

Post



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Ivory finders keepers? - August 3, 2025

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SUMMARY

An amazing day! We followed the "typical" agenda outlined in yesterday's Summary. On our game drives we saw baboons, hyenas, elephants, wildebeest, giraffes, zebras, wild dogs, impalas, hippos, crocodiles, warthogs, kudus, ostriches, leopards (one with a warthog it had killed secured up in a tree), bush bucks, monkeys and probably some I'm missing. Lots and lots of cute young 'uns, too! - Karen

[Photos](#) | [Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

DETAIL

Up at 5:30, groan. We swear we won't have as many drinks tonight as last night (knowing we probably will). We take our malaria meds, but aren't sure they're even needed, no mosquitos. My temperature/hygrometer says it's 25% humidity and it does feel very dry. Any water splashed or spilled dries up very quickly. We're thinking that what mosquitos are here, at least at this time of year, don't stand a chance.

At the drive vehicle we figure out how to rotate where we're sitting. It's a rule. Whatever row you were in yesterday, you'll be one row back this time (unless you were at the top level, in which case you'll move down to the lowest, front-most row). We're thereby on the top row today. Good view, but chilly with lots of wind as the vehicle races ahead.

As we're getting into the Range Rover we see an unappealing pile of brown balls, a little smaller than tennis balls. Apparently these were Palm Tree Nuts and were eaten (and then pooped out) by some elephant. Now the monkeys and baboons will eat the partially digested nuts. Ah the circle of life.

A ways on we see wildlife, elephants, Tricia's favorite. This is a mom and her kid, among others. The young elephant is nursing, which seems weird (with the trunk in the way) but the young 'un makes it work.

Just up the road from this we see a ton of baboons. As always they're up in trees and scampering along the ground. Ant points out a female baboon in heat and a male demonstrates how baboons make babies. I'm not able to get my camera ready in the two seconds this takes. It would have been perfect, with the couple profile, side on, in the middle of the road in front of us. They finish and scamper on another couple of yards. Mr Baboon is now ready for more and has her again. This time I have my camera ready but all I can see is his backside. This 'session' takes about the same few seconds, at the end of which the male lets out a loud, satisfied groan. We all laugh.

A ways along, at a watering hole, we watch an elephant drink. We also see hyenas there too, for a drink and for any mischief they can get into. Their posture always makes them look guilty, someone observes.

At the next watering hole the view is a good bit sadder. The story it tells is of a hole, full of water and a hippo. But now the water has all evaporated but the hippo didn't get out in time. There's no water, only mud, and the poor hippo is up to its shoulders in dried mud. From that position it's never getting out, but rather will die, or has recently died, in this unfortunate position. We don't know what to say. The circle of life, eh?

Our drive has now taken us, by chance, to "the airport". It's just a landing strip with our location "Chitabe Camp" written in huge white painted bricks, visible from the sky. There's a lean to, against the rain or sun and a first aid box. There are some stripes on the runway to show where it starts and ends and every so many 100s of meters, as required by regulation. We just care about the animals. There's a jackel and a few kudus. As always there's lots of impala. Further along on we find more elephants. Families all eating and hanging out (protecting) each other.

Driving on, much like yesterday, we find a skeleton, with the skull again being the dead give-away (if you'll pardon the pun) of whose skull it was. It obviously used to be a hippo. Someone has arranged it as it would have been in life. With such teeth you can see how deadly these creatures can be. We see a big pack of wildebeests, not pretty creatures. We come across a big group of giraffes. Very gangly but majestic creatures. There's a zebra thrown in for good measure, but mostly this is a few families, with quite a few young. We look at them and they at us, and finally they go back to eating. They're eating leaves of the tall and less tall plants around them. In turn Ox Pecker birds are sitting on the giraffes eating bugs and lice. They're helping each other out. We learn a group of giraffes is named according to whether they're moving or stationary. It's a journey of giraffes (if they're en route) and a tower of giraffes if they're stationary. Hm.

Down the road we find a big elephant tusk, obviously old, but big and Ant stops and lets each of us give it a heft. It's heavy! We put it back where we found it. We come across and visit a wild hyena den. It's still morning and cool. The hyenas probably were out all night, so they're sleeping and barely register our visit. A group of hyenas is (we're told) a slam of hyenas.

Around nine we stop at a river and have our coffee and snacks. We look at the many hippos on the (very) far side of the river, and the two crocodiles sunning themselves on rocks.

On our drive back we encounter more elephants, a big family, sauntering along. We also see a big pack of hyenas wishing to get into trouble. They're on the far side of a creek, we on one side, they on the other, paralleling each other for a ways. One of them finds a big stick and starts playing with it. Another insists on stealing it away, or at least trying.

Around a corner, we come across Mr. and Mrs. Warthog. They're big, hairy, and ugly. They're looking for some kind of food on the ground and don't mind us. More driving and we see some big, beautiful kudu, with their curly horns. Then ostriches, one male and his three ladies. Ant tells us how much they weigh, which I find hard to believe.

More driving and Ant slams on the breaks and backs up. He almost ran over a little chick, not much larger than a table tennis ball. Further along we get to where Ant was headed. Look. Up there. Leopard! The beautiful creature is laying on a branch, one back leg dangling on each side. Above him is his prey, the warthog he caught. He's already eaten the back half, and will be eating the rest of it over the next day or so. We look at him and he at us. He's full and tired. His eyes close.

More zebras (lot of them) on the way home. Ant informs us its called "a dazzle of zebras". We see Kudus, with their twisty horns. They grown 1/2 a turn each year, I believe. Ostriches. One male and his harem of three females. We visit the leopard again, up the tree. He (she?) moved the prey further up into the tree to avoid having other animals bother it. Easier to defend.

And finally we're back for lunch and then our afternoon down time.

On the afternoon drive: Elephants, leopard, monkeys, and impala. For our sundowner we turn the corner and there's a special table set up with tons of snack food and a full bar. Lots of the chefs and servers are there to say goodbye and thanks. It is fun and sweet. Back to the camp for more food (dinner) and adult beverage. Lots of fun. There is a birthday (Lisa's) with cake and singing. So much for less alcohol. Tomorrow's another (eearly) day. Groan.

Photos



Sorghum porridge for breakfast again.
Yum!



Baby elephant having it's breakfast:
Mom's milk.



Male baboon having a female. Briefly.



Elephant having a drink of water.



Wildebeests having a look at us.



A very small elephant. The parents and family didn't like how much attention we were giving the young one.



Young giraffes. So many of them. One going in for a drink of mom's milk.



A long gone hippopotamus.
Reassembled to resemble it's old self.



Hyenas, tucked out from a long night of hunting.



Kudu. Kudus to this guy for such beautiful horns. 1/2 turn growth each year.



Male and his three ladies. (Ostrich)



Our leopard and his (her?) prey up above, out of harm's way.



Red Lechwe



Mid morning break. Coffee. "Picking flowers" (relieving ourselves). Looking around. Across the water? Hippos and crocodiles.

FARNSNIENTE





Mr and Mrs warthog.



Special sundown.



Group picture with Ant (Anthony)



The sundowner went long. Good thing they had these lanterns.



Back at camp. Dinner and a cake for Lisa for her birthday. We're all singing.

[Previous](#) | [Next](#) | [Index](#)

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