



SAFARI TO SOUTH LUANGWA AND LOWER ZAMBEZI, ZAMBIA

This trip was a whirlwind of 13 camps in 16 days! On arrival in Lusaka I boarded a scheduled Proflight to the Jeki airstrip. There I was met by a guide from Sausage Tree and we took a short 10 minute game drive to the boat launch site. From there we traveled up stream for a 20 minute boat ride to camp. Sausage Tree has beautiful views to the river and the rooms are large with all bath facilities outside - open air.



Elephant outside my bathroom – Sausage Tree Camp

The next stop was up river – Chiawa Camp. I was allocated Tent 9, the honeymoon tent set apart from all the other rooms, on a small rise. The tent was perfect, all new with the bed under canvas but the facilities outside the tent under roof, but fully open to views to the river. There is a deck with day bed and comfy chairs. I awoke to the rhythmic sounds of ground hornbill. I opted for a morning walk with Paul and a few other guests. The elephants stayed far away but we saw lots of little things, like praying mantis and spiders.



Trying to find a praying mantis



Lion and elephant – Lower Zambezi

Downstream about 30 minutes was the best camp of all - Old Mondoro. The camp has 4 rooms, so it is intimate and private. The rooms are a little small, but perfect, because there is a large porch with day bed and chairs, so your living space is expanded. I did a nice walk with Etienne and saw lots of elephants.

Back at camp the elephants had invaded, there were so many I had to take a game drive to get to the room, with a coordinated pick up for lunch. We saw lion, honey badger, white tailed mongoose and black mongoose on the night drive.



So many elephants in camp we had to game drive to lunch!

I then flew 45 minutes back to Lusaka and then an hour to Mfuwe and then a 1.5 hour road transfer to Tafika Camp in the South Luangwa. It was an interesting drive through the village, but I would only do it once, fly out! I met up with a game vehicle for sundowners, and we spotted 2 leopards mating, and saw a third! A python was even spotted on the limb of tree. Tafika is a typical Zambian camp that is made of reed and rebuilt every year. The camp has a great view to the river, and a green lawn – a welcome site in the height of dry season.

The following morning I drove to the canoe launch site to join a walking safari for the night – Chikoko Walking Trails. Our guide was Isaac who has been in the South Luangwa for over 30 years. We set off on a 4 hour walk back to camp. In order to have a tea or coffee break you had to start your own fire with sticks. I am sure they had back up plan just in case. On the walk we encountered baboon, buffalo, puku, impala, hippo and many different bird species.



Start your own fire



Chikoko Bar



Chikoko Lounge

The food is comfort food, simple but delicious. Our chef baked all the breads and cakes in a hole, with a steel plate on top. I took a much needed siesta – the day time temperatures were well over 107 degrees . The day finished with a short walk starting around 4:30pm ending back at camp for sundowners and dinner. Early the next morning we walked out of camp and I drove back to Tafika. John Coppinger operates a micro flight and it is something you have to do! Hold on, because we buzzed crocs, giving them an early wake up call, saw a huge herd of buffalo. It was an amazing experience.



Who needs a Viking Range when you have a hole in the ground?

I took a long 3 hour game drive to Kaingo Camp – saw several lion along the way as well as the Thornicroft giraffe. I really enjoyed Kaingo, the rooms are small, but there is a nice sala overlooking the river, where they serve a private lunch! There are 3 hides in the area, so you can choose to spend time there in the afternoons. I was observing some guinea fowl from the hippo blind. There was a croc very close to them, the birds were quite nervous but the croc never made an attempt. Derrick and Jules Shenton run a great little camp – put this one on you to do list.



Private lunch with cooler box of drinks



Mmmmmm homemade chips!

From Kaingo we drove to Mfuwe – about 3 hours. I flew to Lusaka, then Kafue then onto Lufupa Camp to join my colleague Lynne Glasgow. You can read about our adventure together on the next trip report.