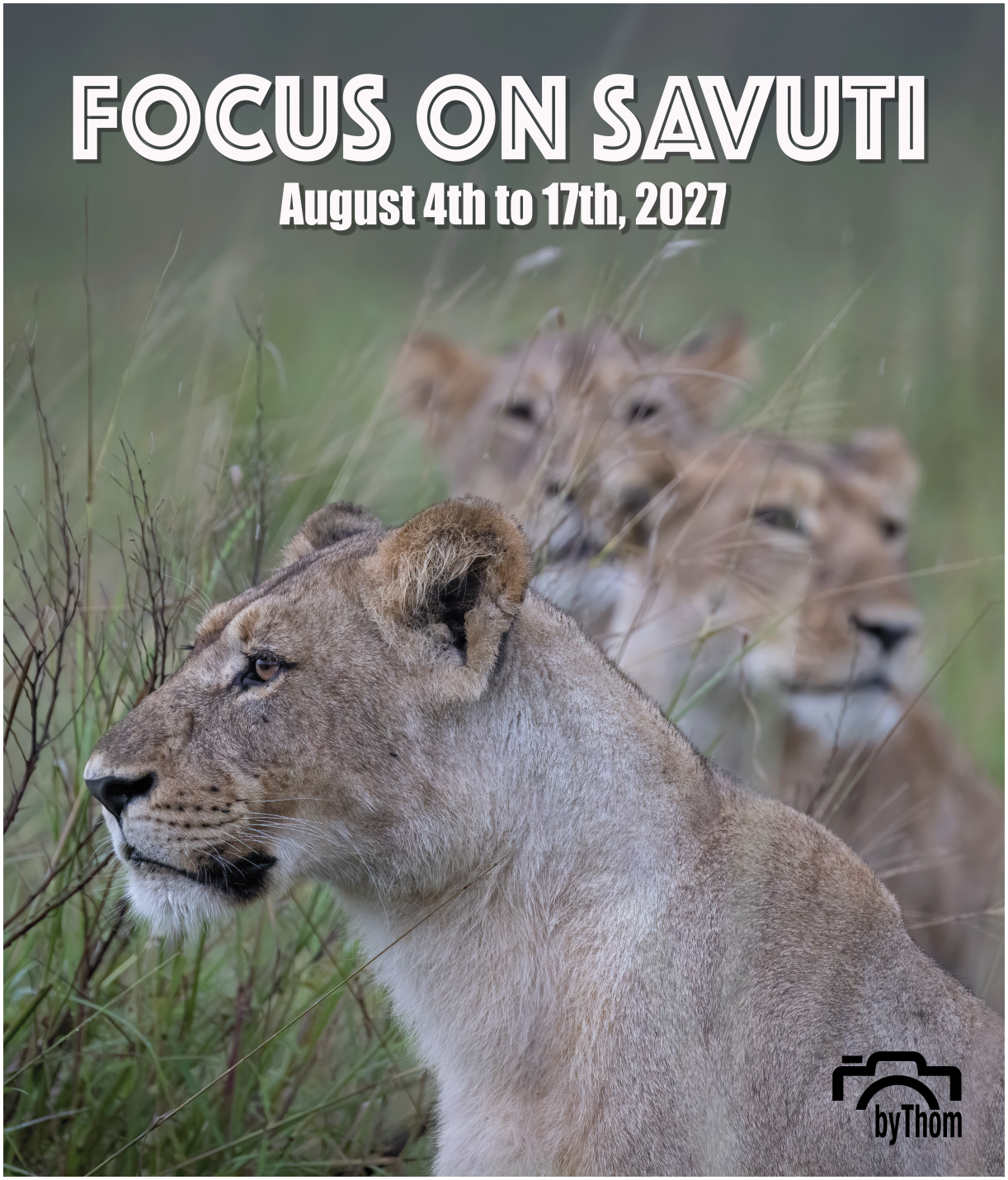

FOCUS ON SAVUTI
August 4th to 17th, 2027
byThom

Focus on Savuti

For 2027 we're going to do something different and very exciting with our Botswana workshops: we'll spend 12 nights in a single target rich area of Botswana and get to know the animals there on an almost intimate level. For this first trip in 2027 we'll be doing our focused concentration in one of the best-known, most cat-productive locations in Botswana: Savuti National Park.

