36 Hours

VICTORIA FALLS (ZIMBABWE SIDE)

On the Zimbabwe-Zambia border, one of the world's most enthralling natural wonders offers adrenaline-pumping adventures.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN STEVEN CHIKOSI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left: the Victoria Falls Bridge, built in 1905 as part of Cecil Rhodes's imagined plan for a Cape-to-Cairo railway; part of the falls as seen from the Chain Walk in the rain forest; night life can include an African drum show.

By SARAH KHAN

In 1855, after first glimpsing what the local Kololo tribe called Mosi-oa-Tunya — "the smoke that thunders" — the Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone promptly set about renaming it for his queen. Today, Victoria Falls straddles the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, transforming the placid Zambezi River into what is perhaps the most majestic waterfall in the world. Since Livingstone's day, the region has recast itself as the adventure capital of Africa, a hub for white-water rafting, bungee-jumping, zip-lining and more. While you can fly into either the newly redone airport in the town of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe or its Zambian counterpart in Livingstone and cross back and forth fairly easily (usually in 30 to 45 minutes), Americans should keep in mind the visa fees associated with multiple crossings: $80 for Zambia, and $45 for Zimbabwe. Many say the views are better from the Zimbabwean side, and the country's 2009 adoption of the United States dollar means you won't have to worry about exchanging money, so it would be easiest to spend most of your time in the town of Victoria Falls. With adrenaline-pumping activities galore, there are countless ways to experience one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

IF YOU GO

1 Flight of Angels, zambezihelicopters.com. **2 Stanley's Terrace,** Victoria Falls Hotel, 1 Mallet Drive; victoriafallshotel.com. **3 MaKuwa-Kuwa,** Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, 471 Squire Cummings Road; victoria-falls-safari-lodge.com. **4 Victoria Falls Rainforest,** zimparks.org/index.php/parks-overview/national/national-parks. **5 Wild Horizons,** wildhorizons.co.za. **Shearwater,** shearwatervictoriafalls.com. **6 Shearwater Café,** Corner of Livingstone Way and Parkway Drive, shearwatervictoriafalls.com/victoria-falls-restaurants. **7 Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village,** 273 Adam Stander Drive; elephantswalk.com. **8 Ra-Ikane,** raikane.com. **9 Palm Restaurant,** Ilala Lodge, A8; ilalalodge.com/the-palm-restaurant. **10 Livingstone Island, Book through Tongabezi,** tongabezi.com.

ONLINE: **AN OVERVIEW**
Our interactive map: **nytimes.com/travel**

Friday

1 3 P.M. ➤ FLIGHT OF ANGELS

It's difficult to fully comprehend the magnitude of Victoria Falls from up close: Though it's neither the tallest nor the longest waterfall in the world, at 355 feet high and a mile wide, and with an average flow of 33,000 cubic feet per second, it's certainly impressive. The best way to get some perspective is an eagle-eye view during a late-afternoon helicopter flight, when the lush landscape glows in the descending sun and the precipice shimmers with rainbows. Book a 12-minute ($150) ride with Flight of Angels that glides over the falls from both Zimbabwean and Zambian vantage points — a sight so stunning it was surely "gazed upon by angels in their flight," Livingstone wrote. You will have ample opportunity to admire what a structural feat the 1905 Victoria Falls Bridge, which linked the two countries sharing the falls, was. A 25-minute outing ($284) allows you some aerial game viewing above Zambezi National Park; keep your eyes peeled for elephants, wildebeest and zebras.

2 4 P.M. ➤ OLD WORLD AMBIENCE

One of Africa's most legendary retreats is the venerable Victoria Falls Hotel. It was constructed in 1904 as a key stop along an imagined Cape-to-Cairo railway that the British politician and diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes hoped to build someday, with the bridge part of his plan. The "grand old lady of the falls" retains much of her rarefied colonial-era charm, and the best way to experience it is with a proper afternoon tea on Stanley's Terrace, where two can share a tiered stand brimming with sandwiches and pastries ($25) — all while gazing at the mist exploding around the Victoria Falls Bridge as a pianist plays nearby.

