

CHIAWA CAMP & OLD MONDORO

— LOWER ZAMBEZI NATIONAL PARK — ZAMBIA —

ACTIVITIES LIST

The Lower Zambezi National Park, by virtue of the Zambezi River and its parallel escarpment, is one of Africa's most scenic wildernesses, home to an impressive quantity and variety of wildlife that can be viewed not only on the more usual land based safari activities but also on a variety of water based activities and in the camps themselves.

Do not expect vast open plains with countless prey animals constantly being hunted down by multiple predators. There are other places for this, with more animals and more variety – but these places are usually on the path more traveled, suffering from an overload of tourists and average guiding. Zambia's wildernesses are still wild and not yet overrun with lodges and tourists, where tracking down its precious wildlife requires skilled guides and patient guests who appreciate the adventure and remoteness as much as the sightings.

It is important to note that Zambia does not offer private concessions in its National Parks and so one is likely to encounter others during their safaris, however due to the remoteness of Zambia's National Parks, this is rarely an issue and we typically do not suffer from multiple vehicles and people at any one sighting, as in some places in East Africa.

Both Chiawa Camp and Old Mondoro are located in the middle of the prime wildlife and habitat zones of the Lower Zambezi National Park, so we usually do not have to travel far to see wildlife (which often visits us in camp!) and we are usually headed back to camp by the time any other vehicles start finding out what's going on.

The following safari activities are included in the price of your visit to Chiawa Camp and/or Old Mondoro.



GAME DRIVE

A "game drive" is a safari activity conducted in an open 4x4 safari vehicle. This is the most effective way to see wildlife as these cover much ground and can get close sightings without placing our guests in harms way or disturbing the wildlife that has come to accept our vehicles almost as much as the scenery around them. We eschew canopies as these interfere with the views of the trees and birds during the day, and at night the stars. Each vehicle has 3 bench seats with a back rest and a foot rest for each, so up to 6 guests can each travel comfortably with a "window seat" however we typically restrict each game drive to 4 guests maximum. These leave camp in the morning and return before brunch, stopping for a mid morning coffee stop. Cool box and First aid kit are carried on each vehicle, which is also equipped with a VHF radio for safety and for our guides to share news of interesting sightings so that the likelihood of any

of our guests missing out on a great sighting is minimized. Your guide is an expert in the bush and will point out interesting subjects as if by magic, a flick of a tail here, a curve of an ear there, a movement wherever. If one opts for a game drive in the afternoon, this will depart after high tea and then stop at sunset for sundowners (snacks and a drink, usually a cocktail, of your choice) before an experienced tracker assisting the guide switches on a red filtered spotlight and looking for the nocturnal creatures on a "night drive". The light will be handled sensitively, avoiding shining on the eyes of any animals but particularly the herbivores. Even the vehicle's head lamps are covered with red filters, as the red light reduces discomfort and improves the viewing experience for all concerned, however this does impact photography somewhat. Our guides will help you set your camera for best results, ideally switching over to monochrome (b&w) or adjusting the white balance against the red light. Night drives will return to camp before dinner.



WALKS

Walks are an interesting way to get a "back stage pass" look at the wildlife and how the ecology of the Lower Zambezi works. Our guides are trained naturalists who can not only identify spoor, birds, plants and insects but also explain in interesting detail how these all interact with each other, how each relies on each other in this, the great circle of life. Taking advantage of the cooler weather these usually take place in the early morning and are led by one of our pro guides and a Zambia Wildlife Authority armed "escort scout".

Sometimes walks happen right out of camp but usually we drive a short distance into more open country. Guests are given a thorough safety briefing and orientation, and although the pace is much like a stroll in the park (no pun intended) and are by no means exerting, in the interests of

safety, mediocre fitness and mobility is required in order to participate. Your professional guide will be carrying a first aid kit, radio, pencil flare and "bear banger" to warn off any aggressive animal, and additional water. After the walk, which will last between 1-3 hours, a short (or long if you prefer) game drive back to camp, perhaps via a sighting one of our other vehicles has picked up. Important to note that although both our camps have sufficient pro guides licensed to walk each camp is only provided with one ZAWA escort scout and as we are able to only take 6 guests on a walk at any one time, occasionally guests may not get to walk at the time of their choosing however such circumstances are unlikely, highly unusual and beyond our control.



