



ADVERTISEMENT

MailOnline

That's what I call a REAL walk in the park: JANE SLADE explores the Botswanan bush on foot - and is warned to 'run like hell' if a buffalo charges

Site Web Enter your search Search

- Jane spends nine days in the Okavango, Botswana's 'game-rich oasis'
- She sees some remarkable animals, including the endangered pangolin
- READ MORE:** [The unspoken rules you need to follow on a holiday to the USA](#)

By JANE SLADE FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY
PUBLISHED: 19:18 GMT, 11 September 2024 | UPDATED: 19:35 GMT, 11 September 2024

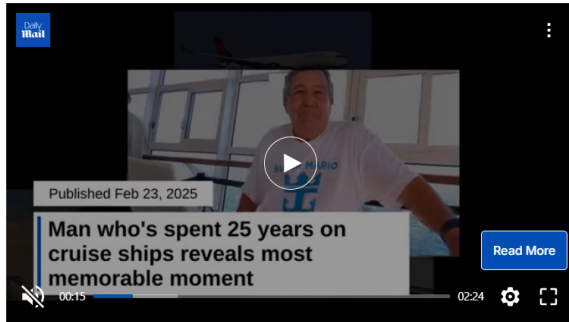


16 View comments

Our walking-safari guide told us to keep in a straight line behind him and if we saw a big cat or elephant to stand still. 'If you run, they will think you are game and will chase and kill you,' he warned. 'Stand still and they will back off.' Then, he added: 'Except the buffalo - he won't stop, so just run like hell.'

While you are much safer travelling in a big vehicle, there is nothing like exploring the bush on foot or in a canoe.

Walking safaris are not so much about spotting wildlife but analysing footprints, learning about trees and plants, and finding out what to do if you meet a wild animal. You soon realise why guides carry a rifle.



We mixed walking and canoe trips with game drives in vehicles. Nowhere in Africa can you combine all three except in the Okavango in Botswana. We went a step further and stayed in a tented, fenceless camp. So if you didn't zip it up properly, you may discover a baboon in your bed - or worse.

Frankly, it was a miracle we were in Africa at all. After being diagnosed with cancer two years ago and enduring two operations and a round of chemotherapy, my 66-year-old husband Neil thought he would not live long enough to revisit his homeland.



Jane Slade travels to the Okavango in Botswana (pictured) for a nine-day walking safari holiday

ADVERTISEMENT

MailOnline

TOP STORIES

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire fans gasp 'this is madness!' as player 'fafs about' using three lifelines on 'such an easy question' - but can you solve it?



EXCLUSIVE Heathrow T5 is like a zoo - I splash out on the airport's £3,800 VIP 'Windsor' terminal instead. It has a secret entrance, a personal butler and I'm driven to the plane in a BMW



Fans shocked by skinnier than ever stars at SAG Awards amid Hollywood's Ozempic craze



M+ I stumbled across my wife's Pornhub search history and it's broken me. She told me it's 'just a fantasy lots of women have' but now I fear I'll never be enough:...



ADVERTISEMENT

MailOnline

EXCLUSIVE How plane food is really made: Inside the incredible 'kitchen city' that makes meals for the world's best airline





© NEIL MACKICHAN

+6
View gallery

African wonders: Okavango has the highest concentration of endangered large mammals in the world, reveals Jane. Above, a snarling lion captured by Jane's husband, Neil

Neil was born in Zambia and spent his childhood there. He would go fishing with his two elder brothers and sister in the Zambezi, play with their pet ducks and rabbits in their garden and help care for an orphaned elephant that his animal-loving mother had briefly adopted.

Africa is embedded in Neil's DNA and has lured him back many times. It is the smell of the scorched earth and sage that beguiles him. We had been to many game reserves in South Africa but never to the Okavango, Botswana's game-rich oasis which has the highest concentration of endangered large mammals in the world.

During the summer months, water pours down from the Angolan highlands, creating an inland wetland covering vast tracts of the Kalahari Desert, which attracts herds of big beasts and huge numbers of game.

Read More

EXCLUSIVE Inside a £19,000 'Lion King' safari holiday, with Mount Kilimanjaro as a magical backdrop >



TRENDING



Fans shocked by skinny stars at SAG Awards amid Ozempic craze

26.6k viewing now



Travel experts reveal the best bridges you must cross in your lifetime

18.6k viewing now



Justin Bieber breaks silence to explain truth behind disheveled look

14.6k viewing now

After each exhilarating morning drive in the bush, we would retreat from the heat and sit on our terrace chatting through what we had just experienced.



© NEIL MACKICHAN

+6
View gallery

Jane was warned about the belligerence of buffalo. 'Run like hell,' was the advice if one charged



We took boat rides in mokoros – canoes traditionally carved from dug-out tree trunks – and paddled up to a cheetah lurching on an impala, the blood on her face. We also witnessed the rare sight of two lionesses swimming.

