

immerse



YOURSELF

Scuba Safaris

Nile Crocodiles (Okavango Delta, Botswana)

For more than a decade we have been working with some of the top Apex predators ruling our waters, and for the past years we have been intrigued with the ultimate of them all... diving with the Nile Crocodiles in their natural environment. With this the National Geographic documentary "Dragons Feast" was done featuring a member of our dive team, Walter Bernardis. After the production we started developing protocols for diving with these incredible creatures, and for the past two years have been running and offering the very exclusive Crocodile Dive Safaris.

The Crocodile is without a doubt nature's ultimate survivor... and one of the animals that has been on this planet the longest. From a physiological point of view they truly are incredible, being able to not only physically control its own heart rate but also being able to harvest up to 70% of its needed energy purely from the sun. They also have very potent antibiotic properties in their skin and blood... and it is technically unknown how old or how big Nile Crocodiles can grow to, and actually believed to be limited only by food and sunlight. The biggest croc we have had the privilege of diving with is a huge 5m+ male, however the average size crocs you will most likely be diving with are between 2-4m (depending on your comfort level).

The one major factor involved in diving safely with these dinosaurs is the specific time of year when the water temperature is at its lowest. Normally in the month of May the rains fall on the Angolan highlands with a resulting factor of a huge flooding of cold clean water pushing through the Okavango Delta in Botswana. Depending on the rainfall we can even expect a secondary push, improving diving conditions even further and allowing us a small window of opportunity in June/July each year to explore the amazing underwater world of the Okavango Delta.

The water that push through is between 14 - 16 degrees Celsius, which as said, plays a huge role in the behaviour of the crocodiles in and underwater. When the water is this cold the crocodiles are mostly in 'energy saving' mode, and when underwater they tend to be very passive. This, unless they are disturbed, makes for fantastic photographic opportunities and most unforgettable close encounters with these magnificent creatures.

This dive is physically and psychologically quite challenging though, and not just for the fact that you will be looking for and diving with nature's ultimate predator but also because dive protocols are very strict ie. Entry and Exit procedures needs to be fast and accurate, with absolute minimum time spent on the surface.

Once you arrive we will have an extensive briefing as to the various protocols when diving with the crocs, incl:

- How to enter and exit with the least amount of surface time
- How to use the current and correct body orientation
- How to and what to look for when spotting crocs in their natural environment
- How to behave around the crocodiles underwater, danger areas etc.

On arrival in Maun you will have a 3hr transfer to Sepupa from where we will get on the boat and make our way to the island where we will be staying. Once at camp you will be showed to your luxury en-suite tent and you will have a moment to freshen up before we invite you to a 5 star dinner next to one of the most beautiful delta systems in the world!

Next morning we will meet for breakfast and after have an in depth briefing as to the protocol of diving with Nile crocodiles in their natural environment. Once everyone is happy with the procedures we will kit up and make our way out to a side channel for a quick check-out dive to make sure all is weighted right and to give you an idea of the environment we will be diving in... which in all honesty is quite different to what even most experienced divers have dived in before.

Once you are comfortable we will make our way out to go do what we came here to do... dive with crocodiles!! We will rely on our expert Okavango Delta guide to spot the crocs before we get too close with the boat and scare them into the water before we can mark the entry spot. As soon as we have a croc entry spot we will head up river ready to enter the water. Depending on various aspects we will judge roughly how far up we need to drop. Upon entry we will make our way down to the bottom immediately, check all is happy and assume our positions...moving down with the current looking for the crocodile, which by itself is quite the adrenaline rush.

When we find the croc we will observe for a couple seconds to get a feel for the animal's demeanour. Once we are happy that the croc is relaxed we will position you for the best view and observation of this incredible creature. We will spend between 15-20mins with each animal before we will make our way to the middle of the channel and execute the surfacing procedure.

We continue to dive with as many crocs as we can until around midday when we will stop for lunch on a spot close to where we are at that point. Keeping in mind that we are in the open African bush and encounters with Elephants, Hippos and other wildlife sightings are quite frequent as we go along. Diving will continue until about 14h00-15h00 after which we will head back to our island.

Once back at camp you can enjoy a hot shower, and enjoy some sundowners next to the river... with a raft of hippo passing by from time to time, and some spectacular bird life all round. Dinner will be served and after we invite you to join us around the campfire... allowing us to get to know each other and have a chat about the day's diving, all whilst standing under the most spectacular starry sky you have ever imagined...

The next four days will have a similar itinerary, breakfast around 08h00 and make our way out on the river around 09h00-09h30.

On arrival of the last day you will enjoy an early breakfast before being transferred back to the mainland, and from there back to the airport.

Safari Includes:

- Exclusive experienced Guides, on-site Paramedic and emergency helicopter evacuation standby
- All road and boat transfers
- Luxury en-suite tented or Luxury Houseboat accommodation on a full board Basis (incl. Dinner, Bed, Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks ie. water, juice, tea, coffee, local beers, wines, selected spirits)
- 5-6 hours on the water per day, which normally allows for 2-4 dives per diver per day
- Tanks, Weights and Air Fills

Safari Excludes:

- Flights, Taxes and Entrance Visas
- Personal Travel and Dive Insurance
- Dive Gear (available on rental with prior arrangement)

7D/6N - 5 Days diving

\$7 500.00 p/p All-inclusive

Flights: This safari starts in Maun Botswana. Flights to Maun are very limited, and the easiest route is to fly to Johannesburg International and from there connect to Maun with either Air Botswana or SA Airlink. Should you require assistance with flight bookings please let us know. Should your arrival be by private jet or charter there are airstrips closer to us than Maun and will advise on request.