

Southern Africa



Zambia

(PDF Chapter)

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Victoria Falls

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Why Go?

Taking its place alongside the Pyramids and the Serengeti, Victoria Falls (*Mosi-oa-Tunya* – the 'smoke that thunders') is one of Africa's original blockbusters. And although Zimbabwe and Zambia share it, Victoria Falls is a place all of its own.

As a magnet for tourists of all descriptions – backpackers, tour groups, thrill seekers, families, honeymooners – Vic Falls is one of the earth's great spectacles. View it directly as a raging mile-long curtain of water, in all its glory, from a helicopter ride or peek precariously over its edge from Devil's Pools; the sheer power and force of the falls is something that simply does not disappoint.

Whether you're here purely to take in the sight of a natural wonder of the world, or for a serious hit of adrenaline via rafting or bungee jumping into the Zambezi, Victoria Falls is a place where you're sure to tick off numerous items from that bucket list.

When to Go

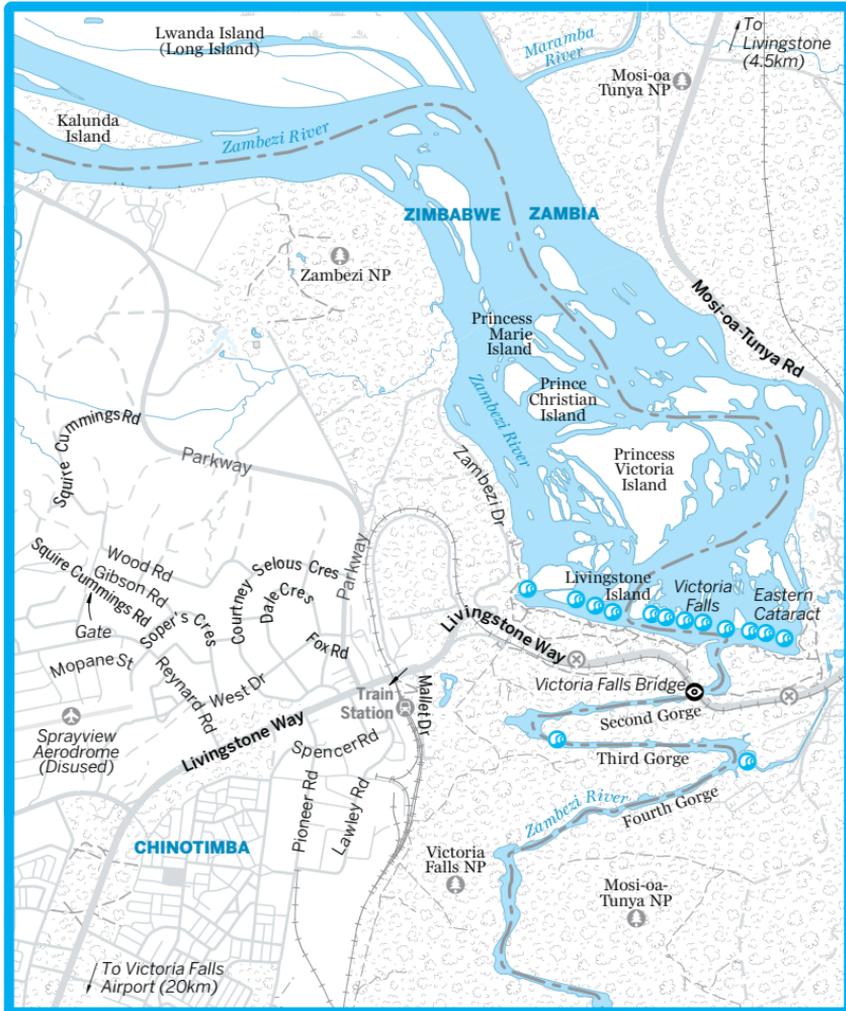
There are two main reasons to go to Victoria Falls – to view the falls and to experience the outdoor activities – and each has its season.

July to December is the season for white-water rafting, especially August for hardcore rapids.

From February to June don't forget your raincoat as you'll experience the falls at their full force.

From July to September You'll get the best views of the falls, combined with lovely weather and all activities to keep you busy.

Victoria Falls



Seventh Natural Wonder of the World

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.

One million litres of water fall – per second – down a 108m drop along a 1.7km wide strip in the Zambezi Gorge; an awesome sight. Victoria Falls can be seen, heard, tast-

ed and touched: it is a treat that few other places in the world can offer, a ‘must see before you die’ spot.

Victoria Falls is spectacular at any time of year, yet varies in the experiences it offers.

Activities

While of course it’s the spectacular sight of Vic Falls that lures travellers to the region, the astonishing amount of activities to do here is what makes them hang around. White-water rafting, bungee jumping, taking a chopper ride over the falls, walking with rhinos: Vic Falls is well and truly estab-

lished as one of the world's premier adventure destinations.

To get the best value out of your time here, look into packages which combine various adrenaline leaps, slides and swings for around US\$125. Confirm any extra costs such as park or visa fees at the time of booking.

Costs are fairly standard across the board and activities can be organised through accommodation providers and tour operators.

Abseiling

Strap on a helmet, grab a rope and spend the day rappelling down the 54m sheer-drop cliff face for US\$40.

Birdwatching

Twitchees will want to bring binoculars to check out 470 species of birds that inhabit the region, including Schalow's turaco, the African finfoot and half-collared kingfisher. Spot them on foot in the parks or on a canoe trip along the Zambezi.

Bungee Jumping & Swings

The third-highest bungee in the world (111m), this famous jump is from atop the iconic Victoria Falls bridge. It's a long way down, but man, it's a lot of fun. It costs US\$125 per person.

Otherwise there's the bridge swing where you jump feet first, and free fall for four seconds; you'll end up swinging the right

way up, not upside down. There are two main spots, one right off the Victoria Falls Bridge, and the other a bit further along the Batoka Gorge. Costs for single/tandem are US\$125/195.

Combine bungee with a bridge swing and bridge slide, and it'll cost US\$160.

Canoeing & Kayaking

On the Zambian side, take on the Zambezi's raging rapids in an inflatable kayak on a full-day trip (US\$155), or learn to eskimo roll by signing up for half-/one-/three-day courses for US\$82/145/412.

Otherwise there are peaceful canoe trips along the Upper Zambezi River on two-person inflatable canoes for US\$125 or even more relaxed three-hour guided sunset trips for US\$60 including wine and beer. Overnight jaunts cost US\$200, with longer trips available.

Cultural Activities

Spend an evening by a campfire drumming under the Southern African sky, which includes a traditional meal, for US\$25 for the hour. You can arrange to watch and participate in traditional dance for US\$40.

Fishing

Grab a rod and cruise out to the Zambezi for the opportunity to reel in a mighty tiger fish, for around US\$125 for a half day, and

THE FALLS VIEWING SEASON

Though spectacular at any time of year, the falls has a wet and dry season and each brings a distinct experience.

When the river is higher and the falls fuller it's the Wet, and when the river is lower and the falls aren't plumed in spray it's the Dry. Broadly speaking, you can expect the following conditions during the year:

January to April The beginning of the rainy season sees the falls begin their transitional period from low to high water, which should give you decent views, combined with experiencing its famous spray.

May to June Don't forget your raincoat, as you're gonna get drenched! While the falls will be hard to see through the mist, it'll give you a true sense of its power as 500 million litres of water plummets over the edge. The mist during this time can be seen from 50kms away. If you want views, don't despair, this is the best time for aerial views with a chopper flight taking you up and over this incredible sight.

July to October The most popular time to visit, as the mist dissipates to unveil the best views and photography options from directly across the falls, while the volume maintains its rage to give you an idea of its sheer force.

November to January The least popular time to visit, as temperatures rise and the falls are at their lowest flow. But they're still impressive nevertheless, as the curtain of water divides into sections. The advantage of this time of year is you're able to swim right up to the edge of Devil's Pool on the Zambian side.

ZIM OR ZAM?

Victoria Falls straddles the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and is easily accessible from both countries. However, the big question for most travellers is: do I visit the falls from the town of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, or from Livingstone, Zambia? The answer is simple: visit the falls from both sides and, if possible, stay in both towns.

From the Zimbabwean side you're further from the falls, though the overall views are better. From the Zambian side, for daring souls you can literally stand on top of the falls from Devil's Pool, though from here your perspective is narrowed.

The town of Victoria Falls was built for tourists, so it's easily walkable and located right next to the entrance to the Falls. It has a natural African bush beauty.

Livingstone is an attractive town with a relaxed ambience and a proud, historic air. Since the town of Victoria Falls was the main tourist centre for so many years, Livingstone feels more authentic, perhaps because locals earn their livelihood through means other than tourism. Livingstone is bustling with travellers year round, though the town is fairly spread out, and is located 11km from the falls.

US\$255 for a full day, which includes beer, fuel and transfers. Get in touch with [Angle Zambia](http://AngleZambia.com) (☎327489; www.zambezfishing.com) for more info.

Horse Riding

Indulge in a bit of wildlife spotting from horseback along the Zambezi. Rides for 2½ hours cost around \$US90, and full-day trips for experienced riders are US\$145.

Jet Boats

Power straight into whirlpools! This hair-raising trip costs US\$97, and is combined with a cable-car ride down into the Batoka Gorge.

Quad biking

Discover the spectacular landscape around Livingstone, Zambia and the Batoka Gorge, spotting wildlife as you go on all-terrain quad bikes. Trips vary from ecotrail riding at Batoka Land to longer-range cultural trips in the African bush. Trips are 1 hour (US\$80) or 2½ hours (US\$150).

Rafting

This is one of the best white-water rafting destinations in the world, both for experienced rafters and newbies. Rafting can be done on either side of the Zambezi, in Zim or Zam, and fills up between mid-February and July, high-water season. In the river below Vic Falls you'll find Grade 5 rapids – very long with huge drops and big kicks, and not for the faint-hearted. In high-water season, day trips move downstream from rapids 11 to 24, covering a distance of around 18km.

Low-water (open) season is between July and mid-February and is considered the best time for rafting. Day trips run between rapids 1 and 19, covering a distance of around 25km. The river will usually close for its 'off season' around April/May, depending on the rain pattern for the year.

Half-/full-day trips cost about US\$120/130. Overnight and multiday jaunts can also be arranged.

Other options include **riverboarding**, which is basically lying on a boogie board and careering down the rapids for US\$135/150 for a half/full day. The best time of year for riverboarding is February to June. A rafting/riverboarding combo is available, US\$165.

River Cruises

River cruises along the Zambezi range from civilised jaunts on the grand *African Queen* to all-you-can-drink sunset booze cruises. Prices range from US\$30 to US\$60. Great for spotting wildlife, though some tourists get just as much enjoyment out of the bottomless drinks. Highly recommended.

Scenic Flights

Just when you thought the falls couldn't get any more spectacular, discover the 'flight of angels' helicopter ride that flies you right by the drama for the undisputed best views available. Rides aren't cheap, but it's worth it. **Zambezi Helicopter Company** (www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com/helicopters; flights 13/25 mins US\$130/250, plus US\$10 park entry fee) in Zimbabwe and **United Air Charter** (☎213

323095; www.uaczam.com; Baobab Ridge, Livingstone) in Zambia both offer flights.

Another option is motorised hang-gliders, which also offer fabulous aerial views, and the pilot will take pictures for you with a camera fixed to the wing. It costs US\$140 for 15 minutes over the falls.

Steam-train Journeys

To take in the romance of yesteryear, book yourself a ride on a historical steam train. On the Zimbabwe side there is the 1953 class 14A Garratt steam train through **Victoria Falls Steam Train Co** (☎13 42912; www.steamtraincompany.com; incl drinks US\$40, incl dinner from US\$75), that will take you over the iconic bridge at sunset or through the Zambezi National Park with either a full dinner or gourmet canapes and unlimited drinks. Even if you're not booked on a trip it's worth getting along to the station to watch the incredible drama of its departure. There are also daily vintage tram trips (one way/return US\$15/30) that head over the bridge and which also have a drinks and canapes option (US\$40).

In Zambia the **Royal Livingstone Express** (☎213 323232; www.royal-livingstone-express.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd, Livingstone; incl dinner & drinks US\$170; ☺Wed & Sat) takes you on a 3½-hour ride including five-course dinner and drinks on a 1922 10th-class steam engine that will chug you through Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park on plush leather couches.

Wildlife Safaris

There are plenty of options for wildlife watching in the area, both in the nearby national parks and private game reserves, or further afield. Both guided walks and jeep safaris are available in the parks on both sides of the border. At **Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park** (wildlife sanctuary admission US\$10; ☺wildlife sanctuary 6am-6pm) in Zambia, there's a chance to see white rhinos, while the Zambezi National Park in Zimbabwe has a small population of lions. Walks cost around US\$70, and drives US\$50 to US\$90. There are also dusk, dawn or night wildlife drives (US\$50 to US\$90). River safaris (US\$30) along the Zambezi River are another popular way to see various wildlife including elephants, hippos and plenty of birdlife.

Another convenient option, only 15km from Victoria Falls town, is the **Victoria Falls Private Game Reserve** (☎44471;

www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com/safaris), a 4000-hectare private reserve run by Shearwaters. Here you can track the Big Five on a game drive (US\$90), where apparently you stand a 97% (to be precise) chance of encountering a black rhino.

You can travel further afield, with operators arranging day trips to Chobe National Park (see p54) in Botswana for US\$170 (excluding visas). It's only a one-hour drive from Victoria Falls, and 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.

Hwange National Park (admission per day US\$15; ☺about 6am-6pm) in Zimbabwe is the other option, with one of the largest number of elephants in the world. A day trip will cost around US\$250.

Zipline & Slides

Glide at 106km/h along a zipline (single/tandem US\$66/105), or soar like a superhero from one country to another (from Zim to Zam) on the 'bridge slide' as you whiz over Batoka Gorge (single/tandem US\$35/50). Other similar options are flying-fox rides (US\$40).

i Information

Tourist Information

Hands down the best independent advice is from Backpackers Bazaar (p548) in the town of Victoria Falls, run by the passionate owner, Joy, who is a wealth of all info and advice for Vic Falls and beyond. In Livingstone, the folks at Jollyboys Backpackers (p539) are also extremely knowledgeable on all the latest happenings. Both are good places to book activities and onward travel.

Travel & Adventure Companies

With activities and prices standardised across the board, all bookings can conveniently be arranged through backpacker accommodation and big hotels.

You can also go directly to the tour operators. The main ones in Zimbabwe are **Wild Horizons** (☎0712-213721, 13 42013; www.wildhorizons.co.za; 310 Parkway Dr) and **Shearwater** (☎13 44471; www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com; Parkway Dr). In Zambia try **Safari Par Excellence** (☎213 320606; www.safpar.net) and **Livingstone's Adventure** (☎213 323587; www.livingstonesadventure.com) both in Livingstone. All cover activities on either side.

VISAS

You will need a visa to cross sides between Zim and Zam. These are available at the border crossings, open from around 7am to 10pm. Note that you can't get multi-entry visas at these crossing; in most cases you need to apply at the embassy in your home country before travelling.

Crossing into Zambia, a day visit costs US\$20 for 24 hours, a single-entry visa costs US\$50 and double entry is US\$80.

Crossing into Zimbabwe, a single-entry visa costs US\$30 for most nationalities (US\$55 for British/Irish, US\$75 for Canadian). Double entry is US\$45 for most nationalities (US\$75 for British/Irish, and unavailable for Canadians).

ZAMBIA

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As Zambia continues to ride the wave of tourism generated by the falls, it manages to keep itself grounded, offering a wonderfully low-key destination that has been recognised as such; it's co-host of the 2013 United Nations World Tourism Assembly. The waterfront straddling the falls continues its rapid development and is fast becoming one of the most exclusive destinations in Southern Africa.

Livingstone & Around

0213

Set 11km away from Victoria Falls, the relaxed town of Livingstone has taken on the role of a backpacking mecca. It attracts travellers not only to experience the falls, but to tackle the thrilling adventure scene. The town is not much to look at, but it is a safe, lively place with some fantastic restaurants. Those looking for a more scenic and luxurious experience can treat themselves to the natural setting along the Zambezi River at any number of plush lodges with river and wildlife views.

The town centres itself around one main road, Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd, 11km from the entrance to the falls. Several establishments are set right on the Zambezi River, but most of the action is set a bit back from the waterfront.

Sights & Activities

TOP CHOICE Victoria Falls World Heritage National Monument Site

WATERFALL

(admission ZMW103.5; ☀6am-6pm) This is what you're here for, the mighty Victoria Falls. It's a part of the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, 11km outside town before the Zambia border crossing; a path here leads to the visi-

tor information centre, which has modest displays on local fauna, geology and culture.

From the centre, a network of paths leads through thick vegetation to various viewpoints. You can walk upstream along a path free of fences – and warning notices (so take care!) – to watch the Zambezi waters glide smoothly through rocks and little islands towards the lip of the falls.

For close-up views of the **Eastern Cataract**, nothing beats the hair-raising (and hair-wetting) walk across the footbridge, through swirling clouds of mist, to a sheer buttress called the **Knife Edge**. If the water is low, or the wind is favourable, you'll be treated to a magnificent view of the falls as well as the yawning abyss below. Otherwise, your vision (and your clothes) will be drenched by spray. Then you can walk down a steep track to the banks of the great Zambezi to see the huge whirlpool called the **Boiling Pot**. Watch out for cheeky baboons.

The park is open again in the evenings during (and just before and after) a full moon in order to see the amazing lunar rainbow. The tickets cost an extra ZMW51 – hours of operation vary, so inquire through your accommodation.

TOP CHOICE Livingstone Island

VIEWPOINT

One of the most thrilling experiences not only at the falls, but in Africa, is the hair-raising journey to Livingstone Island. Here you will bathe in **Devil's Pool** – nature's ultimate infinity pool, set directly on the edge of the raging drama of Victoria Falls. You can leap into the pool and then poke your head over the edge to get an extraordinary view of the 100m drop.

Livingstone Island is in the middle of the Zambezi River, located at the top of the falls, and here you'll see a plaque marking the spot where David Livingstone first sighted the falls. The island is accessed via boat, and

prices include either breakfast (ZMW333), lunch (ZMW615) or high tea (ZMW486). When the water is low, you're able to access it via walking or swimming across, but a guide is compulsory. Note that access to the island is closed from around March to May when the water levels are too high.

Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park WILDLIFE RESERVE (admission US\$10; ☀6am-6pm) The other part of the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park is up-river from the falls, and only 3km southwest of Livingstone. The tiny wildlife sanctuary has a surprising range of animals including rhinos, zebras, giraffes, buffaloes, elephants and antelopes. It's most famous for tracking white rhinos on foot. Walks cost ZMW435 per person, for groups of up to eight.

Livingstone Museum MUSEUM (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; admission ZMW25; ☀9am-4.30pm) The excellent Livingstone Museum

is divided into five sections covering archaeology, history, ethnography, natural history and art, and is highlighted by Tonga ritual artefacts, a life-sized model African village, a collection of David Livingstone memorabilia and historic maps dating back to 1690.

Sleeping

TOWN CENTRE

TOP CHOICE **Jollyboys Backpackers** BACKPACKERS \$ (☎324229; www.backpackzambia.com; 34 Kanyanta Rd; campsite/dm/r ZMW40/50/205; @☎) The British and Canadian owners of Jollyboys know exactly what backpackers want, and it is wildly popular for a good reason. They have kept the needs of independent travellers at the forefront, from the sunken lounge and excellent coffee to the sparkling pool, cheap restaurant-bar and clean bright rooms. Things can get a bit hectic in the evenings, so they've

LIVINGSTONE – THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND

David Livingstone is one of a few European explorers who is still revered by modern-day Africans. His legendary exploits on the continent border the realm of fiction, though his life's mission to end the slave trade was very real (and ultimately very successful).

Born into rural poverty in the south of Scotland on 19 March 1813, Livingstone worked in London for several years before being ordained as a missionary in 1840. The following year he arrived in Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and began travelling inland, looking for converts and seeking to end the slave trade.

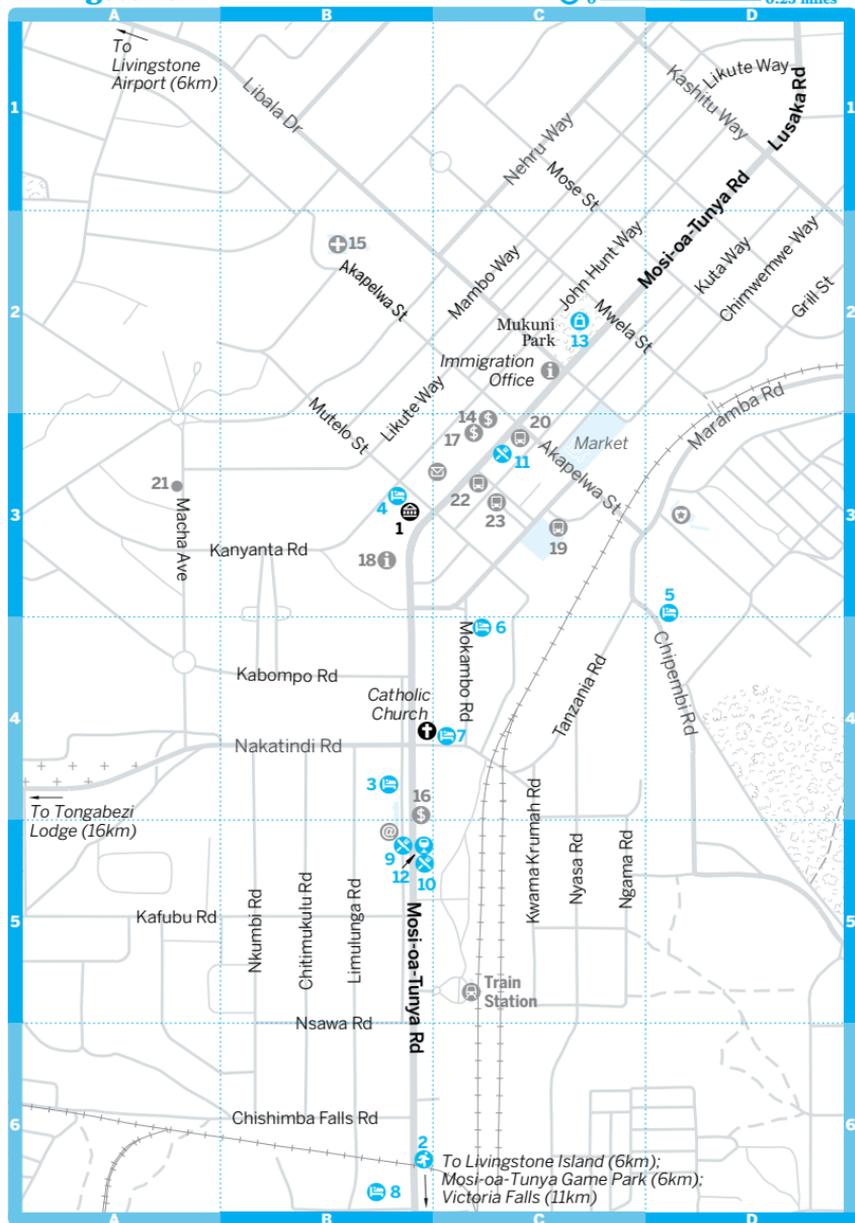
As early as 1842 Livingstone had already become the first European to penetrate the northern reaches of the Kalahari. For the next several years he explored the African interior with the purpose of opening up trade routes and establishing missions. In 1854 Livingstone discovered a route to the Atlantic coast, and arrived in present-day Luanda. However, his most famous discovery occurred in 1855 when he first set eyes on Victoria Falls during his epic boat journey down the Zambezi River. Livingstone returned to Britain a national hero, and recounted his travels in the 1857 publication *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*.

In 1858 Livingstone returned to Africa as the head of the 'Zambezi Expedition', a government-funded venture that aimed to identify natural resource reserves in the region. Unfortunately, the expedition ended when a previously unexplored section of the Zambezi turned out to be unnavigable.

In 1869 Livingstone reached Lake Tanganyika despite failing health, though several of his followers abandoned the expedition en route. These desertions were headline news in Britain, sparking rumours regarding Livingstone's health and sanity. In response to the growing mystery surrounding Livingstone's whereabouts, the *New York Herald* arranged a publicity stunt by sending journalist Henry Morton Stanley to find Livingstone.

After arriving in Zanzibar and setting out with nearly 200 porters, Stanley finally found Livingstone on 10 November 1871 in Ujiji near Lake Tanganyika and famously greeted him with the line 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'

Although Stanley urged him to leave the continent, Livingstone was determined to find the source of the Nile, and penetrated deeper into the continent than any European prior. On 1 May 1873 Livingstone died from malaria and dysentery near Lake Bangweulu in present-day Zambia. His body was carried for thousands of kilometres by his attendants, and now lies in the ground at Westminster Abbey in London.



opened up the quieter **Jollyboys Camp** (Chipembi Rd) guesthouse nearby, in Chipembi Rd, to suit couples and families.

Fawly Towers

(☎323432; www.adventure-africa.com; 216 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; **campsite/dm/tr** ZMW40/76/215, d

with/without bathroom ZMW307/205; ☎☎☎☎) Once a backpacker institution, things have been spruced up here into a guesthouse full of upmarket touches: free internet and wi-fi, shady lawns, a great pool and some of the nicest and most spacious dorms we've seen. No Basil or Manuel in sight.

Livingstone

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ZigZag

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

( 322814; www.zigzagzambia.com; off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; s/d ZMW280/410; ) Don't be deceived by the motel-meets-caravan-park exterior; the rooms here are more boutique B&B with loving touches throughout. Run by a friendly Scottish and Namibian couple, the lovely swimming pool, great restaurant and playground for kids give it a classic holiday feel.



Olga's Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

( 324160; www.olgasproject.com; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya & Nakatindi Rds; s/d/f ZMW256/358/460; ) If you need a lie down after gorging at Olga's Italian Corner restaurant, Olga's has it covered. Clean, spacious rooms with cool tiled floors, teak furniture and slick bathrooms are just a few feet away. Profits go towards helping an organisation supporting local youth.

Livingstone Backpackers

BACKPACKERS \$

( 324730; www.livingstonebackpackers.com; 559 Mokambo Rd; campsite/dm ZMW40/50; ) Resembling the *Big Brother* household, this place can be a bit 'party central', particularly when the Gen Y volunteer brigade is on holiday. You'll find them lounging by the pool or in the sandy outdoor cabana, swinging in hammocks or tackling the rock-climbing wall! There is also a hot tub, open-air kitchen and living room.

ZAMBEZI RIVERFRONT

Most prices include meals and transfers from Livingstone and reservations are recommended.



Stanley Safari Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

( in South Africa 27-72-170 8879; www.stanley-safaris.com; per person with full board and activities from ZMW2,203; ) Intimate and indulgent, Stanley is a 10km drive from the falls in a peaceful spot surrounded by mopane forest. Rooms are as plush as can be expected at these prices; the standouts are the open-air suites where you can soak up nature from your own private plunge pool. When you tire of that, curl up by the fire in the open-air lounge. Rates are all-inclusive.

David Livingstone

LODGE \$\$\$

( 324601; www.thedavidlivingstone.com; River Side Dr, Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park; s/d incl breakfast & activities ZMW1,745/2,675; ) The newest addition to Livingstone's luxury hotels: all rooms have river views, Rhodesian teak furniture, concertina doors, four-poster beds and stand-alone bathtubs looking out to the water. It's set within the national park, hippos honk around at night, and the decking and bar around the riverfront infinity pool is a wonderful spot for a sundowner. It's located halfway between Livingstone and the falls.

Jungle Junction

Bovu Island

LODGE, CAMPGROUND \$
(☎0978-725282, 323708; www.junglejunction.info; campsite per person ZMW50, hut per person ZMW128-179; 🦘) Hippos, hammocks and harmony. On a lush island in the middle of the Zambezi River, around 50km from Livingstone, Jungle Junction attracts travellers who just want to lounge beneath palm trees, or engage in some fishing (ZMW77 including equipment and guide). Meals are available (ZMW36 to ZMW60).

Zambezi Waterfront

LODGE \$\$\$
(☎320606; www.safpar.net/waterfront.html; campsite per person ZMW50, s/d tent ZMW155/200, s/d incl breakfast from ZMW640/920; 🦘📶🚰) Another waterfront lodge, things feel more rustic here with a wilderness charm, as crocs inhabit a small creek on the property. Accommodation ranges from luxury tents and riverside chalets to executive rooms or family suites. The riverside open-air beer garden is unsurprisingly popular at sunset. It's located 4km south of Livingstone, and a handy free shuttle service takes you to the falls and town.

Zambezi Sun

RESORT \$
(☎321122; www.suninternational.com; s/d incl breakfast from ZMW2,355/2,510, f ZMW2,550; 🦘📶🚰) Only a 10-minute walk from the falls, this sprawling resort provides a great base for exploring the area. The North African kasbah-inspired rooms are vibrant while plenty of pools and a playground are perfect for families. It's within the perimeter of the national park, so expect to see grazing zebras but keep your distance. Rates include falls entry.

Tongabezi Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$
(☎323235; www.tongabezi.com; cottage/house per person ZMW2,200/2,710; 🦘📶) Here you'll find sumptuous spacious cottages and open-faced 'treehouses' and private dining decks. Guests are invited to spend an evening on nearby Sindabezi Island (per person per night US\$350), selected by the *Sunday Times* as the best remote place to stay in the world.

Eating & Drinking

Livingstone is home to a number of high-quality restaurants, including a batch of excellent newcomers. Enjoy a sundowner at any of the the Zambezi riverfront resorts that allow nonguests to pop in for a drink and a stellar sunset.



Cafe Zambezi

AFRICAN \$\$

(☎0978-978578; 217 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains ZMW30-48; ☀9am-midnight; 📶🚰) Bursting with local flavour; vibrant decor flows from the indoor dining room to the outdoor courtyard, sunny by day and candlelit by night. The broad menu covers local *braai* (barbecue) favourites of goat meat and mopane caterpillars or an international twist of roasted veg with feta, served with *sadza* (maize porridge). Authentic wood-fired pizzas are a winner or sink your teeth into crocodile or eggplant-and-haloumi burgers.



Olga's Italian Corner

ITALIAN \$\$

(www.olgasproject.com; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya & Nakatindi Rds; pizza & pasta from ZMW40; ☀7am-10pm; 📶🚰) Olga's does authentic wood-fired thin-crust pizzas, as well as delicious homemade pasta classics all served under a large thatched roof. Great options for vegetarians, include the lasagna with its crispy blackened edge served in the dish. All profits go to a community centre to help disadvantaged youth.

ZigZag

CAFE \$\$

(off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains from ZMW25; ☀7am-9pm; 📶) Another string to Livingstone's bow of culinary choices, ZigZag has a drool-inducing menu of homemade muffins (such as cranberry and white chocolate), smoothies using fresh fruit from the garden, and a changing small menu of comfort food.

Spot

CAFE \$

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains from ZMW40; ☀10am-10pm) Promising 'forkin good food', this attractive little outdoor eatery with picnic tables delivers with its mix of local and international dishes, including a mean chicken schnitzel.

Wonderbake

CAFE, BAKERY \$

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; ☀8am-9pm; 📶) There's nothing fancy about this bakery cafeteria, but it has a good local flavour, sells cheap pies and has free wi-fi.

Fez Bar

BAR

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) This open-air bar set under a garage tin roof is a popular place to kick on to with its drinking games, pool tables and menu of soft-shell tacos.



Shopping

Mukuni Crafts

CRAFTS

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) The craft stalls in the southern corner of Mukuni Park are a pleasant, and hassle-free place to browse for souvenirs.

i Information

Dangers & Annoyances

Don't walk from town to the falls as there have been a number of muggings along this stretch of road – even tourists on bicycles have been attacked. It's a long and not terribly interesting walk anyway, and simply not worth the risk. Take a minivan for under ZMW5 or a blue taxi for ZMW40.

Emergency

Police (☎320116; Maramba Rd)

Internet Access

Computer Centre (216 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; internet per hr US\$2; ☎8am-8pm) Also offers international phone calls and faxes. All the hostels now have wi-fi or at least internet access.

Medical Services

Livingstone General Hospital (☎321475; Akapelwa St)

Money

Barclays Bank (cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd & Akapelwa St) and **Standard Chartered Bank** (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) both accept Visa cards, while **Stanbic** (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) accepts MasterCard.

Post

Post Office (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) Has a *poste restante* and fax service.

Tourist Information

Tourist Centre (☎321404; www.zambia tourism.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri) Mildly useful and can help with booking tours and accommodation, but Jollyboys and Fawly Towers have all the information you need.

i Getting There & Away

Air

South African Airways (☎0212-612207; www.flysaa.com) and **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) have daily flights to and from Johannesburg. **1Time** (☎322744; www.1time.aero) flies three times a week. The cheapest economy fare starts at around US\$400 return. **Proflight Zambia** (☎0211-845944; www.proflight-zambia.com) flies daily from Livingstone to Lusaka.

Bus & Combi (Minibus)

The Zambian side of the falls is 11km south of Livingstone and along the main road to the border with Zimbabwe. Plenty of minibuses and shared taxis ply the route from the minibus terminal along Senanga Rd in Livingstone. As muggings have been reported, it is best to take a taxi.

TO LUSAKA

CR Holdings (☎0977-861063; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd & Akapelwa St) Runs four services a day to Lusaka (ZMW80, seven hours).

Mazhandu Family Bus (☎0975-805064) Seven daily buses to Lusaka (ZMW80 to ZMW115) from 6am till 10.30pm.

Shalom Bus (☎0977-747013; Mutelo St) Eight buses a day travelling to Lusaka (ZMW75), six hours), from 5.30am till 10pm, as well as to many other parts of Zambia

TO NAMIBIA

For travelling to Namibia, and crossing the Zambia–Namibia border at Katima Mulilo, see p597.

TO BOTSWANA

Buses to Shesheke (ZMW60, two hours) depart with Mazhandu Family Bus at 5am and 2pm. Otherwise there are buses to Sesheke (ZMW50) departing when full from Mingongo bus station next to the Catholic church at Dambwa village, 3km west of the town centre. To get to Mongu from Livingstone, it's best to head to Sesheke or Lusaka, and then transfer to a Mongu bus.

Combis (minibuses) to the Botswana border at Kazungula depart when they are full from Mingongo bus station and cost ZMW30. Shared taxis can be taken from the taxi rank by Shoprite and cost ZMW40.

For information about travelling to Botswana, and crossing the Zambia–Botswana border at Kazungula, see p597.

Car & Motorcycle

If you're driving a rented car or motorcycle, be sure to carefully check all info regarding insurance, and that you have all the necessary papers for checks and border crossings such as 'owners' and 'permission to drive' documents, insurance papers and a copy of carbon tax receipt. Expect to pay around \$US55 in various fees when crossing the border into Zimbabwe.

Train

While the bus is a much quicker way to get around, the *Zambezi Express* is more for lovers of slow travel or trains. It leaves Livingstone for Lusaka (economy/1st class/sleeper ZMW30/45/45, 15 hours), via Choma, on Tuesday and Friday at 8pm. Reservations are available at the **train station** (☎320001), which is signed off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd.

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

Livingstone Airport is located 6km northwest of town, and is easily accessible by taxi (ZMW50 each way).