3 8 P.M. ➤ DINE WITH THE ELEPHANTS

On the deck of the Victoria Falls Safari Lodge, the MaKuwa-Kuwa Restaurant has a prime view over a watering hole where elephants, impala and warthogs regularly congregate; if you come around sunset, you can watch the full spectacle of an animal kingdom's procession to its banks. Then settle in to dine on ostrich carpaccio, Zambezi bream or sirloin steak — Zimbabwean beef is highly regarded among carnivores the world over — while listening to elephants trumpeting in the dark. Dinner should come to around $50 for two.

Saturday

4 9 A.M. ➤ GET WET

Arrive at the gates of the Victoria Falls Rainforest bright and early for an up-close view. Admission is $30, and $20 more will get you a guided tour — but you don't really need one. What you *do* need is a poncho and water-friendly, closed-toed shoes, as you're almost guaranteed to get soaked, especially if you visit during the rainy period, approximately between mid-November to mid-May. (The drier season offers a clearer view of all the sections of the falls, while the wet months are better for experiencing the falls at their most thunderous.) You'll be perfectly dry on much of the boardwalk facing the falls, but just a step or two toward the 16 lookout points might have you momentarily enveloped in behemoth clouds of mist and monsoon-worthy gusts. You will also experience the unusual phenomenon of an upour: the powerful spray of the falls coming at you from below.

5 11 A.M. ➤ ADVENTURE HOUR

Thrill-seekers won't be satisfied by old-fashioned ways of seeing the falls — they prefer to glimpse them as they bungee-jump off the bridge ($160), zip-line nearly 1,000 feet across a gorge ($45), or take a bridge swing that has them dangling over the Batoka Gorge ($160). The area's main adventure draw is found on the water. The thrashing falls and narrowing gorges transform the otherwise tranquil Zambezi River into Grade 5 rapids that are considered among the best white-water rafting spots in the world. But that requires almost a full-day's commitment (about $150 per person), so plan your visit accordingly. Most activities can be arranged via Wild Horizons or Shearwater, either through your hotel or directly through their websites or offices.

6 1:30 P.M. ➤ CHIC EATS

Shearwater Café, in the center of the small town of Victoria Falls, doesn't have much to offer by way of views, but it does have a cheery, stylish interior and a creative menu that recently included tempura prawns with cucumber and avocado purée and crayfish from Lake Kariba ($9), and a crocodile wrap with wasabi aioli ($13).

7 3 P.M. ➤ SOUVENIR SHOPPING

Victoria Falls is a town built up entirely around its tourism industry, so local authenticity can be hard to come by. Many of the masks, bowls and beaded animal figurines on offer at the Elephant's Walk Shopping & Artist Village, an atmospheric thatched-roof arcade, are the same stock you'll find at tourist markets across the continent, but there are a few worthy stops. Prime Art Gallery, for instance, showcases local artwork (that they can ship overseas); Cultural Vibes offers music from across Africa; and Chitenge Tenga carries funky clocks made from recycled packaging and chandeliers fashioned from bottle caps and scrap metal. If you want to haggle, walk around the corner to the open curio market, where a labyrinth of stalls hawk similar souvenirs. It's worth a visit for the quirky shop names alone: Mr. Pay Less, Mr. Beat Price, Mr. Big Discount, Walmart, Los Angeles Lakers.

8 4 P.M. ➤ CRUISE THE ZAMBEZI

After a jam-packed day, you've earned yourself a relaxing trip down the Zambezi. There are many companies through which you can reserve a seat on a not-quite-sunset cruise (boats have to be docked by sundown, which isn't such a bad thing when you consider that that is when the mosquitoes descend in full force). But for a more intimate, old-school ambience, book with Ra-Ikane — the luxury boats hark back to the colonial era, with cane chairs and wood-paneling. A maximum capacity of 14 means you won't be jostling with crowds for a view of hippos breaching in the water or elephants meandering along the shore. At $75 per person, Ra-Ikane is a touch pricier than other, larger boats, but that includes unlimited drinks along with snacks like minipizzas and crocodile kebabs.

