



Botswana Farm Tour

May 2025

ORGANISED BY DIY DRIVING TOURS BOTSWANA (PTY) LTD

Farm Tour to Botswana

1st to 27th May 2025

Join us on a very special tour to Botswana, a country of abundant wildlife and friendly, peaceful people, and arguably the greatest safari destination in the world. We meet the farmers for whom this vast wilderness is part of their working landscape.

Botswana is a southern African country best known for its spectacular wildlife, the iconic Okavango Delta; the vast open spaces of the Kalahari Desert; the stunning landscapes of the Makgadikgadi Pans, and the production of diamonds.

The land area is double that of New Zealand, and the population is roughly half. So it is not surprising that a large proportion of the population have a rural background. On this tour we will get to see the wildlife, the Okavango Delta, the Kalahari Desert, the Makgadikgadi Pans and the diamonds. But the main focus will be on meeting the farmers.

Farming in Botswana is not as we know it in New Zealand. Dealing with incursions of Foot and Mouth Disease from neighbouring countries. Raising self shedding sheep with fat tails, and breeds of other livestock unknown in New Zealand. Making the best use of what little water is available with deficit irrigation, and treatment of municipal wastewater. And growing unfamiliar crops like sorghum, millet, lerotse melon, dragonfruit and prickly pear.

This tour will give us an in depth look at both modern and traditional farming practices, and an unparalleled opportunity to meet and engage with the local farmers and rural people, who will be just as interested in us as we are in them.

Whilst in Botswana the tour will be accompanied throughout by both Lamodimo Ditamara of Mosu and Dr Graeme Bremner, formerly of Otago and now farming in the Tswapong Hills of Botswana.



Tour Cost

- NZ\$11,900 pp
- excluding international travel
- NZ\$ 1600 single supplement

Botswana Country Information

The Country

Botswana is a large, land locked country in the middle of Southern Africa, and shares borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Most of the country is on a high plateau at roughly 1000 m altitude. The population is mostly concentrated on the eastern side of the country which has marginally better rainfall than the centre and the west.

Botswana has been a stable, democracy ever since gaining independence in 1966, and has been widely regarded as the success story of Africa, having transformed from being one of the poorest countries on the continent at independence to having the highest GDP per capita in sub-Saharan continental Africa in modern times.

The Agriculture

Traditional agriculture is based on the raising of livestock and the growing of rainfed grain crops like sorghum, millet, beans and melons. The gathering of veld products like thatching grass, wild fruits, mopane worm caterpillars and various edible plants is an important source of supplementary income for many traditional farmers.

Large scale commercial agriculture (aside from extensive livestock ranching and game farming) is mostly confined to the areas of higher rainfall or easy access to irrigation water. The country is self sufficient in vegetable crops like carrots, onions and tomatoes, and sunflowers, beans and other high value crops are grown for export. Free-range Botswana beef has a lucrative export market in Europe.

The Weather

Due to the large size of the country the climate varies quite a lot from north to south and from east to west. However, the rainy season tends to last from October to April. In May you should expect overnight lows which might drop to near freezing, and daily highs in the mid to high twenties. The average rainfall in May is about 5mm.

The People

The population of 2.2 million people is made up of many different tribal groups. The largest group are the Tswana, who make up the majority of the population and speak Setswana as their mother tongue. There are at least 29 languages spoken in the country, but English and Setswana are the most common. The Basarwa (or Kalahari Bushmen) exhibit the greatest linguistic diversity, with the various Basarwa tribes speaking mutually unintelligible 'click' languages.

Time

Botswana is GMT+2, and in May 2025 will be 10 hours behind NZST.

International Travel Arrangements

The deposits for the farm tour will be collected by Natasha Sinclair of IndAfrica Travel Marketing Ltd, on behalf of DIY Driving Tours Botswana Ltd.

Natasha will also be organising the international travel for the group. Natasha, as well as specialising in African Safaris is also a TAANZ bonded broker member of Travel Connections (www.travelconnections.co.nz) so you are in good hands.

