

Wild Zimbabwe
Best of Hwange's Wildlife and Conservation
July 5 to July 20, 2026



African Elephants
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Embark on an exclusive **Zimbabwe** safari adventure, exploring the breathtaking landscapes of **Hwange National Park** and the majestic **Victoria Falls**. Travel through private concessions where intimate encounters with elephants, **lions**, and rare painted dogs unfold in unspoiled wilderness. With over 100 mammal species, including buffalo, wildebeest, cheetahs, and leopards, Hwange is one of **Africa's most biodiverse reserves**. Its **45,000-strong elephant population** and the presence of **endangered painted dogs** make it a truly exceptional wildlife destination. Take part in thrilling walking safaris alongside **white rhinos**, track elusive **big cats** on 4x4 game drives, and get up close to wildlife from custom-built **underground blinds**.

Beyond the **safari experience**, engage with local communities to witness the positive impact of **ecotourism** and ongoing efforts to address human-wildlife conflict. Venture to the remote **Jozibanini Camp** in southern Hwange, where you'll actively contribute to **conservation** by maintaining vital waterholes. The journey concludes at **Victoria Falls**, one of the world's greatest natural wonders, with a sunset cruise on the **Zambezi River**, offering a perfect finale to this immersive, small-group safari led by expert guides.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Exclusive Wildlife Viewing in Hwange:** Spot elephants, lions, cheetahs, leopards, painted dogs, and over 100 other mammal species.
- **Rhino Tracking & Conservation Experience:** Walk alongside white rhinos and meet the conservationists protecting them.

- **Unique Look-Up Blinds for Close Encounters:** Observe elephants drinking just feet away from custom-built blinds.
- **Explore Remote Southern Hwange.** Stay at Jozibanini Camp, deep in the park, for an unparalleled off-the-grid safari.
- **Victoria Falls & Zambezi River Sunset Cruise.** Witness one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, followed by a scenic cruise.

LEADER: Vusa Ncube.

DAYS: 16, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$9,500 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for two internal flights), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 7.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Jul 5–6	Travel to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.		
Jul 7	Arrive in Victoria Falls & Welcome Dinner. Meet your guides and group.	Pioneers Lodge, Victoria Falls	D
Jul 8–11	Elephant Express Rail Safari & Ngamo Plains Exploration. Embark on a unique rail safari enroute to Southeast Hwange National Park, where you'll enjoy game drives, big cat tracking, close-up elephant viewing. Visit a local school and rhino sanctuary to observe conservation efforts.	Bomani Tented Camp, Hwange National Park	B, L, D
Jul 12–13	Journey to Remote Jozibanini Camp. Venture deep into southern Hwange to the remote Jozibanini Camp, featuring wildlife encounters, underground blinds, and insight into solar-powered waterholes and anti-poaching efforts, all capped with starlit dining at a vital conservation outpost.	Jozibanini Camp, Hwange National Park	B, L, D
Jul 14–16	Fly to Nehimba Lodge & Explore Northern Hwange. Take a scenic flight to Nehimba Lodge in Northern Hwange, where you'll enjoy diverse landscapes, lion encounters, game drives to vital water sources, and evenings of bush sundowners while elephants visit waterholes nearby.	Nehimba Lodge, Hwange National Park	B, L, D
Jul 17–18	Victoria Falls & Zambezi River Sunset Cruise. Return to Victoria Falls to explore this natural wonder and enjoy a final evening on the river.	Palm River Lodge, Victoria Falls	B, L, D
Jul 19	Depart for Home. Bid farewell to Zimbabwe		B
July 20	Arrive home.		

LEADER

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. One leader with an assistant guide(s) will provide a range of expertise for your trip.



Vusa Ncube

Vusa leads safaris in Hwange National Park as a fully licensed Professional Guide, the culmination of ten years of hard work and dedication. Zimbabwe's Professional Guides are known as among the best in Africa due to the intensive qualification procedure. Vusa guides with expertise in the plant, wildlife, and culture of Zimbabwe, and he entertains travelers with his humor and warm personality. Vusa exudes passion for his native country.

