



## Spellbinding Kalahari • South Africa 2019

**18 - 25 March**  
**14 - 21 November**

Join Wildlife Photographer **Hannes Lochner** for an unforgettable **8 days** Photographic Safari Experience to the **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park**.

### Open Spaces and Predators of the Mystical Kalahari

During this quintessential photosafari, guests traverse the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park which is characterised by its red rolling sand dunes, the arid fossil river environment of the predator-rich Nossob River valley, open Acacia savannas, grassy plains and vegetated pans. The park is located largely within the southern Kalahari Desert and straddles the border between South Africa and Botswana. The smell of the first rains, the flowers after the rainy season, the birth of hundreds of springbok and, of course, seeing a big black-maned lion against the backdrop of a red dune. The dry river beds with its multitude of waterholes show predators and antelopes off at a premium and provide excellent photographic opportunities. In addition to the quadrupeds, the birdlife is also spectacular. Sunrise and sunsets in the Kalahari are incomparable and immerse the photographic subject in a magical light. The thunderstorms in summer present an even more spellbinding colour in the sky. Winter shows blue sky for weeks, the climate is pleasant and the air is dry.

The Kalahari is like a lost world tucked into the furthest corner of South Africa and it always delivers. There are no words that fully describe what an exceptional place it is. These are just a few features that draw one to this arid landscape, and for photographers this place is hot and sweaty but also chilly to freezing, but with enough patience, heaven on earth!



## General Information



### This trip offers a number of extraordinary photographic highlights!

- The trip offers you countless photographic scenes featuring the creatures of the Kalahari desert. In addition to the big cats, you will have excellent opportunities to photograph meerkats, large herds of antelopes, birds of prey, owls, African wild cats and many other animals.
- One trip takes place at the beginning of the Kalahari summer which brings fantastic colourful skies, thunderstorms and magical light. The other trip is at the end of the summer which brings an abundance of flowers and colourful landscapes.
- The red sand dunes form a spectacular background for photos of wildlife.
- Sunrise and sunsets in the Kalahari are incomparable and immerse the photographic subject in a magical light.
- The imposing star-spangled sky in the Kalahari is a very inspiring photographic subject and ideal for time-exposure photography.
- Photographic support for all skill levels and tour guiding from Hannes Lochner. Hardly anyone knows the region better than Hannes. He lived in the park for five years and, among other things, published three absolutely riveting illustrated books on the Kalahari.
- You will spend the nights inside the park in two beautiful, comfortable lodges whose surroundings are also ideal for hunting for photographic subjects.
- Small groups with a maximum of 6 participants and open 4x4 vehicles.

### Basic course content:

- Night Photography, Star-Timelapse • Knowing your subject • Knowing your equipment
- Knowing what you want the image to say • Telling a story. Does the photo have *Feeling*?
- Focussing on the eyes • Composition - Rule of thirds • Using flash - during the day and night!
- Watching the light. What time is good for photography? • *The little things!* - There's more to wildlife photography than lions • Patience and perseverance • Getting the perfect shot in the field (without Photoshop)! • Mastering birds in flight • Shooting in manual mode • And many more tips and tricks!

### What is included:

- Photographic Tutoring and one-on-one personal assistance by Hannes Lochner • 2 game drives a day • Accommodation: 1 night at Kgalagadi Lodge, 3 nights at Polentswa Lodge, 3 nights at Rooiputs Lodge • Full board at Polentswa and Rooiputs Lodge • Transfers between these Lodges • Park fees

### What is not included:

- Journey to and from Twee Rivieren / Kgalagadi Lodge • Drinks at the Ta Shebube Lodges • Drinks and meals at Kgalagadi Lodge • Personal expenses • Tips/gratuities • Travel insurance/cancellation cover



**Itinerary** • *PLEASE NOTE: Depending on the safari date the itinerary below reverses so the trip starts at Rooiputs first and ends off at Polentswa Lodge.*

### Day 1 - Arrival in the Kalahari

We will meet in late afternoon at the Kgalagadi Lodge, only a few kilometres from the gates of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. After an introduction we will have time to capture the first images of a Kalahari sunset and the starry sky.

