

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the left.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid national license with photo, International Driving Permit (IDP), passport, vehicle registration and proof of insurance.
- ❑ Carry identification at all times.
- ❑ The Botswana Pula (BWP) is the official currency.
- ❑ Pedestrians account for an estimated 25 percent of all road traffic fatalities.
- ❑ Avoid walking alone, particularly after dark. Women should not walk alone at any time.
- ❑ Criminals may target vehicles stopped at intersections. Drive with windows up and doors locked. If confronted, resistance may result in severe injury.
- ❑ Driving after dark is hazardous. Roads are poorly lit or unlit. There are many speeding drivers and large, loose animals.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.05 g/dl for all drivers. Despite legal limits, alcohol use is a factor in an estimated 30 percent of serious and fatal crashes. Incidences of drink driving increase on weekends and end-of-month Friday paydays.
- ❑ There are high rates of drug use among drivers.
- ❑ There are 30.3 road deaths per 100,000 people in Botswana, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



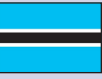
Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving standards** are low. Erratic, aggressive and reckless driving are common.
- **Many motorists** are inadequately trained and do not adhere to traffic laws or safety regulations.
- **Drivers often** run through red lights and stop signs. Approach all intersections with caution.
- **Many drivers** operate vehicles that are not roadworthy, and lack standard safety features including seat belts, headlights, taillights, turn signals, functioning brakes, windscreen wipers and tires that are in good condition.
- **There are** many pedestrians along city streets and busy main roads who may step unexpectedly into roadways.
- **Road directions** are generally given using landmarks instead of street names.
- **Many** people hitchhike. Hitchhikers may walk in roadways or approach moving vehicles to solicit rides.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 31,747 km (19,726 miles) of roads; 9,810 km (6,095 miles) are paved and 21,937 km (13,631 miles) are unpaved. Road conditions vary widely. In urban areas, roads are generally paved and well-maintained.
- **Main** roads from Windhoek, Bulawayo and Pretoria into Gaborone and Maun are usually in good condition.
- **Most roads** have two lanes.
- **Beyond cities**, many road surfaces are damaged and have large, deep potholes.
- **Edges of** paved roads are often badly deteriorated. Verges may be sand. Many roads, including main routes, have no shoulders.
- **Road surfaces** in rural areas and towns may be dirt, and can become hazardous following heavy rains.
- **Road signage** is limited.
- **Fuel stations** may be long distances apart.
- **Avoid all** gatherings and demonstrations. Even peaceful demonstrations may turn confrontational and disrupt road travel and public transportation.
- **Government-run** checkpoints are common. Officials may require drivers to demonstrate that headlights, windshield wipers and turn signals are functional.
- **At some checkpoints**, motorists may be required to drive through medicated water to clean tires of possible transmittable diseases. Due to efforts to control the spread of agricultural diseases, drivers may be required to exit vehicles and clean footwear on sanitation mats before proceeding along some routes.
- **When traveling** to remote areas, a four-wheel drive vehicle is necessary. Motorists should be prepared to navigate dirt or gravel roads.
- **Beyond** urban areas, bring tools, water (including enough for vehicle), food, first aid kit and satellite phone. Carry spare tires, as blowouts and punctures are common on hot and damaged pavement.
- **Carry up-to-date** paper maps. Satellite mapping systems may be unreliable.
- **In** remote areas, traveling in a convoy with a knowledgeable local guide is recommended.