DETAILED ITINERARY

July 5–6 ~ Travel to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Jul 7 ~ Arrive in Victoria Falls and Meet the Group

Welcome to Zimbabwe! Our local agent will provide transfers from the airport to the hotel. If you would like to arrive earlier, we can arrange divergent airport transfers and extra nights. Join the group and your leader for dinner at the lodge.

Jul 8–11 ~ Experience the wildlife and culture of Ngamo Plains

After a leisurely breakfast, you will depart Victoria Falls on a 2.5-hour road transfer to Dete Railway Station on the boundary of Hwange National Park. Enjoy lunch on the Elephant Express before departing on your one-of-a-kind game drive by antique rail car.

After arriving at Ngamo in the early evening, you'll disembark the Elephant Express and climb aboard 4x4 safari vehicles for the short ride to camp. You can settle in before returning to the main lodge for a pre-dinner drink at the bar or around the campfire. A delectable 3-course dinner will be served under the Milky Way and the Southern Cross followed by coffee or a nightcap around the campfire.



African Elephant and the Elephant Express
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

Over the next two days you will have the opportunity to explore and discover the wonders of Bomani Concession and Southeast Hwange National Park. After early wake-up calls, join your guide at dawn for a cup of coffee and slice of toast before heading out to explore and interpret what happened in the wilderness the previous night. You will depart early when the big cats are still active. Your professional guide will point out tracks and signs, and perhaps approach an animal on foot to snatch a memorable photograph. Game-viewing is flexible to take advantage of happenings on the ground.

You will explore Hwange in search of game before making a stop for a bush lunch next to a specially built underground game-viewing “look-up blind” named such because it’s located at the water level, so you’ll be looking up at the elephants! After lunch, you’ll enjoy some time in the blind with snout-level viewing of thirsty elephants just feet away! The blind is furnished with comfortable seating and has running water for flush toilets and hand basins.

In the late afternoons, you’ll continue to explore the Ngamo Plains on foot and by vehicle. After sundowners, you’ll drive back to camp on the Bomani concession looking for nocturnal species that prowl the plains after twilight.

On your third morning, only a minute drive from the lodge, you have the opportunity to enjoy an unorchestrated look at village life in rural Matabeleland. After breakfast, you can join the children on their morning walk to school or ride with younger kids in our safari vehicles! Once at the school, meet the headmaster and enjoy traditional songs sung by the students, followed by a short classroom interaction. This activity gives the school children a wonderful opportunity to meet and interact with people from all over the world who have come to see the wildlife bordering their community.



African Elephant from Blind
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

After the school visit, head to a nearby village for an authentic visit to a local homestead, including a meeting with the headman of the village. You will be able to see some of Imvelo's community initiatives firsthand and gain insight into the day-to-day life of a rural Zimbabwean, including learning about thatching roofs, tilling fields, milling maize, and weaving baskets.

In the afternoon, you head to the Imvelo Ngamo Rhino Sanctuary, where you'll meet the resident white rhinos, Thuza and Kusasa, as well as the Cobra Rangers guarding them 24/7. Start with a behind-the-scenes look at the Cobra's basecamp, where you'll learn more about their work along with Imvelo's many other community and conservation programs. Hear a short talk on the origins and ideas behind the formation of the Cobras unit and how they protect the rhinos, as well as the plans for the ground-breaking Community Rhino Conservation Initiative. Then, head off on foot or by vehicle with the Cobras to meet Thuza and Kusasa! There will be plenty of photo opportunities and quality time to watch and enjoy the rhinos in their natural environment.



Rhino Sanctuary
© Logan Carter

Jul 12–13 ~ Onward to Jozibanini

Enjoy an early morning tea or coffee on your veranda before a hot breakfast in the main lodge. Afterwards, you'll depart Bomani on a full-day safari or "pump run" deep into the southern part of Hwange.

Hwange National Park has no major rivers, and for the past 70 years, during Hwange's dry seasons, wildlife has subsisted here on water originally pumped by windmills, later replaced by diesel engines, and now solar power. In the southern sector of the park, Imvelo Safari Lodges shoulders the responsibility for 20+ pumped waterholes. This means Imvelo is looking after approximately 20 to 25% of the waterholes that sustain Hwange's wildlife, including upwards of 10,000 elephants in the dry season – a huge commitment!

