



NAMIBIA HIGHLIGHTS CAMPING SAFARI

This Namibia camping safari begins with a night at Okonjima, home of the *AfriCat Foundation*, which rescues and rehabilitates big cats. Then it's on to Etosha, one of Africa's top game parks, followed by a chance to marvel over the Bushman rock art at Twyfelfontein. En-route you'll spend quality time with a Himba community and pause to watch thousands of Cape Fur Seals frolic in the surf at Cape Cross. End with a memorable visit to the spectacular sand dunes at Sossusvlei. Explore these and more of Namibia's highlights with your guide whilst staying in easy-to-erect dome tents – other camp chores

are seen to by the camp assistant. Camping equipment, including sleeping bags, is supplied and three meals are provided on most days. Your urban nights in Windhoek and Swakopmund will be in en-suite accommodation, the rest are spent under canvas in well-appointed campsites.



Day 1 - Flight to Namibia

A scheduled overnight flight takes you from the UK, via Johannesburg, to Windhoek where you begin your Namibia camping safari adventure.

Includes dinner on the flight.

Day 2 - Windhoek

After arriving at Windhoek Airport and passing through customs, you are met and transferred to a comfortable guesthouse in one of Windhoek's leafy suburbs. There is free time this afternoon to get over your long flight by relaxing at the pool or exploring the city center. Windhoek has many good restaurants to choose from for dinner, or alternatively you can order in at the guesthouse – just ask your hosts for details.

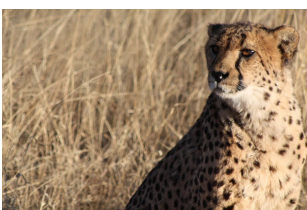
Includes breakfast on the flight.

Day 3 – Okonjima

You will be met at the guesthouse between 08.00 and 08.30 and taken to join your safari group and guide at the safari base. You then depart, heading north out of Windhoek on a long straight road running between some of Namibia's large game farms. It's not unusual to see springbok, warthog, kudu and even giraffe near the side of the road so keep your eyes peeled. Along the way there's time for a short break at the craft markets in Okahandja before continuing on to your destination, a private campsite at Okonjima, home of the *AfriCat Foundation*.



You'll set up camp and enjoy a relaxing lunch before heading out on a guided tour exploring the work done here, including rescuing needy wildlife and rehabilitating them for rerelease - especially predators such as cheetah. It is not always possible to return some of these magnificent creatures back to the wild due to the injuries that brought them to the sanctuary, or previous contact with humans, and so they remain well looked after as ambassadors to the *AfriCat* cause. You may have the chance to see and photograph these cats whilst your guide spends time explaining the need for their conservation and the ethos of Okonjima and *AfriCat*.



Windhoek to Okonjima: approx. 3 hours (300km)

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Day 4 – Etosha National Park

After a fairly early breakfast and breaking camp you'll continue north through the towns of Otjiwarongo and Tsumeb, and then perhaps stop at the mysterious and fascinating Lake Otjikoto on the way to Etosha National Park. Aiming to reach your campsite for lunch, there's a little time to relax before your first game drive. Late afternoon and early morning are the best time for seeking out wildlife as the temperatures are cooler and the animals are at their most active.

Okonjima to Eastern Etosha: approx. 5 hours (360km)

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 5 – Etosha National Park

Spend the day game driving westwards through this seemingly harsh yet surprisingly habitable and scenic park, with some spectacular views of the huge, silvery expanse of Etosha Pan. Spotting plains game can be easy; but travelling with a guide allows you to also appreciate the fascinating smaller and shier species, as well as learn about some of Etosha's many birds. You visit various waterholes along the way and stop off at Halali Camp, in the middle of the park, for a leisurely lunch and a cooling dip in the pool before continuing your way to your campsite situated in Etosha's southern region. The camp has a productive floodlit waterhole where you can watch animals interact well after dark.

Safari drives.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Day 6 – Kavita

Exiting Etosha National Park, you'll first head south and then west through farmland dotted with rocky outcrops. A little further on from the small town of Kamanjab you'll visit one of the only traditionally functioning Himba communities outside of the north-west Kaokoland region of Namibia. These tribespeople have migrated here, lifestyle and customs intact, and are following their traditional way of life in their village located on a farm.

