



NXAI TRAVEL

Tailored safaris. Timeless landscapes.

The Makgadikgadi Self-Drive Explorer

12 nights/13 days

Discover the essence of Botswana's great salt pans on this 13-day guided self-drive safari along the legendary Makgadikgadi heritage trails.

This journey invites you into one of Earth's most extraordinary landscapes, the vast white horizons of the Makgadikgadi Pans, remnants of an ancient super-lake that once rivalled seas in size. Fed long ago by the Okavango Basin and the now-fossilized Okwa River, this prehistoric lake shaped a world where wildlife and early humans thrived side by side.





Tour details

Tour days: 13 days

Accommodation: standard and/or camping

Tour Type: Self-drive

Dates: All year round. Weather conditions during the rainy season may require adjustments to the itinerary. A full route map will be provided on enquiry

Day 1: Maun

Day 2 & 3: Makgadikgadi Pans National Park & Boteti River

Day 4: Lake Xau Heritage Trail

Day 5 & 6: South Sua Heritage Trail

Day 7: Lekhubu Heritage Trail

Day 8 & 9: Ntwetwe Pan & Nata Bird Sanctuary Experience

Day 10 & 11: Nxai Pan National Park

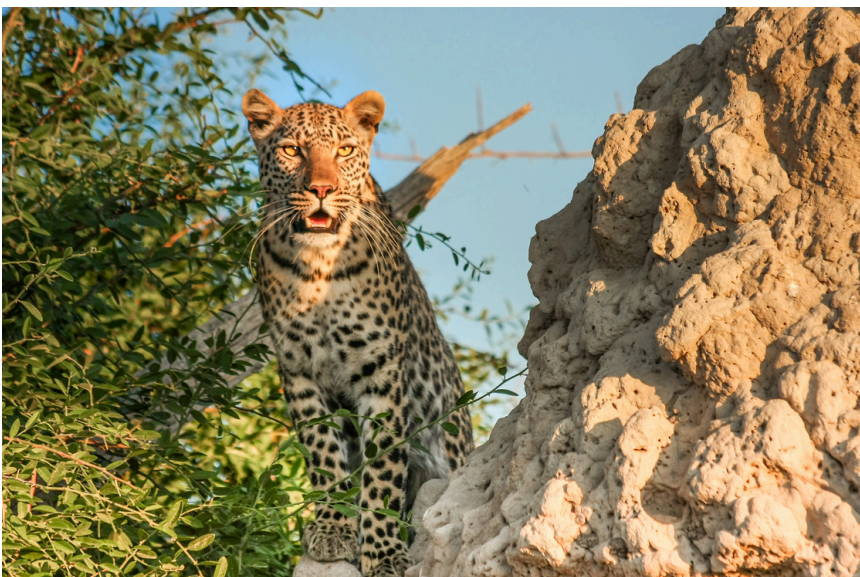
Day 12: Maun

Day 13: (Departure)

*The meals and activities included depend on the lodges and accommodation type you choose. Contact us for full details.

Tour highlights

- Discover one of the world's largest salt pans
- Zebra & Wildebeest migration
- Star gazing experience in Lekhubu Island
- Search for the desert-adapted animals
- Safari in Nxai Pans National Park
- Baines Baobabs at Nxai Pans National Park
- Flamingo migration at Nata Bird Sanctuary (seasonal)





Day-to-day itinerary

Day 1: Maun (1 night)

Upon arrival at the Maun International Airport, you will be met by our representative who will take you to your rental vehicle.

Maun is a vibrant gateway town that welcomes travellers on their way to the breathtaking Okavango Delta. You'll have the afternoon free to explore this lively hub, where local culture and warm hospitality set the tone for your journey.

This is the perfect chance to enjoy a meal at one of the town's local restaurants (own expense), sampling the rich flavours of Botswana's cuisine or trying traditional delicacies such as tswii.

Spend the afternoon at leisure; explore town or unwind beside the river before enjoying your first night beneath Botswana's star-filled skies.

Standard Accommodation: Thamalakane River Lodge
Campsite Accommodation: Sitatunga

Day-to-day itinerary

Day 2 & 3: Mkgadikgadi Pans National Park & Boteti River (2 nights)

After breakfast, stock up on supplies and begin the drive to Khumaga on the banks of the Boteti River.

