

Victoria Falls

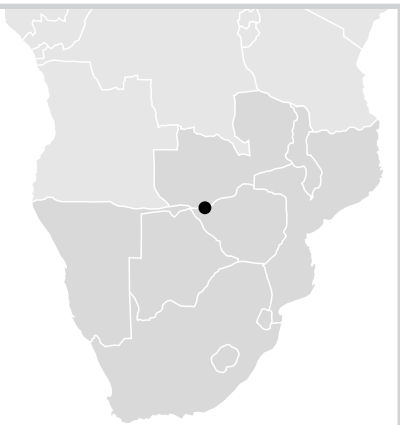
Victoria Falls is the largest, most beautiful and most majestic waterfall on the planet, and is the Seventh Natural Wonder of the World as well as being a Unesco World Heritage Site. A trip to Southern Africa would not be complete without visiting this unforgettable place. But it isn't just the one million litres of water that fall – per second – down a 108m drop along a 1.7km wide strip in the Zambezi Gorge that makes Victoria Falls so awesome; it's the whole natural context in which the falls are located that makes Victoria Falls so special.

Jump into the gorge, get drenched by the spray of the falls, raft along the rapids or cruise gently along the great Zambezi River. Whether it's wildlife that attracts you or the chance to fill your life with wildness, this place is rare and extraordinary and yet easy and unspoilt. Victoria Falls is to be seen, heard, tasted and touched: it is a treat that few other places in the world can offer, a Must See Before You Die spot.

Victoria Falls has a wet and dry season: when the river is higher and the falls fuller it's the Wet and when the river is lower and the falls aren't smothered in spray it's the Dry. The falls are spectacular at any time of year, except if all you want to do is ride those famous rapids, in which case you want the river low, the rocks exposed and the rapids pumping. The weather is never too hot or too cold, and all else on offer – from fine dining to zipping across a border on a high wire – are also there year round. The high seasons are June to August and Christmas, but April, with all the spray, is special too. Although Zimbabwe and Zambia share it, Victoria Falls is a place all of its own, which is why we give it its own chapter.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gazing in amazement at Victoria Falls from the **Zambian** (p615) or **Zimbabwean** (p620) side (or preferably both)
- Visiting the falls during the full moon and seeing the enigmatic **lunar rainbow** (p615 or p620)
- Drinking a cocktail at the **Royal Livingstone Hotel** (p613) on a deck on the river near the lip of the falls
- Enjoying a spot of high tea at the **Terrace** (p619) at the elegant Victoria Falls Hotel
- Getting your **adrenaline kicks** (p605) with bungee jumping, microlighting, white-water rafting, jet-boating or a Gorge Swing



ACTIVITIES: A-Z

Face fear and enjoy the rush: Victoria Falls has got it all! Activities listed in this section can be booked through your accommodation and started from either Livingstone (Zambia) or Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe) for about the same cost. Confirm any extra costs such as park or visa fees, at the time of booking. All operators give package prices too and for around US\$125 you can sample all the adrenalin leaps. The operators usually offer photos and videos of your escapades as well (US\$35 for videos, US\$15 for single shots, US\$45 for both). Note that rates given in this section are approximate and subject to change.

Abseiling

Spend the day rappelling down cliffs and swinging across the canyons and gorges the rushing Zambezi cuts through in the scenic Batoka Gorge. Half-/full-day excursions cost US\$80/100.

Bird Walk

Check out the amazing birds that inhabit the area around the falls for around US\$70.

Botswana/Chobe Day Trip

Located a mere one-hour's drive from Victoria Falls, this day trip includes a breakfast boat cruise, a game drive in Chobe National Park, lunch and transfer back to Victoria Falls by 5pm. Wildlife viewing is excellent: lions, elephants, wild dogs, cheetahs, buffaloes and plenty of antelopes. The price is US\$150 per person.

Bungee Jumping

Tackling the third-highest jump in the world (111m) costs single/tandem US\$105/\$130. There are two main spots, and both jumps are from the same height.

Canoeing & Kayaking

Half-/full-day trips along the Zambezi River cost US\$60/75; overnight jaunts cost US\$150, and three-night trips start at US\$300.

Clay Pigeon Shooting

Morning, lunch and afternoon sessions are available, the latter with dinner, which you eat in a boma with panoramic views over the rolling African bush. Situated only 3km from Victoria Falls, these sessions are of an interna-

tional standard with instructors and are good for both beginners and the experienced. Costs start at US\$55.

Elephant-Back Safaris

Take a journey on the back of an elephant through stunning national parkland or nature reserves. See the boxed text, p607, for information on some issues with wild animal encounters.

Fishing

Tackle the mighty tiger fish of the Zambezi with a half-day trip including tackle, rods, lures and bait, all for around US\$90.

Fixed-Wing Flights

Whether you fly in a modern Cessna or a vintage Tiger Moth, you'll have amazing views of the falls, the spray and the river from above. Flights range from US\$80 to US\$160 depending on the type of craft and the route.

Flying Fox

Zip across the Batoka Gorge for just US\$25.

Game Drives & Walks

Take a morning or evening guided safari in a national park, either in a 4WD or by foot. Enjoy the African landscape at its best in the gentle morning or early evening light. Costs are from US\$50 per person or game walks US\$70. Note that this is for group bookings only.

Golf

Enjoy scenic game drives between rounds on immaculate fairways on both sides of the border, in Zimbabwe at The Elephant Hills Hotel or in Zambia at Livingstone Royal Golf & Country Club. A game of nine holes costs US\$10 (equipment hire US\$10) and 18 holes costs US\$20 (equipment hire US\$20). Caddy fees are US\$5 extra.

Gorge Slide

This is a lot like the Flying Fox but you whiz down into the Batoka Gorge and back up the other side (single/tandem \$35/45) – an adrenalin rush for starters.

Gorge Swing

For those who want to be brave enough to bungee jump but never will be, this is perfect. It's located at the Batoka Gorge.