



Nxamaseri island lodge

OKAVANGO DELTA - BOTSWANA

Peaceful riverside luxury with a personal touch.....

Nxamaseri Island Lodge is a unique African experience on an island in the permanent waters of Botswana's Okavango Delta. A small, exclusive lodge, and one of the oldest in the delta, it has seven double en-suite chalets, each secluded in indigenous forest and each with a private deck overlooking the water. Teak walkways link the rooms to the main area of the lodge.

The distinct style of Nxamaseri Island Lodge showcases the beauty of the permanent swamp that is its home and also subtly expresses the rich vibrance of the indigenous people. The lodge and the rooms are enhanced with original Botswana artwork and furniture is handcrafted by local artisans. Nxamaseri Island Lodge is owner-run with the focus on personal attention to detail, noticeably expressed in the original décor and excellent catering.

We pride ourselves in creating the opportunity to experience the unique, intimate and peaceful nature of Africa.

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THE LODGE

FACILITIES

The lounge area has comfortable upholstered seating with wonderful views and plenty of good books to browse through.

The lodge power supply is a 220v generator. Batteries for camera equipment can be charged when the generator is running.

DINING

Home-style buffet meals are served in our dining area. Private dining is available on request.

ACCOMMODATION

Each chalet is privately situated on its own teak deck. Bedrooms are quiet havens with open access to their decks with a seating area. Beds are draped with mosquito nets and each evening will see guests' beds turned down and if there is a chill in the air, hot water bottles are tucked in under the blankets, as a welcome surprise for tired guests.

A safe is provided at reception for guests' valuables.

Bed configuration:

5 x Twin rooms - 2 single beds under 1 large mosquito net. These can be pushed together or apart.

2 x Double rooms - 1 with king size bed & 1 tree-house with queen size bed.

Bathroom

Bathrooms are en-suite and offer a shower and WC.

HISTORY

Nxamaseri Island Lodge is one of the oldest camps in the Okavango Delta. It was established in the early 1980s by PJ and Barney Bestelink. PJ, an experienced guide and lodge owner, spent months exploring the permanent water channels of the delta in search of a perfect location for his home and camp. He favoured the Nxamaseri Channel for its beauty and seclusion, and eventually elected to build his camp on a large shady island hidden in the Nxamaseri waterways.

PJ, an avid fisherman, used Nxamaseri Island Lodge to pioneer fly-fishing in Botswana. He remains one of the most experienced fly fishermen in Southern Africa and the lodge is Botswana's premier fly-fishing destination.

Nxamaseri Island Lodge - Here you will experience the soul of Africa

ACTIVITIES

Take a boat or mokoro trip in the cool Nxamaseri waterways to relax and revitalize your soul. The channels abound with water lilies, fish and wildlife such as crocodiles, hippos, otters, swamp antelope and bird species too numerous to count. Experience the thrill of fishing in the deep waters from boats or sandbanks for tiger fish and bream. Nxamaseri is renowned for spectacular birding trips.

Motorised boat trips, mokoro, birding, fishing and walks are included in the rates. As an optional extra excursion we also offer the rare opportunity to visit a sacred San site - the beautiful Tsodilo Hills.

Nxamaseri prides itself in being able to tailor make each guest's stay to suit their specific needs. We also do not combine groups or individuals not travelling together, on an activity. Each couple/group has their own boat, mokoro and guides at their disposal to use at any time and for as long as they wish.

On days of arrival and departure we will arrange meals around the guests' travel times.

A typical day at Nxamaseri:

Early morning:	Guests wake up usually between 6 and 8.30am. Tea/coffee and a continental breakfast in the main dining area.
Morning activity:	Private boat trip for fishing or birding or both, including a guided walk on an island in the area if the guests would like this. An alternative is a mokoro trip in the channels and floodplains near the lodge.
Early Lunch:	Usually around 11am/midday - full lunch provided on return from boat trip
Early afternoon:	Siesta in room or relaxing on private decks, reading, alternatively doing a bird walk around Nxamaseri island (approx 45 mins).
Tea:	Usually around 4pm
Afternoon activity:	Private boat trip for sundowners, fishing and/or birding.
Drinks:	Pre-dinner drinks around the fire in the bar area, usually around 7/7.30pm
Dinner:	Full dinner provided (usually 7.30 or 8pm)

For fishermen visiting us during the barbel run - they are normally up early in the morning and can spend the entire day out if they would like. We can arrange a packed lunch for them with notice the day before.

MOKOROS

The traditional method of transport along the waterways and over floodplains in Botswana is by mokoro (dug-out canoe). There is no better way to experience the stillness and beauty of the Okavango Delta than to be poled on the water silently, gliding just inches above the crystal-clear surface, eye level with dragonflies, reed frogs and water lilies and within touching distance of the myriad of colourful fish that swim just below the surface.

