

Planning your Burkina Faso Safari

Introduction

We have been arranging hunts in Burkina Faso for the last six years and have probably taken more American clients to Burkina than all other booking agents and operators combined! Burkina offers hunters a terrific hunting experience in truly wild dangerous game country. While we have done our best to make changes over the years to suit the American hunter's expectations, hunters must go with the understanding that sometimes they may encounter some minor issues. Simply put the local organization and staff do not have the level of training and professionalism as may be experienced in Southern African camps. They make up for this in being genuinely friendly and caring towards clients and do their best to ensure that you will have a great safari. So overlook the small things, go with an open mind and enjoy your safari.

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso formerly known as Upper Volta is a relatively unknown hunting destination for North American hunters. It is a small country in West Africa and being an ex-French colony, French is the main spoken language aside from a number of other local languages. Burkina is a very poor country even by African standards but the people are extremely friendly and welcoming to hunters.

Burkina is a safe country for travelers and even the bustling city of Ouagadougou or Ouaga for short (pronounced as Waga) is quite safe. Violent crime is uncommon. There is no problem related to terrorism and other such security concerns nor has one case of Ebola ever been reported in Burkina.

Air France is probably the best carrier from the United States as there are several daily flights to Paris from major US cities. These will connect to a daily flight from Paris to Ouagadougou. Other carriers include Air Brussels, Turkish Airlines, etc.

Hunting Season

The hunting season runs from 1st December to the end of May, but typically we complete our hunts by the end of April. The winter months in Burkina are December to the middle of February where one can expect day time temperatures around 80 F and chilly mornings and nights. After the middle of February the weather starts getting hotter and can get up to 110F+ during the day in March/April.

The hunting is good throughout the season and apart from your own preference for cooler weather, hunters need not be concerned about when is the best time to come. If one is especially keen on the smaller antelope like Oribi and Duikers, then March onwards is probably the best time to come as the grass is shorter and the visibility is better for these small animals.

Species of Game that can be hunted in Burkina Faso:

Burkina offers hunters the opportunity to take various species of big-game unique to West Africa. If you have never hunted West Africa you have not taken any of these sub-species before.

MAIN SPECIES

- Lion
- Western Savannah Buffalo (Buffle)
- Western Roan (Koba)

BIG GAME SPECIES

- Sing Sing Waterbuck (Kob Defassa)
- Western Hartebeest (Bubale)
- Kob (Kob)
- Harnessed Bushbuck (Guib)
- Nagor Reedbuck (Redunca)

SMALL GAME SPECIES

- Oribi (Oribi)
- Grimms Duiker (Cephalophe)
- Red Flanked Duiker (Cephalophe Roux)
- Warthog (Phaco)
- Olive Baboon (Baboon)

OTHER

- Bustard
- Francolin
- Dove
- Green pigeon
- Guinea fowl

STRICTLY PROHIBITED

- Elephant
- Leopard
- Cheetah
- Hippo
- Crocodile
- Hyena
- Civet cat
- Caracal
- Korrigum
- Python

Any other species not mentioned in the list above of species that can be hunted is strictly prohibited.

Quotas

Burkina is not the place to go to hunt a large number or even multiple species of the same animal on one hunt. Annual game quotas are limited and the concession owner packages his hunts in a way to offer enough hunting for everyone. Shooting of below minimum size, females and young animals is strictly prohibited. There are government imposed fines for shooting such animals and the trophy will also not be exportable. If you make a mistake and shoot a female animal you may also not be allowed to take another animal of the same species as there may not be available quota. So please be extra careful before shooting.

Typical Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive in Ouaga where you will be met at the airport by an English speaking company representative and assisted with clearing your guns. You will then be taken to a comfortable hotel where you will spend the night. Flights in to Ouaga generally arrive in the evening or night making it too late to travel to camp the same day.

Day 2 - The next morning you will be picked up around 7am for the drive to camp. The roads are good but due to traffic, etc. the drive can take up to 9 hours with a 1 hour stop in Fada for brunch. On arrival in camp, after you settle in you will shoot your rifle to ensure everything is in order.