Like East Africa's Maasai, the Himba have a proud culture that they have successfully retained in the face of the modern world. Many adhere to their traditional dress and customs, living in ways that have changed little over centuries. Each aspect of their lives has a meaning, from how they set up their kraal to honour their ancestors, to the way they wear their hair. You spend some time with the community, where a local guide introduces you to their way of life and helps you to learn about their culture. The exact location of the village may vary as the Himba are nomadic and sometimes move for reasons such as better grazing for their cattle.

After this insightful experience you'll continue on to your destination, Kavita Lion Lodge, arriving in time to set up camp in their camping ground before dinner.

Southern Etosha to Kavita: approx. 3 hours (300km)

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 7 – Damaraland

AfriCat North is non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation and protection of Namibia's lion population. This morning you will visit the organisation's education centre, based at Kavita, where you'll gain insight into the research and monitoring programmes they run. You'll also learn a little of their work with farmers based along the boundary of Etosha National Park to overcome their conflicts with the predators. Moving on to the viewing hide, you might be lucky enough to see one of the rescued lions that can't be returned to the wild and so resides in the sanctuary set up here.

You then set off on a spectacular drive through the mountainous and picturesque scenery of Damaraland, arriving at Twyfelfontein in time for a guided tour. This seemingly ordinary sandstone valley shelters an amazing gallery of ancient Bushman rock engravings, and was recently declared a *UNESCO* World Heritage Site. A local guide will lead you at Twyfelfontein and explain a little of the history and significance of these ancient artworks. Using a local guide here ensures that the knowledge is maintained and revenue from tourism is ploughed back into the surrounding communities. Tonight you'll camp nearby Twyfelfontein.



Kavita to Twyfelfontein: approx. 3.5 hours (300km)
Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 8 – Swakopmund

Bypass Brandberg which, at 2,573 metres, is Namibia's highest mountain and a national monument. Travel through the small town of Uis, once a busy and thriving community centred on a large tin mine. Closure of the mine has led Uis into a sleepy decline. Semi-precious stones such as amethyst and tourmaline can be bought here at bargain prices from local prospectors keen to make a sale. You'll then cross seemingly endless plains to reach the Skeleton Coast and the Atlantic Ocean. Taking a worthwhile detour to visit Cape Cross, you can walk to within feet of an enormous colony of Cape fur seals sprawled across rocks and frolicking in the surf. Heading south along the coast you'll finally reach Swakopmund where your afternoon is free to relax and explore this pretty coastal town. There are many interesting shops and craft centres here, and several excellent (and great-value) seafood restaurants to choose from for your evening meal. Your guide will offer to arrange a group dinner for those keen to dine together. You stay two nights in Swakopmund in en-suite accommodation, with free time to take advantage of the wide range of activities available.

Twyfelfontein to Swakopmund: approx. 5.5 hours (420km)
Includes breakfast and lunch.



Day 9 - Swakopmund

This full day is completely free for you to explore Swakopmund town and its surrounds at your leisure. There are many activities to choose from; such as dune-boarding, quad-biking, sky-diving, dolphin cruises and scenic flights over the desert, to name a few. Your guide will explain these and many other options to you in advance and help you make bookings (activity costs are extra, payable locally and activities are undertaken at your own risk). Alternatively, you can spend your time exploring the museums, colonial architecture, galleries and curio markets, relaxing in one of Swakopmund's many cafés or taking a quiet stroll along the beach. Often the group and guide will arrange to meet up for dinner. Only breakfast is included so that you are free to spend your day as you wish.

Includes breakfast.

