



WILD NAMIBIA ADVENTURE

Interested in Namibia's remote and less-visited wildernesses? Want to really get to grips with a unique desert landscape and the fascinating indigenous people that live there? Here is an adventurous journey that explores a region of Namibia which few visitors get to experience. On safari, led by a knowledgeable and professional guide, you'll track rhino and other desert-adapted wildlife along the Hoanib River valley, learn about the unique flora found around the Etendeka Mountains, marvel at the mysterious fairy circles on the Giribis Plains and spend time with the semi-Nomadic Himba people. It's an adventure that combines a top-rate safari with ethical tourism and allows travellers a real insight into community-based conservation.

Day 1 - Flight to Namibia

Travel to Namibia on a scheduled overnight flight from London to Windhoek, via Johannesburg, with *South African Airways*.

Includes dinner on the flight.

Day 2 - Windhoek

Landing at Windhoek Airport around late morning, you'll pass through customs and meet a driver who will transfer into the city. Your accommodation is in one of Windhoek's comfortable and welcoming guesthouses. Relax after your long flight with a leisurely walk through the town centre or relaxing by the pool. For dinner you have the choice of Windhoek's many good restaurants.

Includes breakfast on the flight.

Day 3 - Damaraland

You will be met at the guesthouse early by your guide and set of on safari. Some of your fellow travellers may not travel with you from Windhoek, choosing to connect with the safari from Wereldsend instead. The route begins by travelling north through central Namibia before you turn west into the scenic landscape of Damaraland. It's about a five hour drive before you reach Wereldsend, your base and the first night camping.

The Wild Namibia Adventure can also be easily arranged as part of a self-drive holiday around Namibia. After driving yourselves to Wereldsend in Damaraland, you would leave your vehicle at the base camp here and join your specialist guide and the group on this 6-night safari.



Wereldsend is the historic base of IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation) and from where this now national community-based conservation programme was piloted in the early 1980's. This safari camps here by special arrangement; seeing the work done from the IRDNC base is fascinating and serves to place the entire conservation of Namibia's northwest Kunene region into context. During the afternoon there may be time to visit a nearby graveyard of bones, a potent reminder of mass commercial poaching during the 70's and early 80's. Poaching came close to wiping out desert-adapted rhino and elephant from these parts of Namibia. Your guide will explain how attitudes have changed since then and how conservationists working with rural communities have turned the situation around. Tonight's accommodation will be in a semi-permanent, comfortable tented camp.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 4 - Hoanib Valley

Head out early accompanied by the Torra Conservancy wildlife wardens known as 'game guards'. The guards will take you by vehicle, and perhaps on foot so stout footwear is essential, in search of desert-adapted black rhino. En route they will point out and describe other interesting animals and plants found here - many unique to Namibia.



Later in the morning you'll leave Wereldsend behind, heading north and driving deeper into the wild Kunene region of Namibia; an area sometimes referred to as Kaokoland. Travel through the small outpost of Sesfontein (named for the six springs or fountains in the area) and past basalt hills, a typical feature of Damaraland. Your destination is the dry bed of the Hoanib River, a linear oasis with tall winterthorn, leadwood and camelthorn trees marking its course through an otherwise arid landscape. The remainder of the day is spent exploring this fascinating eco-system, once again searching for desert-adapted wildlife including elephants, giraffe, gemsbok and even lion if you're lucky, all of which seasonally use this ephemeral river's resources. In the late afternoon you'll climb out of the riverbed to set up a remote mobile camp at the foot of the hills. It's a location that offers amazing views across the Hoanib Valley.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 5 – Puros Conservancy

Continue your drive of discovery through the Hoanib river course during the morning and before heading further north towards the Puros Conservancy. This vast area of Namibia covers 3,568km² of magnificent and remote landscape and is home to a population of less than 300 semi-nomadic Himba and Herero herders. These indigenous people live in small family settlements dotted throughout the desert. Keep your cameras ready for sights of rural living: domestic stock feeding peacefully alongside wildlife near a small village; a colourfully clothed Herero woman with her full-skirted dress sweeping the ground, walking alongside her Himba neighbour who is painted in ochre and clad in calf-skins; children, just out from school, playing a desert version of soccer using a ball made of plastic and rubber bands.