9 8 P.M. ➤ GAME FOR DINNER

Head to Ilala Lodge, an elegant thatched-roof pile across the street from the Victoria Falls Hotel, for a refined dinner on the Palm Restaurant's terrace or in the garden. You can be safe and opt for a beef tenderloin with gnocchi ($20), or you can try the sous-vide warthog fillet ($20), crocodile and porcini risotto ($21) or kudu Wellington ($24).

Sunday

10 8 A.M. ➤ LIVING ON THE EDGE

Livingstone Island in Zambia is where Livingstone first set eyes on Mosi-oa-Tunya. It is an island perched quite literally atop the precipice of the falls. If the season and water levels allow it, you can set sail from the Royal Livingstone Hotel on the Zambian side to witness what he did. During the three-hour excursion ($100, including breakfast, plus the cost of transfer from Zimbabwe), you'll hike across the island, get heart-stopping views from the top of the falls, and, if it's still accessible (the trip is offered only in the driest months), take a nerve-racking dip in the Devil's Pool, at the very edge. Celebrate afterward over breakfast under a tent — an assortment of eggs Benedict with creamed spinach and bacon, scones, muffins, and tea and coffee.

Bites Dok | TEL AVIV

Local Ingredients, Global Influences

Everything served at Dok, from the rosé wine to the ice cream, is made from ingredients grown in Israel. O.K., almost everything: Sugar and wheat flour are exceptions. But Asaf Doktor, the chef who owns the Tel Aviv restaurant with his brother, Yotam, is working on it.

Call the restaurant moshav (Israeli cooperative farm) to table.

Take its gin and tonic, for example. The "tonic" is a caramel syrup that Asaf makes using the juice of bitter oranges that grow a few blocks from the restaurant. When combined with gin from Jullius Distillery in Galilee, it evokes the assertive astringency of quinine, but is rounder and richer.

The micro-restaurant, which opened in May 2015, has a counter that seats eight, plus two little tables. Sidewalk seating doubles the capacity. There's no kitchen, just chefs assembling dishes in the open, sushi-bar style. The place is so tiny that when I asked about the bathroom, I was sent outside. "It's a small place," Mr. Doktor said, shrugging.

Though the ingredients are almost all local, the food reflects Israel's polyglot culture, with influences from across the Jewish diaspora. The phenomenal mackerel, quick-cured in salt and sugar, slicked in olive oil and served simply with boiled potatoes, sour cream, grated horseradish and chopped parsley, is pure Russian. Beef tartare takes its cues from Lebanese raw kibbe, with quenelles of minced raw beef and freekeh, dotted with herbs, plenty of lemon zest and fruity harissa, sitting atop slices of pickled turnip. Each nugget disperses on contact with your tongue, like the most skillfully formed nigiri.

SARIT GOFFEN

Roasted kholrabi in cheese, sesame seeds and thyme, a dish at the restaurant Dok.

Some expected ingredients are missing, like tahini, the sesame paste that is ubiquitous in Israel, but is usually made from Ethiopian seeds. "It's very cliché to use tahini in Israeli cuisine," Mr. Doktor said.

Sesame ice cream does appear, though, as a cool foil to the warm toffee medjool date cake. Mr. Doktor uses sesame seeds that are "baladi," an Arab word that translates, more or less, to "heirloom." In fact, most of the produce served at Dok is from Arab farmers in Israel.

The restrictions the chef imposes might sound like a gimmick, but in his hands, it is an organizing principle. "That's what's fun about it," he said. "I'm not limited in what I do, only in what I use."

GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

Dok, Ibn Gabirol Street 8; 972-3-609-8118. An average dinner for two, without drinks or tip, is about 300 shekels, about $82.

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