

# Victoria Falls to Cape Town

Trip Code: VCMB

Version:



CYCLE



GUIDED GROUP



TOUGH



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cycle from Victoria Falls through Botswana and Namibia to the Cape of Good Hope
- Wildlife spotting on the Chobe River and during the game drives at Moremi
- Amazing cycling across the Kalahari and wild Namib Desert
- The sunrise at Sossusvlei and the hike to the top of Dune 45
- Cape Town, Table Mountain and the ride along Chapman's Peak Drive

## AT A GLANCE

- 15 days biking
- 1000 kilometres
- 60% road
- 40% dirt road
- 95% vehicle supported
- Max altitude - 2347 metres
- Join at Victoria Falls, end in Cape Town

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

This wide-ranging and exciting biking holiday begins at the world-famous Victoria Falls and finishes in Cape Town. After visiting Africa's most impressive waterfall on the very first day, we employ a sensible mix of vehicle transfers and cycling stages, as we bike from Zimbabwe through the Zambezi National Park into Botswana, then via the Makgadikgadi Saltpan, the Okavango Delta and the Kalahari Desert into Namibia and onwards via Sossusvlei and the Fish River Canyon to South Africa.

This action-packed holiday also includes plenty of time off the bikes, to enjoy a riverboat cruise on the Chobe River, game drives in the Moremi Game Reserve (Okavango) and the opportunity to spend a little time with the San (Bushman) people and learn a little of their self-sufficient lifestyle. Then, continuing our journey to the Namibian capital Windhoek, we have several days and half-days of wild cycling, as we cross the vast Namib Desert and stop off to visit the amazing sand dunes at Sossusvlei. Still heading south and following sections of the 'Long Way Down' route, our epic biking journey takes us to the awe-inspiring Fish River Canyon. Crossing into South Africa, we stop off to ride a loop into the spectacular Cederberg Mountains, before making our final approach to Cape Town with Table Mountain looming ahead of us. A final day of cycling from the Cape of Good Hope via the iconic Chapman's Peak Drive is a fitting way to complete this sustained biking expedition which you will look back on as 'the experience of a lifetime'.

## Is this holiday for you?

**ADVENTURE CYCLING.** Suitable for regular, fit bikers with stamina and a thirst for real African adventure. This African odyssey is a fascinating mix of adventure biking, travel and exploration through Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and South Africa. A mountain bike fitted with semi-slick tyres is best suited for the long stretches on tarmac, but a set of off-road knobbly tyres is also needed for the Namib Desert, where traction and control are more important. Mainly on tarmac roads when in Botswana and on gravel roads in Namibia, this is not a technical ride. However, with many days of sustained riding under the hot African sun, this trip presents a real challenge. Our accommodation ranges from comfortable guesthouses to camping wild under the African night, as well using many fixed campsites - some of them with swimming pools. Due to the sheer distance that needs to be covered within a three-week holiday, regular vehicle transfers are unavoidable. However, we have planned the itinerary so that we cycle the most interesting sections of this amazing journey. Vehicle support is almost always available. There are 15 days of cycling

and on 11 of these days the distance covered will be 60 kilometres or more. Taking into account the sometimes challenging gravel road conditions, we rate this as one of our toughest biking holidays. BIKE HIRE AVAILABLE LOCALLY.

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- A locally based English speaking bike guide
- Single timed airport transfers as described
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- One or more support vehicles and drivers
- A full support crew
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- Chobe River cruise

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas (if required)
- Tips for local guide and crew
- Airport departure taxes (if applicable)
- Optional activities
- Some meals as per the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous personal expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc
- Bike Carriage on the flights - please check with your carrier for charges

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the campground accommodation in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

A single transfer from Victoria Falls Airport is provided in the early afternoon of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. On the last day of the Land Only itinerary there is a single transfer from the hotel in Cape Town to Cape Town Airport for flights departing mid afternoon.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

## Meal Plan

All meals are included (except 6 dinners).

## Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as [Water-to-Go](#), which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

All meals, except 6 dinners, are included in the trip price. Breakfast is usually cereal, coffee, tea and toast. Lunches will be picnic style and dinners will be braais (barbecue), potjies (stew), stir fries, pasta, etc. Most meals are generally cooked on an open fire. Water is provided from the support vehicle and there are drinking water taps at the majority of the lodges we use. It's a good idea to bring a supply of your favourite energy bars, gels etc. from home, as these are not widely available locally.

## Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 1 nights in a guesthouse in Windhoek, 2 nights in a hotel in Cape Town and 17 nights camping. For the nights spent wild camping, facilities will naturally be minimal and basic - although the locations more than compensate for this. All organised campsites that we use have washing facilities, toilets and many have swimming pools. Hot showers are available every night with the possible exception of Day 5 and Day 13 when we are wild camping. We use our own tents each night; these are well-made and spacious (2.4 x 2.4 metre footprint and 1.8 metre high) Safari canvas tents, with a window and mosquito-mesh screens to keep insects out. You can see an image of our tents on the website gallery. All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single tent and single room occupancy can be pre-booked - please refer to the Dates and Prices page for this holiday on our website.

Please note that the holiday will run more smoothly if you are ready to assist with camp chores, such as setting up and packing away tents.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The trip will be led by an experienced local cycling guide. In addition, there will be a support vehicle and driver, as well as a camp assistant.

## Altitude

The altitudes on this holiday are not extreme and the maximum altitude attained is no more than the equivalent of a pressurised cabin on an international flight. You may 'feel' the altitude the first time you trek above 2000 metres but all that is required is a slower pace to compensate. You should pay particular attention to your hydration levels while trekking above 2000 metres.

## Spending Money

A total of about £300 should be allowed to cover miscellaneous expenses, departure taxes and the non-included meals. Since a great deal of this trip is spent in remote areas, it is best to carry your personal spending money in the form of cash. When we are wild camping there will be little, if anything, to spend money on. However, the organised campsites usually have a bar area and we would suggest a budget of around £5 per day for drinks is sensible. In cities like Windhoek and Cape Town there are ATM's where you can withdraw local currency using a credit or debit card. We will be in Botswana for 6 days and will need to get Botswana Pula in Kasane. Sterling, US Dollars and South African Rand can all be exchanged in Botswana. In Namibia the currency is the Namibian Dollar and again Sterling and US Dollars can be easily exchanged. In South Africa, the local currency can be obtained easily. We recommend that you bring US \$50 to US\$100, £100 to £200, as well as SA Rand (1000 to 2000) for the Namibian and South African sections.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and porters. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that is given. We recommend that you tip your crew, if you feel that their services have been good. As a rough guide, we suggest you allow a total of £50 for tipping your crew.

## Your Bike

If you are taking your own bike, we suggest that a 'hardtail' mountain bike with front suspension is appropriate for this holiday. It should have a good range of gears and we recommend you fit fast-rolling all-rounder or semi-slick tyres which work well on the surfaced roads and non-technical trails typically found on our **Adventure Cycling** holidays.

Since you are depending on your bike to transport you throughout your holiday, it's important to ensure it is in good working order. If you are not mechanically minded, get your local bicycle dealer to service it for you.

Please contact us if you are unsure about the suitability of your bike.

## Bike Hire

You can either take your own bike or hire one locally. Our agent has a mix of Giant Talon 29ER 1 and Giant Fathom 29ER 1 bikes for hire which are perfect for this ride. These are hardtail bikes purchased in either 2016 or 2017. The two models of bike are similar, with Shimano components, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes and 100mm suspension forks. The bikes are also fitted with a single bottle cage. Bike rental is subject to availability and costs £250 (subject to change) paid in Victoria Falls on Day 1. Please note that this must be paid in cash, either in GBP, US\$ or in €Euros. If you want to hire a bike, please contact the KE office and we can reserve one on your behalf. We must stress that your hire contract is with the local rental company and KE cannot be held responsible for any issues arising from bike rental. If you do hire a bike, we recommend that you take your own shoes, pedals and possibly even your saddle, which will go a long way towards making it feel like your own bike. You will also need to take a helmet, which must be worn at all times when riding. One final issue with regard to the hire bikes is that they are generally fitted with regular knobbly tyres. However, a pair of semi-slick tyres is also provided with the hire bikes and these can be fitted for those sections of the route where they make the cycling easier.

## Travelling With Your Bike

Airlines require that you pack your bike properly for travel and for this holiday we recommend that you use a purpose-made soft bike bag. These can be relatively inexpensive. They are also light in weight, easy to handle and, most importantly, can be packed into a small space to allow easy transportation in the support vehicle. You will need to partially dismantle your bike to pack it in your bag.

PLEASE DO NOT USE a purpose-made rigid bike box for this holiday. We do not have the space in the support vehicle to transport these bulky items.

Please contact us if you have any questions regarding travelling with your bike.