Combis & Taxis

Combis run regularly along Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd to Victoria Falls and the Zambian border, 11km south of Livingstone (ZMW5, 15 minutes). Blue taxis cost ZMW40 to ZMW50 from the border to Livingstone. Coming from the border, combis are parked just over from the waiting taxis, and depart when full.

Car Hire

Hemingways (☎320996; www.hemingwayszambia.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) in Livingstone has new Toyota Hi-Lux 4WDs for around US\$210 per day. Prices include cooking and camping equipment. Drivers must be over 25.

ZIMBABWE

☑ 263

There may still be a long way to go, but finally things seem to be looking up for Zimbabwe. All the bad news that has kept it in the glare of the spotlight – rampant land reform, hyperinflation and food shortages – fortunately

now seem to be a thing of the past. In reality, safety has never been a concern for travelers here and, even during the worst of it, tourists were never targets for political violence. Word of this seems to have spread, as tourists stream back to the Zim side of the falls.

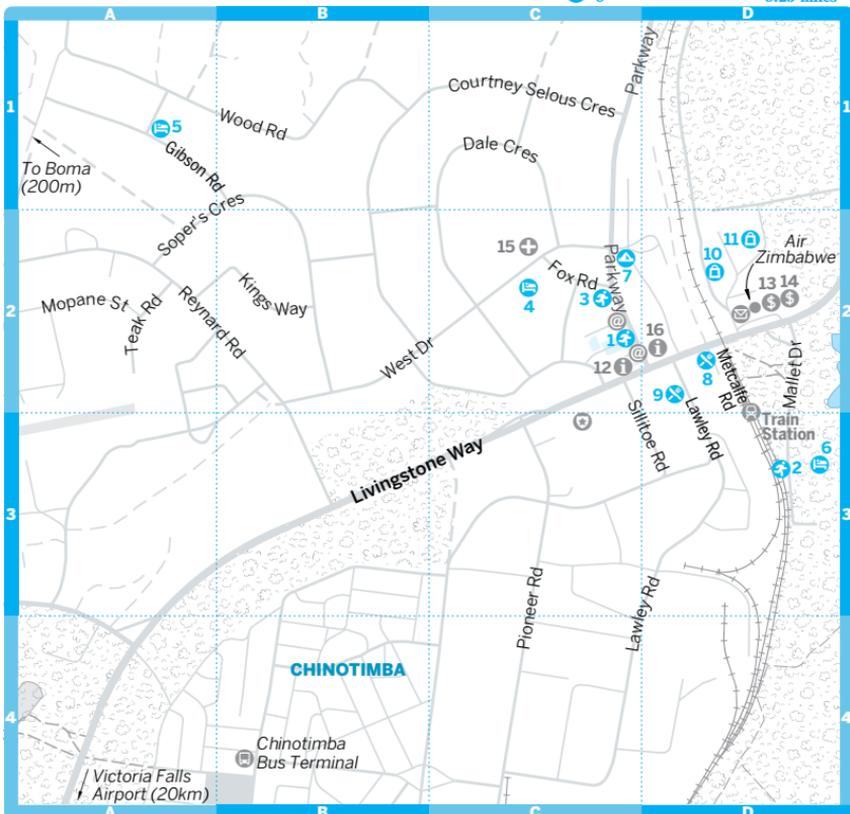
Victoria Falls

☑ 013

Having temporarily lost its mantle to Livingstone as the falls' premier tourist town, the town of Victoria Falls has reclaimed what's historically theirs as tourists return across the border in numbers.

Unlike Livingstone, the town was built for tourism. It is right upon the falls with neat, walkable streets (though not at dark, because of the wild animals) lined with hotels, bars and some of the best crafts you'll find in Southern Africa. While for a few years it felt like a resort in off-season, there's

Victoria Falls



no mistake about it now – it's officially reopened for business.

Sights & Activities

TOP CHOICE **Victoria Falls National Park** WATERFALL (admission US\$30; ☀6am-6pm) Located just before the border crossing and about 1km from the town centre, here on the Zim side of the falls you're in for a real treat. The walk is along the top of the gorge on a path, with various viewing points opening up to the extraordinary front-on panoramas of these world-famous falls. One of the most dramatic spots is the westernmost point known as **Cataract View**. Another track leads to the aptly named **Danger Point**, where a sheer, unfenced 100m drop-off will rattle your nerves. From there, you can follow a side track for a view of the **Victoria Falls Bridge**.

Hire a raincoat and umbrella just inside the gates if you go in April, or you may as well walk in your swimsuit – you will get soaked! The park is open again in the evenings during (and just before and after) a full moon, in order to see the amazing lunar rainbow (tickets cost an extra US\$10).

Zambezi National Park WILDLIFE RESERVE (admission US\$15; ☀6am-6.30pm) Consisting of 40km of Zambezi River frontage and a spread of wildlife-rich mopane forest and savannah, this national park is best known for its herds of sable antelopes, but it is also

home to giraffes, elephants and an occasional lion. The entrance to the park is only 5km northwest of the Victoria Falls town centre, and is easily accessible by private vehicle. Tour operators on both sides of the border offer wildlife drives, guided hikes and fishing expeditions.

FREE **Jafuta Heritage Centre**

CULTURAL CENTRE (www.elephantswalk.com/heritage; Elephant's Walk Shopping Village, off Adam Stander Dr; ☀8am-6pm) This worthwhile collection details the cultural heritage of local ethnic groups, from Shona, Ndebele, Tonga and Lozi people.

Sleeping

TOP CHOICE **Victoria Falls Hotel** LUXURY HOTEL \$\$\$ (☎44751; www.victoria-falls-hotels.net; 2 Mallet Dr; s/d incl breakfast from US\$312/336; 📶📶📶) Built in 1904, this historic hotel (the oldest in Zimbabwe) oozes elegance and sophistication, and occupies an impossibly scenic location. Looking across manicured lawns (with roaming warthogs) to the gorge and bridge, you can't see the falls as such but you do see the spray from some rooms. High tea here at Stanley's Terrace is an institution.

Shoestrings Backpackers BACKPACKERS \$ (☎40167; 12 West Dr; campsite per person US\$6, dm/d US\$9/35; 📶📶📶) A perennial favourite

Victoria Falls

Sights

Jafuta Heritage Centre.....(see 11)

Activities, Courses & Tours

- 1 Shearwater Victoria Falls..... C2
- 2 Victoria Falls Steam Train Co..... D3
- 3 Wild Horizons..... C2

Sleeping

- 4 Shoestrings Backpackers..... C2
- 5 Victoria Falls Backpackers..... A1
- 6 Victoria Falls Hotel..... D3
- 7 Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges..... C2

Eating

- Africa Cafe.....(see 11)
- In Da Belly Restaurant.....(see 7)
- 8 Lola's Tapas & Bar..... D2
- 9 Mama Africa..... D2

Drinking

Shoestrings Backpackers.....(see 4)
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Shopping

- 10 Curio Shops.....D2
- 11 Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village.....D2
- Jairos Jiri Crafts.....(see 11)
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- 12 Backpackers Bazaar.....C2
- 13 Barclays Bank.....D2
- 14 Standard Chartered Bank.....D2
- 15 Victoria Falls Surgery.....C2
- 16 Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.....D2

Victoria Falls & Mosi-oa-Tunya National Parks



DETOUR: VICTORIA FALLS VICTORIA FALLS

for backpackers, both the overland truck crowd and independent variety, who are here for its laid-back ambience, swimming pool and social bar (things gets very rowdy here on weekends). Rooms are a mix of dorms or privates, or pitch a tent. They also book all activities.

Elephant Camp

LUXURY LODGE \$\$\$

(www.theelephantcamp.com; s/d full board US\$350/700; @☎📶) One of the best spots to splash out; the luxurious 'tents' have a classic lodge feel and are set on a private game reserve looking out to the mopane woodland savannah. Each room has its own outdoor private plunge pool and balcony decking to spot grazing animals or the spray of the falls. You might get to meet Sylvester, the resident cheetah.

Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges

CAMPSITE, LODGE \$

(☎40509; www.vicfallsrestcamp.com; cnr Parkway & West Dr; campsite/dm/fitted dome tents US\$10/11/20, s/d chalets without bathroom US\$25/34, cottages US\$67; 📶📶) A great alternative for budget travellers wanting to avoid the party atmosphere of other backpackers. Rooms are basic no-frills lodge-style and tented camps. There's a lovely pool and fantastic

open-air restaurant, In Da Belly. Rooms are basic, but spotless.

Victoria Falls Backpackers

BACKPACKERS \$

(☎42209; www.victoriafallsbackpackers.com; 357 Gibson Rd; campsite per person US\$4, dm US\$8, s/d without bathroom US\$10/20; @📶) Slightly rough around the edges, and a bit further away from the centre of town, it nevertheless remains a very good choice for budget travellers wanting a more laid-back environment.

Bengula Cottages

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(☎45945, 0778-173286; www.bengulacottages.com; 645 Mahogany Rd; s/d/f low season US\$60/100/120, high season \$US100/160/220; 📶) In the leafy suburbs, these attractive units are a solid midrange choice set around a shady pool with paper lanterns strung up and a relaxed atmosphere. The communal kitchen comes well equipped.

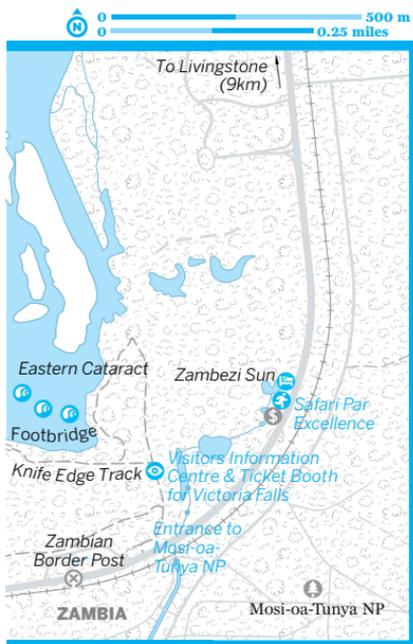


Eating

In Da Belly Restaurant

AFRICAN, INTERNATIONAL \$

(☎332077; Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges; meals US\$5-15; ☎7am-9.30pm) Under a large thatched hut, looking out to a sparkling pool, this relaxed open-air eatery has a menu of warthog schnitzel, crocodile curry and impala burgers, as well as one of the



best breakfast menus in town. The name is a play on Ndebele, one of the two major population tribes in Zimbabwe.

Africa Cafe

CAFE \$

(www.elephantswalk.com/africa_cafe.htm; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Art Village; ☺8am-5pm; 📍) This appealing outdoor cafe at the Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village, with smiley staff, is a great place to refuel with quality coffee, delicious breakfast, burgers and vegetarian food.

Lola's Tapas & Bar

SPANISH \$\$

(☎42994; 8B Landela Complex; tapas US\$2-9; ☺8am-10pm; 📍) Tapas such as *patatas bravas* and *calamares a la Romana* served by a welcoming couple from Barcelona. Dine outdoors or in the more intimate indoor area. Jugs of sangria available (US\$15).

Mama Africa

AFRICAN \$\$

(☎41725; www.mamaafricaeatinghouse.com; meals US\$5-8; ☺10am-10pm) This long-time tourist haunt behind the Landela Centre specialises in local dishes, steaks and game meats. Also has regular live music and traditional dance performances.

Boma

AFRICAN \$\$

(off Map p544; ☎43211; www.thebomarestaurant.com; Squire Cummings Rd, Victoria Falls Safari

Lodge; buffet US\$40; ☺dinner 7pm) While it may be a bit of a tourist trap, Boma manages to be more genuine than tacky. Enjoy a taste of Africa at this buffet restaurant set under a massive thatched roof. Dine on smoked guinea-fowl starter, impala-knuckle terrine or spit-roast warthog. There's also traditional dancing, interactive drumming and fortune telling by a witch doctor.



Drinking



Stanley's Terrace

RESTAURANT

(Mallet Dr, Victoria Falls Hotel; high tea for 2 people US\$30; ☺high tea 3-6pm; 📍) The Terrace at the stately Victoria Falls Hotel just brims with English colonial ambience. High tea is served with a postcard-perfect backdrop of the gardens and Vic Falls Bridge, with polished silverware, decadent cakes and three-tiered trays of finger sandwiches (cucumber? why yes, of course). Jugs of Pimms are perfect on a summer day at US\$22. The only thing missing is the croquet.

Shoestrings Backpackers

BAR

(12 West Dr) It's fairly laid back during the week, while weekends often feel like a house party as the dance floor gets a lot of action.



Shopping

A good selection of craft shops are located along Adam Stander Dr, with a quality items such as Shona sculpture and pieces made from recycled materials.



Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village

SHOPPING CENTRE

(☎0772-254552; www.elephantswalk.com; Adam Stander Dr) A must for those in the market for quality Zimbabwean and African craft, this shopping village is home to boutique stores and galleries owned by a collective that aims to promote and set up local artists.

Prime Art Gallery

ART

(☎342783; www.primeart-gallery.com; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Arts Village) Sells original pieces by Dominic Benhura, Zimbabwe's most prominent current-day Shona sculptor whose work has been exhibited around the world.

Matsimela

BEAUTY

(www.matsimela.co.za; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Arts Village; ☺8am-5pm) South African body-care brand Matsimela has set up store here with an enticing aroma of natural scented soaps and body scrubs such as rose and

lychee and baobab-seed oil. Also has a branch at Doon Estate in Harare.

Jairos Jiri Crafts

(Victoria Falls Curio Village; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm Sat, 8.30am-1pm Sun) Good range of Shona arts and crafts, with proceeds assisting disadvantaged locals.

CRAFTS

Ndau Collection

(☎386221; www.ndaujewelry.com) Watch local artisans hand-make individually pieced silver bracelets, rings and necklaces at this store-workshop. They also sell exquisite antique African trade beads to be incorporated into custom-made jewellery.

JEWELLERY

i Information

Dangers & Annoyances

Mugging is not such a problem anymore, but at dawn and dusk wild animals such as elephants and warthogs do roam the streets away from the town centre, so take taxis at these times. Although it's perfectly safe to walk to and from the falls, it's advisable to stick to the more tourist areas.

Emergency

Medical Air Rescue Service (MARS; ☎44764)

Police (☎44206; Livingstone Way)

Victoria Falls Surgery (☎43356; West Dr)

Internet Access

Econet (Park Way; per 30min/1hr US\$1/2;

☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat & Sun)

Telco (☎43441; Phumula Centre; per hr US\$1;

☎8am-6pm)

Money

Barclays Bank (off Livingstone Way)

Standard Chartered Bank (off Livingstone Way)

Post

Post Office (off Livingstone Way)

Tourist Information

Backpackers Bazaar (☎013-45828; www.backpackersbazaarvicfalls.com; off Parkway; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) Definitive place for all tourist info and bookings.

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (☎44202; zta@vicfalls.ztazim.co.zw; 258 Adam Stander Dr; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) A few brochures, but not very useful.

i Getting There & Away

Air

Check out www.flightsite.co.za or www.travelstart.co.za, where you can search all the airlines

including low-cost carriers (and car-hire companies) for the cheapest flights and book yourself.

South African Airways (☎011-808678; www.flysaa.com) and **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) fly every day to Johannesburg from around US\$320 return. **Air Namibia** (www.airnamibia.com) flies to Windhoek for around US\$530 return.

Bus & Minibus

TO JOHANNESBURG

By road the easiest option is Pathfinder from Vic Falls to Bulawayo (arrives 1pm) then connect with Intercaper Greyhound at 4pm to Johannesburg.

TO BULAWAYO/HWANGE

Pathfinder has a daily service to Bulawayo (US\$30, six hours) en route to Harare (US\$60, 12 hours), stopping outside Hwange National Park on the way. Bravo Tours also plies the route for similar prices. Otherwise combis (US\$20) and local buses (US\$15) head to Bulawayo.

Car & Motorcycle

If you're driving a rented vehicle into Zambia, you need to make sure you have insurance and carbon tax papers, as well original owner documents. When you enter Zambia you are issued with a Temporary Import Permit, valid for while you are in the country. This must be returned to immigration for them to acquit the vehicle.

Train

A popular way of getting to/from Vic Falls is by the overnight Mosi-oa-Tunya train that leaves Victoria Falls daily at 7pm for Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (economy/2nd/1st class US\$8/10/12, 12 hours). First class is the only way to go. Make reservations at the **ticket office** (☎44392; ☎7am-10am & 2.30-6.45pm Mon-Fri, 9-10am & 4.30-6.45pm Sat & Sun) inside the train station.

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

Victoria Falls Airport is located 20km southeast of town, and is easily accessible by taxi (US\$30 each way). Another option is to book a transfer with one of the companies through your hostel or travel agent in Vic Falls. Transfers are US\$15 per person one way.

Car & Motorcycle

At the time of research, petrol was readily available in petrol stations. Avis and Europcar both have offices at the Vic Falls airport.

Taxis

A taxi around town costs about US\$10, slightly more after dark.



Zambia

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Best Off the Beaten Path

- » Shiwa Ng'andu (p581)
- » Liuwa Plain National Park (p576)
- » Lake Bangweulu (p580)
- » Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage (p585)

Best Places to Stay

- » Busanga Plains Camp (p573)
- » South Luangwa bushcamps (p564)
- » Chongwe River Camp (p573)
- » Ndole Bay Lodge (p573)
- » Kapishya Hot Springs Lodge (p573)

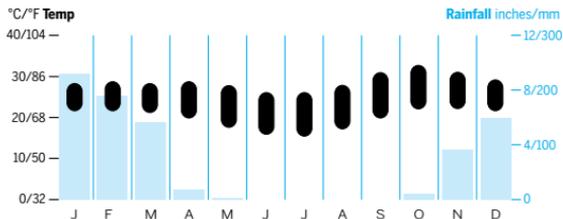
Why Go?

Get out into the bush where animals, both predators and prey, wander through unfenced camps, where night-time means swapping stories around the fire and where the human footprint is nowhere to be seen. The rewards of travelling in Zambia are those of exploring remote, mesmerising wilderness as full of an astonishing diversity of wildlife as any part of Southern Africa. The geography is similarly varied: one day you can canoe down a wide, placid river, and the next raft through raging rapids near world-famous Victoria Falls.

Though the country is landlocked, three great rivers, the Kafue, the Luangwa and the Zambezi, flow through Zambia, defining both its geography and the rhythms of life for many of its people. For the independent traveller, however, Zambia is a logistical challenge because of its sheer size, dilapidated road network and upmarket facilities. For those who do venture here, though, the relative lack of crowds means an even more satisfying journey.

When to Go

Lusaka



Late May–early Oct Dry season; prime wildlife-viewing time; October can be brutally hot.

Jun–Aug Generally dry, though temperatures are cooler; can get downright frosty at night.

Dec–Apr Rainy season; landscape vibrant, though wildlife difficult to spot; many lodges closed.



Zambia Highlights

- 1 Walking like a detective following the tracks of wild animals in **South Luangwa National Park** (p561)
- 2 Paddling a canoe down the **Zambezi River** (p567) past

pod of hippos, menacing-looking crocs and thirsty elephants

- 3 Rafting, bungee jumping or getting your adrenaline going in any one

of the adventures available at **Victoria Falls** (p534)

- 4 Spotting leopards in **Kafue National Park** (p572), a behemoth wilderness area

LUSAKA

📍0211 / POP 1.4 MILLION / ELEV 1300M

All roads lead to Lusaka, the geographic, commercial and metaphorical heart of the country. Zambia's capital and largest urban zone is a mishmash of dusty tree-lined streets, bustling African markets, modern commerce and Soviet-looking high-rise blocks. The city doesn't easily justify exploration by the casual visitor, as there are no real attractions: no grand monuments to drool over, no historical treasures to unearth. However, for some, the city's genuine African feel, cosmopolitan populace, and quality restaurants and accommodation – at least as far as top-end hotels go – is reason enough to spend a night or two.

Sights & Activities

The main commercial thoroughfare, or at least that of the 'old' central business district is Cairo Rd, lined with basic shops, fast-food outlets, banks and offices. To the north and south are major traffic roundabouts. West of Cairo Rd are small shops selling everything from maize meal to auto parts and then the crowded and chaotic city markets. East of Cairo Rd, across the railway line and near the train station, is the Inter-City Bus Station. Further east are the wide jacaranda-lined streets of the smarter residential suburbs and the area officially called Embassy Triangle (not surprisingly, home to many embassies and high commissions). Further east and north, around Manda Hill and Arcades Shopping Centres, is where many visitors end up spending the bulk of their time.

Munda Wanga Environmental Park ZOO

(📍0211-278614; www.mundawanga.com; Kafue Rd, Chilanga; adult/child ZMW25/15; 🕒8am-5pm Mon-Thu, to 6pm Fri-Sun) Munda Wanga Environmental Park rehabilitates all sorts of animals for re-entry into the wild, including rarely seen pangolins and owls used for black magic. The park features plenty of regional fauna, including cheetahs, lions and wild dogs; feeding time is 2pm Friday to Sunday. The park is shabby in parts with slightly dilapidated enclosures, but the animals seem well cared for and it's perhaps the first and only exposure to wildlife for Zambians in Lusaka. But the lovely **botanical gardens**, with nearly 500 species of plants and one of the few places in the city suitable for a picnic, is at least as much of a reason to visit.

Munda Wanga is about 16km south of central Lusaka and accessible by any minibus heading towards Chilanga or Kafue from the Kalima Towers Bus Station or South End Roundabout (near the downtown Spar supermarket).

Lusaka City Market

MARKET

(Los Angeles Rd, New City Market; 🕒7am-7pm) Fronted by the chaotic and congested eponymously named bus station as well as a veritable Maginot line of sidewalk vendors, the Lusaka City Market can be a challenge to reach. Unfortunately, while the place is large, lively and packed to the rafters, the clothing and housewares sold in the warren of stalls aren't of much interest to the average traveler.

Soweto Market

MARKET

(New City Market) Soweto is the largest market in Lusaka (and Zambia). The sheer scale of the place, essentially a densely packed shanty town spilling out into the surrounding streets in a haphazard fashion, the amount of goods on offer and the number of people buzzing around can be overwhelming – consider a visit on a Sunday when things are a little quieter. Immediately to the west of the market is the New Soweto Market, a dull and only partly occupied building with numbered stalls under a covered roof.

National Museum

MUSEUM

(Nasser Rd; adult/child ZMW20/12; 🕒9am-4.30pm) This big square box of a building resembling a Soviet-era Moscow ministry is not much more than a shell of a museum. The decade-long plan to renovate the upstairs galleries to include exhibitions on urban culture and Zambian history seems to be in a permanent state of suspension, leaving a rather decrepit hodgepodge of cultural, ethnographic and archaeological artifacts. Some of the textual descriptions related to witchcraft and initiation ceremonies are interesting at least. Contemporary Zambian paintings and sculpture are displayed downstairs.

Sleeping

Lusaka's sleeping options are pretty spread out, although if you're looking for a backpackers there are several within a few blocks of one another. In central Lusaka midrange and top-end options are clustered around Rhodes Park and Embassy Triangle; in Greater Lusaka most accommodation tends to be in the east, off Great East Rd, in the direction of the

airport. An important factor to keep in mind is proximity to restaurants; often this means the closer to a mall the better.

Lusaka Backpackers

BACKPACKERS \$

(☎0977 805483; www.lusakabackpackers.com; 161 Mulombwa Cl; dm ZMW75, r with/without bathroom ZMW250/150; @☎) With few alternatives, this deservedly popular place (formerly Chachacha) is the obvious choice for those on a budget in Lusaka. The centrepiece of activity is the patio area out front, with a small pool and bar that can get lively and loud, especially on weekends. The backyard accommodation options are better all around than those up front: a mixed dorm is nicer and quieter than the smaller and barer ones up front; and two basic safari tents, the simply furnished A-frame double and 'log cabin', all in the backyard, are the most pleasant accommodation. Other facilities include a restaurant (serving basic meals); a tub for doing laundry; a communal, dilapidated kitchen and baggage storage. Organises overnight safari trips to national parks and Livingstone.

Zamcom Lodge

HOTEL \$

(☎0211-253503; doreen@zamcom.ac.zm; Church Rd; r ZMW250; ☎) Though it looks like a school built in the '70s or earlier, this small motel-style complex has simple spick-and-span rooms. There's a shady courtyard-car park with resident turkeys strutting their stuff out the front. Conferences and wedding receptions aren't uncommon on weekends, so it's best to check with reception beforehand as these can be loud and raucous affairs.

Stay Easy Lusaka

HOTEL \$\$\$

(☎0211-372000; www.tsogosunhotels.com; cnr Church & Kabalenga Rds, Levy Junction; r incl breakfast ZMW500; ☎@☎) Only in Lusaka would a mall parking lot be considered an ideal location for a hotel. But not only is this smart boutique-style property, part of a South African hotel group along with the Southern Sun, within shouting distance of Levy Junction's restaurants, banks and cinema but also it's a short walk to Inter-City Bus Station and Cairo Rd. Rooms are small – as are the wall-mounted flat-screen TVs – but comfortable, and you can always decamp to the backyard patio pool area or breakfast dining room for more elbow room during the day. Free wi-fi is a bonus.

Bongwe Barn

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(☎0977 762096; www.bongwesafaris.com; 305 Ngwezi Rd, Roma; s/d with shared bathroom ZMW175/250, with private bathroom ZMW250/350; ☎) In a quiet suburban neighborhood, Bongwe's seven rooms offer a secure and social – if you're so inclined – refuge. Simply furnished rooms line a single hallway with a stocked kitchen (coffee, toast and scones for breakfast) and a living room at one end. Out the back is a small pool and members-only bar (guests of course are considered members) with a TV tuned to international sporting events, a pool table and a menu of hearty steaks and other fare. It's 2.5km north (and just slightly west) of Arcades Shopping Centre.

Pioneer Camp

CAMPGROUND, CHALET \$\$

(☎0966 432700; www.pioneercampzambia.com; Palabana Rd, off Great East Rd; r ZMW300, campsites per person ZMW35; ☎) An isolated 25-acre camp, surrounded by bird-rich woodland, Pioneer is the accommodation of choice for many expats living outside Lusaka. Most of the widely dispersed and simply furnished thatch-roofed chalets have flagstone floors, small verandahs and large bathrooms. The well-kept facilities for campers are up the front next to the comfortable bar, lounge and restaurant (mains ZMW70) area (which has a small plunge pool), where the free wi-fi reception works best. The campground's signposted 5km south of Great East Rd; if you don't have a car, a transfer from the airport or city centre should run around ZMW150.

Wayside Bed & Breakfast

GUESTHOUSE \$\$\$

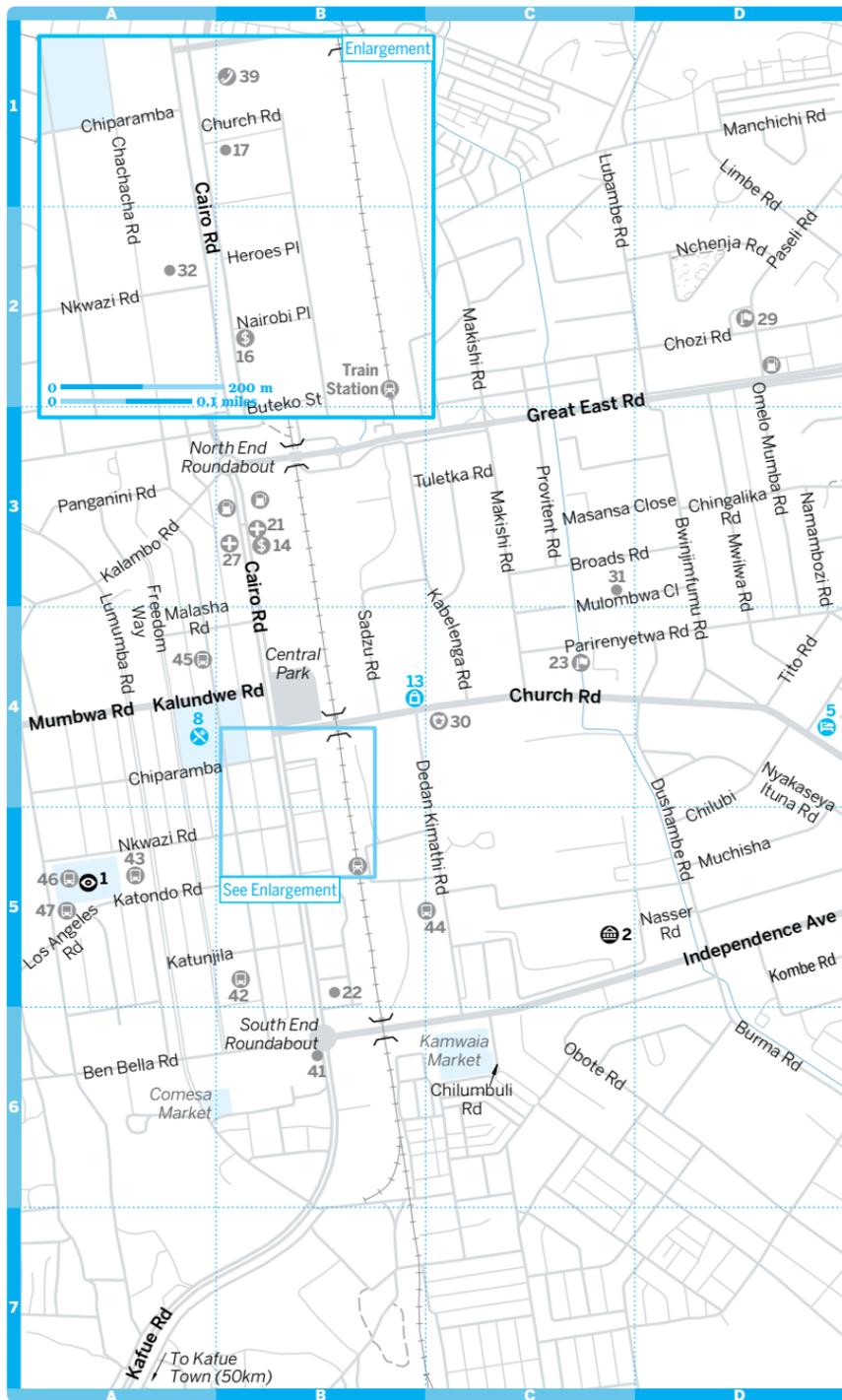
(☎0211-273439; www.wayside-guesthouse.com; 39 Makeni Rd, Makeni; s/d incl breakfast ZMW500/550; ☎) This upmarket and peaceful guesthouse is one of the best in Lusaka, with only a handful of snug, en suite rooms. It used to be a farm and today the sizeable grounds are devoted to the owners' love of gardening, and really are magnificent (and ever growing); this is a place where you can wander well away from other guests. Three rooms in a separate cottage have air conditioning and there's a lounge with TV and comfortable couches. Located around 4.5km southwest of the South End Roundabout on Cairo Rd.

Kilimanjaro Country Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

(☎0211-255830; www.kilimanjarozambia.com; Leopards Hill Rd; s/d incl breakfast ZMW540/648; ☎) A good out-of-town option – especially for groups and families – around 7.5km east

Lusaka



Lusaka

📍 Sights

- 1 Lusaka City Market..... A5
 2 National Museum..... C5
 Soweto Market..... (see 1)

🛏 Sleeping

- Lusaka Backpackers..... (see 31)
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 4 Taj Pamodzi Hotel..... E4
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🍴 Eating

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- 9 InterContinental Hotel..... F5
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🛍 Shopping

- 12 Kabwata Cultural Village..... F7
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- 14 Barclays Bank..... B3
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 25 French Embassy..... F5
 26 German Embassy..... G5
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 28 Kenyan High Commission..... G5
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 31 River Safari Company..... C3
 32 Steve Blagus Travel..... A2
 33 Swedish Embassy..... H4
 34 Tanzanian High Commission..... G5
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🚗 Transport

- Air Botswana..... (see 9)
 41 Air Malawi..... B6
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 42 City Bus Station..... B5
 43 Lusaka City Market Bus Station..... A5
 44 Lusaka Inter-City Bus Station..... C5
 45 Millennium Bus Station..... A4
 46 New Soweto Minibus Station..... A5
 47 Soweto Market Bus Station..... A5

of the city centre, Kilimanjaro consists of several well-kept low-slung buildings on a manicured lawn. The 10 rooms are spacious and simply furnished and management is responsive to any requests. Another eight rooms and a pool were in the works at the time of our visit. The curio-filled garden restaurant here has a large menu (mains ZMW45) and a mouth-watering selection of desserts; there's a playground for children and mini pony rides as well.

Southern Sun Ridgeway

HOTEL \$\$\$

(☎0211-251666; www.southern.sun.com; cnr Church Rd & Independence Ave; s/d incl breakfast ZMW1445/1602; 🍷🍴🚶) Deservedly popular with in-the-know expats and a coterie of international business and government types, the Southern Sun is a no-brainer for those seeking an affordable low-key, comfort-

able city-centre option. Rooms are tastefully done in muted tones - those in the 'weaver' block wing are the most newly renovated (all are due to be refurbished by the summer of 2013). Past the foyer is an inviting outdoor sitting area surrounding a fish pond and **Musuku**, a restaurant serving possibly the best breakfast and dinner buffet in the city. A pub, small gym, large outdoor pool area and free wi-fi round out the offerings. Conveniently on the premises are a Barclays Bank and offices for South African Airways and Proflight.

Taj Pamodzi Hotel

HOTEL \$\$\$

(☎0211-254455; www.tajhotels.com; Church Rd; s/d incl breakfast from US\$300/325; 🍷🍴🚶) An oasis of luxury and tranquility with fastidiously trained staff, the Taj is a welcoming cushion for travellers transitioning between

the bush and home. Featuring plush bedding and top-quality amenities, from slippers to skincare products, rooms at the Taj are a step up from others in a similar category in Lusaka. Views from the top-floor balconies of the sprawling city below are incomparable. A lavish breakfast buffet is served in one of the hotel's restaurants – the other, Steaks & Grills, does candlelit dinner outside with live music most nights – and drinks can be had at the bar, accompanied by the tinkling of a piano. Guests have access to the full-service gym – racquetball, anyone? – and spa out the back next to a lovely pool and patio area.

Eating

The better places tend to congregate either inside or fairly close to the three main shopping centres: **Arcades** (Great East Rd), **Levy Junction** (cnr Church & Kabalenga Rds) or **Manda Hill** (Great East Rd), where you'll find massive and modern grocery stores, a handful of quality independent restaurants and a wide range of mostly South African fast-food and chain ones (Manda Hill probably has the best selection). Other options are scattered around the suburbs, especially around Embassy Triangle and Rhodes Park.

For local meals, the food stalls at the **Town Centre Market** (Chachacha Rd) serve cheap local food, but the scavenging dogs roaming the piles of rubbish are not a sight for the squeamish. Sausages and steaks are grilled before your eyes and served with a generous portion of veg and *nshima* (maize porridge) for around ZMW10. Other food stalls are scattered elsewhere around the city.

Deli

CAFE, BAKERY \$

(Lunzua Rd, Rhodes Park; mains ZMW25; ☺7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat; ☺) With an enviable garden setting and excellent coffee, the Deli is a good place to plant yourself for a few hours. The sophisticated kitchen turns out all-day breakfasts such as eggs and French toast, speciality sandwiches like Asian-pork meatballs and classics like pastrami, wood-fired pizzas and homemade ice cream.