The indicative cost of a return economy class airfare from Christchurch to Gaborone, flying with QANTAS is currently NZ\$3419. The flight requires an overnight stop in Johannesburg, and this is included in the indicative cost. Natasha will organise a night's accommodation at City Lodge OR Tambo airport hotel in Johannesburg for the group, and will also organise overnight accommodation in Christchurch for anyone needing this. Note that the flight pricing is subject to change at any time until flights are booked and ticketed.

Natasha will quote on other cabin classes if requested.

Natasha's contact details are:

Natasha Sinclair
Indafrica Travel Marketing Ltd
P O Box 365, Cromwell, Central Otago 9342
Phone: 03 442 4067 or 021 041 8555
www.indafrica.co.nz



Itinerary

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Botswana Farm Tour May 2025

Day 0: Wednesday April 30 2025

Your flights to Africa will depart Christchurch International Airport at 6 a.m. tomorrow morning, so you need to stay in Christchurch overnight tonight. A representative of our company will be on hand in the bar of the Sudima Airport Hotel from 7 p.m. to effect introductions; check the roll, and hand out briefing materials to read on the flights in the morning.

Day 1: Thursday May 1 Christchurch -> Johannesburg (Meals in flight)

You will be farewelled by our representative at the entrance to the international departure zone of Christchurch Airport, and fly with QANTAS to Johannesburg, changing planes in Sydney.

In Johannesburg you will be met inside the arrivals area of OR Tambo Airport by another of our staff, who will help with luggage and organise transport to an airport hotel for an overnight stay. Our staff member will travel on to Botswana with you the next morning. Note that accommodation in Johannesburg is not included in the tour price: it will be arranged and billed to you at the same time as Natasha organises your air tickets.

Day 2: Friday May 2 Johannesburg -> Gaborone (L,D)

Transport will be organised from the Airport Hotel back to the International Terminal, and our staff member will be on hand to assist you through the check-in and immigration processes. Plan to eat breakfast in the terminal before departing Johannesburg as the inflight 'snack' will probably be something like a small packet of biltong. It's a short, one hour flight from Johannesburg to Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana.

On arriving in Gaborone we will check in to a hotel beside the giant 'Airport Junction' shopping complex. Company staff will help you to obtain a local SIM Card, local currency, and any travel necessities you have forgotten. The hotel has a nice swimming pool and outdoor area for those who want to relax for the afternoon. For those who feel like doing something a little more active, Airport Junction has all manner of shops. The produce sections of the local supermarkets are always interesting, and there will be a good selection of South African wines on display in the liquor stores. Airport Junction also boasts the best bookshop in Botswana.

Day 3: Saturday May 3 Pottering around ! (BLD)

The aim of today is to keep you interested, exercised and awake to help overcome jet lag. We will stop frequently and won't be covering a great distance, and we will make up the day as we go along.

We'll start at the 'Main Mall', a pedestrian only mall in the centre of Gaborone. It was the original commercial heart of the city and the wide, open air plaza is home to numerous artists, artisans and musicians along with stalls selling all manner of produce never seen in New Zealand. A fascinating place to visit.

And then we will head out of the city to the SW.

The first stop will be in the village of Gabane, which is home to (i) A pottery using termite mound clay to make lovely pieces; (ii) a business repairing and restoring all models of landrovers, run by an eccentric Englishman named Ben, current president of the Landrover Club of Botswana; and (iii) The Veld Products Research Centre.

Other places we might stop are:

- Kolobeng, site of the mission station established by David Livingstone in the 1840's. The site saw construction of the first church ever built in Botswana; the first medical clinic; and the house in which Dr Livingstone and his family lived. The mission station was destroyed by a Boer raiding party in 1853, but the ruins have been preserved as a national monument. Livingstone is still a revered figure in Botswana. There are a number of other historic sites associated with him in the surrounding area and we will visit one or two of these if time permits.
- Thamaga, home to another famous pottery, where the local ladies make handcrafted dinnerware and other items. Avid readers of the No. 1 Ladies Detective Series will recognise the name, as Thamaga pottery features in at least one of the books.
- Dimamwe. The battle of Dimamwe in 1853 saw the end of Boer raids into Bechuanaland. The Boers had underestimated both the strength of the Tswana indigenous political system and the sophistication of the arms possessed by the Tswana tribes. A young Paul Kruger had a large calibre bullet from an elephant gun pass through his jacket but escaped unhurt. Others were not so lucky. The Tswana retaliated by destroying Boer farmhouses and laying waste to crops all the way to the Marico River, and the Boers were forced to sue for peace. The agreement that ended the hostilities saw the border of the Tswana territory established along the Notwane River, where it has remained ever since. The Dimamwe battlefield is preserved as a national monument which we can visit if we wish.