By staying in essentially one area throughout the workshop, we get the benefit of learning and reacting to the primary cycles of the animals in the area. For Savuti, that's the cat predators, 100%. That includes lions, leopards, and cheetah. In addition, there's an active wild dog pack in the park, as well as hyena. Over the course of almost two weeks we'll learn the predator territories, see how they're managed, and almost certainly encounter each of the key predators through their full hunt, eat, rest cycles.



All images in this brochure were taken in Savuti within the past three years.

In previous workshops, I've emphasized the buffet-style tour. In those older style workshops, we move to completely new areas every three days and you get a *sampling* of all the different terrain and ecosystems that Botswana has to offer. But you don't get a deep dive into any of them. By spending only a few days in each territory in the buffet style, you're at the whim of where the animals are in their cycles, and sometimes that's mostly sleeping.

By sticking solely to Savuti for the duration of this workshop, we'll pretty much guarantee that you'll see the lions, leopards, and wild dogs in action. The cheetah (see image below) are a little more difficult to find and track, but we'll attempt that, as well. We hope to see all the predators play, interact with other animals, defend their territories, as well as witness their hunt cycle. Savuti itself is a pretty large area, but it's all reachable on any given safari drive without having to choke down sand all day.



We're not in a hurry to get anywhere on this trip, which means that we can maximize our time with whatever we find, wherever we find it. We'll spend some mornings at the water holes just waiting to see what approaches and how that turns out for them. We'll take the time to take in the viewpoints in Savuti (Savuti is one of the few areas in upper Botswana that I'd say has viewpoints), see image below). We can take the time to find the Northern, Southern, and Eastern lion prides, all of whose territory sort of intersects in the middle of Savuti.

We expect to have "hot" days and "calm" days. Predator activity is not a constant, which is why on the buffet style workshops you're subject to the whim of the hunt cycles. On this trip you'll see both what lions (and other predators) do when they're well fed ("calm"

days), as well as what they do when they're hungry ("hot days").



Thom is also going to turn our main common tent into a teaching pavilion during our mid-day breaks. With a maximum of six students at this workshop, that's going to allow for a lot of personalized teaching, deep dives into making your image(s) work, and introductions into advanced processing techniques you might not have known about.

However our primary goal is to maximize our safari time in a location well known for its prides and packs. That applies from the very beginning to the very end on this unique trip, as we'll fly into Savuti from Maun the very first day and hit the safari circuit before lunch, and on our very last day we'll take one last morning ride prior to flying to Kasane. (We're flying out to Kasane to end the workshop so that people can easily add a Victoria Falls or Chobe River extension to the end of their trip. Ticketing costs are about the same on Airlink whether you do a Maun Jo-berg roundtrip or do an open jaw route as we will.)



Accompanying us in Savuti are two phenomenal driver guides, a full camp crew and dedicated chef, all with a portable tented camp that's at the glamping level, not basic camping. We will move our camp location within Savuti twice, just so that we have quicker morning access to different areas during the workshop, but you'll find the tents roomy, comfortable, and with an en suite bath setup and hot water when you want it.

As we move around Savuti each day in our Land Cruisers, they'll be no more than three of you in each vehicle (though one vehicle will also have me in the front seat next to our driver/guide). You'll have plenty of room for your gear, and these vehicles have proven durable and effective on previous safaris.



Since we charter the entire 10-passenger aircraft bringing us to and from Savuti, there will be no weight limits involved on the internal flights, though we do ask that you keep your clothing and accessories to a single soft-sided duffel.