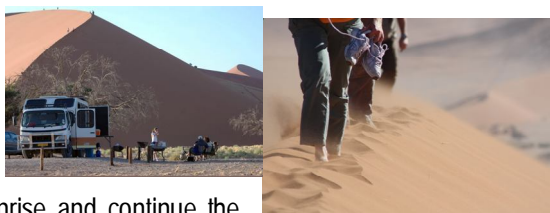
Day 10 – Namib-Naukluft National Park

A short drive south of Swakopmund is the port town of Walvis Bay. Stop to visit the coastal lagoon here where you'll usually see flamingos, pelicans and other water birds. Drive south past coastal dunes and across desolate gravel plains dotted with rocky outcrops before traversing the deep Gaub and Kuiseb passes. The road through these canyons takes you down to the riverbed at the bottom and then climbs steeply out to the top, where spectacular mountain panoramas are revealed. The scenery changes yet again as you pass dry savannah towards the small outpost of Solitaire. There is just a petrol station and cafe here; the latter famous for its delicious sandwiches and apple cake. It's then a relatively short drive to your campsite at the edge of the desert.

Swakopmund to Namib Desert Camp: approx. 5.5 hours (300km)
Includes breakfast and lunch.

Day 11 – Namib-Naukluft Park

Rising well before dawn, you drive deep into the desert; home to some of the world's highest dunes and stunning scenery. You'll enter the Namib-Naukluft National Park gate at Sesriem around sunrise and continue the drive into the dunes. The shifting, contrasting patterns of light and shadow on these dunes are always enthralling, and the view from the top (if you have the energy!) is spectacular. Making the most of the cool morning, your guide takes time to point out flora and fauna of interest as you walk the 5km through the sand to Sossusvlei and Dead Vlei – an ancient mineral pan dotted with stunted camelthorn trees. As the day wears on you travel back to Sesriem for lunch, before taking a drive to nearby Sesriem Canyon, where the rock has been sculpted into amazing shapes by the force of the ephemeral Tsauchab River. Return to your campsite in the afternoon to relax and share the day's experiences by the evening campfire.



Desert Camp to Sossusvlei to Desert Camp: approx. 2.5 hours (120km)

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 12 – Windhoek

This morning's drive takes you across the flat gravel plains of the Namib Desert and up onto the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands on your way back to Windhoek. Arriving back in the city and to your guesthouse in the late afternoon, your evening is free, although the group and guide often arrange to meet up for a farewell dinner together.

Desert Camp to Windhoek: approx. 5 hours (315km)

Includes breakfast and lunch.

Day 13 – Flight to London

After some free time to explore Windhoek, you are collected from your guesthouse and driven to the airport in time to depart on your scheduled flight to London.

Includes breakfast and dinner is on the plane.

Day 14 - Arrive in London

SAFARI INFORMATION

Explore the highlights of Namibia with your guide on this camping safari, staying in easy-to-erect dome tents with all other camp chores taken care of by a camp assistant. You will sleep under canvas on all nights except for in Windhoek and Swakopmund. During this safari you will take in the wildlife of Etosha National Park and learn about conservation through Namibia's *AfriCat Foundation*, experience the traditional Himba culture and discover the remarkable landscapes of Damaraland, Skeleton Coast and Sossusvlei. Camping equipment, including sleeping bags, is supplied on this safari to Namibia, and three meals are provided on most days.

The first 8 days of this safari forms the Northern Namibia Camping Safari – a shorter safari which visits northern Namibia and is also offered on this website. So, on Day 9 of this itinerary, when you are in Swakopmund, some of your fellow travellers may leave the group to return to Windhoek, ending their safari. New group members may join you for the remaining days visiting the Namib-Naukluft Park. Throughout the entirety of this Namibia Highlights Camping Safari you will be led by the same guide and accompanied by the same camp assistant.

Guide

The Namibia Highlights Camping Safari is led by a proficient guide who helps you get to know the country's vastly different environments, cultures and wildlife seen during this safari. Each guide is qualified and then trained in-house. They are almost

all Namibians who are keen to share their local knowledge and personal experiences with you. Although they are not specialist guides, they will have a good general knowledge and a friendly disposition.

Camp assistant

Whilst on this camping safari to Namibia you will be asked to erect your own tent (it's very easy once you are shown how!) but all other camp chores are attended to by the camp assistant. There is scope for you to get involved in camp chores such as unpacking trailers and peeling potatoes if you wish to as part of your camping experience but it is not compulsory. Having a camp assistant join the safari gives you and your guide more time to relax and chat about each day's experiences.