Conservancies in Namibia are member-defined areas zoned for a variety of uses including farming, mixed farming and wildlife, core wildlife and tourism. They are not game reserves but communal land where the majority of Namibia's two million people live. Puros, which borders the Skeleton Coast Park, is one such conservancy. In return for the sustainable management of wildlife in their area, Namibia's conservancies legally acquire rights to benefit from non-consumptive and consumptive use of the land. Puros's conservancy owned enterprises include a popular campsite, a self-catering restcamp and a traditional Himba village and craft market open to tourists. In addition, Puros is

one of the conservancies that part-own the safari company you travel with on the Wild Namibia Adventure. Run by a team with many years of experience in the safari industry, money made by this safari company goes towards helping the conservancy manage their wildlife and build a future for their children.

Tonight's accommodation is in a mobile camp set up at the Puros Conservancy Camp. Enjoy an evening of lively discussion around the camp fire and the possibility of elephants strolling past your tent during the night.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Days 6 & 7 – Orupembe Conservancy

Take a scenic drive up the Hoarusib River, cross the flank of the Etendeka Mountains and descend into the Khumib dry riverbed. Your route travels across dramatic landscapes and passes small Himba settlements. Your destination for the next two nights is Etambura Camp, Namibia's first Himba-owned camp. You'll sleep in simple, yet comfortable canvas and thatch units each with an en suite bathroom, private deck and magnificent views. Your safari group has exclusive use of Etambura Camp during your stay and you'll spend each evening with your conservancy hosts, conversing around the camp fire with the game guards and/or conservancy staff.



The emphasis during your stay in the Orupembe Conservancy is on the interesting and intricate culture of the local Himba people. For instance, a member of the conservancy may describe how myrrh (used for its fragrance and medicinal qualities) is collected. In the months of December to April, Himba women harvest resin from the plant *commiphora wildii* (the perfume plant, also known as myrrh, and made famous by the Bible's three wise men). Hear how IRDNC has assisted conservancies to earn a regular annual income by sustainably harvesting and marketing this valuable product to international cosmetic companies. You're likely to also get some insight into the challenges of living in an arid and harsh environment and the adaptations that the people here need to make to survive both as an individual and a society in such circumstances.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



Day 8 – Sesfontein Conservancy

After a hearty breakfast you turn and head south. Pause briefly in Puros before following the course of the Gomatum River and travelling across the Giribis Plains where you might find the mysterious fairy circles. A noticeable feature, these are a circular patch of ground devoid of vegetation. Nobody really knows what causes them but in addition to the idea that they were created by fairies, the various theories to their existence include: the suggestion that they are the sites of long dead termite colonies; that they are small hard pans where water is

unable to penetrate the soil and so no vegetation grows; or that they are an area upon which a highly poisonous *euphorbia* bush once grew leaving noxious chemicals in the soil long after it died.

Spend the night at in a private mobile camp set up at the Ganamub Mountain Campsite, on a hillside amongst giant granite boulders. Enjoy the sounds and the scents of the African night whilst around the campfire on your last night in this remote corner of Namibia.



Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Day 9 – Windhoek

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before travelling south, via the outpost of Sesfontein and the edge of the Palmwag Concession, back to the base camp at Wereldsend. It's a long drive today as you continue south and east to Windhoek. Arriving back at your guesthouse in the early evening, there's time to make arrangements for a relaxing dinner at a nearby restaurant.

If the long drive doesn't appeal to you, speak to us about the possibility of a flight transfer from Wereldsend to Windhoek. This can be arranged at an additional cost.

Includes breakfast and lunch.

Day 10 – Flight to London

You'll have time to visit the town centre and pick up any last minute souvenirs this morning before transferring to Windhoek Airport for your scheduled flight home.

Includes breakfast. Dinner is on the flight.

Day 11 – Arrive in London

SAFARI INFORMATION

Experience a remote area of Namibia that sees few visitors on this unique and extraordinary safari. Staying in simple, yet comfortable mobile camps and at a ground breaking Himba owned lodge, you will be guided by an expert guide and spend time with local conservationists and community members who will introduce you to this remarkable region in an interesting and insightful way.

Guides

Each Wild Namibia Adventure will be led by a knowledgeable wildlife expert and experienced safari guide.

Camp team

A back-up crew transporting all the camping equipment will travel alongside the safari. It is their job to set up and take down each mobile camp and to prepare all the meals.

Camps and camping equipment

Whilst on safari you'll spend some nights in a mobile camp set up for the use of yourself and your safari group. This might be set up in a remote area of Namibia's Kunene region or at a community based campsite. The community campsites usually have a tap and camp fire at each site and shared ladies/gents ablution blocks with hot/cold running water and flush toilets nearby. When camping at a remote site, canvas wash basins are set up outside each tent. A separate enclosure for a bucket shower and another with a bush toilet are also erected.