Design House Cafe

INTERNATIONAL, ORGANIC \$\$

(Leopards Hill Rd, Sugarbush Farm; mains ZMW35-60; ☺8am-5pm Tue-Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) This picture-postcard idyllic cafe is worth every kwacha of the journey it takes to get here. Chill out for an afternoon at one of the picnic tables munching on homemade bread

and pastries, salads made with vegetables from the organic garden and expertly prepared sandwiches, pasta and meat dishes as well as a glass of wine. It's southeast of the city centre on the same premises as the also highly recommended shop Jackal & Hide.

Chicago's

STEAKHOUSE \$\$

(Manda Hill Shopping Centre, Great East Rd; mains ZMW45-115; ☺lunch & dinner) This theme restaurant – think Al Capone and gangsters, not meat-packing plants and 'duh Bears – located on the mall's 2nd floor is a nighttime haunt of Lusaka's young, prosperous and stylish. The large menu specialises in steaks and seafood, though the quality is akin to, well, a theme restaurant.

Oriental Garden Restaurant

CHINESE, INDIAN \$\$

(United Nations Ave; mains ZMW25-65; ☺lunch & dinner; ☺) Forget the Chinese and grill dishes at the back of the menu and stick to the speciality: Indian. There's a small bar terrace area (with a pool, for diners in need of a refreshing dip?) and a spacious indoor dining room, offering excellent service. Good veggie options are on the menu, such as a tasty masala kofta.

Rhapsody's

INTERNATIONAL \$\$\$

(Arcades Shopping Centre, Great East Rd; mains ZMW55-110; ☺) Despite the views of the shopping-centre car park, this is one of the best places to eat in Lusaka. The international menu does everything from steaks to Thai chicken, salads and even nasi goreng. There are also lots of seafood dishes, but try the chicken Espetada, a delicious Portuguese-inspired chicken dish whose presentation will have you playing hangman in minutes.

Plates Restaurant &

Wine Bar

INTERNATIONAL \$\$\$

(☺0211-841015; Acacia Park, Great East Rd; mains ZMW60-95; ☺noon-10pm Mon-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat) In a modern office park with nice outdoor seating next to Arcades Shopping Centre, Plates is quickly becoming regarded as one of the city's best restaurants. A Culinary Institute of America-trained chef prepares sophisticated dishes like almond-crustured bream, Kansas barbeque-style ribs, plus good burgers and wraps. The menu changes monthly.



Drinking & Entertainment

Bars and restaurants aren't allowed to sell alcohol after 11pm, nightclubs 2am; it's prohibited everywhere on Sunday.

Lusaka nightclubs play internationally familiar house music on weekends. The pub at the **InterContinental Hotel** (☎0211-250000; www.ichotelsgroup.com; Haile Selassie Ave; 📶) is good for watching English Premier League and rugby on the telly, as is O'Hagan's, though it's less conveniently located in Kabulonga. Most of the hotels, from backpackers to top-end places, have their own bars. Levy Junction and Manda Hill Shopping Centres have stylish and state-of-the-art Fresh View Cinemas, and Ster-Kinekor is at Arcades (tickets from ZMW16). The busy casino at Arcades Shopping Centre is one of the most popular in the city, especially with Chinese businessmen and visitors.

Polo Grill

BAR

(2374 Nangwenya Rd; ☎8am-midnight) A large, open-air bar under an enormous thatched roof overlooking a huge, well-kept polo field (where you can occasionally catch a live match); it's all rather incongruous for Lusaka, but it's an exceedingly pleasant place to knock back a few Mosi's and catch some live music.

O'Hagans

PUB

(Manda Hill Shopping Centre, Great East Road) This South African chain pub, popular with South Africans and Brits, is ideal if you like fake Irish pubs and a more Western drinking experience. There are decent beers and a great outdoor terrace, even if it does overlook a car park.



Shopping

Sunday Market

MARKET

(Arcades Shopping Centre, Great East Rd; ☎9am-6pm Sun) This weekly market in the car park at the Arcades Shopping Centre features Lusaka's best range of handicrafts, especially wood carvings, curios made from malachite and African prints. Bargaining is expected, though it's a relaxing, low-pressure affair.

Jackal & Hide

ACCESSORIES

(www.jackalandhide.net; Leopards Hill Rd) For extremely high-quality leather goods, especially purses, travel bags and accessories, head to this spot that shares an idyllic location with a highly recommended cafe on Sugarbush Farm east of Kabulonga, around 15km from the city centre.

Kabwata Cultural Village

HANDICRAFTS

(Burma Rd; ☎9am-5pm) You'll find a scruffy collection of thatch-roofed huts and stalls selling carvings, baskets, masks, drums, fab-

rics and more at this place southeast of the city centre. Prices are cheap, however, because you can buy directly from the workers who live here.

i Information

Emergency

Ambulance (☎994)

Police (☎991; Church Rd)

Specialty Emergency Services (☎0211-273302; www.ses-zambia.com) For evacuations. Has bases in Lusaka, Livingstone and Kitwe but operates throughout the country. Also has ambulances and in-patient care.

Internet Access

Wireless internet is available all over Lusaka now – at many cafes, restaurants and hotels. Look for the 'I Spot' sign. All three of the large malls have internet cafes and there are a couple along Cairo Rd; however, these seem to come and go with some frequency.

I-Zone Internet (Arcades Shopping Centre, Great East Rd; per 30min ZMW6; ☎9am-9pm) Reliable, fast internet access, plus wireless facility.

Medical Services

Corpmid (☎0211-222612; Cairo Rd; ☎24hr) Behind Barclays Bank. Has a doctor on duty 24 hours and is probably the city's best-equipped facility. Also runs its own ambulance service.

Greenwood Pharmacy (☎0211-227811; 680 Cairo Rd)

Money

Banks (Barclays Bank, FNB, Indo-Zambian Bank, Standard Chartered Bank and Zanaco) with ATMs and bureaux de change are located in Arcades, Levy Junction and Manda Hill Shopping Centres, along Cairo Rd and elsewhere in Lusaka, such as on Haile Selassie Ave.

Safe Travel

As in most African cities, pickpockets take advantage of crowds, so be alert in the markets and bus stations and along the busy streets immediately west of Cairo Rd. At night, most streets are dark and often empty, so even if you're on a tight budget, take a taxi. It would be foolish to wander the streets after dark, especially in and around Cairo Rd.

Lumumba Rd, parallel to and just west of Cairo Rd, has a bad reputation for robbery, especially from cars at a standstill in traffic jams, and especially from foreigners. Keep your windows up and doors locked if driving down this road.

Telephone & Fax

A dozen telephone booths (using tokens and phonecards) can be found outside the post

office. 'Phone shops' and 'fax bureaux' are dotted along Cairo Rd.

Zamtel (cnr Cairo & Church Rds) International calls can be made and faxes sent at the telephone office upstairs from the main post office.

Tourist Information

Zambia National Tourist Board (☎0211-229087; www.zambiatourism.com; 1st fl, Petroda House, Great East Rd; ☀8am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) Information and maps of Lusaka are limited.

Travel Agencies

Bimm Travel Agency (☎0211-234372; www.bimmtourszambia.com; shop 3, Luangwa House, Cairo Rd) Just south of the post office, Bimm is reliable and locally run. It can also arrange car hire.

Bush Buzz (☎0211-256992; www.bush-buzz.com) Organises trips to Kafue, Lower Zambezi and South Luangwa National Parks and Livingstone.

Steve Blagus Travel (☎0211-227739; www.sbltravel.com; 24 Nkwazi Rd; ☀8am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 11.30am Sat) The agency for Amex and a dozen upmarket lodges and camps; also organises regional and domestic tours.

Voyagers (☎0211-253064; www.voyagerszambia.com; Suez Rd) Perhaps the most popular agency in Zambia (it has other offices in Ndola, Chingola and Kitwe), it arranges flights and hotel reservations and partners with Europcar for car hire.

i Getting There & Away

Air

There's a departure tax of ZMW156 per person applicable to all international flights. Before you make your way to the relevant counter to pay, check with your airline, as it's often included in the price of your ticket. You *will* have to pay the ZMW58 tax at the counter (just outside and to the right of the entrance of the domestic lounge) for all domestic departures.

The humble international airport has slim pickings as far as services are concerned. There's a coffee stand in the main hall, or make your way upstairs to the Copper Chimney Restaurant. Once you're through security for international flights the only eating option is a very basic bar selling reheated burgers, hot dogs and pies (ZMW25); a couple of shops sell a poor selection of overpriced curios. Several ATMs, a bureau de change, Europcar and Avis rental-car offices and Airtel and MTN mobile-phone company offices are in the hallway immediately outside the arrivals area.

For further information on air travel in Zambia, see p597.

Bus & Minibus

DOMESTIC

From in front of the massive and chaotic **Lusaka City Market Bus Station** (Lumumba Rd) buses and minibuses leave for nearby towns such as Kafue (ZMW25, one hour, 10 to 15 daily), Chirundu (ZMW30, 2½ hours, five to seven daily) and Siavonga (ZMW70, three hours, three to five daily).

Public transport to nearby towns, especially minibuses, also leaves from the **Soweto Market Bus Station** (Los Angeles Rd), but here nothing is signposted and you're better off avoiding it.

To add to the confusion, minibuses to places not far south of Lusaka also leave from the **City Bus Station** (Kulima Towers Bus Station; off Chachacha Rd), so it's possible to get to Kafue, Chirundu and Siavonga from here too.

Minibuses heading to the north (eg to Manda Hill Shopping Centre) depart from the **Millennium Bus Station** (Malasha Rd).

All long-distance public buses (and most private ones) use the larger though still somewhat confusing and disorderly **Lusaka Inter-City Bus Station** (Dedan Kimathi Rd), where there is a left-luggage office and inquiries counter. A range of buses from different companies cover most tourist destinations (all leaving from this bus station unless otherwise stated) – we've quoted the highest prices because they represent the best companies, with the most comfortable buses (two-storey with reclining seats) and are generally only between ZMW10 and ZMW20 higher in price (and well worth the extra). It's certainly worth double-checking the schedules and booking your tickets one or two days before you leave.

Heading southwest, as you'd expect, there are plenty of buses to Livingstone (ordinary/business class ZMW90/115, six to seven hours, at least seven daily), but we'd recommend traveling business class (one or two morning departures) with either **Mazahandu Family** (☎0978 05064) or Shalom bus services.

Travelling east, many companies operate services to Chipata, the road link for South Luangwa or Malawi (ZMW130, seven hours); Johabie, with departures at around 5am, 6am, 7am and 2pm, is the most recommended.

Heading west, catch an 8am Juldan or Shalom bus through Kafue National Park and on to Mongu (ZMW160, seven hours); for Kafue camps just off the highway it's ZMW100 and three hours.

Juldan, Power Tools and Mazandhu Family buses, among others, go to Copperbelt destinations such as Ndola (ZMW65, four hours, five daily), Kitwe (ZMW70, five hours, five daily), Solwezi (ZMW110, two daily) and Kapiri Mposhi (ZMW50, 2½ hours, five daily).

Tracking northeast, Germins and Juldan are two of the better companies, making a beeline for Kasama (ZMW130, 14 hours, four daily) and Mpulungu (ZMW150, 18 hours, four daily).

INTERNATIONAL

All buses mentioned here (unless stated otherwise) leave from the Lusaka Inter-City Bus Station.

To Botswana, Zambia-Botswana has buses to Gaborone (ZMW180, 22 hours, three weekly) via Kasane and Francistown; Mazandhu Family has a 5am departure for the border at Kazungula.

For South Africa, Intercape (ZMW400, 6am and noon daily) and Shalom (ZMW380, 6am Tuesday and Wednesday) have buses that head to Johannesburg (18 hours more or less) via Livingstone, Harare, Masvingo and Pretoria.

To Zimbabwe, take any bus going to South Africa, or Pioneer, Zupco or First Class buses go directly to Harare (ZMW120, nine hours, one daily per company).

For Malawi, there's no direct service to Blantyre, but there are three services a week to Lilongwe (ZMW150, 12 hours, 5am), where you can change buses; try Kobs Transport.

Zambia-Tanzania and Takwa Bus Services both make the run to Dar es Salaam (Tanzania; ZMW250, 27 hours, six weekly), but services can be haphazard (and the train is a more interesting and adventurous experience).

Train

The Zambezi Express travelling to Livingstone (economy class ZMW40, 14 hours), via Choma, leaves Lusaka at 11.50pm on Monday and Friday but has no 1st or sleeper class. Tickets are available from the reservations office inside the **train station** (btwn Cairo & Dedan Kimathi Rds). Get there early and be prepared for hustle and bustle. Slow, 'ordinary' trains to Ndola (standard class ZMW25, 12 hours), via Kapiri Mposhi (ZMW17, eight hours) depart Tuesday and Saturday at 1.20pm.

The Tazara train runs between Kapiri Mposhi and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

The international airport is about 20km north-east of the city centre. Taxis to and from the airport to central Lusaka cost anywhere from ZMW110 to ZMW150. There's no airport bus, but the upmarket hotels send minibuses (usually for a fee) to meet international flights, so you may be able to arrange a ride into town with the minibus driver (for a negotiable fee).

Bus & Minibus

Local minibuses run along Lusaka's main roads, but there are no route numbers or destination

signs, so the system is difficult to work out. There is a confusing array of bus and minibus stations. The standard fare is ZMW2 to ZMW3.

Car & Motorcycle

The roads can get extremely clogged around Lusaka at peak traffic times, and you should always be alert on the road as accidents are not infrequent. Speed limits are enforced in and around the city. Do not park your vehicle on the streets unless you have someone to keep an eye on it for you. If you drive around at night you significantly increase the risk of an accident or carjacking – after dark leave the car at your hotel and take a taxi.

Several international car-rental companies have counters at the airport, such as Avis (p600) and Europcar/Voyagers (p600). **Benchmark Transways & Car Hire** (☎0211-292192) – bookings can be made through Lusaka Backpackers – rents cars for use within Lusaka for ZMW300 per day and for use outside Lusaka for ZMW400 to ZMW500 per day.

If you want a car and driver to help get you around Lusaka, you're better off hiring a taxi for the day, although travel agencies do offer this service. One of the official blue taxis should charge around ZMW300 to ZMW350 for a day, but an unofficial taxi would be cheaper.

Taxi

Official taxis can be identified by the numbers painted on the doors and their colour – light blue – but hundreds of unofficial taxis also cruise the streets. Generally they'll be ZMW5 to ZMW10 cheaper for a single journey within the city.

Official taxis can be hailed along the street or found at ranks near the main hotels and markets. Fares are negotiable, but, as a guide, ZMW30 will get you between Cairo Rd and Manda Hill Shopping Centre during the day – always agree on the fare before setting out.

EASTERN ZAMBIA

This part of the country contains one of Zambia's finest attractions: South Luangwa National Park, often considered one of the greatest parks in Africa for the density and variety of its game and for the beauty of its landscape. Sitting further north is wild North Luangwa, more difficult to access than its southern cousin and far less developed but also notable for its density of game.

Eastern Zambia covers the Great East Rd – and sections around it – extending east of Lusaka to the border with Malawi. There are several buses a day up to Chipata and through to Malawi and frequent flights

between Lusaka and South Luangwa National Park.

Great East Road: From Lusaka to Chipata

The Great East Rd crosses the Luangwa River on a large suspension bridge about halfway between Lusaka and Chipata; there's a permanent security checkpoint manned by the army. In the nearby settlement of Luangwa Bridge, about 3km south of the main road on the western side of the muddy river, is the **Bridge Camp** (☎0977 197456; www.bridgecampzambia.com; Feira Rd; campsites ZMW40, per person chalets ZMW85-205; 🏠), with comfortable, simple stone chalets.

About 90km from Chipata and 500km from Lusaka, Katete is a small town just south of the Great East Rd. On the main road 4km west of town, **Tikondane Community Centre** (☎0216-252122; tikoeducation@gmail.com; campsites per person ZMW25, dm ZMW30, s/d from ZMW60/75), next to St Francis Hospital, is a grass-roots initiative that works with local villages. Among its many activities, it focuses on adult and child education and agricultural initiatives, and trains home-based carers for AIDS victims. Tikondane also accepts volunteers to work at its centre and on its projects (there's a minimum two-week commitment). Contact volunteer director Elke Kroeger-Radcliffe for more details.

If you're interested in experiencing village life or just want a break from the road, consider a stay at the friendly Community Centre's Guest House. The rooms are small and simple; meals, such as chicken and *nshima* (ZMW30), are provided and internet access is available. You can visit the school, hospital and community projects, take a guided walk up a nearby mountain or see a traditional dance performed.

Chipata

The primary commercial and urban centre in this district, Chipata is a traffic-clogged town in a valley surrounded by a fertile agricultural region. For travellers it's simply a stop on the way to South Luangwa National Park or Malawi, only 30km away. There are a few decent accommodation options, petrol stations, banks with ATMs and a large Spar supermarket to stock up on food and other supplies.

Mama Rula's (☎0977 790226; www.mamarulas.com; campsites per person ZMW35, s/d incl breakfast ZMW248/315; @📷) is a long-running operation in a leafy compound around 4km out of Chipata along the road to Mfuwe. Simply furnished rooms with mosquito nets are in a low-slung building by the pool; out the back is a huge, grassy garden campground and nearby are small but clean cheaper rooms with shared bathroom facilities. Meals (ZMW90) can be served in the informal bar festooned with pennants and flags.

Another good option, perched at the top of a hill with great views of the valley below, is **Deans Hill View Lodge** (☎0216-221673; www.deanshillview.com; campsites per person ZMW25, r without bathroom per person ZMW50), run by a friendly British expat. There's little to distinguish the rooms, which are very simple, and the shared ablutions are generally kept clean; camping is out on a nice, big sloping garden.

Getting There & Away

Of the handful of bus companies offering service to Lusaka, Johabie (ZMW130, seven hours, 5am, 6am, 8am and 2pm) is easily the most recommended. The main bus station, also the departure point for minibuses to Mfuwe (around ZMW150, 3½ hours, 11pm) for South Luangwa National Park, is located about 1.5km north of the town centre. A taxi, official or otherwise, to Mfuwe (ZMW450, at least three hours) is a better option, especially as the minibuses arrive in Mfuwe around 3.30am.

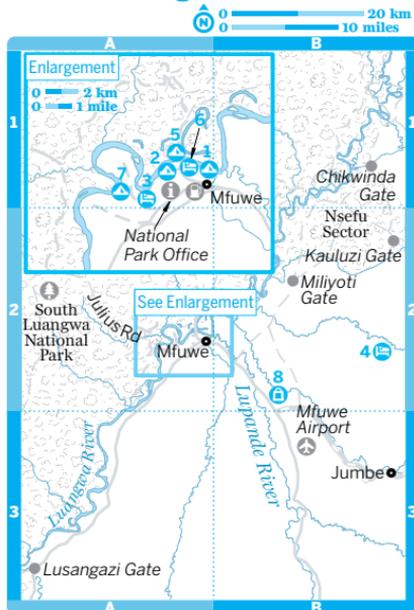
Minibuses for the Malawi border depart from the BP petrol station on the main drag in town; otherwise a taxi should run around ZMW80 (30 minutes).

South Luangwa National Park

☎0216

For scenery, variety and density of animals, accessibility and choice of accommodation, **South Luangwa** (per person US\$25, vehicle Zambian-registered/non-Zambian-registered ZMW15/US\$15; ☀6am-6pm) is the best park in Zambia and one of the most majestic in Africa. Impalas, puku, waterbucks, giraffes and buffaloes wander on the wide-open plains; leopards, of which there are many in the park, hunt in the dense woodlands; herds of elephants wade through the marshes; and hippos munch serenely on Nile cabbage in the Luangwa River. The bird life is also

South Luangwa NP



South Luangwa NP

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tremendous: about 400 species have been recorded – large birds like snake eagles, bateleurs and ground hornbills are normally easy to spot. The quality of the park is reflected in the quality of its guides – the highest in Zambia.

The focal point is Mfuwe, an uninspiring though more prosperous than average village, with shops, petrol station and market. Around 1.8km further along is **Mfuwe Gate**, the main entrance to the park, where a bridge crosses the Luangwa River. A little before the gate are turn-off signs for a hand-

ful of lodges and camps. The area around the gate can get quite busy with vehicles in the high season, but only because it probably has the highest concentration of wildlife in the park.

Away from Mfuwe, in the northern and southern parts of the park, the camps and lodges enjoy a quieter and more exclusive atmosphere. The animals may be less used to vehicles and slightly harder to find, but there are fewer visitors in these areas and watching the wildlife here is immensely rewarding.

Much of the park is inaccessible because of rains between November and April (especially February and March), so many lodges close at this time.

If you're in either Zambia or Malawi, on a budget and looking for ways to see South Luangwa without breaking the bank, consider organising an all-inclusive safari, which will also sort out those challenging transport logistics. Recommended budget operators with accommodation in tents are: **River Safari Company** (www.riversafaricompany.com; 161 Mulombwa Cl, Lusaka; 3-/4-day safari per person US\$545/695) (run out of Lusaka Backpackers) and **Jackalberry Safaris** (www.jackalberrysafaris.net; 3-/4-/5-day safari per person US\$425/545/645) in Zambia, and **Land & Lake Safaris** (www.landlake.net) and **Kiboko Safaris** (www.kiboko-safaris.com; 4-day safari per person US\$515), both of which operate from Lilongwe (Malawi).

FLORA & FAUNA

The wide Luangwa River is the lifeblood of the park. It rises in the far northeast of Zambia, near the border with Malawi, and flows southward for 800km through the broad Luangwa Valley – an offshoot of the Great Rift Valley, which cuts through East and Southern Africa. It flows all year, and gets very shallow in the dry season (May to October), when vast midstream sandbanks are exposed – usually covered in groups of hippos or crocodiles basking in the sun. Steep exposed banks mean animals prefer to drink at the park's numerous oxbow lagoons, formed as the river continually changes its course.

Vegetation ranges from open grassy plains to the strips of woodland along the riverbank, dominated by large trees including ebony, mahogany, leadwood and winterthorn, sometimes growing in beautiful groves. As you move away from the river onto higher

ground, the woodland gets denser and finding animals takes more patience.

Not that you'll ever be disappointed by Luangwa's wildlife. The park is famous for its herds of buffaloes, and elephant numbers are also very healthy, even though ivory poaching in the 1980s had a dramatic effect on the population. This park is also a great place to see lions and leopards (especially on night drives), and local specialities include Cookson's wildebeest (an unusual light-coloured subspecies) and the endemic Thornicroft's giraffe, distinguished from other giraffes by a dark neck pattern.

There's a stunning variety of 'plains game'; the numerous antelope species include bushbuck, waterbuck, kudu, impala and puku. Roan antelopes, hartebeest and reedbucks are all here, but they're encountered less often.

Luangwa's population of wild dogs, one of the rarest animals in Zambia (and Africa), seems to be on the increase, especially around the Mfuwe area from November to January; there has been a resurgence in numbers around the Nsefu sector as well.

The bird life in South Luangwa is also tremendous. As small lagoons dry out, fish writhe in the shallows and birds mass together as 'fishing parties'. Pelicans and yellow-billed storks stuff themselves silly and herons, spoonbills and marabou storks join the fun, while grasses and seeds around the lagoons attract a moving coloured carpet of queleas and Lilian's lovebirds. Other ornithological highlights are the stately crowned cranes and the unfeasibly colourful carmine bee-eaters, whose migration here every August is one of the world's great wildlife spectacles.



Activities

All lodges/camps run excellent day or night **wildlife drives** (called 'game drives' in Zambia) and most have **walking safaris** (June to November). These activities are included in the rates charged by the upmarket places, while the cheaper lodges and camps can organise things with little notice. A three-hour morning or evening wildlife drive normally costs around ZMW210. You also have to pay park fees (ZMW156) on top of this, but only once every 24 hours, so you can have an evening drive on one day and a morning drive on the next. A walking safari (ZMW260) is perhaps the best way of all to experience the park; expect most attention

to be paid to animal tracks, what animal dung reveals and the medicinal uses of various plants.

You can visit the office of the **South Luangwa Conservation Society** (SLCS; ☎0216-246069; www.slcszambia.org), which supports and works closely with the Zambian Wildlife Authority spearheading anti-poaching and anti-snaring initiatives.

For an absolutely decadent experience of relief, head to the **Bush-Spa** (☎0216-246123; www.bush-spa.com; 1hr massage ZMW380; ☀8am-4.30pm daily), a beautifully designed Balinese-style spa built over a hippo pond on the grounds of Mfuwe Lodge. Massages are of the highest quality and house calls to area lodges can be arranged.

Sleeping & Eating

All of the lodges and camps deep in the park are all-inclusive and at the very top end in terms of price (the park fee for these camps, ZMW309 per person per night, is also included). Some companies offer walking safaris for a few days from one bushcamp to the next, as well as what's often referred to as 'fly camping': camping out under the stars with nothing more than a mosquito net.

Most travellers will end up choosing from the places just outside the park boundary. These range from budget camping to top-end lodges; however, you don't pay admission fees until you actually enter the park. Note that some lodges and camps open only in the high season (April to November), but those in and around Mfuwe are open all year. Places that open in the low (or 'green' or 'emerald') season offer substantial discounts.

Any rates listed here are per person during the high season; single supplements usually cost 30% more. None of the lodges or camps described here are fenced, which means loud grunting hippos and their like might disturb your sleep and you may require an escort at night.

All the lodges, camps and camping grounds provide meals – from simple snacks, to creative haute cuisine at the top-end places. Flatdogs Camp probably has the best food of the 'drop-in' lodge restaurants. Highly recommended by area expats and one of the few places to eat in the village is friendly **Dophli Restaurant** (mains ZMW25; ☀5am-10pm). If you're coming from the airport it's on the left-hand side of the road just after the Matizye Bridge.

Around Mfuwe Gate

Croc Valley

CAMPGROUND \$

(☎0216-246074; www.crocvalley.com; campsites per person ZMW52, r without bathroom ZMW78, safari tents from ZMW180; ☹) This sprawling, continually expanding compound is set under a tangle of trees lining the riverbank. The campground is popular with independent travellers; 'backpacker rooms' with shared, clean toilets and showers are quite a good deal; safari tents of varying levels of luxury and cost run the gamut. There's a big bar and restaurant with nightly three-course meals on offer for those paying full board, not to mention plenty of hammocks and shaded chill-out spots. Wildlife drives and walking safaris can be arranged.

Wildlife Camp

CAMPGROUND \$

(☎0216-246026; www.wildlifecamp-zambia.com; campsites ZMW52, safari tents/chalets ZMW211/317; ☹) This spacious, secluded spot about 5km southwest of Mfuwe village is popular with both overland groups and independent travelers. There are nine simple stone and thatch chalets (two with basic kitchenettes), five airy tented ones and a big, open area for campers with its own bar and pool area perfect sundowner views. A restaurant serves up standard international fare (mains ZMW80). Wildlife drives and walks are available in the park and in the area around the camp, which is rich in wildlife.

Flatdogs Camp

TENTED CAMP \$\$\$

(☎0216-246038; www.flatdogscamp.com; safari tents from ZMW240, chalets ZMW405; ☹) This large, leafy property along a kilometre of riverfront is one of the best of the midrange options. Eleven safari tents of varying features – all are well kept and have outdoor showers – are at the end of snaking pathways. Groups of four can consider the 'tree house', which has two open-air bedrooms overlooking a floodplain frequented by all manner of wildlife. Four enormous chalets are good for families. Flatdogs bar is a welcoming spot and the restaurant, one of the only places with an à la carte menu open to nonguests, has a variety of Zambian and international fare (mains ZMW60). Wildlife drives and walking safaris are offered at affordable rates.

Track & Trail

River Camp

CHALET, CAMPGROUND \$\$\$

(☎in Lusaka 0211-246020; www.trackandtrail-rivercamp.com; campsites per person ZMW53, all-inclusive chalets & safari tents from ZMW1610; ☹) Set on a riverfront property about 400m east of Mfuwe Gate are four fairly luxurious chalets sleeping up to four, each with a deck overlooking the river. There are also five large safari tents raised on concrete platforms with open-air bathrooms, some a bit further back in the bush. The camping grounds, shaded by a giant African fig, are just lovely. An above-ground pool has an elevated deck with lounge chairs overlooking

BUSHCAMP COMPANIES

Only a handful of companies offer lodging within the park proper, primarily in what are generally referred to as 'bushcamps'. Despite the misleading name, these are very comfortable, ranging from simple thatch-roofed chalets to stylishly furnished tents with gold-plated faucets and plunge pools. Most have only three to five rooms and offer customised itineraries that take guests to multiple camps by vehicle or on foot.

There are three major companies, all with 'base lodges' near the Mfuwe Gate. Sophisticated and expertly managed by its founder, Andy Hogg, **Bushcamp Company** (www.bushcampcompany.com) operates six uniquely designed camps (Bilimungwe, Chamilandu, Chindeni, Kapamba, Kuyenda and Zungulila), all in the southern section of the park, as well as its base, Mfuwe Lodge. **Norman Carr Safaris** (☎0216-246015; www.normancarrsafaris.com) operates five somewhat more rustic camps (Kakuli, Kapani, Luwi, Mchenja and Nsolo), all in the northern section of the park, as well as its base at Kapani. **Robin Pope Safaris** (www.robinpopesafaris.net) has its base at Nkwali, not far south of Mfuwe Gate, and operates three camps (Luangwa River Camp, Nsefu and Tena Tena).

The other companies in the park are the highly recommended **Remote Africa** (www.remoteafrica.com; Chikoko, Crocodile and Tafika camps) in the northern section, run by John and Carol Coppinger; **Sanctuary Retreats** (www.sanctuarylodges.com; Chichele, Puku Ridge and Zebra Plains camps); **Shenton Safaris** (www.kaingo.com; Mwamba and Kaingo camps); and **Wilderness Safaris** (www.wilderness-safaris.com; Kalamu Lagoon camp).

KAWAZA VILLAGE

This **enterprise** (www.kawazavillage.co.uk; day visits ZMW181, s with full board ZMW362) run by the local Kunda people gives tourists the opportunity to visit a real rural Zambian village while helping the local community. Four *rondavels* (round huts; each sleeps two) with open-air reed showers and long-drop toilets are reserved for visitors, who are encouraged to take part in village life, such as learning how to cook *nshima*, attending local church services and visiting local schools. Other activities include visits to the local healer or to the chief's palace, and bush walking. Evenings are filled with traditionally cooked meals, dancing, drumming and storytelling around the fire. Transfers can be arranged from camps around Mfuwe village.

the river. Built around a lime tree, the bar-restaurant offers excellent food.

Mfuwe Lodge

BUSHCAMP \$\$\$

(☎0216-245041; www.bushcampcompany.com; per person per night all-inclusive US\$450; 🕒year-round; 🏠🚿) Laid out along an enviable stretch of a well-trafficked oxbow lagoon only 2km from the Mfuwe Gate, this lodge, one of the largest, is also certainly one of the nicest and best run. The 18 separate cottages are imaginatively designed with private verandahs and colourful bathrooms. From the back porch of the suites or from the huge outdoor deck with a restaurant, bar and swimming pool, it's like having front-row seats to, well, *The Lion King*. Besides operating as the base for its own six bushcamps in the southern section of the park, it's also the site of the recommended Bush-Spa.

Kapani Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

(☎0216-246015; www.normancarrsafaris.com; all-inclusive per person US\$325) Known as one of the camps Norman Carr built and intertwined with this pioneer's reputation, Kapani is set about 4km southwest of Mfuwe Gate overlooking a beautiful oxbow lagoon. The 10 fairly ordinary thatch and stucco cottages are simply furnished and meals are taken on a large wooden deck that hangs over the river. The majority of guests spend only a night or two here, choosing to shuttle between the company's four smaller rustic bushcamps in the north of the park.



Shopping

Tribal Textiles

HANDICRAFTS

(☎0216-245137; www.tribaltextiles.co.zm; 🕒7am-4.30pm) Along the road between Mfuwe village and the airport is a large enterprise that employs a team of local artists to produce, among other things, bags, wall hangings, bed linen and sarongs, much of which

are sold abroad. It's quite a refined place to shop or take a short (free) tour around the factory.

Getting There & Away

Air

Most people reach South Luangwa by air. Mfuwe airport is about 20km southeast of Mfuwe Gate and served by **Proflight** (☎0211-271032; www.proflight-zambia.com), with several daily flights from Lusaka (ZMW810 to ZMW1500 one way).

Bush & Lake Aviation (www.bla.mw) flies from Lilongwe (Malawi) to Mfuwe. There's a bureau de change in the little terminal, a Barclay's Bank and Zanaco ATMs. Most every lodge meets clients at the airport. Otherwise, a taxi to locations near the Mfuwe Gate should run around ZMW80.

Car

To get to Mfuwe Gate and the surrounding camps from Chipata you should have a 4WD, high-clearance vehicle. In the dry season the dirt road is poor and the drive takes about three hours. In the wet season, however, the drive can take all day (or be impassable). Check locally before you make the trip.

Minibus & Private Vehicle

Several crowded minibuses leave from the BP petrol station in Mfuwe village for Chipata (around ZMW150, luggage supplement ZMW10 to ZMW20, 3½ hours). Unfortunately, they depart around 7.30pm, meaning a late-night arrival.

A shared taxi (around ZMW450 for the entire taxi, around ZMW250 for the front seat for solo travelers) is a more convenient though pricier alternative. If you arrive at the BP station early in the morning, say before 7am, you have a good chance of joining a carload of Zambians or possibly other travellers.

A taxi from Mfuwe village to one of the lodges near the gate only a few kilometres away will cost anywhere from ZMW30 to ZMW100.

North Luangwa National Park

This **park** (admission US\$20, vehicle US\$15; ☉6am-6pm) is large, wild and spectacular, but nowhere *near* as developed or set up for tourism as its southern counterpart. The big draw of North Luangwa is its walking safaris, where you can get up close to the wildlife in a truly remote wilderness.

It's important to note that most of the southern part of the park has been set aside as a wilderness area. There are not many roads and only a few smallish camps, which mainly run walking safaris.

Located in the south of the park, **Buffalo Camp** (☎0976 970444; www.shiwasafaris.com; all-inclusive per person ZMW1700) is a quiet, secluded place run by Mark Harvey, grandson of Stewart Gore Browne of Shiwa Ng'andu, where he was raised. The six traditional-style thatch-roofed chalets overlook the river. Book ahead for the 'self-catering rates' (ZMW500 per person excluding park rates and bed levy), normally only available when there's a paucity of guests on the all-inclusive package.

Mwaleshi Camp (☎0216-246185; www.remoteafrica.com; all-inclusive per person ZMW2900) is a top-notch operation, at once luxurious and relaxed with accommodation in four charmingly simple chalets made from reeds and thatch with open-roofed bathrooms. Walking is the main activity and that's a fortunate thing once you've tasted the excellent food.

There is no public transport to the park. Most guests fly in and out on expensive charter flights arranged by their lodge (the typical price per person from Mfuwe to one of the airstrips is ZMW1000 one way); the result is that only several hundred people a year visit the park.

If you are coming into the park independently, remember that you need to be well set up with a fully equipped high-clearance 4WD, and your accommodation prebooked. Also, get advice regarding the state of the roads into the park and make sure you've got maps (and GPS) that cover the area.

SOUTHERN ZAMBIA

This region is a real highlight of Zambia, with some wonderful natural attractions. The most popular and highly regarded of

this is the Lower Zambezi Valley, with its wildlife (especially elephants), scenic landscape and canoe safaris. Then there are massive Lake Kariba and Siavonga's sandy beaches; if you're lucky enough to see a storm roll in over the steely waters from Zimbabwe, it'll be an experience you'll long remember. (The Zambian side of the lake isn't nearly as developed or popular as the eastern shores in Zimbabwe.) The area is also home to the remote Lochinvar National Park, a World Heritage Wetland Site with pristine wetlands – it's worth a visit by those with their own vehicle.