Imvelo's trademark "pump runs" combine game viewing in remote areas of the park with practical, hands-on conservation, helping to maintain the waterholes and pumps that the wildlife rely on for water during the dry season. Many of these pumps have been converted to solar-hybrid pumps in recent years. You'll learn about the challenges of maintaining this system in conversations and hands-on activities with your guide and the pump attendants who spend the dry season living at the waterholes to keep the pumps running.

You will also make a stop at the Makona Ranger Station near Jozibanini Camp and meet some of the national park rangers who patrol in this remote corner of the park. Imvelo funded and installed a state-of-the-art solar-powered water pump at Makona, which provides water for the rangers, their organic vegetable garden, and wildlife at the nearby Makona pan. In addition, the solar array provides power for lights and radios at the station.



African Elephants at Watering Hole
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

Arrive at Jozi for dinner and then gaze upon the Milky Way, four hours from any other camp. After a night's rest, enjoy an early morning game drive or a guided game walk through the area around camp, once more, experiencing Hwange's magnificent elephants on ground level. Track the different species to be found in this part of the park, such as lion, wild dog, and buffalo. After returning to camp, relax and experience a fabulous brunch out in the open at the Jozi pan, enjoying the solitude of being in a completely untouched and isolated spot within the pristine African bush.

An afternoon option is to head off on a guided mountain bike ride through the elephant paths along the inter-dune troughs around Jozibanini. The ecosystem here is semi-desert, akin to the Kalahari in neighboring Botswana. Ancient windblown fossil sand dunes are separated by shallow valleys where elephant paths have compacted the terrain, providing the opportunity for a unique experience of game viewing by mountain bike. These rides can be from 30 minutes around camp to a full day exploring deep into southern Hwange, depending on your energy, fitness, and adventure level.

In the late afternoon, you'll head into an underground "look-up" blind for spectacular photographic opportunities of the wildlife, just feet away, at the Jozi waterhole. You'll enjoy sundowners inside or atop the look-up blind, and once the sun has set, take a quick drive back to camp for a tasty dinner out under the glorious night sky.



Camp Under the Stars
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

Jozibanini has an interesting story, which reinforces the importance of your visit here. A ranger station named Jozibanini was abandoned in the early 2000s due to a lack of park funds, leaving the southern and western parts of the park largely unpatrolled by rangers and never visited by tourists. As a result, elephant poaching raised its ugly head in this area in 2013. After these poaching incidents, Imvelo Safari Lodges decided to establish an outpost at Jozibanini, which staff and a privileged few tourists could use as a base for both management of water resources and a safari experience unlike any other. Presence in the area would also deter poachers, and who better to employ to protect the new project than ex-poachers who have turned over a new leaf? By introducing tourism, the Jozi project has helped protect and

conserve hundreds of kilometers of remote park, and regular traffic on the route has translated into reliable support for both the park's pump attendants and roughly 25% of Hwange's thirsty wildlife in the dry season.

Jul 14–16 ~ Scenic flight to Nehimba

Following breakfast, take a scenic flight over Hwange National Park, giving the opportunity to view the herds from the air. You will land at Shumba and transfer to camp by road in a 4x4 vehicle (about 20 minutes). Your arrival will likely be met with elephants in camp drinking from the lodge waterhole.

During the afternoon, you'll begin your explorations from Nehimba Lodge. The northern region of Hwange is distinctly different from the southern region, both in topography as well as habitats and species of wildlife. Nehimba is situated right on the edge of the mopane woodlands of Northern Hwange and the Kalahari sandveld of the West and offers the full spectrum and diversity of Hwange's fauna.



Lions
© Imvelo Safari Lodges

The area is famous for its large elephant herds and prides of lion, so you will probably head out to the Nehimba Seeps in search of these and other species of wildlife. You will also enjoy a bush sundowner in the evening before returning to the lodge to toast another magnificent day in Hwange as the herds of elephants and other game arrive for their own sundowner drink. A 3-course dinner under the stars follows, while elephants drink from the pool nearby.