Camping equipment

Good-quality camping safari equipment is transported in the safari vehicle or in a custom-built trailer. The tents are two-man dome tents made of canvas with a sewn-in ground sheet and mosquito netting over the windows and door. Each person will have a camp chair made of canvas with a back rest and a 5cm thick mattress. Sleeping bags are also provided and included in the price. You are welcome to bring along your own sleeping bag if you prefer ('3 to 4 season' recommended). Pillows are not included so we suggest you bring your own travel pillow or a soft jumper to fold up and sleep on.

Campsites

As Namibia has an avid camping culture, almost all of the campsites used on the Namibia Highlights Camping Safari are well established with good facilities. There is usually at least one set of ladies and gents ablution blocks with hot and cold running water. There might also be a small kiosk, bar or shop where you can buy drinks, and in most cases a swimming pool. As the lights at most campsites are usually turned off after about 10pm, we strongly recommend you travel with your own torch.

Vehicles

For groups of up to four people, this Namibia camping safari might use a double-cab (4WD pick up) or minibus, with a purpose built trailer, as the safari vehicle. More commonly, a *Toyota Dyna* will be used to transport group sizes anywhere between two to fourteen people. These *Toyota Dyna*'s have been specially adapted to suit the safari requirements. They have air-cushioned suspension, individual bucket seats and a pop-top roof – an advantage when game viewing.

All of the safari vehicles are fitted with seatbelts and many are fitted with plugs where you are able to charge batteries for cameras. Most of the camping sites visited also provide a plug point. The plug points take 15 amp plugs with three large round pins. This is the same plug type used in South Africa, so when purchasing an adaptor just request one suitable for conversion to South African plug sockets.

Language

The Namibia Highlights Camping Safari is always conducted in English.

Costs

The Namibia camping safari includes transport in a custom-built safari vehicle; transfers; accommodation and camping as mentioned; camping equipment; campsite fees; entrance fees to national parks; and usually three meals a day (with the exception of when you are in Windhoek and Swakopmund).

Meals

Three meals are included on most days whilst on this camping safari in Namibia. The only excluded meals are lunch and dinner in Windhoek on Day 2, dinner in Swakopmund on Day 8, lunch and dinner in Swakopmund on Day 9, dinner in Windhoek on Day 12 and lunch on Day 13. All evening meals, unless stipulated, are cooked over an open fire by your guide and camp assistant.

Drinks

Whilst you're in your safari camp each night; tea, coffee and hot chocolate are included, as is normal drinking water from the tap.

Any other beverages are to be bought at your own expense. Your guide will let you know where to stock up on soft drinks, wines, beers and bottled mineral water along the way. Each vehicle has a cool box and/or fridge in which you can store drinks.

Single travellers

There is no single supplement on the Namibia Highlights Camping Safari.

This camping safari offers the perfect opportunity for single travellers to meet like-minded adventurers. If you are a single traveller, you may be asked to share a tent or twin-bedded room with someone of the same gender. However, if you would prefer your own tent/room, please ask us to request this for you.

Age of travellers

This Namibia Highlights Camping Safari takes children aged 12 and over. Those families with younger children are welcome to request a private guided safari which will be quoted for accordingly.

Laundry

A laundry service is not included on this Namibia camping safari. However, when staying two nights in the same camp it may be possible for your guide to arrange laundry to be done for you by campsite staff, at extra cost paid directly. You can also use the washroom facilities or ask your guide for a bucket to do some hand washing yourself.

Luggage

Travellers are limited to one soft sided bag per person with a maximum weight of about 15kg, one medium sized hand luggage bag and one medium sized camera bag.

Visa & passport requirements

It's important that **you take responsibility** for checking that you satisfy any visa and immigration requirements for the countries to which you travel. Having said that, we have included some guidelines here which may be of help to you.

It is important that your passport is valid for **at least six months** from your travel date and that it has **at least 3 clean pages for immigration stamps** each time that you pass through customs. It is our current understanding that travellers on a British, American, Canadian, New Zealand or Australian passport do not need a visa for camping safaris in Namibia or travel through South Africa. However, we recommend that you double check this at the nearest relevant embassies in good time before you travel.