Chirundu

☎0211

This dusty and bedraggled border town is on the main road between Lusaka and Harare. The only reason to stay here is if you're going on to Zimbabwe or planning to explore the Lower Zambezi Valley. Other than a few shops and bars, as well as a Barclays Bank with ATM and a number of moneychangers (no petrol station), there's little else to note.

Sleeping

Zambezi Breezers

CAMPGROUND \$\$

(☎0979 279468; zambezibreezers@gmail.com; campsites per person ZMW50, r without bathroom ZMW190, s/d chalets incl breakfast ZMW375/650; ☉) Especially popular with backpackers and overland trucks, Breezers, only 6km from Chirundu, can take on a party atmosphere when busy. There's a variety of accommodation options, including a wide lawn for camping, six simple and clean tented chalets and 'budget' rooms (really nothing more than concrete boxes with beds). A pool table, basic but cavernous bar area, riverside deck and restaurant (mains ZMW60) encourage socialising. Other activities on offer are boat trips, and River Horse Safaris (which operates out of Breezers) can organise recommended overnight canoeing trips on the Zambezi.

Gwabi Lodge

CAMPGROUND, CHALET \$\$

(☎0211-515078; www.gwabiriverlodge.com; campsites per person ZMW50, s/d chalets incl breakfast ZMW425/660; @☎☉) This long-running lodge, which sees mostly weekenders Lusakans, is set on large leafy grounds 12km east of Chirundu. There's a well-equipped campground (tents can be rented) and nine solid chalets (with four new ones in the works). With a lovely elevated outlook over

the Kafue River, 6km from the confluence with the Zambezi, the decking in front of the à la carte restaurant is a great spot. Fishing, boating and overnight canoe safaris can be arranged.

i Getting There & Away

Minibuses leave regularly for Chirundu from Lusaka (ZMW30, 3½ hours, five to seven daily). To reach Siavonga (on Lake Kariba) from Chirundu, catch a minibus towards Lusaka, get off at the obvious turn-off to Siavonga and wait for something else to come along. You can also get to Zimbabwe from Chirundu.

Lower Zambezi Valley

One of the country's premier wildlife-viewing areas includes the Chiawa Game Management Area (GMA) as well as the Lower Zambezi National Park, covering 4200 sq km along the northwestern bank of the Zambezi River. Several smaller rivers flow through the park itself, which is centered on a beautiful floodplain alongside the Zambezi, dotted with acacias and other large trees, and flanked by a steep escarpment on the northern side, covered with thick *miombo* woodland.

On the Zambezi are several islands. Some are large rocky outcrops covered in old trees, which feature in the writings of explorers such as Livingstone and Selous. Others are nothing more than temporary sandbanks with grass and low bush. Along the riverside grow the largest trees – jackleberry, mahogany and winterthorn. On the opposite bank, in Zimbabwe, is Mana Pools National Park,

and together the parks constitute one of Africa's finest wildlife areas.

The best wildlife viewing is on the floodplain and along the river itself, so boat rides (about ZMW150) are a major feature of all camps and lodges. The elephant population, ravaged by poaching until the early 1990s, is making a strong comeback thanks to the efforts of **Conservation Lower Zambezi** (www.conservationlowerzambezi.org), an organisation funded by the area's lodges and private grants.

Other mammal species include puku, impala, zebra, buffalo, bushbuck, leopard, lion and cheetah, and more than 400 bird species have been recorded, including the unusual African skimmer and narina trogon. Seeing elephants swim across the river, or hundreds of colourful bee-eaters nesting in the steep sandy banks, could be the highlight of your trip. The best time to visit is May to October; however, temps average around 40°C – and have been recorded as high as 55°C – in the latter half of October.

The main entrance to the park is at Chongwe Gate along the southwestern boundary (park fee ZMW132). The southwestern sector of the park is the easiest to reach and the most scenic, and has excellent wildlife viewing, so as you might expect it's a popular area. As you go further into the central part of the park the surroundings become wilder and more open and there's more chance of having the place to yourself. Although the park is technically open all year, access is impossible in the rainy season and most lodges are closed down from at least mid-December to the end of February.

Lower Zambezi National Park



Activities

One of the best ways to see the Lower Zambezi is by canoe safari. Drifting silently past the riverbank, you can get surprisingly close to birds and animals without disturbing them. Most of the camps and lodges have canoes, so you can go out with a river guide for a few hours; longer safaris are even more enjoyable.

The best time for tiger fishing (strictly catch and release) is September to December but still possible in other months. Rods, reels and bait can be supplied by all the lodges and camps.

Sleeping

There is a line of lodges running through the Chiawa GMA before the Chongwe Gate (this is where all of the properties reviewed here are located), a few in the park itself (all at the very, very top end in terms of price) and one to the east of the park boundary (only really accessible to self-drivers).

Rates listed are usually per person during the high season (April to October) staying in twins/doubles unless mentioned otherwise. Also, add on transfers if you haven't got your own wheels. Most lodges offer wildlife-viewing activities by boat or 4WD and are not fenced. Keep in mind, however, that while this is theoretically on offer, most of the lodges in the GMA, especially those closer to Chirundu than to Chongwe Gate, don't take their wildlife drives in the park proper.

Kiambi Safari CAMPGROUND \$\$
(0977 186106; www.kiambi.co.za; campsites per person ZMW52, chalets per person with full board from ZMW420; 🍷🍷🍷) This well-run operation at the confluence of the Zambezi and Kafue Rivers has a smattering of different, relatively affordable accommodation options. Wood-floored tented chalets are comfy with attached outdoor bathrooms; the spacious air-con chalets are good if the humidity is getting a bit much, and well-equipped self-catering cottages can sleep six. Campers get their own fire pit, swimming pool, a separate bar and upstairs viewing platform (Kiambi provides tents and bedding for an extra ZMW42). In addition to the usual river activities, Kiambi offers three-night canoe safaris (ZMW820 per person per day including all meals, tent and bedding). It's open all year; enquire about discounts from December to March.

TOP CHOICE Chongwe River Camp TENTED CAMP \$\$\$
(0211-286 808; www.chongwe.com; s/d all-inclusive US\$900/1400; ☀️Apr-Nov; 🍷🍷) This camp has an enviable position right on the Chongwe River that marks the boundary between the GMA and the national park. The river's confluence with the Zambezi is within view and a menagerie of wildlife grazes on a spit of grassland with the park's escarpment in the background. The tented chalets, well spaced along the edge of the river, have plush bedding, shaded verandahs and charming open-air bathrooms. It's a laid-back place with a small fenced-in pool, nightly bonfires and large lantern-lit communal dining table.

Tsika Island is Chongwe's very rustic adobe-and-thatch bushcamp further up-river; hot water for showers is supplied by buckets suspended high above on poles to catch sunlight.

Royal Zambezi Lodge CHALET \$\$\$
(0211-840682; www.royalzambezilodge.com; per person all-inclusive US\$650; ☀️year-round; 🍷🍷) The epitome of luxury bush mixed with a colonial-era vibe, Royal is only a short drive to the airstrip as well as Chongwe Gate. Despite its understated opulence - think brass fixtures, claw-footed tubs and private day beds on decks overlooking the river - it's unpretentious and friendly. In addition, there's a full-service spa (the only one on the Zambezi) and a bar built around the trunk of a sausage tree next to a small pool.

Kanyemba Lodge CHALET \$\$\$
(0977 755720; www.kanyemba.com; chalets with full board around US\$330; 🍷) This lodge has phenomenal river views and proximity to big wildlife, as well as authentic, homemade Italian food and cappuccinos. The spacious round chalets are stylishly furnished and stone-floored bathrooms have rainwater showers. In an attic-like space above the open-air dining area is a charming little library and lounge and the pool with river-front deck is ideal for those long between-activities afternoons. Take a guided canoeing safari, try your luck at tiger fishing or down G&Ts on a sundowner cruise.

Mvuul Lodge CAMPGROUND \$\$\$
(in South Africa 012-660 5369; www.mvuulodge.com; campsites per person ZMW115, safari tents per person from ZMW1155) A large, leafy property with an informal vibe, Mvuul is built on the edge of the tree-lined riverbank. Comfortable, elevated safari tents with balconies are

on either side of a casual lounge and dining area. The communal campfire encourages guests to share their tales of leopard and lion sightings. Each site in the campground, the furthest one into the GMA, has its own outdoor stone shower and toilet, fire pit (firewood is provided), concrete cooking table and sink; self-caterers can use the lodge kitchen's refrigerator.

Kasaka River Lodge

TENTED CAMP \$\$\$

(☎0211-256202; www.kasakalodge.com; safari tents all-inclusive per person ZMW2090) Kasaka is perched high above the Zambezi only 4km from the park entrance. On one side are eight fairly luxurious tented chalets with charming outdoor bathrooms set on a manicured lawn with a small pool. On the other, 'bush' side is the honeymoon suite, with Ottoman-style bed, or a group-oriented two-bedroom thatch-roofed home with its own viewing deck and fire pit. In between, built under several large trees, is the dining and bar area; just below is another small 'library' deck, best used for kicking back and watching the river flow by.

Getting There & Away

There's no public transport to Chongwe Gate, nor anything to the eastern and northern boundaries, and hitching is very difficult. Most people visit the park on an organised tour and/or stay at a lodge that offers wildlife drives and boat rides as part of the deal. The lodges also arrange transfers from Lusaka – generally a minivan to Chirundu and then a boat to the lodge (rates and travel times vary depending on the distance from Chirundu).

Uncomfortable minibuses run from the City Bus Station in Lusaka to Chirundu; departures are throughout the morning, but you have to sort out transport from town to your accommodation.

If you have your own vehicle (you'll need a high-clearance 4WD), head down to Chirundu. As you enter the town, you are looking for a left-hand turn to Gwabi Lodge and from there into the GMA and on to the Chongwe Gate into the Lower Zambezi.

For budget travellers, ask at Bongwe Barn (p553) and Lusaka Backpackers (p553) in Lusaka or Jollyboys (p600) in Livingstone for deals on budget safaris into the Lower Zambezi.

Air

Proflight (p598) has twice-daily flights (in high season) between Lusaka and Royal Airstrip (30 minutes); in the GMA just a few kilometres west of Chongwe Gate) and Jeki Airstrip (40 min-

utes; in the heart of the park); both are around ZMW820 one way. Royal is very convenient for the lodges near Chongwe Gate.

Getting Around

Nor far from Gwabi Lodge in the GMA is a pontoon (operational 6am to 6pm), which you'll need to take to cross a river; it costs ZMW40 for a Zambian-registered vehicle, ZMW100 for a non-Zambian registered vehicle, and foot passengers go free.

Remember that you'll need a well-equipped 4WD to access and get around the park. You must drive slowly in the GMA area and the park itself. There are several loops inside the park for wildlife viewing, but these change from year to year, so pick up a guide at any of the gates.

Siavonga

☎0211

Siavonga, the main town and resort along the Zambian side of Lake Kariba, has a location to be envied. Set among hills and verdant greenery, just a few kilometres from the massive Kariba Dam, the town has some stunning lake views. Built up primarily in the 1960s and '70s, though, it gives the impression that no architects, builders or designers have visited it since. Set up primarily for the conference-business market and wealthy urban Zambians, the town is a challenge to get to for independent travellers without their own wheels. The accommodation, though relatively affordable, is spread out, with just a market, a few shops, a bakery, a Zanaco bank with ATM, a post office and little else. But it is the closest 'beach vacation' to Lusaka and you can kick back or experience water activities such as canoeing through the Zambezi Gorge or a sunset cruise to the dam wall. Just don't think of putting your big toe in the water – crocs lurk around the lakeshore.

Activities

The lodges organise activities in and around the lake, including boat trips to the dam wall (price depends on boat size and ranges from ZMW135 to ZMW530), **sunset cruises** (per person ZMW75), **fishing trips**, longer-distance motoring around to Lottery Bay (ZMW1550) and one-day to four-night **canoe safaris** on the Zambezi where you'll canoe through the gorgeous Zambezi Gorge (these must be booked in advance and average around ZMW500 per person per day).

Sleeping & Eating

Eagles Rest

CAMPGROUND, CHALET \$\$

(☎0211-511168; www.eaglesrestresort.com; campsites per person ZMW50, s/d incl breakfast ZMW400/550; 🏠🚰) With its own sandy area (swimming not recommended, of course), pool and the only campsite around town, Eagles Rest is easily the best set up for independent travelers. Large, spacious chalets overlook the lake, and the campground is well landscaped; tents (ZMW50) and mattresses (ZMW25) are available for rent. Everything from wakeboarding, tubing, fishing and canoeing can be arranged; the houseboat *Bateuleur* (sleeps 12) is available for rental March to November.

Lake Kariba Inns

HOTEL \$\$

(☎0211-253768; www.karibainns.com; s/d from ZMW305/420; 🏠@🚰🚰) Lush gardens, great lake views and relatively luxurious rooms – that is, at least an attempt to bring the decor into the modern era – make this a good choice for those who don't mind sharing

space with conference attendees (the upside is a good gym and, for those who have spent too much time in the bush, a hair salon). The restaurant is a grandiose affair, overlooking the pool area, which is itself perched high above the lake.

Lake Safari Lodge

LODGE \$\$

(☎0211-511148; www.lake-safari.com; s/d incl breakfast from ZMW400/500; 🏠@🚰🚰) Slightly up-market and nicely situated with an elevated position on the shore, Lake Safari is the longest-standing lodge in town. The large rooms come with cable TV and bland stylings. There are lovely landscaped grounds, including a nice pool area, giving the whole set-up a tropical vibe.

Sinazongwe

☎0213

Near the southwestern end of Lake Kariba and far from its cousin on the water at the other end of the lake, Sinazongwe is used

THE CURSE OF KARIBA

Beyond Victoria Falls, the Zambezi River flows through the Batoka Gorge then enters the waters of Lake Kariba, with the silhouettes of jagged Zimbabwean peaks far across its shimmering waters. Formed behind the massive Kariba Dam, this is one of the largest artificial lakes in Africa. When the local Tonga people learnt that the new lake would flood a huge rock buttress called Kariba, which they believe is the home of their river god, the fish-headed and serpent-tailed Nyaminyami, they were understandably angry. But when they found out that their own homes and ancestral lands would also be submerged it was the last straw, and they called on their god to step in and destroy the interference.

Did the god deliver? Oh, yes. In July 1957, about a year into the dam's construction, a torrential storm on the Upper Zambezi sent floodwaters roaring through the work site, breaching the temporary coffer dam and damaging equipment. The following March, there was an even greater flood – the sort expected only once in a thousand years, and never two years running – again destroying the coffer dam and causing major damage, as well as washing away a bridge that had been constructed downstream.

The engineers may have had a grudging respect for Nyaminyami by this time (they did increase the number of spillway gates from four to six), but the building continued and the dam was officially opened in 1960. Meanwhile, the justifiably disgruntled Tonga were forced to leave their homeland.

But Nyaminyami still had a final trick up his sleeve. No sooner had the lake begun to fill than a destructive floating weed called *Salvinia molesta* began choking the lake's surface. As the weed is native to South America, its arrival in Kariba remains a mystery. At one stage, a third of the lake was covered in a green carpet, rendering boating impossible and threatening to block the dam's outflow.

Finally, for reasons still not fully understood, the weed started to disappear, but other problems continued: in the early 1990s, a drought caused water levels to drop so low that there wasn't water enough to generate power. The rains returned and through 2000 and 2001 the lake was mostly full again. However, with rumours of earth tremors and cracks in the concrete, and concern over the dam's long-term strength and design – not to mention that another dam has been proposed at Batoka Gorge, below Victoria Falls – it remains to be seen whether Nyaminyami will rise in wrath again.

by *kapenta* fisherman as an outpost. The centre of the small town is actually up on a hill away from the lake's edge and the whole area has little tourism footprint.

A kilometre from town and easy to find is **Lakeview Lodge** (☎0976 667752; www.lakeview-zambia.com; campsites per person ZMW50, s/d incl breakfast ZMW250/470; ☹), where simple chalets with ceiling fans have a secluded terrace overlooking the lake and verdant grounds. There's also a pool, a small beach area and a *braai* (barbecue). Meals are ZMW40. You can hire a boat to Chikanka or Chete island.

A lot further away (60km from Sinazongwe), but with an excellent array of accommodation options, is **Kariba Bush Club** (☎0979 493980; www.karibabushclub.com; campsites per person ZMW50, dm ZMW110, r ZMW192; ☹). Traditional buildings have dorm accommodation as well as very tastefully furnished double, twin and family rooms and thatch-roofed chalets, and there are two wonderfully comfortable guesthouses for groups. Activities include walking safaris on the club's private islands (you can camp or stay in a safari tent on Maaze Island, 20 minutes away by speedboat). To get to the club, take the road to Maamba from Batoka on the main Lusaka–Livingstone Hwy; about 2km before Maamba take the dirt road to the left and follow the signs.

Ask in Choma for minibuses that can take you to Sinazongwe. By car, head to Batoka, just north of Choma. From here take the turn-off to Maamba. After about 50km look for the turn-off to Sinazongwe; the town is a short distance down this dirt road.

Choma

☎0213

This busy market town, the capital of the Southern Province, is strung out along the highway 188km northeast of Livingstone. Most people zip through, but Choma is a convenient stopover or staging post for trips to Lake Kariba and even to the southern section of Kafue National Park. Other than the museum there's not much to distinguish the town, though it has all of the facilities and services travellers need.

For anyone interested in regional history, **Choma Museum** (adult/child ZMW10/5; ☉9am–5pm), about 1.5km east of the town centre, is worth a visit. Displays focus on the traditional practices of the Tonga people,

most of whom were forcibly displaced when the Kariba Dam was built, including possession dances, and some lovely beadwork.

Kozo Lodge & Lituwa Fast Foods (☎0977 619665; www.kozolodge.co.zm; s/d ZMW200/300) is about 7km south of Choma. Out the front, the large fast-food outlet is a common stop for tour groups; around the back is the lodge, which has chalets with fridges, fans and somewhat limited satellite TV. Being this far south of town, they're quiet and convenient for getting on the road the next morning.

Despite the two enormous stone carved lions out the front, **Leon's Lodge** (☎0978 666008; r ZMW180–200, chalets ZMW250–350), just off the main street (clearly signposted), is welcoming rather than grandiose. The large, clean rooms come with satellite TV and fridge; the thatch-roofed chalets are a step up in luxury.

All daily buses and trains between Livingstone and Lusaka stop at Choma. The bus to either Lusaka or Livingstone is ZMW65 or ZMW50 and there are many departures every day.

Lochinvar National Park

This small (410 sq km) **park** (admission US\$10, vehicle US\$15; ☉6am–6pm), northwest of Monze, consists of grassland, low, wooded hills and the seasonally flooded Chunga Lagoon – all part of a huge World Heritage Wetland Site called the Kafue Flats. You may see buffaloes, wildebeest, zebras, kudus and some of the 30,000 Kafue lechwes residing in the park. Bushbucks, oribis, hippos, jackals, reedbucks and common waterbucks are also here. Lochinvar is a haven for bird life, with more than 400 species recorded. An excellent selection of wetland birds (including wattled cranes) occurs near the ranger post along the edge of Chunga Lagoon.

For history and geology fans, **Gwisho Hot Springs** is the site of a Stone Age settlement, today surrounded by palms and lush vegetation with steaming water far too hot to swim in.

Lochinvar was virtually abandoned in the 1980s; since then various developers have come and gone. Provided you bring all your own gear, you should be able to camp – ask the scouts at the gate for the latest on viable campsites within the park.

The best option for sleeping in the area with one of the nicer campgrounds in Zambia

is **Moorings Campsite** (☎0977 521352; www.mooringscampsite.com; campsites ZMW35, s/d chalets ZMW175/250), located on an old farm 11km north of Monze. It's a lovely, secluded spot with plenty of grass and open-walled thatch huts with *braais*. Simple meals are available and day visitors can picnic here (ZMW5/2.50 per adult/child); proceeds are used to support an on-site clinic and the Malambo Women's Centre.

The network of tracks around the park is still mostly overgrown, with only the track from the gate to Chunga Lagoon reliably open. A 4WD with high clearance is recommended for getting to and around the park, though you may get stuck if you don't also have a winch.

WESTERN ZAMBIA

The little-visited western area, dominated by two huge rivers, the Kafue and the upper waters of the Zambezi, is home to the magnificent Kafue National Park, the biggest single park in Africa. Kafue has all the big mammals, marvellous birdwatching and a thousand different landscapes that include river systems offering the chance to float past a leopard stretched out on the shore.

Other highlights are thundering waterfalls and tremendous views of floodplains; a chance to experience even more remote wilderness areas, such as Liuwa Plain National Park, which sees few visitors but is a majestic patch of Africa; an exploration of Barotseiland, home of the Lozi people and site of the colourful Kuomboka, Zambia's best-known traditional ceremony; and easy access to Botswana and Namibia, with world-class national parks such as Chobe to explore.

Kafue National Park

This stunning **park** (per person/vehicle US\$15/15; ☀6am-6pm), about 200km west of Lusaka, is a highlight of Zambia. Covering more than 22,500 sq km (nearly the size of Belgium), it's the largest park in the country and one of the biggest in the world (ZAWA has only one scout for every 400 sq km). This is the only major park in Zambia that's easily accessible by car, with a handful of camps just off the highway.

The main road between Lusaka and Mongu runs through the park, dividing it

into northern and southern sectors. (You don't pay the park fee of ZMW79 per person per day if in transit; self-drivers pay another ZMW79 per vehicle per day). There's an incredible number of animals to be seen just from the main road – wildlife watching doesn't get much easier than this! There are several gates, but three main ones: **Nalunganga Gate**, along the eastern boundary, for the northern sector; **Musa Gate** for the southern sector; and **Tateyoyo Gate** for either sector if you're coming from the west.

To the far north is Kafue's top highlight, the **Busanga Plains**, a vast tract of Serengeti-style grassland, covered by huge herds of near-endemic red lechwes and more solitary grazers such as roan antelopes and oribis. (Note that this area is accessible only between mid-July and November.) Attracted by rich pickings, lions (which climb the local sycamore figs – to keep cool and away from the flies – and swim through deep pools in the swamps during the wet season) and hyenas are plentiful, and during the dry season there are buffaloes, zebras, wildebeest herds and even a handful of wild dogs.

In the little-visited southern sector of the park, the vegetation is more dense, and early in the season the grass is very high, making animals harder to locate, although the thick woodland around Ngoma is the best place to see elephants. **Lake Itenzi-Tezhi**, a vast expanse of water, is both tranquil and beautiful, especially at sunset. In the far south, the Nanzhila Plains support an abundance of red lechwes, while other species include oribis, roan and sable antelopes, hartebeest, wildebeest and pukus.

Sleeping

Several lodges and camps are just outside the park boundaries, which means that you don't have to pay admission fees until you actually visit the park. An additional 'bed levy' (ZMW53) charged to tourists is usually included in the rates for the upmarket lodges, but elsewhere the levy is added to your accommodation bill (unless you're just camping).

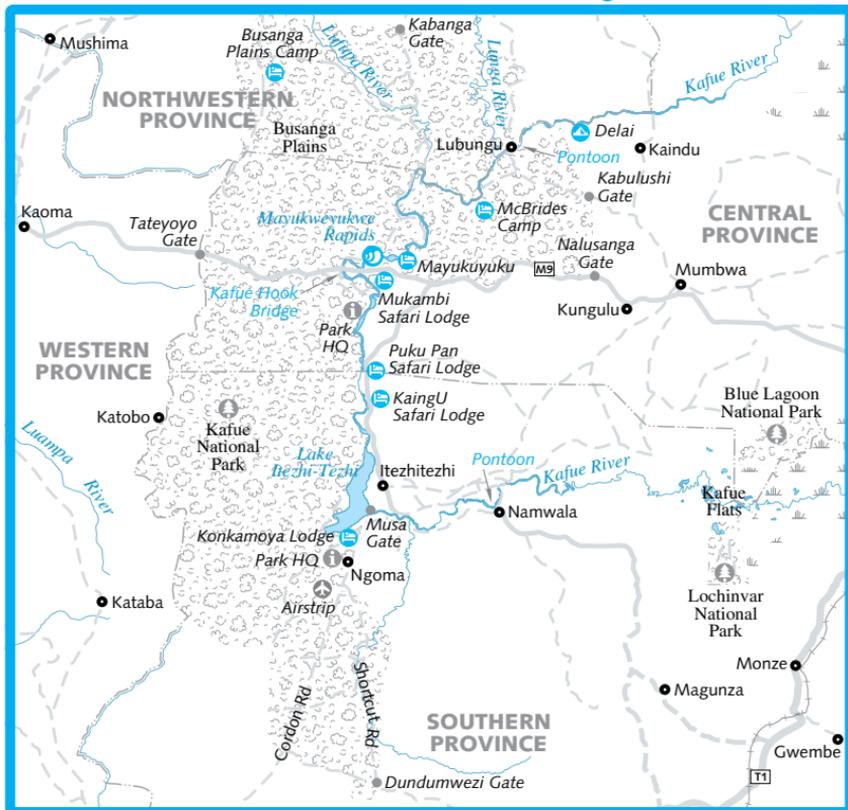
Just Off the Lusaka–Mongu Highway

Mayukuyuku

CAMPGROUND, BUSHCAMP \$\$

(www.kafuecamps.com; campsites per person ZMW78, with full board ZMW802) A rustic bushcamp, small and personal, in a gorgeous spot on the river with a well-landscaped camping area and four tastefully furnished thatch-roofed safari tents. If you don't have

Kafue National Park



your own gear, you can even rent tents (ZMW78/130 per small/large tent). It's possible to self-cater, to have meals prepared with advance notice (dinner is ZMW150) or to stay with full board. Mayukuyuku is only 5km off the main highway on decent gravel; the camp does pick-ups (ZMW160 per vehicle) from the nearby bus stop (jump off any Lusaka–Mongu bus or minibus) or transfers from Lusaka (round trip ZMW2650).

TOP CHOICE **Mukambi Safari Lodge** CHALET \$\$\$
 (0974 424013; www.mukambi.com; per person with full board ZMW1422; 📶🚰) Easily the most accessible of the Kafue lodges and easy to reach from Lusaka, Mukambi makes for a great base to explore the park. Tastefully designed *rondavels* (round huts) are set back from the riverfront and a few luxurious 'tents' (reserved for Busanga Plains Camp guests) have private back decks overlooking the river with their own outdoor claw-footed tubs!

You can relax by the pool between morning and afternoon activities. The beautifully designed dining area has a 2nd-floor lounge, a great spot for contemplating sunsets – that is, if you're not out on a sunset cruise on the motorised pontoon boat that covers a placid stretch of the river. Ask about camping, soon to be available nearby.

Northern Sector

Other than one highly recommended property, Wilderness Safari Company has a monopoly on accommodation in the Busanga Plains. Several other lodges and camps are in the centre and northeastern section and one, Delai, is outside the park proper in the Mushingashi Conservancy, a GMA/hunting concession with thriving wildlife.

TOP CHOICE **Busanga Plains Camp** TENTED CAMP \$\$\$
 (www.mukambi.com; all-inclusive per person ZMW 3409; 🌞Jul-Oct) The approach to this bucolic

oasis, basically an island just 7km from the park's northern border, is made all the more dramatic by the wooden walkway over a prairie of 'floating grass'. The pièce de résistance of each of the four simply but comfortably outfitted safari tents is the outdoor bathroom with bucket shower. An air of informality and intimacy is encouraged by fireside pre-dinner drinks and meals taken communally in the thatch-roofed lounge area. The six-hour transport (160km) from Mukambi is basically an extended wildlife-viewing drive. Most visitors spend time at Mukambi on either end of their journey here.

Delai

BUSHCAMP \$\$\$

(☎0977 762096; www.bongwesafaris.com; 3 nights all-inclusive per person incl transport from Lusaka ZMW5800) Located in the wildlife-rich Mushingashi Conservancy just outside the north-eastern border of Kafue proper, this rustic camp is run by Bongwe Barn & Safaris in Lusaka (all guests here are on all-inclusive multi-day trips). Basic thatch-roofed chalets are on a hillside overlooking a stunning bend in the river. In part because of the lack of electricity and its isolation, a stay of several nights here feels truly like a refuge from the wider world. The food served at the communal-style meals is delicious and the portions are huge.

McBrides Camp

CHALET, CAMPGROUND \$\$\$

(☎0977 414871; www.mcbridescamp.com; campsites ZMW155, per person chalets ZMW1200) Situated at the confluence of the Mushingashi and Kafue Rivers, this genuine bushcamp is cleverly built around wildlife paths, assuring the regular presence of wild visitors. The seven chalets are spacious and simple, built of thatch and wood. The simple, shady campsite is the budget alternative and has two clean ablution blocks. Chris, one of the owners, has written three books on lions and is a font of knowledge.

Southern Sector

Contact lodges for driving directions from the Lusaka-Mongu highway. Charter flights can land at Chunga, the nearby airstrip.

Puku Pan Safari Lodge

CAMPGROUND, CHALET \$\$\$

(☎in Lusaka 0211-266927; www.pukupansafarilodge.com; campsites per person ZMW156, chalets with full board & 1 activity per person ZMW1090; ☉year-round) A low-key, no-frills Zambian-managed compound beautifully situated overlooking the hippo- and croc-filled river.

The eight somewhat rustic mud-and-thatch cottages have verandahs, and the campgrounds have hot showers and clean ablutions blocks. Out the back, overlooking the swamps and the hunting concession that surrounds the property, is a thatch-roofed viewing area with wicker chairs and a hammock. Walking safaris (ZMW106) and boat trips (ZMW132) are available as well as the usual wildlife drives. Transfers from Lusaka (ZMW260) and pick-ups from the highway near Mukambi (ZMW518) are available; prices are per vehicle.



Safari Lodge

CAMPGROUND, CHALET \$\$\$

(☎in Lusaka 0211-256992; www.kaingu-lodge.com; campsites per person ZMW127, with full board & 2 activities ZMW1905; ☉) Experienced African travellers especially will love this remote camp set on a magical stretch of the Kafue River – broad, but filled with lush islands among the rapids providing lots of nooks and crannies to explore, and delightful birdwatching. The four tastefully furnished Meru-style tents raised on rosewood platforms with stone bathrooms overlook the river and have large decks to enjoy the view. Families can opt for the large high-ceilinged two-bedroom chalet. There are also three campsites, each with its own well-kept thatch ablutions and *braai* facilities. Two-day to week-long fly-camping safaris in large, inflatable canoes are offered.

Konkamoya Lodge

CHALET \$\$\$

(www.konkamoya.com; all-inclusive per person ZMW1820; ☉mid-Jun–mid-Nov) Easily the best accommodation on the southern shores of Lake Itzhi-Tezhi, Konkamoya has five enormous and luxurious safari tents raised on wooden platforms with stunning lake-facing views. Morning and afternoon walks and wildlife drives are part of the daily schedule.

Getting There & Away

Most guests of the top-end lodges and camps fly in on chartered planes. Transfers from the airstrip to the lodges and camps are often included in the rates.

For drivers, the main route into Kafue National Park is along the road between Lusaka and Mongu. It's about 200km from Lusaka to Nalusanga Gate; 30km west of Nalusanga Gate a road leads southwest towards Lake Itzhi-Tezhi. The road is in very bad condition, with only a small part graded; the rest is terrible – it's only accessible by a 4WD with high clearance. Note

that the tsetse flies are bad down here. Just past Itezitezhi village is Musa Gate, from where the road crosses Lake Itezhi-Tezhi.

For Mukambi Safari Lodge, continue west along the main road from Lusaka until about 10km before Kafue Hook Bridge and look for the signposted turn-off to the south. On the western side of the bridge, a main track leads into the northern sector of the park.

There's no public transport in the park, but you could easily catch a Mongu-bound Juldan or Shalom bus from Lusaka (ZMW100, three hours, 8am) to the highway stop near Mukambi Safari Lodge or Mayukuyuku. For a ride back to Lusaka, wait out by Hook Bridge or the stop by Mukambi between 11am and 11.30am.

Mongu

0217

The largest town in Barotseland, and the capital of the Western Province, is on high ground overlooking the flat and seemingly endless Liuwa Plain. There's plenty of activity on Mongu's streets but little to draw travellers apart from the spectacular panoramic views over the floodplains and the annual **Kuomboka ceremony**, when thousands flock here and room prices skyrocket. The town is quite spread out with no real centre; from a harbour on the southwestern outskirts, an 8km canal runs westwards to meet a tributary of the Zambezi. The river

port is a settlement of reed and thatch buildings, where local fishermen sell their catch, and it's a good spot for people watching as longboats glide down the river transporting people and goods to nearby villages.

There are a few internet cafes around town.

Sleeping

Country Lodge

LODGE \$

(0977 427777; countrylodge@iconnect.zm; 3066 Independence Ave; r incl breakfast ZMW175;  ) Close to the centre of town, this modern and well-run place sees its fair share of conferences, weddings and the like. The rooms are plainly decorated, though they come with amenities like satellite TV and nice modern bathrooms; there's a bar and restaurant on site.

Getting There & Away

The public bus station is on the southeastern edge of town, behind the Catholic church. Juldan and Shalom are the most recommended of the bus companies servicing the Lusaka to Mongu route (ZMW150, eight hours).

A daily bus operates between Livingstone and Mongu (ZMW125, 10 hours) via Sesheke, Kalongola and Senanga, but you might want to break up the journey in Senanga; minibuses and pick-ups leave on a fill-up-and-go basis from here (ZMW25, 2½ hours).

VISITING THE PALACES

The village of **Limulunga** is 15km north of Mongu. Here you can see the palace of the *litunga* – the king of the Lozi. It's a large traditional house, occupied by the *litunga* from around April to June, when his main residence at Lealui is flooded. You cannot go inside, and photos are not allowed. Of more interest is the **Nayuma Museum** (admission ZMW5;  8am–5pm daily), with its colony of bats in the roof, and exhibits about the Lozi, the *litunga* and the Kuomboka, including a large model of the *nalikwanda* boat used in the ceremony. Minibuses run between Mongu and Limulunga throughout the day.

The village of **Lealui**, on the floodplain 15km northwest of Mongu, is the site of the *litunga*'s main palace; he lives here for most of the year (July to March), when the waters are low. The palace is a large single-storey Lozi house, built with traditional materials (wood, reeds, mud and thatch) and meticulously maintained. Around the palace are smaller houses for the *litunga*'s wives and family, and a tall reed fence surrounds the whole compound. It's not easy to reach, but the journey by boat (along a canal from Mongu to a branch of the Zambezi, then upstream to Lealui) is interesting, passing local villages and plenty of bird life. Avoid visiting at weekends, when the *litunga*'s *kotu* (court) is closed, because you need permission from his *indunas* (advisers) and the *kotu* is only open from Monday to Friday.

Public longboats between Mongu harbour and Lealui (ZMW10, one hour) leave once or twice a day. Alternatively, charter a boat to Lealui for about ZMW500 return (for up to six people). Make enquiries at the shed on the left as you enter the harbour. Buses do the trip in the latter months of the dry season.

