

# South Luangwa National Park



## Further Links

- One of the best safari destinations in Africa.
- This is where walking safaris were pioneered.
- Huge concentration of hippos.
- About 400 bird species.
- Excellent for spotting leopards.
- Visit Kawaza village to see real rural Zambian life.
- Excellent quality lodges and camps, and also mobile camping.
- Great in the green season

## Situation

South Luangwa National Park is north east of Lusaka, towards the Malawi border.

## Activities

Wildlife viewing by jeep and boat (day and night); walking safaris, mobile camping safaris; birdwatching; visiting a local Zambia village;

South Luangwa National Park is one of THE best places to take an African safari. Zambia's Luangwa Valley, which marks the end of the Great Rift Valley, is one of the last unspoilt wilderness areas and possibly the finest wildlife sanctuary in Africa. It is one of Africa's best kept secrets, a favourite amongst experienced safari goers and stunning for first timers.

South Luangwa park covers an area of over 9000 sq km through which the meandering Luangwa River runs. The oxbow lagoons, woodland and plains of the valley host huge concentrations of game.

It holds the biggest concentration of hippos anywhere, at around 45 per kilometre of river. The elephant herds, once badly diminished by poaching, are now thriving. There are huge herds of buffalo, and the area is home to the distinctive Thornicroft's giraffe.

Over 400 species of birds have been identified in the valley, including an impressive list of raptors, and migrant populations of brightly coloured carmine bee-eaters nest here in their thousands. There are masses of different antelope, the most common being the puku, and of course there are the big cat predators that feed on them - lions in abundance, and South Luangwa is one of the best places to see

leopard and night drives here are always exciting.

There are a variety of camps both inside and outside the national park, most of a very high standard being small with personal service, high levels of comfort and good food and wine, whilst being in a rustic bush environment. The guiding in Luangwa is of a very high standard with an excellent guiding examination process in place. There are also several owners / managers of safari companies who have been personally guiding in the Luangwa valley for decades and a safari with them (particularly on foot) is a unique experience to learn first hand about the natural history of this beautiful part of Africa.

Whilst mobile fly camping and walking safaris are popular in the dry season, Luangwa is an all year round destination with some camps (mainly on the edge of the park) remaining open 12 months of the year. Some bush camps inside the park do remain open outside the normal 'dry' months of June to October, giving you the chance to stay in the park up to the end of the year.

Early in the year with the river is at it's flood, boat safaris are offered which is an amazing way to see an otherwise quite dry landscape - floating on the water through a flooded Ebony grove is one of the world's most beautiful things to do. The 'Emerald' season in Zambia during the main rains and the rivers floods (Jan - April) is gorgeous and perfect for keen birders and photographers alike. Many mammals are also usually seen at this time including the endangered Wild Dogs, so although the grass at that time of year is normally too high for walking safaris, the landscape and vehicle based viewing more than makes up for it.