- Manyana: site of a famous panel of rock paintings
- The hill country around Kanye and Ranaka offers superb views, and opportunities for gentle strolls.

We will end the day at Crocodile Pools. This is historic territory for New Zealanders. Several battles were fought here during the Boer War. This was a particularly vulnerable point on the railway line between Bulawayo and Mafeking, and the Boers were determined to keep the line closed. In 1900 the defenders of Crocodile Pools included men from the Auckland Mounted Rifles.

The original Crocodile Pools are now submerged beneath the waters of the Notwane Dam, built to provide a reliable source of water for the steam locomotives operating along the line.. But the crocodiles themselves are still here, and we will join Crocodile Pools River Safaris to go and see them (and the birdlife) along the tranquil stretches of the Notwane River, traveling in an electrically powered boat.



Day 4: Sunday May 4 Gaborone (BD)

This morning we visit a number of historical sites in and around Gaborone, the capital city. Prior to independence, the Bechuanaland Protectorate was administered from the Imperial Reserve in Mafeking. It would be difficult for the newly independent Botswana to have its capital city in an enclave inside another country, and so Gaborone was built on a greenfields site in just two years.

Lunch at the lovely Sanitas Garden Centre will be followed by an afternoon of wildlife watching. The lunch here is a la carte- it will probably cost you between NZ\$12 and NZ\$25 depending on what you order.

Mokolodi Nature Reserve is a sizable protected area just outside the southern boundary of Gaborone. It is operated by a Trust set up to provide environmental education opportunities for the local population, and much used for active recreation as well as wildlife viewing. The wildlife here includes zebra, giraffe, hippo, rhino, ostrich and many other species but nothing really dangerous (excepting in the waters of Lake Gwithian) making this a safe place for game viewing from a mountain bike or on foot. We will organise to explore the reserve in a game viewing truck, but those who would prefer to do their own thing by mountain bike will be able to hire one at the reserve gate.

Dinner will be a bush braai out amongst the animals.



Day 5: Monday May 5 Gaborone (BLD)

After breakfast we will head for Glen Valley, a rural area just to the N of Gaborone. This is a horticultural area dependent on municipal wastewater for irrigation. All of the wastewater from the city passes through the Glen Valley treatment plant. The treated water is discharged into large holding ponds. The Glen Valley farmers use the water for growing tomatoes, capsicum, cucumber and other fruits using either drip irrigation or hydroponic systems. The quality of the wastewater fluctuates and pH is seldom ideal, so we will look at an on-farm treatment system as well as the growing methods.

Glen Valley also hosts an important training site aimed at producing young horticultural entrepreneurs, and we hope to meet some of them at the Local Enterprise Authority Glen Valley Incubator.

Following the visit to Glen Valley we will visit the village of Oodi, home to the famous Oodi Weavers, a group of ladies who produce amazing tapestries using traditional methods. Their raw material is raw wool, which they spin, dye and weave by hand. They have invited us into their workshop, and would be especially interested to talk to any spinners and weavers amongst our group.

Day 6: Tuesday May 6 Gaborone (BLD)

Today we tour the research farms of the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and learn about some of the research being conducted. Our hosts are the Department of Veterinary Sciences. The Head of Department, Prof. Solomon Ramabu, is no stranger to New Zealand since he studied at Massey. He was deeply involved in eradicating an incursion of *Mycoplasma mycoides* into northern Botswana, and would like the opportunity for his students to quiz any livestock farmers amongst the group about the on-farm precautions taken in New Zealand to minimise spread of *Mycoplasma bovis*.



