

Botswana



Travellers now have more opportunities to experience Botswana, with new routes and more access. Jeanette Phillips looks at what the country has to offer...

Next stop, Maun

MAUN has become more accessible for South African travellers following Air Botswana's recent launch of flights from Cape Town on June 1 and Airlink's flights from Johannesburg on June 15.

Following the launch, Air Botswana has reported a positive response from the travel industry and passengers.

Thabiso Leshoai, assistant manager for communications for the airline:

"The route is new and we are monitoring its progress. The response has been positive both from the travel industry and passengers. The benefits of the route are obvious that clients can now enjoy a sea and delta holiday experience with ease, unlike previously, when passengers had to connect to Maun via Johannesburg."

Charmaine Lemkus, sales manager for Air Botswana: "The industry both in South Africa and Botswana have recently been very positive and have welcomed the new route."



Air Botswana has seen positive response from the trade and passengers for its new Cape Town-Maun flights.

Charmaine says, besides the benefits of a non-stop service from bush to beach, the route is also more cost effective for passengers from Cape Town than travelling via Johannesburg. Additionally, the stress of another airport connection is removed.

"Getting into and out of Cape Town at a reasonable time is also a draw card."

Charmaine reiterates that the airline is committed to the route. "However we do rely on the trade to support the

route. No airline can sustain a route without support."

When first announcing the flights, the airline said the flights had been introduced just ahead of the tourism peak season, giving travellers the opportunity to enjoy a sea and delta holiday experience.

Joe Motse, Air Botswana commercial director said: "The introduction of the Maun-Cape Town route is a very exciting development for us at Air Botswana. It is part of our airline's growth strategy, which

will see the introduction of several other regional routes."

Air Botswana currently operates flights from Johannesburg to Maun, Gaborone, Francistown and Kasane.

In other news, Airlink launched Johannesburg-Maun on June 15.

"Flights are timed to connect with the majority of international morning arrivals, domestic and regional flights from points such as Cape Town, and then the afternoon

wave of intercontinental departures as well as flights onward to Cape Town and other domestic destinations such as Nelspruit Kruger," said Karin Murray, Airlink sales and marketing manager.

Airlink uses one of its 10 Embraer ERJ 137 regional jets on the route, with 37 seats in economy class.

Flights depart Johannesburg at 11h45, arriving in Maun at 13h15. Return flights depart Maun at 14h00 arriving in Johannesburg at 15h40.

Significant rise in Botswana bed levy

From May 1, the Botswana government increased the accommodation bed levy from P2 (R2) to P10 (R10,60) per person per night.

According to &Beyond regional director, Jason King, the Department of Tourism is responding to calls from the industry to improve on service

delivery and friendliness, and the bed levy will be used by the Department of Tourism to provide training for tourism industry employees.

This training will now also incorporate government bodies that interact directly with guests. Some of the funds will therefore be used to provide training to organisations such as the

Department of Immigration and the Botswana Unified Revenue Service.

He said &Beyond would absorb the increase of this levy into its costs and would not pass it on to guests. It will therefore have no impact on future bookings with &Beyond.

Cresta Hotels declined to comment about the increase.

Save the date

AIR Botswana will host a series of roadshows in South Africa towards the end of the month. On June 27 the airline is hosting a roadshow in Durban at the Three Cities Riverside Hotel and Spa from 08h00-12h00.

Two roadshows will be held in Cape Town on June 28 and 29 respectively. Both will be held at the Protea Hotel President. On June 28, there will be two sessions – the first, from 08h00-12h00 and

the second from 13h00-17h00. On June 29 there will be a morning session from 08h00-12h00.

The Johannesburg roadshows were hosted at the Protea Hotel Fire and Ice! Melrose Arch on June 25 and 26 respectively.

Please note, registration will take place an hour before the workshops commence i.e 07h00-08h00 or 12h00-13h00. To RSVP, contact tumi@onshowsolutions.co.za

Maun, Botswana. Airlink – the Regional Feeder Airline – connects you to Maun in Botswana daily, offering you an exclusive African Safari experience. Book your flight direct on www.flyairlink.com

