

TOURS D'EXCELLENCE t/a

**HUNTERS'**

*Support  
and Travel*



**CHOOSING YOUR AIRLINE**

**2023**

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## **CHOOSING YOUR AIRLINE** *consider these options*

Please don't book the first flight that is presented to you by your travel agent. Don't get onto your computer and book a flight on the internet without first checking a few basics on respective airlines.

Ask friends or associates from your local chapter or hunting club how they flew to their last safari and if they had any problems on specific airlines.

Confirm the exact destination you need to go to with your outfitter. Confirm exact dates of arrival into camp and out of camp keeping in mind that usually you need two nights in-transit before getting into camp.

Many people will book their airline tickets on the internet and do not even consider the regulations that are implemented by each airline when travelling with sporting weapons. Many countries are not as free and easy as the United States, when transporting sporting weapons domestically or even over border.

If you are hoping to use miles also be conscious of the proposed airline that is offered to you when using your miles. Keeping in mind that you cannot change those flights once booked and if you finish your safari early and want to go home you cannot get another seat without paying to upgrade that class of travel on that airline if there is a seat available. You might also have to purchase a completely new air ticket. A good option here is if you stick to your intended return dates and take time to go and see the rest of the country.

It is advisable to use the services of a travel agent. The travel agent can go into the booking and put notes into the remarks section of your booking telling the airline that you are transporting sporting weapons. This requirement is becoming regulation with many airlines. The agent can, in the case of airline strikes, dust clouds etc get your tickets changed and you re-booked. If you book via the internet and you want to change flights then you have to deal with the airline itself and often the airline must revert to the country of origin of the booking before changing your booking. The United States is six to eight hours behind Africa so often you must wait for a reply.

The common answer I get from passengers who have booked on line say "it is cheaper and I don't have to pay a booking fee". That is correct but you don't have the back up if something goes wrong. Pay the minimal fee and get the support when needed. Often the agent will get a better fare to what you can get on the internet, so keep that in mind too.

Over the years we have documented various incidents with airlines and have put together some ideas that we suggest you take into consideration when making those reservations on specific airlines. Deal with the airlines that fly directly to South Africa preferably. Airlines that fly from Europe, Middle and Far East and Australia direct.



### **AMERICAN AIRLINES**

Good news - the embargo that was implemented by the British Authorities against American Airlines to carry sporting weapons into and intransit firearms through London Heathrow has been lifted. As AA does not operate directly to any African destination you will have to codeshare with British Airways. Originate on AA and fly to London Heathrow and then connect onto a myriad of BA flights to Africa. Keeping in mind you must adhere to the BA requirements. The airline needs to be advised well in advance of the flight that you will have sporting weapons, please refer to British Airways (International Route) requirements. Handling costs apply.



**AIR CANADA** a good option if you fly from Toronto or Calgary on Air Canada to London Heathrow and connect onto British Airways. British Airways does operate on the same route and you can start your flight in Canada and stay with BA all the way to South Africa.

Keeping in mind you must declare your sporting weapons on both Air Canada and British Airways before the commencement of the flight at least 72 hours before starting your flight. Each firearm case is regarded as a piece of luggage and goes towards your checked bag allowance which is subject to your fare type. Ammunition must be separate to the firearm and placed in a locked box in your checked bag. You need to complete the declaration form when checking in on Air Canada. There is a handling fee of CAD50 to CAD80 plus taxes on a single sector for the firearm case. You can also fly to Frankfurt and connect onto Lufthansa to South Africa plus another route is to Amsterdam and connect onto KLM. (Terms and conditions do apply if traveling through Amsterdam with sporting weapons)

Please check the Air Canada website about their requirements for the carriage of horns, antlers, bounty, archery and fishing equipment .



