

# NAMIBIA



## OVERVIEW

Namibia is a landscape of striking contrasts: dramatic coastlines; shifting deserts; majestic canyons; lush, river-fed plains; rugged mountains; and adrenalin-busting ocean waters. But for all its awe-inspiring natural splendour, Namibia also conveys a compelling human tale: the extant Himba and San tribespeople offer insight to their noble, ancient wisdom; the plentiful shipwrecks which frame the Skeleton Coast speak of lives lost to risk and adventure in bygone days; whilst the uncomfortable history of colonial settlement and oppression is told through the architecture and museums of the towns and cities. In spite of the apparent desolation of some of its landscapes, wildlife has evolved to survive the harsh, arid climate, with desert-adapted elephant, lion and black rhino inspiring highlights to observe. Often described as other-worldly', Namibia is a place for adventure; a place to relish the freedom of the wind in your hair, the sun on your back; and to embrace the journey...



## KEY FACTS

<b>CAPITAL CITY</b>	<b>TOURIST HUB(S)</b>
Windhoek	Windhoek
<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>TIME ZONE</b>
Christian	GMT +1hrs/+2
<b>CURRENCY</b>	<b>LANGUAGE</b>
The Namibia Dollar	English, Afrikaans, German, Oshiwambo + other regional languages)
<b>FLIGHT TIME</b>	
London 15h   New York 24h   Dubai 11h	



## KNOWN FOR

World's oldest desert - the Namib Desert, is about 80 million years old  
 World's highest sand dune, Dune 7  
 Rarest & Oldest Plant, Welwitschia mirabilis, is endemic to the Namib and a living fossil  
 40-50% of the world's population of cheetah  
 Largest canyon in Africa, Fish River Canyon  
 Rock art at Twyfelfontein (UNESCO site)  
 One of the largest colonies of Cape fur seals  
 The Himba Tribe - semi-nomadic people of North West Namibia  
 The Skeleton Coast  
 Etosha National Park



## ACCESSIBILITY

**Flights** mainly go into the capital city of Windhoek. There are daily flights from Johannesburg and Cape Town (South African Airlink), & regular flights from Frankfurt (Eurowings/ Lufthansa), & Addis Ababa (Ethiopian Airlines). Light aircraft flights are easy to book and there are many airstrips around the country which can be used in a flying safari itinerary. **Roads** within Namibia are excellent and are regularly maintained. There are roads which connect the country with neighbouring Botswana, South Africa and Zambia, although these are less often included in itineraries given their conditions can be unreliable.



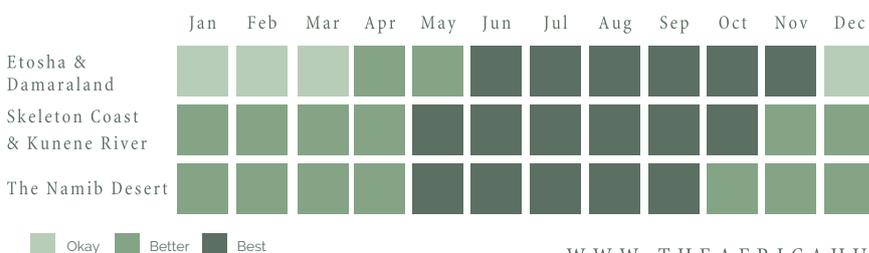
## WHO FOR

Photographers  
 Honeymooners  
 Families  
 Adrenaline Junkies  
 Naturalists & Birders  
 Archaeologists



## WHEN TO GO

December to February is Namibia's wet season with most of the rain falling at this time. March to May is moving towards Winter when it gets drier. June to August is winter and the driest time. Daytime temperatures drop and nights can get down to freezing. Come September temperatures begin to warm again, with occasional thunder showers building again in late October and early November



## PACKING

Light layers of clothing in neutral colours. Bright coloured clothing is not suitable for walking safaris. Packing checklist: Layers – long and short sleeve shirts and trousers | Warm fleece or jumper for cooler evenings | Waterproof jacket | Comfortable, sturdy shoes | Flip- flops /sandals | Swimming attire | hat/ baseball cap | Sunglasses and Sun-cream | Personal items – toiletries, small medical kit etc | Torch, plug adapter s and charging equipment | Binoculars and camera | Books etc for siesta time.

# KEY REGIONS

## WINDHOEK

Windhoek (pronounced with a "V", not a "W") is the capital city of Namibia and is also the largest. The city is almost exactly in the country's geographical centre. Windhoek is the main tourist arrival hub, and the majority of itineraries will require an overnight here mainly due to international flight times. Hosea Kutako International airport (code WDH) is located 40km outside the town, however Eros International airport (code ERS) is just 5km from the city centre and is mainly used for flying safaris. The city has a number of attractions (enough to fill a full day city tour) and some restaurants for overnight stays.

## SWAKOPMUND

This seaside town is a stopover most itineraries will have included as standard. With a quintessential 1890s German village style, it is located between the desert and the sea. Originally a landing station for the German Imperial Navy, it is well known for adventure activities including quad biking on the sand dunes and skydiving. A safari to find desert adapted creatures (snakes, spiders, etc) is highly recommended. Visitors can also set out on a boat from the neighbouring town of Walvis Bay to look for pods of dolphins. It is also easy to access Sandwich Harbour from here, a highlight for birders with more than 200,000 birds including flamingos, cormorants, and pelicans.

