



Botswana

POP 2.02 MILLION

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Best for Wildlife-Watching

- ➔ Moremi Game Reserve (p768)
- ➔ Chobe National Park (p762)
- ➔ Makgadikgadi Pans National Park (p761)
- ➔ Central Kalahari Game Reserve (p773)
- ➔ Tuli Block (p760)

Best of the Outdoors

- ➔ *Mokoro* trip, Okavango Delta (p771)
- ➔ Tsodilo Hills (p773)
- ➔ Camping, anywhere

Why Go?

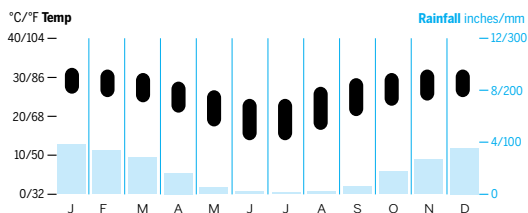
Blessed with some of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth, Botswana is one of the great safari destinations in Africa. There are more elephants in Botswana than in any other country on earth, the big cats roam free, and there's everything from endangered African wild dogs to aquatic antelopes, from rhinos making a comeback to abundant birdlife at every turn.

This is also the land of the Okavango Delta and the Kalahari Desert, at once iconic African landscapes and vast stretches of wilderness. Put these landscapes together with the wildlife that inhabits them and it's difficult to escape the conclusion that this is wild Africa at its best.

Botswana may rank among Africa's most exclusive destinations – accommodation prices at most lodges are once-in-a-lifetime propositions – but self-drive expeditions are also possible. Whichever way you visit, Botswana is a truly extraordinary place.

When to Go

Gaborone



May–Aug Dry season, with fine weather and wildlife concentrations around waterholes.

Sep & Oct Extremely hot temperatures and good dry-season wildlife-watching.

Dec–Apr The rainy season; many tracks are impassable but tourist numbers are fewer.

GABORONE

POP 231,626

Botswana's small capital may be the country's largest city, but it's a pretty low-key place. There aren't many reasons to come here – it's a world of government ministries, shopping malls and a seemingly endless urban sprawl, which is why most travellers either fly to Maun or cross overland elsewhere. If you do find yourself here, 'Gabs' has a handful of decent restaurants and good hotels.

Sights & Activities

Gaborone Game Reserve WILDLIFE RESERVE
(📍 318 4492; adult/child/vehicle P10/5/10; 🕒 6.30am-6.30pm) This reserve, 1km east of Broadhurst, is accessible only by private vehicle (no bikes or motorcycles), and is home to a variety of grazers and browsers.

National Museum & Art Gallery MUSEUM
(Map p759; 📍 397 4616; 331 Independence Ave; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun) **FREE** If you come with expectations reasonably lowered, you may enjoy this small but diverse museum. It's a good way to kill an afternoon, especially if you're into taxidermy. The ethnographic displays are interesting too.

Tours

Garcin Safaris GUIDED TOUR
(📍 393 8190; www.garcinsafaris.com; 1-/2-day tours €126/402) Tours of the city, including a *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*-focused jaunt.

Africa Insight GUIDED TOUR
(📍 7265 4323; www.africainsight.com; half-/full-day tours P495/860) *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* tours endorsed by the author himself.

Sleeping

Mokolodi Backpackers BACKPACKERS \$
(📍 7716 8685; admin@backpackers.co.bw; campsites/dm/s P95/165/220, chalets P370-525; 📍) This excellent place around 10km south of the city centre is the only place with a real backpacker vibe around Gaborone. It has attractive chalets and good campsites and dorms. It's handy for the Mokolodi Game Reserve, 1km away.

Brackdene Lodge HOTEL \$\$
(Map p759; 📍 391 2886; www.brackdenelodge.com; Tati Rd; r from P250, s/d incl breakfast P420/458; 📍) One of the better-value hotels in town. Rooms are simple but large and kitted out with TVs and air-con. It's quiet, but you're within walking distance of the Mall.

SET YOUR BUDGET

Budget

- ➔ Campsite for two US\$50
- ➔ Two-course dinner US\$8-10
- ➔ Maun-Kasane bus US\$12

Midrange

- ➔ Hotel room US\$100
- ➔ Two-course dinner US\$20
- ➔ Maun-Kasane domestic flight US\$50

Top End

- ➔ Luxury lodge US\$250 to US\$4500
- ➔ Two-course dinner US\$25
- ➔ Helicopter ride US\$110 per person

★ **Metcourt Inn** HOTEL \$\$
(📍 363 7907; www.peermont.com; r from P720; 📍) Located within the Grand Palm Hotel complex and part of the reliable Peermont suite of hotels, this affordable business hotel has classy rooms with a hint of Afro-chic in the decor.

Eating

Cafe Dijo CAFE \$
(📍 315 0575; Kgale View Shopping Mall, Old Lobatse Rd; mains P62; 🕒 7am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat; 📍) Next door to Kalahari Quilts in the Kgale View Shopping Mall, this classy but casual place is one of our favourite haunts in Gabs. Lunch specials include pepper steak pie, chicken tandoori wraps and light Thai-inflected dishes.

★ **Courtyard Restaurant** AFRICAN, INTERNATIONAL \$\$
(📍 392 2487; www.botswanacraft.bw; Western Bypass, off Airport Rd; mains P55-85; 🕒 8am-4pm) In the garden area out the back of Botswana-craft, this tranquil spot serves up imaginative African cooking (including impala stew) with other local staples.

Bull & Bush Pub INTERNATIONAL \$\$
(Map p758; 📍 397 5070; www.bullandbush.net; mains P85-110; 🕒 noon-10.30pm Mon-Fri, to 11.30pm Sat & Sun) This long-standing Gaborone institution is deservedly popular with expats, tourists and locals alike. Though there's something on the menu for everyone, the Bull & Bush is renowned for its thick steaks and cold beers.