Day 7: Wednesday May 7 Gaborone -> Tuli Block (BLD)

Departing Gaborone we head north-east to Sherwood in the Tuli Block. Along the way we will visit the Ministry of Agriculture Ostrich Multiplication Unit. The Unit currently holds about 220 breeding birds, and supplies chicks to ostrich farmers throughout the country. We will also visit Dibete, a village where the principal industry is the harvest of thatching grass and the making of grass brooms.

Next stop along the way will be at Phala Road, an old cattle trading post and the scene of desperate deeds during the great rinderpest panzootic of the 1890's. A good place to learn about the history of the cattle industry in the days of the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

Day 8: Thursday May 8 Tuli Block (BLD)

Today we are guests of the Tuli Block Farmers Association. The large scale commercial farms of the Tuli Block grow vegetables, oranges and forage crops; and they raise cattle, sheep, goats and rabbits. Agrotourism is a popular sideline, and the main source of income for the many game farms in the area.

After an introduction to the area we will split into small groups for farm visits, reuniting in the evening to socialise with our hosts at a local lodge. Have some pictures of your farm handy !



Day 9: Friday May 9 Tuli Block -> Palapye (BLD)

The ladies of the Tuli Block have also requested a 'ladies only' discussion this morning over tea and scones. They would like to compare approaches to common problems like attracting girls into agriculture; distance education of children; and keeping the social fabric of a rural community together. The menfolk will be kept busy elsewhere: one suggestion is that they go off to a game farm for a demonstration of butchery and preparation of impala. But we will be in the hands of the local Farmers Association as to what they organise.

Then we are off to Palapye. It's only 90 minutes away, but we will be making a number of short stops at points of interest along the way, including a prehistoric iron smelting site under giant baobab trees. The first Bantu people arrived in this area around 500 AD, and immediately saw the potential in the iron rich rocks.

We will be stopping for the next three nights at the historic Palapye Hotel, dating from 1904. It is the oldest hotel still operating in Botswana. And tonight is the night for an outdoor movie.

Day 10: Saturday May 10 Palapye (BL)

Today is a day to get a close up view of traditional agriculture. The tour will be hosted by Segaiyai Farm and their neighbours, and we will split into smaller groups to experience ploughing with donkeys; learn to identify individual cattlebeasts using 'cattle praise' poetry; walk an 8 km self guiding nature trail; go foraging for wild foods in the hill forest; participate in the cooking of a very traditional Tswana meal; visit a cattlepost and a masimo, or traditional ploughing field; taste a selection of the local seasonal beverages; and after dark visit a colony of very tame porcupines.



Day 11: Sunday, May 11 Palapye (BLD)

It's a Sunday morning. Those who wish can attend Mass, or an English language protestant service. The churches are not far from the Palapye Hotel, but going to church requires an early start.

Later in the morning we take a short walking tour of the historic heart of Palapye. Palapye was originally a road junction named Palapye Road. The roads that met here were oxwagon trails. With the coming of the railway in 1896 a white trader, Robert Bailey, could see opportunity beckoning, He established a stock and station agency beside the railway line. He traded in animal skins, cattle, saddlery, firearms, boots and all the other goods a rural community would produce or value. Like Gilchrist's Store in Otuhua, R.A. Bailey's is still trading, and something of a time capsule. It has been owned by the same family since 1917, and we will get to tour the store with the current owner.

Others could see opportunity here also. But modern Palapye has moved steadily westward, leaving all the turn of the century buildings behind. Many have fascinating stories behind them.



Then it is off to CNS Farm, just outside Palapye for a late lunch . CNS farm is a working game farm with an attached restaurant, and serves a selection of game meats. It also includes a Kalahari Red goat stud, and a breeding flock of Buff Orpington poultry. Ever wondered what warthog would taste like ? Now is your chance to find out !