We stayed in three camps run by Machaba safaris over our nine-day adventure in different parts of the Delta; Little Machaba, Gomoti Plains and Kiri. We wanted variety to maximise our chances of seeing as much wildlife as possible on land and in the water.

Each camp varied in size, ranging from Little Machaba, which had just four rooms, to Kiri, which had 12. We flew in four-seater Cessnas to tiny airstrips between each one.

Machaba specialises in classic safaris centred around a boma (large fire) overlooking a savannah which is floodlit at night.

Justin Bieber breaks silence to explain truth behind his disheveled look amid fan fears of hard drug use



EXCLUSIVE I moved from the UK to Montpellier, the 'Brighton of France' - here's why the shopping is better and the French aren't as rude as you think



EXCLUSIVE Should you respond to work emails while you're on holiday? I'm a career expert and these are the do's and don'ts for dealing with messages from colleagues while you're away



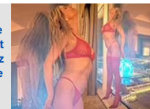
Why would Brit husband have killed his wife to fake a robbery at their dream French home? Mystery over cop theory that mother of Hollyoaks star was victim of 's...



ADVERTISEMENT

MailOnline

Heidi Klum, 51, shows off her incredible figure in a racy red lingerie set as husband Tom Kaulitz snaps photos after date night



How I lost 3 STONE in 3 WEEKS. My free method's more effective than any fat jab. I've reversed pre-diabetes and no longer need a knee op: DONAL MACINTYRE's extr...



CHRISTOPHER STEVENS reviews The Baldwins: What hideous people! Now I really have no sympathy for has-been Alec Baldwin



EXCLUSIVE We're Britain's top Wetherspoons experts and have visited ALL 799 pubs in the country. These are the top 22 you MUST go to, the cheapest pints - and the food and booze you have to try



EXCLUSIVE I'm a female solo traveller... and this is how travelling alone around the world changed my life



London's Regent's Park is plagued by early morning hammer attacks on cyclists, intentional wheel punctures and masked thieves - but police say they 'can't' patr...



EXCLUSIVE It's the pretty England we all want: I'm the High Sheriff of Herefordshire - here's why you should visit my





Jane and Neil stayed in three camps run by Machaba safaris. Above is Kiri, which had 12 rooms



The rare and endangered pangolin was among the many remarkable animals that Jane saw during her trip (stock image)



Jane took boat rides in mokoros – canoes traditionally carved from dug-out tree trunks (stock image)

The cuisine is simple. Meals of local dishes and fresh fruit and vegetables served with delicious South African wines.

Our tent was like an opulent suite with an indoor and outdoor shower, huge comfy bed, and large terrace.

But nothing could have prepared us for the rawness of the Okavango. A hyena with the leg of a baby elephant in its mouth. A dozen lion cubs and their parents gorging on a zebra. Male lions beating up a younger male and plovers dive-bombing a female cheetah and her cubs. We even saw the rarest creature of all, the endangered pangolin.

We especially loved the evening drives, watching hippos and elephants silhouetted against a brilliant purple and orange sunset. With a gin and tonic in hand, we luxuriated in the stillness. This was all Neil needed. Suddenly fears for his future fell away.

TRAVEL FACTS

Rhino Africa packages at Machaba camps from £934pp per night, including internal flights, full-board, two guided game drives daily, and transfers. Visit rhinoafrica.com and machabasafaris.com. Flights to/from Botswana included in packages. Heathrow to Johannesburg with Virgin Atlantic from £680.



Share or comment on this article: That's what I call a REAL walk in the park: JANE SLADE explores the Botswanan bush on foot - and is warned to 'run like hell' if a buffalo charges



Add comment

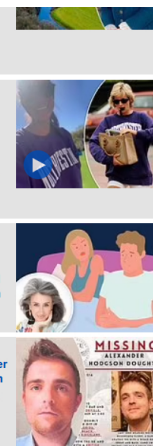
...rather than the crowded Cotswolds

▶ Meghan Markle recreates Princess Diana's iconic look in Northwestern sweatshirt in new Instagram clip of her 'soaking up weekend' in the Californian sunshine

▶ DEAR JANE: My husband and I are going through a dry spell. I've just realized the depressing reason why

▶ Body of British man, 32, who vanished 'after getting into an Uber' in Florida more than two years ago is found

ADVERTISEMENT



MailOnline

EXCLUSIVE Are British or American men better at dating? I'm a relationship expert who's romanced both - and here's my verdict

EXCLUSIVE I'm a normal mother in my 40s but I've found a nudist hobby that's changed my life

EXCLUSIVE We've been to over 250 places in Scotland - from 'Caribbean' beaches to an island 'frozen in time', here are the country's best spots to visit

EXCLUSIVE How to retire in Albania - the 'Maldives of Europe': The ultimate guide to where to live, how to get a visa and healthcare