The Schedule

To be clear as to dates and where we'll actually be, here's our full itinerary for the workshop:

- **August 4th** — arrive in Maun, Botswana by mid-afternoon where you'll be met at the airport and transferred to the Sedia hotel, where we'll have our Reception Dinner and a comfortable night's stay.
- **August 5th** — after breakfast at the Sedia, we'll transfer back to the airport for our mid-morning private flight from Maun to Savuti. We'll be met at the Savuti airstrip by our driver/guides with our Land Cruisers and immediately transfer into a late morning safari drive. We'll safari until lunch, at which point we'll arrive at our private tented camp situated at CNP24 (about six months before the workshop you'll get a map that helps you understand our actual locations within Savuti, along with other helpful information from Thom). After lunch you'll have time to settle into your tent and start your daily image download rituals. In the afternoon we'll have tea at

3:30pm, then immediately head out for our afternoon/sunset safari. We'll be back at camp about 6:30pm, where we'll have time to clean up, have a drink at the campfire, and then dinner.

- **August 6th** — today starts our "usual" daily schedule, which consists of getting up at 5:30am, having a quick continental type breakfast, and hitting the safari trails as soon after 6am as possible. We'll be out for a long drive in our mornings, typically not arriving back at camp before 11am, and often dragging all the way to lunch. Lunch on most days is at camp. After lunch Thom will be available and doing image review and teaching from about 1pm to 2:30pm. Once again we'll have tea at 3:30pm, and head out immediately after for our afternoon/sunset safari. We'll be back at camp about 6:30pm, where we'll have time to clean up, have a drink at the campfire, and then dinner.
- **August 7th and 8th** — exactly the same as yesterday: safari, lunch/teach, safari, dinner, bed.
- **August 9th** — This is a "camp moving (but not much) day." We'll again get up at 5:30am, have a quick continental type breakfast, and hit the safari trails as soon after 6am as possible. We'll be staying out all day, though, with a picnic lunch mid-day. As the sun sets, we'll eventually arrive at our camp, which has relocated to Rhino Vlei, which is on the main marsh. Dinner will be served, and you'll find your tent pretty much as you left it in the morning, only in a new location within Savuti. *Why do we move camp? First, to give you an experience in different areas within Savuti, but more importantly to minimize the impact of camping at any one location for a long period of time. Our camp sites are given a rest between people staying in them, which allows them to stay more natural over time.*
- **August 10th, 11th, and 12th** — exactly our usual day: safari, lunch/teach, safari, dinner, bed.
- **August 13th.** This is another "camp moving (but not much) day." We'll again get up at 5:30am, have a quick continental type breakfast, and hit the safari trails as soon after 6am as possible. We'll be staying out all day, though, with a picnic lunch mid-day. As the sun sets, we'll eventually arrive at our camp, which has relocated to CNP21, which is on the main marsh. Dinner will be served, and you'll find your tent pretty much as you left it in the morning, only in a new location within Savuti.
- **August 14th, 15th, and 16th** — exactly our usual day: safari, lunch/teach, safari, dinner, bed.
- **August 17th** — after a quick breakfast, we'll leave camp for the last time and catch our private flight from Savuti to Kasane. This flight will arrive in time for anyone wanting to make Kasane-to-Johannesburg flight connections that day. However, we'd suggest that you maximize your time in Botswana by either by booking the Victoria Falls (get details from Wilderness Travel) or Chobe River (see details below) extension. Those of you either extension will be transferred to the service that provides it.

A Message from Thom

I have high expectations for this workshop. First, it's small in scale, so there will be a lot of one-on-one interaction between myself, guests, and guides throughout. But more importantly, I targeted Savuti because of its well-known and highly active cat population and the likelihood that we can get in cycle with them and see them behaving in multiple ways, doing different things. *Eternal Enemies* by Dereck and Beverly Joubert was filmed here, as have been a number of BBC, Discovery Channel, and other productions, including a new BBC one that will air in 2026.



The timing of this workshop is also important. In August, water sources begin to get scarce, which means that all the animals all start to concentrate into certain, known areas. The lions know this as well as I do, and some of the biggest pride action tends to take place during this time period, as the water sources also mean that the prides' active territories start to overlap more as there's more activity around the year-round water sources.

However, this workshop won't just be all predators all the time. Savuti is also home to large herds of zebra, cape buffalo, giraffe, and more. After all, you don't have predators if you don't have prey.



One other aspect that the concentration of area does for the workshop is that it allows us over our two weeks together to explore “stories.” Sometimes that will be about the same animal (e.g. male lion), sometimes it will be about a place, sometimes it will be about interactions (e.g. water hole). In the “move every three days” type of workshops I’ve done in the past, you rarely have the time to work with one animal or one setting long enough to do story development.