Day 12: Monday May 12 Palapye -> Orapa (BL)

Time to move on to Orapa, home to a huge diamond mine. Along the way to Orapa we will stop for a for a tour of the Khama Rhino Sanctuary, a community initiative originally intended to provide a safe haven for the few rhino remaining in Botswana. At one time there were fewer than 40 rhino remaining in the country, and they were all here, carefully guarded by soldiers. Descendants of these animals have been used to repopulate reserves around the rest of the country, but this is still one of the best places to come to see them, along with all the other wildlife of the Kalahari sandveld country.

Dinner tonight is a la carte: allow between NZ\$20 and NZ\$30.

Day 13: Tuesday May 13 Orapa -> Maun (BLD)

Orapa is home to the Orapa Diamond Museum, which tells the story of diamonds from their formation deep in the Earth's mantle all the way to their end users. The museum is owned by the giant Debswana mining company, a joint venture between DeBeers and the Botswana government.

Then it is on to Khumaga, on the edge of the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. There is an orchard here producing dragonfruit and prickly pears. It's a lovely spot on the banks of the Boteti River, and the owners have also branched out into agrotourism. We will join them for lunch; a tour of the orchard; and a look at the hippos in the river just outside their boundary fence.



We are stopping for the next 2 nights at Island Safari Lodge, a tourist lodge just outside Maun at the southern end of the Okavango Delta.

Day 14: Wednesday May 14 Maun (BLD)

The character of the Okavango Delta differs from autumn to autumn, depending on the strength of the summer rains, but the wildlife is always there and always spectacular.

The options for going to see the wildlife are:

- Game Drive vehicle
- Dugout canoe
- Motor boat

Which of these is possible will depend on the conditions, but one way or another Island Safari Lodge will get us out into the Delta.

Day 15: Thursday May 15 Maun -> Gweta (B,D)

This morning we will head back to Maun. Nhabe Museum is one of the regional museums of Botswana, and also one of the most interesting. The museum grounds are dotted with little workshops where artisans are at work on their traditional crafts. One of the most interesting is the manufacture of paper from elephant dung – a substance in abundant supply in and around Maun. If we break into small groups we can explore what they are all doing, as well as touring the museum itself with the curator.

Optional activity: For anyone interested, there will be time for a scenic flight over the Okavango Delta this morning.

A helicopter flight, with the doors removed, provides a wonderful opportunity for wildlife photography.

A fixed wing flight gives a better appreciation of the landscape since it will probably fly higher and travel further.

The flights are usually 45 minutes in duration. Many Kiwi pilots spend their winters here – don't be surprised if your pilot has a familiar accent !

A scenic flight is an optional extra not included in the standard tour price: if you want to include one the extra cost is shown on the booking form.

Maun is also home to the only craft brewery in Botswana, which makes beer from the millet grown in the Delta. We will tour the brewery, taste the beers, and also sample some of the local gin. The gin is flavoured with the resinous seeds of a local tree. A tour of the brewery and a tasting tray of their products is included.

The brewery has a lovely outdoor restaurant as part of the complex. Lunch today is a la carte: allow around NZ\$ 20 depending on what you order.



After lunch we will head for the village of Gweta, several hours to the East. It is the closest village to the giant Ntwetwe Pan, and to reach it we have to drive through the Nxai Pan National Park.

Accommodation for tonight is the very traditional Gweta Lodge, an older style traveller's lodge right in the heart of Gweta village. But there is a twist. If enough wish to do this, Gweta Lodge can organise a comfortable bedroll and a picnic dinner, and you can sleep out under the stars in the desolate waste of the Ntwetwe Pan. The cost is about the same whether you dine and sleep in the lodge or out in the wilds. Indicate on the booking form which option you prefer.

Day 16: Friday May 16 Gweta -> Pandamatenga (B)

Everybody loves meerkats, and the edges of the Ntwetwe Pan are meerkat country. Gweta Lodge will take us to see their band of habituated meerkats out at Ntwetwe Pan; and we will also have the opportunity to meet some of the local people who live in this least hospitable of environments. Those staying at the lodge will be setting out for the Ntwetwe Pan at dawn. Those sleeping out under the stars can have a more leisurely start as they will be at the Pan already !

