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JUNE 2025

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ON THE COVER:

Bwabwata National Park: Namibia's best kept safari secret

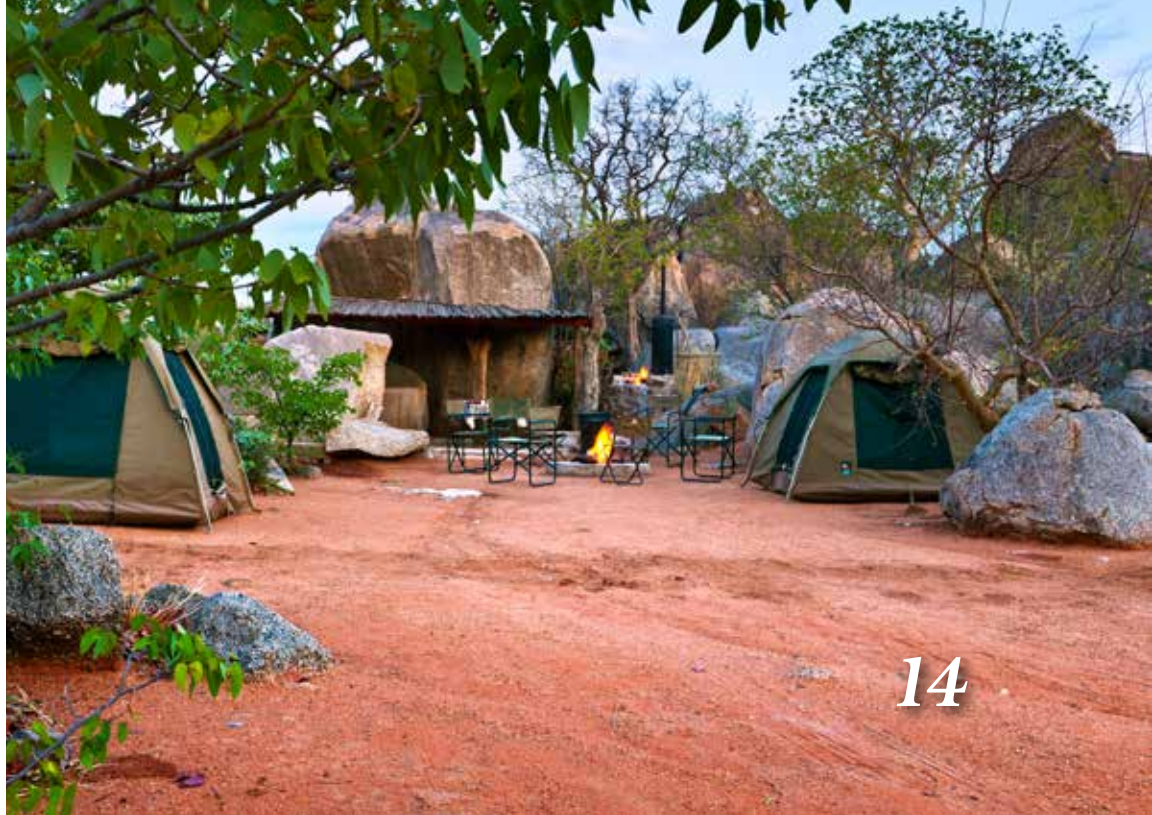
Bwabwata isn't your typical park—it's a living landscape where people and wildlife coexist in a one-of-a-kind conservation area.

(See pages 36-37 for the full story)

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Unique Safari for the Visually Impaired

Mind's Eye Travel specialises in travel experiences for the visually impaired. In collaboration with Bushtrails Africa Tours and Safaris, they created a one-of-a-kind, multi-country sensory safari tailored for visually impaired travellers.

words by Anne Schaffer | photographs by Jaco van der Westhuizen

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—TRAVEL & LEISURE—



Travel specialists Jaco van der Westhuizen and Sue Bramhall met with one thing in common - a passion for meaningful, accessible travel. Jaco's company, Bushtrails Africa Tours and Safaris, specialises in bespoke safari experiences across Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Sue's Mind's Eye Travel designs adventures specifically for the visually impaired.