## Vehicle Support

Throughout this trip we have the back up of our 12-seater safari-truck support vehicle. Each morning our main baggage will be loaded onto the support vehicle which will follow the group on the day's ride. The support vehicle will go ahead on occasion, to set up lunch or to make preparations at the next overnight camp. During the course of this ambitious bike journey there will also be regular transfers with the whole group in the support vehicle and the bikes on a purpose-made trailer. When game-viewing at Moremi we use a different vehicle, an open-topped, 4WD Toyota Landcruiser. The local biking leader and the support vehicle driver will watch over the group and there will be regular fruit and water stops, every 20 kilometres or less, to allow the biking group to reassemble. We want everyone to enjoy their cycling experience on this trip and we recognise the importance of group members being allowed to cycle at their own pace. The support vehicle will pick up any group members who wish to take a break from cycling at any time.

## **Baggage Allowance**

Apart from your bike in its bag (if you are taking your own bike), you should travel with one main item of luggage, such as a KE Trek Bag or similar holdall, as well as a small day pack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack. The day pack can be used to carry valuable items such as cameras and GPS devices whilst travelling and will also carry your day-ride essentials during the rides.

Your baggage allowance on the flights will depend on your airline. When choosing your flights, whether booking them directly or through KE, you will need to consider the cost of carrying your bike. These costs are your responsibility.

## **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.



# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.**

Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

UK nationals do not normally need a visa to enter Botswana for stays of up to 90 days.

### Travelling with children under 18yrs - Botswana

Parents travelling with children under 18 years will be asked to show the child's full unabridged birth certificate. If the child is travelling with one parent, with another adult or unaccompanied, the parent or parents who aren't present will need to provide an affidavit giving their consent for the child to travel. Please note that they are very strict and they do not accept photocopies of birth certificates or short versions. This is also applicable if you are transiting through Botswana. For further details please see FCO website <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/botswana/entry-requirements>

### Visa South Africa

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. You must have 2 blank pages in your passport.

Rules on **travelling with children under 18 years** have been relaxed. Visa exempt children entering South Africa only need passports, and not birth certificates as previously required. This applies if the child is travelling with both parents, one parent or an adult who is not a biological parent, and school groups. There are some different requirements for unaccompanied children, and children who do not have UK passports or visa exempt passports. For full details please see the FCDO website.

### Visa Namibia

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for short stays. You should carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times when in Namibia for identification.

### Travelling with children under 18yrs - Namibia

Parents travelling with children under 18 years will be asked to show the child's full unabridged birth certificate. If the child is travelling with one parent, with another adult or unaccompanied, the parent or parents who aren't present will need to provide an affidavit giving their consent for the child to travel. Please note that they are very strict and they do not accept photocopies of birth certificates or short versions. This is also applicable if you are transiting through Namibia. For further details please see FCDO website.

### Visa Zambia VCMB

**Please Note: Only those choosing to join Victoria Falls to Cape Town (VCMB) through Livingstone in Zambia will require a visa for Zambia.**

British passport holders do not need a visa in advance and can obtain a visa on arrival. The Government of Zambia recently announced the removal of all visa fees for British passport holders. However implementation of the policy has not yet been confirmed and British nationals may still be charged \$25 on arrival.

Other nationals should check details online to see if they need an e-visa.

A visa for Zimbabwe is required. This is obtained on arrival (usually at Victoria Falls Airport) and the cost is \$55 single entry and \$70 double entry. Payment must be made in cash and you should take small denomination notes for this.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specifically require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. Malarial prophylaxis are required. A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required if travelling from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission and for travellers having transited for more than 12 hrs through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in South Africa is the South African Rand.

The unit of currency in Botswana is the Pula.

The unit of currency in Zambia is the Zambian Kwacha.

The unit of currency in Namibia is the Namibian Dollar. The Namibian and the Southern African Rand have the same value, and the Rand is accepted everywhere in Namibia.

## Preparing for your Holiday

The better conditioned you are the more you will enjoy your trip. We suggest that you adopt a sensible weekly exercise regime and fit in a number of long cycle rides in hilly country to ensure you are physically capable of taking part in this trip - this will also provide you with an opportunity to make sure all your riding kit is tried and tested before you travel. Cycling is obviously the best activity to prepare for this trip, however, running, squash and swimming are also good for developing aerobic fitness and stamina.