Liuwa Plain National Park

About 100km northwest of Mongu, **Liuwa Plain National Park** (☎0977 158733; liuwa@africanparks.co.zm; per person per day US\$40, campsites per person US\$10, scout per day US\$10) is 3600 sq km of true wilderness on the Angolan border. A remote and rarely visited wild grassland area, it's where vast numbers of wildebeest and other grazing species such as lechwes, zebras, tsessebes and buffaloes gather at the beginning of the wet season (November). Although their gathering is often called a migration, it's more of a meander, but the wall-to-wall herds are nonetheless spectacular. Roan antelopes, wild dogs, cheetahs and especially big and well-fed hyenas in particularly large numbers can be found in the park. Birdwatching is also a highlight; there are waterbirds such as wattled and crowned cranes, marabouts, saddle-billed storks, herons, pelicans and egrets, among others.

Although it became a national park in 1972, for years the park was in decline with no government funds to rehabilitate it. However, an organisation called **African Parks** (www.african-parks.org), which assists Afri-

can governments in funding conservation projects, signed a lease agreement in 2004, and now manages the welfare and facilities of the park.

Liuwa Plain is accessible from June to December, but the best time to go is November, just after the rains start (the later the better). Make sure you leave before the floodwaters rise, however, or you'll be stuck for months.

There are three campsites in the park, **Kwale**, **Lyangu** and **Katoyana**, that are open to independent travellers. Remember that you must be totally self-sufficient, including bringing all food for yourself and your guide.

Getting here independently, via the park headquarters at Kalabo, is restricted to well-equipped and completely self-contained vehicles and is a real expedition, hence the small visitor numbers (only 25 vehicles are allowed in at any one time; and a GPS is advisable). One of the only companies to offer all-inclusive organised trips is the highly recommended **Robin Pope Safaris** (www.robinpopesafaris.net); a trip out to Liuwa Plains will cost about ZMW17,200 for four nights.

KUOMBOKA CEREMONY

The Kuomboka (literally, 'to move to dry ground') is probably one of the last great Southern African ceremonies. It is celebrated by the Lozi people of western Zambia, and marks the ceremonial journey of the *litunga* (the Lozi king) from his dry-season palace at Lealui, near Mongu, to his wet-season palace on higher ground at Limulunga. It usually takes place in late March or early April, and sometimes ties in with Easter. The dates are not fixed, however; they're dependent on the rains. In fact the Kuomboka does not happen every year and is not infrequently cancelled because of insufficient floodwaters; the 2012 ceremony was called off because it's against Lozi tradition to hold the Kuomboka under a full moon.

The palace at Limulunga was built in 1933 by Litunga Yeta III. Although the Kuomboka was already a long-standing tradition, it was Yeta III who first made the move from Lealui to Limulunga a major ceremony.

Central to the ceremony is the royal barge – the *nalikwanda*, a huge wooden canoe, painted with black-and-white stripes, that carries the *litunga*. It is considered a great honour to be one of the hundred or so paddlers on the *nalikwanda*, and each paddler wears a headdress of a scarlet beret with a piece of lion's mane and a knee-length skirt of animal skins. Drums also play a leading role in the ceremony. The most important are the three royal war drums, *kanaona*, *munanga* and *mundili*, each more than 1m wide and said to be at least 170 years old.

The journey from Lealui to Limulunga takes about six hours. The *litunga* begins the day in traditional dress but during the journey changes into the full uniform of a British admiral, complete with all regalia including an ostrich-plume hat. The uniform was presented to the *litunga* in 1902 by King Edward VII, in recognition of the treaties signed between the Lozi and Queen Victoria.

Senanga

📍0217

If you're coming from Lusaka, Senanga has a real 'end of the line' feel – although the main street can be surprisingly lively, especially in the evening, and the views of the Zambezi are beautiful. It is the best place to break up a journey between Mongu and Ngonye (Sioma) Falls or Sesheke.

The best accommodation option is **Senanga Safaris** (📍0217-230156; campsites per person ZMW30, incl breakfast ZMW321). It offers comfortable *rondavels* with splendid views over the Zambezi plains – spoilt only by the giant satellite TV dish in the garden. The bar sells cold beer and the restaurant serves expensive meals. Be warned that you may have difficulty getting accommodation when it hosts an annual fishing competition over a few days in the dry season.

Minibuses and pick-ups run between Senanga and Mongu (ZMW25, 2½ hours) several times a day. About 30km south of Senanga, the pontoon ferry (passengers free, 2/4WD vehicles ZMW100/150) across the Zambezi to the tiny settlement of Kalongola (marked as Sitoti on some maps, but this is a separate village about 5km south of Kalongola) on the west bank of the river is being replaced by a bridge. From here, a recently tarred road continues south towards Sesheke and Namibia.

Sioma & Ngonye Falls

📍0217

The village of Sioma is about 60km south-east of Kalongola. It has a large mission and a row of shops, and that's about it. The only reason to come here is **Ngonye Falls** (Sioma Falls; ☀️24hr) – a 1km-wide chain of waterfalls, rapids and rocky islands cutting across the Zambezi River. It's beautiful and very impressive and would be a major attraction if it weren't so difficult to reach.

If you can, stop at the National Parks & Wildlife Service office near the falls, which can advise on the best way to visit the falls and point out a local **campsite** (campsites US\$10). You should be able to engage an official guide here.

Situated 8km south of Ngonye Falls, **Maziba Bay Lodge** (📍0927 11 234 1747; www.mutemwa.com/maziba.htm; all-inclusive per person US\$320) has large wooden chalets with bathrooms and comfortable furnishings,

and overlooks an idyllic sandy beach on the Zambezi.

The falls are less than 1km east of the main road, about 10km south of Sioma. For drivers, access is not difficult.

Sesheke

📍0211

Sesheke, 200km upstream from Livingstone (virtually opposite the Namibian town of Katima Mulilo), consists of two towns on either side of the Zambezi River linked by a new bridge. The major part of town is on the eastern side of the river, before you cross the bridge. There's not much to see or do here, it's really just a transit point between Zambia and Namibia. The smaller section of town, on the western side of the river, is centred on the Zambian border post, with the Namibian border a few hundred metres down the road.

Friendly **Brenda's Best & Baobab Bar** (📍0979 011917; campsites per person ZMW30, chalets ZMW150-250) is the best place to stay in Sesheke. It offers airy thatch-roofed chalets and a lovely campsite with a popular bar built around a massive baobab. The entrance to Brenda's is 200m beyond the western side of the church on the main street, down an unmarked road towards the river.

Small buses link Sesheke with Natakindi Rd in Livingstone (ZMW55, two hours, two daily), usually in the morning, and minibuses also make the run. Occasional minibuses also link Sesheke with Katima Mulilo.

NORTHERN ZAMBIA

Those with a spirit of adventure who love wild, open spaces will be at home in Zambia's untamed north. True, it can be difficult to get around, as the distances are vast and the tracks often rough, but this is all part of the experience.

Topping the list of attractions are Kasanka National Park, where you can camp by the side of a river and watch sitatungas splashing in the swamps at dawn from high up in a mahogany tree; Mutinondo Wilderness, a vast area of whaleback hills, rivers and valleys so untouched you feel almost transported to a prehistoric era; and striking Shiwa Ng'andu, a grand English mansion buried deep in the Zambian bush with a relaxing hot spring to enjoy.

Northern Zambia starts after the 'Pedicel', the slice of DR Congo territory that juts sharply into Zambia, almost splitting it in two. From here onwards the old Great North Rd shoots its way straight up to Tanzania, passing national parks, vast wilderness areas and waterfalls.

Serenje

☎0215

Serenje is a relatively uninspiring town, spread out around the Great North Rd. The only reason for travellers to pass through is as a convenient refuelling stop (both petrol and food wise) on the way to more exciting destinations. There are two main hubs: the turn-off at the junction, which has a petrol station, a couple of shops and a few basic restaurants, and the town centre, 3km north of the Great North Rd, which has a bank, a market, a bus station and a couple of places to stay.

Mapontela Inn (☎0215-382026; r ZMW175-235), with its leafy courtyard and bright, homey rooms, is the lodging of choice in town. The attached restaurant (meals ZMW15 to ZMW25) has a patio overlooking the street and serves tasty staples.

The basic **Siga Siga Resthouse** (☎0215-382362; d with shared bathroom ZMW60) is a useful option for bus travel as it's right by the junction with the Great North Rd. There are a couple of restaurants nearby, including the guesthouse's own.

All buses between Lusaka (ZMW80, five hours) and Kasama (ZMW90, five hours) pass through Serenje. Most of the big buses stop beside the petrol station at the junction with the Great North Rd, while minibuses stop in town.

Kasanka National Park

One of Zambia's least known wilderness areas and a real highlight of a visit to this part of the country is the privately managed **Kasanka National Park** (www.kasanka.com; admission US\$10; ☀6am-6pm). At just 390 sq km, it's pretty small compared with most African parks, doesn't have a huge range of facilities and sees few visitors, and this is what makes it special: you'll discover great tracts of *miombo* woodland, evergreen thicket, open grassland and rivers fringed with emerald forest, all by yourself.

Kasanka is perhaps most famous for its swampland, though, and this is the terrain in which to see the park's shy and retiring star, the sitatunga, a semi-aquatic antelope distinguished by its long, splayed hooves and oily coat. Between July and October you'll most likely see sable antelopes and hartebeest, and may also be treated to a glimpse of roan antelopes. Hippos and crocodiles inhabit the lakes and rivers here and there's a small population of elephants. During the months of November and December, this park is home to more than eight *million* migratory fruit bats – the biggest mammal gathering anywhere in the world – which can blanket the sky for several minutes at dusk. Bird spotters will also love Kasanka: 463 species have been recorded here.

👁 Sights & Activities

A trip to Kasanka isn't complete without viewing the park from the heights of the **Fibwe Hide**, a 15-minute drive from Wasa Lodge. Ascend 20m up an old mahogany tree via a rickety wooden ladder to a platform where you can sit and watch the swamps below. Come at dawn and dusk for the best chance of spotting sitatungas.

Game drives can be arranged at the main lodge for wildlife viewing in comfort. Drives cost ZMW140 per person (minimum two people). The lodge also arranges **walking safaris** – anything from a one-hour jaunt near the camp to a five-day extravaganza with an armed ranger, camping out in the bush.

Finally, gliding along the Luwombwa River in a **canoe** (per person ZMW40) or a **motorboat** (per person ZMW140) surrounded by bustling forest on either side is a wonderful way to get a different look at the park; fishing on the river can also be arranged.

🛏 Sleeping

There are two campsites in Kasanka, where you'll be surrounded by the stars, the noise of animals, and little else. The **Pontoon Campsite** (per person US\$10) and the **Kabwe Campsite** (per person US\$10) both look out over the Kasanka River. Both are 10km to 12km from the main Wasa Lodge and come equipped with long-drop toilets and bucket showers.

Wasa Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

(☎873 76 2067957; www.kasanka.com; per person self-catering chalets ZMW267, with full board incl all activities ZMW1920) This lodge overlooking

Lake Wasa doubles as the park headquarters. Accommodation consists of thatched bungalows in two sizes; the larger chalets are airy and cool with wide balconies. There are several vantage points, including stone benches on the lakeshore, a small hide in the trees and the deck of the large bar and dining area. If you don't want the full-board option you bring your own supplies and the camp staff will cook for you.

i Getting There & Away

From Lusaka, take a bus (ZMW110) in the direction of Mansa, or take any bus from Lusaka to Serenje and change to a minibus (ZMW35) for Mansa. After turning off the Great North Rd, ask the driver to drop you at Kasanka National Park (near Mulembo village), not at Kasanka village, which is much further away. From the gate to Wasa Lodge is 12km; you can radio Wasa Lodge for a lift. It is also possible to charter a taxi from Serenje directly to Wasa Lodge (ZMW150 to ZMW200).

If you have your own vehicle, continue north along the Great North Rd from Serenje for 36km, then turn left onto the road towards Mansa. It's then 55km on a good road to the Kasanka entrance gate, clearly signposted on the left. There is no fuel available in the park, so stock up at Serenje.

Around Kasanka

Drivers with 4WD and high clearance may like to take the 'back route' from Kasanka direct to the Great North Rd, which winds past several attractions.

History buffs can go in search of the **Davidi Livingstone Memorial** – a simple stone memorial topped with a cross – which honours the famous explorer, who died here in 1873 whilst searching for the source of the Nile. The local villagers buried Livingstone's heart under a mupundu tree before his body was sent home to the mother country; the memorial marks that spot, though the tree is no longer there. To get here, pass the Kasanka National Park gate and continue 11km to the Livingstone Memorial turn-off, which will be on your right. Take the first left, from where it's another 25km to the memorial. However, the road is pretty bad, so it is really only for dedicated Livingstone buffs.

This route also winds past beautiful little **Lake Waka-Waka**, with glassy, croc-free waters (though always check the situation locally before jumping in) encircled by *miombo* woodland. Accommodation is in the

form of a small community **campsite** (per person US\$5) with basic bucket showers, barbecues and long-drop toilets. Local villagers will collect clean water for you and prepare fires. To get here, pass the Kasanka gates and take the turn-off to the Livingstone Memorial, but this time continue straight on for 35km, leaving the Livingstone Memorial road on your left.

In between Kasanka National Park and the Bangweulu Wetlands is the **Nakapalayo Tourism Project** (www.kasanka.com; campsites US\$20, huts per person incl village tour & entertainment US\$40), a community initiative that allows tourists to experience life in a real Zambian village. Visitors can camp, or stay in specially made huts with double beds and nets. Activities revolve around village life and include learning how to pound cassava, meeting local healers, and bush walks where you're taught about traditional uses for plants and trees. Meals (US\$20 per person per day) are local fare, eaten with the villagers. Day visits are also available for ZMW106 per person. To get here, continue just past Lake Waka-Waka, where the road will fork. Take the left-hand fork and continue on for 35km to Chiundaponde, where you'll find the project.

Bangweulu Wetlands

The Bangweulu Wetlands is a watery wilderness of lakes, seasonally flooded grasslands, swamp and unspoilt miombo woodland that lies 50km to the north of Kasanka. This rarely visited part of Zambia is the only place in Africa to see major numbers of black lechwes (antelopes with long, curved antlers). There are estimated to be some 100,000 here, enough to rival the great wildebeest migrations of the Serengeti. The wetlands are also home to the swamp-dwelling sitatunga and many other antelope species. Attracted by rich pickings, jackals are often seen and hyenas often heard at night, and when the floodwaters have receded, herds of elephants and buffaloes venture here.

Bangweulu is also known for its birds. Some 400 species have been noted, and a particular highlight for twitchers is the strange and rare shoebill stork. Other birds found here include crowned hornbills, swamp flycatchers, Denham's bustards, herons, ibises and storks, plus 15% of the world's wattled cranes.

The best time to see the lechwe herds is June to July, as the waters have begun receding, leaving vast plains of fresh green grass. September to November is great for general birdwatching, though you may not see shoebills at this time (March to April is best for these).

Sleeping

Nsobe Camp CAMPGROUND \$
(www.african-parks.org; campsites per person ZMW53) This is a basic campground with *braai* area, bucket showers, long-drop toilets and a couple of thatched cooking shelters. It is now under the management of African Parks.

Shoebill Island Camp CAMPGROUND \$\$\$
(www.kasanka.com; per person tents US\$50, incl meals & activities US\$360) This camp rests in the heart of the wetlands and is splendidly positioned on a tiny permanent island with only birds, hippos, lechwes and the occasional passing fisher for company. Guests stay in safari tents and there's a dining area and lookout point. Most activities revolve around dugout canoes, but drives and guided walks are also on offer. The camp is sometimes inaccessible from January to April.

Getting There & Away

The only way into the wetlands is by vehicle and chartered plane. Dirt roads lead here from Kasanka via Lake Waka-Waka and the Nakapalayo Tourism Project. The Chikuni ranger post and Nsobe Camp are 65km on from Nakapalayo, and from here it's another 10km to Shoebill Island Camp if it's dry. When it's wet, you have to travel this last stretch by boat. You will definitely need a fully equipped 4WD to attempt this trip as the going is tough.

There's an airstrip 3km from Shoebill Island Camp and charters from Lusaka are available.

Samfya

Perched on the western shore of Lake Bangweulu, about 10km east of the main road between Mansa and Serenje, is Samfya, a small and dusty trading centre with little going for it except for its excellent location. Just outside town is a long strip of blinding white beach bathed by startlingly blue waters. Don't jump in here, though, unless you fancy being a crocodile's dinner.

Located on the shores of the lake, the **Bangweulu Bay Lodge** ( Lusaka 0211-

266927; www.bangweulubaylodge.com; r per person US\$150-180) offers three smart guest chalets with views over the beach and blue waters beyond. Activities on tap include hobie-cat sailing, boat trips and wildlife spotting in the area.

Samfya Beach Hotel (campsites per person ZMW50, r ZMW150) has a pretty good location sitting on Cabana Beach, though the rooms are small and the bathrooms basic. Camping is an affordable option for those with a tent. Take the first turning on the left in town and it's about 2km north of the centre.

Samfya is regularly served by minibuses from Serenje (ZMW70, four to five hours). Buses from Lusaka (ZMW120, 10 hours) may drop you into town or at the junction 10km away, from where local pick-ups shuttle passengers to and fro.

Mutinondo Wilderness

This is one of the most stunning places in northern Zambia. Mutinondo is a beautiful 10,000-hectare wilderness littered with whaleback hills or inselbergs: huge, sweeping hulks of stone in varying shades of black, purple, green and brown. The landscape here feels unspoilt and somehow ancient. Scramble to the top of one of those great granite beasts and it is easy to imagine a time when Stone Age hunters wandered the endless valleys, woodland and rivers below.

Mammal sightings are rare here, although there are plenty of tree squirrels, klipspringers and other antelopes (roan, sable, reedbuck and bushbuck) lurking around out of sight. Mutinondo is an important birding destination and there are about 320 species here, including plenty of rare specimens. Notable are the Ross's turaco, the Anchieta's sunbird and the bar-winged weaver.

Other than hiking and taking in the views, you can canoe and swim in the river, ride horses and, during the mushroom-friendly rainy season, go in search of the largest edible mushroom in the world.

Sleeping

TOP CHOICE **Mayense Camp** LODGE \$\$\$
(www.mutinodozambia.com; s/d per person incl meals & activities from ZMW600/550) Built into the hillside are a handful of individually designed chalets, which, while not luxurious,

are beautiful in their simplicity and blend in seamlessly with their natural environment. All have outstanding views and the majority are open to the elements; the camp uses a number of alternative energy sources and the kitchen uses as much locally sourced produce as possible. Campers at other sites can enjoy hearty home-cooked meals (a three-course dinner is ZMW120).

i Getting There & Away

The turn-off to Mutinondo is 164km past Serenje heading north on the Great North Rd. It's sign-posted to the right; Mutinondo is 25km down a 2WD-friendly track.

Travelling by bus from Lusaka, ask for a ticket to Kalonje Railway Station (ZMW110, six hours). Road transfers for a maximum of five people can be arranged from the Great North Rd turn-off (ZMW180). There's also an airstrip for charters.

Shiwa Ng'andu

Deep in the northern Zambian wilderness sits **Shiwa Ng'andu** (www.shiwangandu.com; tours US\$20; ☎9-11am Mon-Sat, closed to non-guests Sun), a grand country estate and the labour of love of eccentric British aristocrat Sir Stewart Gore-Brown. The estate's crowning glory is **Shiwa Ng'andu Manor House**, a glorious brick mansion. Driving up to the house through farm buildings, settlements and workers houses, it almost feels like an old feudal domain. Today Gore-Brown's grandchildren live on and manage the estate, which is a working farm.

Shiwa House, full of old family heirlooms, photographs and stories, is the main draw and visitors can go on guided tours. Standing on the perfectly tended lawns, you could almost forget that you're in Southern Africa and imagine instead that you're at a 1920s garden party on an English summer's day.

Guided tours of the estate (home to 27 species of mammal and 380 species of bird), in a car or on foot, are possible, though you are also free to wander.

About 20km west of Shiwa House, but still on the Shiwa Ng'andu estate, is **Kapishya Hot Springs** (guests/nonguests of Kapishya Lodge free/ZMW26). The setting is marvellous – a blue-green, steaming lagoon of hot water surrounded by palms. From the lodge, **walking, fishing** and **canoeing** trips are also offered.

Sleeping

TOP CHOICE Kapishya Hot Springs Lodge

LODGE \$\$

(☎0211-229261; www.shiwasafaris.com; campsites US\$10, per person chalets US\$60, d incl breakfast & dinner US\$110; ☎☎) Light and spacious chalets have wide wooden decks complete with fireplaces and views over the river and gardens; also has a lovely campground with free firewood, hot showers and barbecue areas. Excellent meals (full breakfast ZMW100, packed lunch ZMW50, three-course dinner ZMW150) are available. The owners have recently added a spa on the banks of the river.

Shiwa House

HISTORIC HOTEL \$\$\$

(☎0211-229261; www.shiwasafaris.com; d per person with full board from US\$350) This old place is suitably attired for a grand English manor, with fireplaces, four-poster beds, oil paintings and big roll-top baths. There's a glorious guest sitting room looking out onto the front lawn, lit by candles and a crackling fire at night. Tasty dinners are taken in the rather splendid dining room. The hosts (the grandchildren of Sir Stewart Gore-Brown) are happy to chat and to give you tours of the house. Guests can browse the Gore-Brown archives, a fascinating collection of Sir Stewart's journals, letters and photographs.

i Getting There and Away

To reach Shiwa House, head along the highway by bus (or car) from Mpika for about 90km towards Chisoso. Look for the signpost to the west, from where a 20km dirt road leads to the house. Kapishya Hot Springs and the lodge are a further 20km along this track. You can also get to Shiwa from the Mpika-to-Kasama road; this time look for the signpost pointing east and it's then 42km down the dirt track to Kapishya. There is no public transport along this last section, but vehicle transfers are available from the Great North Rd turn-off for ZMW212 per vehicle (maximum four people). Transfers are also available between Kapishya and Shiwa House for ZMW159 per vehicle.

Kasama

☎0214

Kasama is the capital of the Northern Province and the cultural centre of the Bemba people, and with its wide, leafy streets and handsome old tin-roofed colonial houses, it is the most appealing of the northern towns.

Thorn Tree Guesthouse (☎0214-221615; www.thorntreesafaris.com; 612 Zambia Rd; s/d

THE SHIWA STORY

In 1914 Stewart Gore-Brown, a young British colonial officer, was helping establish the border between Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo when he stumbled across a lake that the local Bemba people called Shiwa Ng'andu, or the place of the royal crocodiles. For years he'd harboured dreams of his own kingdom in Africa, and with characteristic verve he decided this was the ideal spot, swiftly buying about 10,000 hectares from the local chief and returning after the end of WWI to build his little piece of England in the bush.

The heart of the estate was the great mansion of Shiwa House, made from materials found locally, or transported on foot by porters from the nearest town of Ndola, a 300km, three-week walk away. Essentials such as grand pianos and fine wines were shipped from London. The house sat overlooking the lake, complete with manicured lawns and servants clad in white gloves and pillbox hats. Around the house grew an estate, which included houses for 2000 employees, schools and a post office.

All of this upkeep was expensive and Gore-Brown tried many money-making schemes, including growing flowers from which to extract and export oils for perfume, but none ultimately succeeded, and Shiwa was continually bankrolled by his wealthy aunt in Britain.

Gore-Brown was a stickler for discipline in his attempts to create a utopian fiefdom, and his violent temper was legendary. But, unusually for the time, he believed in African independence and became a well-known figure in Northern Rhodesia and in Britain. He was knighted by George VI and was close friends with early nationalists, including Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's first president. When he died in 1967 he was, uniquely for a white colonist, given a full state funeral and is buried on the hill overlooking the lake at Shiwa.

Through the 1980s, Gore-Brown's daughter and son-in-law continued struggling to run the estate, and were actively involved in the campaign against poachers, especially in nearby North Luangwa National Park. In 1992 they were mysteriously murdered. Shiwa House stood empty for several years, and rapidly disintegrated, but in 2001 Gore-Brown's grandsons began a major renovation and opened the house to visitors again.

Stewart Gore-Brown's story is described (or perhaps romanticised) in *The Africa House* by Christina Lamb.

ZMW230/290, f from ZMW350: ☎), well sign-posted from the centre of town, is family run, homely and very popular – you should definitely book before turning up. There's a bar and a restaurant serving fresh farm produce and it can organise tours of little-visited parts of the northern region.

The **JB Hotel** (Golf Rd; mains ZMW20-40) has a good restaurant at the rear that serves local dishes such as *nshima* and chicken as well as sea-bream curry and chicken schnitzel.

Buses and minibuses leave for Lusaka (ZMW130, 10 hours) daily. Buses go via Mpika (ZMW75, two hours) and Serenje (ZMW95, four hours). Northbound buses go to Mbala (ZMW35, two hours) and Mpulungu (ZMW40, three hours). The Tazara train station is 6km south of the town centre.

Mbala

This sleepy town sits on the periphery of the Great Rift Valley, from where the road drops

over 1000m down to Lake Tanganyika. It was once a colonial centre called Abercorn, and today the only reason to visit is the local museum, or as a way station en route to Kalambo Falls. **Moto Moto Museum** (admission ZMW15; ☎9am-4.45pm), about 3km from the town centre, is a huge and fascinating collection of artefacts based on the cultural life of the Bemba people. Particularly noteworthy is an exhibition detailing how young Bemba women were traditionally initiated into adulthood.

The most atmospheric and welcoming place to stay in Mbala is **Lake Chila Lodge** (☎0977 795241; lakechilalodge@yahoo.com; Lake Chila; r ZMW150), located on the lakeshore about 2km from town. Rooms are set in spacious chalets with hot showers and satellite TV. The lodge includes a lively bar-restaurant (mains ZMW20 to ZMW40), which makes for a good rest stop on a road trip.

Minibuses run a couple of times a day to Kasama (ZMW35, two hours) and Mpulungu (ZMW15, 50 minutes), leaving from the main street.

Kalambo Falls

About 40km northwest of Mbala, along the border between Zambia and Tanzania, is the 221m-high **Kalambo Falls** (adult/child/car US\$15/7/15, campsites US\$10). Twice as high (but nowhere near as expansive) as Victoria Falls, Kalambo is the second-highest single-drop waterfall in Africa (the highest being Tugela Falls in South Africa). From spectacular viewpoints near the top of the falls, you can see the Kalambo River plummeting off a steep V-shaped cliff cut into the Rift Valley escarpment down into a deep valley, which then winds towards Lake Tanganyika. There is a very basic campground here, with stunning views out over the Great Rift Valley.

The best way for travellers without a car to get here is from Mpulungu. A thrice-weekly taxi-boat service (ZMW25) stops at villages east of Mpulungu. It moves quite slowly and makes plenty of stops, so just getting to the base of the falls can take all day. Avoid arriving in the dark, as it's two to three hours' walking uphill to the viewpoint near the top of the falls (and the campsite). It's also possible to hire a private boat from Mpulungu harbour, which will cost around ZMW700 a day, including fuel.

Another alternative is to stay in one of the lakeshore lodges near the falls, from where you could hike to the falls or visit on an organised boat trip.

Travel by road is possible, but only with a 4WD, as the road is in very poor condition, with plenty of deep, sandy stretches.

Mpulungu

📍0214

Resting at the foot of mighty Lake Tanganyika, Mpulungu is a crossroads between Eastern, Central and Southern Africa and the terminal for the ferry across the lake to Tanzania. The streets are fairly lively and busy, especially at night, but there is no real reason to come here unless you're travelling north to Nsumbu National Park and Ndole Bay or northeast to Tanzania.

Nkupi Lodge (📍0214-455166; nkupilodge@hotmail.com; campsites per person ZMW40, dm ZMW75, rondavels from ZMW125), a short walk out of town near the lake, is the best place for independent travellers. It has plenty of space for tents as well as a number of spacious *rondavels* and there's a self-catering

kitchen and a bar, or food can be prepared with notice.

Long-distance buses link Mpulungu with Kasama (ZMW40, three hours) and Mpika (ZMW100, six hours). Minibuses also depart from near the BP petrol station for Mbala (ZMW15, 40 minutes).

Nsumbu (Sumbu) National Park

Hugging the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika, little-visited **Nsumbu** (admission US\$10; 🕒6am-6pm) is a beautiful 2020 sq km of hilly grassland and escarpment, interrupted by rivers and wetlands. Like other remote parks in Zambia, Nsumbu was virtually abandoned in the 1980s and 1990s, and poaching seriously affected wildlife stocks here. Conditions have improved over the past decade, though. Poaching has come under control, and animal numbers have increased, in part thanks to a buffer zone created by two game management areas that adjoin the park.

Herds of elephants and buffaloes are seen here once again, often coming to the lake to drink. There are also plenty of antelopes, including roan and sable antelopes, waterbucks and sitatungas. All of these animals attract predators, and these days lions and hyenas can often be heard at night. In the lake itself are hippos as well as some of the largest crocodiles in Africa. For anglers, Lake Tanganyika offers top-class sport: Nile perch, tigerfish and *nkupi* (yellow belly) are plentiful, while golden perch and giant tigerfish all exist in the waters.

Sleeping



Ndole Bay Lodge

LODGE \$\$

(📍088-2165 2077; www.ndolebaylodge.com; campsites US\$11, per person chalets with full board from US\$100; 🕒) Set on a pretty beach just outside Nsumbu National Park, this lodge has several spacious chalets made from natural local materials – the newest ones include a huge attached bathroom with Balinese-style outdoor showers. There is also a campground under the trees on the sandy beach. Fresh Lake Tanganyika fish is on the menu at the restaurant. All kinds of activities are on offer here, including snorkelling, waterskiing, bush walks, fishing trips and even scuba diving. Or try a sailing trip up Lake Tanganyika in a wooden dhow, including fishing and

diving on the side and rainforest and waterfall walking safaris.

Nkamba Bay Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

(☎027 73 690 2992; www.nkambabaylodge.com; per person with full board & activities US\$180-400; 🍷) This exclusive private lodge set in a gorgeous, pristine cove is the only accommodation operating within the park itself. Nine luxurious and spacious chalets are decorated with African and the bathrooms and balconies overlook either the lake or the bush. There's also a small swimming pool (you can't swim in the lake here because of crocodiles and hippos), and the food is excellent and plentiful. Game drives, bird-watching and fishing are the main activities, but canoe trips or walks in the surrounding rainforest are also available.

i Getting There & Away

Each lodge will arrange transfers for guests from the airstrip in the national park, or across the lake from Mpulungu. **Proflight** (☎0211-271032; www.proflight-zambia.com) offers charter flights to Kasaba Bay on a five-seater plane.

Slow local passenger boats (ZMW60 one way) chug up and down the lake heading north to Nsumbu on Thursday and Friday and heading south to Mpulungu on Monday and Wednesday. Boat charters to either lodge start from ZMW1318 one way for a slow boat.

Hardy overlanders can drive, but aim to come from the southwest, where the roads are in better condition. A new road is nearing completion from Mbala direct to Nsumbu – check with the lodges for up-to-date information.

THE COPPERBELT

Not on the radar for most visitors unless they happen to be mining consultants, the Copperbelt Province is the industrial heartland of Zambia and the main population centre outside of Lusaka. The region is home to the unique attraction of Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage, the largest chimpanzee sanctuary in the world.

The world copper market slumped during the 1970s, so vast opencast mines cut back production, creating high unemployment in the area. The cost of copper and cobalt went through the roof in the early 21st century and has once more seen the region prosper as Zambia records impressive economic growth.

Kapiri Mposhi

☎0215

This uninspiring transit town, about 200km north of Lusaka, is at the southern end of the Tazara railway from Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) and at the fork in the roads to Lusaka, the Copperbelt and northern Zambia.

Coming from Tanzania, there's a passport check before exiting the station, then from outside the station there's a mad rush for buses to Lusaka and elsewhere. Thieves and pickpockets thrive in the crowds and confusion, so stay alert.

Buses and minibuses from Lusaka (ZMW50, three hours) leave regularly and are a quicker and more convenient option than the irregular local trains.

Ndola

☎0212 / POP 500,000

Ndola, the capital of the Copperbelt Province, is a peaceful, prosperous little city that provides relief from the pace, pollution and chaos of its larger cousin, Lusaka. However, other than the **Copperbelt Museum** (☎0212-617450; Buteko Ave; adult/child ZMW25/10; ☀9am-4.30pm), which showcases the local industry as well as artefacts of traditional culture in the area, there are few genuine attractions for the average visitor.

While the **New Savoy Hotel** (☎0212-611097; savoy@zamnet.zm; Buteko Ave; r incl breakfast ZMW500-1100; 🍷🍷) is a bit of a hulking concrete block from the outside, inside it's upholding standards well: old-fashioned, true, but not without a certain charm.

'New' is rather optimistic given the creaky state of the corridors of the **New Ambassador Hotel** (☎0212-374396; President Ave; r ZMW140-550), but the spacious rooms are of reasonable value.

The dining destination in Ndola is **Michelangelo** (☎0212-620325; 126 Broadway; mains ZMW35-65; ☀breakfast, lunch & dinner; 🍷🍷), which does impressively authentic pizza and homemade pasta and ground coffee. There's also a small boutique hotel attached.

Ndola is about 325km north of Lusaka. **Proflight** (☎0211-271032; www.proflight-zambia.com) flies daily to Lusaka (from ZMW316 one way); **South African Airlink** (☎0211-254350; www.saairlink.co.za) has daily flights to Johannesburg from US\$400 one way and

Kenya Airways (☎0212-620709; www.kenya-airways.com) has daily flights to Nairobi from US\$600 one way. The airport is 3.5km south of the public bus station.

From the public bus station, at the southern end of Chimwemwe Rd, three blocks south of Buteko Ave, minibuses and buses run every few minutes to Kitwe (bus ZMW15, 45 minutes). Long-distance buses depart from the stand next to the Broadway–Maina Soko roundabout and run to Lusaka (ZMW65, four hours, around 10 buses daily). The train station is 700m north of the museum, but trains to Lusaka (ZMW25, Monday and Friday) are infrequent and slow.

Avis (☎0212-620741) and **Voyagers** (☎0212-620604) both have offices at the airport.

Kitwe

☎0212 / POP 700,000

Zambia's second-largest city and the centre of the country's mining industry, Kitwe seems far larger than quiet Ndola. Business travellers (read: mining consultants) stop here for the good selection of accommodation and eating places.

Mukwa Lodge (☎0212-224266; www.mukwalodge.co.zm; 26 Mpezeni Ave; s/d incl breakfast ZMW585/690) has gorgeous, beautifully furnished rooms with stone floors – the bathrooms are as good as you'll find in Zambia. Its well-laid-out restaurant, the **Courtyard Cafe** (☎0212-224266; 26 Mpezeni Ave; mains ZMW55-75; ☺10am-2.30pm & 6-10pm), is a soothing dining sensation, especially with the sound of trickling water in the courtyard garden.

Dazi Lodge (☎0955 460487; Pamo Ave; r ZMW200-350; 🍷) has a wonderful kitschy air about it. Some rooms have private bathrooms, others come with shared facilities, and all are spick and span.

Formerly Arabian Nights, **Heer** (☎0212-229530; 11 Mushita Cl; mains ZMW60-95; ☺noon-2.30pm & 6-10.30pm; 🍷🍷) is one of the top restaurants in the region, featuring subcontinental curries, European dishes and sizeable cuts of meat.