Road Conditions, continued

- **The A1** is a toll road. Pay in cash at toll booths.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is underdeveloped, and is nonexistent in many areas.
- **There are** large numbers of pedestrians and livestock on roads in areas including the Chobe district, Ghanzi, Okavango Delta, Pandamatenga and the Savuti area.
- **Avoid walking** or driving near Kgale Hill in Gaborone due to frequent criminal activity.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **The A2** highway connecting the border with Namibia at Buitepos, and the South African border at Pioneer Gate, is considered a dangerous route. The road is part of the Trans-Kalahari Corridor. There are two fuel stations between Gaborone and Ghanzi, separated by large distances. Many drivers exceed safe speeds. At night, there are large numbers of loose animals on and along the road.
 - » **The A3** links the center of Francistown to Ghanzi. In Francistown, the road is called Gemmel Drive. It is considered one of the country's most dangerous highways. Large potholes, speeding drivers, drink driving and lack of road maintenance are contributing factors in many road fatalities.
 - » **The Maun to Orapa Road** is poorly maintained. Hazardous conditions include broken surfaces and road edges. Road verges are sand. Potholes may force drivers to veer suddenly into other lanes. Speeding is common. There are many pedestrians and cyclists.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Botswana** is subject to heavy rains, thunderstorms, strong winds and seasonal drought.
- **Rainy season** is generally from September to April.
- **During periods** of heavy rain, dirt roads may become washed out. Standing water may obscure deep potholes and other surface hazards.
- **Powerful** desert trade winds occur. Sand may obscure road surfaces and potential hazards.
- **Winter weather** between May and August is cold and dry.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, buses, "combi/kombi" (minibus/minivan taxis), private coach buses and taxis.
- **Public transport** is underdeveloped and not regarded as reliable.
- **There are** three types of taxis: registered vehicles, private company-operated taxis and unregistered vehicles.
- **Use only** registered taxis, which are generally regarded as safe. Vehicles usually are not private; to request a private taxi ("cabs" or "specials"), negotiate terms with driver.
- **Blue taxi plates** denote vehicles that are registered and regulated by the Department of Roads. Fares are set by the government.
- **Taxis are** operated by multiple companies and vary in color and style of vehicle. Company branding and contact information is usually displayed on vehicle doors.

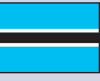
Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	30 kph (18 mph)
Rural roads	60 to 100 kph (37 to 62 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

								
Stop followed by sharp turn	Passenger cars only	Unauthorized vehicles prohibited	Right lane ends	Three-way stop	Dead end road	Pedestrians have priority	Give way to oncoming traffic	Staggered road junction



Transportation, continued

- **Taxis** are not metered. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- **Unregistered taxis** have no company names on vehicles, and are generally private cars owned by the driver. Condition of vehicles varies greatly.
- **Unregistered taxis** are often found near shopping centers. Drivers stand outside of vehicle and shout “taxi,” or approach potential customers. Some drivers may be aggressive.
- **Combis** are privately owned minibuses or minivans which travel along fixed routes. Placards in windshields identify destination.
- **Combis provide** the main form of public transport within towns and cities. Vehicles are registered and carry blue license plates.
- **Combis** can be found at stations or hailed on streets along their designated routes. There are no schedules.
- **Combi drivers** usually do not leave until vehicle is full. Many combi drivers speed and are reckless.
- **Long-distance** coach buses serve destinations within Botswana and cities in nearby countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia.
- **Coach bus** service is generally regarded as safe. Buses are operated by many companies, including Seabalo.
- **Rideshares** are available in some cities, but are run through local taxi companies that use ride-hailing apps. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Pedestrian infrastructure** is underdeveloped. Even where crossings exist, drivers frequently ignore persons on foot.
- **Pedestrians often** walk along or in busy roads, and may cross through heavy, fast-moving traffic.
- **E-scooters** are increasing in popularity.
- **E-scooter drivers** may behave recklessly and ignore traffic safety rules and the presence of pedestrians.
- **Street vendors** are common in many areas. Temporary

structures may block sidewalks and force pedestrians to walk in roadways.