The one thing I'd caution against is that bird activity in Savuti is somewhat limited, and often only seen around the water holes (that's a Secretary bird you see here). Savuti is a cat lovers paradise, but not so much a bird lover's one. If you're more interested in birds, you might consider the *Focus on Moremi* workshop later in 2027, as we'll be specifically targeting bird activity at that workshop, and its location in a wetter portion of the Okavango Delta makes for much more bird variety and activity. It's not that we won't see and photograph birds in Savuti, it's that this is not the primary thing that you come to Savuti for, its an incidental thing you take advantage of when you come upon birds doing something interesting at the edge of the savannah. For instance, this:



This photo—it's not a composite—was taken very near our second camp site (Rhino Vlei). The lilac-breasted rollers were in the midst of their mating season, and we spent several hours there photographing them. But that was not planned or expected. If you're an avid birder first and foremost, particularly one that values diversity of sightings, Savuti really isn't the place you want to be in Botswana.

Pricing

Safari cost (per person): US$17,250 (single supplement available for US$2600)
Internal airfare: US$1695
Park entrance fees: US$645
Deposit: US$1200 non-refundable deposit due at time of reservation.
The balance is due 120 days prior to departure

Cancellation Fee Schedule
* Up to 120 days prior to departure: first deposit, as above
* 120 days or less: 100% of land cost

What's included on this adventure?

- Private flight from Maun to Savuti at the beginning, and from Savuti to Kasane at the end.
- Welcome Dinner and breakfast at Sedia hotel. Overnight at Sedia.
- All food and all beverages (including soft drinks and alcohol) from lunch the first day through breakfast the last.
- Single or double tent accommodations with a comfortable bed, storage space, in-tent bath with shower, and a tent steward to keep your tent clean, do your laundry, and help you with anything else you might need around camp.
- Pre-workshop Zoom instruction from Thom Hogan on how to prepare, and things you might want to know in advance.
- Photography help in the vehicles, as needed, from Thom Hogan on the days he's in your vehicle (typically every other day).
- During workshop presentations, one-on-one sessions, and image reviews with Thom Hogan and Shane Hedges.

What's not included:

- Any lodging you need prior to August 4th in Maun, or after the trip ends mid-day August 17th in Kasane.
- Tips for the driver/guides or the camp crew.

Additional Suggestions

We're going to be in the woods for 12 nights on this trip. Our suggestion is that you arrive a day before the official workshop start and spend that night at one of the many hotels or lodges in Maun, which range from US$150 for a comfortable modern hotel to US$500 a night for a fancier high-end lodge. Either will meet you at the airport and provide transportation to their facilities, as well as transportation back to the airport in the morning to meet the workshop flight.

On the last day of the workshop, our private flight will get you to Kasane in time to connect to Kasane-to-Johannesburg flights that in turn connect to International flights out of Johannesburg that evening, if you so desire. But we'd suggest you spend at least another night in Kasane so as to get all the sand out from between your toes and not be rushed trying to get back home all in one dramatic multi-flight bonanza. Better yet, sign up for the Victoria Falls extension and see one of the natural wonders of the world in person.

Additional Information

While we don't have a weight limit on the internal flights we use (because we charter the entire plane, which has extra capacity), we still suggest that you limit what you bring on this trip and how you bring it.

In particular, we'd ask that you restrict yourself to one soft-sided duffel for your clothing, DOP kit, and other personal items. It can be any size, but it helps logistically if there's only one duffel per person and that it's soft-sided. We don't place any restrictions in weight or size on your camera backpack or your personal item (typically a briefcase with additional camera gear and your laptop). Because we're not moving great distances on this trip, this would be a workshop where you might bring more than two cameras and two lenses. We'll discuss that in pre-workshop sessions via Zoom, and get you dialed in to bring the right gear for this trip.

While our camp crew does provide laundry services on days when the camp isn't moving, because of cultural differences, that doesn't include laundering underwear. We will provide you with soaps and hot water to do that yourself, and there are areas within your tent's bathroom set up to help you with both that and drying those items.