Canoe trips always head downstream, eastwards, as the current of the Zambezi is deceptively powerful. The canoes take either 2 or 3 people. All trips are led by at least one pro guide with current experience of that stretch of the river, and all canoes are paddled by one experienced “back paddler”, usually a trainee guide or other member of staff who has grown up and spent his young life paddling on the Zambezi. All canoe trips carry a dry bag, cool box, first aid kit and at least one VHF radio – guests are required to wear the floatation vests provided throughout the trip. The best canoeing experience is to be had in the channels above camp, the Inkalange Channel above Chiawa and the Discovery Channel above Old Mondoro offer world class canoeing. Otherwise canoeing amongst the islands down the main river close to shore makes for an equally memorable experience. Drifting in near silence past birds, crocs and a variety of mammals makes for an amazing experience of a lifetime

however this is the Zambezi at its most natural and unfortunately, also at its most dangerous. Do not be lulled into a false sense of security - canoe trips can go horribly wrong. Although our camps have a perfect safety record, both have had crocs and hippos bump our canoes - and other camps have been less fortunate with incidents resulting in serious injury and, on very rare occasions, fatal consequences. Although our camps follow best practice and take steps to mitigate the risks, we cannot eliminate the risks and it is important that all guests who participate in canoeing and indeed any activity at our camps, understand and accept these risks and the associated liability with them. Canoe trips usually leave camp at about 1430, by boat towing the canoes in tandem behind after which you are dropped off at the channel entrance around 1515 followed by a safety briefing and orientation. These float back into camp just before sunset and sundowners after which guests have the choice to relax before dinner by the camp fire and enjoy perhaps another cocktail or two, or join a night drive.



Boat Cruises or River Safaris conducted on custom built, stable pontoon boats with a canopy that can be raised or lowered according to circumstance and powered by near-silent, environmentally sensitive 4-stroke outboard motors give guests the opportunity to see more of the river and perhaps more wildlife by being able to cover more area – and in more comfort and safety than a canoe. Each boat carries first aid kit, flares, vhf radio, sufficient life vests, fire extinguisher and of course the obligatory cool box. Guided by one of our expert river guides who will have grown up on the Zambezi, explore the main bank, islands and channels coming across fish eagles, herons, perhaps a buffalo lurking in the reeds, a crocs and hippos sunning themselves, or elephants crossing the river – these are a relaxing way to enjoy wildlife viewing all the while in awe of the scenery. As the sun sets your guide will pour your cocktails

of choice and serve you snacks before gently motoring back to camp or dropping you off at a waiting 4x4 to take you on a night drive. Sometimes we use the boats to drop off our walks on the mainland or – for those wanting a walk on a totally pristine habitat with no vehicles - on the permanent islands.



Fishing for tiger fish, for those who are keen, is one of the seasonal specialties of the Zambezi River. We say seasonal as definitely the best time to catch them is from late August to mid November during the hotter months although tiger fish and other species can be caught throughout our safari season. Netting and killing of any fish is not permitted within the National Park – 100% catch & release for all species. Additionally no live or cut bait is permitted (artificial lures only), no ultra light tackle (minimum 20lb) and only one single de-barbed hook per line is allowed. These measures have all been proven by science to reduce stress and mortality of caught and released fish, making this activity in the National Park more conscienable and sustainable, and hence making this stretch of the Zambezi River the most protected stretch along its

length. Which consequently offers some of the most productive sport angling opportunities available. Both Chiawa Camp and Old Mondoro have expert river guides who have grown up on the Zambezi and who have been guiding anglers, novice and expert alike, for a decade and more. With our custom built 18’ pontoon boats and intimate, local knowledge of the river there is nowhere else on the Zambezi that offers finer opportunities to fish from. Over the years absolute beginners and world-class anglers alike have set a number of IGFA World Records for tiger fish at Chiawa Camp.

