

SWAKOPMUND

Surrounded by the ancient Namib desert and the inhospitable Atlantic Ocean, Swakopmund is alive with activity

1

Namibia's adventure capital with quad biking, sky diving, sand boarding, camel rides and more

2

Curio shops and shopping for arts, crafts and jewellery

3

Scenic flights along the Skeleton Coast over the endless dunes and vast hostile coastline

4

See one of the world's oldest plants in the Moon Landscape: the *Welwitschia mirabilis*

Half way between Namibia's top two attractions, Swakopmund makes for an ideal break to the vast distance between Sossusvlei and Etosha. Swakop's an unusual place. Poking out amidst palm trees are Bavarian spires and there's a lighthouse dating back to 1902. In fact, there's a very German feel to it all, with colonial buildings, German style restaurants and coffee shops selling German cakes. Add to that lots of restaurants, bars, a museum and a small aquarium and you get a bustling town popular with both tourists and Namibians.

And Swakopmund is more than just a quaint coastal town on the Skeleton Coast, it is the adventure centre of Namibia. Desert tours, sea kayaking and scenic flights are complimented by a host of adventure activities including quad biking, paragliding, sandboarding and skydiving. Certainly one of the best, and most unusual, places to visit in Namibia.



SWAKOPMUND FACTS



The Hohenzollern House is a monument and landmark in Swakopmund, the building was built between 1904–1906 (left); The Lighthouse is still in operation, with its light seen as far as from 35 nautical miles (above)

1. The name of the town is derived from the Nama word Tsoakhaub (“excrement opening”) describing the Swakop River in flood carrying items in its riverbed, including dead animals, into the Atlantic Ocean.
2. The German settlers changed it to Swachaub, and when in 1896 the district was officially proclaimed, the version Swakopmund (German: “Mouth of the Swakop”) was introduced.
3. Captain Curt von François founded Swakopmund in 1892 as the main harbour for the Imperial German colony - the natural deep sea harbour at Walvis Bay belonged to the British.
4. Early in World War I in 1915, German South West Africa was taken over by the Union of South Africa. With this, the logistic and political barriers disappeared to use the harbour in Walvis Bay for South West Africa.
5. Having lost its military importance, Swakopmund was used for recreation even during World War II, and in the 1940s and 1950s it was expanded to serve more and more tourists.
6. In 1976 the discovery of uranium at Rössing, 70 km (43 mi) outside town, led to the development of the world’s largest opencast uranium mine and the foundation of Arandis. This had an enormous impact on all facets of life in Swakopmund.
7. Swakopmund now has a population of over 40,000, making it the fourth largest population centre in Namibia.
8. After Namibian independence from South Africa in 1990 many street names were changed from their original German or Afrikaans names to honour Namibians.
9. German, Afrikaans and English are the predominant languages spoken.
10. Swakopmund is considered more expensive than other Namibian cities.

SWAKOPMUND LANDMARKS

German Architecture: Swakopmund has many interesting old German buildings: Woermannhaus (1905) - climb the small tower for panoramic views of the ocean and desert; Hohenzollernhaus (1904) - one of the finest colonial buildings in Swakopmund; Altes Amtsgericht (1906); The Old Prison (1909); The Swakopmund Lighthouse (1902); Hansa Hotel (1905).

Swakopmund Museum: This private collection founded in 1951 offers displays of minerals, indigenous flora and fauna as well as historical and cultural artefacts.

Kristall Galerie (Crystal Gallery): Home to the world's largest quartz crystal cluster on display and an interesting collection of crystals and gemstones.

Swakopmund Jetty: The 100-year-old jetty extends 262 meters out into the ocean and offers views over the ocean and back towards the historic town.

Restaurants: Swakopmund has a variety of places to eat that offer different types of cuisine from German specialties to home-cooked Namibian staples. Brauhaus, The Tug, Hansa Hotel, The Wreck, Ocean Cellar, Brewer & Butcher are some of the popular restaurants to visit.

Aquarium: This small aquarium showcases the marine life found in the cold Benguela Current and features a walk-through tunnel.

Moon Landscape and Welwitschias: The Moon Landscape, within a 30-minute drive from Swakopmund, is an area of endless eroded hills and valleys forged by the Swakop River over eons. Amidst it all, you will find the famous *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a plant which can live to up to 2,000 years old.

Dune 7: Dune 7 is on the outskirts of Walvis Bay and is popular with locals and tourists. The strenuous climb to the top is well worth the view. Visit in the morning before the sand gets too hot.

Sandwich Harbour: About 60km south of Walvis Bay, this is one of Namibia's most dramatic sights where the giant dunes descend into the ocean to form a natural tidal lagoon.