Kitwe is about 60km northwest of Ndola. The public bus station is situated 500m west of Independence Ave, and the **train station** (☎0212-223078) is at the southern end of Independence Ave. Frequent minibuses and buses run to Lusaka (ZMW70, five hours), Ndola (ZMW15, 45 minutes) and Chingola (ZMW15, 30 minutes).

Voyagers (☎0212-617062; Enos Chomba Ave) is very helpful and can organise car hire and other travel arrangements.

Chingola

☎0212

Chingola is basically a huge mine with a settlement wrapped around it. The reason to come here is because it's the closest town to Chimfunshi and has a decent range of accommodation. Traditional bed and breakfast is served up at homely English-style **New Hibiscus Guest House** (☎0212-313635; hibiscus@copperbeltlodging.com; 33 Katutwa Rd; r per person incl breakfast US\$70, with full board US\$100; 🍷🍷🍷), or try the **Protea** (☎0212-310624; www.proteahotels.com; Kabundi St; s/d US\$149/165; 🍷🍷🍷), sparkling with modern amenities and featuring a pool. Chingola is 50km northwest of Kitwe. The **bus station** (13th St) is in the centre of town. There are frequent buses and minibuses to Kitwe (ZMW15, 30 minutes).

Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage

On a farm deep in the African bush, about 70km northwest of Chingola, this **chimpanzee sanctuary** (www.chimfunshi.org.za; day visit adult/child project area ZMW50/25; ☺9am-3pm) is home to around 120 adult and young chimps, most of which have been confiscated from poachers and traders in neighbouring Congo or other parts of Africa. It's the largest sanctuary of its kind in the world. This is not a natural wildlife experience, but it's still a unique and fascinating opportunity to observe the chimps as they feed, play and socialise. It is undoubtedly the standout highlight in the Copperbelt region.

Entry fees go directly towards helping the sanctuary remain financially viable. Ensure that you do not come if you're sick; the chimps can easily die of a simple disease like the flu. The best time to visit is for the 1.30pm feed, when the chimps are out in the open (not in the concrete blocks they enter for their morning feed). A very special way to experience this place is to do a chimpanzee bush walk (ZMW520) with some of the younger chimps. Volunteering opportunities are available too.

It is possible to stay overnight at the **campground** (per person ZMW75) or in the **self-catering cottage** (adult/child ZMW150/75) at

the education centre, which has 10 beds and linen.

By car, there's a new, well-signposted road that starts about 55km from Chingola. It's about 20km off the main road straight to the project area. Contact the sanctuary in advance and staff can arrange a one-way transfer for ZMW100 to coincide with a supply run. Although buses between Chingola and Solwezi can drop passengers at the turn-off, it's generally easier to visit with a private vehicle.

UNDERSTAND ZAMBIA

Zambia Today

In September 2011 Michael Sata, nicknamed 'King Cobra', and his party, the Patriotic Front (PF), won national elections. This made Sata only the fifth president in Zambia's post-independence history. The tables have turned on the two major opposition parties, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD; the party of Frederick Chiluba, Levy Mwanawasa and Rupiah Banda) and the United National Independence Party (UNIP; the party of Kenneth Kuanda), which now face a familiar strain of authoritarianism in the form of the PF's 'mild' hostility to a free press and a series of laws passed with little consultation.

There's an undercurrent of worry that Sata's rhetoric and some of his decisions, as well as his continued support of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, augur a move towards a more centralised economy and less democratic government. After Sata's inauguration, he sacked and replaced all of the Supreme Court judges with new hand-picked ones. In a highly publicised move, he snubbed former US president George W Bush and his wife, Laura, when they visited Zambia in July 2012 promoting health and anti-poverty initiatives. In a disturbing move in the eyes of conservationists, he ordered the release of hundreds of prisoners, including many doing time for illegal poaching.

However, observers claim that the populist strain in Sata's rhetoric and policy, including the revaluing of the country's currency, motivated more by symbolism than economics, also indicates a sincere focus on redirecting the country's wealth to the majority of Zambians who are poor. To this end, Sata announced a significant increase in the

minimum wage in September 2012 and his administration continues to encourage Zambian participation and ownership in the tourism industry.

Almost half of all Zambians live in urban centres, crowding into housing compounds, where water shortages and overstretched sewerage systems cause all sorts of health problems. Most unskilled city labourers work six to seven days per week, with their families sometimes living on less than US\$1 per day. Still, a small middle class and expats frequent high-end shops and cinemas in Lusaka's malls and the music industry is thriving, in part because ordinary Zambians can listen to and share music on their Bluetooth mobile phones. Life hasn't changed much in rural Zambia: subsistence farmers still eke out a living at the whim of crop success or failure, and traditional religions mixed with Christian beliefs and village hierarchies are the mainstays. (Ironically, the production of Christian-themed music videos, usually with a chorus of 'church ladies,' is big business in Lusaka.)

Two of the more pressing contemporary issues are the impact on Zambia of rebounding tourism in Zimbabwe, and the influence of Chinese investment in the mining sector. During Sata's presidential campaign he argued against such investment, worried about workers' rights and pay. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his administration has since been more welcoming. Conflict has sporadically spilled over into violence, and tensions over the business practices and benefits of China's influence continue to press on the government.

History

The first of the 'modern' (ie still found today) ethnic groups of Zambia to arrive were the Tonga and Ila peoples (sometimes combined as the Tonga-Ila), who migrated from the Congo area in the late 15th century. Next to arrive were the Chewa. Between the 14th and 16th centuries they followed a long and circuitous route via Lakes Mweru, Tanganyika and Malawi before founding a powerful kingdom covering much of present-day eastern Zambia, as well as parts of Malawi and Mozambique.

The Bemba had migrated from Congo by crossing the Luapula River into northern Zambia by around 1700. Meanwhile, the Lamba people migrated to the area of the

Copperbelt in about 1650. At around the same time, the related Lala settled in the region around Serenje.

Meanwhile, in western Zambia, the Lozi people established a dynasty and the basis of a solid political entity that still exists. The Lozi's ancestors may have migrated from what is now Angola as early as AD 450.

Early 19th Century

In the early 19th century, the fearsome reputation of the newly powerful and highly disciplined warrior army under the command of Shaka Zulu in Kwa-Zulu Natal (South Africa) led to a domino effect of groups living in his path fleeing elsewhere and in turn displacing other groups. This included the Ngoni, who fled to Malawi and Zambia, and the Makololo, who moved into southern Zambia, around the towns of Kalomo and Monze, and eventually were forced further west into southwest Zambia, where they displaced more Tonga people.

Also around this time, the slave trade – which had existed for many centuries – increased considerably. Swahili-Arabs, who dominated the trade on the east coast of Africa, pushed into the interior; many people from Zambia were captured and taken across Lake Malawi and through Mozambique or Tanzania to be sold in the slave markets of Zanzibar.

Colonial Era

David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer, journeyed through large swaths of Zambia, including the lower Zambezi, where he came upon a magnificent waterfall never before seen by a European, naming it Victoria Falls in homage to royalty back home. On a subsequent trip, Livingstone died while searching for the source of the Nile in northern Zambia. His heart was buried under a tree near the spot where he died, in Chief Chitambo's village, southeast of Lake Bangweulu.

In 1885 claims over African territory by European powers were settled at the Berlin Conference and the continent was split into colonies and spheres of influence – Britain claimed Rhodesia (Zambia and Zimbabwe) and Malawi.

This 'new' territory did not escape the notice of entrepreneur Cecil John Rhodes, who was already establishing mines and a vast business empire in South Africa. Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC) laid claim to the area in the early 1890s and was

backed by the British government in 1895 to help combat slavery and prevent further Portuguese expansion in the region.

Two separate territories were initially created – North-Western Rhodesia and North-Eastern Rhodesia – but these were combined in 1911 to become Northern Rhodesia. In 1907, Livingstone became the capital. At around the same time, vast deposits of copper were discovered in the area now called the Copperbelt.

In 1924 the colony was put under direct British control and in 1935 the capital was moved to Lusaka. To make them less dependent on colonial rule, settlers soon pushed for closer ties with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Malawi), but various interruptions (such as WWII) meant that the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland did not come about until 1953.

Independence & Kaunda

In Zambia the United National Independence Party (UNIP) was founded in the late 1950s by Dr Kenneth Kaunda, who spoke out against the federation on the grounds that it promoted the rights of white settlers to the detriment of the indigenous African population. As other African countries gained independence, Zambian nationalists opposed colonial forces through civil disobedience and a small but decisive conflict called the Chachacha Rebellion.

Northern Rhodesia became independent a year after the federation was dissolved and changed its name to Zambia. While the British government had profited enormously from Northern Rhodesia, the colonialists chose to spend a large portion of this wealth on the development of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

After gaining independence, Zambia inherited a British-style multiparty political system. Kaunda, as leader of the majority UNIP, became the new republic's first president. The other main party was the African National Congress (ANC), led by Harry Nkumbula. But Kaunda disliked opposition. In one swift move during 1972, he disbanded the Zambian ANC, created the 'second republic', declared UNIP the sole legal party and made himself the only presidential candidate.

Consequently, Kaunda remained in power for the next 27 years. His rule was based upon 'humanism' – his own mix of Marxism and traditional African values. The civil

service was increased, and nearly all private businesses (including the copper mines) were nationalised. But corruption and mismanagement, exacerbated by a fall in world copper prices, doomed Zambia to become one of the poorest countries in the world by the end of the 1970s. The economy continued to flounder, and Zambia's trade routes to the coast through neighbouring countries (such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique) were closed in retaliation for Kaunda's support for several liberation movements in the region.

By the early 1980s Rhodesia gained independence (and had become Zimbabwe), which allowed Kaunda to take his country off a war footing; and the Tazara railway to Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) was completed, giving Zambia unencumbered access to the coast. Yet the economy remained on the brink of collapse: foreign-exchange reserves were almost exhausted, serious shortages of food, fuel and other basic commodities were common, and unemployment and crime rates rose sharply.

In 1986 an attempt was made to diversify the economy and improve the country's balance of payments. Zambia received economic aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but the IMF conditions were severe and included cutting basic food subsidies. Subsequent price rises led to countrywide riots in which many people lost their lives. Kaunda was forced to restore subsidies.

The winds of change blowing through Africa during the late 1980s, coupled with Zambia's disastrous domestic situation, meant that something had to give. Following another round of violent street protests against increased food prices in 1990, which quickly transformed into a general demand for the return of multiparty politics, Kaunda was forced to accede to public opinion.

He announced a snap referendum in late 1990 but, as protests grew more vocal, he was forced to legalise opposition parties and announce full presidential and parliamentary elections for October 1991. Not surprisingly, UNIP (and Kaunda) were resoundingly defeated by the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), led by Frederick Chiluba, a former trade-union leader. Kaunda admirably stepped down without complaint, which may have saved Zambia from descending into anarchy.

The 1990s

President Chiluba moved quickly to encourage loans and investment from the IMF and World Bank. Exchange controls were liberalised to attract investors, particularly from South Africa, but tough austerity measures were also introduced. Once again, food prices soared. The civil service was rationalised, state industries were privatised or simply closed, and thousands of people lost their jobs.

By the mid-1990s, the lack of visible change in Zambia allowed Kaunda to confidently re-enter the political arena. He attracted strong support and soon became the UNIP leader. Leading up to the 1996 elections, the MMD panicked and passed a law forbidding anyone with foreign parents to enter politics (Kaunda's parents were from Malawi). Despite intercessions from Western aid donors and world leaders like Nelson Mandela – not to mention accusations that Chiluba's parents were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) – the law was not repealed. The UNIP withdrew all its candidates in protest and many voters boycotted the election. Consequently, Chiluba and the MMD easily won, and the result was grudgingly accepted by most Zambians.

In the 21st Century

The political shenanigans continued unabated at the start of the new millennium: in mid-2001 Vice-President Christon Tembo was expelled from parliament by Chiluba, so he formed an opposition party – the Forum for Democratic Development (FDD). Later, Paul Tembo, a former MMD national secretary, joined the FDD but was assassinated the day before he was due to front a tribunal about alleged MMD corruption.

Chiluba was thwarted from changing the constitution and running for a third presidential term by parliamentary threats of impeachment and growing public unrest. He anointed his former vice-president, Levy Mwanawasa, as his successor, but Mwanawasa only just beat a coalition of opposition parties known as the United Party for National Development (UPND). Again, allegations from international observers about the MMD rigging the results and buying votes fell on deaf ears. To Chiluba's horror, Mwanawasa stripped his predecessor of immunity from prosecution and proceeded to launch an anti-corruption drive, which targeted the former president. In August

2009, after a long-running trial, Chiluba was cleared of embezzling US\$500,000 by Zambia's High Court. His wife, however, was given a jail term earlier in the year for receiving stolen funds while her husband was in office. In a separate case, the High Court in Britain ruled that Chiluba and four of his aides conspired to rob Zambia of about US\$46 million, but it remains to be seen whether this judgement will be enforced within Zambia.

Though Zambia is still a poor country, its economy experienced strong growth in the early part of the 21st century, with GDP growth at around 6%. However, the country is still very dependant on world prices for its minerals (copper and cobalt). Knocking Zambia off its feet in the early '70s, the whim of the market then brought about huge gains in wealth early in the new millennium as world copper prices rose steadily. However, with the global economic slump of 2008-09, and with the price of minerals such as copper falling rapidly, Zambia is on the same merry-go-round. There has been large foreign investment in the mines (especially from China), and South African-owned businesses are exploding in towns across the country, as there is finally local demand for them.

In 2005, under the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative, Zambia qualified for debt relief to the tune of US\$6 billion.

People

The population of Zambia is made up of between 70 and 80 ethnic groups. The final count varies according to your definition of ethnicity, but the Zambian government officially recognises 73 groups.

There is considerable homogeneity among the tribes of Zambia. This is partly due to a long history of people moving around the country, settling new areas or looking for work, and also because after independence President Kaunda fostered national unity, while still recognising the country's disparate languages and cultures. Intermarriage among the officially recognised groups is also common, and Zambia is justifiably proud of its relative lack of ethnic problems.

The Bemba, whose traditional homeland is in northern Zambia around Kasama and Lake Bangweulu, are the largest ethnic group, forming about 20% of the population. All together, speakers of Tonga as a first

language make up about 15% and Nyanja speakers another 15% (the term Nyanja is used more to describe a language than a particular people); the Chewa people make up about a third of the Nyanja speakers in Zambia. The Ngoni, descendants of Zulus who migrated here in the early 19th century, make up about 6% and are found in south-east Zambia around the town of Chipata. The Lozi, who have their own distinct nation called Barotseland, which takes up a significant part of Zambia's Western Province and the vast Zambezi floodplain, number about 650,000 and make up roughly 6% of the population.

The vast majority (99%) of Zambians are indigenous Africans. The final 1% are people of Indian or European origin (mostly involved in business, commerce, farming and the tourist industry). These are Zambian citizens; many white and Asian families have lived here for generations – although race relations are still sometimes a little strained.

Relative newcomers to the country include South African business people and Zimbabwean farmers who lost their land due to the policies of Robert Mugabe's government. There are also many Europeans and North Americans. Some (such as mining consultants) have lived in Zambia for decades; others (such as aid workers) stay for only a few years before moving on.

Around 75% of Zambians are Christians, the majority members of one of the hundreds of Protestant churches; in addition, there are some Catholics and those who follow indigenous Christian faiths, including large branches of the African Zion churches. Many of these people also follow traditional animist-based belief systems. There is also a significant Muslim population.

Environment

The Land

Landlocked Zambia is one of Africa's most eccentric legacies of colonialism. Shaped like a mangled butterfly, its borders don't correspond to any tribal or linguistic area. And Zambia is huge. At some 752,000 sq km, it's about the size of France, England and the Republic of Ireland combined.

The country is chock full of rivers. The Luangwa, the Kafue and the mighty Zambezi dominate western, southern and eastern Zambia, flowing through a beautiful mix

of floodplains, forests and farmland. In the north, the main rivers are the Chambeshi and the Luapula – sources of the Congo River. Northern Zambia has many smaller rivers too, and the broken landscape helps create stunning scenery of lakes, rapids and waterfalls.

Of course, Zambia's most famous waterfall is Victoria Falls, where the Zambezi plunges over a mile-wide cliff before thundering down the long, zigzagging Batoka Gorge. The Zambezi flows into Lake Kariba, created by a dam but still one of the largest lakes in Africa. In northern Zambia is the even larger Lake Tanganyika – 675km long, second deepest in the world, and holding one-sixth of the earth's fresh water.

In the south and east, Zambia is cut by deep valleys – some of them branches of the Great Rift Valley. The Zambezi Valley is the largest, and defines the country's southern border, while the 700km-long Luangwa Valley is lined by the steep and spectacular Muchinga Escarpment.

Even the flat places can be stunning: the endless grassy Busanga Plains in Kafue National Park attract fantastic wildlife, while the Liuwa Plain – part of the even larger Upper Zambezi floodplain that makes up much of western Zambia – is home to Africa's second-largest wildebeest migration.

Wildlife

Because of Zambia's diverse landscape, plentiful water supplies, and position between Eastern, Southern and Central Africa, the diversity of animal species is huge. The rivers, of course, support large populations of hippos and crocs, and the associated grass-

lands provide plenty of fodder for herds of zebras, impalas and pukus.

Huge herds of rare black lechwes live near Lake Bangweulu, and endemic Kafue lechwes settle in the area around the Kafue River. Kasanka National Park is one of the best places on the continent to see the rare, water-loving antelopes called sitatungas. South Luangwa and Lower Zambezi National Parks are good places to see tall and stunningly graceful giraffes, and Zambia has its own subspecies – Thornicroft's giraffe. South Luangwa has its very own subspecies of wildebeest too – the light-coloured Cookson's wildebeest – but the best place to see these creatures is the Liuwa Plain, a remote grassland area in western Zambia where thousands converge every year.

These animals naturally attract predators, so most parks contain lions, leopards, hyenas and cheetahs. Wild dogs were once very rare but are now encountered more frequently. Elephants are also found in huge herds in South Luangwa, Lower Zambezi and some other national parks. Zambia's herds of black rhinos were destroyed by poachers in the 1970s and 1980s, but reintroduction programs have seen rhinos transported to North Luangwa National Park.

Bird lovers will love Zambia, where about 750 bird species have been recorded. Most notable are the endangered shoebill storks (found in the Bangweulu Wetlands); fish eagles (Zambia's national bird); and endemic Chaplin's barbets (mostly around Monze).

Plants

About 65% of Zambia, mainly plateau areas and escarpments, is covered in *miombo*

ZAMBIA'S MOST IMPORTANT NATIONAL PARKS

PARK	FEATURES
Bangweulu Wetlands	floodplain; black lechwes, shoebills, waterbirds
Kafue National Park	<i>miombo</i> woodland, open grasslands, Kafue River; red lechwes, leopards, cheetahs, lions
Kasanka National Park	woodlands, plains, rivers, swamps; sitatungas, wattled cranes, hippos, blue monkeys, bats (migration Oct-Dec)
Lower Zambezi National Park	Zambezi River, sandy flats, mopane woodland; crocs, hippos, elephants, buffaloes, lions
North Luangwa National Park	Luangwa River, <i>miombo</i> woodland, plains; buffaloes, elephants, hippos, Thornicroft's giraffes, leopards, lions
South Luangwa National Park	mopane & <i>miombo</i> woodland, grasslands; Thornicroft's giraffes, Cookson's wildebeest, lions, leopards, elephants, pukus

woodland, which consists mainly of broad-leaved deciduous trees. Some areas are thickly wooded, others are more open, but the trees never form a continuous canopy, allowing grass and other plants to grow between them. In the dryer, hotter valleys and best-known national parks like South Luangwa and Lower Zambezi, much of the vegetation is mopane woodland.

With its many rivers and lakes, Zambia has some of the most extensive wetlands in Southern Africa. These include the Bangweulu Wetlands, along the southern and eastern shores of Lake Bangweulu; and the vast plains of the Kafue Flats downstream from Kafue National Park, which is dotted with seasonally flooded marshes, lagoons and oxbow lakes.

Most grassland in Zambia is low, flat and flooded for part of the year – with hardly a tree in sight. The largest floodplain area is west of the Upper Zambezi – including Liuwa Plain National Park – where thousands of square kilometres are inundated every year. Another is the Busanga Plains in Kafue National Park.

Along many of Zambia's rivers are riverine forests. Tourists will see a lot of this type of landscape as national-park camps are often built on riverbanks, under the shade of huge trees such as ebony, winterthorn and the unmistakable 'sausage tree' (*Kigelia africana*).

Evergreen forest, the 'jungle' of Tarzan films, is found only in isolated pockets in northwestern Zambia – a remnant of the larger forests over the border in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

National Parks

Zambia boasts 20 national parks and reserves (and 34 GMAs), and some 30% of the land is protected, but after decades of poaching, clearing and general bad management, many are just lines on the map that no longer protect (or even contain) much wildlife. However, some national parks accommodate extremely healthy stocks of wildlife and are among the best in Southern Africa. Privately funded conservation organisations have done much to rehabilitate the condition of some of these.

Admission fees to the parks vary. Each ticket is valid for 24 hours from the time you enter the park, but if you're staying inside the park at official accommodation this admission fee is valid for seven days.

Environmental Issues & Conservation

Although the population is growing rapidly, it's still relatively sparse, so Zambia doesn't suffer some of the environmental problems its neighbours have – or at least to the same extent. That being said, the country faces the daunting challenge of deforestation and consequent soil erosion and loss of productivity. Poachers set fire to ambush animals, land is regularly burned and cleared for agricultural purposes, local people chop down wood for charcoal, and illegal logging and timber smuggling continues, now primarily to meet the demand for wood from China.

Hunting has greatly damaged Zambia's wildlife. The '70s were a devastating time when other countries' civil wars

ACTIVITIES

walking, canoe trips, birdwatching
game drives, birdwatching, fishing

SIZE

9800 sq km
22,400 sq km

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Dec-Mar
May-Oct

boat trips, walking, game drives

390 sq km

Jul-Nov

canoeing, boating, birdwatching, game drives

4092 sq km

Jun-Sep

walking safaris

4636 sq km

May-Oct

day & night game drives, walking safaris

9050 sq km

Apr-Oct

were funded with ivory coming out of the parks. In 1960 North Luangwa had 70,000 elephants; an estimated 5000 remained by 1986. Under pressure from international organisations, however, the government introduced serious anti-poaching and development measures. Despite successes in some parks, poaching and poor management remain major problems.

In the past, people moved into some protected areas, chopped down trees, grew crops or hunted the animals. They were poor, and good land and food were scarce elsewhere. Animals were a source of protein, since in areas with tsetse flies raising livestock isn't an option. Even outside the parks, on areas of land shared by people and animals, there was conflict. The same is still true today. To a poor rural subsistence farmer, wildlife is nothing but a problem: lions will kill cattle, and an elephant takes an hour to polish off a field of crops that took all year to grow.

With this inevitable tension in mind, all of the national parks are surrounded by a ring of game management areas (GMAs), a good portion of which are earmarked as hunting concessions. To many, this might at first seem like a compromise of conservationist ideals, but it's argued that if there was no hunting there'd be indiscriminate and unregulated slaughter.

Arguably, the biggest problem is indiscriminate snaring for commercial bushmeat. Sold 'underground' in the back of shops or door to door to trusted customers, it's the middle and upper class, mostly in Lusaka, who are driving the bushmeat market. After all, widely available buffalo, warthog and antelope is on average 50% more expensive than beef.

As might be expected, there's considerable tension between environmental preservation and conservation and Zambia's underground wealth. Many worry that it's only a matter of time before the profits to be wrung from the region's mineral resources will be too seductive to deny.

One of the most important developments regarding conservation in recent years is the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Park (KAZA), a multinational effort to link the historic and instinctual migratory patterns of elephants and other wildlife between Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Angola.

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Directory A-Z

Accommodation

We list accommodation prices based on 'international rates'. Often, lodges offer resident rates that can be half as much. Some lodges and camps close in the wet season (November to April); if they're open, discounts of up to 50% are common.

It should be noted that accommodation in the national parks (there is some variety in terms of cost just outside park boundaries) is even more skewed towards the way, way top end: rates average around ZMW2000 per person. These privately operated lodges and 'camps' (a confusing term often used to describe expensive lodges) in the parks offer the same sort of luxury and exclusivity as other lodges and camps in Southern and East Africa. Rates usually include all meals, drinks, park fees and activities, such as wildlife drives, but not transfers by road, air and/or boat.

A real treat of travel here are the open-air toilets and showers; most bushcamps and many lodges have them.

Most cities and larger towns have campgrounds where you can pitch your tent, but most are way out in the suburbs (wood and charcoal is usually for sale). Camping is also possible at privately run campgrounds just outside national-park boundaries (you don't pay admission fees until you actually want to visit the park). Some lodges around national parks have multiple types of accommodation, everything from safari tents to chalets as well as campsites - this can be a great deal as you have access to the lodge's facilities while paying a pittance for accommodation (in these cases we've placed them in the budget category in terms of room rates).

SLEEPING PRICE RANGES

The following price ranges refer to accommodation rates per person in high season (April-May to September-October).

\$ less than ZMW250

\$\$ ZMW250-500

\$\$\$ more than ZMW500

The better budget hotels charge by the room, so two, three or even four people travelling together can get some real (if crowded) bargains. Single travellers are often charged a 'supplement'; negotiation is usually possible.



Activities

Companies in Livingstone (and Victoria Falls town in Zimbabwe) offer a bewildering array of activities, 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 intrepid may want to try hiking and horse riding.

Canoeing, either for a few hours or a few days, is a great way to explore the Zambezi River and can be arranged at lodges in the Lower Zambezi Valley and Siavonga. Fishing along the Zambezi, and at several lakes in northern Zambia, is also popular; the tiger fish provide a tough contest for anglers. Fishing and boating are also possible on Lakes Kariba, Bangweulu and Tanganyika.

Most national parks, such as Kafue, Kasanka, Lower Zambezi and South Luangwa, have activities for visitors, with wildlife drives and walks the main focus of these places, and the main drawcard for visitors to Zambia. Expect early mornings in the bush as morning drives and walks depart around 6am; night drives typically last from 4pm to 8pm.

'Fly camping' – trips that involve walking or boating during the day and informal bush camping at night – is becoming more popular, especially in South Luangwa, Kafue and Liuwa National Parks.

Business Hours

Government offices are open from 8am or 9am to 4pm or 5pm Monday to Friday, with an hour for lunch sometime between noon and 2pm. Shops keep the same hours but also open on Saturday. Supermarkets are normally open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm Saturday and 9am to 1pm Sunday (although some are open 8am to 10pm daily at the big shopping centres in Lusaka). Banks operate weekdays from 8am to 3.30pm (or 5pm), and from 8am to 11am (or noon) on Saturday. Post offices open from 8am or 9am to 4pm or 4.30pm weekdays. Restaurants are normally open

for lunch between 11.30am and 2.30pm and dinner between 6pm and 10.30pm, though bar-restaurants in Lusaka are often open until 11pm on Friday and Saturday.

Embassies & Consulates

The British high commission looks after the interests of Aussies and Kiwis. Most consulates are open from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and from 8.30am to 12.30pm Friday, though visas are usually only dealt with in the mornings.

Botswanan High Commission

(☎0211-250555; 5201 Pandit Nehru Rd, Lusaka)

Canadian High Commission

(☎0211-250833; 5119 United Nations Ave, Lusaka)

DRC Embassy (☎0211-235679; 1124

Parirenyetwa Rd, Lusaka)

Dutch Embassy (☎0211-253819; 5208 United

Nations Ave, Lusaka)

French Embassy (☎0211-251322; 74

Independence Ave, Cathedral Hill)

German Embassy (☎0211-250644; 5209

United Nations Ave, Lusaka)

Irish Embassy (☎0211-291298; 6663 Katima

Mulilo Rd, Lusaka)

Kenyan High Commission (☎0211-250722;

5207 United Nations Ave, Lusaka)

Malawian High Commission (☎0211-265768;

31 Bishops Rd, Kabulonga)

Mozambican Embassy (☎0211-220333;

9592 Kacha Rd, off Pasesi Rd, Northmead)

Namibian High Commission (☎0211-260407;

30B Mutende Rd, Woodlands)

South African High Commission

(☎0211-260999; 26D Cheetah Rd, Kabulonga)

Swedish Embassy (☎0211-251711; Haile

Selassie Ave, Lusaka)

Tanzanian High Commission (☎0211-

253323; 5200 United Nations Ave, Lusaka)

UK High Commission (☎0211-423200;

http://ukinzambia.fco.gov.uk/en; 5210 Independence Ave, Lusaka)

US Embassy (☎0211-250955; http://zambia.

usembassy.gov; cnr Independence & United Nations Aves, Lusaka)

Zimbabwean High Commission (☎0211-

254006; 11058 Haile Selassie Ave, Lusaka)



Festivals & Events

One remarkable festival to look out for is **Kusefya Pangwena**, practised by the Bem-

PRACTICALITIES

- » The *Daily Times* (www.times.co.zm) and *Daily Mail* (www.daily-mail.co.zm) are government-controlled newspapers. The *Post* (www.postzambia.com) is independent. Published in the UK but printed in South Africa, the *Weekly Telegraph*, the *Guardian Weekly* and the *Economist* are available in Lusaka and Livingstone.
- » 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. Radio Phoenix (89.5FM) has a call-in show called 'Let the People Talk' on Tuesday and Friday from 9am to 11am. MUVI TV is independently owned, while ZNBC also runs the solitary government-controlled TV station, but anyone who can afford it will subscribe to South African satellite TV. The 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.

ba people of northern Zambia. This program of music, drama and dance, which is held near Kasama over four days in August, commemorates the victory of the Bemba over the Ngoni in the 1830s.

N'cwala is a Ngoni festival held near Chipata in eastern Zambia on 24 February. At this time, food, dance and music are all enjoyed by participants who celebrate the end of the rainy season and pray for a successful harvest.

The remarkable **Kuomboka Ceremony** is one of Southern Africa's last great festivals.

Information about these and other festivals are on the official Zambian tourism website: www.zambiatourism.com.

Food & Drink

The staple diet for Zambians is unquestionably *nshima*, a thick, doughy maize porridge that's bland but filling. It's eaten with your hands and always accompanied by beans or vegetables and a hot relish, and sometimes meat or fish.

Although food is generally not a highlight of travel in Zambia, lodges and camps in and around the national parks usually offer the highest standards of culinary options. Perhaps the opportunity to taste local game (kudu is very good) is the standout.

The local beer is Mosi, but you may come across discarded plastic sachets of *tujitijili*, a strong home-brewed alcohol, the manufacturing and importation of

which was declared illegal in 2012. Nevertheless, a thriving business in Malawi supplies Zambian drinkers.

The following price ranges are used for Eating reviews in this chapter. Remember that this is a guide only and prices will be considerably more in many lodges and camps in national parks.

\$	Less than ZMW30 per main
.....	
\$\$	ZMW30-70 per main
.....	
\$\$\$	More than ZMW70 per main
.....	

Internet Access

Zamnet is the country's largest internet service provider. Internet centres are in Lusaka, Livingstone and the bigger towns, such as Mongu and Ndola, and are spreading. Access at internet centres is cheap – about ZMW0.12 to ZMW0.20 per minute – and the speed and reliability of connections vary.

Wi-fi is becoming more common, so travelling with a laptop that has wireless connectivity can be useful, even in remote towns. In Lusaka look for 'I Spot' zones, which can be found at accommodation and eating places, but the quality of these connections varies. When we've used the wi-fi symbol in sleeping reviews, it can mean either that wi-fi is free or that guests pay a fee for it. In addition, wi-fi is likely only available in a small area around the lobby and usually not in rooms.

Maps

The German *Zambia Road Map* by Ilona Hupe Verlag is currently the best available map for touring around Zambia – it shows petrol stations and important wild-life areas. Also easy to find is Globetrotter's *Zambia and Victoria Falls* map, which includes regional and national-park insets, and *Street Guide Lusaka and Livingstone*, which is a book-form collection of blow-ups of the two cities. All are available at bookshops in Lusaka. Self-drivers should check out *Tracks4Africa* (www.tracks4africa.com), a highly detailed downloadable GPS system.

Money

President Sata passed legislation in 2012 that revalued Zambia's currency and prohibited any other currency from being accepted as a form of payment. This means that as of 1 January 2013 three zeros were removed from every banknote denomination and the unit of currency changed from ZMK (or ZK) to ZMW: eg ZMK90,000 is now ZMW90. Every single bank and ATM was to change over to the new system on that date.

While tourist-oriented places might still quote prices in US dollars on websites and in promotional materials, you must by law pay in kwacha (except for international airfares, some organised tours and visas). This includes national parks, domestic flights, restaurants and so on.

CASH & ATMS

In the cities and larger towns, you can easily change cash (no commission; photo ID required) at branches of Barclays Bank, FNB, Standard Chartered Bank and Zanaco. We've received reports that many banks, including at least one at the airport, won't accept US dollars issued before 2000. You can obtain cash (kwacha) at ATMs at Barclays Bank, Stanbic and Standard Chartered banks in the cities and larger towns.

CREDIT CARDS

Some shops, restaurants and better hotels and lodges accept major credit cards, though Visa is the most readily recognised (MasterCard less so and Amex still less). A surcharge of 4% to 7% may be added to your bill if you pay with a credit card, so you might be better off using it to draw cash and paying with that.

Note that payment by credit card requires a PIN to authorise the transaction.

MONEYCHANGERS

The best currencies to take to Zambia (in order of preference) are US dollars, UK pounds, South African rands and euros; the currencies of most neighbouring countries are worthless in Zambia, except at the relevant borders. The exception is Botswana pula, which can also be exchanged in Lusaka.

Foreign-exchange offices – almost always called bureaux de change – are easy to find in all cities and larger towns. Their rates aren't significantly better than those of banks.

There is no black market. You might get a few kwacha more by changing money on the street, but it's illegal and there is a chance that you'll be ripped off, robbed or set up for some sort of scam.

TIPPING

While most restaurants add a 10% service charge, rarely does it actually get into the pockets of waiters. Therefore, you may choose to tip the waiter directly. The top-end lodges and camps often provide separate envelopes for staff and guides if guests wish to tip.

Public Holidays

During public holidays, most businesses and government offices are closed.

New Year's Day 1 January

Youth Day Second Monday in March

Easter March or April

Labour/Workers' Day 1 May

Africa (Freedom) Day 25 May

Heroes' Day First Monday in July

Unity Day First Tuesday in July

Farmers' Day First Monday in August

Independence Day 24 October

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

Safe Travel

Generally, Zambia is very safe, though in the cities and tourist areas there is always a chance of being targeted by muggers or con artists. As always, you can reduce the risk considerably by being sensible. In Zambia, thieves are known as *kabwalalas* universally.

For as long as the seemingly endless civil strife continues in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire), avoid any areas along the Zambia-Congo (Zaire) border, especially around Lake Mweru. Foreign embassies in Zambia warn of landmines (left over from the Rhodesian civil war) in the Sinazongwe area on the shores of Lake Kariba. Avoid trekking off the beaten track in this area.

The possession, use and trade of recreational drugs is illegal in Zambia and penalties are harsh.

Telephone

Every landline in Zambia has an area code; you only have to dial it if you are calling from outside the area code.