- **Many people** travel by bicycle. There are few cycling paths. Cyclists must often share narrow, damaged roads with motorized traffic.
- **Drivers** may fail to use caution around bicyclists.
- **Passenger rail** services are operated by Botswana Railways. Routes are limited.
- **The BR Express** train offers regular service connecting Lobatse, Gaborone and Francistown.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be a minimum of 18 years of age to drive or rent a vehicle. Some rental agencies may have additional requirements.
- **Seat belt use is** compulsory for driver and passengers.
- **Helmets are** mandatory for motorcycle drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened and meet national standards.
- **Children** are not restricted from being motorcycle passengers. If possible, children should not be passengers on motorcycles.
- **Children up to** age five must be secured in a child safety restraint, and are prohibited from riding in front seats of vehicles. Children are allowed in front seats of pick-up trucks.
- **Drivers must** yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- **Vehicles** must be fitted with functioning horns, and have mudguards on rear wheels.
- **Bicycles must** be equipped with bells, a headlight and red rear lights. Lights must be turned on a half hour before sunset, and until a half hour after sunrise.
- **Laws require** drivers to use turn signals before passing another vehicle.
- **Yield** to existing traffic when entering a roundabout.
- **Vehicles should** be equipped with warning triangles and reflective vests.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests.

Gaborone (Capital)

- » Located in the south, close to the border with South Africa.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, “combi/kombi” minibus/minivans, private coach buses, taxis and trains.
- » Traffic congestion is common. City streets and main roads are generally in good condition.
- » Registered, official taxis are usually white cars and have blue license plates.
- » Registered taxis are generally regarded as safe.
- » The registered taxi network includes multiple private companies. Vehicles vary in color and style. Company name and contact information is displayed on vehicle doors.



Gaborone, continued

- » Taxis usually carry more than one fare. To request a private taxi (sometimes called “cabs” or “specials”), negotiate terms with driver.
- » Cabs must be requested by phone.
- » Taxis are unmetered. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Taxis also include unregistered vehicles owned by individual drivers. Condition of vehicles varies greatly.
- » Unregistered taxis are usually found parked near shopping centers. Drivers often stand next to vehicle and call out “taxi.” Some drivers may be insistent and approach potential fares.
- » “Combis” are white vans. Most are small minivans. Fares are paid in cash onboard.
- » Combis travel along specific routes with signs in their front windows that identify destination.
- » Combi drivers may not adhere to traffic rules or road safety practices. Speeding is common.
- » At Riverwalk Mall, “runners” often solicit for passengers who are heading to specific locations, and direct them to the correct combi.
- » Long-distance coach buses are available, but should be booked in advance.
- » Daily coach bus service is available to and from Pretoria, South Africa.
- » Combis provide hourly service between the city and Johannesburg, South Africa.
- » Pedestrians should remain alert. Infrastructure is lacking. Drivers generally ignore persons on foot.
- » Many pedestrians walk in busy roads, and cross streets with fast-moving traffic.
- » The use of e-scooters is increasing. Many drivers behave recklessly and disregard traffic rules, safety practices and the presence of pedestrians.
- » There are many street vendors. Sidewalks may be blocked, forcing pedestrians to walk in roadways.
- » Bicycle travel is common. There are few cycling paths. Cyclists must often share narrow, damaged roads with motorized traffic.
- » Drivers often fail to use caution where bicyclists are present.
- » Trains are operated by Botswana Railways. Long-distance service is limited. There are daily routes connecting the city to Francistown and Lobatse.
- » The main train station is Gaborone Station.
- » Sir Seretse Khama International Airport is 15 km (9.3 miles) north of city center, and is the country’s main airport.
- » Some hotels provide shuttle services to and from the airport. Arrange in advance for transfers.
- » Taxi ranks are located outside of the arrivals area.
- » Registered taxis may not be readily available at the airport. Book taxis in advance.
- » Combis are located outside of the arrivals terminal.
- » There is no public bus route connecting the airport to the city.
- » Most major car rental agencies are represented at the airport.

Francistown

- » Located in the southeast of the country near the border with Zimbabwe.
- » The city is a major freight transportation hub, and is connected to Gaborone in the south via the A1; and by the A3 to Nata and Maun in the west.
- » Transportation options include cars, buses, “combi/kombi” minibus/minivans, private coach buses, taxis and trains.
- » Buses generally make hourly connections to Gaborone. Travel time ranges from five to seven hours.
- » Regional bus routes link the city to villages and towns in the north, with direct service to popular tourist areas including Maun and Kasane.
- » Long-distance bus routes are available to destinations including Bulawayo and Harare in Zimbabwe.
- » Mahube Express bus service links the city to Johannesburg, South Africa via Gaborone.