The park can be reached with your own or hired car or with an organised transfer from Upington. On request we can book accommodation for you in Upington the night before and after the trip.

### Day 2 - Driving to Polentswa

After your breakfast you will be transferred to the park entrance. The guides are already waiting for us and we will start our journey through the park. In an open Safari vehicle you will be exploring the Nossob valley and have the opportunity to photograph the first animal encounters. Around noon you'll have a picnic lunch in the Park and in the late afternoon we will arrive at Polentswa lodge.

### Day 3 & 4 - Days spent exploring the northern part of the Park

These two days, you will go on a game drive early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Every day in the afternoons there will be time for tutoring, one-on-one support and time off for yourself. After dinners, Hannes will introduce you to the secrets of night-time photography around the camp. The starlit sky in the Kalahari offers a breath-taking vista.

### Day 5 - The journey onward to Rooiputs

Today you will enjoy a long game drive. We will make our way to the southern part of the Park to Rooiputs. As every day you will have plenty of opportunities to photograph the abundant wildlife of the Kalahari. In the late afternoon you'll arrive at the next lodge Rooiputs. This region is famous for its regular sightings of lions and cheetahs.

### Day 6 & 7 - Days spent exploring the Rooiputs region

On both these days you will once again go on a game drive early in the morning and late in the afternoon. You will explore the southern part of the Nossob Valley. There will be plenty of time for taking pictures. Hannes will be there to share his knowledge and help with tips and tricks. After dinners, one evening night-time photography is once again part of the programme. **And the last evening to round off the course we hold a general presentation on a laptop where each person can show a small selection of their favourite photographs.**

### Day 8 - End of the photography trip and the return journey to the Upington

After a last game drive in the early morning and some breakfast we will drive back to the park entrance at Twee Rivieren and the Kgalagadi Lodge, arriving there between 12 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon. This is where the trip ends and you can continue your individual travel.



## Accommodation

### Comfortable and very beautiful accommodation in the desert

On this photography trip you will be staying for six nights within the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in very beautiful and comfortable lodges with full board.

The first night is spend just 5km outside the Park at the Kgalagadi Lodge.



### Ta Shebube Rooiputs Lodge

This comfortable lodge is located in the park, circa 25km from the park entrance. The area is particularly known for regular sightings of lions. The lodge contains 9 chalets built on wooden platforms. Each chalet contains a double bed or a twin bed, a seating area, a bathroom, an outdoor shower and a large veranda. The main building contains a lounge, a bar, the dining room and a reading area. There is also a small souvenir shop and a plunge pool, and massages can be booked.

