

NAMIBIA'S NATURAL HIGHS SAFARI (14 DAYS)

This tour is a condensed version of our 3-week Namibia and Okavango Safari, and has been especially designed for those wishing to experience all the main highlights of Namibia within a 2-week period. Namibia is a fascinating 'Land of Contrasts' - from the dramatic dunes of the Namib Desert and the Skeleton Coast to the world-famous Etosha Pan, teeming with large game and remarkable birdlife. Beginning and ending in Windhoek, this tour includes the spectacular Sossusvlei, the mysterious Swakopmund coast, some of the fascinating rock formations which make Namibia famous, the Etosha National Park as well as the world-renowned Africat Foundation at Okonjima, a unique wildlife experience where we encounter cheetahs and leopards in their natural habitat. This itinerary aims to capture the beauty and diversity of Namibia, whilst incorporating some of the best wildlife-viewing available in Africa. The tour ends with an optional balloon trip over the Namib.

BASIC ITINERARY

Day	Accommodation
1 Windhoek	Amani Lodge
2 Swakopmund	Atlantic Villa Guest House
3 Swakopmund	Atlantic Villa Guest House
4 Khorixas	Vingerklip Country Lodge/ similar
5 Okonjima Game Reserve	Okonjima Bush Camp
6 Okonjima Game Reserve	Okonjima Bush Camp
7 Etosha National Park	Okaukuejo Rest Camp
8 Etosha National Park	Halali Rest Camp
9 Etosha National Park	Namutoni Rest Camp
10 Waterberg Plateau Park	Waterberg Rest Camp
11 Sesriem	Sossus Dune Lodge
12 Sesriem	Sossus Dune Lodge
13 Windhoek	Olive Grove Guest House

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

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

DAY 1: WINDHOEK

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: SWAKOPMUND

Highlights: Walvis Bay Lagoon, Swakopmund

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

DAY 3: SWAKOPMUND

Highlights: Swakopmund architecture, lunar landscape

In the morning we will explore Swakopmund by foot, with its unique German architecture. In the afternoon we will embark on a scenic drive through the nearby "lunar landscape" to an area where we may encounter *welwitshia mirabilis*, an extremely unusual plant unique to the Namib Desert. These plants are truly living fossils, since they can live for 1000s years! In the evening we plan to dine at a well-known local steakhouse and seafood restaurant.

DAY 4: KHORIXAS

Highlights: Cape Cross Seal Reserve

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. We then continue to the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain at 2570m, and home to the famous White Lady Rock Paintings. Brandberg is German for "Fire Mountain", a name which comes from its glowing colour at sunset. We then

make our way northwards to Vingerklip Lodge. In the evening we will embark on an excursion to see the unusual Vingerklip rock formation.

DAY 5: OKONJIMA

Highlights: Himba excursion (optional), Leopard radio-tracking, Night hide

In the morning you have the option of visiting a nearby Himba village (optional activity), of particular interest to those who may wish to photograph these beautiful people. After breakfast or lunch, 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 6: 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. After dinner, we will again have the opportunity to visit the night hide.

DAY 7 - DAY 9: 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 3 nights at Etosha (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 10: WATERBERG PLATEAU PARK

Highlights: Otjikoto Lake, Waterberg Plateau, Game drive

After an early morning drive we will exit the park and make our way south. We will stop en route at Otjikoto Lake, meaning "deep hole" in Herero, an elliptical sink hole with a diameter of 150m and a depth of 55m. This remarkable natural phenomenon is home to the colourful Otjikoto chichlid, an endemic fish occurring only in the Otjikoto and Guinas Lakes. In 1915, retreating German forces dumped a large part of their weaponry in the lake, including ammunition, cannons and machine guns, much of which has been recovered. We then continue 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. In the evening we will join a game drive on the plateau, which serves as a breeding area for rare and endangered species including black and white rhino, buffalo, sable and roan antelope. The natural beauty of the Waterberg can also be explored on foot by means of a number of short trails from the camp, offering spectacular bird viewing opportunities and a high diversity of interesting flora.

DAY 11: SESRIEM

Highlights: Nature walk, scenic landscapes, Naukluft Mountains

After breakfast and perhaps a short walk in the camp, 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 some gravel roads to get there. The scenery en route is rewarding, however, and will offer some good photographic opportunities. Tonight we will be staying at the Sossus Dune Lodge, where we can watch the sunset over the dunes and enjoy a sumptuous dinner in this spectacular, tranquil setting.

DAY 12: SESRIEM

Highlights: Namib dunes, Sossusvlei, Deadvlei, Sesriem Canyon

We will get an early start today (with a packed breakfast) so that we can enjoy a spectacular 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 will also look for any rare bird species such as Dune Lark along our drive. After viewing and photographing these dunes, we will be shuttled to Sossusvlei by 4x4 where we can explore by foot the spectacular Deadvlei Pan and Sossusvlei. We will return to the lodge for lunch. In the afternoon we will visit the nearby Sesriem canyon – relatively small but surprisingly picturesque.

DAY 13: WINDHOEK

Highlights: Hot air balloon trip (optional)

This morning you will be collected from the lodge ½ hour before sunset (weather permitting) to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime balloon trip over the world's oldest desert – a spectacular way to end our 2 week tour! You will soar with the winds for approximately one hour over the dunes and mountains of the Namib, watching the sun rise and enjoying some incredible photographic opportunities! After landing, you will be given a champagne breakfast, followed by a 4x4 nature drive back to the lodge. After your return, we will start our return journey to Windhoek. Alternatively, if you would prefer not to participate in the balloon trip, we can enjoy a relaxing morning walk in the vicinity of our lodge, before returning to Windhoek. Please confirm whether you would like to participate in the balloon trip on booking, as it is included in the price of the tour.

DAY 14: FLIGHT HOME

After a relaxed evening at the Olive Grove Guest House, you will have the opportunity to indulge in any Spa treatments available at the lodge, or relax by the pool. During the course of the day, you will be transferred to the Windhoek Airport to catch your flight home.