After brunch back at Gweta Lodge we will head for Pandamatenga, in the middle of the area that supplies the bulk of the Botswana grain crop. We will be staying at Pandamatenga Rest Camp for the next two nights. Tonight's dinner is a la carte and you should allow between NZ\$20 and NZ\$30.

Day 17: Saturday May 17 Pandamatenga (BLD)

Today we are guests of the Pandamatenga Commercial Farmers Association. The farmers here are practicing broadacre cropping on fertile but very difficult black cotton soils. When wet the soils are much too sticky to work; when dry they set like concrete; and they are almost self ploughing. However, despite the difficult soil the farmers here grow some of the most productive crops in Botswana. Sorghum, winter wheat, potatoes, sunflower, black eyed peas, and soy beans are grown on a large scale. And of course the farmers have to deal with the problems of birds, wildlife, uncertain rainfall, and isolation. They are a long way from markets.

Once again we will split up into small groups for farm visits, and reunite in the evening. We will invite our hosts to join us for dinner, and screen some Country Calendar clips on a big screen.



Day 18: Sunday May 18 Pandamatenga -> Kasane (BD)

And now on to Kasane, arguably the wildlife capital of Botswana. It's a town where you can expect to see warthogs, baboons and elephants in the streets. The Wildlife Department round up the warthogs periodically and take them back to Chobe National Park, but it doesn't take long for them to return.

We'll reach Kasane in time for lunch at the lovely Coffee Buzz garden cafe. Lunch is a la carte: allow NZ\$ 12 to \$20. In the afternoon we head out on a sunset cruise along the Chobe River – a wonderful way to see the wildlife of the Chobe National Park. Expect to see buffalo, zebra, giraffe, waterbuck, red lechwe, hippo and elephants by the score. The sunset is usually spectacular too !



Day 19: Monday May 19 Kasane (BLD)

Today we will potter slowly out to the Chobe Enclave, an area where wildlife, people and livestock intermingle freely on the floodplain of the Chobe River. The Enclave is surrounded by the Chobe National Park and the Chobe Forest Reserve., but there are five small villages here.

The locals practice flood recession farming. Seeds are planted as the floodwaters recede, and the roots of the seedlings chase the water table downwards as the soil dries. Some of the floodwater is usually impounded behind little earthen dams, and can be used to irrigate the crops later in the season.

The village ladies are skilled basket makers and have set up several basketry cooperatives. We will visit one to see how they do it.

Optional Activity – Day trip to the Victoria Falls

Kasane is only an hour's drive from the Victoria Falls. We cannot take you there ourselves as we are not licensed to operate in Zambia.

However, if you would like to take a day trip to the Victoria Falls and explore the Mosi-a-Tunya National Park we can easily organise a trip to the Zambian Border and for a Zambian tour company to pick you up from the other side of the border post. Crossing the border is straightforward, as New Zealand citizens have visa free access to Zambia. You just have to present your passport for another stamp.

If you want to stroll across the bridge to the Zimbabwean side of the Falls this does require a visa. The river is the boundary between the two countries.

A visit to the Victoria Falls is not included in the price of the tour, but if you wish to do this the extra cost is shown on the booking form, and today would be the day to go.

Day 20: Tuesday May 20 Kasane (BD)

This morning we will pay a visit to the Caracal Wildlife Centre. An American University runs a wildlife hospital and research centre in Kasane. Animals which cannot be released back into the wild are kept on as ambassadors for their species and used for public education. There are many species here like African civets and bushbabies which are extremely difficult to see in the wild; and it might be the only place in Botswana where you can shake paws with a tame honey badger.

After morning tea we will tour the Chobe Bream Farm – a high-tech aquaculture farm which breeds and grows three-spot tilapia. The only farm in the world to domesticate this species. We will be guided through the entire process.

The plan is for a free afternoon. Kasane is a tourist town with a nice riverside walking track; interesting street markets; small cafes; and all manner of short tours on offer. Everything in town is within walking distance. Get out and explore; or just enjoy a lazy afternoon.

Optional Activity – Fishing in the Chobe/Zambezi

The Zambezi, and the section of the Chobe between Kasane and the Zambezi confluence are big, permanent rivers are popular for fishing year round. The most prized catch is the tigerfish. As you can see from the teeth it is a voracious predator.



