

Botswana's Land of the Giants

Get up close and personal with elephants on a safari
in Chobe National Park.

生生不息

——博茨瓦納Chobe國家公園之旅

當清晨的朝陽升起，一群群河岸邊驚起的飛鳥，奔跑在灌木叢中的羚羊和斑馬，以及那悠悠於眼前經過的象群，會讓經典影片《獅子王》中的場景如此真實地展現在你面前。

English Text by Janice & George Mucalov Translated by Rui Chen

座落在Chobe國家公園西側，Ngoma Safari度假村可以俯瞰壯麗的Chobe河和非洲原野的壯麗景色。還有現代化的設施和近在咫尺的野生動物棲息地。

Bordering Chobe National Park, Ngoma Safari Lodge offers staggering views of the Chobe River floodplain, where huge herds of elephants and other wildlife roam.



在乾燥的非洲大草原上，河流無疑是這裏的生命線，孕育著種類繁多的野生動植物，構建出一片原始又飽含無盡生命力的世界。在博茨瓦納Chobe河的兩岸，面積達11,600平方公里的國家公園為棲息在這裏的動物們提供了一個安全的家園。豐茂的水和草更讓這裏成為體型巨大的大象們的樂園，整日漫步在園區裏超過12萬頭的龐然大物，讓Chobe國家公園有了「巨獸國度」的別稱。當我們乘坐遊船沿著河岸航行，看到岸邊淺水處的大象們正自在地甩動長長的鼻子，將水噴灑在身上，巨大的象牙則撥動著如蘆葦樣的野草。牠們離我們如此之近，甚至讓人產生一種彷彿伸出手，就可以觸摸到牠們粗糙皮膚的錯覺。

河中的航行結束之後，我們又乘上了路虎越野車，為了盡可能保持園區的原始氛圍，這裏的道路基本全是砂石路，儘管有些顛簸，卻別有一番意味。這座完全沒有圍欄，在園區內擁有森林、灌木叢、淺灘沼澤等多種地貌的巨大動物園有數百種動物。水牛在泥地裏打

著滾，淤泥可以防止蚊蟲的叮咬；成群的羚羊和斑馬一邊低頭喝水，一邊警惕地環顧著四周；遠遠便可以望見長頸鹿優雅的身影，牠們長長的脖頸交叉搖擺著，像是在跳舞，又像是在親暱地交談。還有一隻隻蹲在路邊的狒狒好像早已經對我們這些外來的遊客見怪不怪，偶爾有一隻飛快地竄起來，攀上了樹枝。

據導遊介紹，在非洲其它國家公園中難得一見的獅子、獵豹、大象、犀牛等，在這裏除了因犀牛的數量太過稀少不易遇見之外，其它的非常容易看到，這讓Chobe國家公園每年吸引了大量來自全世界的野生動物愛好者和攝影家。正在這時，經驗豐富的導遊告訴我們，前方出現獅子的踪跡了。車輛小心翼翼地靠近了獅群，生怕驚動了這些非洲草原上的王者。距離越來越近了，我們驚奇地發現居然足足有四頭獅子正在樹下乘涼休息。這些線條優美的野生大貓此時就像躺在家中客廳地毯上的貓咪一樣，慵懶地伸展著四肢，眯著眼睛，好像正在等你去為牠們撓肚皮一樣。



In the parched African bush, water is life, and the banks of the Chobe River teem with an awe-inspiring abundance of wildlife. This is the “Land of the Giants” — so-named because it’s home to Africa’s largest number of elephants (more than 120,000). On a boat ride, we see them in the shallow water, yanking out reeds and grass with their trunks, waving their magnificent tusks as they shake the clumps clean to pop into their mouths. Sometimes the elephants are so close we can imagine reaching out and touching their wrinkly skin.

The wonder of the place — better known as Chobe National Park — is that animals besides elephants are also found here in prolific numbers. The unfenced 11,600-square-kilometer park in Northern Botswana is also famous for its huge herds of Cape buffalo, large prides of lions, countless antelope, giraffes and pretty well every

對頁：Chobe國家公園以數量眾多的大象聞名。上圖：在旱季裏，Chobe河岸邊會出現許多前來飲水的斑馬群。下圖：如果你夠幸運，乘坐越野車在園區中遊覽時會遇到獵豹，一種比獅子體型更小，更機敏的貓科動物。

Opposite: Chobe National Park (known as the “Land of the Giants”) is most famous for its large herds of magnificent elephants. Above: During the dry winter months, you see many zebras congregating by the Chobe River to quench their thirst. Below: If you’re lucky, you may spot a cheetah on a game drive through Chobe National Park.





