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Botswana Grasslands Conservation Family Program

Grasslands isn't just a place to visit — it's a place your family can experience together, hands in the dirt, side by side. Set on private land bordering Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve, this program blends real, hands-on conservation work with genuine cultural connection to the San Bushmen — the kind of shared adventure that gives kids stories to tell for years and gives parents a break from screens and schedules. Family-run for eight generations, Grasslands understands what it means to bring a family into this land and look after them properly while they're here.

Arrival Day

Introductions, Safety, Cultural Awareness

The adventure starts the moment you land at Maun International Airport. From there, it's a road transfer to Grasslands Safari Lodge (around five hours, including 16 farm gates) — plenty of time for the kids to spot their first wildlife and for the whole family to soak in Botswana's landscapes together.

Arrival Day - Monday

Time - Your flight can land anytime

Airport - Maun International Airport, Botswana

Departure Day - Monday (Day 8, or Day 15 for 2 weeks program)

Departure time - You can depart anytime

Min Duration - 1 week (2-week or longer durations recommended)

Min Age: No minimum age

Max Age: N/A - Medium Level of fitness required

Optional Upgrade: A 50-minute light aircraft transfer is available for an extra thrill, at an additional cost.

On Arrival:

Settle into your accommodation, join a family-friendly safety briefing and cultural introduction, and enjoy a welcome dinner at the lodge.

The day closes with a first, magical encounter with the San community and a welcome dinner under the African sky — a great first night for kids and adults alike.

***Note:** Packages are priced on 1 Adult and 1 child under 12 years old. Further requests can be quoted accordingly.

Day 2 – Orientation & Introductions

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A relaxed day to help everyone find their feet. A safety and cultural briefing covers what to expect and how to engage respectfully with the San community, followed by a guided tour of the reserve — fence lines, waterholes, predator camps, horse facilities — that's as fascinating for curious kids as it is for parents.

There's an open Q&A for any questions, then easy, hands-on introductions to horse care, predator conservation with the African wild dogs, rhino conservation, and the camera traps used to track wildlife. It's a gentle, engaging start that gets everyone excited for the days ahead.

Day 3 – Cultural & Conservation Activities

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Mornings begin with the whole family pitching in on horse and rhino care — feeding routines, supplementary rhino feed, releasing horses to graze.

Then comes a highlight kids won't forget: time with the San Bushmen, learning to track animals, make fire, and understand a landscape in a way no classroom could ever teach.

The family can help with the wild dog program, record wildlife sightings at the waterholes, and join fence inspections. In the afternoon, everyone can get involved in Western Mounted Games prep — a fun, active session with riding opportunities for kids and adults at whatever level suits them — before winding down with a family review of the day's discoveries.

Day 4 – Firewood Collection & Horse Riding

Firewood Collection & Horse Riding

A day built around the animals every kid falls in love with.

Feed and move horses into their grazing camps together, then join a guided outride through the surrounding landscape — riding as a family, at a pace that works for younger or less experienced riders.

There's room to help with predator feeding too if the family's keen, plus fence patrols and waterhole monitoring, before closing out with time to talk through everything spotted that day.

Day 5 – Rhino Tracking & Waterhole Monitoring

Rhino Tracking & Waterhole Monitoring

Join the conservation team for real fieldwork the whole family can be part of — rhino patrols, fence inspections, and basic repairs that genuinely protect this reserve.

Spend time at the waterholes recording what you see, then choose your family's afternoon: a mounted patrol, or a quiet, patient sit watching wildlife come and go.

As evening falls, help set up night cameras together — always a favourite with kids — before winding down and reviewing the day's finds.

Day 6 – Camera Monitoring & Predator Camp Work

Camera Monitoring & Predator Camp Work

After horse care, spend the morning on one of the most exciting parts of the whole trip for kids — retrieving overnight camera trap footage and seeing exactly what wandered past camp while everyone slept.

The family can help tidy the predator camps and join fence inspections, before an afternoon of waterhole monitoring together.

Day 7 – Free Day / Optional Activities

Free Day / Optional Activities

A well-earned family day off.

Take a game drive, go for a relaxed ride, watch wildlife from camp, or just let the kids run around and everyone recharge.

There's light optional involvement in daily support activities for those who want to stay hands-on, plus a chance to help with the week's data review if the kids enjoy feeling like real conservationists — many do.

Day 8 – Departure

Departure Day

A relaxed transfer back to Maun, or an optional charter flight.

Before you go, take a few minutes as a family to talk about what everyone learned, the animals you cared for, and the time spent with the San Bushmen — a nice way to close out a trip most families remember for a long time.

Information & Documents

Accommodation

Your home for this program is a room at the main lodge itself — comfortable, en-suite, and just steps from the heart of camp life.

It's the kind of accommodation that lets you fully enjoy the Kalahari by day and properly relax by night, with proper bedding, a private bathroom, and none of the compromises of camping.

The lodge's communal spaces — the lounge, dining area, and fireside seating — are all close at hand, so evenings unwind easily into shared stories and a sky full of stars without much walking required. It's comfort with the wilderness still right on your doorstep.