**BRITISH AIRWAYS (International Route).** Keep in mind on departing from Johannesburg or Cape Town you have to pay a handling fee of

GBP150 for the first firearm case, there after GBP70 per firearm case. If you are travelling economy or coach class you will pay GBP80 to have a second bag even after paying the firearm handling charge. Permission is required to be obtained from the airline a minimum of 72 hours before departing the US. All firearms must be declared in the booking and you must get confirmation in writing in advance of departure that you can transport the firearms. You must give yourself extra time when checking in especially when returning from Johannesburg or Cape Town as there is paperwork that has to be completed and this takes time. *Ammunition must be in a locked container and checked in separate to your firearm and checked bag.*



**BA COMAIR.** This airline ceased operations in in May 2022.



**LUFTHANSA.** A handling fee is charged when departing through Johannesburg and Cape Town of €90 per gun. This is payable at the respective ticket counter before you check in. You will be given a receipt. Please keep in mind that this charge is NOT included in the initial cost of the ticket, it is an auxiliary fee and the check-in agent is not a Lufthansa employee, they come from a local handling company and only implement Lufthansa requirements. Also you must specify in your booking the exact information of the sporting weapons you will be carrying, they request the make, type and caliber to be included in the remarks section of your ticket. Ammunition must be packed in a locked container and checked in separate to your firearm and checked bag.



**KLM.** Each weapon counts as a single item of baggage. KLM insists that you specify in your booking that you are travelling with sporting weapons and ammunition. Then make sure you have the written permission of the Amsterdam Police to travel through Amsterdam. It is advisable to make a copy of this permission once received and put it into a plastic sleeve and strap it to a outside of the firearm case to avoid confusion in Amsterdam. The authorities only work office hours Monday to Friday so if you try and contact them over the weekend do not expect to get an answer to your queries till the next working day.



**QANTAS.** Prior permission must be obtained to transport ammunition on Qantas in advance of departure. You must email [dg@qantas.com.au](mailto:dg@qantas.com.au) and send them the following information : Name and Address, flight details, firearms license number and expiry date, type of ammunition with a return fax, email or postal address. If you want to transport a firearm without ammunition the firearm must be declared at the time of check in. All firearms and ammunition must be carried and packed in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the State or Territory you are travelling to and from. An alliance has been formed between Qantas and Emirates so please keep in mind that you will still have to get approval from Emirates head office to transit through Dubai with sporting weapons and ammunition even if you arrive on a Qantas Flight. Please refer to the information on the carriage of firearms with Emirates.



**AIR FRANCE.** When reserving your ticket you must contact the Air France office by telephone or the Air France ticket sales office and advise them that you wish to transport firearms and ammunition. Do not pay for the ticket till you have this information approved. A new requirement with Air France is that they are charging an economy or coach passenger for a second bag be it the firearm case or another suitcase. A handling fee is charged to all economy class (voyageur/ alize) passengers of E50 per firearm case, but business (affaires class) and first class (premiere) passengers are not charged the handling fee. Ammunition must be packed separate to your firearm case in a locked container and not placed in your checked luggage.



**EMIRATES.** The carriage of sporting weapons, ammunition and compound bows must be approved by Emirates head office a minimum of 72 hours before you depart. To obtain the permission for the carriage of these items you can apply online by completing the published form and attaching a copy of your passport and proof of ownership (be it a license or US Customs form 4457). If you do not hear please chase the application. Allow extra days for weekend and public holidays keeping in mind that Emirates head office is in Dubai and all permissions must be given by Dubai and they have a different working week to other countries.

If, at the end of your safari you decide to go home early, you still need 72 hours to get permission to travel through Dubai. They will not accept the original request and just transfer it to the new booking. This requirement is applicable to all classes of travel. Ammunition must be in a separate locked container and not checked in with your checked luggage and separate to your firearm case.



**VIRGIN.** No specific permissions are required to transport firearms and ammunition on Virgin but they do adhere to IATA regulations for the carriage of same. Virgin reserves the right to ask for the required import/ export permit or see a copy of your paperwork that allows you to import firearms to a corresponding country/ destination. They also reserve the right to charge an excess baggage fee if you exceed your free baggage allowance. Ammunition must be packed separate to your firearm and checked bag.



**DELTA.** No prior declaration is required when traveling with sporting weapons. You can have one checked bag and one firearm case under 32kgs. If the firearm weighs over 32kgs they will charge an excess baggage fee and a second bag will incur a fee payable on check in. Delta does state that you are allowed to put your ammunition in a locked container in your checked bag for the flight over but once in SA and you take a regional or local flight you will be required to take out the locked container and send it separate to the checked bag but alongside your firearm.



**ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES.** The Management at Ethiopian Airlines have now agreed to transport sporting weapons subject to them being advised when making your reservation of the carriage of the sporting weapons. A maximum of two rifles is allowed in one hard case only. Ammunition is in a locked box and checked in separately to the firearm. All charges for the handling of the firearms by a local security company is billed back to the passenger on arrival and again on departure. Estimated charges is R600 per firearm case either way. Travelling through Addis Ababa you need to inform the airline that you will have sporting weapons and ammunition and get something in writing from them that they have been advised of the sporting items, so when you land in Addis Ababa you have something to show the authorities. Otherwise they hold the items and often it is not easy to get them back.



**EGYPTAIR.** Sporting weapons and ammunition is accepted as checked baggage in accordance with Carrier's regulations. Firearms must be unloaded with the safety catch on and packed as per the IATA and ICAO regulations. In other words in approved guncase and the ammunition to be placed in a locked box (not more than 5kgs in weight) and placed in the checked bag. The airline has the right to charge a handling fee subject to the fare type. This airline has cut its flights down to flying to South Africa twice a week.



**SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS**

**SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS.** Massive changes at SAA - they only started to operate again on the 23rd September 2021 to Accra, Kinshasa, Harare, Lusaka and Maputo. They are operating one domestic route from Johannesburg to Cape Town and return. They have plans to start operating to Victoria Falls - but no start date has been published yet. **Please Note: They have decided to accept the carriage of sporting weapons and ammunition. They are charging a handling fee on departure and do require you to advise them on booking the ticket that you will have one firearm case and ammunition in a separate locked box weighing less then 5kgs.**



**SWISS AIR.** Sporting weapons and ammunition is accepted as checked baggage in accordance with Carrier's regulations. Firearms must be unloaded with the safety catch on and packed as per the IATA and ICAO regulations. In other words in approved guncase and the ammunition to be placed in a locked box (not more than 5kgs in weight) and placed in the checked bag. The airline has the right to charge a handling fee subject to the fare type.



**QATAR AIRWAYS.**

This year has seen once again an increase in hunters travelling on Qatar as they have increased their routes and destinations for travel through Doha. Notification and clearance is required to be obtained before departure for sporting weapons and ammunition which travel by cargo or checked baggage. This must be declared in the remarks section of your ticket. If booked on line you need to contact the local office and advise them of the



**DECLARATION OF SURRENDER OF FIREARMS**

Name of Passenger:	Flight: QR	Seat No:
Nationality:	Final Destination:	Time:
Passport Number:	Connecting Fli's:	Date:
Home Address:	PNR:	
	Bag Tag No:	
Description and Quantity of Firearms:		
Description of Packaging:		
Certificate No:	Date of Issue:	

*I confirm to be in possession of all authorizations required from the States of flight origin, transfer and destination, as required.  
I understand that for safety and security reasons I am prohibited from taking the above articles into the aircraft.  
I understand that the firearms will be placed in the hold of the aircraft.  
I confirm that the firearms are not loaded and are in "made safe".  
I confirm that I am not carrying more than the permitted amount of ammunition.  
I confirm that the ammunition is packed in an approved manner.  
I confirm no loose ammunition is present in my hold or cabin baggage.*

**This form must be signed by the passenger in the presence of a Qatar Airways staff.**

**Signature of Passenger:**

*Any violation of the above statements may result in Qatar Airways not carrying the firearms and repatriation costs being recovered from the passenger.*

**Received and witnessed by:** **Staff Number:**



firearms they will want to see a copy of your 4457, letter of invitation or hunt contract.

Once that is approved they will require you complete a **Declaration of Surrender of your Firearms** (example on previous page). This form can be given on check in with a copy of your proof of ownership (4457) and letter of invitation. The airline has been requesting to see a Temporary Import permit on check in for South Africa, Mozambique and Botswana but if travelling to Zimbabwe or Namibia where permits are available on arrival they want to see that you have the application in place with passport and 4457 attached. The check in person can request to see proof of ownership and the invitation letter or hunting contract to prove the hunt is taking place. The same requirement on size and weight of the firearm case as other airlines is honoured and the ammunition allowance of a maximum of 5kgs is permitted in a separate locked box traveling along with your firearm but not in your checked bags.