Public phones operated by Zamtel, the government monopoly, use tokens, which are available from post offices (for ZMW0.50) or local boys (for ZMW1) hanging around phone booths. These tokens last three minutes but are only good for calls within Zambia. Phone booths operated by Zamtel use phonecards (ZMW5, ZMW10, ZMW20 or ZMW50) available from post offices and grocery shops. These phonecards can be used for international calls, but it's often easier to find a 'phone shop' or 'fax bureau', from where all international calls cost about ZMW12 per minute.

International services are generally good, but reverse-charge (collect) and toll-free calls are not possible. The international access code for dialling outside Zambia is 00, followed by the relevant country code. If you're calling Zambia from another country, the country code is 260, but drop the initial zero of the area code.

MOBILE PHONES

MTN and Airtel offer mobile (cell) phone networks. It's almost impossible to rent mobile phones in Zambia, though if you own a GSM phone, you can buy a SIM card for only around ZMW3 without a problem (this is easy to do at Lusaka airport). You can then purchase credits - from the same company from which you bought your SIM - in whatever denominations you need; scratch cards range from ZMW1 to ZMW100. In Lusaka the best place to buy a cheap mobile phone is around Kalima Towers (at the corner of Chachacha Rd and Katunjila Rd); a basic model is about ZMW80 to ZMW100.

Numbers starting with 09 plus another two numbers (for example 0977) are mobile phone numbers.

Mobile-phone reception is getting better all the time; generally it's very good in urban areas, surprisingly good in some rural parts of the country and patchy or nonexistent in others.

Visas

Tourist visas are available at major borders, airports and ports, but it's important to note that you should have a Zambian visa *before* arrival if you're travelling by train or boat from Tanzania.

All foreign visitors - other than South African Development Community (SADC) passport holders, who are issued visas free of charge - pay US\$50 for single entry (up to one month) and US\$80 for double entry (up to three months); good if you plan on venturing into one of the bordering countries). Applications for multiple-entry visas (US\$80; different from double-entry visas) must be made in advance at a Zambian embassy or high commission. If you're staying less than 24 hours - for example, visiting Livingstone from Zimbabwe - you pay only US\$20.

Payment can be made in US dollars, and sometimes UK pounds, although other currencies such as euros, South African rand, Botswanan pula or Namibian dollars, may be accepted at borders, but don't count on it.

Most visas for travel to neighbouring countries are available at border crossings. However, your chances of obtaining a visa for Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire) or Angola are extremely remote at borders or in Lusaka, so make arrangements for these before you arrive in Zambia.

VISA EXTENSIONS

Extensions for all types of tourist visa are possible at any Department of Immigration office in any main town in Zambia, though you're likely to be more successful in **Lusaka** and **Livingstone** (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd). The Lusaka office is an efficient operation: there's generally no queue and no fee for an additional 30 days. It's possible to seek an extension twice for a total of 90 days a year. Be aware of the expiration date of the visa; if it's a Saturday or Sunday it's best to go in on a weekday beforehand.

If for some reason you overstay your visa, humility and politeness go a long way in dealing with Zambian authorities.

Getting There & Away

The main way to get to Zambia is by land or air. Overland, travellers might enter Zambia from Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe or Tanzania.

Entering Zambia

Visas are generally issued upon arrival.

A yellow-fever certificate is not required before entering Zambia, but it *is* often requested by Zambian immigration officials if you have come from a country with yellow fever. It is required if you're travelling from Zambia to South Africa (and, possibly, Zimbabwe) – it's worth checking on this since negotiations with South Africa to drop this requirement were ongoing in late 2012. It's also worth noting that the Centers for Disease Control in the US do not recommend the vaccination for travellers to Zambia.

Air

Zambia's main international airport is in Lusaka, though some international airlines fly to the airports at Livingstone (for Victoria Falls), Mfuwe (for South Luangwa National Park) and Ndola.

The country is increasingly well connected, with direct flights to destinations outside Africa. **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) has thrice-weekly flights from London, **KLM/Air France** (www.klm.com) from Amsterdam and **Emirates** (www.emirates.com; Acacia Park, Arcades Shopping Centre, Great East Rd, Lusaka) from Dubai.

For North Americans who don't want to fly first to London or Amsterdam, **South African Airways** (www.flysaa.com) has daily direct flights from New York City to Johannesburg (South Africa). From here there are regular flights to Lusaka, Ndola and Livingstone.

Zambia is also well connected to Southern Africa. **Zambezi Airlines** (0211-250342; www.flyzambezi.com) flies to regional destinations such as Johannesburg (from Lusaka and Ndola) and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania).

Air Malawi (0211-228120; www.flyairmalawi.com; COMESA Centre, Zone B, ground fl, Ben Bella Rd) connects Lusaka with Lilongwe and Blantyre (both in Malawi), while **Air Zimbabwe** (www.airzimbabwe.com) flies to Harare (Zimbabwe). **Air Botswana** (0211-255024; www.airbotswana.co.bw; InterContinental Hotel, Lusaka) connects Lusaka and Gaborone (Botswana) and **Air Namibia** ([0211-258370;](http://0211-258370; www.airnamibia.co.na)

www.airnamibia.co.na; Manda Hill Shopping Centre, Lusaka) flies between Lusaka, Livingstone and Windhoek (Namibia).

It's also easy to find a flight from Nairobi (Kenya) on **Kenya Airways** (0211-228886; www.kenya-airways.com; 3rd fl, Maanu Centre, Chikwa Rd, Lusaka), and **Ethiopian Airlines** (0211-236402/3; www.flyethiopian.com) has daily flights between Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Lusaka.

There is also an increasing number of flights to Livingstone for Victoria Falls: South African Airways, British Airways and discount airline **Kulula** (www.kulula.com) fly there from Johannesburg (and increasingly from Cape Town and Durban).

The departure tax for all international flights is ZMW156. This tax is often included in the price of your airline ticket, but if not, must be paid at the airport (in Zambian kwacha only).

Border Crossings

Zambia shares borders with eight countries, so there are a huge number of crossing points. Most are open daily from 6am to 6pm, though the border closes at 8pm at Victoria Falls and at 7pm at Chirundu. Before you leave the Zambian side ensure that you have enough currency of whatever country you're travelling to, or South African rand, to pay for your visa (if you require one).

If you are crossing borders in your own vehicle (be sure to inform your rental-car company to guarantee that you have all the required documents in order), you need a free Temporary Export Permit (TEP), obtained at the border. You'll likely need to purchase insurance, sometimes called COMESA and bought either at the Zambian border posts or just after you've gone through formalities on the other country's side (for Zimbabwe it'll cost around ZMW150). For Zim you also need an Interpol Certificate (good for three months) obtained from the police in Zambia and a typed 'Permission to Drive' document, which states that the vehicle's owner knows you're driving their car.

You also need to request and complete a Temporary Import Permit (TIP), and of course pay for it (retain the document and payment receipt for when you re-enter Zambia).

Heading back into Zambia you might get hassled by Zambians trying to sell you insurance – you don't need this if you're in a Zambian-registered vehicle.

Note also that Zambia charges a carbon tax for non-Zambian-registered vehicles; it's usually about ZMW150 to ZMW200 per vehicle.

The following borders issue visas to foreigners on arrival:

Botswana Zambia and Botswana share what is probably the world's shortest international boundary: 750m across the Zambezi River at Kazungula. The pontoon ferry (ZMW40 for foot passengers, ZMW30 for an ordinary Zambian-registered vehicle) across the Zambezi is 65km west of Livingstone and 11km south of the main road between Livingstone and Sesheke. There are one or two buses (ZMW20, 35 minutes) here daily from Livingstone, departing from Nakatindi Rd in the morning.

Note that US dollars and other currencies are not accepted at the Botswanan border post.

A quicker and more comfortable (but more expensive) way to reach Botswana from Zambia is to cross from Livingstone to Victoria Falls (in Zimbabwe), from where shuttle buses head to Kasane.

Buses to Gaborone, via Kasane and Francistown, leave several days a week from Lusaka.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, Zaïre) DRC visas are only available to Zambian residents and this rule is strictly enforced unless you can get a letter of invitation from the Congolese government. The most convenient border to use connects Chingola in the Copperbelt with Lubumbashi in Katanga Province, via the border towns of Chililabombwe (Zambia) and Kasumbalesa (DRC).

Malawi Most foreigners use the border at Mchinji, 30km southeast of Chipata, because it's along the road between Lusaka and Lilongwe. Note that visas into Malawi are free for most nationalities.

Mozambique The main border is between Mlolo (Zambia) and fairly remote Cassacatiza (Mozambique), but most travellers choose to reach Mozambique through Malawi. There is no public transport between the two countries.

Namibia The only border is at Sesheke (Zambia), on the northern and southern bank of the Zambezi, while the Namibian border is at Wenela near Katima Mulilo. There are bus services to Sesheke from

Lusaka and Livingstone respectively; it's 200km west of the latter.

Alternatively, cross from Livingstone to Victoria Falls (in Zimbabwe) and travel onwards from there.

South Africa There is no border between Zambia and South Africa, but several buses travel daily between Johannesburg and Lusaka via Harare and Masvingo in Zimbabwe. Make sure you have a Zimbabwean visa (if you need one before arrival) and a yellow-fever certificate for entering South Africa (and, possibly, Zimbabwe).

Tanzania The main border by road, and the only crossing by train, is between Nakonde (Zambia) and Tunduma (Tanzania). Bus services run from Lusaka to Nakonde (ZMW140, 15 hours, 3pm) and on to Dar es Salaam.

Zimbabwe There are three easy crossings: at Chirundu, along the road between Lusaka and Harare; between Siavonga (Zambia) and Kariba (Zimbabwe), about 50km upstream from Chirundu; and easiest and most common of all, between Livingstone (Zambia) and Victoria Falls town (Zimbabwe). Plenty of buses travel every day between Lusaka and Harare via Chirundu.

Getting Around

Air

The main domestic airports are at Lusaka, Livingstone, Ndola, Kitwe, Mfuwe, Kasama and Kasaba Bay, though dozens of minor airstrips, most notably those in the Lower Zambezi National Park (Proflight flies here regularly) and North Luangwa National Park, cater for chartered planes.

The departure tax for domestic flights is ZMW58. It is not included in the price of airline tickets and must be paid at the airport in Zambian kwacha. An additional 'infrastructure' tax applied to every ticket was passed and then subsequently cancelled in October 2012. It may be reinstated in the future.

AIRLINES IN ZAMBIA

Proflight (www.proflight-zambia.com) is the only domestic airline offering regularly scheduled flights connecting Lusaka to Chipata, Livingstone (for Victoria Falls), Lower Zambezi (Jeki and Royal Airstrips), Mfuwe (for South Luangwa National Park),

Ndola (also flies direct from here to Kasama) and Solwezi. The fare class with the most flexibility (in case of change of travel plans) is the most expensive. A one-way ticket from Lusaka to Mfuwe (one hour 20 minutes) ranges from ZMW810 to ZMW1500; to Jeki, from ZMW470 to ZMW1000; to Livingstone, from ZMW750 to ZMW1400. Visa, MasterCard, Amex and Paypal are accepted for on-line payments.

On the Livingstone and Ndola routes, which use larger planes, passengers can check one or two bags totalling 23kg; on all other flights the limit is only 15kg (additional fees are applied for excess weight). Carry-on baggage on all flights is limited to 5kg.

There are plenty of charter-flight companies (Proflight also does charters) catering primarily for guests staying at upmarket lodges and camps in national parks. Flights only leave with a minimum number of prebooked passengers and fares are always high, but it's sometimes worth looking around for a last-minute stand-by flight.

Pro Charter (☎0974 250110; www.avocet-charters.com)

Royal Air Charters (☎0971 251493; www.royalaircharters.com)

Bus & Minibus

Distances are long, buses are often slow and many roads are badly potholed, so travelling around Zambia by bus and minibus can exhaust even the hardest of travellers.

All main routes are served by ordinary public buses, which either run on a fill-up-and-go basis or have fixed departures (these are called 'time buses'). 'Express buses' are faster – often terrifyingly so – and stop less but cost about 15% more. In addition, several private companies run comfortable European-style express buses along the major routes, eg between Lusaka and Livingstone, Lusaka and Chipata, and Lusaka and the Copperbelt region. These fares cost about 25% more than the ordinary bus fares and are well worth the extra kwacha. Tickets for these buses can often be bought the day before. There are also express buses zipping around the country.

Many routes are also served by minibuses, which only leave when full – so full that you might lose all feeling in one butt cheek. Their fares can be more or less the same as

ordinary buses. In remote areas the only public transport is often a truck or pick-up.

Car & Motorcycle

BRING YOUR OWN VEHICLE

If you're driving into Zambia in a rented or privately owned car or motorcycle, you will need a carnet; if you don't have one, a free Customs Importation Permit will be issued to you at major borders instead. You'll also be charged a carbon tax if it's a non-Zambian-registered vehicle, which just means a bit more paperwork and about ZMW200 at the border depending on the size of your car.

Compulsory third-party insurance for Zambia is available at major borders (or the nearest large towns); however, it is strongly advised that you carry insurance from your own country on top of your Zambian policy.

While it is certainly possible to get around Zambia by car or motorbike, many sealed roads are in bad condition and the dirt roads can range from shocking to completely impassable, particularly after the rains. We strongly recommend that you hire a 4WD if driving anywhere outside Lusaka, and certainly if you're heading to any of the national parks or other wilderness areas. Wearing a seat belt in the front seat is compulsory.

Self-drivers should seriously consider purchasing the in-car GPS navigation system Tracks for Africa (www.tracks4africa.co.za); even petrol stations come up.

DRIVING LICENCE

Foreign licences are fine as long as they are in English, and it doesn't hurt to carry an international driver's licence (also in English).

FUEL & SPARE PARTS

Diesel costs around ZMW8 per litre, petrol ZMW8.15. Distances between towns with filling stations are great and fuel is not always available, so fill the tank at every opportunity.

It is advisable to carry at least one spare wheel, as well as a filled jerrycan. If you need spare parts, the easiest (and cheapest) vehicle parts to find are those of Toyota and Nissan.

HIRE

Cars can be hired from international and Zambian-owned companies in Lusaka, Livingstone, Kitwe and Ndola, but renting is

very expensive. **Avis** (☎airport 0211-271303; www.avis.com) and **Europcar/Voyagers** (☎0212-620314; www.europcarzambia.com) are at Lusaka airport.

Europcar/Voyagers charges from ZMW365 per day for the smallest vehicle, plus ZMW2 per kilometre, and this doesn't include 16% VAT, petrol or insurance. Other companies, such as **Hemingways** (☎0213-320996; www.hemingwayszambia.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd), **4x4 Hire Africa** (☎in South Africa 721-791 3904; www.4x4hire.co.za) and **Limo Car Hire** (☎0211-278628; www.limohire-zambia.com) rent out Toyota Hiluxes and old-school Land Rover vehicles respectively, unequipped or fully decked out with everything you would need for a trip to the bush (including unlimited kilometres and the ability to take them across borders), with the price for an unequipped vehicle starting at about ZMW680 per day.

Most companies insist that drivers are at least 23 years old and have held a licence for at least five years.

INSURANCE

Compulsory third-party insurance for Zambia is available at major borders (or the nearest large towns) and costs about ZMW63 per month. However, it is strongly advised that you carry insurance from your own country on top of your Zambian policy.

ROAD CONDITIONS

While many main stretches of sealed road are OK, beware of the occasional pothole. Sections of main highway can be in a pretty bad way, with gaping potholes, ridges, dips and very narrow sections that drop steeply off the side into loose gravel. Be wary and alert at all times, and seek out information about road conditions. Gravel roads vary a lot from pretty good to pretty terrible. Road conditions are probably at their worst soon after the end of the wet season (April to June) when many dirt and gravel roads have been washed away or seriously damaged – this is especially the case in and around national parks.

ROAD RULES

Speed limits in and around cities are enforced, though on the open road buses and Land Cruisers fly at speeds of 140km/h to 160km/h. If you break down, you must place an orange triangle about 6m in front of and behind the vehicle. At police checkpoints (which are very common), smile, say good morning/afternoon, be very polite and

take off your sunglasses. A little respect will make a huge difference to the way you are treated. Mostly you'll be met with a smile, perhaps asked curiously where you're from, and waved through without a problem.

Hitching

Despite the general warning, hitching is a common way to get around Zambia. Some drivers, particularly expats, may offer you free lifts, but you should expect to pay for rides with local drivers (normally about the same as the bus fare, depending on the comfort of the vehicle). In such cases, agree on a price beforehand.

Taxis

Often the most convenient and comfortable way of getting around, especially in the cities. They have no meters, so rates are negotiable.

Tours

Tours and safaris around Zambia invariably focus on the national parks. Since many of these parks are hard to visit without a vehicle, joining a tour might be your only option anyway. Budget-priced operators run scheduled trips, or arrange things on the spot (with enough passengers), and can often be booked through a backpackers – try Lusaka Backpackers (p553), or Jollyboys (p539) in Livingstone. Upmarket companies prefer to take bookings in advance, directly or through an agent in Zambia, South Africa or your home country.

Most Zambian tour operators are based in Lusaka and Livingstone. Several companies in Lilongwe (Malawi) may also offer tours to South Luangwa National Park. There are travel agents in Lusaka who can often organise tours of South Luangwa and other parks.

Train

The Tazara trains between Kapiri Mposhi and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) can also be used for travel to/from northern Zambia. While the Lusaka–Kitwe service does stop at Kapiri Mposhi, the Lusaka–Kitwe and Tazara trains are not timed to connect with each other, and the domestic and international train stations are 2km apart.

Zambia's only other railway services are the 'ordinary trains' between Lusaka and Kitwe, via Kapiri Mposhi and Ndola, and

the 'express trains' between Lusaka and Livingstone.

Domestic trains are unreliable and slow, so buses are always better. Conditions on domestic trains generally range from slightly dilapidated to ready for scrap. Most com-

partments have no lights or locks, so take a torch and something to secure the door at night.

Tickets for all classes on domestic trains (but not the Tazara service) can be bought up to 30 days in advance.

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Victoria Falls

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Best Places to Eat

- » Cafe Zambezi (p542)
- » In Da Belly (p546)
- » Olga's Italian Corner (p542)
- » Mama Africa (p547)

Best Places to Stay

- » Victoria Falls Hotel (p545)
- » Elephant Camp (p546)
- » Jollyboys Backpackers (p539)
- » Stanley Safari Lodge (p541)

Why Go?

Taking its place alongside the Pyramids and the Serengeti, Victoria Falls (*Mosi-oa-Tunya* – the 'smoke that thunders') is one of Africa's original blockbusters. And although Zimbabwe and Zambia share it, Victoria Falls is a place all of its own.

As a magnet for tourists of all descriptions – backpackers, tour groups, thrill seekers, families, honeymooners – Vic Falls is one of the earth's great spectacles. View it directly as a raging mile-long curtain of water, in all its glory, from a helicopter ride or peek precariously over its edge from Devil's Pools; the sheer power and force of the falls is something that simply does not disappoint.

Whether you're here purely to take in the sight of a natural wonder of the world, or for a serious hit of adrenaline via rafting or bungee jumping into the Zambezi, Victoria Falls is a place where you're sure to tick off numerous items from that bucket list.

When to Go

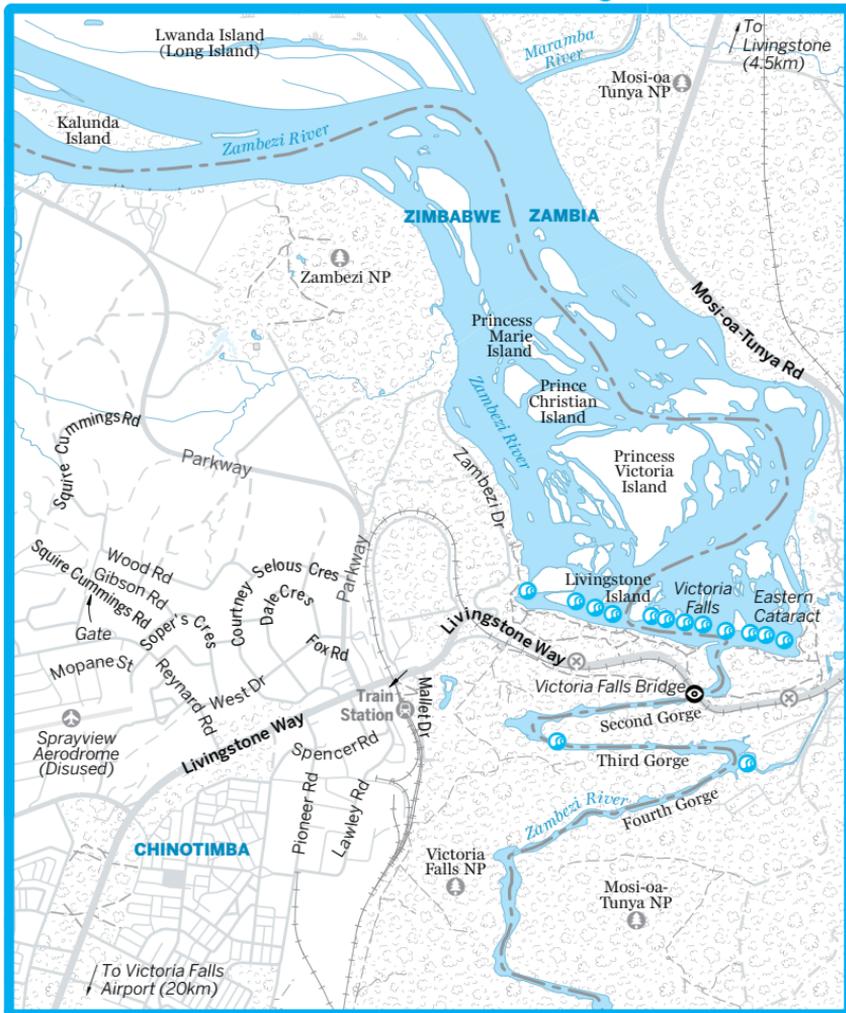
There are two main reasons to go to Victoria Falls – to view the falls and to experience the outdoor activities – and each has its season.

July to December is the season for white-water rafting, especially August for hardcore rapids.

From February to June don't forget your raincoat as you'll experience the falls at their full force.

From July to September You'll get the best views of the falls, combined with lovely weather and all activities to keep you busy.

Victoria Falls



Seventh Natural Wonder of the World

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.

One million litres of water fall – per second – down a 108m drop along a 1.7km wide strip in the Zambezi Gorge; an awesome sight. Victoria Falls can be seen, heard, tast-

ed and touched: it is a treat that few other places in the world can offer, a ‘must see before you die’ spot.

Victoria Falls is spectacular at any time of year, yet varies in the experiences it offers.

Activities

While of course it's the spectacular sight of Vic Falls that lures travellers to the region, the astonishing amount of activities to do here is what makes them hang around. White-water rafting, bungee jumping, taking a chopper ride over the falls, walking with rhinos: Vic Falls is well and truly estab-

lished as one of the world's premier adventure destinations.

To get the best value out of your time here, look into packages which combine various adrenaline leaps, slides and swings for around US\$125. Confirm any extra costs such as park or visa fees at the time of booking.

Costs are fairly standard across the board and activities can be organised through accommodation providers and tour operators.

Abseiling

Strap on a helmet, grab a rope and spend the day rappelling down the 54m sheer-drop cliff face for US\$40.

Birdwatching

Twitchees will want to bring binoculars to check out 470 species of birds that inhabit the region, including Schalow's turaco, the African finfoot and half-collared kingfisher. Spot them on foot in the parks or on a canoe trip along the Zambezi.

Bungee Jumping & Swings

The third-highest bungee in the world (111m), this famous jump is from atop the iconic Victoria Falls bridge. It's a long way down, but man, it's a lot of fun. It costs US\$125 per person.

Otherwise there's the bridge swing where you jump feet first, and free fall for four seconds; you'll end up swinging the right

way up, not upside down. There are two main spots, one right off the Victoria Falls Bridge, and the other a bit further along the Batoka Gorge. Costs for single/tandem are US\$125/195.

Combine bungee with a bridge swing and bridge slide, and it'll cost US\$160.

Canoeing & Kayaking

On the Zambian side, take on the Zambezi's raging rapids in an inflatable kayak on a full-day trip (US\$155), or learn to eskimo roll by signing up for half-/one-/three-day courses for US\$82/145/412.

Otherwise there are peaceful canoe trips along the Upper Zambezi River on two-person inflatable canoes for US\$125 or even more relaxed three-hour guided sunset trips for US\$60 including wine and beer. Overnight jaunts cost US\$200, with longer trips available.

Cultural Activities

Spend an evening by a campfire drumming under the Southern African sky, which includes a traditional meal, for US\$25 for the hour. You can arrange to watch and participate in traditional dance for US\$40.

Fishing

Grab a rod and cruise out to the Zambezi for the opportunity to reel in a mighty tiger fish, for around US\$125 for a half day, and

THE FALLS VIEWING SEASON

Though spectacular at any time of year, the falls has a wet and dry season and each brings a distinct experience.

When the river is higher and the falls fuller it's the Wet, and when the river is lower and the falls aren't plumed in spray it's the Dry. Broadly speaking, you can expect the following conditions during the year:

January to April The beginning of the rainy season sees the falls begin their transitional period from low to high water, which should give you decent views, combined with experiencing its famous spray.

May to June Don't forget your raincoat, as you're gonna get drenched! While the falls will be hard to see through the mist, it'll give you a true sense of its power as 500 million litres of water plummets over the edge. The mist during this time can be seen from 50kms away. If you want views, don't despair, this is the best time for aerial views with a chopper flight taking you up and over this incredible sight.

July to October The most popular time to visit, as the mist dissipates to unveil the best views and photography options from directly across the falls, while the volume maintains its rage to give you an idea of its sheer force.

November to January The least popular time to visit, as temperatures rise and the falls are at their lowest flow. But they're still impressive nevertheless, as the curtain of water divides into sections. The advantage of this time of year is you're able to swim right up to the edge of Devil's Pool on the Zambian side.

ZIM OR ZAM?

Victoria Falls straddles the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, and is easily accessible from both countries. However, the big question for most travellers is: do I visit the falls from the town of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, or from Livingstone, Zambia? The answer is simple: visit the falls from both sides and, if possible, stay in both towns.

From the Zimbabwean side you're further from the falls, though the overall views are better. From the Zambian side, for daring souls you can literally stand on top of the falls from Devil's Pool, though from here your perspective is narrowed.

The town of Victoria Falls was built for tourists, so it's easily walkable and located right next to the entrance to the Falls. It has a natural African bush beauty.

Livingstone is an attractive town with a relaxed ambience and a proud, historic air. Since the town of Victoria Falls was the main tourist centre for so many years, Livingstone feels more authentic, perhaps because locals earn their livelihood through means other than tourism. Livingstone is bustling with travellers year round, though the town is fairly spread out, and is located 11km from the falls.

US\$255 for a full day, which includes beer, fuel and transfers. Get in touch with [Angle Zambia](http://AngleZambia.com) (☎327489; www.zambezfishing.com) for more info.

Horse Riding

Indulge in a bit of wildlife spotting from horseback along the Zambezi. Rides for 2½ hours cost around \$US90, and full-day trips for experienced riders are US\$145.

Jet Boats

Power straight into whirlpools! This hair-raising trip costs US\$97, and is combined with a cable-car ride down into the Batoka Gorge.

Quad biking

Discover the spectacular landscape around Livingstone, Zambia and the Batoka Gorge, spotting wildlife as you go on all-terrain quad bikes. Trips vary from ecotrail riding at Batoka Land to longer-range cultural trips in the African bush. Trips are 1 hour (US\$80) or 2½ hours (US\$150).

Rafting

This is one of the best white-water rafting destinations in the world, both for experienced rafters and newbies. Rafting can be done on either side of the Zambezi, in Zim or Zam, and fills up between mid-February and July, high-water season. In the river below Vic Falls you'll find Grade 5 rapids – very long with huge drops and big kicks, and not for the faint-hearted. In high-water season, day trips move downstream from rapids 11 to 24, covering a distance of around 18km.

Low-water (open) season is between July and mid-February and is considered the best time for rafting. Day trips run between rapids 1 and 19, covering a distance of around 25km. The river will usually close for its 'off season' around April/May, depending on the rain pattern for the year.

Half-/full-day trips cost about US\$120/130. Overnight and multiday jaunts can also be arranged.

Other options include **riverboarding**, which is basically lying on a boogie board and careering down the rapids for US\$135/150 for a half/full day. The best time of year for riverboarding is February to June. A rafting/riverboarding combo is available, US\$165.

River Cruises

River cruises along the Zambezi range from civilised jaunts on the grand *African Queen* to all-you-can-drink sunset booze cruises. Prices range from US\$30 to US\$60. Great for spotting wildlife, though some tourists get just as much enjoyment out of the bottomless drinks. Highly recommended.

Scenic Flights

Just when you thought the falls couldn't get any more spectacular, discover the 'flight of angels' helicopter ride that flies you right by the drama for the undisputed best views available. Rides aren't cheap, but it's worth it. **Zambezi Helicopter Company** (www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com/helicopters; flights 13/25 mins US\$130/250, plus US\$10 park entry fee) in Zimbabwe and **United Air Charter** (☎213

323095; www.uaczam.com; Baobab Ridge, Livingstone) in Zambia both offer flights.

Another option is motorised hang-gliders, which also offer fabulous aerial views, and the pilot will take pictures for you with a camera fixed to the wing. It costs US\$140 for 15 minutes over the falls.

Steam-train Journeys

To take in the romance of yesteryear, book yourself a ride on a historical steam train. On the Zimbabwe side there is the 1953 class 14A Garratt steam train through **Victoria Falls Steam Train Co** (☎13 42912; www.steamtraincompany.com; incl drinks US\$40, incl dinner from US\$75), that will take you over the iconic bridge at sunset or through the Zambezi National Park with either a full dinner or gourmet canapes and unlimited drinks. Even if you're not booked on a trip it's worth getting along to the station to watch the incredible drama of its departure. There are also daily vintage tram trips (one way/return US\$15/30) that head over the bridge and which also have a drinks and canapes option (US\$40).

In Zambia the **Royal Livingstone Express** (☎213 323232; www.royal-livingstone-express.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd, Livingstone; incl dinner & drinks US\$170; ☺Wed & Sat) takes you on a 3½-hour ride including five-course dinner and drinks on a 1922 10th-class steam engine that will chug you through Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park on plush leather couches.

Wildlife Safaris

There are plenty of options for wildlife watching in the area, both in the nearby national parks and private game reserves, or further afield. Both guided walks and jeep safaris are available in the parks on both sides of the border. At **Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park** (wildlife sanctuary admission US\$10; ☺wildlife sanctuary 6am-6pm) in Zambia, there's a chance to see white rhinos, while the Zambezi National Park in Zimbabwe has a small population of lions. Walks cost around US\$70, and drives US\$50 to US\$90. There are also dusk, dawn or night wildlife drives (US\$50 to US\$90). River safaris (US\$30) along the Zambezi River are another popular way to see various wildlife including elephants, hippos and plenty of birdlife.

Another convenient option, only 15km from Victoria Falls town, is the **Victoria Falls Private Game Reserve** (☎44471;

www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com/safaris), a 4000-hectare private reserve run by Shearwaters. Here you can track the Big Five on a game drive (US\$90), where apparently you stand a 97% (to be precise) chance of encountering a black rhino.

You can travel further afield, with operators arranging day trips to Chobe National Park (see p54) in Botswana for US\$170 (excluding visas). It's only a one-hour drive from Victoria Falls, and 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.

Hwange National Park (admission per day US\$15; ☺about 6am-6pm) in Zimbabwe is the other option, with one of the largest number of elephants in the world. A day trip will cost around US\$250.

Zipline & Slides

Glide at 106km/h along a zipline (single/tandem US\$66/105), or soar like a superhero from one country to another (from Zim to Zam) on the 'bridge slide' as you whiz over Batoka Gorge (single/tandem US\$35/50). Other similar options are flying-fox rides (US\$40).

i Information

Tourist Information

Hands down the best independent advice is from Backpackers Bazaar (p548) in the town of Victoria Falls, run by the passionate owner, Joy, who is a wealth of all info and advice for Vic Falls and beyond. In Livingstone, the folks at Jollyboys Backpackers (p539) are also extremely knowledgeable on all the latest happenings. Both are good places to book activities and onward travel.

Travel & Adventure Companies

With activities and prices standardised across the board, all bookings can conveniently be arranged through backpacker accommodation and big hotels.

You can also go directly to the tour operators. The main ones in Zimbabwe are **Wild Horizons** (☎0712-213721, 13 42013; www.wildhorizons.co.za; 310 Parkway Dr) and **Shearwater** (☎13 44471; www.shearwatervictoriafalls.com; Parkway Dr). In Zambia try **Safari Par Excellence** (☎213 320606; www.safpar.net) and **Livingstone's Adventure** (☎213 323587; www.livingstonesadventure.com) both in Livingstone. All cover activities on either side.

VISAS

You will need a visa to cross sides between Zim and Zam. These are available at the border crossings, open from around 7am to 10pm. Note that you can't get multi-entry visas at these crossing; in most cases you need to apply at the embassy in your home country before travelling.

Crossing into Zambia, a day visit costs US\$20 for 24 hours, a single-entry visa costs US\$50 and double entry is US\$80.

Crossing into Zimbabwe, a single-entry visa costs US\$30 for most nationalities (US\$55 for British/Irish, US\$75 for Canadian). Double entry is US\$45 for most nationalities (US\$75 for British/Irish, and unavailable for Canadians).

ZAMBIA

260

As Zambia continues to ride the wave of tourism generated by the falls, it manages to keep itself grounded, offering a wonderfully low-key destination that has been recognised as such; it's co-host of the 2013 United Nations World Tourism Assembly. The waterfront straddling the falls continues its rapid development and is fast becoming one of the most exclusive destinations in Southern Africa.

Livingstone & Around

0213

Set 11km away from Victoria Falls, the relaxed town of Livingstone has taken on the role of a backpacking mecca. It attracts travellers not only to experience the falls, but to tackle the thrilling adventure scene. The town is not much to look at, but it is a safe, lively place with some fantastic restaurants. Those looking for a more scenic and luxurious experience can treat themselves to the natural setting along the Zambezi River at any number of plush lodges with river and wildlife views.

The town centres itself around one main road, Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd, 11km from the entrance to the falls. Several establishments are set right on the Zambezi River, but most of the action is set a bit back from the waterfront.

Sights & Activities

TOP CHOICE Victoria Falls World Heritage

National Monument Site

WATERFALL

(admission ZMW103.5; ☀6am-6pm) This is what you're here for, the mighty Victoria Falls. It's a part of the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park, 11km outside town before the Zambia border crossing; a path here leads to the visi-

tor information centre, which has modest displays on local fauna, geology and culture.

From the centre, a network of paths leads through thick vegetation to various viewpoints. You can walk upstream along a path free of fences – and warning notices (so take care!) – to watch the Zambezi waters glide smoothly through rocks and little islands towards the lip of the falls.

For close-up views of the **Eastern Cataract**, nothing beats the hair-raising (and hair-wetting) walk across the footbridge, through swirling clouds of mist, to a sheer buttress called the **Knife Edge**. If the water is low, or the wind is favourable, you'll be treated to a magnificent view of the falls as well as the yawning abyss below. Otherwise, your vision (and your clothes) will be drenched by spray. Then you can walk down a steep track to the banks of the great Zambezi to see the huge whirlpool called the **Boiling Pot**. Watch out for cheeky baboons.

