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Majestic Monachira Camp

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IN MOREMI GAME RESERVE

Conservation-led Machaba Safaris stuns with their latest offering, the exquisite Monachira Camp in Moremi Game Reserve.

This stunning property is eco-luxury at its finest. With only ten tented suites, two of which are family units, a maximum of 24 guests can stay here, enjoying this very special part of Botswana. Arriving by helicopter certainly adds a level of panache, and it's definitely the best way to see the camp from an elevated point of 500 ft. Friendly faces are eagerly waiting at the arrival section, and I am warmly welcomed with song and dance.

Front of house manager Manila shows me to the lounge area, where she provides an orientation of the camp and the activities offered. She tells me about the different accommodation options, and when she talks about tented suite number 10,

she has a twinkle in her eyes. I immediately guess that I am staying there! It's situated right at the end of a sandy pathway and under the most imposing sausage tree. The interiors are beautiful, with a black and white theme throughout, and a dollop of fun in the form of mustard colour cushions.

My tented suite has a bedroom, corner seating area, bathroom with double vanities, shower and a flush loo. In the outside area, there is an outdoor shower and a freestanding bath, as well as a private deck for spending time taking in the magnificent views over the floodplains.

Walking back to the dining area for High Tea, I pass by the pool

with the intention of taking a dip some time during my stay. Sitting just a few metres away on a bare tree branch is the tiny and most striking little bee-eater. To my left, the lounge looks very inviting, with plush couches and a variety of excellent reading material. Afternoon tea has a delectable spread of sweet and savoury treats, and I opt for the chicken mayonnaise roll.

Guide Harold is ready to start the afternoon game drive, and the floods have caused some areas to be impassable. When Manila told me that the vehicles get stuck in the mud on a daily basis, I thought she was joking. Clearly, she wasn't as the Toyota Land Cruiser is not going anywhere soon. Harold finds some tree branches that will hopefully aid in getting us moving again. He has alerted the rescue team, but

with his combination of using the wood and a jack to get us unstuck, he is successful!

Moremi Game Reserve is a hidden gem when it comes to prolific wildlife sightings. We happen upon a small breeding herd of elephants out on the plains and sit quietly with a big bull having a feeding frenzy on a marula tree. There are the usual suspects - zebra, impala, red lechwe and tsessebe. The grass is very tall, and we can just make out the shape of a side-striped jackal.

In the shade of a sausage tree, two male lions are having a wonderful slumber. Not too far from where they are lying, a lioness is sitting in the road indulging in a grooming session. We find them the following morning - the male and female have split from their respective prides and coalition. They are clearly on honeymoon. The brother keeps on trailing behind the newly betrothed couple, but he gets a stern warning when he gets too close. Sniffing where the female has been, he does a flehmen grimace, much to our amusement.

A storm has set in, bringing with it thunder, lightning and a torrential downpour. Seeing a rainbow while out on game drive is a magnificent occurrence. Harold and his guests are doing a boating excursion on the Monachira channel, and I'm left in guide KG's capable hands.

The search for the most elusive of them all has yielded no results for a few days, until this morning! Roy has finally found the female leopard and her grown-up cub. The cub is in a very playful mood, stalking and pouncing on mom and getting to grips with a tree. Mom happily partakes in these friendly and affectionate 'attacks', which is a learning process for the cub. The two seem inseparable, making their way into impenetrable territory. What an amazing sighting to conclude my incredible stay at Monachira Camp.

<https://machabasafaris.com/en/camps-lodges/monachira-camp>



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