

ADVENTUREX

WITHOUT ADVENTURE... WHAT IS LIFE?

Rafting The Zambezi *The Ultimate High!*

Trips just don't get much more fun than this! Beneath the mist of the Victoria Falls, deep in the Batoka Gorge would have to be one of the more dramatic places in the world to start a rafting trip. From the very first rapid encountered you have embarked on a river journey with some of the most exhilarating whitewater and spectacular scenery that you'll experience in your life. From hippos rising in the warm morning light as you drift serenely past, to nights camped on expansive beaches of white sand – this trip really is the ultimate.

Your Itinerary

Day 1:

Flights generally arrive into Livingstone in the morning. You will be met by one of our guides, who will escort you to your hotel to make sure that you get settled in and comfy. The remainder of the day is yours to relax or explore and what better place to start than a leisurely look at one of the seven natural wonders of the world – the breathtaking Victoria Falls! A myriad of beauty with its vivid rainbows and fascinating whitewater pounding deep below, it is truly magnificent.

Early evening we have organised for those interested, a balloon trip over Victoria Falls to watch the sun set above the mist of the Falls whilst sipping Champagne – very romantic! Alternatively, we can organise a trip to the upper river to watch the sunset behind vulture clad Baobab trees. Wildlife is in abundance on this section of the river with the opportunity to possibly view elephants, hippopotamus and buffalo at close range. Locally known as 'The Booze Cruise' it is a great way to unwind and get in to your holiday mood! That evening there is a pre-trip get together where some of your equipment is given out and we run through the plan for the next 7 days. The Mighty Zambezi awaits . . . (Not Included: Breakfast, lunch, dinner, Balloon Trip or the 'Booze Cruise')

Day 2:

We meet for a leisurely breakfast. With all valuables locked up safely in the hotel and all dry bags packed for the days ahead, it is now time to put on your water wings and head on down to the base of the Falls. The Batoka Gorge provides a great backdrop for our comprehensive safety briefing before we don our high float life jackets and practice our paddling techniques in the warm waters of the river. Then we float off down the Zambezi. The first rapid 'Morning Glory' definitely wakes up us properly! Following around the corner, is one of the biggest commercially run rapids in the world, 'Stairway to Heaven'. 'The Devil's Toilet Bowl' and 'Gulliver's Travels' follow before we get to the fantastic 'Midnight Diner' featuring one of the biggest waves that you will ever see on a river. Shortly after, we walk around the rapid 'Commercial Suicide'. This is a great place to take photos, as are several other spots where we will take time out to grab our cameras and take some quality shots. 'The Gnashing Jaws of Death' provides a suitable whitewater finale before we float into camp. It is now time to relax, (with a beer!) watch the sun disappear behind the basalt cliffs and enjoy our first night under the stars with many a story being told.

Day 3:

After a hearty breakfast, we load all our equipment into the rafts and the fun continues. We get straight back into it with 'Creamy White Buttocks' and 'The Mother'! Later on in the day, we have one of the most thrilling rapids on the whole trip to look forward to - number 18 also called 'Oblivion'. It isn't the first wave that gets you, nor the second, but the third rather huge crashing wave that normally has all the video vultures and photographers standing ready with poised cameras to capture all the fun. We make base a little further down while watching the incredibly graceful fish eagles soar above us as dusk falls. With G & T's in hand we prepare dinner and look forward to our next day with even more outstanding whitewater!

Day 4:

'Morning Shower' wakes us up in the conventional fashion that we are becoming accustomed to. The river begins to open out a bit more but that doesn't mean that the rapids get any smaller especially with one of the more technical and exhilarating rapids, 'Open Season' to conquer today! We sample a huge adrenalin rush before lunch which is a certain recipe to inspire hunger in order to polish off the freshly prepared salads. Later on it is time for 'Chamamba' and 'Upper Moemba' before we must portage our rafts over 'Lower Moemba' a definite grade 6. A great campsite awaits us around the corner from where you can take a walk and look at the beauty of 'Lower Moemba' as you enjoy your sundowners!

