



BOTSWANA PILGRIMAGE 2022
AN INITIATIVE OF THE BOTSWANA COMPANION LINK COMMITTEE
OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE BOTSWANA PILGRIMAGE

PILGRIMAGE

The Botswana Pilgrimage is just that, a *pilgrimage*, an opportunity to experience the life of the Church in Botswana with fellow communicants from the Diocese of North Carolina. Not only will we learn of various ministries of the Anglican Diocese of Botswana, we will have multiple occasions to be with people of faith in Botswana – youth, women and men, clergy and laity – to worship together, to be in fellowship, and to engage in focused discussions about our journeys from our differing contexts.

Botswana is a remarkably easy country to visit in many ways, but there can be water shortages, electricity outages, hot weather without air-conditioning, and so on. Schedules may change and things may not go exactly the way we planned. If you have doubts about your gifts to adjust to such circumstances, as a minimum we ask that you let us know and that you arrange for us to discuss your concerns with you.

Though Botswana is a peaceful country, no travel is without risks. It is expected that pilgrims take responsibility for themselves and one another, attending to the recommendations of the leaders about individual and group safety.

Pilgrims have traditionally “traveled light.” Once in country, there will be overnight trips and limited space in vans and buses for suitcases and other travel bags, and though pilgrims are ever-ready to help one another, please carefully consider your ability to tend to your own luggage.

This is a *group* experience. We expect pilgrims to participate fully in the entire pilgrimage agenda, which will include time for personal reflection and quiet. Any additional tourism or personal activities should take place after the Pilgrimage.

Approval of your application to be a part of the Botswana Pilgrimage 2022 comes with expectations: you are expected to read all communications, as important details about this program will be delivered in coming months; you are expected to read any recommended materials; you are expected to come with an open mind and heart, to listen to others’ ideas, stories and dreams as we all strive to grow in faith through this experience; and you commit to sharing your experience within the Diocese of North Carolina – in your parish and in other venues – on your return.

APPLICATION

To be considered for the Botswana Pilgrimage, you will need to complete an application. Our Committee is not establishing restrictive criteria for participation. Rather we are looking toward a full contingent of at least 10 persons with firm commitments as early as possible. Completing the application and making the deposit at your earliest convenience enhances the chance of your being a part of the Pilgrimage.

FINANCIAL

The total cost of the Botswana Pilgrimage in 2022 is \$4,250. This includes roundtrip airfare from North Carolina to Johannesburg and Gaborone, Botswana's capital; trip protection and cancellation insurance; local transportation; lodging; and meals. It does not include cost of a passport, travelers' health insurance, medicines, transport to the North Carolina airport, souvenirs, some drinks, and any additional tourist excursions you may want to make after the Pilgrimage. Some scholarship assistance may be available.

A deposit of \$250 should accompany the application, **payable to the Diocese of North Carolina** with notation "Botswana Pilgrimage." The deposit is fully refundable if you cancel before June 1st.

A second payment of \$2,250 is due on June 1st. This will cover the cost of airfare to Botswana. Once your name has been given to the airlines, you will not receive a refund, even if you should have to cancel your plans to participate. If you need to cancel but your name has not yet been given to the airlines, this amount will only be refunded if a replacement for you is found.

The final payment of \$1,750 is due on July 15th. Withdrawal from the Pilgrimage after that date has serious repercussions for our travel and overall plans. This amount *may* be refunded but the previous payments, which cover airfare and which are unlikely to be recouped, will not.

Payments should be sent to

*The Rev. Miriam Saxon
225 W. Tryon Street
Hillsborough, NC 27278*

If you travel in the region after the Pilgrimage, you are likely to incur additional costs above the group's airfare. Such arrangements are your responsibility, and you will be liable for any costs beyond the group flight costs.

PASSPORT AND VISA

You are responsible for securing a valid passport. All participants must have a valid passport. It may take 4-6 weeks to process an application. See <https://pptform.state.gov/>.

Your passport should contain at least four blank visa pages and should be valid for at least 90 days from the beginning of your travel. Neither South Africa nor Botswana requires American citizens to obtain a visa. If you are not an American citizen, it is your responsibility to learn of needed visas and to secure them. If you choose additional travel before or after the Pilgrimage, and if that travel includes Victoria Falls, you can obtain a day visa for Zimbabwe at the border. If you travel elsewhere on the continent, learning of needed visas and securing them in a timely fashion is your responsibility.