Over the next two days, after breakfast, you'll depart for your morning exploration of the Nehimba concession and the beautiful northern part of Hwange National Park. The elephant-hunting lions of this area are famous. The area is well watered, so it is host to large numbers of animals throughout the year, but particularly during the dry season. You'll return to the lodge for a leisurely lunch and then afternoon siesta or perhaps relax by the lodge swimming pool, frequented by Hwange's thirsty herds during the dry season.

Sundowners at the famed Nehimba Seeps is a must-do activity while staying at Nehimba in the dry season. The Nehimba Seeps are in a specially designated conservation area and one of the few year-round, naturally occurring water sources in the massive Hwange National Park. The seeps are an ancient water resource that was once used by the San hunters. Today, the area is frequented by elephants, which dig for minerals and water; this sacred spot will leave you with special memories and photographs. Back at the lodge, enjoy drinks and then dinner while watching the elephants slurp from the nearby waterhole.

Jul 17–18 ~ Victoria Falls

After a final breakfast and morning game drive (time permitting) at Nehimba, climb aboard your flight covering the scenic territory between Shumba Airstrip and Victoria Falls Airport. Upon arrival, you'll be transferred to the Palm River Hotel, situated on the banks of the mighty Zambezi River. The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure until meeting up with the group for cocktails and dinner.



Victoria Falls
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Start the next day with a tasty early morning breakfast then head to the town of Victoria Falls for a guided tour of Zimbabwe's foremost attraction – the Victoria Falls! Also known as Mosi-oa-Tunya in the local language, “The Smoke that Thunders” is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. At 360ft (108m) high and 5,306ft (1,708m) wide, it remains one of the most spectacular natural wonders in the world. While not the widest or highest waterfall, Victoria Falls is considered to be the largest curtain of falling water in the world thanks to its incredible volume of water.

In the evening, there is simply no better way to enjoy the dazzling African sunset than from the comfort of a Ra-Ikane boat on the Zambezi River. The ever-popular sunset cruise offers a unique way to explore the channels of the river and to get an up-close view of the pristine wilderness and African game along its banks. Enjoy an array of canapés, a full bar, and a charming crew who can impart a bit of interesting Victoria Falls history with you on board the Ra-Ikane.

Jul 19 ~ Depart for home

Begin your journey home full of new memories of your time in wild Zimbabwe.

Jul 20 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$9,500
Single Supplement	\$1,587

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for two internal flights), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	January 26, 2026	Remaining Balance

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and permits for all activities, unless described as optional.
- Two internal flights.
- Accommodations for the nights of July 7 through July 18.
- Meals from dinner on July 7 through breakfast on July 19.

- Beverages, including alcohol, from dinner on July 7 to breakfast on July 19.
- Sundowners from July 8 to July 18.
- Transfers on July 7 from the Victoria Falls Airport to Pioneers Lodge and on July 19 from the Palm River Lodge to the Victoria Falls Airport.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we will add a gratuity of \$250 per participant to your final payment for local guides and lodge staff. This does not include gratuities for Vusa, your trip leader. We recommend budgeting \$15 to \$20 per day for 13 days (\$195 to \$260 total per participant) to give directly to him at the end of your trip.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Divergent airport transfers (arranged by us) and extra hotel nights.
- Mandatory [emergency evacuation insurance](#).
- Optional [trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

July is in the dry season in Hwange National Park. The average lows are in the lower 50s°F (10°C), and the average highs are in the lower 80s°F (27°C). Rain is unlikely.

Fitness Level

Good energy levels are required for long days in the field riding in bouncy Land Cruisers. You will also have the opportunity for walks on elephant trails, usually less than 2 miles at a time, and you can take an optional mountain bike ride at Jozbanini.

Accommodations

Nehimba and Bomani have rustic, but luxurious accommodations, while Jozibanini is more basic but comfortable. All lodging has electricity and flush toilets.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Victoria Falls (VFA) by 4:00pm on July 7.
- Depart from Victoria Falls (VFA) after 10:00am on July 19.

Flights we book.

- Two internal flights are included in the trip cost. **Important:** these flights have a strict luggage allowance of 44lbs (20kg), including carry-on luggage. Soft luggage is required with dimensions no more than 11.8in by 13.8in by 27.5in (30cm by 35cm by 70cm).

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation [Zimbabwe](#).**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are [Carbon Neutral](#).**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.