

LICEF AT SOUTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK - AUGUST 2017

OUR BEAUTIFUL AFRICAN SAFARI



It was 5:30am on a freezing August morning when we began our 11 hour journey from Lusaka to Mfuwe, South Luangwa National Park. The weather had chilled us to the bone but the excitement of the trip and 4 days with our friends had warmed our souls. In this lengthy journey we had the privilege of overlooking the beautiful landscape and scenery that Zambia's Eastern and Lusaka Provinces had to offer. Whilst passing through towns like Chongwe, Rufunsa, Luangwa, Nyimba, Petauke, Sinda, Katete and Chipata, we had the chance to experience various eye-catching sights such as the Muchinga Escarpment, parts of the mighty Luangwa River and the beautiful swamps which were along the Great East Road.

The South Luangwa National Park

Visiting the park was a first time for most of us and it certainly did not disappoint. The naughty monkeys, huge elephants, laughing hyenas, sneaky warthogs, massive hippos, stalking leopards, impalas, pukus, kudus, zebras, buffaloes, a variety of unique birds and the elegant prides of lions, all captivated our imagination.

Mopani Safari Lodge

This exquisite safari lodge was in a serene and unique location about 15km from the main gate of the park. It had chalets and small villas surrounding its main offices and kitchen area which provided a memorable living space for us as its guests. The main dining area was an open space off the shores of the Luangwa River which gave an absolutely magnificent view to both us and other visitors. Because of its distant location from the main town, we had the opportunity to get daily visits from the elephants, naughty baboons and even hippos whilst at the lodge.

Our day would begin with the Fajr prayers after which we would have a quick, light breakfast in readiness for the early morning drive at around 06:00hrs. We had 3 separate safari vans that the lodge allocated to us and these would be used for the park tours. The morning drives were specially meant for us to see the diurnal animals. These would include browsers and grazers such as the zebras, giraffes, kudus, water bucks, impala, pukus, monkeys and elephants. Other than the above mentioned, the main focus would also be on seeing hippos and possibly crocodiles.

After our morning drives, we would rest and thereafter take a dip in the pool. The gaming area especially kept us entertained as many of us took advantage of the availability of the mini soccer and pool tables. In the afternoon, we would walk to the beach and here we would have our daily runs and also explore the shallower parts of the river.

When we were not out on the safari drives, resting or playing, we were feasting on the delicious food that the lodge had to offer. With varied cuisines and tasty dishes, the chef and other members of staff always kept us happy. We were constantly pampered and given 5-star treatment throughout our stay.

The evening drive, which we would depart for at around 16:30hrs, was especially exciting because of the thrill that would come with seeing the nocturnal animals. These were mainly predators and carnivores such as the lions and leopards. The animals active during this time were also the porcupine, squirrels and other small creatures. This drive presented an opportunity for to see these predators live in action and on quite a number of occasions we did.



Aerial view of the swimming pool area

Other than the exciting wildlife, the park also provided an opportunity for us to appreciate the beautiful natural environment that was before us. The rare sight of the escarpments and beautiful plant life in the park gave a memorable experience for all onlookers.

Moral benefit of experience in Mfuwe

As important as the overall wildlife experience was, our group leaders felt a strong spiritual flavour was cardinal for a truly successful trip.

To this end, they ensured that all the salaahs (5 times daily prayers) were read with jamaat (congregation) during their respective times. We used the spacious lounge for the congregation. The constant presence of wild animals at the camp meant that the Fajr salaah would be rather challenging but with the aid of Almighty Allah and the handy work of the guards we were able to read it with jamaat. Whilst the Muslim students would be offering their prayers with congregation, the non-Muslims would be encouraged to have their own prayers too.

The group leaders also ensured that we read all our Du'aas (praising Allah and seeking help from Him) at the appropriate times and occasions.

Ta'leem was also made after salaah in which the virtues of the recitation of The Holy Quraan, Salaah and Zikr (remembrance of Allah) were taught. Apart from this, the group was also given important talks on life, e.g. importance of our parents, challenges faced by the youth, etc. at different times during the tour, including after meals, during the morning and evening game drives and most memorably seated around the camp fire at night.

We, as a group, also learnt to be fierce and brave because of the many encounters we had with the untamed wildlife. We learnt that out in the real world it truly is 'survival of the fittest' and that we had to take all opportunities given to us and make use of them.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important lessons we learnt was that we should be respectful and appreciative to our teachers who organized this trip and took care of all the logistics. We thank you all; Mr Peter Mwiya, Maulana Shoyeb Khanat, Shaikh Yusuf Witi and all others who helped in any other way.

Similarly, we thank our parents for the generosity they displayed by giving us this valuable opportunity. Every one of us is definitely taking back with us indelible memories which we will cherish for the rest of our lives. We thank you all! We would like to make special mention of Mr Abdullah Seedat, the father of one of the boys on the trip, who displayed astonishing generosity by availing his vehicle at the last minute when the transport providers organized by the school failed to deliver the trailer that was requested.

Finally, we would love to thank all the administration and staff of Mopani Safari Lodge for the exquisite hospitality offered to us before and during this trip. We wish to specially make mention of the following:

Mr Ahmed Musa, who accommodated us thoroughly,

Mr Mohammed Fayaaz Bobat, the manager, who left no stone unturned in making our trip most enjoyable and free from any worries. He also gave the group an inspirational talk on the challenges that life will throw towards us and how we should manage them,

Mr Japhet Mchape, the in-house chef, who teased our taste buds with the most scrumptious of meals,

Mr Robert, Mr Noah and Mr Godfrey who all made our game drives most exciting with their expert knowledge and interesting commentary.

MEMORIES FOREVER!

Mr Peter Mwiya, Sh Yusuf Joseph Witi, Mr Mohamed Shoyeb Yunus Khanat, Mohammed Rayyan Mohammed - 8B2, Adnaan A Seedat - 8B2, Samir Bashir Chipman - 9B1, Isam Eldeen Hussein - 9B1, Talha Jasat - 9B1, Ahmed Sirajuddin Patel - 9B1, Hamza Y. A. Patel - 9B1, Patel Muhammad Ammar - 9B1, Ahmed Ilyas Valli - 9B1, Ibrahim Y. V. Akubat - 9B2, Adnaan A. Sayed Bobat - 9B2, Azhar Iqbal H. Patel - 9B2, Mohammed Rayyan Patel - 9B2, Mohammed Issa - 10B1, Darsh Manoj Patel - 10B1, Mohamed Faizel Patel - 10B1, Mohammed Aamir Y. A. Patel - 10B1, Mohammed Imran V. Patel - 10B1, Saad Hassam Ghumra - 10B2, Mohammed Kara - 10B2, Aadil Ahmed - 11B2, Mpundu Nsama - 11B2

Report compiled by:

Aadil Ahmed and Nsama Mpundu, Grade 11b



Crossing the Luangwa on a pon-



Sunset over the Luangwa River