This life-giving river sustains wildlife in the arid park and plays a vital role in the annual zebra migration. Vast horizons, golden sunsets and quiet encounters define your time here.

Standard Accommodation: Boteti River Camp
Camping Accommodation: Boteti River Camp





Day-to-day itinerary

Day 4: Lake Xau Heritage Trail (1 night)

Drive via Motopi toward Lake Xau near Kedia, where migratory birds and fish have returned after decades of dryness.

Nearby fossil sites preserve ancient animal footprints and bones, frozen in time as the great lake slowly retreated, a powerful reminder of the region's climatic past.

After 40 years of being dry, Lake Xau came back to life in around 2011 when floods from the Angolan highlands reached the Lake and filled it.

The lake was quickly transformed from an ugly dust bowl that it had become during the dry period to its glorious years of attracting tourists, fishermen and bird fanatics.

Standard Accommodation: [Makumutu](#) Lodge & Campsite
Camping Accommodation: [Makumutu](#) Lodge & Campsite

Day-to-day itinerary

Day 5 & 6: South Sua Heritage Trail (2 nights)

You will be about halfway through your Makgadikgadi trails.

The South Sua Heritage Trail covers the four villages of Mosu, Makgaba, Mokubilo and Mmea – all of which are located on the southern and southeastern end of the Sua Pan. The trail is accessed from Letlhakane village.

There are stunning cultural heritage sites in this area and we will give you a breakdown of the best ones to visit with your itinerary.

Standard Accommodation: Moriti Wa Selemo





Day-to-day itinerary

Day 7: Lekhubu Heritage Trail (1 night)

From Mosu, visit Mmatshumo; the gate to the famous site of Lekhubu Island, a sacred granite outcrop rising from the salt flats.

Stone walls and ritual cairns mark ancient initiation grounds, while towering baobabs and bird colonies dominate the skyline, most commonly the flamingo that nestles here every year. By night, the island becomes one of Botswana's most magical stargazing locations.

Standard Accommodation: Makgadikgadi Adventure Camp
Camping Accommodation: Lekhubu Campsite

Day-to-day itinerary

Day 8 & 9: Ntwetwe Pan & Nata Bird Sanctuary Experience (2 nights)

Your journey will take you to the northern parts of the Pan, enroute Zoroga and right on the Ntwetwe Pan edge. Upon arriving in Zoroga, the camp will take you for a village tour and quad biking experience on the vast magnificence of the Ntwetwe Pans.

Day 2 will be spent at the Nata Bird Sanctuary.

The Nata Bird Sanctuary is located in the northeastern periphery of Sua Pan and is managed by the Kalahari Conservation Society, whose members are from the four villages namely; Nata, Sepako, Maposa, and Manxotae. Established in 1988 and operational since 1993, the sanctuary covers an area of approximately 230 km².

Over 160 bird species inhabit this area, including a population of around 250,000 lesser and greater flamingos that visit the sanctuary every year during the winter period to breed after the rainy season when water sources are full.

Serviced Camping Accommodation: Zoroga Expedition Camp





Day-to-day itinerary

Day 10 & 11: Nxai Pan National Park
(2 nights)

Enter Nxai Pan National Park, where grassy plains draw migrating zebras, elephants and antelope after the rains. Predators follow close behind, creating thrilling wildlife encounters framed by acacia woodlands and open skies.

Nxai Pan National Park is a conservancy located in the north-eastern section of Botswana that comprises the Nxai Pan. This large salt pan forms part of the greater Makgadikgadi Pans, and is a fossil lakebed accessed by air and road.

Standard Accommodation: Nxai Pan Camp
Camping Accommodation: Nxai Pan Campsites

Day-to-day itinerary

Day 12: Maun (1 night)

Return to Maun for your final night, travelling through sandy tracks and open plains before rejoining the gateway town of the Delta. This leg is approximately 140 km and takes 3.5 to 4.5 hours, depending on sand conditions and park exits.

Standard Accommodation: Maun Studios
Camping Accommodation: Audi Camp

Day 13: Maun (Departure / End of Tour)

Your safari concludes in Maun. If time allows, enjoy one final activity before your flight; a fitting farewell to Botswana's salt pan kingdom. You leave with dust on your boots, stars in your memory, and one certainty: The pans will call you back.