Meals

Meals

- **Breakfast:** Freshly baked bread from the lodge kitchen, cereals, yogurt, fresh fruit, and assorted spreads.
- **Lunch:** Light meals such as macaroni cheese, vegetable pizza, pasta dishes, fresh salads, and bread.
- **Dinner:** Three-course meals with starter, main (meat, starch, vegetables), and dessert - enjoyed at the Lodge with guests (subject to space limitations) otherwise back at the camp
- **Afternoon tea:** Daily

Drinks are available at the lodge bar, or volunteers may bring their own supplies from Maun.

Laundry

Limited laundry services are available during your stay.

For volunteers participating in the 1-week program, personal laundry can be arranged through the lodge for an additional fee.

Volunteers staying for the 2-week program will receive one complimentary laundry service, during which select clothing of your choice will be washed free of charge.

Please note that undergarments are not washed by lodge staff. For personal items such as these, hand-washing powder is provided, along with a small drying line at the volunteer camp for your convenience.

Medical and Emergency Evacuation

The lodge maintains a comprehensive first aid kit to address minor injuries such as cuts, bumps, and bruises, as well as a small selection of over-the-counter medications. Use of these medications is entirely at the volunteer's discretion. Please note that lodge staff have basic first aid training, but they are not trained medical practitioners.

Due to the lodge's remote Kalahari location, it is essential that all volunteers have comprehensive medical insurance, including coverage for medical evacuation to Maun and onward transfer to South Africa if required. The lodge has a registered landing strip, operational during daylight hours.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the lodge's volunteer program provides comprehensive evacuation options, including:

- Fixed-wing aircraft
- Helicopter evacuation to the closest medical facility in Maun

It is important to understand that any further medical care beyond Maun, such as transfer to Johannesburg, South Africa, must be covered by your personal insurance.

Volunteers are strongly advised to ensure their insurance policy includes full emergency medical coverage and repatriation. Being prepared allows for safe, timely care in the unlikely event of a serious medical incident, while the lodge continues to maintain its strong safety and first aid protocols.

Wifi

Wifi is available at the main lodge to use but not at the volunteer accommodation

What to Bring – Preparing for the Kalahari

Life in the Kalahari is both rewarding and physically engaging. Volunteers will spend time outdoors in a semi-arid desert environment where temperatures can vary greatly throughout the day. It is therefore important to pack practical, comfortable clothing and a few essential personal items for each family member.

Clothing

- Lightweight long-sleeved shirts for sun protection
- Comfortable long trousers suitable for bush work
- Warm fleece or jacket for early mornings and evenings
- Layered clothing – the Kalahari can be very cold at night and very hot during the day, sometimes within the same 24-hour period
- Wide-brim hat or cap for sun protection
- Light gloves (useful for fence work, firewood collection, and general tasks)
- Comfortable walking shoes or light boots suitable for bush terrain
- Sandals or casual shoes for relaxing at camp
- Swimwear (optional depending on lodge facilities)

Essential Personal Items

- Flashlight or headlamp (very important for moving around camp at night)
- Sunglasses
- High SPF sunscreen
- Personal toiletries
- Small backpack or daypack for daily activities
- Reusable water bottle
- Insect repellent

Optional but Recommended

- Binoculars for wildlife viewing
- Camera with spare batteries or charging equipment
- Notebook or field journal for recording wildlife observations
- Personal medication and a small basic first aid kit

Why join?

This is a chance for your family to do something meaningful together — real conservation work, real cultural connection, and real time away from daily routines, in one of Africa's last great wildernesses. Kids come away with hands-on skills and a genuine sense of contribution; parents come away with memories the whole family will keep talking about long after the trip ends.

Volunteer Program Objectives

1. **Cultural Preservation** — work alongside the San Bushmen as a family, learn tracking and survival skills together, support the continuation of Naro culture
2. **Conservation Efforts** — rhino tracking and monitoring, predator conservation, daily waterhole monitoring, fence patrols, camera trap setup and review
3. **Safari Farm Operations** — horse care, camp maintenance, firewood collection, waterhole cleaning, general lodge support
4. **Marketing & Guest Engagement** — help with social media content, promote lodge activities, support sustainable tourism
5. **Skill Development & Personal Growth** — conservation know-how for all ages, cultural heritage exposure, and a shared family immersion in the Kalahari

2026/2027 start dates

Program Dates 2026

1-Week Program

- 15 June – 22 June
- 20 July – 27 July
- 17 August – 24 August
- 21 September – 28 September
- 19 October – 26 October
- 16 November – 23 November

2-Week Program

- 15 June – 29 June
- 20 July – 3 August
- 17 August – 31 August
- 21 September – 5 October
- 5 October – 19 October
- 16 November – 30 November

Program Dates 2027

1-Week Program:

- 4 January – 11 January
- 1 February – 8 February
- 1 March – 8 March
- 29 March – 5 April
- 26 April – 3 May
- 24 May – 31 May
- 21 June – 28 June
- 19 July – 26 July
- 16 August – 23 August
- 13 September – 20 September
- 11 October – 18 October
- 8 November – 15 November
- 6 December – 13 December

2-Week Program:

- 4 January – 18 January
- 1 February – 15 February
- 29 March – 12 April
- 26 April – 10 May
- 24 May – 7 June
- 21 June – 5 July
- 19 July – 2 August
- 16 August – 30 August
- 13 September – 27 September
- 11 October – 25 October
- 8 November – 22 November
- 6 December – 20 December

*Please note that activities, schedules, and course details may be subject to change due to operational requirements, weather conditions, or conservation priorities.