### Ta Shebube Polentswa Lodge

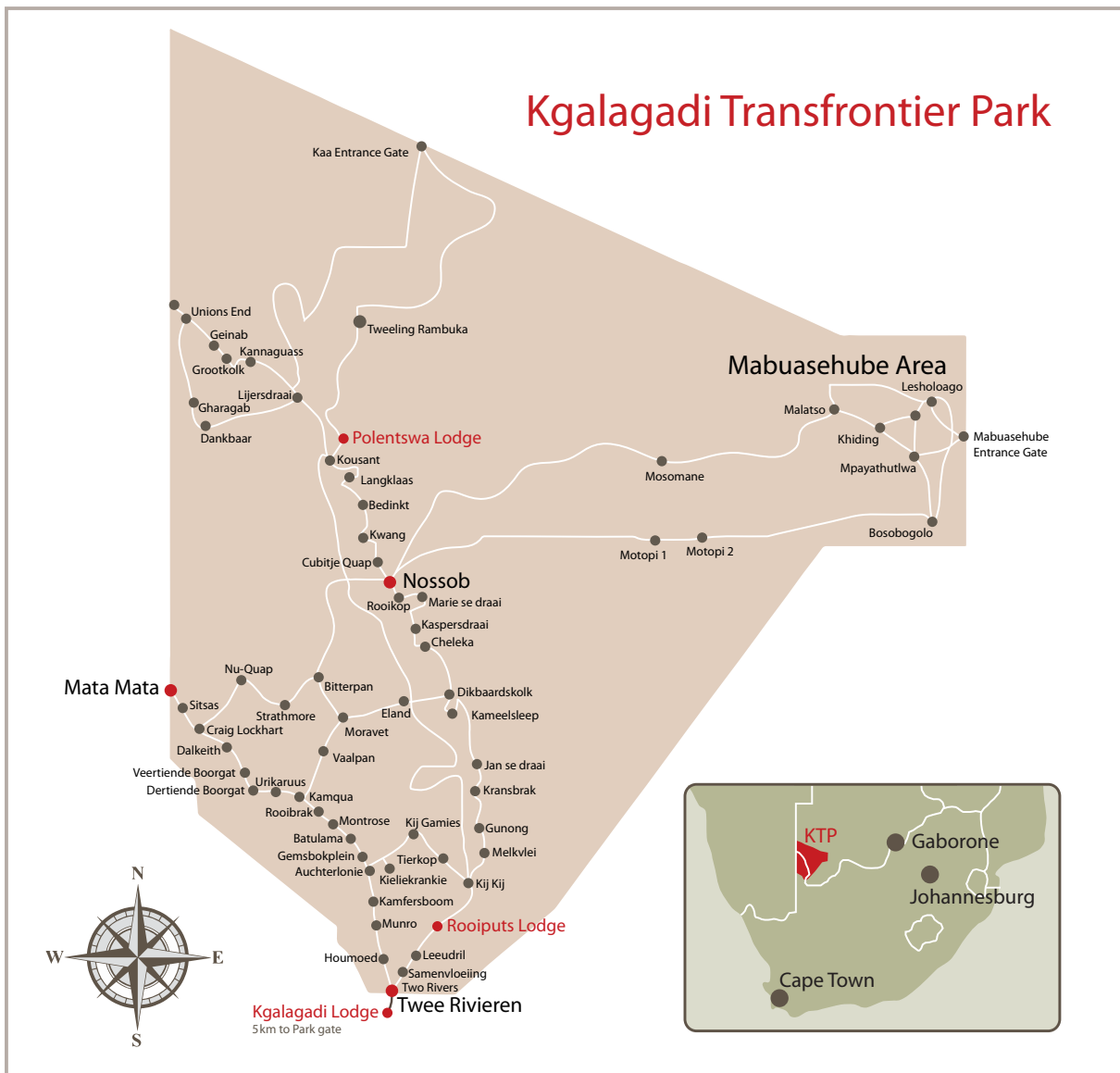
In contrast to Rooiputs, Polentswa's accommodation is a classic tented camp capturing the romance of a nostalgic bygone era. The camp comprises of six classic safari tents, one family unit and one luxury desert suite/honeymoon suite all built on raised wooden platforms and under huge canvas roofs that also encompass a private veranda. Each tent has a sleeping area, a desk, en-suite bathroom, and a surprising yet exhilarating outside shower open to the desert and to the stars. The main building consists of a spacious lounge area with a splendid view of the vegetated pen. In addition there is a viewing deck with a telescope, a bar, a dining room, a boma and a restful reading area.





## Kgalagadi Lodge

The Kgalagadi Lodge is located 5km from the Kgalagadi National Transfrontier Park. Accommodation comprises 26 chalets, that are unique and tastefully decorated. All chalets have air-conditioning, DSTV and outside braai facilities. The lodge has a communal swimming pool and an on-site grocery shop that stocks fresh produce. The restaurant also offers traditional mouth watering meals and a menu is included in each unit for room service.



