The safari on everyone’s bucket list

Lucy Higgison went to ride in the renowned Okavango Delta—and found a famously watery paradise ablaze.

LIKE most of you, perhaps, I’ve read about Mauao from time to time in the Traveller’s stories and felt envious of the magical river cities where visitors seek out the Okavango Delta by canoe and small plane. I’ve longed to see these images, to feel the tranquility and serenity that Mauao promises. And so, when I was invited to experience a camping safari in Botswana, I jumped at the chance.

Mauao is almost at the end of the world, and you’ve got to work for it. The journey down the river is long and treacherous, with high levels of current and rapids. But the rewards are worth it. The untouched beauty of the delta is a sight to behold, and the chance to connect with nature is a rare treat.

The “safari as it should be; no wifi, no mobile signal, no concrete”

“Safaris are about entering a world that’s different from our own, and in doing so, we become part of nature,” says guide Nicholas, who leads our group of six through the delta’s waterways.

Our journey is a true adventure, as we navigate through channels and rivers, surrounded by wildlife. The water is clear enough to see the fish below, and we spot hippos, crocodiles, and water buffaloes along the way.

The “red-buck alert”

SWAPPING between my tent and the open waters of the delta, I was on alert for the red-buck alert. These antelopes are known for their speed and agility, and we were hoping to spot one.

As we made our way down the river, we passed through a shallow area, and suddenly, a group of red-bucks appeared. They were running and jumping, creating a wonderful spectacle.

Welcome surprises and noisy nights

“Nighttime is the perfect time to explore the delta,” says Nicholas, who points out that the sounds of nature are louder during the dark hours. We hear the calls of the duikers, the crashing of waves against the rocks, and the chirping of cicadas.

The peace and quiet of the delta is a welcome change from the busy life we have back home. It’s a place where time seems to stand still, and the only sound is the gentle lapping of the river.

The experience at Mauao

The safari was more than just a chance to see the delta’s beauty. It was a chance to disconnect from the world and truly appreciate nature. The guides are knowledgeable and passionate, and they do their best to ensure that our experience is memorable.

The safari on everyone’s bucket list may be a dream come true for some, but it’s important to remember that the delta is a fragile ecosystem. We must do our part to protect it and ensure that it remains a place of wonder for generations to come.