



Botswana – Basic Information

Official Name	The Republic of Botswana
Total Area	600,370 sq km
Total Population	1,8 million
Places of Interest	<u>Capital:</u> Gaborone <u>Tourist Gateway Towns:</u> Maun & Kasane <u>Tourist Attractions:</u> Okavango Delta, Moremi Game Reserve, Chobe National Park, Tsodilo Hills
National Symbols	<u>National Song:</u> Fatshe leno la rona (Blessed Be This Noble Land) <u>National Dish:</u> Seswaa <u>National Motto:</u> Pula <u>National Bird:</u> Lilac-breasted Roller The motto on the national coat of arms is also <i>Pula</i> , which means 'rain' or 'let there be rain', indicating the importance of rain for the country.
Official Languages	English is the official language but Setswana is widely spoken
Religion	Predominantly Christian
Public Holidays	1 January - New Year's Day 2 January - Public Holiday 13 April - Good Friday 14 April - Public Holiday 16 April - Easter Monday 1 May - Labour Day 24 May - Ascension Day 1 July - Sir Seretse Khama Day 16 July - President Day 17 July - Public Holiday 30 September - Botswana Day (Day of Independence) 1 October - Public Holiday 25 December - Christmas Day
Provinces	<u>9 Districts:</u> Central, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Kgatleng, Kweneng, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southern <u>5 Town Councils:</u> Francistown, Gaborone, Jwaneng, Lobatse, Selebi-Pikwe
Time	GMT +2

Electricity	230 volts, 50Hz. Round three-pin plugs are used. Lodges in the more remote areas of Botswana do not have electricity. They generally rely on generators for lighting and refrigeration but this power only runs at critical times of the day.
Money	The unit of currency is the Botswana Pula (BWP), which is divided into 100 Thebe. The word 'Pula' means rain and 'Thebe' means shield. Bank notes come in denominations of P10, 20, 50 and 100, and coins in denominations of 5t, 10t, 25t, 50t, P1, P2 and P5. The shield appears on the national coat of arms. Major credit cards are widely accepted, and traveller's cheques and foreign currency are accepted at most large hotels and lodges. There are banks and exchange bureaux in all the main towns, as well as ATM machines. Surcharges are often high on traveller's cheques.
Entry Requirements	Americans, UK Nationals, Canadians & Australians <u>do not</u> require a visa for stays of up to 90 days. For more information about countries subject to/exempt from Botswanian visa requirements, please visit: http://www.botswanaturism.co.bw/getting_in/visas.html
Passport / Visa Notes:	All visitors entering Botswana must hold a passport that is valid for at least six months, except those with United Nations Convention travel documents. Visitors must also have outgoing travel documents and sufficient funds to finance their stay. Valid entry visas for the countries which do require them may be obtained from Botswana's various embassies and high commissions abroad. In countries where Botswana is not represented, visas may be obtained from the British High Commission. Entry visas obtained at border posts are valid for a maximum of 30-90 days. Extensions may be obtained from any immigration office in Botswana. No visitor is allowed more than a 90-day stay in every calendar year, unless permission has been granted in the form of a waiver pending the outcome of a residence permit application.
Health	Malaria is of particular risk in the northern parts of Botswana between November and June and prophylactics are recommended. Visitors who are camping or walking in the bush should be cautious of tick bites. There are no compulsory vaccinations, but a yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers over one year of age passing through yellow fever zones. Botswana has a good public health system, but facilities are limited outside urban areas. HIV/Aids infections are at a high level. Common sense should prevail in all liaisons with local people. Travel Insurance is recommended and should include medical evacuation by air if this is not specifically catered for by your ground agent. Travelers should carry an adequate supply of their prescribed medicines with them. Tap water in urban areas is safe to drink and all foodstuffs are safe to consume.
Safety	The majority of visits to Botswana are trouble-free, although visitors should still exercise reasonable caution and common sense. Wildlife and livestock can make driving hazardous, so caution is recommended.
Business & General	Business is fairly relaxed in Botswana and dress is generally smart casual. Handshakes begin and end meetings, which are usually held in private. Office hours are usually 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday, or 7.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday between October and April. Tipping is expected in tourist hotels and restaurants. Many automatically add a service charge, but where not, a 10-15% tip is appreciated. Taxi drivers, porters and golf caddies should also be tipped a