The mokoro, introduced into the Delta by the Bayei people in the early 18th century), was originally made from the trunk of a single African Ebony or Sausage Tree. The rounded underside of the mokoro made it ideal for traversing the shallow floodplains. Nowadays, with ever-increasing demand from tourism, almost all new mokoro are made from fiberglass in an effort to protect the large indigenous trees.

During your Mokoro excursion you will learn more about the local inhabitants, the people in the panhandle are largely subsistence. They are in the panhandle because the water provides their livelihood. Fish and water lily roots and bulbs are harvested for food, reeds for fencing and building, sedge grass for thatching and as the water recedes vegetation emerges for livestock to feed on. The panhandle area of the Okavango Delta experiences extensive annual water fluctuations, often up to 5 metres. The result is that, with the flat topography of the delta, huge surface area is gained and lost with each cycle and hundreds of square metres of floodplains are alternatively exposed and covered as the water ebbs and flows with the flood. To maintain proximity to the water the people must live a nomadic lifestyle. Almost all the families have temporary homes that during high season may be completely flooded but are ideal for low water cultivation and subsistence.

In the areas surrounding Nxamaseri Lodge one can often see these subsistence people at work, collecting water lily bulbs on mekoros, gathering thatching grass, actively fishing with long, sharpened sticks (called a meshoeshoe) or wading into the water with conical woven baskets in which to scoop up the fish. As the water recedes one can also often see circular low mud ridges in the dry floodplains which are fishtraps constructed when the water is low to capture the small fish in the shallows.

The old fossil river that leads into the Nxamaseri channel used to flow passed Tsodilo hills, where a group of San lived (Tsodilo being the most sacred San site in Botswana). Due to tectonic movements the river gradually dried up and the swamp retracted. Some of the San followed the river to continue their traditions of fishing and living off the river, and thus are now living in the panhandle area. Others remained at Tsodilo to become hunter gatherers in the dry environment. The San people that followed the river continue to be known as River Bushmen. These San, unlike the San in Namibia, are related to the Banoka tribe that came up from Angola.

BIRDING

Nxamaseri Island Lodge has spectacular birding throughout the year. However, exceptional birding months are from September to February, before the new water arrives. This is when feeding conditions are at an optimum and most of the migrants are present during this time. The area has approximately 325 bird species (of the roughly 500 found in Botswana), and on a three to four day trip one can expect to see between 190 and 220 species.

Nxamaseri boasts one of the densest concentrations of fish eagles in Southern Africa. It provides unrivaled water bird viewing, having a large variety of kingfishers, herons, storks and waterfowl. The area also has an impressive woodland and riverine forest species list that occur on the islands and the seasonal floodplains beyond the camp.

Sightings at Nxamaseri include rare species such as the nearly endemic slaty egret, African skimmer, Pels fishing owl, white-backed night heron, western banded snake eagle, wattled crane and lessor jacana. There are a number of species that have their southern-most range in the Okavango, including the coppery-tailed coucal, brown firefinch, Hautlaubs babbler, swamp boubou, long-toed plover and swamp warbler.

Bird viewing can be done on foot, from mokoro, on boats, or even from the comfort of the lodge. A highlight at Nxamaseri is the night boating trips, on which rare and shy birds are easily seen. Nxamaseri Island Lodge is a water-based environment and so water birds are prolific. Day trips to Tsodilo Hills (which is an arid environment) afford diversity of bird species as well as giving one the opportunity to walk amongst the hills and view some of the 2000 San rock paintings.

Nxamaseri offers a specific birding package, indicated in our Package section.

WALKING

Nxamaseri Island Lodge offers guided walks on nearby islands, accessed by boat or mokoro, giving you the opportunity to experience the intimacy and peace of unspoiled Africa. Exploring the islands on foot is an effective way of relaxing and finding the more timid, forest-dwelling birds.

FISHING

Fly-fishing

Nxamaseri Island Lodge prides itself on being the premier fly fishing destination in Botswana. It is featured in several specialist books including "Fly fishing in Southern Africa", "The Longest Cast" and "A fly Fishing Safari in Africa". The prize catch at Nxamaseri is the tiger fish, but this is only one of eight separate species in the area.

The optimum time to fish for tiger fish is during the annual catfish (barbel) runs. The exact time of these runs differs from year to year but generally lasts from early September to the end of October. During March through to August, although there are no catfish runs, the tiger fish are still in abundance, and these are also excellent months for fly-fishing for species diversity, as the water level is low and the fish are concentrated in the permanent channels.

We have specialist fly-fishing guides available. (This service must be requested in advance upon making the reservation). Special arrangements at an additional charge can be made for private boats for fly-fishing, if required. The lodge carries standard lure fishing equipment but for fly fishing we suggest you bring your own equipment, although there are tiger fish flies available for purchase at the lodge as they are fairly specific.