Activity Booking Centre: Our head office and activity booking centre is in Swakopmund, pop in to meet us or book your activities.

Swakopmund is the activities hub for adventure activities including quad biking and sand boarding in the Namib desert sand dunes



SWAKOPMUND ACTIVITIES



Quad Bike (ATV) over the Dunes

One of the best ways to explore the world's oldest desert is by quad bike, up and over the dunes, more dunes and beyond that, even more dunes. Less effort than climbing the dunes on foot, enjoy the exhilarating slopes as the 4x4 kicks in.



Surf the Sand

Sand boarding is a popular activity on the dunes. It's a great climb to the top, well worth the ride back down again. You can lie down or stand up, either way it's exhilarating and loads of fun.



Discover where the Dunes Meet the Sea

Inside the Namib Naukluft National Park, roughly 60km from Walvis Bay, you'll find Sandwich Harbour. Your 4x4 trip to get there (tide dependent), will take you along the beach where the dunes quite literally meet the ocean.



Explore the Living Desert

The desert, despite being arid and dry, and for the most part heaps and heaps of sand, is actually alive. This is an educational scenic drive that will allow you to see the desert in a whole new light.



Walk the Desert at Night

The sand dunes come alive under UV light. Explore the Namib's gravel plains and watch as the theatre of the night comes to life.



Old Plants in the Oldest Desert

The Moon Landscape is an area of endless eroded hills and valleys forged by the Swakop River over eons. Amidst it all, you will find the famous *Welwitschia mirabilis*, some of which are over 2000 years old.



Trail the Desert on Horse or Camel

Explore the dunes, rocky plains and mountain vistas just outside of the town of Swakopmund on horse or camel.



Breathtaking Beauty by Bike

Cycle up and down endless dunes on this 14km scenic tour. For those who may need a little help along the way and prefer a little less burn, opt for an E-bike.



Cruise the Bay

One of the most popular activities is to cruise the bay on a catamaran. It's a chance to explore the marine side of things. En route back to harbour, enjoy the sparkling wine and fresh oysters.



Paddle at Pelican Point

At the tip of the Pelican Point peninsula, you'll find the seal colonies and one of the better ways to explore it all is from the water, just off shore in a kayak.



Catch a 'Big One'

Namibia is renowned for its fishing. Try your hand at reeling in kabeljou, black tail, steenbras or galjoen and then have a seafood braai (barbecue) right there on the beach.



The Sky's the Limit

From Swakopmund you can take various different charter flights over the Skeleton Coast. Fly over Sossusvlei and Dead Vlei, old diamond mines, shipwrecks and Langewand, where the Atlantic Ocean meets the sea of dunes.



Fall from the sky

If this has been an activity you've always wanted to do, take our word for it, there are few places in the world that beat skydiving over the Namibian desert.



Glide over the Dunes

Paragliding is a unique activity for those who want to spend time in the dunes, climb to the top and then let the winds take you gliding. A great option for those who aren't in on the adrenaline of skydiving.