Day 5:

Next morning, about an hour downstream from camp we check out the proposed site for the joint Zambia / Zimbabwe power project, threatening the entire section that we have been rafting down the previous three days. At 'Chabango Falls' we get restocked with ice and fresh fruit and meat. After the portage around the Falls we relaunch the boats into the water and take on the amazing 'Ghostrider'. What a rush this rapid is and also the longest of all the rapids on our journey. The river mellows out substantially from here and we entertain ourselves looking for the crocs sunning themselves on the beaches. We camp in the evening at a rapid called 'Asleep at the Wheel'.

Day 6:

Layover Day! A wonderful day off, relaxing in the sunshine. Usually there are pancakes at the leisurely hour of 10am and then it is time to do whatever you like. Whether it is a game of volleyball, reading your favourite book or just crashing out, you'll be amazed at just how great it feels to have to do nothing!

Day 7:

Resuming our casual float, we are able to view game, often from such close range it has to be seen to be believed. Bird life abounds in a gorgeous array of colour and we also see some of the first villages of our trip. With your guide doing most of the work getting the raft down the river with a set of oars, we take time out to relax with a floating lunch and a relaxing paddle down to the evening's camp.

(Included: All meals on Days 2 - 7)

Day 8:

An early rise and a gentle float in the dawn light is a fantastic way to finish the river trip as we arrive at our take out point at the Matetsi River mouth. We enjoy some ice cold drinks brought by the gear truck and then a scrumptious riverside lunch. After such a brilliant trip, there is no better way to finish than with a spectacular half hour helicopter flight back through the Batoka Gorge getting a bird's eye view of the rapids, to Taita Falcon Lodge. We have a welcome shower before meeting together to share all our experiences over dinner that night.

We stay at Taita Falcon Lodge for the night situated on the banks of the Zambezi, above rapid number 17. A stunning balcony overlooking the river, is a great backdrop for sundowners!

Well done you have rafted one of the '10 Classic River Trips in the world' and believe us you will feel exhilarated for having done so!

(Evening meal excluded)

Day 9:

Time to cruise around town and do last minute retail therapy before boarding your flight back home.

Holiday Options

So you have finished the trip of a lifetime and don't want to return to city life in the UK? Don't panic as you are in the adventure capital of Africa and there is a vast array of exhilarating and also quite gentle activities to occupy your time. We can recommend all of the following so if you fancy a little extension to your trip call us and have a chat and we will make any reservations for you in advance.

Wildlife Viewing:

Fantastic opportunities abound in Southern Africa for experiencing some of the most amazing wildlife viewing to be found anywhere in the world. It would be a shame to come to this region and not visit the wide variety of parks on offer. We suggest a visit to Chobe Park in Botswana, widely acclaimed as offering some of the best game viewing in Africa – from elephants to zebras to prides of lions.

One of the best options on offer is a 'self drive safari' where you drive yourself around the relevant parks of interest to you. You are well equipped with a 4 wheel drive vehicle, which sleeps 2 to 4 people and all the kitchen facilities that you will require. This adds a very adventurous dimension to your trip with a great deal of flexibility and fun.

Canoe Safari:

Well before the Zambezi River tumbles over the Victoria Falls, there are some quieter stretches upstream where you can spend time exploring in a canoe. It is quite a thrill to see elephants at close range as they come down for a drink and hippos rise in the morning. It is a lovely way to spend a relaxing few days before flying back to civilization. The trips vary in length up to three days and all equipment is provided.

Microlight Flights:

Truly a magnificent way to explore the beauty of the Falls or the wildlife of Zambezi National Park. Try this one if you have real 'thrill seeking tendencies'!

Bungee Jumping:

Not only is the bridge over the Zambezi the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, but it is the highest commercial bridge bungee jump in the world. And what a RUSH as you leap into the chasm created by Victoria Falls. The jump at 111 metres is not for the faint hearted!

