



# Gonarezhou Bushcamp Information

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## ABOUT GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK

**Gonarezhou National Park** is situated in the south eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe and covers an area in excess of 5 000 square kilometres, which to put this into perspective, is about the same size as Mana Pools, Matusadona and Chizarira National Parks put together. Yes, it is that big – there is plenty of bush to explore and contrary to popular (but mostly uninformed) opinion, there are heaps of animals and it is spectacularly beautiful.

"**Gonarezhou**" meaning "The place of many elephants" is estimated to have a population in excess of 7000 elephants and we've seen several bulls with ivory weighing not much less than a hundred pounds a side. You don't find these kinds of elephants just anywhere, and even in **Gonarezhou** these big tuskers haven't got that big without good reason. Without doubt, **Gonarezhou's** Grey Ghosts possess an enigma that has kept them safe through civil wars, severe droughts and poaching.



Being far away from major tourist attractions, **Gonarezhou** is seldom visited and until recently has only attracted the most intrepid of travellers.

Apart from its scenic beauty and incredible diversity of wildlife, the park's most important attraction is its wilderness character which makes it one of the very few areas left in Southern Africa which can offer a genuine

wilderness experience. No boat motors, no aircraft engines, no permanent camps and few other tourists makes **Gonarezhou** quite unique to anywhere else.



**Gonarezhou** is an extremely scenic park comprising some of the most rugged and beautiful landscapes to be found anywhere in Southern Africa: honestly, you will struggle to find a backdrop more spectacular than Gonarezhou ANYWHERE in Africa.

The dominating features of the park include incised sandstone cliffs, rocky basalt river gorges, extensive tracts of Mopane, Ironwood and mixed broadleaf woodland, riverine floodplains, wetlands and wide sweeping sand rivers.

**Gonarezhou** has another unique quality in being the only national park in Zimbabwe in which both banks of a major river (the Runde River) are enclosed within the boundary of a National park. Two other major rivers, the Save to the north east and the Mwenezi in the south west also cut their courses through the park, providing life sustaining water and habitat for hundreds of species of birds, wildlife and fish.



In addition to all of the above, **Gonarezhou** is the jewel in the crown of the [Great Limpopo Trans Frontier Park](#) a massive Pan-African park which covers an area of 35 000 km<sup>2</sup> and includes South Africa's Kruger National Park and Mozambique's Limpopo National Park. This huge area is set to become one of the largest peace parks in the world and is the most forward thinking conservation initiatives to have come out of Southern Africa.

#### **ABOUT THE CAMP**

**Gonarezhou Bush Camp** is a mobile tented camp, which means it is set up for the duration of your safari, after which it is taken down and packed away. The camp can be set up at several locations within **Gonarezhou National Park** depending on the time of year and wildlife movements.

Our favourite site is on the banks of the Runde River, looking out across the sand and gently flowing water to the red sandstone Chilojo cliffs and is within easy access of the flood plain and seasonal pans where game congregates.

Apart from the National Parks lodges at Mabalauta in the extreme south of the park, **Gonarezhou Bush Camp** currently provides the only accommodation within the park.

Owing to the camp being lightweight and mobile in nature, one has to forgo some of the luxuries of a permanent safari camp, however, that said this does not mean that our camping style is basic or uncomfortable.

Adequate thought has been given to ensuring that none of the important necessities have been overlooked – comfortable beds, hot showers and clean ablution facilities, freshly prepared wholesome meals and a good selection of hot and cold beverages are all provided.



The camp can sleep a maximum of ten guests, in five 3 x 3 metre canvas dome tents. Each tent has two regular size single beds fitted with cotton sheets, duvets and throw pillows, a bedside table and outside a little front veranda with two chairs and a hand washbasin. Each tent has its own separate bucket shower and short-drop loo tent a little way behind.

We provide LED lighting in the tents and hurricane lamps illuminate the elephant paths that are our pathways between the tents and the main mess area.



The main mess area is a large tent that can be either closed or open-sided and is where most meals are served unless we are having a bush-breakfast or picnic. In the early evening, after drinks and snacks have been enjoyed around the fire in the river-bed dinner is taken by candlelight in the mess or under the stars.