Balloon on the Coast

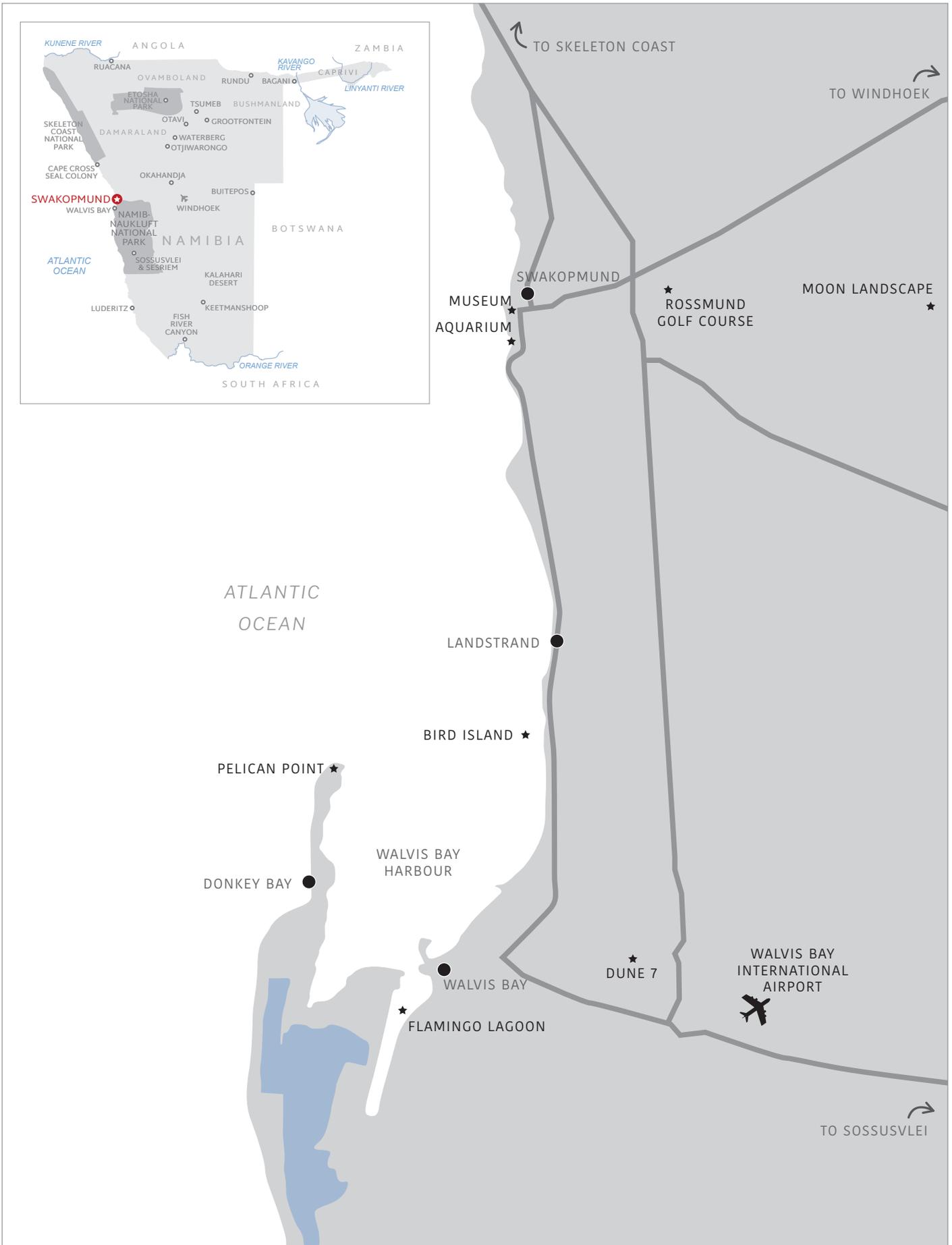
If you thinking to include a hot air balloon safari, little will beat doing this in the Sossusvlei area, but if you aren't visiting that area or your itinerary doesn't allow it, then taking to the skies in a hot air balloon on the coast is equally unique.

Our top tip: Book in advance where possible to avoid disappointment.