**UNITED AIRLINES.** United started a flight to Johannesburg in July 2021 from Newark. They transport firearms and ammunition. You can only check in at the airport counter if you have sporting weapons. No check in will be permitted through the United App, airport kiosk or curbside check in. All International pre-requisites for the carriage of firearms and ammunition will apply. The transportation of black powder (which is classified as hazardous material) will not be accepted for check in. United starts a seasonal flight from Newark to Cape Town from beginning of December to end of March each year. This flight option could be changed at short notice so keep an eye on the United website for updates.



**AIRLINK**

**AIRLINK.** Airlink is no longer a code share partner of SAA they dissolved their agreement in 2019. Airlink have taken over the carriage of sporting weapons and will send to most of their destinations that they service domestically and regionally. At this time they do not accept firearms to Pietermaritzburg, George, Manzini, Maseru, Mafekeng and Antananarivo. They often deny the carriage of firearms on the Vilankulu sector but sometimes accept with special prior permission from the airline. It is advisable to book through a travel agent as they can declare the firearms in the remarks section of the ticket. If you do the ticket online you must then contact Airlink by email and give them the firearm information, they will send a reply within three working days accepting the carriage of firearms on a specific route. They will accept an IATA approved firearm case that does not exceed 190cm x 75cm x 65cm. It must be locked. The airline does not accept the use of cableties to secure the case. The ammunition box must be hard sided and also be locked with padlock. It cannot weight more then 5kgs including the case. They charge a handling fee on all routes this is a per firearm fee. There is a domestic handling fee and a different amount is charged for a regional flight. These fees are payable at check in at the appropriate counter.



**AIR BOTSWANA.** The amount that you can carry is 20kgs of checked luggage. Any amount over and above this will be charged at excess baggage rates.

A handling fee is charged for the transportation of sporting weapons. Ammunition cannot be kept in the checked bag it must be sent separately to the firearms and checked luggage.



### **SINGAPORE AIRLINES / MALAYSIAN AIRLINES / CATHAY PACIFIC**

Prior permission is required to transport sporting weapons on these airlines. This must be given in writing to the respective airline and a confirmation in writing is also required. They do have a limit which is one firearm and 50 rounds of ammunition allowed. This limit can be adjusted but is subject to the airlines discretion on the day of travelling. The Airline reserves the right to charge a handling fee on departure from Johannesburg and Cape Town.

**TURKISH  
AIRLINES**



**TURKISH AIRLINES.** Sporting weapons and ammunition is accepted as checked baggage in accordance with Carrier's regulations. Firearms must be unloaded with the safety catch on and packed as per the IATA and ICAO regulations. In other words in approved guncase and the ammunition to be placed in a locked box (not more than 5kgs in weight) and placed in the checked bag. The airline has the right to charge a handling fee subject to the fare type. This airline has been asking this season for a pre issued firearm permit before boarding on going to print they confirmed they will continue to ask for this permit on check in.



**LAM (LINHAS AEREAS DE MOCAMBIQUE).** No longer part of the SAA codeshare agreement. LAM do accept sporting weapons and ammunition but do not have a dedicated security company to handle firearms in Johannesburg. Often firearms are not loaded on flights, the client will be charged the applicable excess baggage rates to get the firearm loaded on the first available flight. Mozambique is not a sophisticated country and the logistics to get the firearms to you is long and drawn out so research this option thoroughly. Send your firearms and baggage to Johannesburg, collect them and go through the arrival formalities, then check onto LAM. This option will make sure everything arrives at your destination.



**ETIHAD AIRLINES.** Sporting weapons, hunting rifles & sporting equipment like a bow will be accepted for carriage but prior notice of these items must be made to the airline in advance of travel. The firearm case must be within the 23kgs weight limit and you will be charged the applicable excess baggage rate for the firearm case.



