

Saddle & Paddle Safari A 9 Night Adventure A once vast inland sea offers many **fascinating** and magical safari **moments**.



**THIS 9 NIGHT SAFARI** with David Foot is about as adventurous as it gets in Botswana. A very minimal time is spent in a safari vehicle but instead you explore some of the wilder areas of Botswana by canoe, boat, on foot and on horseback. You must be a competent horse rider to join in the fun!

The safari begins with a 5 day/4 night canoe trail along the Selinda Spillway followed by 5 nights on horseback in the Makgadikgadi Pans.

In 2009 and 2010 the high waters flowing through northern Botswana's Okavango Delta caused the Selinda Spillway to flow in a way that it has not done for nearly 3 decades! This remarkable event provided the unique opportunity for us to canoe this incredible water system thus replicating the safari experiences



of old, camping along the banks of the river at the end of the day, wherever we find ourselves

The distance from one end of the Canoe Trail to the other is roughly 45 km. It is a wildlife experience like no other as we witness elephant herds splashing and mudbathing along the banks; buffalo, giraffe and sable antelope amongst some of the many species that come down to drink; wild dog have been known to swim the Spillway in front of the canoes and lion and leopard can also be sighted. The Selinda also hosts some 300 bird species making it a twitcher's paradise.

The vast Makgadikgadi Pans, the remnant of a once vast inland sea offer many fascinating and magical safari moments. Combining three nights at Camp Kalahari with two nights fly camping out

> we will ride through endless interact with the space. inhabitants of Meerkat Manor. visit giant baobabs, walk with the San Bushmen and look for rare Kalahari wildlife such as the brown hyena and the aardwolf. We do this all in the same way as many of the earliest explorers, hunters and missionaries did - on horseback - and learn about their travels as we go!

on the Makgadikgadi Saltpans



DAY 1 Your arrival by light aircraft from Maun into the Selinda Reserve offers a bird's eye view of what lies ahead for the next few days. The flight takes you over the Linyanti Marsh where off to the west the Spillway itself can be seen meandering its way through the flood plains and mopane woodlands. Elephant and hippo feeding deep into the marsh are a common sight.

David and a 4 x 4 safari vehicle will be at the Selinda airstrip to greet you and take you on a 3 hour drive to the starting point of where the actual canoe trail begins. The drive follows the old tsetse fly control cut line passing through miles of mopane woodland interspersed with pans which attract the elephant and buffalo as they quench their thirst. The vastness and wildness of this country soon becomes apparent!

Without warning the waters of the Spillway suddenly open up before you – indeed a

# SELINDA CANOE TRAIL

**David** and **Robyn Foot**, invite you to join them on safari on horseback, on foot and by canoe, to share their **passion** for this country's wildlife, pristine **wilderness** and **ancient people**.



refreshing sight after the hot, dry drive. You are now truly deep in the wilds of the Botswana bush!

A full safety briefing and demonstration on the handling of the cances follows before setting off with your guide for a gentle late afternoon paddle taking you to your first camp. A dedicated support team who move ahead daily by cance to set up camp will be on hand to greet us. The comfortable camp consists of small dome tents with made up bed rolls and a bucket shower and long drop toilet.



SADDLE & PADDLE SAFARI



#### A truly **magical** African safari **experience...**





DAY 2 An early wakeup call followed by a hearty breakfast sees us heading out in the cances for a full day of paddling.

As the day warms up each bend in the river offers a host of surprises including the likelihood of elephants coming down to drink. A game walk on foot is a distinct possibility should we encounter buffalo or sable or hear the alarm calls of animals in the surrounding bush. A delicious lunch will be taken in the heat of the day with a cooling swim for those who wish before paddling on in the late afternoon to our next campsite further along the Spillway. After a delicious home cooked dinner out under a starlit sky we drift into a tired but contented sleep with the nocturnal calls of peeping frogs, roaring lions and the hyena's whooping punctuating the deep silence. A truly magical African safari experience.