Photo by Janice Mucalov



Birds from left to right: Roger McDonald, Karei Gallias / Shutterstock.com; Ondrej Prosimky / Shutterstock.com; jacotakepics / Shutterstock.com; Roger McDonald

頂圖：作為陸地上最高的動物，長頸鹿喜歡用牠們標誌性的長脖子彼此嬉戲打鬧。上圖：Chobe國家公園是數百種鳥類的家園，是非洲大陸最佳的鳥類觀賞地之一。對頁：作為夜行動物，獅子在白天多是睡覺休息，幸運的遊客會有近距離觀賞到牠們的機會。

靜靜地和獅群一起休息了片刻，我們有些依依不捨地離開了那裏，看來這些猛獸們也早已習慣了被欣賞的目光，直到我們離開也沒有任何挪動的意思。除了陸地上的動物，我們一路見過的鳥的種類恐怕也比過往所有時間加起來的都多。鸞鵒、鵝鶉、鸚鵡、翠鳥、犀鳥……不過，讓我印象最深刻的，還是一種紫胸長尾雀。紫色、湖藍、翠綠色、亮橙色的羽毛在灰褐色為主色調的非洲格外惹眼，讓人覺得有些美麗的不真實。

一路走來，我的腦海裏不禁浮現出迪士尼經

典動畫《獅子王》中那經典的一幕，小辛巴的洗禮慶典上，那各種各樣的動物們如萬花筒般旋轉、變幻著演繹出一幅幅奇幻瑰麗的畫面。當時看到那一場景時，我們可能更多是在感歎藝術家們豐富的想像力和傑出的塑造表現手法。而如今，當我們親身來到這裏，才發現原來電影竟是真實的寫照，是對大自然生生不息、蓬勃朝氣的由衷讚頌。

Ngoma Safari 度假村

我們選擇居住在Chobe國家公園西門附近，相

Opposite, top: The tallest animals on earth, giraffes are especially interesting to watch as they spread their long legs to drink or playfight with each other. **Opposite, below:** Home to more than 450 species of birds, Chobe is one of the top birding spots in the southern African continent. **Right:** Hunters at night, lions rest during the day; chances are excellent you'll see a pride in Chobe.

2630ben / Shutterstock.com



other African animal imaginable. Indeed, Chobe has one of the greatest year-round concentrations of wildlife in all of Africa. The only one of the “Big Five” (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino) hard to spot is the rare rhinoceros.

Setting off on a full-day’s game drive in an open Land Rover, we bounce along red-sand tracks criss-crossing the scrubby bush by the river. Large Chacma baboons swinging through the trees catch our attention. Then a dazzle of zebras. (Don’t you love the name for a group of zebras? Their black and white stripes are certainly dazzling!) We pass a bull elephant giving himself a dust bath with his trunk, his ears flapping. When two male giraffes circle each other in what looks like a curious dance, we stop to watch; after each circle, they curl their sinewy necks down and bump the other’s body with their heads — playfighting, we’re told.

We can’t wait to see lions. And we do! We drive up close, observing four lions resting in the shade, and we’re amazed yet again at how close the animals allow us to get. (Most safari viewing in Africa occurs on game drives, and the animals are habituated to the sight and sound of people sitting in open vehicles.)

And, oh, the birds! African fish eagle, ground hornbills, sacred ibis? Check. The most beautiful is the lilac-breasted roller — in flight, the tips of its turquoise wing feathers look like they’ve been dipped in royal blue ink.

So many animals and birds rotate through this kaleidoscope of nature that our necks get sore swivelling from right to left. It’s a marvel they can live together in harmony.

With their tusked snouts, comical warthogs dig up mud that baboons then pick through with their nimble fingers, plucking out juicy bulbs to eat. Antelope even prance around near the lions! At night, yes, the cats hunt. But in the light of day, it’s all one peaceful scene.

