

Szilvia Hegyi – Southern Africa 2007

First stop of our safari was Mombo camp, one of Southern Africa's most luxurious camps. During our first ten minutes (while driving to camp!) we saw lots of impalas, warthogs and elephants. After our first game drive we stopped for a sundowner and watched the endless floodplain with its harmony full of elephants, zebras, wildebeests, buffalos and impalas. We have spent our first night listening to the amazing concert Botswana's bird, hyena and frog community provided for us. Next morning we departed on our game drive at 6:00 am. Once again the beauty of wildlife totally mesmerized us including giraffes, elephants, lions, jackals and a pack of wild dogs. Seeing wild dogs was one of my dreams and it was truly an amazing experience!

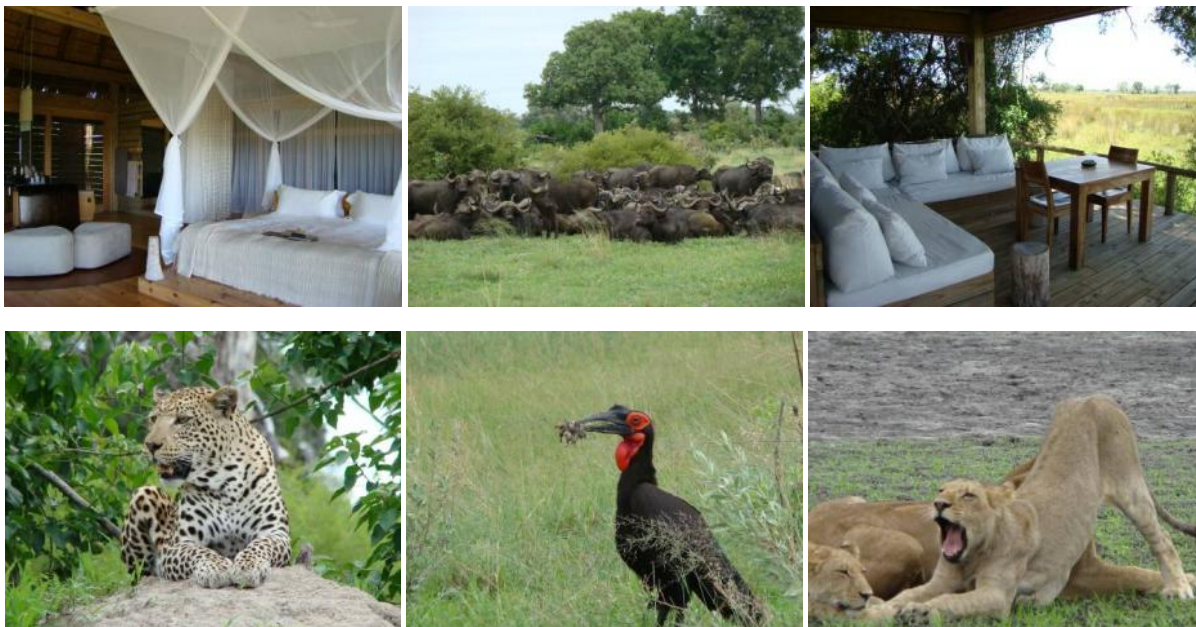


Our next stop was Jao Camp, where we experienced our first leopard encounter. The camp with its amazing architecture was breathtaking. Our guide, Victor made sure that our stay at Jao will be an unforgettable experience. We enjoyed a mokoro ride and appreciated just being quiet and listened to the sounds of nature. I also enjoyed a relaxing massage in the open air spa at Jao. What a nice treat, a definite do not miss at Jao! One of the many highlights here was the traditional night at the Boma with its great food and entertainment from the local staff. On our last morning we went walking with our guide and tried to absorb all the knowledge he shared with us about what the treks mean, which way the elephants were walking, signs of the coming rain, etc. We could have stayed there and listened to him forever. His depth of knowledge was incredible.