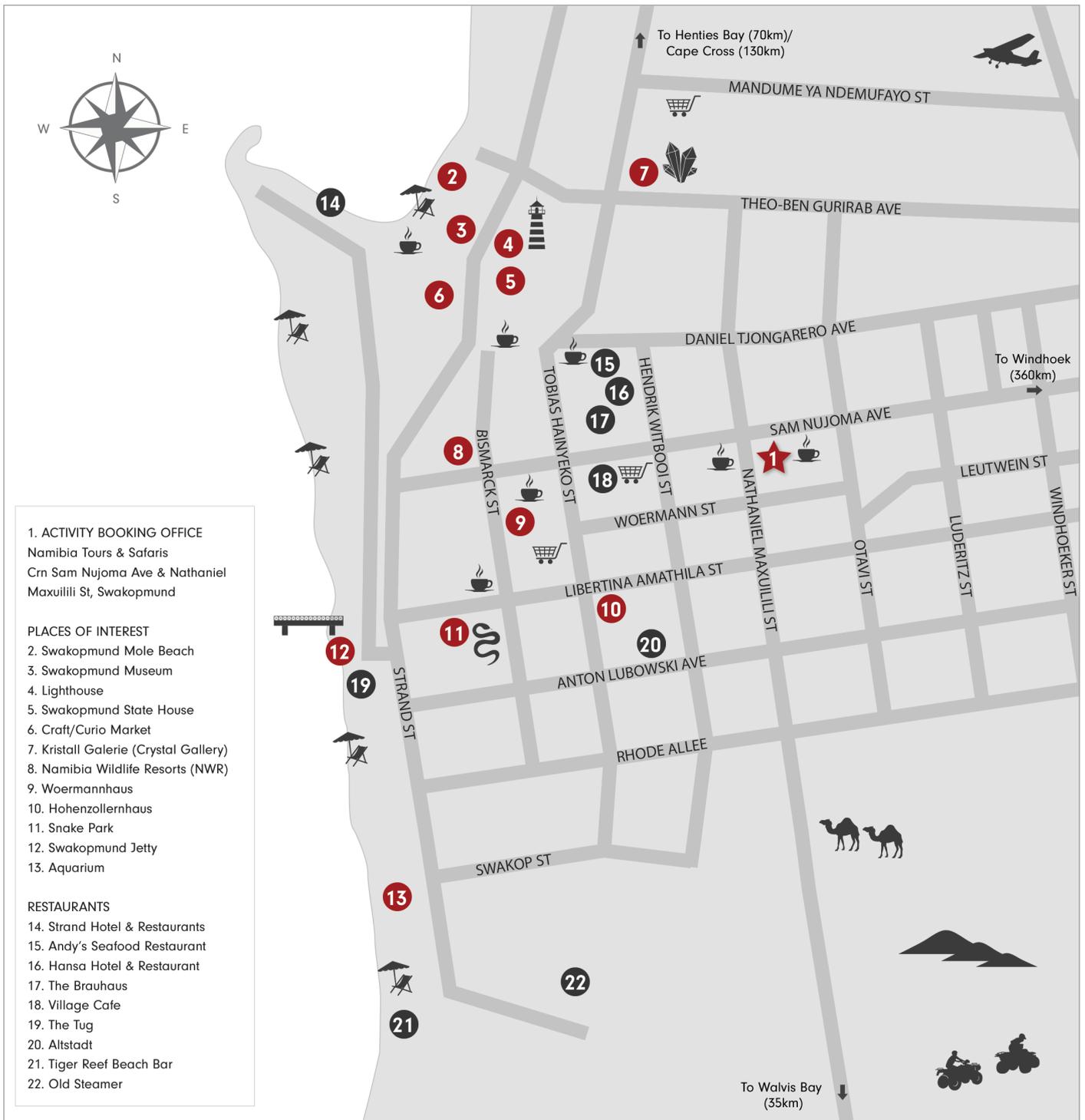
Namibia is a country full of experiences, even the furthest reaches, the most remote areas, offer unique adventure. The simple pleasure of enjoying a gin and tonic at sunset is, in our books, a worthy activity and one no African holiday should go without. For those who will be in Swakopmund, there's so much more to explore and we're happy to help you pre-book any of these experiences.

Contact your consultant for more information on each activity and to make the necessary bookings.

SWAKOPMUND MAP



SWAKOPMUND TOWN MAP



SWAKOPMUND DISTANCES

Swakopmund – Sesriem	350km	5 - 6 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Swakopmund – Windhoek	360km	4 hours	Tarred road
Swakopmund – Moon Landscape	40km	40 mins	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Swakopmund – Walvis Bay	35km	30 mins	Tarred road
Swakopmund – Walvis Bay Airport	50km	40 mins	Tarred and gravel road
Swakopmund - Dune 7	45km	40 mins	Tarred and gravel road
Swakopmund – Henties Bay	70km	50 mins	Tarred road
Swakopmund – Cape Cross	130km	1.5 - 2 hours	Tarred and salt road
Swakopmund – Twyfelfontein	335km	5 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Swakopmund – Spitzkoppe	160km	2 hours	Partly gravel but mostly tarred road

SWAKOPMUND WEATHER

Surrounded by the Namib Desert on three sides and the cold Atlantic waters to the west, Swakopmund has a desert climate with mild conditions year round. The average temperature ranges between 15 to 25 °C and rainfall is less than 20 millimetres. The cold Benguela Current supplies moisture for the area in the form of fog that can reach as deep as 140 km inland. Early mornings can easily warrant an extra layer of clothing when sea fog is present. If you're looking for the warmest months, visit in January, February or March.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
AVERAGE HIGH °C (°F)	22 (72)	23 (73)	22 (72)	21 (70)	21 (70)	20 (68)	20 (68)	18 (64)	18 (64)	19 (66)	21 (70)	22 (72)
AVERAGE LOW °C (°F)	16 (61)	16 (61)	16 (61)	14 (57)	12 (54)	11 (52)	10 (50)	10 (50)	11 (52)	12 (54)	14 (57)	15 (59)
DAILY MEAN °C (°F)	19.9 (67.8)	20.6 (69)	21 (69.8)	20.7 (69.3)	19.2 (66.5)	17.8 (64.1)	17.9 (64.2)	15.9 (60.6)	16 (60.9)	16.9 (62.5)	18.1 (64.6)	18.9 (66)
AVERAGE RAINFALL MM (INCHES)	1 (0.0)	2 (0.1)	6 (0.2)	2 (0.1)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0.0)	0 (0)	1 (0.0)	1 (0.0)

Originally designed and built for the purpose of loading and unloading pontoons and boats, the Swakopmund Jetty is now a popular tourist attraction.