Francistown, continued

- » Taxis include registered vehicles, private company-operated cars and unregistered vehicles.
- » Registered taxis are generally regarded as safe. Vehicles usually carry more than one fare. To request a private taxi (sometimes called “cabs” or “specials”), negotiate terms with driver.
- » Taxis that are registered and regulated by the Department of Roads have blue license plates and fares set by the government.
- » Taxis are not equipped with meters. Agree on fare prior to travel.
- » Multiple private companies operate taxis. Vehicles vary in color and style of vehicle. Company names and contact information are displayed on vehicle doors.
- » Unregistered taxi vehicles do not display company names, and are generally private cars owned by the driver. Condition of vehicles varies greatly.
- » Unregistered taxis are often found near shopping centers. Drivers often stand next to vehicle and call out “taxi.” Some drivers may approach potential fares and be aggressive.
- » Minibuses/minivans called combis travel along fixed routes.
- » Combis provide the main form of public transport and can be hailed anywhere along their designated route.
- » There is little pedestrian infrastructure. Drivers frequently ignore persons on foot, even at crosswalks.
- » Many pedestrians walk along or in busy roads, and may attempt to cross through heavy traffic.
- » E-scooters are increasing in popularity. Drivers frequently behave recklessly and ignore traffic safety rules. Drivers may weave through pedestrians.
- » There are large numbers of street vendors. Structures, including tents, may block sidewalks and force pedestrians to walk in roadways.
- » Bicycles are a common form of transportation. Cycling paths and bike lanes are largely undeveloped. Cyclists are generally forced to share narrow, damaged roads with motorized traffic.
- » Drivers may fail to provide adequate lane space for bicycles, or to drive cautiously where cyclists are present.
- » Passenger rail service is limited.
- » There is a regular overnight train from Lobatse via Gaborone. Travel time is approximately ten hours.
- » Francistown BR Station is the only train station.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Laws that prohibit** discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual or mental challenges are generally enforced.
- **Persons with** physical or other challenges are not always socially accepted.
- **Common types** of provisions include accessible facilities, and information and access to communications and services, but these features are not widely available.
- **The government** mandates access to public buildings and transportation for persons with physical, sensory and other challenges, but these services are limited.
- **Laws do not** specifically include transportation. Travelers should expect accessibility to be limited in public transportation, lodging and general infrastructure.
- **Many** privately owned buildings and businesses, as well as older government buildings, remain inaccessible.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **English** is widely spoken, but responders to emergency numbers in remote areas may not speak English.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
 - » Police (Botswana Police Service): 999
 - » Ambulance: 992
 - » Fire: 998
- **Good medical treatment** is available in Gaborone, and in the cities of Maun, Francistown and Kasane. Gaborone has



Emergency Information,, continued

private medical facilities, emergency rooms and trained physicians for simple medical treatments. Overnight care is generally unavailable.

- **Beyond cities**, medical treatment is rudimentary. Communication systems may be inadequate.
- **Guarantee** of payment must be determined prior to the administration of treatment, especially in private clinics. In some cases, cash payment is required before care is delivered.
- **Emergency care** may be denied to those without full insurance coverage.
- **Responses** to emergency situations in remote areas may be slow.
- **Ambulances** are widely available, but availability and training of emergency responders may be lower in remote areas and small towns.
- **In case of** serious illness or injury, medical evacuation to South Africa may be necessary.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police.
 - » Wear reflective vest and place warning triangles in front of and behind vehicle at an adequate distance to alert other road users.
 - » Stay inside the vehicle if you are a passenger, provided it is safe to do so.
 - » Remain with vehicle until police indicate you may leave.
 - » Collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses.
 - » Take photographs if possible.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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