**AIR CHINA** – (Star Alliance Codeshare Partner) – has started to operate into Johannesburg. Sporting weapons and ammunition will only be carried as checked luggage along with all the required certificates issued by the competent authorities. They should be locked and packed separately and their carriage subject to approval from Air China in advance of the start of the flight. These items do not qualify for free baggage allowance and will be charged as overweight baggage. Check-in with sporting weapons and ammunition is required 3 hours before departure of the flight.



**fastjet**

### **SAFAIR / FASTJET AIRLINES**

**SAFAIR** does except the carriage of sporting weapons on most of their routes but does not accept firerams on their George flight. The request must be booked at least 72 hours prior to travel on the Fly Safair website and is only available when booking the Standard or Premium fare. All passengers need to check in at the counters not on line at least 2 hours before departure of the specific flight. Same applies to firearm cases they cannot exceed 190cm x 75cm x 65cm. It must be locked. The airline does not accept the use of cable ties to secure the case. The ammunition box must be hard sided and also be locked with a padlock. It cannot weight more then 5kgs including the case. There is a handling fee that will be charged at the counter on check in.

**FASTJET** does accept the carriage of sporting weapons on their routes to Zimbabwe. The request must be made to Fastjet either via email or telephone call to their head office in Harare. All passengers need to check in at the counters not on line at least 2 hours before departure of the specific flight. Same applies to firearm


cases they cannot exceed 190cm x 75cm x 65cm. It must be locked. The airline does not accept the use of cable ties to secure the case. The ammunition box must be hard sided and also be locked with a padlock. It cannot weight more then 5kgs including the case. There is a handling fee that will be charged at the counter on check in.



الخطوط الجوية العربية السعودية  
SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES

### **KENYA AIRWAYS / SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES**

There has been passengers using these airlines to transport sporting weapons and ammunition. Please check with your travel agent or the airline for the conditions of carriage for sporting weapons & ammunition before booking your ticket. We have found the information on the airlines website is different to information given on the ground. Try and get specifications in writing to cover you.

 **LATAM CHILE** will accept Archery Equipment (Compound Bows) in their sporting items category and will if prior permission is obtained well in advance of departure from the airline head office of the intended carriage of the sporting weapons and ammunition. The airline will consider the request. A fee can be charged subject to the fare type booked.




### **AIR SEYCHELLES/ AIR ASTRAL / EL AL**

Do not accept the carriage of sporting weapons.



### **RUWANDA AIR / AIR MAURITIUS**

Will accept the carriage of one gun case and maximum of 50R of ammunition. Please contact the respective airline well in advance to advise them of the firearms. Both airlines charge a handling fee estimated to be R600 per sector.

 **AIR BELGIUM** started to operate into Johannesburg on the 26 October 2022. They will accept the carriage of one firearm and ammunition in a locked box weighing less then 5kgs. Prior Notice is required and the cost for transportation of one gun case is E150 per sector. The case cannot be longer then 300CM in length.

## **Keep in mind...**

Please book on tried and tested airlines, don't book routes that are new and cheaper, often you the passenger will end up paying monetarily more and losing time.

CEMAIR will accept the carriage of sporting weapons on their flight to Hoedspruit. However, I have been advised by the authorities for the passenger to check in advance before making the reservation to see if the situation has changed.

With the constant changes in the carrying of an unabridged birth certificate, until such time as the law is clarified, please carry an unabridged birth certificate (commonly referred to as a long form certificate in many



countries) for all children who have not attained the age of 18. If one parent is travelling alone you will need a Parental Consent affidavit from the absent parent with a notarised copy of the absent parents identification attached giving permission for the minor to travel with the other parent. (This consent is valid for six months not just one entry)

**N.B It is at the discretion of the immigration officer to ask for additional information on the minor if so required. Please make sure you have a contact number for the absent parent in case the official wishes to speak to him or her.**

All airlines require the firearms to be in an approved hard gun case and packed separately to the checked luggage firearms can be transported in the checked bag with your personal belongings. Ammunition must be locked in a locked box and can travel in your checked bag from the USA on either Delta or SAA but once it reaches SA and needs to go on a regional or domestic carrier then it needs to be taken out and sent separate to your checked bag but along side the firearm case.