The tiger fish is a wily and strong adversary. Somewhere between a trout and a piranha on the evolutionary scale, they are equipped with large bony jaws and a mouthful of razor sharp interlocking teeth. Wire leaders and strong, sharp hooks are a must. Apex predators, they eat smaller fish up to 75% their own length including their own species, and even young ducks and swimming reptiles.

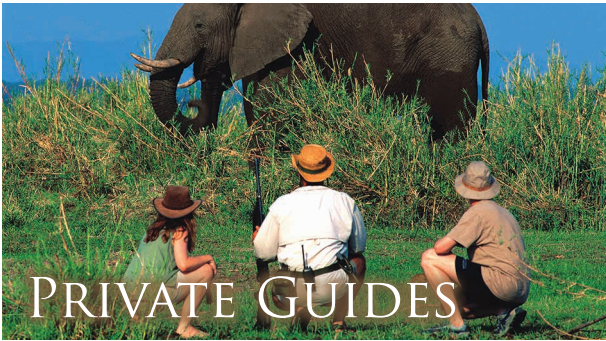
Your guide will position the boat to help you get the right cast to the fish, usually towards the bank behind cover and structure, in eddies and over sand bars on the drop offs. Casting slightly upstream you will let your lure sink to about 7 foot depending on water depth, and then retrieve as the current brings your lure roughly adjacent to you, with an erratic jiggling action. One often gets the strike on the pick up, but in reality tigers are so aggressive they are known to strike at pretty much any lure at any speed at any depth. Getting them to strike is the easier part, setting the hook is less easy – 50% skill and 50% luck - a sharp snap of the wrist on conventional gear and a strong strip on fly is the best you can do. Getting them to stay hooked is trickier still with strike to catch ratios of roughly 10:1 whereby after their initial and unmistakable hit, they tear line off the spool with a short, intensive run before leaping into the air, shaking their heads and usually throwing the hook at that point. At this point keep your rod tip down and your fingers crossed, don’t allow any slack line, ever, and don’t stop working until the fish is at the boat or lost! Tiger fish are strong fighters but don’t have much stamina so even big ones should be gotten to the boat quickly – we strongly discourage fighting fish to exhaustion which otherwise increases stress and mortality.

Once secured by the boat side, whilst watching out for crocs and ensuring the boat does not drift over a pod of hippos, your river guide will help

revive your fish before lifting it out briefly for you to hold and photograph and then release.

Like fishing anywhere, some days you're going to get "skunked" and catch nothing but most days anglers can expect multiple bites and boat perhaps half a dozen. On a really good day an accomplished fly fisherman can boat 40+ fish. Most common size is about 3lbs, average size 5lbs, a trophy would be in excess of 8lbs and a monster in excess of 12lbs. Camp record 21lbs and there are still stories of the one that got away, we believe that there are fish in excess of 25lbs waiting ...

Catching and landing a trophy tiger fish is the stuff of dreams and we have an impressive array of loaner equipment (fly, spinning and bait casting) which complies with our FISHING POLICY at no charge to help you in your quest. However one should be prepared for lost and broken tackle and all losses and breakages whatsoever will be charged for, in lieu of a tackle rental fee, and we strongly recommend that serious anglers bring their own tackle according to this LIST, which has been crafted over years of experience.



Private guiding is available at a surcharge and by prior arrangement for Game Drives and Fishing however we only recommend this for those who do not wish to share their activities with others or who have specific requirements that would make sharing with others difficult. The majority of our guests do not book privately guided activities and will be flexible, happy to share with others and our managers go out of their way to ensure that each guest's requirements are personally attended to, and that like-minded guests and interests are matched to the best of their ability.