Lure Fishing

Nxamaseri Island Lodge is a prime destination for lure fishing from March - December. Tiger fish are indigenous to the area, and as one of the world's most dramatic freshwater game fish it provides thrilling angling for both experienced and novice fishermen. In addition to tiger fish, up to eight other species are generally caught on line, creating eventful and memorable fishing at Nxamaseri. Our lodge has boats made for fishing and carries all the necessary equipment.

Nxamaseri offers a specialised fishing package and a barbel run fishing package, indicated in our Package section.

TSODILO HILLS

This can be enjoyed as an optional extra excursion, or our soon to be introduced Tsodilo Hills package.

One hour from Nxamaseri Island Lodge is one of Botswana's greatest treasures. The mystical and spiritual Tsodilo Hills rise out of the flat desert landscape, forming the highest point in Botswana. These hills are sacred to the San people of Northern Botswana and are adorned with over 2000 ancient San paintings. The San believe that it was from the backs of these hills that people first came to earth and for them it is one of the only places one can reach the Great God in the Eastern sky.

A visit to these hills affords one the privilege of being able to see and feel, however briefly, the essence of an ancient culture, fragile and increasingly threatened in the face of pressure from the Western world.

Tsodilo is a place you will never forget.

As the hills are so easily accessible from Nxamaseri Island Lodge, we offer fully catered and guided day trips to explore them, savour the ambience and view the paintings. In contrast to the cool Nxamaseri waterways Tsodilo is a dry, Kalahari arid experience. We return to the lodge in the late afternoon, in time for the evening boat cruise.

A Tsodilo Hills excursion should be booked in advance when making your reservation.

Nxamaseri offers a specific Tsodilo Hills package, indicated in our Package section.

Tsodilo Hills Itinerary:

An early start after a continental breakfast, an approximate hour and a half trip to the hills, an hour or two guided walk around the hills viewing the paintings, a picnic lunch, and then either more walking and return to the lodge by sunset, or an early afternoon return to the lodge in time for tea and an afternoon boat/mokoro activity.

Nxamaseri Island Lodge

Packages 2010/2011

Nxamaseri's ideal location makes it perfect for packaging together with stays in Namibia and other prime destinations in Botswana. Located on the western side of the Okavango Delta, in the pan handle, we are able to offer a great destination for self-drive clients entering Botswana through Namibia's Kaprivi Strip or vice versa. Nxamaseri Island Lodge is both easily accessible by road and by air with its own private air field.

It's niche market specializations of birding and fishing add to the package opportunities available. In addition, it's close proximity to the world heritage site of Tsodilo Hills, enables Nxamaseri Island Lodge to take day trips to the hills and to include this attraction in any of the other packages.

Below are some details of the packages we offer:

FISHING PACKAGE

Fishing Activities:

Guided boat trips around Nxamaseri's main fishing area, targeting the best fishing spots for tiger fish, tilapia and barbel

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

Lunch/tea

Afternoon private, guided boat trip for fishing

Dinner

Day 2: Breakfast

Morning fishing trip with private boat and guide

Brunch/lunch

Siesta or bird walk around Nxamaseri Island

Tea

Afternoon private, guided boat trip for fishing

Dinner

Day 3: Breakfast

Morning fishing trip with private boat and guide/alternative private mokoro ride

Brunch/lunch

Siesta/bird walk around Nxamaseri Island/ begin afternoon fishing trip early

Tea

Afternoon private, guided boat trip for fishing

Dinner

Day 4: Breakfast

Morning fishing trip with private boat and guide/alternative private mokoro ride

Departure

(Lunch will be subject to departure time)

BARBEL RUN FISHING PACKAGE

Fishing Activities:

Guided boat trips, following the gripping barbel runs, guaranteeing an exhilarating fight to catch large tiger fish on lure or on fly. You may take as many trips in a day as you would like, alternatively choose to spend the whole day out with a picnic lunch

Itinerary:

Note that this package is completely tailor-made, according to the guests' preferences and where the fish are.

BIRDING PACKAGE

A peaceful, relaxing, 3-night stay at Nxamaseri Island Lodge.

