

## NAMIBIA & OKAVANGO SAFARI (21 DAYS)

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Namibia and Botswana are both incredible countries from a landscape photography perspective and this tour incorporates some of their most spectacular scenery - from the dunes of the Namib Desert to the lush swamps of the Okavango panhandle! Also, it includes some fantastic game reserves (such as the world-famous Etosha Pan) where you will have the opportunity of seeing Africa's big game and some remarkable birdlife. Beginning and ending in Windhoek, this tour provides a combination of dramatic scenery, excellent game-viewing, spectacular birdlife and some unique wildlife experiences, such as a visit to the Africat Foundation, which focuses on monitoring cheetahs and leopards. The following is an itinerary which aims to capture the beauty and diversity of Namibia and northern Botswana and will provide you with a rich nature and wildlife experience – Africa at its best!

### **BASIC ITINERARY**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>
<b>1 Windhoek</b>	Amani Lodge
<b>2 Sesriem</b>	Sossus Dune Lodge
<b>3 Sesriem</b>	Sossus Dune Lodge
<b>4 Swakopmund</b>	Atlantic Villa Guest House
<b>5 Swakopmund</b>	Atlantic Villa Guest House
<b>6 Erongo</b>	Erongo Wilderness Lodge
<b>7 Erongo</b>	Erongo Wilderness Lodge
<b>8 Okonjima Game Reserve</b>	Okonjima Bush Camp
<b>9 Okonjima Game Reserve</b>	Okonjima Bush Camp
<b>10 Etosha National Park</b>	Okaukuejo Rest Camp
<b>11 Etosha National Park</b>	Okaukuejo Rest Camp
<b>12 Etosha National Park</b>	Halali Rest Camp
<b>13 Etosha National Park</b>	Namutoni Rest Camp
<b>14 Mahango Game Reserve</b>	Ndhovu Lodge
<b>15 Shakawe</b>	Xaro Lodge
<b>16 Shakawe</b>	Xaro Lodge
<b>17 Linyanti</b>	Lianshulu Lodge
<b>18 Linyanti</b>	Lianshulu Lodge
<b>19 Rundu</b>	Sarasungu Lodge
<b>20 Waterberg</b>	Waterberg Plateau Park

**Price\*:** *Please refer to the Rates page on the website.*

**\* These prices include all accommodation, meals, transport, entrance fees and guide fees. Prices exclude beverages, laundry fees, any optional activities, gratuities and items of a personal nature (such as gifts and souvenirs).**

While most of the accommodation on this tour is moderately luxurious, some nights are spent at high-end luxury lodges, hence the higher price for this tour. If you would prefer more basic accommodation, please contact us to prepare a quote accordingly. If your time is limited, we also offer shortened versions of this ultimate 21-day tour.

## *DAY 1: WINDHOEK*

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*Highlights: Daan Viljoen Game Reserve, Historical Windhoek, Joe's Beerhouse*

After arrival at Windhoek International Airport we will enjoy a brief scenic tour of Windhoek, with its interesting colonial architecture, before making our way to Amani Lodge, with its spectacular views over the Khomas Hochland. Here you will have a chance to relax and freshen up after your flight. We plan to visit the nearby Daan Viljoen Nature Reserve in the early evening, where we will do a short drive or gentle walk. Hartmann's mountain zebra, blue wildebeest, kudu, gemsbok, springbok, klipspringer, red hartebeest, impala and eland may be seen on our drive as well as numerous bird species, including Rockrunner, Monteiro's Hornbill, Black-cheeked Waxbill and Maccoa Duck. There are no large predators in the reserve so we can safely explore by foot. In the evening we will dine at the popular and characterful Joe's Beerhouse in Windhoek, especially renowned for its excellent game and German specialities.

## *DAY 2: WINDHOEK TO SESRIEM*

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*Highlights: Namib dunes, Traditional barbeque*

After breakfast, we will begin our drive southwards to Sesriem, gateway to the magnificent Sossusvlei area. Sesriem is situated quite far south of Windhoek and will require a rather slow drive on gravel roads to get there. The scenery en route is rewarding, however, and will offer some great photographic opportunities. Tonight we will be staying at the luxurious Sossus Dune Lodge with its spectacular views across the Namib Desert.

## *DAY 3: SOSSUSVLEI*

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*Highlights: Namib dunes, Sossusvlei, Deadvlei, Sesriem Canyon*

We will get an early start today (with a packed breakfast) so that we can enjoy a magnificent sunrise over the red dunes en route to Sossusvlei - nothing quite compares to seeing these dunes at sunrise, with their rich red tones contrasting with deep, dark shadows. We hope to see Gemsbok (Oryx) and Dune Lark along our drive. After viewing and photographing these dunes, we will be shuttled by 4x4 to Sossusvlei where we can explore the spectacular Deadvlei and Sossusvlei pans. We will return to the lodge for lunch. In the afternoon we will visit the nearby Sesriem canyon – relatively small but surprisingly picturesque. We will then enjoy drinks and dinner at the lodge before spending the night in our thatched chalets.