Still, it’s the elephants we gaze at later in the day in the river that give us the most joy. Globally, their numbers are declining. But here in “The Land of the Giants,” they are safe for future generations to witness. And that is a blessing.

Ngoma Safari Lodge

We stayed at the intimate Ngoma Safari Lodge near Chobe National Park’s less-visited west gate. It was built in association with a trust that



上圖：體型龐大的非洲水牛成群結隊地生活在Chobe國家公園裏。右圖：黑斑羚是非洲最常見的羚羊之一，體態優雅，有兩隻彎曲的長角。對頁：Ngoma Safari度假村的套房可俯瞰Chobe河的美麗景色，屋頂為質樸的茅草搭建而成，每座小屋還有自己專屬的游泳池。

Above: The Cape or African buffalo is one of the “Big Five” found in Chobe National Park, often living in herds of a few hundred. **Right:** The graceful impala is one of the most common of all African antelopes; they’re beautiful to watch leaping over bushes like ballet dancers. **Opposite:** Overlooking the Chobe River floodplain, Ngoma Safari Lodge spoils you with just eight deluxe, thatched-roof chalets, each with its own private plunge pool.



對遊客較稀少、較私密的Ngoma度假村。當地的社會治安良好，居民淳樸熱情。

站在度假村的露臺上便可以欣賞到Chobe河奔流不息，以及遠處一望無際原野的壯麗景色。八座別緻的小屋都設有單獨的游泳池，茅草屋頂的餐廳座落在樹齡有幾百年的粗壯的猴麵包樹之間，菜餚由當地村民採用本地綠色食材烹製，新鮮又很有風味。從度假村還可以俯瞰到一個水窪處的野生動物，經常會有大象、長頸鹿和斑馬在那裏出沒。甚至發生過旱季時，口渴的大象來到度假村游泳池飲水的事情。日落之後，可以在餐廳裏享用手工釀製的飲品和燭光晚宴，能品嚐到博茨瓦納的優質牛肉、南非鱈魚和紅葡萄酒等精緻的菜餚。

乘車巡遊，每輛越野車上會乘坐四位遊客，每次車輛都會分開探索公園內的不同區域，以避免破壞公園裏的原始氛圍。出遊時還可享受非洲原野上真正的野餐，絕對令人難忘。詳情可登錄網站查詢。

最佳遊玩時間

每年五月至十一月的旱季是遊覽Chobe國家公園的最佳時機，其中九月份天氣最熱。許多內地的水窪在此時會乾涸，大量動物都聚集在Chobe河沿岸，更便於發現和觀賞。

Ngoma Safari度假村距博茨瓦納的Kasane約一個小時車程。距離維多利亞瀑布不遠，那裏是非洲南部另一處觀賞野生動物的絕佳地點。📍



Photo courtesy of Ngoma Safari Lodge

Top left: Bildagenur Zoomar GmbH / Shutterstock.com; Lower left: Simon Eelman / Shutterstock.com

helps support the local community. Strung along an escarpment with staggering views of the Chobe River floodplain, its eight bush-chic chalets each have a private plunge pool. The thatched-roof restaurant, placed amongst centuries-old baobab trees, overlooks a waterhole where elephants, giraffes and zebras drink. Sometimes, thirsty elephants even drain the pool on your chalet deck. Meals are delicious; herbs are supplied by the local village, and breads and pastries are baked fresh each meal in Ngoma’s kitchen. Following artisanal gin-and-tonics at sunset, candlelight dinners are three-course affairs and might include Botswana prime beef with red wine jus or South African kingklip fish in a coconut sauce.

Game drives occur in small groups (perhaps only two couples per vehicle), and vehicles explore different areas of the park, so you may not see other people for long

stretches of time. The full-day game drive and river boat excursion — with an elegant picnic lunch in the wild — is a highlight.

If you visit

The dry season, from May to early November, is the best time to visit Chobe National Park (September is the hottest month). Many waterholes dry up in the bush then, so the animals congregate around the Chobe River floodplain and are thus easier to spot. Ngoma Safari Lodge is about an hour’s drive from Kasane, Botswana. It’s easy to get to from Victoria Falls, another popular stop on Africa’s southern safari circuit.

Ngoma Safari Lodge: Rates include all meals, drinks and game drives. www.africaalbidatourism.com

