



# Botswana

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## Best for Wildlife

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## Best of the Outdoors

- » Mokoro trip, Okavango Delta (p68)
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## Why Go

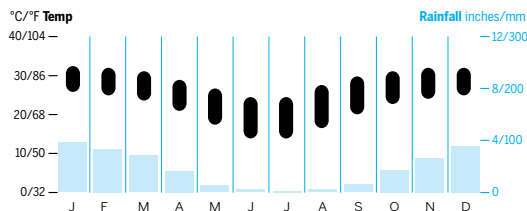
Blessed with some of the greatest wildlife spectacles on earth, Botswana is one of the foremost safari destinations in Africa. There are more elephants in Botswana than in any other country, the big cats roam free and there's everything from endangered African wild dogs to aquatic antelopes, from rhinos (which are making a comeback) to abundant bird life 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. Combine these landscapes and 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. And whichever way you visit, Botswana is a truly extraordinary place.

## When to Go

### Gaborone



**May–Aug** Dry-season wildlife concentrations around water-holes and generally fine weather.

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

**Dec–Apr** The rainy season, many tracks are impassable but there are fewer tourists.

# 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 that many reasons to come here – it's a world of government ministries, shopping malls and a seemingly endless urban sprawl with outer neighbourhoods known as 'Phases' and 'Extensions' – most travellers either fly to Maun or cross overland elsewhere. But if you do find yourself here, 'Gabs' has a handful of decent restaurants and good hotels.

## Sights

**Gaborone Game Reserve** WILDLIFE RESERVE  
(☎318 4492; adult/child/vehicle P10/5/10; ☉6.30am-6.30pm) This small reserve was established in 1988 to give locals an opportunity to view Botswana's wildlife in a natural and accessible location. It boasts elands, wildebeest, gemsboks, kudus, ostriches and warthogs, as well as plenty of bird life. All roads are accessible by 2WD. It is 1km east of Broadhurst Mall and can be accessed from Limpopo Dr.

**[FREE] National Museum & Art Gallery**

MUSEUM

(Map p46; ☎397 4616; 331 Independence Ave; ☉9am-6pm Tue-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun) This small, neglected museum has exhibits of stuffed animals, as well as on precolonial and colonial history. In the Art Gallery section, there's a permanent collection of traditional and modern African and European art.

## Tours

**Garcin Safaris** GUIDED TOUR  
(☎393 8190; www.garcinsafaris.com; 1-/2-day tours €126/402) Local resident and Gaborone expert Marilyn Garcin does great 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 with more wide-ranging excursions also possible.

## Festivals & Events

**Maitisong Festival** PERFORMING ARTS  
(www.maitisong.org) Established in 1987, the Maitisong Festival is the largest performing-

arts festival in Botswana and is held annually for seven days during the last week of March or the first week of April.

## 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, which is 1km away.

**[TOP CHOICE] 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. If you've been out in the bush, it's heaven on a midrange budget.

**Motheo Apartments** APARTMENT \$\$  
(Map p44; ☎318 1587; www.motheoapartments.co.bw; Moremi Rd; apt P420-820; ☎☎☎) This well-run place has good self-catering apartments with internet, DSTV and other mod cons.

**Brackendene Lodge** HOTEL \$\$\$  
(Map p46; ☎391 2886; www.brackendenelodge.com; Tati Rd; r from P250, s/d with bathroom & breakfast P420/458, with kitchen P433/475; ☎☎) Brackendene is one of the better-value hotels in town. Rooms are simple but large and kitted out with TVs and air-con; there's reasonably reliable wi-fi. It's quiet, but you're within walking distance of the Mall.

**Walmont Ambassador at the Grand Palm** HOTEL \$\$\$  
(☎363 7777; www.walmont.com; Molepolole Rd; r from P1755; ☎☎☎) Located 4km west of the city centre, this resolutely modern and polished hotel is situated in a Las Vegas-inspired minicity complete with restaurants, bars, a casino, a cinema and a spa. You'll pay to stay, but it's worth it for the pampering.

## Eating

**Cafe Dijo** CAFE \$  
(☎315 0575; Old Lobatse Rd, Kgale View Shopping Mall; mains P62; ☉7am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat; ☎) Next door to Kalahari Quilts (p45) in the