

Why Zambia should be on your bucket list for 2023

By [Kerry Hayes](#)

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Zambia is one of Africa's most beautiful countries. The unspoilt landscapes, the abundance of wildlife, culture, food and myriad intriguing attractions all make it an incredibly attractive destination for travellers.



Image supplied: Victoria Falls

Here are six reasons why Zambia should be on your bucket list this year:

Insta-worthy landscapes and views

It has been said that Zambia is the best-kept secret in Africa. Because it isn't overcrowded or overpopulated, the landscapes are unspoilt, with beautiful mountains and sweeping valleys providing breathtaking backdrops for "wish you were here" photos.

Zambia has three natural lakes, Bangweulu, Mweru, and Lake Tanganyika - the latter being known as one of the deepest natural lakes in the world. This lake is home to Zambia's secret "beaches", so if you think it only offers safaris and game viewing, think again! You can enjoy sunbathing, swimming, or relaxing on the river's shores - or if you're more active, try some scuba diving, fishing, cruising on the rivers, or visiting the hot springs and rainforest.

Take an adventure

For the adventurous at heart, Zambia offers numerous adventure sports. You can white water raft over 1,323 raging rapids, abseil and gorge swing at Victoria Falls, hike through ancient forests, or try some river boarding.

You can also set out for a day of kayaking or canoeing, or connect more directly with nature and experience one of the breathtaking horseback riding trails. For those who lean more towards the air than the water, there is microlighting, helicopter and fixed-wing flights, and quad biking.

And with the abundance of wildlife, you should include a walking safari or open-vehicle game drive, and some camping under the stars.



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Victoria Falls

One of the highlights for which Zambia is known is Victoria Falls. Known by the locals as Mosi-oa-Tunya (the smoke that thunders), Vic Falls is one of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) Seven Wonders Of The World with a rich archaeological history dating back over three million years.

“The recently-launched Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya, Livingstone Resort, takes its name from the respectful name given to the Falls by the locals,” says Shaun Wheeler, general manager of Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya, “And rests on the banks of the Zambezi River. Sitting at one of the restaurants or de-stressing at the spa, you can look out over the water to enjoy some of Africa’s most glorious sunsets.”

Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya is ideally located close to the Falls, as well as to the town of Livingstone. “Livingstone is known as the ‘tourist capital’ of Zambia,” says Wheeler, “and offers incredible experiences for adrenaline junkies, romantics, and explorers. There is even a steam train ride over Victoria Falls bridge that you can experience”.

Immerse yourself in local culture

Zambia has some of the friendliest locals in Africa, and in fact, has been voted the safest country on the continent. The infusion of 72 different cultures into the vibrant country has created a fascinating mix of attractions and experiences for visitors, such as Livingstone Museum - the oldest museum in the town, sharing the pre-history and cultural development of Zambia.

You can also visit the Craft Museum, one of the largest craft markets in Livingstone, and situated near the entrance of the Mosa oa Tunya National Park.

To widen your experience of Zambia’s culture, you can also visit Kawaza Village, situated near South Luangwa National Park. A working village is a great way to experience how the locals live, eat and work on a daily basis. Spend the night in traditional accommodation, and enjoy some local cuisine before enjoying some entertainment around the campfire.

Some of the traditional foods that you can experience include Nshima – a porridge made of cornmeal and served with meat, fish, veggies; Chikanda – vegetarian meatloaf; Vitumbua – sweet fried dough balls; Michopa – a roasted meat dish served with beer and Mosi (local lager); and other local delicacies like ifinkubala (fried caterpillars) and inswa (fried ants).



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Plethora of wildlife

Zambia has 20 national wildlife parks, which host an abundance of game, birds and other wildlife. Lions are found in all major parks, along with hyenas. And if you are lucky, you can also see the endangered hunting dog.

The Big Five also roam the parks, making for wonderful sightings when out on a game drive. And if you travel near some of the many rivers, you can spot massive pods of over 60 hippos! In the Kafue, South Luangwa, and lower Zambezi, you can get great sightings of leopards, as well as the lesser-seen and rare Thornicroft's giraffe, Crawshay's zebra, and black lechwe.

Baboons, vervet monkeys, and warthogs also live in abundance across Zambia, along with a variety of buck including impala, kudu, bushbuck, and puku.

One of Africa's most awe-inspiring wildlife experiences has got to be the Great Migration of wildebeest through Tanzania and Kenya. But something that is very individual to Zambia is the annual migration of straw-coloured fruit bats. Ten million bats migrate from the Congo Basin, to a single stand of forest in Kasanka National Park.

Festivals

Because of the mix of cultures that the many tribes have instilled into Zambia, some wonderful festivals have come about that visitors to Zambia won't want to miss!

In July, the traditions of the Lunda and Luba people are celebrated in the Umutomboka festival, where Zambians celebrate their coming to the country from Congo.

And from June to August, the Kazanga festival is celebrated by the Nkoya tribe, and is considered the oldest festival in Zambian history, having been celebrated for over 500 years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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