## Practical Information

### A short list of necessities:

Any DSLR & any wideangle lens • Telephoto lens of at least 300mm • Tripod • Flash • Laptop • Memory cards • Extra batteries for camera • Head torch • Binoculars

### Electricity:

The Ta-Shebube Lodges run on solar power. There is enough power during the day to charge your equipment. However over night the power will be turned off once the clients are gone to bed.

### Travel Insurance:

Please ensure that your travel insurance covers personal effects, personal accident, medical travel expenses, baggage, cancellation and curtailment prior to arrival.

### Weather and Climate in the Kalahari:

Interestingly, the Kalahari is not classified as a desert. The area experiences both wet and dry seasons making it a semi-arid region. Only certain parts of the south west can be considered true desert due to a lack of rainfall.

**Summer** - November to March - Kalahari summers are made of incredibly hot days and milder nights. The temperatures climb up to 40 degrees Celsius and higher. Summer brings rain; peak rainy season runs from February to April with the Kalahari receiving between 50-100mm on average. Although the rains can be unpredictable, you can expect occasional afternoon thunderstorms and arid areas which become lush and green after the rainfall. The rains bring out the Kalahari's flora and fauna. Acacia trees are stoic across the landscape and wildflowers bloom.

**Autumn** - April to May - The summer season comes to a close, bringing mild days and cool evenings. Typical temperatures are around 6°C in the morning and 25°C in the afternoon. Following the summer rains, autumn is also the greenest time of the year in many areas of the Kalahari.

**Winter** - June to August - Winter is the Kalahari's dry season. You can expect mild, pleasant days between 18 to 22 degrees but cold nights where the temperature can sometimes drop below freezing. The lack of humidity that hangs over the Kalahari during summer creates dry conditions during winter.

**Spring** - September to October - As spring arrives, the days become hotter and the nights warmer too. Temperatures increase to an average of 29°C in the afternoon. Mornings are still cold, but more tolerable at an average of 7°C. The Kalahari anticipates the summer rains and plants begin to come into bloom.



## Kgalagadi seasons and when to visit

### Autumn

The most spectacular season is undoubtedly early autumn (March to April) after good rains when the sun-baked dunes and riverbeds expose their ephemeral charm and produce flower gardens of exquisite splendour. Large concentrations of game collect along the riverbeds and around the pans where fresh sweet grasses sprout. Termites erupt in spectacular numbers and attract raptors from far and wide. But rainfall is usually patchy and difficult to predict. There is not much wind and the cooler temperatures are pleasant. A second springbok lambing season may occur in March.

### Winter

During winter the temperatures in the riverbeds tend to be lower than in the dunes and some herds and many of the predators move into the dunes. During dry cycles when food is at a premium and riverbeds offer at least some food and water, spectacular winter influxes may occur. Temperatures frequently drop below zero at night but the days are usually glorious and sunny, sometimes even hot. Honey badgers tend to be very active during the day and are sighted on a regular basis. August is the windy month, bringing moisture into the area. It also creates the most beautiful sunsets with all the dust in the sky.

### Spring

Spring is usually dry and antelope spend much of their time in the dunes unless the riverbeds offer better grazing. After good rains in autumn, this can turn out to be the case. It is a good time for canids since this is when they den along the riverbeds. Although mostly pleasant, temperatures can swing from one extreme to the other. Cold winds from the south often alternate with extremely dry berg winds from the north, covering everything in fine dust.

### Summer

Summers can be an ordeal for many people because of the hot day temperatures that can soar into the high forties. Night temperatures drop but remain high. The days are long and getting an early start means you can enjoy a lazy midday break in the swimming pool or napping. Springbok drop their young and a lot of drama unfolds in the riverbeds with predators lurking around to take their chances on easy prey. This is the time for spectacular thunderstorms. Almost 80 percent of the annual rain falls between January and April, a bit more than 18 percent from September to December and the rest in the cooler months between May and August. Termites erupt after heavy showers and provide a feast for the masses.

*Text from: Kgalagadi Self-Drive – Routes, Roads and Ratings. HPH Publishing.*