Sporting Facilities:

If you fancy some sport whilst in Zambia, there are a few unique opportunities for you too. Fancy teeing off for a game of golf on the Royal Livingstone Course with wildlife and game casually walking past? – A brilliant surreal experience! There are plenty of other activities from horse back safaris to helicopter rides into the gorge, to wildlife viewing camps in set areas of the parks. Whatever you are interested in we will try and provide details and make reservations for you. Just remember that Victoria Falls is a very popular destination and things do book up well in advance.

The Details

What Is Included:

- Transfers to and from Livingstone Airport to the hotel. If you provide us with your arrival details we will meet you at the airport. We request that you are there on Day 1, the day before your rafting trip departs (as described above).
- Accommodation the night before and after the river trip in a tourist hotel. This will be on a share twin basis with somebody else on the trip.
- All transfers to and from the river.
- A spectacular helicopter ride from Matetsi to Livingstone.
- All meals from breakfast on Day 2 to lunch on Day 8 (or breakfast Day 11 with safari). We can cater for any dietary requests.
- All rafting equipment, including the best in buoyancy aids, helmets and spray jackets.
- Tented accommodation whilst on the river.

- All camping equipment including thermarest style mattresses and chairs (sleeping bags *excluded*).
- Qualified and experienced guides and safety kayakers. We have a mixture of local and overseas guides who are extremely professional and are some of the most experienced guides in the world. This team will make every effort to make your trip memorable and fun for you whilst at the same time ensuring your safety. They all hold advanced first aid qualifications and in the unlikely event of an injury they have the expertise and professionalism to deal with it.
- All necessary permits and licenses.
- A very cool AdventureX T-shirt!

Please Note: Not included are flights, visas, departure taxes, travel insurance, inoculations, sleeping bags, video or DVD of your trip, alcohol, personal items or gratuities. You will also need to budget for meals in town which are not included in the price and any extra accommodation outside what is provided.

Getting There:

If you have any queries or need a hand at all in arranging your flights to and from Livingstone or Victoria Falls please give us a shout. One of the best flight options is on British Airways via South Africa to Livingstone. These flights leave around 7pm the night prior to Day 1, arriving into Livingstone around 11am the following day. The return flight is a midday departure out of Livingstone with an early morning arrival into the UK the next day. Other options include flying in and out of Victoria Falls. However there are other possibilities, so whether it is a flight from another airport in the UK, or the USA or even an overland trip through Africa we will give you advice on what is the best deal around and help you with your booking.

Visa Requirements:

Normally you can enter Zambia with a minimum of formalities at your point of disembarkation, provided you have given us your passport details beforehand. We will obtain a visa waiver for you whilst you are in Zambia. In order to do this we require your passport number, date of expiry, nationality and date of entry and exit into/ from Zambia. A copy of the waiver will be forwarded to you before you leave to present at your point of entry into Zambia. Please note a visa waiver can only be granted for entry at Livingstone airport.

Please note that a departure tax of USD\$20 is payable by all visitors on departure from Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls or Harare airports. Please check with us regarding the latest visa regulations.

Jabs:

Zambia is relatively disease free, although Certificates of Inoculation for Cholera and Yellow Fever are required by those travellers arriving from infected areas. No other vaccinations are compulsory, although we would recommend consulting your GP or specialist vaccination centre. They may suggest that you get inoculated against Hepatitis A, Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Meningitis. By far the biggest precaution you should take is a course of anti-malaria prophylactics. These are available from your specialist vaccination centre

Exchange Rates:

The current rate for the American dollar to the Zambian Kwacha is around 1:3400 and for the GBP Pound to the Zambian Kwacha is around 1:6262. So the place remains quite good value. However prices generally vary between the local and tourist price. Usually hotel prices are quoted and must be paid for with foreign currency. The same applies for some excursions. As a guideline you can obtain a rather extensive evening meal for around USD\$10 and a pretty cool Nyaminyami (Zambezi River God neck pendant) 20cents! As a general rule you should exchange your money with the local banks. It is not a good idea to explore the entrepreneurial 'black market' as it is quite likely that you could find yourself with a wad of shredded paper and it is a highly illegal practice.

