



## **Zambia Pre-Travel Advice**

### **Entry Requirements**

All visitors require a valid passport and copies of their return air tickets. A visa is required but will be issued on arrival at Lusaka International Airport. You will need to pay for your visa in cash, GBP are often required, although they usually also take US\$. There is some discussion about reducing the charge for UK passport holders, so please check the up to date visa fee before your departure.

### **Health**

Vaccinations for polio, tetanus, hepatitis A and meningococcal meningitis are recommended. Malaria is widespread and you should start a course of anti-malarial prophylaxis pills before leaving home. Please consult your doctor.

Please make sure you have arranged adequate travel insurance to cover evacuation in case of emergency.

### **Time Difference**

Zambia is two hours ahead of GMT.

### **Electricity**

The local current is 220 volts. Three pin plugs similar to those used in the UK are normal. Royal Zambezi also has two pin European plugs/adaptors in most rooms. The Lodge runs on a generator which operates for 24 hours.

### **Weather**

In November the weather can be very hot and humid, reaching 40C plus on occasion. In late November the rains arrive.

### **Lower Zambezi – Background**

The Lower Zambezi National Park is relatively untouched and offers a range of different habitats. The Zambezi is overhung with a thick, riverine, fringe and grassy floodplains inland are fringed with mopane forests full of winterthorn trees. The escarpment hills provide a dramatic backdrop to your safari experience.

Royal Zambezi is directly opposite the famous Mana Pools on the Zimbabwean side of the river.

The National Park is home to herds of elephant and buffalo and sightings of lion and leopard are frequent. Impala, waterbuck and kudu are common sightings as are zebra, warthog,



monkeys, baboons and hyena. The thrill of safari really comes to light when the sunsets and the vehicle's spotlights are used to track the animals. Civet's, porcupines, genets and honey badgers are a few of the nocturnal animals you are likely to encounter. It is normal to see most animals while fishing, particularly elephant, buffalo, hippos and crocodiles. We have also seen lions coming down to the river to drink while we have been fishing.

### **Tigerfish – Background**

The vivid colouration, large protruding teeth, short dorsal, small adipose fin (similar to member of the salmon and trout family) and lateral stripes along the body clearly distinguish this fish from other species. The surface of the body varies through light to dark blue green changing to silver along the mid-body region to an off-white/silvery belly. The caudal fin is colourful with shades of yellow to deep red. All other fins tend to be yellow/orange near the body, the colour becoming darker and more intense towards the extremities of the fin.

The fish are perfect to target with a fly as they are very aggressive, fight hard and are acrobatic jumpers. Tigers can grow up to 30lbs, but this is very rare. A fish of over 10lbs is considered a good catch with fish up to 20lbs caught occasionally on fly. The major factor limiting distribution in a river system appears to be water depth and of course food. It is an open water predator, often found near the water surface, sunken trees and drop-offs from sandbars. They are found throughout the Zambezi system, the Chobe, Okavango and Limpopo Rivers. Tigerfish also live in large dams such as Kariba, but the river fish seems to be stronger and harder fighters.

### **Tackle**

Rods. 9 foot rods that take an 8, 9 or 10-weight line. Salt-water action rods are perfect. At RZL we have found that an 8-weight is perfect for lighter outfits, but a 9-weight works well for the heavier sinking lines.

Reels. Any reel with a good reliable drag system that can hold your fly line plus 200m of backing. Spare spools, which enable fast line changeover, are useful.

Lines. A mixture of lines is essential as you will fish everything from floating to fast sink, depending on the time of day and the depth and speed of water. Generally most fishing is done with sinking lines and shooting head systems work well.

Leader material. Stiff mono such as Maxima in a range from 15lbs to 20lbs breaking strain. We also use a wire trace of about three or four inches between fly and leader. The fish do not seem to be leader shy.

Flies. If tying your own flies use saltwater hooks (Gamakatsu are best) in sizes #4, #2, #1/0, #2/0 & #3/0. Deceiver and clouser patterns with plenty of flash in orange, blue, white, grey, chartreuse, black and plenty of combinations of all of these will work. Blue clousers with weighted eyes worked very well for us at RZL last season. Weighted and non-weighted flies for differing conditions are useful. You will get through a lot of flies in a week, so it is a good idea to come well equipped or to bring a basic fly-tying kit.



Other items that you will require include good Polaroid's, pliers to make wire traces, long nose pliers to unhook fish, a hook sharpener and a waterproof day pack.

### **Clothing**

While you are fishing you will be most comfortable wearing thin, well-aerated shirts and trousers, such as you might wear when flats fishing. It is important to wear clothing that covers all exposed skin during the day, as the sun can be very hot. A good hat and thin gloves are very important and a bandana to cover your face and neck is also useful.

You will be fishing from boats so lightweight shoes with non-slip soles are useful. We sometimes also fish from islands. Normal shoes are fine, but they should have thick soles to avoid thorns penetrating through the shoe into your feet.

In the evening you should have casual clothing and footwear which cover your exposed skin and protect from mosquitoes. There is a highly efficient daily laundry service so it is possible to travel with a minimal amount of clothes.

### **Sundries**

Please bring plenty of sun protection cream and after sun. Anti-histamine cream is also useful in case of insect bites. It is important that in addition to anti-malarial pills you also bring a spray containing Deet that you apply each evening to keep the mosquitoes away.

A good camera is an essential.