# DAY 3 Today will be spent

exploring on foot the environs around our campsite which is situated in an area where large parts of the back country become flooded at this time of year. This creates a truly beautiful area to walk in and to search for the wildlife that uses these water logged areas. Lions are regularly heard calling here, wild dogs have been known to den in the vicinity and elephants love the surrounding mopane woodlands. DAY 4 Another early start is necessary with another full day of paddling ahead. It is on this day that we truly notice the diversity of this magnificent water course.

Gliding ever closer to the Selinda itself, the Spillway takes on a new identity with the water levels slowly dropping before suddenly rising again as we reach the confluence of the Kwando River backing up westwards.

A rich abundance of wildlife and birdlife becomes apparent with pods of hippos wallowing in the deep pools and flocks of jacanas, herons and plovers littering the river banks.

After another sumptuous lunch we finally arrive at the last campsite which has been exquisitely sited on a small palm tree island.

Yet another delicious dinner prepared in front of us on the coals of the fire.



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# THE MAKGADIKGADI SALT PANS RIDE

Three nights at Camp Kalahari with two nights fly camping on the pans.

DAY 5 A slightly more leisurely start with either a long morning walk or a shorter paddle before returning to camp for a final brunch and transfer by vehicle to the Selinda airstrip and a flight to the Makgadikgadi Pans.

A 1 hour 30 minute flight takes us to Camp Kalahari, nestled amongst the acacias and Mokolwane palms of Brown Hyaena Island, on the edge of the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, adjacent to the Makgadikgadi-Nxai Pans National Park, Botswana. The camp is refreshingly simple, yet comfortable, with a traditionally built thatch library, living/dining area and a swimming pool for those hot Kalahari days.

Head off after tea in the beautiful afternoon light, for an introductory ride – primarily to match horse and rider and to provide the opportunity for you to experience the beauty of this magical area.

Return to the camp for sundowners followed by dinner and to kraal the horses close by, before the lions of the Kalahari commence their nightly prowling.





# DAY 6 Up with the dawn,

a light breakfast is followed by a long morning ride through the "land of a thousand islands". Stranded on the ancient lakebed, these sand dunes covered in palm trees are one of the most beautiful and fascinating areas of the Botswana wilderness. The islands and adjoining grasslands are awash with zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest and ostrich - and of course the attendant predators! The white encrusted pans between the islands provides excellent going for the horses. Return to the camp for lunch and rest through the heat of the day in the welcome shade of the camel thorn trees or cool off in the camp swimming pool.

After tea, head off to see some unique desert species such as springbok, gemsbok, red hartebeest and the elusive brown hyaena; these consummate desert specialists survive in arid areas where both food and water are scarce. The brown hyaena is a timid nocturnal, solitary forager, rarely seen by humans, but in spite of this, are very social animals, living in clans of up to 10-12 hyaenas.



Enjoy a night game drive back to camp, and with the aid of a spot light, look for nocturnal desert inhabitants such as aardvark, bat eared foxes, aardwolves, porcupine, honey badgers and perhaps even a black maned Kalahari Lion.

Arrive at Camp Kalahari in time for dinner.





**"Xau Xai Fly Camp...** Comfortable dome tents with fully made up stretcher beds, a central mess tent with dining table, bush loos and bucket showers."

DAY 2 Today is a long ride eastwards to Xau Xai Fly Camp, so an early start is imperative. Be sure to pack a few essentials for the next two days of adventure. The journey takes us away from the edge of the Pans and through the mopane and acacia woodlands interspersed with short grasslands allowing for lovely long canters. Whilst the area is rich in birds of prey, bustards, korhaans and numerous other unusual dry woodland bird species; there is also a chance that we will sight kudu and the odd elephant bull.

