

Post



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Ribs for dinner at Chitabe? - August 2, 2025

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SUMMARY

Typical camp day: Wake up at 5:30, communal breakfast at 6:00, game drive #1 from 6:30 to 11 with a coffee and snack break about half way through. See ALL. THE. ANIMALS! Lunch at 11:15. Down time until 3:30 when it's time for high tea/cocktails and sweets. Game drive #2 (see MORE animals) from 4:00 to 6:30 with a break a little before sunset for Sundowners (cocktails) and more snacks. Back at camp for more cocktails and dinner at 7:00. Finish the day with more drinks if desired then to bed. A really incredible experience, even better than I was hoping for! - Karen

DETAIL

At 5:25 am my watch wakes me. I wake Karen. They verify we're up at 5:30 and at 6 am our guide/driver Ant escorts us (since it's still dark out) to breakfast. All are there and we have coffee, sorghum porridge, and muffins around the fire. At 6:40 we climb into our safari vehicles. It's about 50 degrees out and the swiftly moving Range Rover is making it feel much colder. Thankfully this is not their first rodeo (er, safari) so they have us covered in a warm blanket with a bush baby (a very warm hot water bottle) in our lap. Clothes-wise we're bundled. Let's go!

We haven't driven very far before Ant sees an enormous herd of Cape buffalo. Maybe they weren't expecting us because they all look in our direction. Their horns look comically like an old English Barrister, but with a curled black wig instead of the usual white. Further along we see a herd of zebra and a big scattered group of baboons, many with baby. Two are sitting on a tree, comparing babies. Others are climbing or on the ground. Two are having brief sex (complete with sound effects).

We come across a number of elephants and then a group of wild dogs with pups. The dogs have burrowed into an old, unused termite mound for their den. One female can have up to 17 pups in a litter, but we only see a half dozen or so. The mom and dad wild dogs keep the puppies out of sight as lions love to snack on them, when possible. Nevertheless, kids will be kids, and the pups we can see are roughhousing in front of the den entrance, pretending to be adult dogs, gently fighting.

At a good sized watering hole we see a huge group of guinea fowl. Don comments that they're the perfect size and shape for an oven and we all laugh at their silly way of constantly racing back and forth, randomly choosing a new direction with each switch.

We see a kudu or two, and so many impalas. As we approach an enormous open field we see two other safari vehicles watching a pride of lions. The lions, in turn, are scoping out the field for a bite to eat. On the menu? If the lions get their way it'll be zebra, or maybe giraffe, or possibly Cape buffalo. The lions are stationary, the Cape buffalo are slowly heading away as they graze, and the zebras are drifting right towards the pride, unaware, as they munch grass. We are thinking maybe one of these zebra doesn't have long to live.

We watch for a while, and finally see the lions head off, nonchalantly, towards their prey. Finally saying "this is boring, we're bored" we give up and drive off in search of more immediately interesting stuff. Not long after we've left, Ant's walkie-talkie crackles. The lions made their move. A young cape buffalo is down. We race back and are rewarded by the sight of the fourteen lions feverishly devouring the unfortunate buffalo. The male lion lets all in the pride partake but occasionally huffs when someone in the family gets in his way of a good, fresh meal. The cubs faces get a little redder than the girls might have liked. Over the twenty-five minutes we watch, Ant moves the vehicle twice so we can get a better view. The girls' stomachs aren't sure this is such a good idea.

On the drive back to camp for lunch, we check Tsessebe off our list of animals seen (who knew such a thing existed?).

Communal lunch back at camp is great, followed by quiet time in our rooms. In theory each room has internet access, but it's nothing actually usable. Karen and I shower and then hang out. Off of our balcony we see big and small elephants just wandering by, looking for green stuff to eat. They love young, tender palm fronds, but they'll eat most anything green. They use their trunk to strip the tree branches and then just pop the leaves into their mouths. Later some baboons walk by, also eating plants as they pass.

At 3:30 we meet in the communal area for drinks and snacks followed by our afternoon game drive. By now it's in the low 80s and feels warm. We've stripped off our warm clothes but I'm wishing I'd put on more (any) sunblock.

On our afternoon drive we see...

