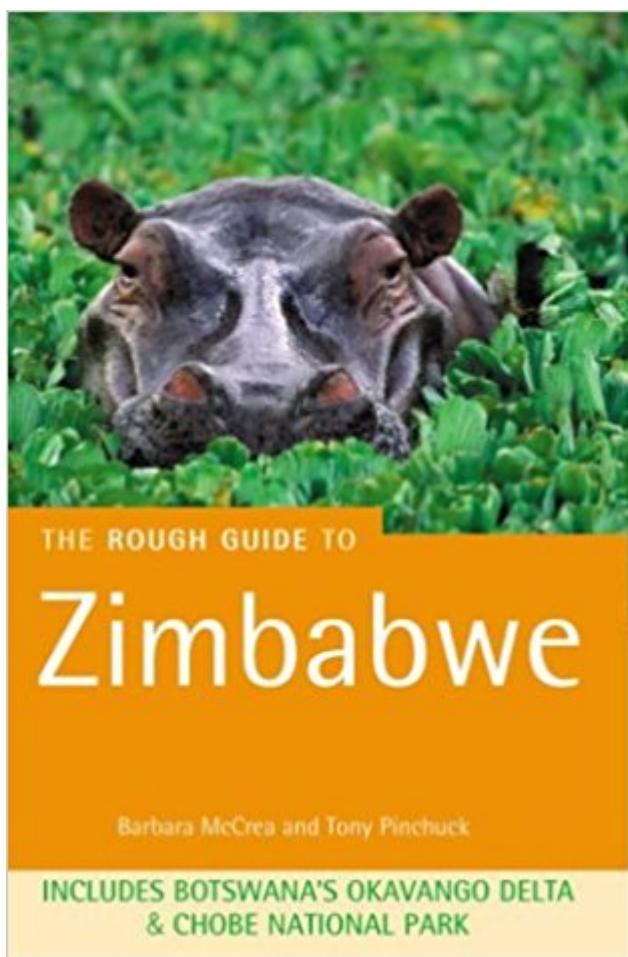


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The Rough Guide To Zimbabwe 4 (Rough Guide Travel Guides)



Synopsis

Includes accounts of all the major attractions from the lush Eastern Highlands to the magnificent ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Includes recommendations of the best palces to eat, drink and stay from campsites and backpackers' hostels to luxury safari lodges.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Where to go Obviously, your own personal interests – and time – will dictate where you travel. The capital, Harare, is enjoyable simply to stroll about, taking in markets, parks, beer gardens, street life and local style; high-energy guitar sounds from bands such as Thomas Mapfumo's Blacks Unlimited and Oliver Mtukudzi burst out of the city's clubs. If this is your first visit to the country and you have only a few days, Zimbabwe's top attraction, Victoria Falls, is the obvious place to head. Not only does it have good regional connections, but Hwange and Chobe, among the best game reserves in the subcontinent, are within easy striking distance. With a week or more you could fly on to safari in Botswana's beautiful and game-rich Okavango Delta, or launch out from the Falls on a walking safari led by one of Zimbabwe's excellent licensed hunter-guides in the remote Chizarira National Park. Lake Kariba, with its prolific waterside game viewing and fishing, can be reached from Victoria Falls by air, or by car and ferry across the lake. Kariba Town is the launch pad for canoeing trips down the Zambezi to the thrillingly wild Mana Pools National Park. From Kariba, it's five hours by road back to Harare. With more time, you could rent a car to circuit the country, taking in the marvellous Matopos Hills and their rock art near Bulawayo, the country's

sepia-toned second city, then strike three hours east to Masvingo and the magnificent ruins at Great Zimbabwe. A further three hours' drive east takes you to the Eastern Highlands, the 350-kilometre mountainous rampart along the border with Mozambique. This is an area where you can see tea and coffee estates, take in waterfalls, wallow in mineral baths at Hot Springs, relax at mountain resorts or hike in Chimanimani's spectacular wilderness. From the Eastern Highlands' mountain-encircled capital, Mutare, it's four hours by road back to Harare. When to go Though technically a tropical country, Zimbabwe doesn't conform to hot, sticky stereotypes. The highveld climate (Harare and Bulawayo) is as close as possible to perfection, with dry-season temperatures similar to those of the Mediterranean, but without the humidity. Surprisingly, Harare's highest recorded temperature peak of 35°C (95°F) is below that of London. Altitude is the most important determinant: the low-lying areas off the plateau – Kariba, the Zambezi River Valley and Victoria Falls – get considerably hotter than the higher towns, and can be uncomfortably humid in the steaming rainy season. Botswana's weather follows a roughly similar pattern, although it can be very hot in the summer months in Maun and Kasane. Deciding when to come is really a question of what you're after. For game viewing, the dry season (roughly May–Oct) is recommended, as wildlife concentrates around scarce water; it's very cold at night and in the early morning, but warm enough for T-shirts in the middle of the day. Temperatures climb towards September; an optimum spring month, which combines good wildlife with vegetation coming into flower amidst the dust. October, the hottest month, is the prime time for wildlife, when animals are restricted to a few waterholes. The arrival of the rainy season in November does much to dampen temperatures. The rains, which last till March, are a time of new growth; a lush and beautiful period. Rain usually comes in the form of afternoon thunderstorms, leaving most of the day clear. There can be several days, or even weeks, between falls. The Eastern Highlands receive the highest rainfall, where you may experience a series of cool wet days. April and May, the autumn months, are perhaps ideal for general travels; warm and dry, with the land still fresh from the rains, though long grass may make game viewing more difficult. November to mid-March. Rainy summer season: thunderstorms; hot. Mid-March to mid-May. Post-rainy autumn season: limited rainfall; cooling off. Mid-May to mid-August. Cool, dry winter season: virtually no rainfall; cool to moderate, but very sunny and clear. Mid-August to November. Warm dry spring season: virtually no rainfall; temperatures rise to peak.

Too much info for lone travelers; not enough background info for those who just want information (history, etc) on country.

A highly practical guide, informative and entertaining to read, sadly out-of-date now because of Zimbabwe's changed situation. But despite the current petrol crisis tour companies are still operating and well managed, hotels still giving the renowned Zimbabwe welcome despite food shortages -- e.g. sustaining English breakfasts and local wines for dinner. It was an invaluable companion to an archeological trip to the stunning eastern highlands, indispensable in finding the way around Harare, with useful potted histories for most rural locations.

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