## *DAY 4: SESRIEM TO SWAKOPMUND*

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*Highlights: Walvis Bay Lagoon, Swakopmund*

Today we make our way towards the Namib Coast. We will spend the afternoon at Walvis Bay lagoon where we hope to see localised bird species such as the diminutive Damara Tern, the tiny Chestnut-banded Plover, Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Great White Pelican, cormorants (including two southern African endemics) and many others. We will then travel further north to Swakopmund. We plan to dine at a renowned seafood restaurant, in a restored tug overlooking the sea.

## *DAY 5: SWAKOPMUND*

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*Highlights: Cape Cross Seal Reserve, Swakopmund architecture*

After breakfast we head up the coast to the Cape Cross Seal Reserve, the largest breeding colony of Cape fur seals on the Southern African coast. At the peak of the breeding season in November and December, as many as 200 000 seals can be seen here. This is also the site where Portuguese navigator Diego Cáo landed in 1486 and erected a stone cross in honour of John II of Portugal. In the afternoon we will return to Swakopmund where we will enjoy exploring the town by foot, with its unique German architecture. Alternatively we will enjoy an afternoon drive through the eerie 'Lunar Landscape' situated close to Swakopmund. In the evening we plan to dine at a well-known local seafood restaurant and steakhouse.

## *DAY 6: SWAKOPMUND TO ERONGO*

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*Highlights: Spitzkoppe, Sundowner walk at Erongo*

Today we will make our way inland via the Spitzkoppe to Erongo Wilderness Lodge. The Spitzkoppe, an imposing batholith that rises straight out of the desert plain, is referred to as the "Matterhorn of Namibia". It is an amazing site for endemic bird species, including Bradfield's Swift, Rosy-faced Lovebird, Stark's Lark, Monteiro's Hornbill, Karoo Long-billed Lark, Augur Buzzard and Herero Chat. We will enjoy a picnic lunch and spend some time exploring the Spitzkoppe area before making our way north. In the evening we will join a guided sundowner walk at the Erongo Wilderness Lodge.

## *DAY 7: ERONGO*

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*Highlights: Nature walk, Sundowner game drive, Rock art site*

We will begin our day with a guided nature walk followed by brunch at the lodge. During the day we will explore the lodge grounds for interesting bird and mammal species. In the late afternoon/ evening, following our afternoon tea, we may embark on a sundowner game drive with a local guide (optional activity), where we will have the opportunity of visiting a San rock art site and enjoy the sunset from this cave.

## *DAY 8: ERONGO TO OKONJIMA*

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*Highlights: Leopard radio-tracking, Night hide*

After brunch, we will make our way towards Okonjima, home to The AfriCat Foundation. This is a non-profit organisation committed to the long-term conservation of Namibia's large carnivores, especially cheetahs and leopards. Here we will have the opportunity of tracking cheetahs and leopards by foot or vehicle. These magnificent animals are generally exceptionally difficult to see in the large game parks of Southern Africa such as Etosha or Kruger National Park, so this may be a unique opportunity to see these creatures in their natural habitat. After afternoon tea, we will 'radio-track' Leopards from game-viewing vehicles. The leopards roam freely and catch their own prey within the 4000 ha rehabilitation area. After dinner, we will visit the nocturnal hide where we hope to spot night creatures such as porcupines, honey badgers and caracal.

## DAY 9: OKONJIMA

*Highlights: Bushman Trail, Bird watching, Cheetah Project*

Today, we embark on the Bushman Trail, an easy walking trail where you will learn the art of making traditional artefacts and be taught the survival techniques of the San people. After brunch we will explore the lodge grounds, where we hope to identify some of the more than 250+ bird species in the area, including Namibian endemics such as Carp's Black Tit, Hartlaub's Francolin and the Damara Rock Runner. After afternoon tea we will visit the Cheetah Project, which offers valuable insight into the welfare work of The AfriCat Foundation.

## DAY 10 - DAY 13: OKONJIMA TO ETOSHA

*Highlights: Cheetah radio-tracking, Etosha Pan, 'Big 5' game viewing*

This morning we participate on foot in the radio-tracking of rehabilitated cheetahs. We will then make our way into Etosha National Park, one of Southern Africa's finest Game Reserves. Etosha covers an area of 22 270 km and is home to 114 mammal species and 340 bird species. Etosha, meaning "Great White Place", is dominated by a massive mineral pan, which forms part of the Kalahari Basin. The pan is generally a large dusty depression of salt and clay, which fills up only if the rains are heavy. The perennial springs along the edges of the Etosha Pan draw large concentrations of wildlife and birds. We will be spending 4 nights at Etosha (at least one night at each of the main camps) where we hope to see a host of large and small mammals including elephant rhino, lion, buffalo and wildebeest, as well as a number of special Namibian bird species, such as Kori Bustard, Common Ostrich, Crimson-breasted Shrike (Namibia's national bird), Pygmy Falcon, Red-necked Falcon, raptors, vultures and owls, Double-banded Courser, Southern Pied Babbler and more. In the evenings, we can enjoy sitting at the floodlit waterholes at the camps. These waterholes attract interesting night creatures and there is a slim chance of seeing leopard at Halali.