## Climate

We cover a lot of ground on this holiday and the climate varies as we head south. During the earlier departures (April, May, June) we will usually see Victoria Falls at its best, with high flow. The Zambezi River level falls through the season and can be quite low by October. Similarly, early in the year, as we progress into Botswana and the Okavango, we will find lush conditions following the rains and wildlife can be harder to spot amongst the tall grass and dense vegetation. Later in the year, the drier conditions mean that the animals congregate around the waterholes and are easy to find. Generally, we can expect daytime temperatures to reach as high as 35 degrees Centigrade, falling as low as 10 degrees Centigrade at night. Extremely, in the most open, desert areas, night time temperatures can drop as low as freezing. From April through to October is the 'dry season' in both Botswana and Namibia. However, rain cannot be ruled out entirely and this would normally come in short, but heavy bursts. By the time we get to Cape Town, we have entered a different climatic zone and during the Southern Hemisphere winter period it will be much cooler (15 to 20 degrees Centigrade) with some rainy days any time from April to September. October is the beginning of summer in Cape Town and it is drier and warmer.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Lonely Planet has guides to the various countries
- Rough Guide has guides to the various countries

## Maps

### Africa South: Geocenter Publishing. 1: 4,000,000

Large map with clear, attractive cartography. It shows the whole of Southern Africa from the southern tip to Namibia's northern border, including Livingstone and Harare. Internal administrative boundaries are drawn, with names of the provinces. Roads, with intermediate distances on main routes, railways, local airports, and ferry routes are shown, national parks clearly marked, and places of interest highlighted. Multilingual legend includes English. Index on reverse.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

## Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through one of our international partners. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

For this holiday you will need your usual cycling clothing, including shoes, cycling gloves and helmet (which must be worn at all times when cycling).

## Bike Wear

- Cycling helmet
- Cycling shoes
- Daypack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack (e.g. Camelbak)
  - Water bladder - min. 2 litres water capacity (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Padded (baggy) cycling shorts
- Long leg cycling trousers (winter bib tights) and/or leg warmers
- Lycra arm warmers
- Base-layer - thermal tops
- Mid-layer - short and long sleeved cycling tops

- Fleece jacket or jumper
- Lightweight windproof top
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Regular biking gloves
- Long-fingered biking gloved
- Warm hat that fits under your helmet
- Buff
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (inc. total bloc for lips/nose)
- Camera
- Mobile phone

## Other Stuff

- Travel and off-the-bike clothing and footwear
- Warm jacket for cool evenings in the desert
- Sleeping bag (comfort rated 0°C). A 5cm thick foam camping mattress is provided.
- Sleeping bag liner (silk liners are lightest and best)
- Camping pillow
- Wash bag, towel, toiletries, including anti-bacterial handwash
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Swimwear
- Basic First Aid kit and personal medication
- Insect Repellant
- Chamois cream (e.g. Assos/Ozone)
- Rear light (eg. clip-on silicone band LED) for early morning starts
- Water purification tablets
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Spares

If you are hiring a bike you do not need to bring any spares. The hire bikes are provided in good condition and a supply of spares is carried. You may be asked to pay directly for any spares used, especially in the case of crash damage or damage by mis-use. If you are taking your own bike, you should consider taking a minimum of spares, including a couple of spare spokes (for each wheel if they are different), spare brake blocks (or brake disc pads), chain links/chain connector, rear derailleur hanger and any non-standard parts specific to your bike. If you are taking your own bike, we suggest that you also take a couple of spare inner tubes.

## Repairs

Whilst not essential, it is a good idea that you familiarise yourself with how to carry out at least some basic repairs to your bike e.g. changing an inner tube and fixing a puncture. Your bike guide will be happy to help with repairs and general maintenance, but being able to carry out a simple repair yourself could save the inconvenience of having to wait for assistance.

## Hydration and Energy Snacks

You should take suitable water bottle(s) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use

plastic) or a hydration pack and you should also consider taking a small supply of the gels, power bars or sports drink mix that you would normally use on a ride at home.

Please contact us if you have any questions about your equipment.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the campground accommodation in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. A single transfer from Victoria Falls Airport is provided in the early afternoon of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. On the last day of the Land Only itinerary there is a single transfer from the hotel in Cape Town to Cape Town Airport for flights departing mid afternoon.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe with Ethiopian Airlines. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the evening, arriving around midday on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart from Cape Town mid afternoon on Day 21 of the Land Only itinerary, arriving in the UK the following morning.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Giant Talon 29ER 1 hire bikes now available. These bikes are perfect for this classic ride and are provided with both knobby and semi-slick tyres so they can be set up to suit the prevailing conditions of each day's ride!

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change