The park is open again in the evenings during (and just before and after) a full moon in order to see the amazing lunar rainbow. The tickets cost an extra ZMW51 – hours of operation vary, so inquire through your accommodation.

TOP CHOICE Livingstone Island

VIEWPOINT

One of the most thrilling experiences not only at the falls, but in Africa, is the hair-raising journey to Livingstone Island. Here you will bathe in **Devil's Pool** – nature's ultimate infinity pool, set directly on the edge of the raging drama of Victoria Falls. You can leap into the pool and then poke your head over the edge to get an extraordinary view of the 100m drop.

Livingstone Island is in the middle of the Zambezi River, located at the top of the falls, and here you'll see a plaque marking the spot where David Livingstone first sighted the falls. The island is accessed via boat, and

prices include either breakfast (ZMW333), lunch (ZMW615) or high tea (ZMW486). When the water is low, you're able to access it via walking or swimming across, but a guide is compulsory. Note that access to the island is closed from around March to May when the water levels are too high.

Mosi-oa-Tunya Game Park WILDLIFE RESERVE (admission US\$10; ☀6am-6pm) The other part of the Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park is up-river from the falls, and only 3km southwest of Livingstone. The tiny wildlife sanctuary has a surprising range of animals including rhinos, zebras, giraffes, buffaloes, elephants and antelopes. It's most famous for tracking white rhinos on foot. Walks cost ZMW435 per person, for groups of up to eight.

Livingstone Museum MUSEUM (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; admission ZMW25; ☀9am-4.30pm) The excellent Livingstone Museum

is divided into five sections covering archaeology, history, ethnography, natural history and art, and is highlighted by Tonga ritual artefacts, a life-sized model African village, a collection of David Livingstone memorabilia and historic maps dating back to 1690.

Sleeping

TOWN CENTRE

TOP CHOICE Jollyboys Backpackers BACKPACKERS \$ (☎324229; www.backpackzambia.com; 34 Kanyanta Rd; campsite/dm/r ZMW40/50/205; @☎) The British and Canadian owners of Jollyboys know exactly what backpackers want, and it is wildly popular for a good reason. They have kept the needs of independent travellers at the forefront, from the sunken lounge and excellent coffee to the sparkling pool, cheap restaurant-bar and clean bright rooms. Things can get a bit hectic in the evenings, so they've

LIVINGSTONE – THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND

David Livingstone is one of a few European explorers who is still revered by modern-day Africans. His legendary exploits on the continent border the realm of fiction, though his life's mission to end the slave trade was very real (and ultimately very successful).

Born into rural poverty in the south of Scotland on 19 March 1813, Livingstone worked in London for several years before being ordained as a missionary in 1840. The following year he arrived in Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and began travelling inland, looking for converts and seeking to end the slave trade.

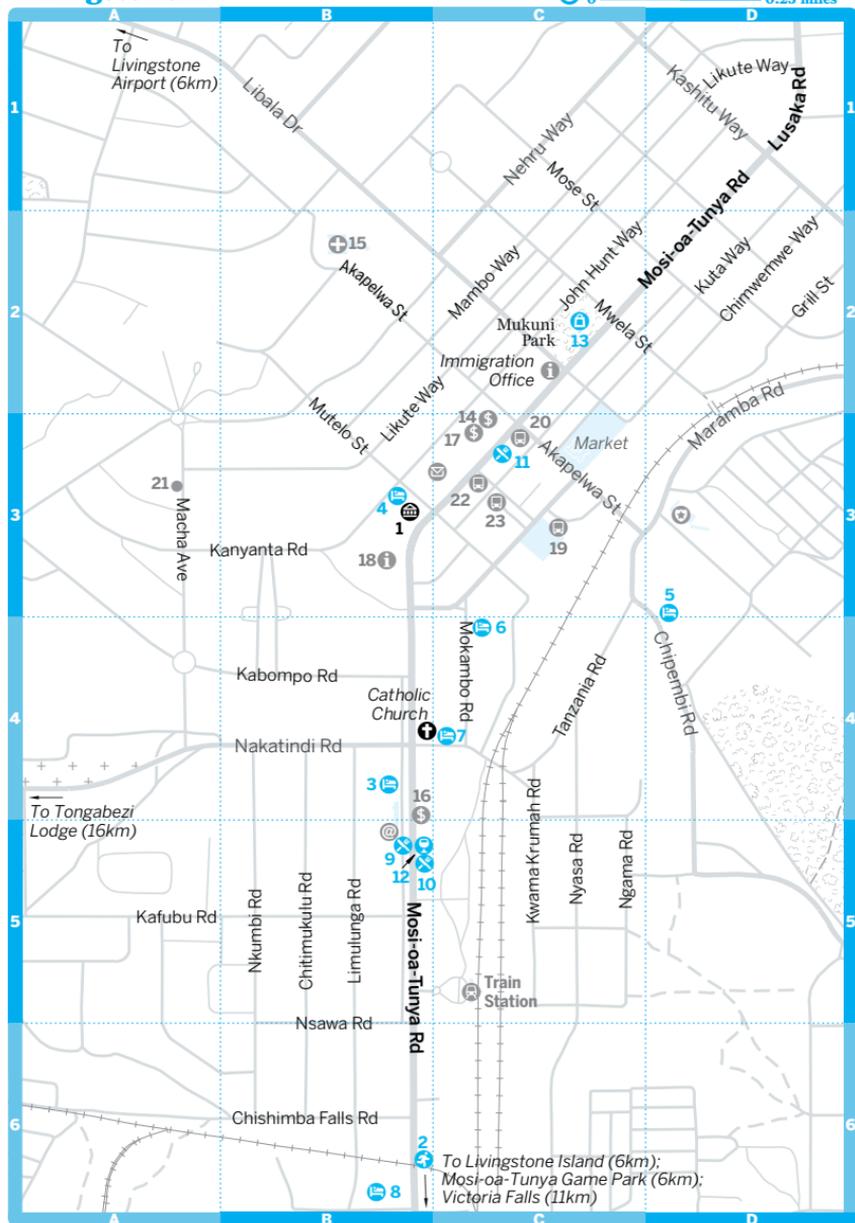
As early as 1842 Livingstone had already become the first European to penetrate the northern reaches of the Kalahari. For the next several years he explored the African interior with the purpose of opening up trade routes and establishing missions. In 1854 Livingstone discovered a route to the Atlantic coast, and arrived in present-day Luanda. However, his most famous discovery occurred in 1855 when he first set eyes on Victoria Falls during his epic boat journey down the Zambezi River. Livingstone returned to Britain a national hero, and recounted his travels in the 1857 publication *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*.

In 1858 Livingstone returned to Africa as the head of the 'Zambezi Expedition', a government-funded venture that aimed to identify natural resource reserves in the region. Unfortunately, the expedition ended when a previously unexplored section of the Zambezi turned out to be unnavigable.

In 1869 Livingstone reached Lake Tanganyika despite failing health, though several of his followers abandoned the expedition en route. These desertions were headline news in Britain, sparking rumours regarding Livingstone's health and sanity. In response to the growing mystery surrounding Livingstone's whereabouts, the *New York Herald* arranged a publicity stunt by sending journalist Henry Morton Stanley to find Livingstone.

After arriving in Zanzibar and setting out with nearly 200 porters, Stanley finally found Livingstone on 10 November 1871 in Ujiji near Lake Tanganyika and famously greeted him with the line 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'

Although Stanley urged him to leave the continent, Livingstone was determined to find the source of the Nile, and penetrated deeper into the continent than any European prior. On 1 May 1873 Livingstone died from malaria and dysentery near Lake Bangweulu in present-day Zambia. His body was carried for thousands of kilometres by his attendants, and now lies in the ground at Westminster Abbey in London.



opened up the quieter **Jollyboys Camp** (Chipembi Rd) guesthouse nearby, in Chipembi Rd, to suit couples and families.

Fawly Towers

(☎323432; www.adventure-africa.com; 216 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; **campsite/dm/tr** ZMW40/76/215, d

with/without bathroom ZMW307/205; ☎☎☎☎) Once a backpacker institution, things have been spruced up here into a guesthouse full of upmarket touches: free internet and wi-fi, shady lawns, a great pool and some of the nicest and most spacious dorms we've seen. No Basil or Manuel in sight.

Livingstone

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🚌 Activities, Courses & Tours

- 2 Royal Livingstone Express..... B6

🛏 Sleeping

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 20 CR Holdings (CR Carriers)..... C3
 21 Hemingways A3
 22 Mazhandu Family Bus
 Services C3
 23 Shalom Bus C3

ZigZag

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(📍322814; www.zigzagzambia.com; off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; s/d ZMW280/410; 📞📧📷📺) Don't be deceived by the motel-meets-caravan-park exterior; the rooms here are more boutique B&B with loving touches throughout. Run by a friendly Scottish and Namibian couple, the lovely swimming pool, great restaurant and playground for kids give it a classic holiday feel.



Olga's Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(📍324160; www.olgasproject.com; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya & Nakatindi Rds; s/d/f ZMW256/358/460; 📞📧) If you need a lie down after gorging at Olga's Italian Corner restaurant, Olga's has it covered. Clean, spacious rooms with cool tiled floors, teak furniture and slick bathrooms are just a few feet away. Profits go towards helping an organisation supporting local youth.

Livingstone Backpackers

BACKPACKERS \$

(📍324730; www.livingstonebackpackers.com; 559 Mokambo Rd; campsite/dm ZMW40/50; 📞📧) Resembling the *Big Brother* household, this place can be a bit 'party central', particularly when the Gen Y volunteer brigade is on holiday. You'll find them lounging by the pool or in the sandy outdoor cabana, swinging in hammocks or tackling the rock-climbing wall! There is also a hot tub, open-air kitchen and living room.

ZAMBEZI RIVERFRONT

Most prices include meals and transfers from Livingstone and reservations are recommended.



Stanley Safari Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$

(📍in South Africa 27-72-170 8879; www.stanley-safaris.com; per person with full board and activities from ZMW2,203; 📞📧📷) Intimate and indulgent, Stanley is a 10km drive from the falls in a peaceful spot surrounded by mopane forest. Rooms are as plush as can be expected at these prices; the standouts are the open-air suites where you can soak up nature from your own private plunge pool. When you tire of that, curl up by the fire in the open-air lounge. Rates are all-inclusive.

David Livingstone

LODGE \$\$\$

(📍324601; www.thedavidlivingstone.com; River Side Dr, Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park; s/d incl breakfast & activities ZMW1,745/2,675; 📞📧) The newest addition to Livingstone's luxury hotels: all rooms have river views, Rhodesian teak furniture, concertina doors, four-poster beds and stand-alone bathtubs looking out to the water. It's set within the national park, hippos honk around at night, and the decking and bar around the riverfront infinity pool is a wonderful spot for a sundowner. It's located halfway between Livingstone and the falls.

Jungle Junction

Bovu Island

LODGE, CAMPGROUND \$
(☎0978-725282, 323708; www.junglejunction.info; campsite per person ZMW50, hut per person ZMW128-179; 🦘) Hippos, hammocks and harmony. On a lush island in the middle of the Zambezi River, around 50km from Livingstone, Jungle Junction attracts travellers who just want to lounge beneath palm trees, or engage in some fishing (ZMW77 including equipment and guide). Meals are available (ZMW36 to ZMW60).

Zambezi Waterfront

LODGE \$\$\$
(☎320606; www.safpar.net/waterfront.html; campsite per person ZMW50, s/d tent ZMW155/200, s/d incl breakfast from ZMW640/920; 🦘📶🚰) Another waterfront lodge, things feel more rustic here with a wilderness charm, as crocs inhabit a small creek on the property. Accommodation ranges from luxury tents and riverside chalets to executive rooms or family suites. The riverside open-air beer garden is unsurprisingly popular at sunset. It's located 4km south of Livingstone, and a handy free shuttle service takes you to the falls and town.

Zambezi Sun

RESORT \$
(☎321122; www.suninternational.com; s/d incl breakfast from ZMW2,355/2,510, f ZMW2,550; 🦘📶🚰) Only a 10-minute walk from the falls, this sprawling resort provides a great base for exploring the area. The North African kasbah-inspired rooms are vibrant while plenty of pools and a playground are perfect for families. It's within the perimeter of the national park, so expect to see grazing zebras but keep your distance. Rates include falls entry.

Tongabezi Lodge

LODGE \$\$\$
(☎323235; www.tongabezi.com; cottage/house per person ZMW2,200/2,710; 🦘📶) Here you'll find sumptuous spacious cottages and open-faced 'treehouses' and private dining decks. Guests are invited to spend an evening on nearby Sindabezi Island (per person per night US\$350), selected by the *Sunday Times* as the best remote place to stay in the world.

Eating & Drinking

Livingstone is home to a number of high-quality restaurants, including a batch of excellent newcomers. Enjoy a sundowner at any of the the Zambezi riverfront resorts that allow nonguests to pop in for a drink and a stellar sunset.



Cafe Zambezi

AFRICAN \$\$

(☎0978-978578; 217 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains ZMW30-48; ☀9am-midnight; 📶🚰) Bursting with local flavour; vibrant decor flows from the indoor dining room to the outdoor courtyard, sunny by day and candlelit by night. The broad menu covers local *braai* (barbecue) favourites of goat meat and mopane caterpillars or an international twist of roasted veg with feta, served with *sadza* (maize porridge). Authentic wood-fired pizzas are a winner or sink your teeth into crocodile or eggplant-and-haloumi burgers.



Olga's Italian Corner

ITALIAN \$\$

(www.olgasproject.com; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya & Nakatindi Rds; pizza & pasta from ZMW40; ☀7am-10pm; 📶🚰) Olga's does authentic wood-fired thin-crust pizzas, as well as delicious homemade pasta classics all served under a large thatched roof. Great options for vegetarians, include the lasagna with its crispy blackened edge served in the dish. All profits go to a community centre to help disadvantaged youth.

ZigZag

CAFE \$\$

(off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains from ZMW25; ☀7am-9pm; 📶) Another string to Livingstone's bow of culinary choices, ZigZag has a drool-inducing menu of homemade muffins (such as cranberry and white chocolate), smoothies using fresh fruit from the garden, and a changing small menu of comfort food.

Spot

CAFE \$

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; mains from ZMW40; ☀10am-10pm) Promising 'forkin good food', this attractive little outdoor eatery with picnic tables delivers with its mix of local and international dishes, including a mean chicken schnitzel.

Wonderbake

CAFE, BAKERY \$

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; ☀8am-9pm; 📶) There's nothing fancy about this bakery cafeteria, but it has a good local flavour, sells cheap pies and has free wi-fi.

Fez Bar

BAR

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) This open-air bar set under a garage tin roof is a popular place to kick on to with its drinking games, pool tables and menu of soft-shell tacos.



Shopping

Mukuni Crafts

CRAFTS

(Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) The craft stalls in the southern corner of Mukuni Park are a pleasant, and hassle-free place to browse for souvenirs.

i Information

Dangers & Annoyances

Don't walk from town to the falls as there have been a number of muggings along this stretch of road – even tourists on bicycles have been attacked. It's a long and not terribly interesting walk anyway, and simply not worth the risk. Take a minivan for under ZMW5 or a blue taxi for ZMW40.

Emergency

Police (☎320116; Maramba Rd)

Internet Access

Computer Centre (216 Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; internet per hr US\$2; ☎8am-8pm) Also offers international phone calls and faxes. All the hostels now have wi-fi or at least internet access.

Medical Services

Livingstone General Hospital (☎321475; Akapelwa St)

Money

Barclays Bank (cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd & Akapelwa St) and **Standard Chartered Bank** (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) both accept Visa cards, while **Stanbic** (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) accepts MasterCard.

Post

Post Office (Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) Has a *poste restante* and fax service.

Tourist Information

Tourist Centre (☎321404; www.zambia tourism.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri) Mildly useful and can help with booking tours and accommodation, but Jollyboys and Fawly Towers have all the information you need.

i Getting There & Away

Air

South African Airways (☎0212-612207; www.flysaa.com) and **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) have daily flights to and from Johannesburg. **1Time** (☎322744; www.1time.aero) flies three times a week. The cheapest economy fare starts at around US\$400 return. **Proflight Zambia** (☎0211-845944; www.proflight-zambia.com) flies daily from Livingstone to Lusaka.

Bus & Combi (Minibus)

The Zambian side of the falls is 11km south of Livingstone and along the main road to the border with Zimbabwe. Plenty of minibuses and shared taxis ply the route from the minibus terminal along Senanga Rd in Livingstone. As muggings have been reported, it is best to take a taxi.

TO LUSAKA

CR Holdings (☎0977-861063; cnr Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd & Akapelwa St) Runs four services a day to Lusaka (ZMW80, seven hours).

Mazhandu Family Bus (☎0975-805064) Seven daily buses to Lusaka (ZMW80 to ZMW115) from 6am till 10.30pm.

Shalom Bus (☎0977-747013; Mutelo St) Eight buses a day travelling to Lusaka (ZMW75), six hours, from 5.30am till 10pm, as well as to many other parts of Zambia

TO NAMIBIA

For travelling to Namibia, and crossing the Zambia–Namibia border at Katima Mulilo, see p597.

TO BOTSWANA

Buses to Shesheke (ZMW60, two hours) depart with Mazhandu Family Bus at 5am and 2pm. Otherwise there are buses to Sesheke (ZMW50) departing when full from Mingongo bus station next to the Catholic church at Dambwa village, 3km west of the town centre. To get to Mongu from Livingstone, it's best to head to Sesheke or Lusaka, and then transfer to a Mongu bus.

Combis (minibuses) to the Botswana border at Kazungula depart when they are full from Mingongo bus station and cost ZMW30. Shared taxis can be taken from the taxi rank by Shoprite and cost ZMW40.

For information about travelling to Botswana, and crossing the Zambia–Botswana border at Kazungula, see p597.

Car & Motorcycle

If you're driving a rented car or motorcycle, be sure to carefully check all info regarding insurance, and that you have all the necessary papers for checks and border crossings such as 'owners' and 'permission to drive' documents, insurance papers and a copy of carbon tax receipt. Expect to pay around \$US55 in various fees when crossing the border into Zimbabwe.

Train

While the bus is a much quicker way to get around, the *Zambezi Express* is more for lovers of slow travel or trains. It leaves Livingstone for Lusaka (economy/1st class/sleeper ZMW30/45/45, 15 hours), via Choma, on Tuesday and Friday at 8pm. Reservations are available at the **train station** (☎320001), which is signed off Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd.

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

Livingstone Airport is located 6km northwest of town, and is easily accessible by taxi (ZMW50 each way).

Combis & Taxis

Combis run regularly along Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd to Victoria Falls and the Zambian border, 11km south of Livingstone (ZMW5, 15 minutes). Blue taxis cost ZMW40 to ZMW50 from the border to Livingstone. Coming from the border, combis are parked just over from the waiting taxis, and depart when full.

Car Hire

Hemingways (☎320996; www.hemingwayszambia.com; Mosi-oa-Tunya Rd) in Livingstone has new Toyota Hi-Lux 4WDs for around US\$210 per day. Prices include cooking and camping equipment. Drivers must be over 25.

ZIMBABWE

☑ 263

There may still be a long way to go, but finally things seem to be looking up for Zimbabwe. All the bad news that has kept it in the glare of the spotlight – rampant land reform, hyperinflation and food shortages – fortunately

now seem to be a thing of the past. In reality, safety has never been a concern for travelers here and, even during the worst of it, tourists were never targets for political violence. Word of this seems to have spread, as tourists stream back to the Zim side of the falls.

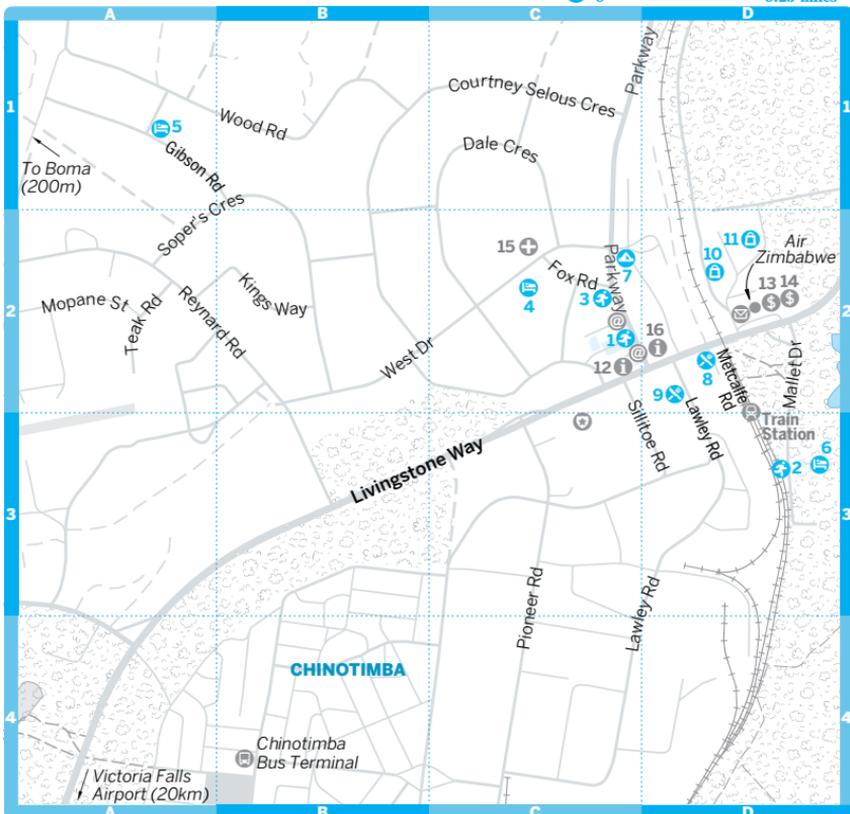
Victoria Falls

☑ 013

Having temporarily lost its mantle to Livingstone as the falls' premier tourist town, the town of Victoria Falls has reclaimed what's historically theirs as tourists return across the border in numbers.

Unlike Livingstone, the town was built for tourism. It is right upon the falls with neat, walkable streets (though not at dark, because of the wild animals) lined with hotels, bars and some of the best crafts you'll find in Southern Africa. While for a few years it felt like a resort in off-season, there's

Victoria Falls



no mistake about it now – it's officially reopened for business.

Sights & Activities

TOP CHOICE **Victoria Falls National Park** WATERFALL (admission US\$30; ☀6am-6pm) Located just before the border crossing and about 1km from the town centre, here on the Zim side of the falls you're in for a real treat. The walk is along the top of the gorge on a path, with various viewing points opening up to the extraordinary front-on panoramas of these world-famous falls. One of the most dramatic spots is the westernmost point known as **Cataract View**. Another track leads to the aptly named **Danger Point**, where a sheer, unfenced 100m drop-off will rattle your nerves. From there, you can follow a side track for a view of the **Victoria Falls Bridge**.

Hire a raincoat and umbrella just inside the gates if you go in April, or you may as well walk in your swimsuit – you will get soaked! The park is open again in the evenings during (and just before and after) a full moon, in order to see the amazing lunar rainbow (tickets cost an extra US\$10).

Zambezi National Park WILDLIFE RESERVE (admission US\$15; ☀6am-6.30pm) Consisting of 40km of Zambezi River frontage and a spread of wildlife-rich mopane forest and savannah, this national park is best known for its herds of sable antelopes, but it is also

home to giraffes, elephants and an occasional lion. The entrance to the park is only 5km northwest of the Victoria Falls town centre, and is easily accessible by private vehicle. Tour operators on both sides of the border offer wildlife drives, guided hikes and fishing expeditions.

FREE **Jafuta Heritage Centre**

CULTURAL CENTRE (www.elephantwalk.com/heritage; Elephant's Walk Shopping Village, off Adam Stander Dr; ☀8am-6pm) This worthwhile collection details the cultural heritage of local ethnic groups, from Shona, Ndebele, Tonga and Lozi people.

Sleeping

TOP CHOICE **Victoria Falls Hotel** LUXURY HOTEL \$\$\$ (☎44751; www.victoria-falls-hotels.net; 2 Mallet Dr; s/d incl breakfast from US\$312/336; 📶📶📶) Built in 1904, this historic hotel (the oldest in Zimbabwe) oozes elegance and sophistication, and occupies an impossibly scenic location. Looking across manicured lawns (with roaming warthogs) to the gorge and bridge, you can't see the falls as such but you do see the spray from some rooms. High tea here at Stanley's Terrace is an institution.

Shoestrings Backpackers BACKPACKERS \$ (☎40167; 12 West Dr; campsite per person US\$6, dm/d US\$9/35; 📶📶📶) A perennial favourite

Victoria Falls

Sights

Jafuta Heritage Centre.....(see 11)

Activities, Courses & Tours

- 1 Shearwater Victoria Falls..... C2
- 2 Victoria Falls Steam Train Co..... D3
- 3 Wild Horizons..... C2

Sleeping

- 4 Shoestrings Backpackers..... C2
- 5 Victoria Falls Backpackers..... A1
- 6 Victoria Falls Hotel..... D3
- 7 Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges..... C2

Eating

- Africa Cafe.....(see 11)
- In Da Belly Restaurant.....(see 7)
- 8 Lola's Tapas & Bar..... D2
- 9 Mama Africa..... D2

Drinking

Shoestrings Backpackers.....(see 4)
Stanley's Terrace.....(see 6)

Shopping

- 10 Curio Shops.....D2
- 11 Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village.....D2
- Jairos Jiri Crafts.....(see 11)
- Matsimela.....(see 11)
- Ndau Collection.....(see 11)
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Information

- 12 Backpackers Bazaar.....C2
- 13 Barclays Bank.....D2
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- 15 Victoria Falls Surgery.....C2
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Victoria Falls & Mosi-oa-Tunya National Parks



for backpackers, both the overland truck crowd and independent variety, who are here for its laid-back ambience, swimming pool and social bar (things gets very rowdy here on weekends). Rooms are a mix of dorms or privates, or pitch a tent. They also book all activities.

Elephant Camp

LUXURY LODGE \$\$\$

(www.theelephantcamp.com; s/d full board US\$350/700; @☎📺) One of the best spots to splash out; the luxurious 'tents' have a classic lodge feel and are set on a private game reserve looking out to the mopane woodland savannah. Each room has its own outdoor private plunge pool and balcony decking to spot grazing animals or the spray of the falls. You might get to meet Sylvester, the resident cheetah.

Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges

CAMPSITE, LODGE \$

(☎40509; www.vicfallsrestcamp.com; cnr Parkway & West Dr; campsite/dm/fitted dome tents US\$10/11/20, s/d chalets without bathroom US\$25/34, cottages US\$67; ☎📺) A great alternative for budget travellers wanting to avoid the party atmosphere of other backpackers. Rooms are basic no-frills lodge-style and tented camps. There's a lovely pool and fantastic

open-air restaurant, In Da Belly. Rooms are basic, but spotless.

Victoria Falls Backpackers

BACKPACKERS \$

(☎42209; www.victoriafallsbackpackers.com; 357 Gibson Rd; campsite per person US\$4, dm US\$8, s/d without bathroom US\$10/20; @📺) Slightly rough around the edges, and a bit further away from the centre of town, it nevertheless remains a very good choice for budget travellers wanting a more laid-back environment.

Bengula Cottages

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(☎45945, 0778-173286; www.bengulacottages.com; 645 Mahogany Rd; s/d/f low season US\$60/100/120, high season \$US100/160/220; 📺) In the leafy suburbs, these attractive units are a solid midrange choice set around a shady pool with paper lanterns strung up and a relaxed atmosphere. The communal kitchen comes well equipped.

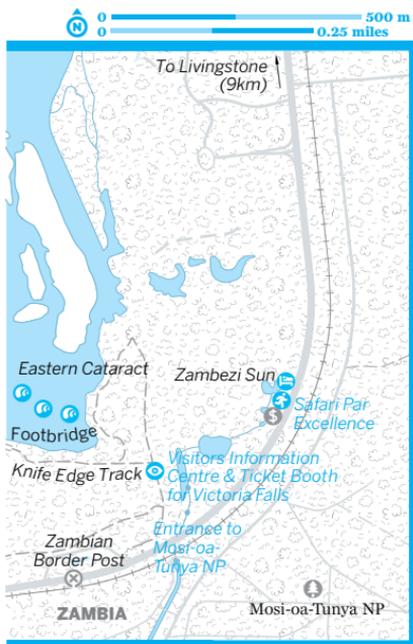


Eating

In Da Belly Restaurant

AFRICAN, INTERNATIONAL \$

(☎332077; Victoria Falls Restcamp & Lodges; meals US\$5-15; ☎7am-9.30pm) Under a large thatched hut, looking out to a sparkling pool, this relaxed open-air eatery has a menu of warthog schnitzel, crocodile curry and impala burgers, as well as one of the



best breakfast menus in town. The name is a play on Ndebele, one of the two major population tribes in Zimbabwe.

Africa Cafe

CAFE \$

(www.elephantswalk.com/africa_cafe.htm; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Art Village; ☺8am-5pm; 📍) This appealing outdoor cafe at the Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village, with smiley staff, is a great place to refuel with quality coffee, delicious breakfast, burgers and vegetarian food.

Lola's Tapas & Bar

SPANISH \$\$

(📍42994; 8B Landela Complex; tapas US\$2-9; ☺8am-10pm; 📍) Tapas such as *patatas bravas* and *calamares a la Romana* served by a welcoming couple from Barcelona. Dine outdoors or in the more intimate indoor area. Jugs of sangria available (US\$15).

Mama Africa

AFRICAN \$\$

(📍41725; www.mamaafricaeatinghouse.com; meals US\$5-8; ☺10am-10pm) This long-time tourist haunt behind the Landela Centre specialises in local dishes, steaks and game meats. Also has regular live music and traditional dance performances.

Boma

AFRICAN \$\$

(off Map p544; 📍43211; www.thebomarestaurant.com; Squire Cummings Rd, Victoria Falls Safari

Lodge; buffet US\$40; ☺dinner 7pm) While it may be a bit of a tourist trap, Boma manages to be more genuine than tacky. Enjoy a taste of Africa at this buffet restaurant set under a massive thatched roof. Dine on smoked guinea-fowl starter, impala-knuckle terrine or spit-roast warthog. There's also traditional dancing, interactive drumming and fortune telling by a witch doctor.



Drinking



Stanley's Terrace

RESTAURANT

(Mallet Dr, Victoria Falls Hotel; high tea for 2 people US\$30; ☺high tea 3-6pm; 📍) The Terrace at the stately Victoria Falls Hotel just brims with English colonial ambience. High tea is served with a postcard-perfect backdrop of the gardens and Vic Falls Bridge, with polished silverware, decadent cakes and three-tiered trays of finger sandwiches (cucumber? why yes, of course). Jugs of Pimms are perfect on a summer day at US\$22. The only thing missing is the croquet.

Shoestrings Backpackers

BAR

(12 West Dr) It's fairly laid back during the week, while weekends often feel like a house party as the dance floor gets a lot of action.



Shopping

A good selection of craft shops are located along Adam Stander Dr, with a quality items such as Shona sculpture and pieces made from recycled materials.



Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village

SHOPPING CENTRE

(📍0772-254552; www.elephantswalk.com; Adam Stander Dr) A must for those in the market for quality Zimbabwean and African craft, this shopping village is home to boutique stores and galleries owned by a collective that aims to promote and set up local artists.

Prime Art Gallery

ART

(📍342783; www.primeart-gallery.com; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Arts Village) Sells original pieces by Dominic Benhura, Zimbabwe's most prominent current-day Shona sculptor whose work has been exhibited around the world.

Matsimela

BEAUTY

(www.matsimela.co.za; Elephant's Walk Shopping & Arts Village; ☺8am-5pm) South African body-care brand Matsimela has set up store here with an enticing aroma of natural scented soaps and body scrubs such as rose and

lychee and baobab-seed oil. Also has a branch at Doon Estate in Harare.

Jairos Jiri Crafts

(Victoria Falls Curio Village; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4.30pm Sat, 8.30am-1pm Sun) Good range of Shona arts and crafts, with proceeds assisting disadvantaged locals.

CRAFTS

Ndau Collection

(☎386221; www.ndaujewelry.com) Watch local artisans hand-make individually pieced silver bracelets, rings and necklaces at this store-workshop. They also sell exquisite antique African trade beads to be incorporated into custom-made jewellery.

JEWELLERY

i Information

Dangers & Annoyances

Mugging is not such a problem anymore, but at dawn and dusk wild animals such as elephants and warthogs do roam the streets away from the town centre, so take taxis at these times. Although it's perfectly safe to walk to and from the falls, it's advisable to stick to the more tourist areas.

Emergency

Medical Air Rescue Service (MARS; ☎44764)

Police (☎44206; Livingstone Way)

Victoria Falls Surgery (☎43356; West Dr)

Internet Access

Econet (Park Way; per 30min/1hr US\$1/2;

☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat & Sun)

Telco (☎43441; Phumula Centre; per hr US\$1;

☎8am-6pm)

Money

Barclays Bank (off Livingstone Way)

Standard Chartered Bank (off Livingstone Way)

Post

Post Office (off Livingstone Way)

Tourist Information

Backpackers Bazaar (☎013-45828; www.backpackersbazaarvicfalls.com; off Parkway; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) Definitive place for all tourist info and bookings.

Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (☎44202; zta@vicfalls.ztazim.co.zw; 258 Adam Stander Dr; ☎8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat) A few brochures, but not very useful.

i Getting There & Away

Air

Check out www.flightsite.co.za or www.travelstart.co.za, where you can search all the airlines

including low-cost carriers (and car-hire companies) for the cheapest flights and book yourself.

South African Airways (☎011-808678; www.flysaa.com) and **British Airways** (www.britishairways.com) fly every day to Johannesburg from around US\$320 return. **Air Namibia** (www.airnamibia.com) flies to Windhoek for around US\$530 return.

Bus & Minibus

TO JOHANNESBURG

By road the easiest option is Pathfinder from VicFalls to Bulawayo (arrives 1pm) then connect with Intercaper Greyhound at 4pm to Johannesburg.

TO BULAWAYO/HWANGE

Pathfinder has a daily service to Bulawayo (US\$30, six hours) en route to Harare (US\$60, 12 hours), stopping outside Hwange National Park on the way. Bravo Tours also plies the route for similar prices. Otherwise combis (US\$20) and local buses (US\$15) head to Bulawayo.

Car & Motorcycle

If you're driving a rented vehicle into Zambia, you need to make sure you have insurance and carbon tax papers, as well original owner documents. When you enter Zambia you are issued with a Temporary Import Permit, valid for while you are in the country. This must be returned to immigration for them to acquit the vehicle.

Train

A popular way of getting to/from Vic Falls is by the overnight Mosi-oa-Tunya train that leaves Victoria Falls daily at 7pm for Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (economy/2nd/1st class US\$8/10/12, 12 hours). First class is the only way to go. Make reservations at the **ticket office** (☎44392; ☎7am-10am & 2.30-6.45pm Mon-Fri, 9-10am & 4.30-6.45pm Sat & Sun) inside the train station.

i Getting Around

To/From the Airport

Victoria Falls Airport is located 20km southeast of town, and is easily accessible by taxi (US\$30 each way). Another option is to book a transfer with one of the companies through your hostel or travel agent in Vic Falls. Transfers are US\$15 per person one way.

Car & Motorcycle

At the time of research, petrol was readily available in petrol stations. Avis and Europcar both have offices at the Vic Falls airport.

Taxis

A taxi around town costs about US\$10, slightly more after dark.

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