COVID INFORMATION

Currently, the U.S. State Department's webpages about travel list Botswana under a Level 3: "Reconsider Travel" due to COVID. Our partners in Botswana are keeping us up-to-date with all requirements, and assure us at the moment that fully vaccinated travelers, with appropriate boosters, will be safe. Hence proof of vaccination status is a non-negotiable requirement for all 2022 pilgrims.

See: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/botswana-travel-advisory.html>.

Currently, proof of vaccination is required for travel through South Africa and in to Botswana, as is a negative COVID test within a given period prior to travel. Protocols are subject to change with short notice, and both our partners in Botswana and we will do our best to apprise you of current protocols come September.

MEDICAL

You should secure your own medical advice regarding travel to Botswana. Consult your own doctor and review the medical precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. (See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/botswana). Note especially their recommendations regarding malarial suppressants and typhoid and hepatitis A vaccines. Note also that international travel is a good occasion to review your normal vaccination record.

We absolutely expect all pilgrims to have adequate health insurance, including evacuation, at your expense. Your policy may or may not cover international travel. Travel insurance including health care coverage is available commercially. Our travel agent may secure health insurance coverage for international travel, including evacuation, for you if you wish. The cost ranges from \$40 to \$80, depending on age, and you will be billed for the expense.

We provide the following information about medical matters only to alert you to common practices. The following does not constitute the professional medical advice which is your responsibility to secure.

Gaborone, Botswana's capital, and Francistown, Botswana's second city, are considered malaria-free, and the general recommendation is that malarial suppressants are not needed while in the environs of Gaborone and Francistown. Malaria is known to occur in the north and central regions. We may well travel through the towns of Palapye and Mahalapye, in the east-central region on the route from Gaborone to Francistown, and malaria is known to occur there. If you plan a tourist trip to Chobe National Park or Okavango Delta after the Pilgrimage, you should definitely secure malarial suppressants.

Yellow fever inoculations are not required for South Africa and Botswana unless you have recently travelled in a country designated as a yellow fever area. If you travel to Victoria Falls after the Pilgrimage, note that Zimbabwe is also not considered a yellow fever area. However, Zambia is, and if you travel in Zambia, you may not be permitted to re-enter Botswana or South Africa without the yellow fever vaccine. In short, unless you plan anything in addition to the Pilgrimage, official advice is that the vaccine is not needed.

WEATHER

September is springtime in southern Africa, and temperatures rise over the August-November period. In September in Gaborone, daily highs are around 84°F, with daily lows ranging from 50°F to 58°F. The north can be significantly hotter.

CURRENCY

Botswana's currency is the pula. Pula may be obtained at numerous ATMs in Gaborone. You may also exchange dollars or travelers cheques in Gaborone, but it is time-consuming. Even if you can find someone to exchange dollars to pula before arrival, better exchange rates are secured once there.

SUPPLEMENTAL TOURISM

Botswana boasts two marvelous safari destinations: The Okavango Delta and Chobe National Park. The former is a unique ecosystem in the northwest of the country, where tourists often travel by canoe. Chobe is located on the Chobe River in the north of the country, and it boasts one of the

largest populations of elephant on the continent. Tourists can take a day trip to Victoria Falls from Chobe; that is not as manageable from the Okavango. For either destination, flights from Gaborone or Johannesburg to Maun or Kasane are necessary.

Some of us have used South African travel agents successfully in recent years and can provide you information if you wish to take that option. Of course there are agents in the United States who can do the same; it is important, however, for you to choose one with experience and knowledge of options in Botswana.

While we like the idea of your tourist travel being in Botswana, we should note that just across the border in South Africa is the large Madikwe Game Reserve, only an hour's drive from Gaborone.

If you choose to enjoy Botswana in this way, you should plan on making your arrangements well prior to departure, not once you are in Botswana.

OTHER QUESTIONS

We commend <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/botswana.html>, the State Department's webpages about travel to Botswana, for further information. You might also wish to consult the Botswana webpages on the diocesan website: www.episdionc.org, What We Do > Companion Dioceses (www.episdionc.org/Ministries%20&%20Mission/companion-dioceses.html).

Naturally some other questions may occur to you as you plan to participate in the Pilgrimage. We will attempt to answer them or refer you to other sources. By all means let us know. Contact Miriam Saxon (miriamsaxon@gmail.com or 919-656-6288) or Warren Pittman (WLPplus@aol.com or 336-210-0602); or Leon Spencer (lspencer1984@gmail.com or 336-643-0754), for further contact information.

March 2022