



An elephant grazing on the banks of the Mwaleshi River

NORTH LUANGWA NATIONAL PARK

North and South Luangwa national parks are part of a continuous rift valley, sharing the same geology, soil types, vegetation and landscapes. Their ecosystems and game are almost identical, though North Luangwa seems to have more eland and, especially, Cookson's wildebeest – which are abundant here, yet rarely seen in South Luangwa.

Most of the 'North Park' is a wilderness area, set aside for walking safaris. It has few access tracks or game-drive loops. Two tiny bushcamps are set along the shallow, perennial Mwaleshi River, reached by a short flight from South Luangwa. They are in ultimate wilderness, far from anything resembling the modern world.

Mwaleshi Camp is a superb little safari camp standing beside the crystal-clear Mwaleshi River, most of which is shallow enough for a refreshing paddle or wallow to be safe. The camp's bar and dining area is ingeniously made of reed and thatch, and open at the front for views over the river. In front is the fire, around which dawn breakfasts and well-deserved evening drinks are served. The chalets are also made of reed and thatch, with solar lanterns, handbasins, en-suite flushing toilets and hot showers.

The wildlife is abundant, with a particularly good population of lion and buffalo. A stay of four nights at Mwaleshi is ideal, and is best combined with Tafika, Chikoko and Crocodile (see page 125, and the *Giraffe Safari* on page 138).

Unfortunately, the excellent **Kutandala Camp**, which was run by Rod and Guz, closed at the end of 2011 and isn't due to reopen as far as we know.

North Luangwa's other camp is **Buffalo Camp**, which is perfect if you're being driven around Zambia by your own safari guide in your own 4WD, but doesn't work so well for fly-in safaris. Ask us for more details.



Lounge at Mwaleshi



Most walking safaris, like those from Mwaleshi Camp, start the day with a light buffet breakfast around dawn