Good-quality camping equipment is included in the cost of the Wild Namibia Adventure. Accommodation will be in 3x3 metre walk-in canvas dome tents with a built in ground sheet and equipped with bedrolls, linen, duvets, pillows and towels. Camp stretchers can be arranged on request at the time of your booking but are not generally recommended as the bedrolls and mattresses are usually much more comfortable without. Each tent also has an LED lamp, a small mirror, complimentary insect repellent and a side-table.

On the first night of your safari you'll stay in the Wereldsend semi permanent tented camp. Accommodation at Wereldsend is in walk-in dome tents equipped with bedrolls. Showers and toilets are rudimentary as this is a working NGO base camp and not a campsite. During your stay your group might have sole use of the camp, or you might find yourselves in the middle of a quarterly planning session attended by 40 members of conservancies. The latter can be a fascinating experience as you become part of conservation in action!

Two nights of your safari will be spent at Etambura Camp. In Herero *etaa mbura* means 'see the rain all over' and the camp is named thus for its vantage point on the summit of a hilltop in an area of Kunene known for its spectacular rainstorms between November and March. The Kunene has an average rainfall of 100mm per annum. These usually short-lived deluges are often accompanied by an impressive display of thunder and lightning. Etambura Camp, Namibia's first Himba-owned camp, has just five thatch and canvas rooms, each with an en suite bathroom and a private deck overlooking breath taking vistas.

Vehicles

This safari is conducted in Land Rovers, each taking up to three passengers thus allowing everyone a window seat. Depending on the overall group size, up to three safari vehicles may travel in convoy. Each vehicle is equipped with a two-way radio and a fridge. There is always a satellite phone taken on the safari for use in case of an emergency.

Road transfers between Windhoek and Wereldsend are usually conducted in these Land Rovers, but could be in a comfortable minibus or 4WD double cab vehicle.

Activities

This safari itinerary describes the various activities that you are likely to do whilst on the Wild Namibia Adventure. However, please note that activities whilst staying in the conservancies and alongside indigenous communities are not staged but depend on the current day to day activities and events of the communities themselves. By remaining flexible and open to changes, this safari allows you to make the most of all possible experiences whilst travelling through this remote and special corner of Namibia.

Joining the safari

The Wild Namibia Adventure can easily be arranged as a stand-alone safari; in combination with another small-group Namibia safari or as an add-on to a self-drive or fly-in trip around Namibia. Speak to us at *Wild about Africa* for details.

Language

The Wild Namibia Adventure will be led in English.

Costs

The cost of the safari includes pre and post safari accommodation in Windhoek, transport by safari vehicle, camping equipment, activities, three meals on most days, additional snacks and refreshments, and the services of a professional guide.

Meals

Meals not included on this Namibia adventure are lunch and dinner on Day 2 in Windhoek, dinner in Windhoek on Day 9, and lunch on Day 10.

Drinks

Whilst on safari, a selection of mineral water, soft drinks, beer and wine are included.

Laundry

A complimentary laundry service is offered during your two night stay at Etambura Camp on Days 6 and 7 of the Wild Namibia Adventure. It is not possible to do laundry at any time during the rest of the safari as you will be in remote desert areas where water is a sought after commodity and used sparingly.

Torches

Although an LED lantern will be supplied in each tent, we strongly recommend that you also take with you a good head torch which will help you if you need to go to the bathroom, read a book or catch up with your safari journal during the night.

Charging batteries

Each safari vehicle is fitted with a power inverter with 2 round-pin plug sockets where camera batteries can be charged. During your two nights stay at Etambura Camp there are facilities to charge batteries using the standard Namibian 3-round pin plug sockets (when buying an adaptor note that this is the same as the plug sockets used in South Africa so an adaptor for a South African plug will work perfectly and may be easier to source in your home country).

Single travellers

If you are a single traveller, who is willing to share a tent, talk to us. If we are able to match you with another guest of the same gender who is also willing to share, we would be happy to accommodate you together and to waive the single supplement. However, if there is no suitable match, the single supplement surcharge will apply.

Passport and visa requirements

It is always your responsibility to get the latest passport and immigration requirements for the countries you will visit or transit through on your holiday from the embassy closest to you. Our current understanding is that travellers on British, American, Australian and New Zealand passports do not require a visa for South Africa or Namibia. However, it is essential that your passport is valid for at least **6 months** from your date of departure and that you have at least **3 blank pages** in your passport for immigration stamps to each country you visit.