#### THE CAMP MANAGERS

**Gonarezhou Bush Camp** is owned and managed by Ant and Rawana Kaschula. Ant is a Zimbabwean licensed professional guide who has been privately guiding safaris into a dozen different countries since 2000. Ant first visited Gonarezhou in 1993, and was immediately captivated by its wilderness character and spectacular scenery.



Having been based in Kenya for the last five years Ant returned home to Zimbabwe in May 2010 and he and Rawana who is of Kenyan descent have concentrated their efforts on promoting tourism into this forgotten corner of south eastern Zimbabwe.

## **WILDLIFE**

If you want to tick off the Big Five, then Gonarezhou is certainly not the place for you, however, the quality of each wildlife sighting far makes up for the quantity of game and a typical drive or walk will usually produce about a dozen mammal species. Owing to low numbers of visitors to the park, wildlife is not habituated to vehicles, which makes searching for game by treading lightly and scouting from vantage points an extremely rewarding experience.



The majority of the larger mammal species are found within the park and we have personally recorded 36 different mammals including charismatic species such as lion, leopard and painted hunting dogs.

Whilst there is no shortage of game (if one knows how and where to look for it) Gonarezhou's main attraction is that it is a vast and pristine wilderness area where it is possible to get away from the hustle and bustle common to other popular national parks.

You may see lion and leopard as well as the usual antelope, mongooses and other mammals...but this is the real Africa where game is not served on a plate, but is searched for, tracked and enjoyed on foot.

## **ACTIVITIES**

We are currently the only licensed operator conducting walking safaris in Gonarezhou National Park, which owing to the limited road infrastructure makes walking the best way to experience Gonarezhou.



In addition to walking we also offer game drives, sport fishing (concentrating on fly fishing for tiger and several species of tilapia), fly camping and multi day walking safaris. The fly camping and multi day walking safaris utilise an ultra lightweight camp consisting of mosquito netted dome tents with bed-rolls.

## **VEHICLES**

For most of our activities we use an open Toyota Landcruiser which can seat nine passengers and we also have a stretched landcruiser that has three roof hatches and can comfortably seat six passengers. We mostly use this vehicle for longer road transfers.



## GETTING THERE

**By Road:** We can transfer guests from Harare in our stretch land cruiser which can comfortably seat six guests. It is five hours to the park gate and seven hours to the camp. We suggest breaking up the trip with an overnight stay at the Great Zimbabwe Ruins on the way.

**By Air:** There are two options for guests to fly in to **Gonarezhou**. Guests can either private charter into Chipinda Pools airstrip which is located within the park where we will collect them and transfer by road to camp (approx 2 hours). Another option is for guests to private charter in to Buffalo Range International Airport (guests can charter directly in from Johannesburg) where we will collect them and transfer by road to camp (approx 3 hours).

Currently the only schedule service running from South Africa to Buffalo Range is operated exclusively for Singita Pamushana Lodge guests. As a result many of our guests take advantage of the schedule and also spend a few nights at Pamushana before or after staying with us.

## FAST FACTS

<b>Maximum no of guests</b>	10 guests
<b>Child policy</b>	Children of all ages are welcome
<b>Triples</b>	Not possible
<b>Accommodation</b>	5 twin tents
<b>Malaria area</b>	Yes but risk is generally very low between May and November when we operate
<b>Ablution facilities</b>	Each tent has its own ablution facilities which comprise bucket showers and short drop toilets located a short distance behind each tent
<b>Laundry</b>	Yes – we can do limited amounts of laundry as a complimentary service
<b>Distance between tents</b>	Approximately 10 metres
<b>Airstrip Co-ordinates</b>	UTM 36 K 0386527, 7650257
<b>Length/service of airstrip</b>	1100m which is long enough for a King Air 200
<b>Power</b>	Limited 220v charging facilities
<b>Guide accomodation</b>	Yes, we can accommodate two additional private guides
<b>Seasons</b>	We operate the camp from 1 <sup>st</sup> April – 30 <sup>th</sup> November
<b>Communications</b>	We have a satellite phone in camp, vhf radios in our vehicles and portable vhf radios are taken on walks