Hunting days - Our packages show the exact number of hunting days. So a 10 day package is 10 full hunting days. After the last day of your hunt you will depart the next day for Ouaga around 5-6am. This will ensure you arrive back in Ouaga early afternoon so that you can get a few hours rest before catching your flight home the same evening. There is no need to spend an extra night in Ouaga on your return journey.

On the hunt

Your team will consist of your PH, a tracker who is also the government game scout, driver and translator.

The concession of Arly Safaris has a very good network of roads so the hunting is not very physically demanding. However the hot weather can be a challenge for some hunters and it is very important to stay hydrated and drink plenty of water even before you feel thirsty.

Your hunt will be conducted by a local black PH. While they are experienced hunters and know how to hunt, approach and judge game the greatest challenge you may face is the language barrier as they only speak French. You will be accompanied by a translator at all times who will communicate between you and your PH and hunting team. Because of the language barrier it is advisable to have a chat with your team prior to your hunt to discuss any particular needs you may have. Example: the height you like your shooting sticks, the distance you can walk, how far are you comfortable shooting, what are your priority

animals? Do you wish to shoot a red colored buffalo, are you looking for an old buffalo regardless of horn size, etc. etc. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO DO THIS BEFORE YOUR HUNT.

It is very important to stay calm and cool especially before and after shooting. Make sure that you are shooting at the right animal and that you have a clear target before taking the shot. This is very important in herd situations especially with Roan and Buffalo as the females also have horns. It is very easy to shoot at the wrong animal even when guided by an English speaking PH, let alone when communicating via a translator!

When your PH asks you to shoot, for whatever reason if you are not sure of your shot simply DO NOT SHOOT. Every hunter must ultimately decide when to squeeze the trigger and must take responsibility for their actions. This is especially important when hunting in a place like Burkina Faso as quotas of game are very small and if you wound an animal and do not recover it or do not shoot the right animal, aside from the loss of trophy fees and fines, you may not be able to take another animal of the same species if there are none left on quota.

Visas

A Burkina Faso visa can be obtained by mail or in person from the embassy in Washington DC. All the information to apply for your visa can be found here <http://burkina-usa.org/the-embassy/visas/>. You can also apply for your visa from the Burkina Faso Consulate in New York, telephone: 212 308 4720.

Your c/o address in Burkina to be entered on the visa application is as follows:

c/o Arly Safaris
01 BP 3308 Ouaga 01
Burkina Faso
Tel: 50 38 19 61

Gun Permits

You can take up to two rifles and one shotgun with you. The cost of the gun permit is 120 euros per rifle and 100 euros for the shotgun. A 375 H&H or similar is probably the single best caliber rifle to take to Burkina. Alternatively a 416 caliber combined with a 300 magnum or 30-06 will also make a good choice.

We will need a copy of your passport scanned in color at high resolution (300 dpi) in jpeg file format along with the make, model, caliber and serial number of your firearms to obtain your gun permit. Please ensure to send this information via email no later than two months before your hunt. There is no limit to the number of rifle cartridges that you can bring to Burkina. Please however refer to your airline or travel agent on the amount of ammunition you can carry. The general airline rule is 11lbs maximum. 12 gauge shotgun ammunition is available for purchase in camp at approximately 10-15 euros per box.

Food and Drink

Apart from soft drinks and bottled water, local Burkina beer is available along with wine and imported liquors. If you wish to bring your favorite drink of choice two bottles of duty free liquor can be imported in to the country.

Travel to Burkina

Air France is probably the best carrier from the United States as there are several daily flights to Paris from major US cities. These will connect to a daily flight from Paris to Ouagadougou. Note when carrying guns on Air France you are required to submit information on the weapons and ammunition that you are carrying well ahead of time. Ensure that your final gun approval has been obtained from Paris and is entered on your reservation before you travel. A travel agent familiar with booking airline tickets for hunters will be aware of this process. We refer our clients to Steve Turner at www.travelwithguns.com as he has arranged the travel for the majority of our clients and we can recommend his services.