EXCLUSIVE You've been writing your out-of-office message all WRONG! I'm a career expert and these are the phrases you should NEVER use

▶ I invited 24 kids to my son's sixth birthday. What happened next left me in tears

▶ Christine McGuinness, 36, makes history as the first female winner of Celebrity Hunted as she confesses it has changed her life

▶ **EXCLUSIVE** We couldn't wait to start our new life in Australia - until a routine health check put us through five years of hell:

MOST WATCHED NEWS VIDEOS Embed this

 Police arrive to quiz Stockport woman about	 Moment mass brawl between men and	 Carville predicts Trump White House will	 Actor Woody Harrelson slams Anthony Fauci
 Bondi tells Governor's blocking Trump	 USAID workers leave after being terminated	 AA flight from JFK is diverted by fighter jets	 Moment Italian Air Force eurofighter

Comments (16)

Comments are subject to our [House rules](#) and [Terms](#)

[Log in to comment](#)

- Newest
- Oldest
- Best rated
- Worst rated

A Atethepies, Kwazulu Natal, United Kingdom, 5 months ago
I did canoe trip, game drives and bush walk in Zambia but would love to visit Okavango. Unfortunately I react badly to anti-malaria medications.

Reply Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Telegram Click to rate Up 0 Down 0

J JenZW, Wantage, 5 months ago
On the Zambezi in Zimbabwe, our canoe was blown against an island on which stood a lone buffalo. Our guide was standing watching, his rifle still in its bag. As we reached for our cameras, the buffalo charged but seemed to have a sore leg and stopped....
[See more](#)

Reply Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Telegram Click to rate Up 0 Down 0

F feestor, Bergen, Norway, 5 months ago
We did a game walk in the Kruger. Two guides with rifles and 8 of us. Probably the most magical experience ever. The Bush is my happy place.

Reply Facebook Twitter WhatsApp Telegram Click to rate Up 3 Down 0

[Show More Comments](#)

The opinions and views expressed in the comments section are solely those of the individual users and do not represent or reflect the opinions, views, or positions of MailOnline. MailOnline does not endorse, support, or verify the accuracy of any user-generated content.

[Terms](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Feedback](#)

British family warns of little-known rule that could turn your Down Under dream into a nightmare

EXCLUSIVE The world's ten best bridges you MUST cross in your lifetime: The views are amazing and they'll set your pulse racing. This is the travel experts' definitive li...

Royal aide at centre of Meghan Markle 'bullying' allegations finally breaks his silence

ADVERTISEMENT

MailOnline

EXCLUSIVE I'm a Thailand travel expert. Here's the definitive guide on which islands to go to, the best beaches and bargains... and the places to avoid like the plague

Neighbours cast and crew look downcast as they return to filming in Melbourne after finding out that the show has been axed

EXCLUSIVE I try Malaysia Airlines' £3,250 business-class seat. And I'm served a dish that's 'hands-down' the best plane food I've ever tried

Truth about Jane Fonda's 'uncomfortable' SAG Awards 2025 red carpet moment as 'dazed' actress sparks concern

EXCLUSIVE How to know you've had a visit from an ANGEL. Feathers, ladybirds, robins and even coins contain poignant heaven-sent messages: This is what to look for, by aut...

EXCLUSIVE Inside Chamonix's ski patrol: What really goes on behind the scenes to keep pistes safe at a resort in the French Alps... from avalanche bombs to dog rescues

Daniel Sturridge makes awkward gaffe live on Sky Sports during Liverpool's win over Man City as presenter David Jones is forced to correct him

EXCLUSIVE You're not depressed - but you may have this condition that you've never heard of, reveals DR MAX PEMBERTON

What you should do if you find a burglar in your own home like

MailOnline

EXCLUSIVE I'm a Thailand travel expert. Here's the definitive guide on which islands to go to, the best beaches and bargains... and the places to avoid like the plague

Neighbours cast and crew look downcast as they return to filming in Melbourne after finding out that the show has been axed

EXCLUSIVE I try Malaysia Airlines' £3,250 business-class seat. And I'm served a dish that's 'hands-down' the best plane food I've ever tried

Truth about Jane Fonda's 'uncomfortable' SAG Awards 2025 red carpet moment as 'dazed' actress sparks concern

EXCLUSIVE How to know you've had a visit from an ANGEL. Feathers, ladybirds, robins and even coins contain poignant heaven-sent messages: This is what to look for, by aut...

EXCLUSIVE Inside Chamonix's ski patrol: What really goes on behind the scenes to keep pistes safe at a resort in the French Alps... from avalanche bombs to dog rescues

Daniel Sturridge makes awkward gaffe live on Sky Sports during Liverpool's win over Man City as presenter David Jones is forced to correct him

EXCLUSIVE You're not depressed - but you may have this condition that you've never heard of, reveals DR MAX PEMBERTON

What you should do if you find a burglar in your own home like