**Please note that all regional or domestic carriers will NOT accept a checked bag that has ammunition inside. All ammunition must travel in a locked box and travel alongside the firearm. Ammunition that is not in a locked box will be confiscated and cannot be sent in a cardboard box as was allowed before.**

***The accepted norm for the airlines travelling to Africa is as follows:***

**Economy or Coach** class passengers can have one check in bag of 23kgs for personal luggage. The ammo will be in this checked bag, in a locked box and please remember a maximum of 5kgs ( 11 lbs) is an international requirement. The airline will check and weigh the ammo if they feel it is too much. There are incidences where the bag is stopped in transit, the ammo case is taken out of the bag and if found to be overweight the ammunition is confiscated. Do not put anything else like rangefinders or binoculars in your ammunition box either as you stand to lose these too if the ammunition container is confiscated.

Please refer to the above airlines on the transportation of sporting weapons and ammunition with the charges being applicable.

**Business Class** passengers are allowed two bags of 32kgs each. Here the free sporting allowance of one firearm case is still honoured by the airlines. This allowance is also subject to First Class passengers travelling on Emirates.

**First Class** passengers on BA / Lufthansa / Air France / Emirates can have three bags of 32kgs per bag. The respective airline will honour the free sporting allowance of one firearm case and subject to other considerations of travel by the passenger like being a gold or platinum frequent flyer card holder will accept a second or third firearm case at no additional charge.

Very important if you need to travel domestically or regionally keep in mind the allowances specified by the respective local carriers, these carriers will not automatically honour the same baggage allowances as the international carriers if at all. Many passengers arrive in South Africa with their full baggage allowance from either Business or First class booking and find they have to pay the excess baggage charges on the domestic or **regional legs**.

**Hand or carry on luggage** is usually one piece of 8kgs which may not exceed 114 linear cm in height, width and breadth but some airlines like Delta allow a bag of 18kgs plus a personal item like a computer, camera bag, briefcase or handbag. But the accepted norm is a hand piece of 8kgs per person plus the personal bag as specified.

**Miscellaneous Charges Order** – this is an accountable IATA document. There are two main types of MCO, those with a specific value for each coupon and those with residual value. Should you anticipate having excess baggage and not want to pay for each sector you fly you can speak to your travel agent or airline and get an MCO in place before you leave home and pay a once off charge for excess baggage for your whole route. The airline or travel agent will give you the different payment options depending on the number of bags you have. This option does save money in the long run and easier to deal with, when having to pay for excess baggage on each sector. But keep in mind you cannot prepay for the handling fee at certain airports for sporting weapons or if the firearm case is overweight.

Please take note that the handling fees for applicable airlines will change from time to time.

**All passengers traveling to the UAE / Dubai** who are taking prescription medication are required to fill out a Declaration Form detailing these medicines. Included are any over-the-counter medicines that have codeine in them need to also be declared. <https://smartservices.moh.gov.ae/eServices/login.html>

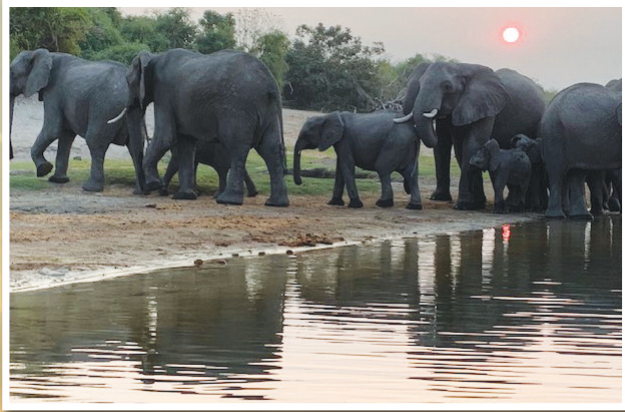
**Information required:** Copy of Passport, Full Itinerary, Copy of Original Prescription. On the prescription it must be legible and also declare the medical condition along with the medication prescribed.

If you keep these recommendations in mind when booking your next trip you should have a trouble free safari.

*If you have any queries or questions please contact the author and I will gladly assist in finding out the answers to your questions.*

*This information is current and correct at the time of going to print,  
but airlines rules and regulations are subject to change.*

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