By lunchtime we reach the famous Greens Baobab proudly positioned alongside the well-travelled Missionary Road, traversed by David Livingstone on his journeys northwards. The magnificent trunk of this ancient tree is scarred with the initials of early travellers dating back some 150 years thus providing a living testimony to the rich history of this area. Break for lunch at the adjacent Gutsa Pan under a stand of palm trees where we may find Stone Age artefacts and the hunting blinds used over millennium by the Bushmen.

Siesta through the midday heat and after tea, continue the journey on to Xau Xai Fly Camp.

Camp will be made up of comfortable dome tents, a central mess tent, loos and bucket showers. Enjoy a long cool drink as you watch the sunset followed by dinner out under the magnificent Kalahari sky.



DAY 8 Wake up to a steaming hot cup of coffee and a light breakfast, before heading off in search of some of the Kalahari's most fascinating inhabitants, the meerkats. With our horses tethered we will proceed on foot in to the midst of the group. Due to an ongoing habituation programme by Uncharted Africa Safari co. it's possible for us to get up close and personal with these captivating creatures. Remember, they are not tame – just used to our non-threatening presence.

On chilly mornings, you might well find a meerkat snuggling up to you for warmth. Or, in the absence of a termite mound or tree, using your head as a sentry lookout post... By spending quality time with these incredibly social, superbly adapted animals, you will be able to see how they interact with each other and their environment. You also get the chance to see the desert through the eyes of a meerkat – which, despite the fact that it's only a foot off the ground, is a pretty spectacular vantage point.

Definitely one of the most special and memorable game experiences you will encounter in Botswana. As the day warms up, leave the meerkats to continue foraging. Mount up and follow the well-worn trails that lead to the resident herds of zebra and large congregations of ostriches attracted to the area by permanent freshwater in hidden waterholes. Return to Xau Xai for lunch and a refreshing shower. Set off in the late afternoon for one of the greatest adventures imaginable - a ride straight out into the middle of the ancient lakebed! Eventually all that can be seen is the vast flatness stretching in every direction

Watch the sun set and the stars rise. This is one of the only places in the world where the silence is so complete you can hear the blood circulating through your ears. There is not one visual landmark to be seen and one swiftly loses one's sense of perspective - 16,000 square kilometres of baking soda void, are inhabited only by you and a few gazillion invisible brine shrimp!

And it is here that we'll make camp. Sleeping on bedrolls under the silence of a star studded sky!



### DAY 9

Wake up on the moon! As the dawn greets this extraordinary landscape and the last of the stars disappear, head homewards directly across the Pans to Camp Kalahari, we may be lucky enough to see the unusual sight of ostrich deep in the Pans and then from a great distance the famous Chapman's Baobab. Also known as the Seven Sisters, and acknowledged to be one of the largest trees in Africa, measuring 25metres around its girth, this great baobab was also the campsite of early explorers like Livingstone and Selous when they pioneered the area.

It is near here that we break for lunch before our final ride back across the grasslands and into camp. As the sun dips below the horizon and the last light fades, we will be sure to dwell on these amazing past few days. Incredible scenery, memorable wildlife encounters and above all superb riding!

Arrive at Camp Kalahari in time for a refreshing shower and a final lamp lit dinner.

"Incredible scenery, memorable wildlife encounters and above all superbriding!" "Offering a **window into the past**, they teach us how they have survived in this harshest of environments."



DAY 10 The horses are loaded early and trucked to their home base in Maun. A non-riding day commences with an early morning walk with Zu/'hoasi Bushmen trackers.

Camp Kalahari has been working closely with the Zu/'hoasi people of the Western Kalahari for many years and are privileged to have a small group of these extraordinary men to guide us on a morning's walking safari. Offering a window into the past, they teach us how they have survived in this harshest of environments, using their vast and ancient knowledge of plants, animal behaviour and survival skills.

Time for one more lunch before we bid farewell to the Makgadikgadi and our flight back to Maun.