On your private boat or mokoro trips, you'll find white-backed night herons, rufous-bellied herons, Pel's fishing owls, lesser jacanas, little and dwarf bitterns and slaty egrets. These are some of the 350 bird species that can be found in the area.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

- Lunch/tea
- Afternoon mokoro trip for bird watching
- Dinner

Day 2: Breakfast

- Morning boating trip to see birds, including a guided walk in the flood plains around the island
- Brunch/Lunch
- Afternoon boating trip for sundowners and bird watching
- Dinner

Day 3: Breakfast

- Boat excursion to 'redcliffs' to see the bee-eaters
- Picnic lunch
- Late afternoon bird walk around Nxamaseri Island (flood dependant)
- Dinner

Day 4: Breakfast

- Morning mokoro trip for bird watching
- Departure
- (Lunch will be subject to departure time)

TSODILO HILLS PACKAGE

Guided day trip to Tsodilo Hills to walk the sacred San site and view the ancient rock art.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

- Lunch/tea
- Afternoon private, guided boat trip for birding and relaxed fishing
- Dinner

Day 2: Breakfast

- Day trip to Tsodilo Hills including picnic lunch
- Dinner

Day 3: Breakfast

- Morning mokoro ride
- Departure

(Lunch will be subject to departure time)

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE NXAMASERI COMMUNITY

'Nxamaseri' is the San word used to describe "the sound the wind makes when it blows through the reeds." The area has strong traditional links to the San people of Botswana as the Nxamaseri channel is unique in that its ancient course flowed past the mystical Tsodilo Hills, a site sacred to the San people. The Nxamaseri community has a strong San influence in its culture and appearance.

Nxamaseri Island Lodge has a curio shop selling handcrafts and artifacts made by the local communities, proceeds of which go to community development projects.

CLIMATE

Rain falls in Botswana from November through to March. Average daily temperatures are around 30 degrees Celsius. Rainfall usually takes the form of a short afternoon shower with plenty of time to enjoy sunshine in between. Evenings remain warm but it is advisable to bring light, long-sleeved shirts and long trousers as protection against mosquitoes.

The dry season extends from April through to October. The hottest and driest month is October, just prior to the rainfall.

It is during the months of February, March and April that the annual floodwater enters Botswana from Namibia and makes its way down the panhandle to the swamps and eventually dissipates into the Kalahari sands. At Nxamaseri the water is at its highest and clearest in the winter months of June and July. Temperatures at this time average around 22° C but evenings can get cold. It is advisable to bring warm jackets, scarves and hats, particularly for the boat trips at night.

FILM CREWS

We are experienced at hosting film crews and can provide private boats, underwater filming and birding guides, facilities for charging batteries and any other facilities required.

ACCESS

COORDINATES OF THE LODGE

18° 36'29.28"S
22° 05'20.26"E

SELF DRIVE

For self-drive guests we have a car park just off the main road where you will be picked up and transferred to the lodge by 4x4 vehicle and boat (30 - 45 minutes transfer).

Driving from Namibia - please phone us the night before your arrival at Nxamaseri (00267 713 26619) to arrange a pick up time at the turnoff (signposted with a red, white and black totem pole on your left).

We are approx 60km (around 1 hour including the border time) south of the Namibia/Botswana border at Mohambo, down the Shakawe-Sehitwa road. We are approx 40km south of the town of Shakawe. You will need to pass the left turning to the village of Nxamaseri and also pass the right turn to Tsodilo Hills.

Driving from Maun - please phone us just as you are leaving Maun and then again from Gumare (+267 713 26619) to arrange a pick up time at the turnoff (signposted with a red, white and black totem pole on your right). We are about 3.5 - 4 hours from Maun on the Sehitwa/Shakawe road.

Directions from Riley's Garage (Maun):

Driving out of Riley's, turn left to go past Barclay's Bank, all the way to a four way stop. Continue over the four way and past Ngami Toyota on your right and carry on with this road all the way out of town. About 12-14km out of town you will pass a sign for Sitatunga Camp on your left - then you know you're on the right road. Continue on this road (approx. 90kms) until you get to Sehitwa. Turn right to Shakawe/Gumare/Tsau. Drive through Tsau, Nokaneng, Gumare, Etsha 6, Etsha 13, Ikoga and Sepopa. Our turnoff will be approx 20kms after Sepopa. Look out for the red, white and black totem pole on your right. If you reach Nxamasere village you have gone too far. Remember to phone us as you leave Gumare so that we can send someone to the tar road to meet you. Our turn off is approx 90km from Gumare. The transfer from the tar road to the camp takes between 20 - 40 minutes, depending on the time of year and varying water levels.

We will arrange that your car is looked after by one of the herdsman of the local village at our turnoff, for a small fee of P 20 per day.

BY AIR

Charter flights from Maun, Kasane or Victoria Falls can be arranged by Nxamaseri. Fly-in guests will be met at Nxamaseri airstrip and transferred to the lodge (10 minute boat transfer).

There is no access to Nxamaseri island by vehicle or foot. Guests are transferred from Nxamaseri airstrip or from the main road car park by boat.

NXAMASERI AIRSTRIP

Name:	FBNX
Altitude:	3250 ft
Coordinates:	S18 35.50 E022 03.59
Runway details:	12/30 1000m/18m grass
Notes/Caution:	Registered for ops of a/c with mauw of 2300kg.



Nxamaseri *island lodge*

OKAVANGO DELTA - BOTSWANA

CONTACT INFORMATION

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