

Zambia Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Prices for all accommodation listed in this book are for the high (dry) season – ie April/May to October/November – and are based on the ‘international rates’. Often, lodges offer resident rates that are at an unfairly and far reduced rate, sometimes cut by as much as half.

Accommodation has been listed in budget order throughout the Zambia chapters, from cheapest to most expensive. The parameters for dividing accommodation into categories by price is budget up to ZK150,000, midrange between ZK150,000 and ZK350,000, and top end upwards of ZK350,000. This is a guide only, however,

and lodges and camps in and around national parks are considerably more expensive due to their remote locations and, in some cases, their exclusive nature. It’s also worth noting that prices for rooms with private bathrooms (called self-contained rooms in Zambia) are about 40% higher than rooms without, and that all accommodation in Lusaka is about 50% higher than anywhere else in Zambia. Most midrange and top end hotels include either a continental or cooked breakfast in their rates.

Budget

Most cities and larger towns have campsites where you can pitch your tent, but most are way out in the suburbs. Camping is also possible at privately run campsites at the national parks, though most are located just outside the park boundaries to avoid admission fees (until you actually want to visit the park). No campsites are run by the national wildlife authority. Many lodges around national parks will accept independent campers – this can be a great deal as you have access to the lodge’s facilities while paying a pittance for accommodation.

The (*very*) few youth hostels around Zambia are not part of any international organisation, so hostel cards are useless. But hostels in Lusaka and the major tourist areas are well set up with swimming pools, bars, restaurants and travel agencies offering organised tours.

Some of the cheapest hotels in the cities are actually brothels. The better budget hotels charge by the room, so two, three or even four people travelling together

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PRACTICALITIES

- The *Daily Times* and *Daily Mail* are dull, government-controlled rags. The independent *Post* (www.postzambia.com), featuring a column by Kenneth Kaunda, continually needles the government. Published in the UK but printed in South Africa, the *Weekly Telegraph*, the *Guardian Weekly* and the *Economist* are available in Lusaka and Livingstone.
- The monthly *Lowdown* magazine (www.lowdown.co.zm; ZK5000), aimed at well-off residents in Lusaka, has useful information for visitors such as restaurant reviews and lists of upcoming events in the capital, as well as handy adverts for package deals for lodges around Zambia.
- Both of the Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) radio stations can be heard nationwide; they play Western and African music, as well as news and chat shows in English. ZNBC also runs the solitary government-controlled TV station every evening, but anyone who can afford it will subscribe to South African satellite TV. *BBC World Service* can be heard in Lusaka (88.2FM) and Kitwe (89.1FM); *Radio France Internationale* (RFI) can also be heard in Lusaka.
- Televisions use the PAL system.
- Electricity supply is 220V to 240V/50Hz and plugs are of the British three-prong variety.
- The metric system is used in Zambia.

can get some real (if crowded) bargains. Single travellers may find some prices steep, though negotiation is always possible.

Midrange to Top End

This is the main budget for accommodation in Zambia. All national parks are dotted with expensive privately operated lodges and 'camps' (a confusing term often used to describe expensive lodges). They offer the same sort of luxury and exclusivity as other lodges and camps in Southern and East Africa – all from US\$150 (but usually much more) per person per night (twin share). Foreigners usually pay 'international rates' for lodges/camps, while tourists from Southern Africa get a 'regional rate' of 25% less, and Zambians pay about half the 'international rates'. These rates usually include all meals, drinks, park fees and activities, such as wildlife drives, but not transfers by road, air and/or boat. Lodges/camps should be booked in advance, either directly by phone, fax or email, or through an agent in Lusaka or abroad. Some lodges/camps close in the wet season (November to April); if they're open, discounts of up to 50% are common.

Lusaka and other large towns have a good number of midrange hotels, lodges and guesthouses, while real top end hotels are less common (although easily found in Lusaka and Livingstone). Facilities and

standards in midrange places can vary a great deal, and they are often set up for the conference trade and not tourists.

ACTIVITIES

Companies in Livingstone (and Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe) offer a bewildering array of activities (see pp150–2), such as white-water rafting in the gorge below the falls or river boarding and canoeing on the quieter waters above the falls. Those with plenty of nerve and money can try bungee jumping or abseiling, or take a ride in a microlight or helicopter. The less adventurous may want to try hiking and horse riding.

Canoeing is also a great way to explore the Zambezi River and can be arranged in Siavonga (p138). Fishing along the Zambezi, and at several lakes in northern Zambia, is also popular; the tigerfish are almost inedible but provide a tough contest for anglers. Fishing and boating are also possible on Lakes Kariba, Bangweulu and Tanganyika.

Most national parks, such as Kasanka (p100), Kafue (p174), Lower Zambezi (p142) and South Luangwa (p119) have activities for visitors, with wildlife drives and walks the main focus of these places, and the main drawcard for visitors to Zambia.

Many tour companies in Livingstone offer short wildlife drives in Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park near Victoria Falls, while companies in Lusaka and Livingstone can