	<p>relative amount. Tour guides, trackers and game rangers rely largely on tips for their income and should be rewarded accordingly.</p> <p>Taking photos or videos near government or military buildings is prohibited, and permission should always be sought before taking photos of local people.</p>
Communications	<p>The international access code for Botswana is +267. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0027 for South Africa). Gaborone's area code is 31, 35, 36 or 39; there is no NDD prefix for calling within Botswana. Mobile phones operate on a GSM 900 network and are limited to urban areas; most North American cell phones will not work. Internet cafes are available in Gaborone and Maun.</p>
Duty Free	<p>Travellers to Botswana over the age of 18 can enter the country with 400 cigarettes; 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 2 litres of wine and 1 litre of alcoholic beverages; 50ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette without incurring customs duty. Gifts and personal goods to the value of P500 can also be imported without incurring customs duty.</p>
Useful Contacts	<p><u>Tourism</u> Department of Tourism, Gaborone: +267 395 3024 or www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw</p> <p><u>Botswana Embassies</u> Botswana Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 244 4990 Botswana High Commission, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7499 0031 Botswana High Commission, Canberra, Australia (also responsible for New Zealand): +61 (0)2 6290 7500 Botswana High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 430 9640</p> <p><u>Foreign Embassies in Botswana</u> United States Embassy, Gaborone: +267 395 3982 British High Commission, Gaborone: +267 395 2841 Consulate of Canada, Gaborone: +267 390 4411 Australian High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa (also responsible for Botswana): +27 (0)12 423 6000 South African High Commission, Gaborone: +267 390 4800/1/2. Irish Honorary Consul, Gaborone: +267 390 5807 New Zealand High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa (also responsible for Botswana): +27 (0)12 342 8656/7/8/9.</p> <p><u>Botswana Emergency Numbers</u> Emergencies: 999 (Police), 911 (Medical Rescue).</p>
Botswana Airports	<p><u>Sir Seretse Khama International Airport (GBE)</u> Location: The airport is located 9 miles (15km) north of Gaborone Time: GMT +2 Contacts: Tel: +267 390 4401 Transfer to the city: Hotel minibuses and taxis provide transport to the city centre Car Rental: Avis and Imperial are represented at the airport Facilities: There is one terminal building which offers a Barclays Bank bureaux de change, bar and restaurant, and duty-free shop for flights outside of the Common Customs Union (South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland) Departure Tax: None</p> <p><u>Smaller airports/airstrips are also located at Francistown, Jwaneng, Kasane, Maun, Selebi Phikwe and Sua Pan</u></p>

<p>Climate</p>	<p>Botswana’s climate is semi-arid and therefore hot and dry for much of the year. The official ‘rainy season’ occurs during the summer months, between December and March, but rainfall can be highly erratic and regional. Heavy localised downpours are usually immediately followed by sunshine. Summers can be exceptionally hot and humid with the rain affecting roadway access in certain areas.</p> <p>The best time to visit Botswana is during the dry season, between April and November. During this time, large numbers of animals migrate towards water sources in the Chobe and Delta regions.</p> <p>There is little distinction between average summer and winter temperatures although it can be chilly at night during the winter months.</p>
<p>Botswanian “Lingo”</p>	<p><u>Common Words & Phrases</u></p> <p>When greeting a man/woman – Dumêla rra/mma When greeting a group of people – Dumêlang How are you? – O tsogile jang, Le kae or Wareng? (informal) I am fine – Ke tsogile sentle or Ke teng (informal) Yes – Ee No – Nnyaa Help! – Nthusa! I am lost – Ke la tlhegile Today – Gompieno Tomorrow – Kamoso Yesterday – Maabane Everything is fine / no problems – Go siame Please – Tsweetswee What is the price? – K bokae? What is your name? – Leina la gago ke mang? Where do you come from? – O tswa kae? Cheers – Pula or Sharpu (slang) Thank you – Ke itumetse or Kea leboga Goodbye/stay well (if you are leaving) – Sala sentle Goodbye/go well (to person leaving) – Tsamaya sentle</p>

Information adapted from the following sources:

The World Fact Book, www.botswanaturism.co.bw, www.flysa.com, www.infoplease.com and www.siyabona.com