## DAY 14: ETOSHA TO MAHANGO GAME RESERVE

*Highlights: Bird and game viewing, Kavango River*

Today we head for the narrow, tropical strip of Namibia wedged between Angola, Zambia and Botswana – known as the Caprivi! We will spend the night at Ndhovu Lodge, a luxury tented camp on the banks of the Kavango River. We will embark on a sunset boat cruise, a very worthwhile trip for sighting water birds and hippos, after which we will enjoy dinner in the thatched lapa overlooking the river, where elephants and hippo often congregate.

## DAY 15: MAHANGO GAME RESERVE TO SHAKAWE

*Highlights: Sunrise boat cruise, Okavango Panhandle, bird and game viewing*

We will get an early start to the day and make our way to the Mahango Game Reserve (situated on the border of Botswana) where we will have excellent opportunities of viewing elephant, buffalo, red lechwe and the rare sable and roan antelopes in beautiful riverine and swampland habitat. Over 400 bird species have

been recorded in the area, many of them spectacular. We then travel into Botswana where we will spend two nights at Shakawe, situated within the Okavango Panhandle, the main watercourse supplying the Okavango Delta. The Panhandle is a stretch of approximately 70km of the Okavango River from where the river enters Botswana until it fans out. Here, we will find ourselves among clear flowing channels fringed with reeds and covered with water-lilies, open grass-covered floodplains, fringing riverine forest and dry acacia woodland. The area boasts some spectacular wildlife and teems with birds. Birds such as Pel's Fishing Owl, White-backed Night Heron, Slaty Egret, Wattled Crane, Southern Carmine Bee-eater (in Summer) and many others may be found in these magnificent swamps.

### *DAY 16: SHAKAWE*

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*Highlights: Bird and game viewing by boat*

Today we continue our game and bird watching around Shakawe. Since game and bird viewing at Shakawe is best done by boat, we will embark on a morning and afternoon boat trip (each in opposite directions along the river) in order to see some of the game and water birds found here.

### *DAY 17: SHAKAWE TO LINYANTI*

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*Highlights: Bird and game viewing, sunset cruise*

After a short morning boat trip, we will make our way back into Namibia and along the Caprivi Strip to Lianshulu Lodge. This luxury lodge is situated in the Mudumu National Park and overlooks the pristine Kwando River. South of Lianshulu, the river breaks up into a labyrinth of channels to form the Linyati Swamp. In the afternoon we will enjoy a sunset cruise on the Kwando River.

### *DAY 18: LINYANTI*

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*Highlights: Bird and game viewing, sunset cruise*

In the morning, we will explore the Mudumu National Park by vehicle, with its lush riverine forest, marshes, dense savannah and mopane woodland. An astonishing 430 species of birds have been recorded here (nearly 70% of Namibia's total) and it hosts a wide variety of game, including the rare sitatunga and red lechwe as well as buffalo, elephant, zebra, hippo and crocodiles. In the evening, we will embark on another sunset cruise on the Kwando River.

### *DAY 19: LINYANTI TO RUNDU*

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*Highlights: Bird watching, Natural woodland*

Today we start our return journey through the Caprivi to Rundu, where we will spend the night at Sarasungu Lodge. The area is renowned for its birdlife. Here you can enjoy a relaxing afternoon by the pool or an evening stroll. We will enjoy dinner at the restaurant before retiring to our rooms.

## *DAY 20: RUNDU TO WATERBERG PLATEAU PARK*

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### *Highlights: Waterberg Plateau*

After breakfast, we make our way southwards to the Waterberg Plateau, one of Namibia's most fascinating geological features. Rising some 200m from the surrounding plains, the Waterberg Plateau is 50km in length and up to 20km wide. We will spend the night at the Bernabe de la Bat Rest Camp situated at the foot of the plateau. There is also a rich array of flora, with over 500 plant species being recorded in the area, and the red rock faces of the plateau support over 130 species of lichen! From a cultural perspective, this is the area where the Herero people fled from the German colonial forces and suffered a huge defeat in 1904. In the afternoon we can enjoy one or more of the short walks in and around the camp, where hope to spot numerous interesting bird and plant species. The camp is a famed site for Hartlaub's Francolin, and beautiful Rosy-faced Lovebirds abound on the cliffs.

## *DAY 21: WATERBERG TO WINDHOEK*

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### *Highlights: Nature walk, Bird watching*

After breakfast, depending on the time available, we will enjoy a walk in the camp or a game drive onto the top of the plateau where one finds a rich variety of fauna, including the endangered white and black rhino, buffalo, roan and sable antelope. We will then make our way back to Windhoek to catch your flight home.