Transport Services:

A fantastic array of colonial transport services abound in Zambia. By far the most interesting is the railway which with still a number of perfectly functioning steam locomotives gives that romanticism back to rail travel. However with some services running hours or possibly half days (or more) late, don't rely on it to get you to your flight on time! First and Second class tickets are very reasonable, and depend on your wish to either share with 3 others or possibly another 20 and all their pets! All main towns in Zambia have a railway station so it is an easy and relaxed way to travel to other parts of the country relatively hassle free. Bus travel unfortunately doesn't share the same glory as the rail system but the inter-city coaches are not too bad. Buses in towns such as Harare are primarily for transporting people to work who will generally look in amazement at you waiting at a bus stop. Taxis are fairly easy to find although you don't tend to find them cruising the streets, but there are plenty of taxi ranks in all the strategic spots around town. First, look outside pubs and then the fast food outlets!

Climate:

It does get rather warm and we would recommend that a sunhat and BIG quantities of good waterproof sunscreen are put at the top of your packing list. It can get up to 45 centigrade occasionally in October down in the Batoka Gorge, but more often than not it ranges from 35-40. With the river running at a mere 24 degrees, the huge waves descending on our boat make a rather welcome reprieve from the warm weather! The rainy season is from November until March, although this can vary. On those trips bordering on November, we would encourage you to put in a raincoat, as it can precipitate quite heavily. It does cool down a little in the evenings but nothing worth worrying about. Generally you are quite comfortable just sleeping under the stars. Most hotels are also equipped with the essential swimming pool, placed in close proximity to the bar for perfect convenience!

Fitness and Safety:

There are no special fitness requirements for the Zambezi River; the main thing recommended is a sense of adventure! Just to recap what is mentioned in the brochure: The minimum age for the trip is 16 years and there is no upper age limit providing that you are in reasonable physical shape and you are aware of the rigours of a whitewater expedition in a foreign country. Please make a point of telling us if you have any medical conditions, known allergies or are on any medication that you think we should be aware of. Safety is our foremost consideration at all times whether on or off the river. We are out there for a great time and we want you to feel comfortable in your new environment.

Dress Code:

The dress code in and around the Falls is fairly casual. Lightweight casual clothes are recommended during the day. On the river you require little more than a bathing costume and a pair of shorts. We also recommend a pair of sandals or wet shoes that will stay attached to your feet. In most of the hotels in and around Victoria Falls, the dress code for men is a collar and long trousers. Some also require a jacket and tie. This is more an exception rather than the rule. For any safari excursions, neutral coloured long sleeved shirts and long pants help you to blend nicely into the background as well as offer protection from the mossies at dawn and dusk.

Personal Equipment:

After years on the river the guides have found exactly what is necessary to feel comfortable on the raft by day, cosy around the camp at night and totally in style in town before and after the trip. Therefore our equipment list will mean that you will be perfectly attired and outfitted for your whole trip and well under the baggage. A full list of what we recommend will be sent to you in your 'AdventureX pack' well before the trip. We find that most people already have in their possession what is needed for a rafting trip and very little if anything in specialised equipment needs to be bought. Perhaps the only thing that we specifically recommend for Zambia is plenty of sunscreen!

Finally...

Please remember that things do change, prices go up and down, activities stop running or change format and weather can send the best laid plans out the door. AdventureX will do its best to provide what is described above but please take into consideration the nature of the journey that you are embarking on and the country that you are travelling in and understand that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary!

The Zambezi River is a unique whitewater rafting trip and combined with the splendid location of Victoria Falls offers the ultimate in a warm, fun filled adventure holiday. We'll see you there!