Ground Hornbill (bird)

Wildebeest

Tsessebe

Hippo

Crocodile

Jackal

Kori Bustard (national bird)

Warthog

At a watering hole we see a big lone male (bull) elephant. Ant thinks he's around 60, with both of his trunks broken off at the skin. Supposedly that's not a comfortable situation. Ant doesn't believe this guy has long to live. The elephant is drinking and spraying water on himself. After a while a mom and a couple of kid elephants come and drink.

We drive to the far side of the watering hole and encounter the skull and other bones of some long dead elephant. Don gets permission to heft the bones with Ant right beside him. The big leg bone is huge and somewhat heavy. The skull is surprisingly light. Part of the skull's been broken away and we see the light lattice structure inside, giving strength without adding too much weight. The elephant has to hold its head up his/her whole life, so it better be fairly light.

We press on. Around sunset Ant parks and we pile out. Ant checks for safety and give us the green light to "pick flowers" (pee). He sets out our "sundowner" snacks and starts pouring G&Ts, wine and beer. We watch the sunset and Tricia prods into the details of Ants love life (married, twice, two kids, and yes, you can see pictures).

Now dark we get back to camp, freshen up, have more drinks and then communal dinner. Again it's quite good. We meet the newcomers, pretty much a daily ritual. Today it's two ladies: René and Lynn from San Diego. We talk with them through dinner. Eventually, knowing that we have to be up at 5:30, we head off to bed. More animal hunting tomorrow.

Photos



Up before dawn with an outside temperature below 40 degrees, we stand by the fire and enjoy breakfast.



Fueled up (and bundled up) we head out.
Thankfully they have blankets and a hot
water bottle for each of us.



First animals of the day? Black haired
English barristers, er, Cape buffalo.



Baboon moms comparing babies.



Wild dogs, once plentiful are now in danger of extinction. They're pretty cool. These were near their den helping to protect the pups.



Lots of cool dead trees. The elephants, in the lean times, will strip and eat the bark to survive. The trees eventually don't survive themselves.



Vultures take advantage of such trees. They tend to show where some keystone predator is about to have another meal. Not always the case, but hey, a bird can hope, eh?



A local family out for a walk.



Guinea Fowl. Weird shape, and constantly darting around in random patterns and timing. Quite comical.



After lunch we see the outside of our "tent" for the first time. This isn't our cabin (we're at the end and thus there's no good angles to photograph from) but they're all similar.



Relaxing from all our morning animal viewing in our tent what should we see, but more animals.



On our afternoon drive Don finds a bone he's thinking to take home (just kidding). This used to be an elephant quite a while ago.



Baboons in the morning and here, monkeys. And an impala. They're fairly ubiquitous.



We were alerted to the local of the big lion pride. 14 members in all. They're sunning and taking in the sights (including lots of prey off in the distance).



This is some of their possible prey: Cape buffalo. There are also zebras and giraffes near by. Decisions, decisions.

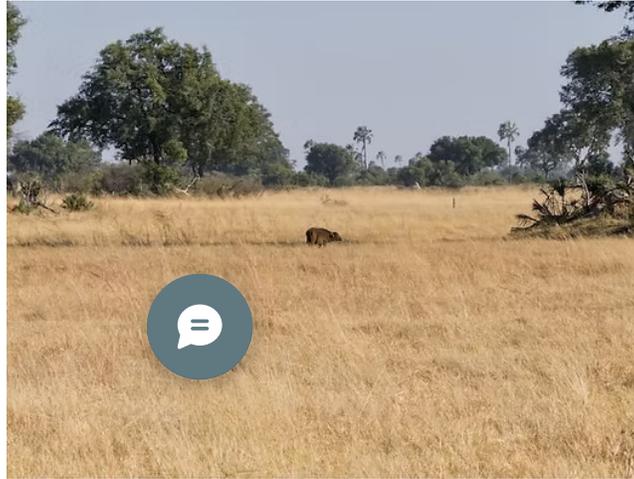


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Eventually the pride heads out in the direction of their possible prey. No rush.



Last to move? Dad. Don's close by taking a picture as the big male passes us.



After a while the Cape buffalo have moved on. Somehow one smallish Cape buffalo is still behind eating, unaware that its companions are no longer around. What could possibly go wrong?



Time to dine on some fresh Cape buffalo. Dad's OK to share as long as no one gets in the way.



Relaxed from our afternoon of carnage we stop for a cocktail in front of the setting African sun.



The lions ate, so why not us? The table is set.

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