitchen staff and loved by the guests. During one of the afternoons, Sherry and I were treated to a relaxing Aromatherapy massage at the 'Rubbing Post' spa on site. Food was superb – a new found respect for the South Africans and their ability to bake muffins, breads and cakes! The afternoon visit to the neighboring villages (Utah & Dixie) was certainly a heart-wrenching time but well worth it!

After a road transfer back to Mpumalanga we boarded our flights to Victoria Falls. Esther met us with our confirmation vouchers and escorted us to the world renowned Vic Falls Hotel. Again, we were greeted by Yvonne and Angie with open arms and ensured that the check-in process went smoothly. High tea was enjoyed on The Terrace overlooking the magnificently manicured gardens with the 'smoke that thunders' in the distance! A sight that takes your breath away...Dinner that evening at the Jungle Junction was brought alive by the local dancers.

The Flight of the Angels and Elephant Back Safari are two well organized tours – fun for all ages! Isaac (GM of VFH) had reserved a table for us at The Livingstone Room for dinner, which allowed us to experience a romantic evening with a 3-piece band! Remember no jeans allowed.



Elephant Back Safari



Victoria Falls



Ra-Ikane sunset cruise

The road transfer to Kazangula border (45 min) brings more smiles to your face as you see the school kids and cattle along the roads. The combination of children laughing and cattle bells ringing brings Africa to the forefront. Botswana was supposed to be the highlight of the trip and it certainly delivered. Chobe Chilwero (Sanctuary Lodges) is a well run organization filled with professional staff, 5 star food, plush accommodations and serene surroundings. Game viewing was good considering the time of year, but the camp is so exquisite that it didn't deter from the overall experience. The Botswana are so gracious and their dancing skills are so completely different to Southern African or Zimbabwean skills! This camp was my favorite of the trip!



Chobe Chilwero – Sanctuary Lodge

On arrival in Kasane (10 min drive from Chilwero) we were told that our party of six would be divided up into two Sefofane planes. Glen and Jake in a four seater and the rest of us in a six seater – never having been in a bush plane – the nerves certainly kicked in at this point! Thank goodness I took that Dramamine before we left the camp this morning. Half an hour later, after a wonderfully exhilarating flight, our friendly guide, Victor greeted us. Ten minutes later, we were greeted by some more friendly faces, the managers at Jao Camp!

Our room was spectacular with all the renowned Wilderness finishing's, with a hammock and an outside bed overlooking the vistas. The love of Victor's life was Beauty – she is a stunning leopard that he has been photographing for the last three years. We were fortunate to see her on every game drive (he knew her habits too well!) Victor also introduced us to a mokoro activity which really allowed us to experience the serenity of Botswana. Our last morning, we went on a bush walk and with the help of the reeds we were able to find the magnetic north pole!



Jao – Wilderness Safaris Camp

Our final bush camp was Vumbura Plains...and the gods certainly saved the best for last! Ona (our guide) was able to make calling sounds for each animal – his ability to track lions, hyenas, elephants etc. was remarkable! Talk about great game viewing – on our 45 min transfer to camp, we ran into ostriches, sable antelope, a hyena mum with her cub, a caracal (yes a caracal), twelve wild dogs, seven lions and elephants too many to count. As Ona said – ‘you are very lucky; all the animals are welcoming you to Vumbura!’



Vumbura Plains – Wilderness Safaris Camp

Fast forward four flights and we arrive in the stunning city of Cape Town! Our business class sea-facing room at the Radisson Waterfront hotel was fabulous – with 180 degree sea views, two TV's and a separate lounge – what more could you ask for!

One full day was dedicated to the private Peninsula Tour which gives you a great introduction to the beauty of this city – the dramatic mountain range that meets the Atlantic Ocean is spectacular. One morning was spent haggling for hand-made curios at Greenmarket Square which was a lot of fun.

And finally, I would like to make mention of the food and wine that this area is renowned for – I could not get enough of the grilled calamari rings, the toasted sandwiches, and the kingklip & hake are DELICIOUS. Fortunately, each country I visited offered red and white wine from the Cape wine lands which always ended off each day on a high!



Cape Town – Radisson Waterfront Hotel

After returning from my unforgettable vacation, and digesting the overwhelming experience, it became very clear that planning a trip with The Africa Adventure Company is a guaranteed exclusive

safari of a lifetime!

