

# Botswana / Caprivi Strip - 2009

Mike Howlett

This year we decided to take a couple of weeks and get away from everything. Just myself, my wife and 18 year old son. We travelled in our 70 series Land cruiser and Bushpig trailer.

We left Durban on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June and drove up to just short of Martins Drift where we stayed at Baobab Farm Cottage, Farm Kildare near Marnitz which is a very pleasant spot, ideal as a stopover. They charge R150 pp.



Baobab Farm Cottage

It was bitterly cold overnight but we left fairly early and crossed the border, driving to Planet Baobab near Gweta. Signs of the recent rains were everywhere with standing water alongside the road from Nata to Gweta.



Planet Baobab Campsite

Camping for three of us at P.B. was P240. Nice spot with good campsites and decent ablutions. Again it was very cold and we went to bed fairly early as even the fire couldn't keep the cold at bay.

Back up the road to Nata in the morning where we turned left and drove on that shocking stretch of road, north of Nata.



Road North of Nata

This reminds me of some of the worst roads in N Mozambique where you drive next to the road to avoid the craters.

We arrived at Elephant Sands nice and early and in good time to set up camp. They are currently building and the camp site now resembles a building site. Whilst we had intended to spend a few days here we were a little disappointed and checked in for just one night.



Elephant Sands "Building Site"

Camping was P56 per person and we treated ourselves to dinner at P80 pp. Good food and a pleasant evening around the fire. The next day, still more bad road for another +-50kms followed and then it improved to the usual state. We arrived at Kasane in good time and found a passable campsite at Chobe Safari Lodge P65 pppd.



Chobe River at Sunset

Booked an afternoon cruise P210 pp and the dinner cruise the following evening at P200 pp. We enjoyed our stay in Kasane and the dinner cruise was a definite highlight. We had the whole vessel to ourselves with a crew of 5, excellent food and a good bottle of red wine. Felt like a movie star ! We then moved on via Ngoma Bridge to Katima and our camp site at Namwi Island - at N\$90pp/pd. Nice camp sites with good ablutions right on the bank of the river.



Zambezi River at Namwi Island

Here we booked a sunset cruise with Caprivi Houseboat Safaris at N\$230pp including drinks which was first class. Ros found a local fellow willing to sell her an old Mokoro and we budu bashed for quite a distance before we found his home [no roads] and collected the mokoro.



The Mokoro

Not for the faint hearted as they weigh about 250kgs [at least].

I did find that Namwi Island was a little too civilised for me. I need something a bit more wild.



I Drove past this turn off with a Heavy Heart

From here we drove on to Divindu and spent a night at Ngepi where we treated ourselves to dinner in the restaurant.



Hippos at Ngepi

On to Maun the next day and we stayed in a chalet at the Sedia hotel which I had treated us to as I was feeling a bit crook. I paid P900 incl and it was a good choice as I was sick as a dog with some sort of gastric upset. Onto Martins Drift the next day and we ended on a bad note with the mokoro being confiscated by the plant people at the border post. pent the night at Baobab Cottage and hit the road early the next morning.



## Observations

Specify 'Return Trip' to the Road Permit people at Martins Drift and you will save yourself some cash. Fellow travellers who didn't do that had to pay again at Muhango Border Post.

On the whole, I found Botswana and Caprivi full of tourists, SAfricans, Germans and Pommies. Overland travel in Botswana has become very popular and you will have to plan your trip very carefully to get away from it all. [or travel in the off season]. I found myself longing for the peace of Namibia. It was wall to wall people everywhere you went.

Cross border charges - Botswana P270 for Cruiser and Trailer return trip.  
Namibia N\$295 as above.

### Diesel Prices

Martins Drift	P5.93
Francistown	P5.89
Nata	P5.93
Kasane	P5.99
Katima	N\$6.82
Divundu	N\$6.82
Lake Ngami	P6.02
Maun	P5.99
Letlakane	P5.94

Used 14,79l per 100km