

How to Read the Live Auction Program

Almost everyone who attends our Live Auction for the first time is struck by the incredible deals that can be had, especially on our African safaris. The deals often seem too good to be true. There has to be a catch, right?

No, there isn't a catch. There are some incredible deals to be had at the Minnesota SCI Expo, but you need to make sure you understand what you're buying.

When reading the live auction program, there are lists of things that are included and not included in each donated hunt. It may be a bit confusing if you've never gone on a safari or guided hunt before. We have compiled this quick guide to help you understand what everything means. While this guide focusing on African safaris, a lot of this applies to any guided hunt anywhere in the world.

The most important thing you can do is always talk to the person who donated the hunt before you buy it. Come to the Expo early enough to speak to the outfitter about the hunt that you would like to bid on. Saturday morning / afternoon is the best time to not feel like you are being rushed.

There are quite a few things that are typically included in a donation hunt such as:

Daily Rate: Your hunt will be for a specific number of days and may or may not include the cost of having an observer or non-hunter. You will want to confirm with your outfitter whether all of those days are actual hunting days, or whether it includes non-hunting days (Travel Days) in the beginning and end. For example, on a five-day/four-night trip, you could potentially only have three hunting days depending on how the donation is structured. Or, it may be five actual days of hunting, but you'll be required to pay for a non-hunting day before and/or after the trip. For certain hunts, your included daily rate may only be good until you take the specified animals listed or continue hunting. For example, if you bought a 10 day hunt that includes the trophy fee for a duiker and impala and you shoot both of those animals on the first day, unless you continue to hunt additional animals, the daily fees included in the donated hunt may not apply. You should inquire if the donated daily rates are included if you choose to do non-hunting activities while staying on the property. This could save you unexpected expenses.

Trophy Fees or Trophy Fee Credit: Your hunt probably includes a few specific animals or a trophy fee credit. Your outfitter will provide you with a list of animals that are available to hunt and the cost per animal – a Price Sheet. **Note:** The trophy fee is usually due if you wound the animal and don't recover it. The hunt you purchased was a donation. If it is listed as a 100% donation in the live auction program, then that means that the outfitter is shouldering all of the cost of all the amenities such lodging, meals/beverages and guiding you on the hunt, as well as the cost of the animals included in the package. These generous donations are what fund the Minnesota SCI and cost the outfitter a lot of money out of pocket. While it is not required, adding additional animals to your package will not only make for a much more enjoyable trip, but will also allow the outfitter to recoup some of the cost of the donation.

Services of Professional Hunter (PH) and Trackers: The PH and Trackers will take care of you all day, every day. They will make you feel welcome, try not to laugh when you miss, and will be a huge part of one of the most incredible experiences in your life. You will be thoroughly impressed by their skills.

What does Daily Rates typically include?

Meals: You'll eat like a king. People gain weight on safari.

Basic Beverages: Bottled water and soft drinks.

Lodging: Usually individual accommodations within suite bathrooms.

Laundry / Maid Service: Your clothes will be washed, and your room cleaned daily.

Field Transportation: The vehicle is usually provided by the Professional Hunter.

It is always best to let the Outfitter know if you have any dietary restrictions before you book your hunt and to ask about lodging.

Aside from the items listed above, there are some additional things that may or may not be covered in your package. These can include:

Alcoholic Beverages: While soft drinks and water are always included in the cost of a hunt, alcohol may or may not be included. If it is included, it is usually with the caveat "in moderation," which is totally subjective. You may want to discuss with the outfitter what they would consider a reasonable amount ahead of time.

Trophy Preparation and Dipping, Packing, and Shipping: Trophy preparation includes skinning your animals, cleaning and boiling the horns/skull, and salting the hides. Trophy preparation is almost always included as part of the package.

After your trophies are skinned and salted, they will need to be chemically treated (dipping), packed up and then shipped to you or your taxidermist. Some outfitters do this themselves, other have the work done by a local taxidermist. Regardless, it's almost always a non-included expense. It's a good idea to think through what you want to do with your trophies before you leave, such as whether you'll be doing shoulder mounts, Euro mounts, rugs, etc. as dipping, packing, and shipping can be very expensive. It doesn't make sense to incur the cost to have them skin all of your animals for life-size mounts, if you're just going to do shoulder or Euro mounts when you get home. The cost for this service is usually a combination of by the animal for dipping and packing and then by weight and the size of the crate for shipping.

Once you know what animals you plan on taking on your trip, it is highly advisable to talk to the outfitter about how they charge for this service. Depending on the country and number of animals, expect to pay at least \$1,000 and possibly two or three times more than that to get your trophies shipped to the United States. Once they arrive, you'll probably want to use the services of a customs broker to get them into the country. The base cost for this is around \$500. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service will inspect your shipment, which may result in additional storage fees from the airline.

Taxidermy: While you can have your taxidermy done overseas, you're almost always better off having your taxidermy done in the United States. Your taxidermist will supply you with tags that you attach to each set of horns and hide with a zip tie. This ensures that you get your own trophies back. Several outfitters work with local taxidermists, so it is good to speak to both before the Live Auction. Taxidermy Certificates are available to bid on during the Live Auction.

Rifle Rental: Traveling with firearms can be a hassle. Most outfitters offer the option to rent a rifle on your trip, which can be a great option if you're planning on doing some non-hunting travel after your trip. Expect to pay anywhere from \$25-\$100 per day for this. Ammunition may be included in the rental price but is usually charged by the round. It may seem incredibly overpriced by our standards, but ammunition in other countries is often very expensive.

International Flights: Almost never included. Your outfitter will tell you which airport to fly into. It is good to research airfare before you bid on a donation.

Airport Pick-Up and Drop-off: This may or may not be included in the donation. If it's not, expect to pay \$100-\$300 each way.

Air Charter: If you're hunting a remote camp, it may be required to take an air charter in. Like ammunition, aviation is very expensive in Africa. Check with the outfitter.

Tips: Tipping is one of the most confusing and sensitive subjects on safaris. Tipping is not required and how much you tip is completely at your discretion. However, it is important to remember that this was a donated hunt. While it is technically not required, it is expected. On your safari, you will be served by professional hunters, trackers, skinners, cooks, maids, gardeners, etc. A good rule of thumb is to expect the total tip amount (combined) to be 15-25% of the total retail value of the daily rate of the trip. For example, if the daily rate for your hunt was \$500/day, and you were there for 7 days, you would base your percentage would be off of \$3,500. Your Professional Hunter is typically supplying their own vehicle. As a result, the PH will usually get about 50% of the total tip. You may wish to ask the PH or Outfitter for a list of staff names and a suggested tip amount. At the end of the trip, they will usually line the staff up and have them come in one by one, where you can thank them and give them their tip individually. On a donated hunt, it is also a much-appreciated gesture to tip the Outfitter. They donated the hunt, and anything that helps offset the cost will be appreciated. This would be above the typical 15-25% tip for the rest of the staff.

While this is not a complete list of by any means, it does cover the typical safari experience. As a member of Minnesota SCI, there are probably several Members of our chapter who have done the same hunt that you are interested in. Please don't hesitate to ask the outfitter for references, so you may contact us with any questions. We're here to help! And we want to hear about your trip!