From the US your firearms will be checked all the way through to Ouagadougou unless you are planning to stop over in Paris. It is advisable in Paris to check at the boarding gate before you board your Burkina flight to ensure that your guns have been loaded on to the next flight. They will do this by checking your bag tags or boarding card. Also complete the Air France Firearms Declaration form and hand it over to them when boarding in the States and also in Paris.

Please send us your travel itinerary prior to purchasing your tickets so we can review them to ensure everything is in order.

Packing List

- Proof of yellow fever vaccination
- 2 passport size photographs (for your hunting license)
- A good hat or two
- Swimming trunks
- Dark glasses
- 3 shirts for hunting, dark green or camo
- 2 trousers, dark green or camo
- 2 shorts, dark green or camo
- 1 extra set of regular clothes for travel or to wear in Ouagadougou
- 1 fleece jacket for early mornings
- Rubber flip flops or similar for camp wear
- 3 pairs of hunting socks
- 1 or 2 pairs of well broken in boots
- Toiletries and other personal items
- Face net for flies
- Sun block
- Talcum powder / other to prevent chafing

Vaccinations and Medications

Please refer to the CDC website <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/vfr/burkina-faso> for a guideline of vaccinations and also talk to your own doctor about what vaccinations they recommend.

Yellow fever vaccination is mandatory and you will need to get this BEFORE you apply for your visa to Burkina Faso. The vaccination is valid for 10 years so will come in handy if you return to Burkina Faso or visit any other country in West Africa in the future. **Please also remember to take proof of the yellow fever vaccination with you as they check this as soon as you land in Burkina.**

A Malaria Prophylactic is highly recommended as well.

We advise our clients to take a small medicine kit to treat stomach upsets, first aid antiseptic cream, band aids, insect repellent, sun burn, sore throat, cough, cold, fever and allergies. Electrolyte powder is also recommended in case one gets dehydrated due to the hot weather.

Payments in Burkina:

Euros are the most accepted form of currency. While credit cards are accepted in your hotel it is wise to always carry enough cash to pay your bills as there is no guarantee that the credit card machine will be working on the day! Traveler's checks are not accepted. Before you depart camp you will have to pay for your hunting license, trophy fees and first preparation of trophies. This has to be paid in CASH in Euros only. Please carry enough CASH with you to pay for all these expenses plus a bit more. We have had hunters in camp that seemed to have budgeted the exact amount of money without any room for error or extras. This resulted in an awkward situation that we wish to avoid in the future. In Southern Africa most operators are willing to let a client settle any extra amounts owed later but this does not apply in Burkina. They need payment in cash right there and then as all trophy and other fees have to be paid in full to the game ranger who is present in camp at the end of every safari.

Tips and Gratuities guideline:

It is customary to tip your professional hunter, trackers and camp crew on a safari if you have had a good hunt. This is totally at your discretion. However as we frequently get asked this question here are some guidelines in US dollars:

Professional hunter \$25/day for buffalo/roan safari, lion safari \$50/day

Per Tracker \$10/day

Translator \$10/day

Hunting Driver \$10/day

Driver from Ouagadougou \$60 on your return to Ouagadougou

\$40 to \$50/day to cover the camp staff including: Chef and assistant, laundry and house cleaning, barman, skinners.

Trophy Shipment

Your trophies will be skinned as per your instructions in camp. These will then be salted, dried, dipped and packed and delivered to the exporter in Ouaga for shipment. Once the paperwork has been received the exporter will send you an invoice for the freight, packing and handling charges. On receipt

of this payment the trophies will be sent. As there are not a lot of options available to send trophies from Burkina to the States we have developed a system to have all our client trophies to be sent to Fauna and Flora in NY who will clear the trophies and then send it to your taxidermist.

NOTES

- Voltage is 220V, take a universal adaptor for the local plug points.
- Your US phone may or may not have a signal in the camp. If it is important to be in contact with your business or family please take a satellite phone with you.
- The camp generator is run as follows - one hour before hunters are scheduled to leave in the morning before their hunt; from around 1 to 3pm; from dark until 10pm or so. The generators are not run 24 hours a day, please do not expect this. During the hot summer months hunters can request their beds to be put outside their chalets and sleep under the stars at night which is quite comfortable and safe.