

African Safari Aboard a Cruise Ship

There is one word that comes to mind when planning a trip to Africa – safari. This continent is home to incredible species and vast national reserves and is the ideal destination for many animal lovers. There are many lodges providing daily trips in jeeps, but a river safari offers a whole new perspective.



The Zambezi Queen has been taking passengers on a water safari in the heart of Africa since 2011 and she is still seen as one of the top vessels.

This AmaWaterways cruise offers a blend of a professional tour, with experienced guides and staff on board and top facilities, and a friendly, laid-back approach. This is due to the fact that the tour is operated by young locals, who are welcoming and knowledgeable, and that there are so few passengers on each trip. The crew are out to provide the full experience and in addition to providing meals with a local flare, there are lectures on the wildlife seen as well as poetry readings.

Spaces on this vessel are in short supply, as it can only take 28 passengers at a time, but this provides a laid back approach and more intimate affair. There are three decks to this boat taking passengers for African safari: the first is the boarding area and a gift shop, the second houses the majority of the rooms and the upper deck contains the leisure facilities, such as the pool, bar, dining room and library.

The rooms vary in size. The smallest measure 215 square feet and the largest 300 square feet. All rooms share many of the same facilities and are set out like most hotel rooms. There is a king-size bed, a bathroom, closet, bedside tables and stylish décor inspired by the local wildlife. Each room is also air conditioned with pretty reliable internet connections and a safe. The larger rooms at the back of the boat have their own private balcony/seating area.

The Zambezi Queen gently travels its 25 kilometer route with regular excursions via high-speed tenders. It has been noted that the name of this ship is a little ill-fitting considering the route that it takes. This African safari cruise doesn't take passengers down the waterways of the Zambezi, but rather the Chobe. This provides a great tour of the water between Namibia and Botswana.



The main Zambezi Queen Tour provides nights on the river and a day's excursion in Chobe National Park, but there is a chance to stray from the itinerary on occasion and other trips are available.

The tour operators ensure that guests can make the most of their time and it is not uncommon for the guests to be able to head out on cruises twice in the day. There is the standard daily wildlife cruise and the early morning bird watching tours.

It is not just about the wildlife on these tours however. This cruise also provides the chance of an excursion to Victoria Falls, South Africa or Tanzania.

Naturally, the main aim here is of course to see as much of the diverse wildlife of African safari as possible. The national parks are celebrated for their biodiversity, their efforts to protect the local animals from poachers and the commitment of the locals. The river is the ideal place to see hippopotamus, crocodiles and warthogs, but there are numerous species that could come to the shores for a drink.

The Botswana side is home to a large population of elephants and there is also the chance of buffalo, antelope and maybe even a lion. Daily tenders mean that it is possible to get close to the riverbank for some great views and photos and if guests don't see a big cat on day 1, there are plenty of chances across the week. There are also around 450 species of bird that are known to visit the river and the on-board guide claims to be able to identify them all.



The Zambezi Queen is an interesting alternative for a new view of African safari.

The Chobe River is a hive of activity and there are few places that are better suited to a gentle river safari cruise. The grand rooms and glass-fronted dining areas provide the ideal viewing point to this wild riverbank, the daily tender tours are educational and action packed and guests get to experience this part of the continent in a whole new way.

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