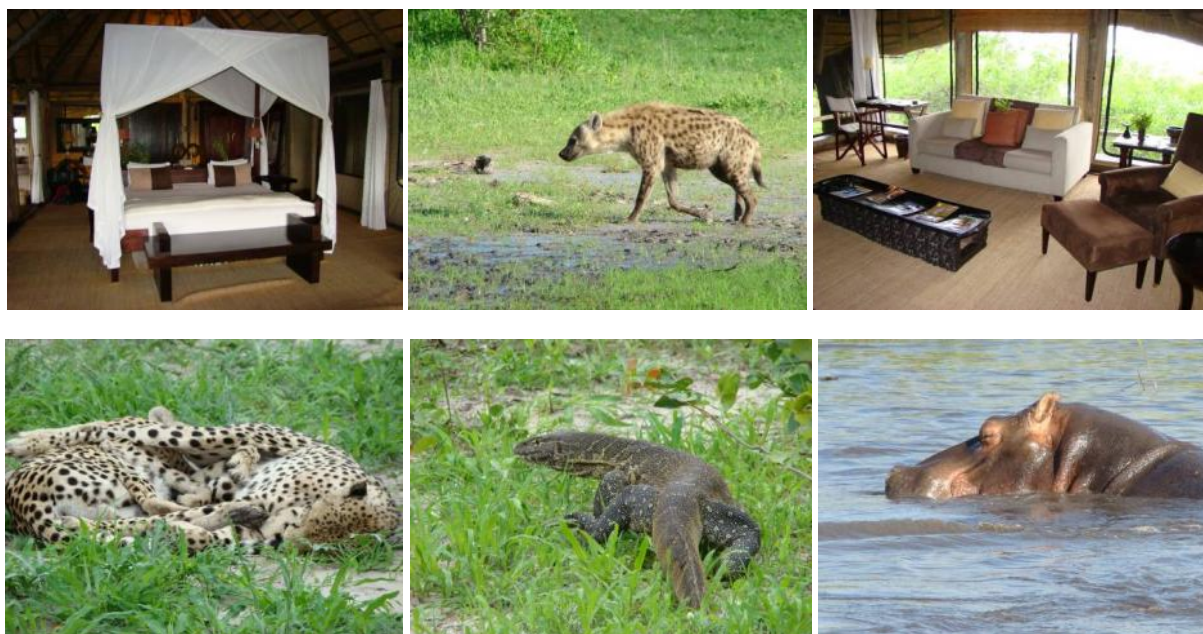


After spending two nights at Jao, we flew to our third camp in Botswana, Vumbura Plains. As one of the newest premier camps, Vumbura Plains represents the modern elegance in the bush. Besides game drives, we also enjoyed a boating excursion. We watched hippos swimming not far from our boat, it was very exciting.

On our second game drive we witnessed a leopard hunting a baby giraffe. At the end, the giraffe got away with some injuries and the leopard needed to look for another prey. On our last morning we had a chance to see wild dogs for a second time. This time they were resting, so we had a chance to stay and observe them for a longer period.



Our last stop in Botswana was Kings Pool camp. Every time we looked out from our room, we saw an average of 10-15 hippos in the river. They were laughing like old ladies and we enjoyed their endless conversations. The highlight of our stay at Kings Pool was seeing two cheetah brothers cuddled up. They woke up once we have approached them, then continued their sleep in a split second. It was very special for us to experience this harmony. Kings Pool was a great finish to our time in Botswana.



Next day we headed to Victoria Falls with a lot of anticipation. We stayed at the colonial -style Victoria Falls Hotel. The hotel is a balanced combination of history and convenience.

The Falls was everything and much more than what we have imagined. With the beautiful rainbows and surrounding rainforest, it is truly a spectacular site. While at Victoria Falls, we enjoyed a sunset cruise, bungee jumping (yes, we did it!) and an elephant back safari.



We also spent a night on the Zambian side of Victoria Falls at the beautiful River Club Lodge. Here we visited Simonga village and the Basic School of the village. We felt very fortunate and appreciative that the head lady of the village allowed us to tour the village and photograph during our tour. We enjoyed the million smiles and laughs the children have shared with us.



After bidding farewell to Zambia we flew to Cape Town for the last four nights of our Southern African adventure. We stayed at the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront hotel. We loved having breakfast on the terrace while looking at Table Mountain. On our first morning we enjoyed a cable car ride up to Table Mountain. The view from the top of the mountain is absolutely breathtaking. Cape Town is definitely one of the most beautiful cities in the world tucked away between mountains and the ocean.



One afternoon we drove out to the winelands and enjoyed a picnic lunch. On the way back to the city we stopped at Greenmarket Square and shopped some nice curios, bargaining is a must! On our last full day, we enjoyed a guided peninsula tour and enjoyed the different beaches and water colors Cape Town has to offer. We finished our tour with a visit to the penguin colony on Boulders Beach.

We left Africa with a lot of unforgettable memories and felt very fortunate to have experienced this incredibly diverse wildlife in its natural habitat!