To Sign Up

Wilderness Travel will be both handling the reservations and coordinating the services for this workshop and safari. You will be asked to fill out the standard Wilderness Travel trip application as well as sign a Release of Liability and Assumption of All Risks agreement. Please note that the payment and cancellation schedules for this trip differs slightly from Terms and Conditions listed in the Wilderness Travel annual catalog and Web site.

Contact Lisa Laferte at Wilderness Travel (1-800-368-2794) in the US, or 1-510-558-2488. Lisa can take your deposit and get you signed up for the workshop.

Chobe Extension

Besides Wilderness Travel's usual extensions—the one to Victoria Falls links up very nicely with Focus on Savuti, we'll be offering another extension that begins right when the Focus on Savuti one ends at the Kasane airport. Thom will be joining this extension.

This Chobe extension is for three nights additional safari in the Chobe National Park, staying at the Pangolin Chobe Hotel.



We'll be alternating boat and Land Cruiser excursions into the park, starting the afternoon we arrive.

Here's the itinerary:

- **August 17th** — On arrival at Kasane Airport we'll be met by a new guide and taken to the hotel, a small, modern, 14-room facility just a couple hundred yards from the Chobe Park boundary, and one which specializes in photography groups. This hotel

is right on the Chobe River. We'll check into our rooms and then head out after tea for an afternoon safari.

- **August 18th** — We'll make both a morning and afternoon safari today, one on the lodge's gimbal equipped boat, and the other in their all window-seat open Land Cruiser. Because Pangolin caters primarily to photographers, both modes of transportation are optimized to photography. Our goal for the day is to experience the shoreline activity from both sides (shore and water).
- **August 19th** — We'll again have a day of alternating modes of transportation and continue to explore the Chobe River edge.
- **August 20th** — After breakfast, you'll be transferred to the Kasane Airport in time for flights that connect to International flights leaving Johannesburg.



Pricing

Extension cost (per person): US$3095 (single supplement available for US$525)
Park entrance fees: included
Deposit: US$600 non-refundable deposit due at time of reservation.
The balance is due 120 days prior to departure

Cancellation Fee Schedule
* Up to 120 days prior to departure: first deposit, as above
* 120 days or less: 100% of land cost



What's included on this adventure?

- Transfers from and to Kasane Airport.
- All food and all beverages (including soft drinks and alcohol) from lunch the first day through breakfast the last.
- Single or double room accommodations with a comfortable bed, air conditioning, storage space, in-tent bath with shower, and Internet.
- Our boats have an overhead canopy and include full swivel seating each with a built-in Arca-Swiss compatible gimbal. Everyone has a clean view to each side of the boat, as the seats are all aligned in a single row down the center of the boat.
- Our Land Cruiser features bean bag camera mounts, and individual (window) seats on each side.
- You can borrow Canon DSLRs, lenses, and memory cards. Our guides are trained photographers and can help you understand how to get the best images, plus Thom will be along for the rides, too.

What's not included:

- Laundry.
- Tips for hotel staff and safari guides.

How Do You Enroll?

Reserving your spot on this trip or extension is simple: **call Lisa Laferte at Wilderness Travel (800-368-2794 in the US, or 510-558-2488 for International callers)**. She'll help you reserve your spot by putting the reservation deposit on your credit card. Lisa will also send you a trip application and a Release of Liability form, both of which must be filled out and returned to Wilderness Travel for you to participate in this safari.

This is a first-come, first-served operation, and only six spots are available. **We expect this trip to completely fill, so we urge you not to delay in reserving your spot.**

Lisa can answer all your Africa and logistical questions, and help you with itinerary extensions throughout Africa if you're interested. Lisa manages African trips for Wilderness Travel and has visited the continent multiple times, thus she can speak to specific needs or requests, or just give you a better idea of the facilities, staff, and activities at any of the places we'll visit. Lisa can also advise you and book you on optional extensions to Victoria Falls or other nearby southern Africa locations.

If you have photographic concerns or questions, you can email them to the photo workshop leader at thom_hogan@msn.com.

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Be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law, which took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires

sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #1007696-40.

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel catalog.

Revised: 11/21/25 (th)