## TWYFELFONTEIN

Twyfelfontein is a UNESCO World Heritage Site found in north-west Namibia and should be included as standard in itineraries. The site is less than 1 km<sup>2</sup> in size yet has the largest concentration of rock art and engravings in Africa. Mostly created by San hunter-gatherers, the art is estimated to be over 10,000 years old and created over thousands of years. Roughly 2,500 individual engravings can be found on over 200 slabs of rock, and 13 panels of rock paintings. The site is essentially an 'open air gallery', with four primary routes. Qualified guides give valuable insights into the engravings which depict a variety of hunting scenes. There are over 100 rhinos and more than 200 giraffes, plus elephants, oryx, ostrich, zebra and – remarkably – a seal. The ocean is over 100km away!

## ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

Located in the north of the country, this National Park is 22,270 km<sup>2</sup> in size which is only just smaller than the size of Rwanda. 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> of this area is made up of saline depressions or 'pans' and otherwise is made up of grassland, woodland and savannah many natural waterholes. The park is home to over 114 mammal and over 340 bird species. Featured in Sir David Attenborough's Africa series, Etosha is well known for its rhinos as well as desert-adapted elephants and endemic black faced impala. Other desert-adapted animals include oryx and Hartmann's mountain zebra. Predators including cheetah, lions and leopard can also be seen. There are a few high-end lodges located on private reserves bordering the park and a number of campsites within the park itself which can be booked in advance.

## SOSSUSVLEI, DEADVLEI & SESRIEM

Access to the Sossusvlei area of the Namib-Naukluft National Park is from the Sesriem gate, roughly 60m away from the Sossusvlei dunes. Sesriem Canyon is the result of years of erosion from the Tsauchab River and is roughly 1.5km long and 30m deep. Given the time it takes to explore, it is often left to the 'end of the day' in an itinerary following a visit to Sossusvlei's dunes. The red and orange dunes are among the world's largest and can tower over 300m above the contrasting white salt pans below. The highest dune in Sossusvlei ('Big Daddy') measures at 325 metres. Dune 45 is the most accessible dune and most photographed. Not far from Dune 45 is the salt pan of Deadvlei. These 900-year-old fossilised black tree skeletons stick out of a stark white pan and the site is a photographer's dream.

## **DAMARALAND**

Located in the north-west of Namibia, Damaraland is home to some remarkable scenery, much of it rocky and rugged. It gets very hot up here in the summer and when it rains the dry riverbeds fill up quickly and dramatically. The desert landscape means very interesting flora and fauna many of which is desert-adapted. There are a number of highlights in this region which means a two-night stay is well worth including in an itinerary. It is here you will find the Brandberg Mountain (the highest mountain in Namibia), the Petrified Forest (a national monument which consists of 280-million-year-old petrified tree trunks) as well as the incredible rock art at Twyfelfontein.

## **NAMIB NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK**

This park is an ecologically protected area 49,800 km<sup>2</sup> in size (larger than the country of Denmark). Located in western Namibia, the park has four distinct areas including the Namib Desert which is the oldest desert in the world and expands well beyond the borders of the park. Inside the National Park is where the highest dune in Namibia (Dune 7) can be found. Sandwich Harbour is situated in the most northern part of the park and is easily accessible from Walvis Bay. Namib Naukluft is also home to three main attractions of the country: Sossusvlei, Deadvlei and Sesriem.

## **KOAKOVELD**

Koakoveld is located in the far north-west of Namibia and is part of the Kunene Region. The area extends to the Kunene River on the northern border with Angola and west to the Atlantic Ocean. The scenes up here are dramatic and incredibly photogenic. The real highlight is the Himba Tribe, the last true nomads of Namibia who are easily recognisable due to their red skin and hair. Only a handful of operators have access to the Himba Tribes for tourism purposes. Access to this part of the country is very difficult and can be quite costly as it mainly requires private charter flights, however it will most definitely be a highlight.

## **CAPRIVI**

The Caprivi Strip is a little-known part of the country however can be considered the 'Okavango Delta light' due to the Zambezi and Kwando rivers which influence its landscape and climate. Getting up to the Caprivi can be difficult and is more easily accessed from neighbouring Zambia and Botswana. Time allowing, a visit here combines well with the desert/salt pan wilderness found in Etosha. There are three National Parks in the strip: Bwabwata, Mudumu and Mamili. The area is rich in flora and fauna with around 450 bird species and four of the big five (elephants, lions, leopards, and buffalos) plus crocodiles, hippos, a variety of antelope including sitatunga and lechwe, and even African wild dog.

## **FISH RIVER CANYON**

Fish River Canyon is the largest in Africa and second largest worldwide after the USA's Grand Canyon. Located in the furthest south, it is not often included in itineraries as it requires a 'dead night' on either side of a stay (when driving). Charter flights are possible but can be costly. The canyon is over 160km long, 27km wide and up to 550m deep, and ends at Ai Ais. The Fish River (the longest in Namibia) then continues into the Orange River – the border with South Africa. Activities here are mainly hikes (from a half day up to 5-day adventures) as well as mountain biking and safari drives into the heart of the canyon.

## **SKELETON COAST**

Often referred to as 'the world's largest ship cemetery', the Skeleton Coast is a unique part of Africa and best observed during a scenic flying safari. The weather can be harsh and due to the rough seas, regular thick fogs and exaggerated winds, it has been the final resting place for many ships caught in the coast's unpredictable currents. The name is also relevant as large numbers of whales have been stranded here and their bones can be found up and down the coast (a stretch of 500km long and around 40km wide). Super for gloomy photography, the area is also home to animals including jackals (who prey on the Cape fur seals), brown hyena and even desert lions.