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Lake Kariba and the Islands

The drowned forests that line the shores of both the mainland and island form one of Kariba's most striking and memorable feature. The dead trees provide important habitats for many species of bird including fisheagle, cormorant, darter, pied kingfisher, duck, geese and egret.

The Matusadona national park, the raw stark beauty of the Sanyati gorge and the vast expanse of lake Kariba make for great superb wildlife viewing - fantastic fishing and photographic opportunities

Spurwing Island Lodge

a prime wilderness destination
an idyllic location for weddings and honeymoons
perfect locale for conferences

- <> on the southern shores of Lake Kariba and overlooked by the Matusadona Mountains
- <> acces to Spurwing Island is by way of a 45 minute boat transfer from Kariba mainland.

Spurwing Accommodation

Safari Tent under thatch : 11 x twin bedded tents under thatch with en-suite shower and w.c.
Chalets: 3 x thatched twin bedded chalets with en-suite bath, separate shower and w.c.
Cabins: 6 x stone and thatch cabins with en-suite facilities

- <> Gazebo bar - floodlit at night to allow guests to watch buffalo, impala and on occasion lion passing by.
- <> Meals are served in the centrally located open sided dining area and there is a braai and spit on the terrace adjacent to the bar.
- <> the swimming pool has a fantastic view

Activities include:

early morning walking safaris
game drives in open landrovers into the Matusadona National Park
game cruises along the shoreline either in a motorboat or pontoon
fishing (half day basis) - Spurwing offers tackle and an experienced coxswain
trips to Sanyati Gorge





The River People

the rising waters of the Zambezi forced the local tribes people of some 50 000 Tonga's to relocate to higher ground.

The Tonga's were very much against this as they felt they were leaving their ancestral burial grounds.

Conceding that they would have to move, ceremonies were held to honour their gods and the journey to new lands began.

Schools and clinics were built in some of the new areas and wells installed for their arrival.

Some new villages that were relocated close to the water' edge have prospered with the new fishing opportunities on the lake.

But for the most part the relocation disrupted the Tonga's way of life and the compensation was minimal.

Operation Noah - the heroic rescue of thousands of stranded animals.

As the dam began to fill it became evident that numerous islands were being created and in some cases pieces of land were being submerged - resulting in the resident animal populations becoming stranded.

Appeals for money were made to purchase boats and equipment necessary for this mammoth rescue and relocation of the animals.

Led by Robert Fothergill (a game warden) - along with other wardens - the mercy mission eventually ferried 5000 animals to safety.

Animals large (elephant and rhino) to animals small (bushbaby's, snakes) were involved in this epic rescue.

Fothergill Island is named in honour and memory of Robert Fothergill

Nyaminyami

(Zambezi River God or Zambezi Snake Spirit)

Nyaninyami is depicted as a snake-like being and can be found as pendants on jewellery, usually carved out of wood, stone or bone, occasionally ivory, silver or gold both as a fashion accessory and as a good luck charm.

The Tonga people believe the building of the Kariba Dam deeply offended Nyaminyami.

Legend tells that his wife had travelled down the gorge. It was during her absence that construction started on the dam wall - thus separating Nyaminyami from his wife.

Construction was halted in 1957 due to the worst floods even known on the Zambezi. When again in 1958 heavy rains accompanied more flooding.

Was this the wrath of Nyaminyami ?

THE NYAMINYAMI WALKING STICK

The Handle represents Nyaminyami

The Tree represents the mopane tree

The Spirals represent the waves on the Zambezi River

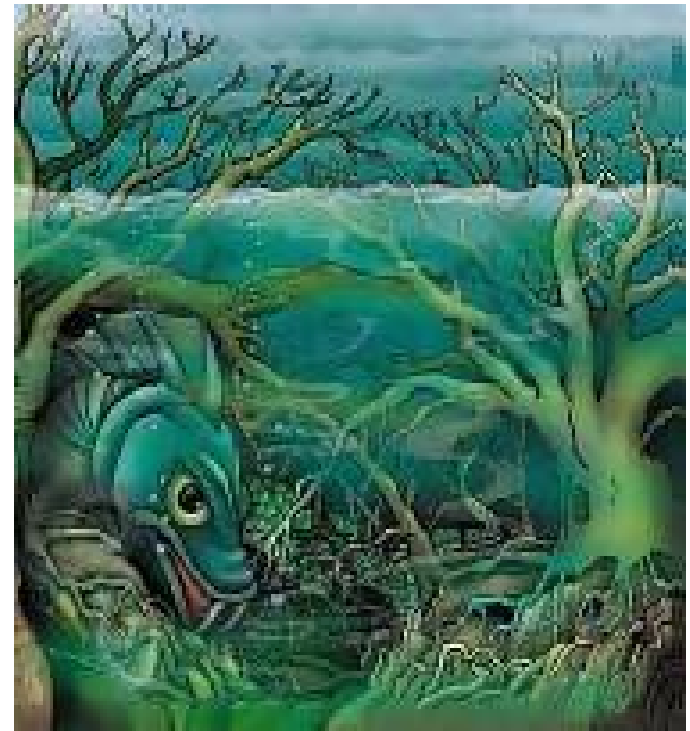
The fish is representative of the staple food of the Tonga people

The Figures represents people on the Zambezi River banks during their ceremonial dances.

The Wooden Rings represents the bangles worn by the Tonga woman as a decoration during ceremonial dances.

The sign of the Hand represents the holding of the "Magical Ball" used by the Tonga fortune tellers to guard against evil spirits

The Women's Bubble Pipe (incelwa) (normally a long pipe made from a calabash and is used by the Tonga people for smoking tobacco)



Kariba Dam - Quick Facts

>> The dam was an initiative of the Federation existing at the time between British ruled Northern and Southern Rhodesia (now Zambia and Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (Malawi).

>> Constructed between 1955 - 1959

>> Kariba dam is one of the largest dams in the world at 128m high and 579m long.

The Zambezi Valley

The source of this mighty river begins in a marsh in north western Zambia and flows through Angola, along the border of Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe to Mozambique, before emptying into the Indian Ocean.

A journey of 2574 km (1600 miles) making the Zambezi the fourth longest river in Africa.

Before lake kariba was filled some 1000 sq.kms (386 sq. miles) of vegetation was cleared of trees.

It was initially believed that this would have an adverse effect on the lake's ecosystem.

What in fact happened was exactly the opposite - the lake became rich in chemicals from the burnt trees and the remaining trees provided habitats for many animals that found their way into the lake.

The river supports a kaleidoscope of wildlife, bird and fish species : from hippos, crocodiles and monitor lizards to buffalo, zebra, giraffe and elephants favouring the riverine woodland.