"I was intrigued by Sue's company and felt we could work together to create something truly unique," says Jaco. And they did. In May 2023, a group of visually impaired travellers embarked on an unforgettable two-week safari through Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

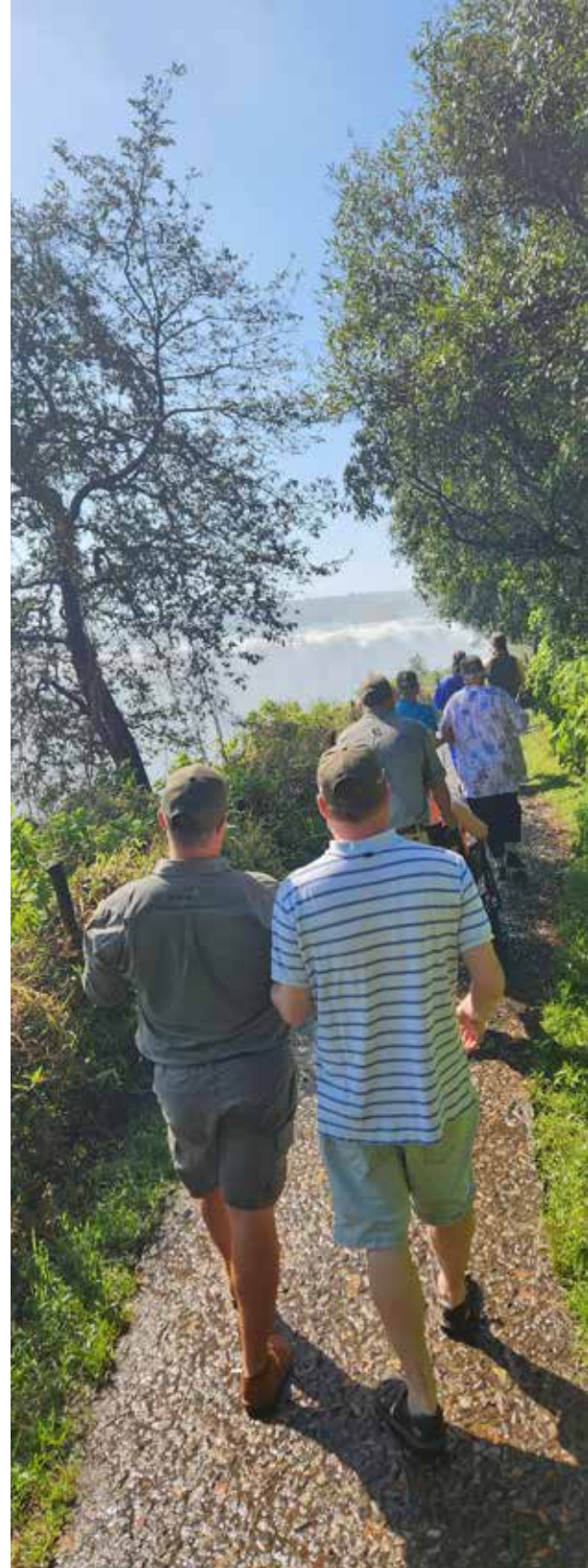
Sue's safaris are designed to enhance the senses beyond sight. Each visually impaired guest is paired with a sighted

guide - a volunteer who joins the journey to serve as their eyes. "We incorporate as much touch, smell, sound, and taste into the experience as possible," explains Sue. "Our guides use intercom systems in the vehicles, and we bring along audio guidebooks with recordings of bird and animal calls. Guides describe each species and then play its sound. We also visit a taxidermist, where guests can feel the horns, fur, and body shapes of different species - a tactile way to 'see' Africa's wildlife."

The safari is packed with thoughtful, sensory-rich experiences to make the journey as immersive as possible. "We try to stay inside national parks and private game reserves," says Jaco, "so clients can experience night sounds and the unique atmosphere around waterholes." In Victoria

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Falls, guests feel the spray and hear the roar of the mighty waterfall. They also participate in an elephant encounter, where they touch and feed the animals.

Another standout experience is a visit to a Windhoek spa that trains visually impaired individuals to become masseuses - a meaningful stop that connects guests with local empowerment initiatives. The itinerary also includes visits to a traditional Bushman village and a Kavango village for cultural immersion, as well as craft markets and woodcarvers' stalls where browsing is done by touch.

The group travels in two purpose-built, air-conditioned, nine-seater safari Land Cruisers for the 13-day/12-night trip. Guests fly into Namibia and are welcomed at the airport by their Bushtrails tour guide. The safari focuses on Namibia's central and northeastern regions - including Windhoek, Etosha National Park, Bushmanland (the traditional San areas), and the Caprivi Strip - before continuing into Chobe National Park in Botswana and ending at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Highlights of the journey include:

- Windhoek Craft Centre and City Tour
- Joe's Beerhouse
- Taxidermy Visit
- Nomad Spa
- Woodcarvers' Market
- Okonjima & AfriCat Foundation
- Leopard Tracking
- Etosha National Park Game Drives
- Bushman Culture Experience
- Okavango River and Kavango Culture
- Mahango Game Reserve
- Tiger Fishing
- Bwabwata and Chobe Game Reserves
- Chobe River Wildlife Cruise
- Sundowner Cruise on the Zambezi
- Victoria Falls and local activities
- The Boma Restaurant and Jungle Junction

This is truly the safari of a lifetime, immersive, thoughtful, and brilliantly designed for those who experience the world beyond sight. 🌿

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