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# A Safari Honeymoon in Botswana

Words by Judy Koutsky

Photos courtesy of **Natural Selection Travel**

I honeymooned in Botswana ten years ago and the country remains one of my favorite destinations in the world. It's ideal for adventurous couples. What could be more romantic than sipping a gin and tonic while watching the giant sherbet-orange African sun slowly drop down over the bush and a herd of giraffe, zebra or elephant meander by? A honeymoon here is for those who are seeking up-close animal encounters, interaction with amazing locals and experiences like no other. I recommend a stay at the Natural Selection properties, which have locations throughout Botswana.



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Start your trip in the Makgadikgadi Pans, one of the world's largest salt pans formed on an ancient lake that has long since evaporated, leaving a beautiful desert scene in its wake.

Spend a night at **Jack's Camp**, one of the most well-known and highly-regarded safari camps in Botswana. Situated in the middle of the Kalahari Desert, the tented camp still maintains a 1940s style. The camp features seven twin and three double tents with en-suite bathrooms, as well as outdoor showers. The guides here are some of the best to be found, so don't be surprised if you get within feet of a variety of animals – including lion cubs. For a real treat, be sure to go for a meerkat bush walk. These inquisitive little creatures will walk right up to people (if you're sitting down, they may even climb over you). This destination is one of the best places to see meerkats in all of Africa.

Next, head to **Makgadikgadi Pans National Park**, which is located in north-eastern Botswana and is reportedly home to the largest tree in Africa, a world famous 5,300-year-old Baobab. Stay at **Meno a Kwena Tented Camp**, a luxury safari camp located in front of a river, where it's possible to see a great array of wildlife, including one of Southern Africa's largest zebra and wildebeest migrations in the dry season (May to November). Activities here include game drives, walking safaris, quad biking, tours to Gweta Village and

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bird watching. In the wet season, massive amounts of wildlife are drawn to the lake including cheetah, hyena and a large flock of pink flamingoes.

From there, head to Khwai Private Reserve: over 440,000 acres bordering both the Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park in northern Botswana, near the world famous Okavango Delta ecosystem. This region has some of the most diverse habitats in northern Botswana, including riverine woodlands, floodplains, open savannah, mopane forests, rivers and lagoons. You can spot tons of wildlife here including elephant, lion, leopard, wild dog, cheetah and the sable antelope.

Be sure to book a stay at **Sable Alley**, which has 12 luxury en-suite, solar powered tents raised on comfortable decks. Each tent has a private veranda overlooking the lagoon and floodplains, stretching towards the unfenced boundary of the Moremi Game Reserve. Many of the staff here are made up of members of the nearby Khwai Village. A favorite excursion is taking a mokoro water safari in private dugout canoes; game viewing from the waterways provides eye-level action of the animals.

For the finale of your safari, be sure to include a night at Sable Alley's sister property, **Skybeds**. It's one of the most romantic "glamping" places in the world. The Skybeds are three-story, raised platforms that resemble stand-alone tree houses and overlook the wild. The walls and ceilings are open, so honeymooners will be sleeping directly under thousands of African stars and surrounded by the sounds of nature. Your view will look like someone threw a bag of glitter in the sky. A stay at Skybeds is one of the most unique – and romantic – experiences that can be had while on safari in Africa.

*This article can be found on page 74 of the Fall/Winter 2018 issue of Destination I Do magazine.*

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