

Victoria Falls: Where angels gaze and moonbows hide

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"Victoria Falls is more than a destination. It's an experience."



An awe-inspiring experience to be exact. Standing at the edge of this - the largest waterfall in the world - would be to witness the incredible scene of 500 million litres of water cascading down the 1708m wide and 108m high drop every minute.

"It's not difficult to see and feel why the Falls are considered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to be one of the Seven Wonders Of The World," says Shaun Wheeler, general manager at Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya, Livingstone Resort, which is based just a stone's throw from these thundering falls.

"Aside from the sheer volume and power of the water exploding down the Victoria Falls Gorge, the pure natural beauty of the sprays, mists, and rainbows give a mystical quality to the Falls that is enhanced by the lush rainforests winding around it, and the abundant wildlife that call its surrounding areas home. They are astounding, and an experience that everyone should have the privilege of enjoying."

So what makes Victoria Falls so unique and special?

Soaked in ancient history

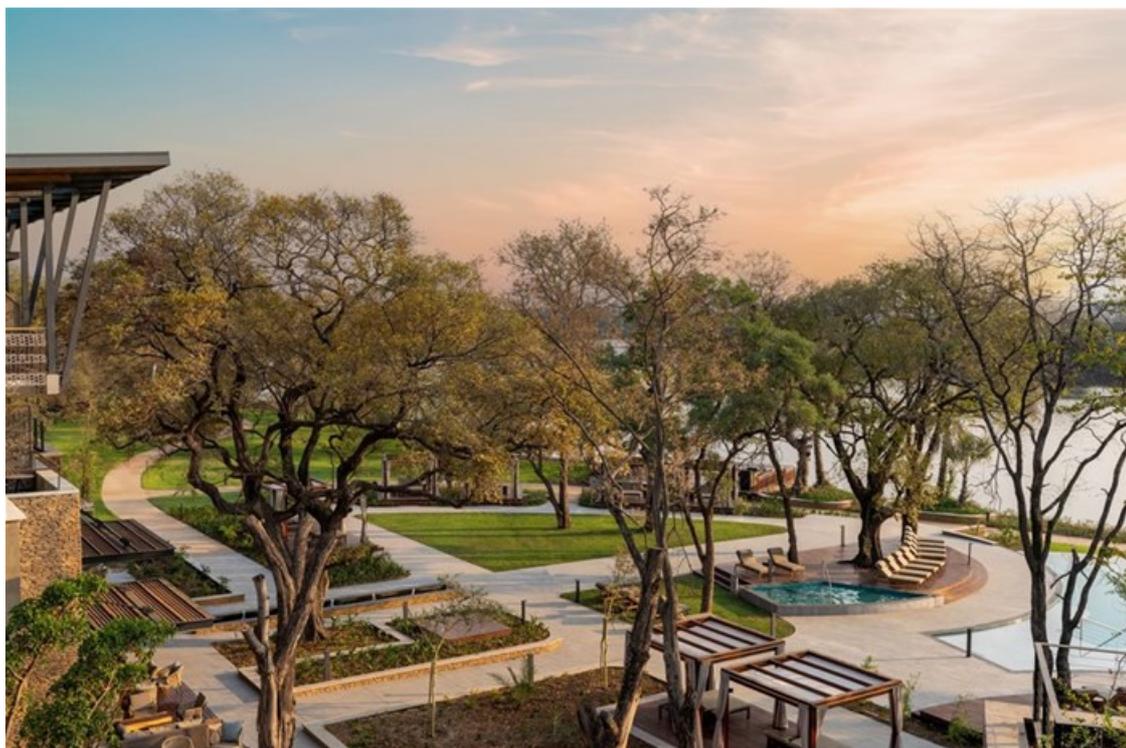
"The Falls are soaked in history," says Wheeler. "Zambians call it Mosi-Oa-Tunya, which means 'smoke that thunders', for obvious reasons."

Archaeological evidence suggests that people occupied the area around Victoria Falls dating back three million years, with stone artefacts and items discovered from the Middle and Late Stone Ages. This ancient history makes Victoria Falls a fascinating place to explore - never mind the more recent history of the first European to see the falls in 1855 - David Livingstone - who was so awestruck by their beauty that he proclaimed: "No one can imagine the beauty of the view from

anything witnessed in England. It had never been seen before by European eyes, but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight!”

This is largely where Radisson Blu Mosi-Oa-Tunya, Livingstone Resort takes its inspiration from. “We wanted to create a space where guests from all over the world could come to, that would honour the incomparable look, feel and history of the Falls - and be just minutes away from its namesake, so visitors could get a taste of their beauty through the carefully crafted and structured details of the hotel, then experience the full glory of the Victoria Falls itself,” shares Wheeler.

“And while most of the world calls it Victoria Falls - named by Livingstone after the British Monarch at the time, Queen Victoria - we chose to honour the age-old name by which it has been known for millions of years, in our hotel’s own name: Mosi-Oa-Tunya.”



Where rainforests flourish and moonbows hide

Another reason why the Victoria Falls are so unique lies on the Zimbabwean side of the Falls - the only place on earth where it rains every single day of the year.

“The Victoria Falls Rainforest feels like a world of its own,” says Wheeler, “And there are the most incredible hidden gems for a visitor to explore. On the Zimbabwean side there are 16 viewing points, looking out across Devil’s Cataract to the Mail Falls, then extending to the Horseshoe Falls, Rainbow Falls, and finally crossing into Zambia with the Eastern Cataract.”

And the rainbows created by the sprays and mists in the daylight have an exquisite secret at night. “On nights when the full moon is clear and bright, a lunar rainbow - called a moonbow - appears where the moonlight hits the Falls,” explains Wheeler. “This only happens in two places in the world - Cumberland Falls near Corbin, Kentucky, and our own Victoria Falls.”

Spectacular wildlife

As you can imagine, Victoria Falls is a paradise for wildlife. Chacma baboons, vervet monkeys, banded mongooses, and warthog thrive in the lush vegetation fed by the Zambezi River and its powerful waterfall.

Of course, being surrounded by multiple national parks - including Chobe National Park, Hwange National Park, Zambezi

National Park, and of course the Mosi-Oa-Tunya National Park - the area is rich in wildlife sightings. “We might not have the traditional big five, but guests will still be able to delight in seeing a wide variety of incredible animals such as lion, elephant, buffalo and rhino with tigers and cheetahs. We also have a smaller Big Five. The leopard tortoise, elephant shrew, rhino beetle, buffalo weaver and antlion are lords of the ground and are as integral a part of this magical eco-system as their larger counterparts,” Wheeler notes.

“We are lucky to find ourselves in such a stunning natural setting, and we have taken every precaution to ensure that our hotel respects the environment in which we find ourselves. As part of our core values, we are committed to caring for our guests, our community and our planet alike. The Victoria Falls and the national parks that surround us are not only part of our sales pitch to potential guests, but it’s also part of who we are. And we love sharing this with all who come to visit,” Wheeler concludes.

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