In May the rainy season has just ended, and the Chobe begins to recede. Baitfish leave the drying floodplains for the deeper waters of the main channels, where the tigerfish are waiting. The result is a feeding frenzy. Both fly fishing and spinning are almost guaranteed to produce good sport at this time of year. Other fish likely to be caught here are catfish and Chobe bream.

We've not included a fishing excursion in the programme. However, if anyone would like an afternoon on the water we would be pleased to organise a guide, a boat, a licence and the requisite gear. (Shore fishing is discouraged because of crocodiles). The extra cost is shown on the booking form.

Day 21: Wednesday May 21 Kasane -> Nata (BLD)

An early morning game drive into Chobe National Park is usually the best chance to see lions, leopards and other predators, so it will be an early start. After the game drive we will be setting off to the south, and stopping overnight in the very ancient village of Nata. Signs of human habitation along the Nata River date back at least 80,000 years.

The Nata River discharges into the giant Sua Pan, the most important flamingo breeding ground in Southern Africa. Some years (like 2024) the pan is dry, and the birds fly elsewhere. But if there is water we will go looking for them at the Nata Bird Sanctuary.



Day 22: Thursday May 22 (BLD)

Between Nata and Francistown we visit the Douma Crocodile Farm. This farm produces first class crocodile skins for the Italian fashion trade, and crocodile meat for tourist hotels. The crocodiles feed on chicken carcasses from the many poultry houses in the area. Its a fascinating place to visit.

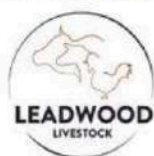
Francistown itself started life as a gold mining town. The miners came from other parts of the globe, including Australasia. The main street, Blue Jacket Street, is named after a Danish/Australian miner named Blue Jacket Andersen after the blue denim jacket he habitually wore. The town itself was named after Daniel Francis, a New Zealander. Nowadays it's a market town where traders from Zimbabwe and Zambia come to trade their wares and produce. Much of the trade is conducted in a bustling outdoor market. It's fascinating to wander around and see the huge range of vegetables, grains and other produce on offer, and to chat to the vendors.

Francistown is also home to an office of the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre, a government institution responsible for supporting and encouraging many of the large scale agricultural innovations in the country. One of the officers from BITC will tell us about their work, and some of the past success stories..

Day 23: Friday May 23 Francistown to Tuli Block (B)

The highlight of the yearly calendar on the Tuli Block is the annual sale. It's akin to an A&P show, with stalls selling all manner of farming related merchandise, machinery and produce; activities for children; and entertainment around a huge bonfire in the evening. But the main interest is in the auction ring.

We will rejoin our hosts from the Tuli Block Farmers Association to enjoy the day, renew friendships made earlier in the trip, and enjoy the evening. There will be plenty of food on sale from the stalls at the venue, so although lunch and dinner are not prepaid no-one need go hungry.



New Zealand White
7 x Females
6 months old

*Tuli-Block
Auction &
Expo 2024*

Day 24: Saturday May 24 Tuli Block -> Serowe (BLD)

The final day of farm visits. We will visit a commercial piggery; a mixed farm; a large agricultural store; and also learn about the 'Brigade' movement in Botswana. Pat van Rensburg was the Botswana equivalent of New Zealand's Rewi Alley, and a champion of self-help 'education through production'. The institutions he established in the early 1960's are still in operation today.

Day 25: Sunday May 25 Serowe -> Gaborone (BL)

Time to head back to Gaborone. We will make the most of the journey with multiple short stops at places of interest along the way, and end the afternoon at the Gaborone Yacht Club to watch the sun set over the waters of the giant Gaborone Dam.



This evening it is time to say farewell to our guide and our drivers over a farewell dinner. Always a sad part of any tour. The dinner is a la carte at a special restaurant near our accommodation. Allow NZ\$ 30 to NZ\$40 for a meal.

Day 26: Monday May 26 (B)

For others this morning will be the start of the long journey home to New Zealand. For those who have signed up for a post-tour package, it is on to the next adventure !