



## ULTIMATE NAMIBIA JOURNEY

It's not easy to find a comfortable safari that takes in Namibia's many highlights without rushing. This itinerary has been designed to do just that. There's no camping on this trip; you'll stay at a mix of comfortable 4\* lodges and lovely permanent camps. You'll be guided by a knowledgeable, experienced expert guide with plenty of time to enjoy the stunning scenery of the Namib Desert, Walvis Bay's marine life, Damaraland's scenic vistas and desert-adapted wildlife, a traditional Himba settlement, the plentiful wildlife of Etosha Park and surrounding private reserves, and the conservation work done by the *AfricCat Foundation*.

### Day 1 – Windhoek

After arriving in Namibia and clearing customs at Windhoek Airport, you are transferred to a comfortable guesthouse in one of the town's leafy suburbs. Our colleagues in Namibia are easily contactable and happy to discuss your trip, answering any queries you might have. Lunch and dinner are at your own expense today; this allows you to choose from Windhoek's many good restaurants or to eat in at the guesthouse.

No meals included.



### Day 2 – Namib-Naukluft Park

After breakfast, your safari guide collects you at around 09.00 for a journey through the Khomas Hochland Highlands, over the escarpment and down towards the dune-fields of the Namib Desert. On route you'll stop to enjoy a picnic lunch at a scenic spot. Your base for the next two nights is Sossus Dune Lodge, the only lodge accommodation located within the Namib-Naukluft Park. Accommodation is in spacious wood, canvas and thatch chalets, each with an en-suite bathroom and sweeping views over the desert or mountains.

Due to its unique location within the park, guests of Sossus Dune Lodge benefit from being able to reach the desert before sunrise or stay after sunset – and therefore catch the best light for photography. The Namib is one of the world's oldest deserts. Here your guide introduces you to the flora and fauna that have specially adapted to their arid surroundings. There's a sprinkling of large animals, from gemsbok and springbok to fleeting ostrich, as well as an abundance of amazing smaller life forms.



Windhoek to Sossus Dune Lodge: approx. 6 hours (370km)  
Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### Day 3 – Namib-Naukluft Park

Use the whole day to explore in and around Namib-Naukluft National Park with your guide. An early start takes you deeper into the desert for a spectacular sunrise. You make for Sossusvlei, where many of the dunes tower up to 300 metres above the Tsauchab River Valley. There's much to see by walking around here; Namibia's Namib-Naukluft Park is one of the largest conservation areas in the world, so it covers an amazing diversity of desert landscapes. You find not only great dune-fields, but also wind-sculpted rock formations, fossil valleys, arid scrub areas and smooth gravel plains. Visit Sossusvlei and Dead Vlei and climb some of the highest free-standing dunes in the world before enjoying a delicious brunch under a camelthorn tree. Return to Sossus Dune Lodge in time for a late lunch. Later in the afternoon you'll visit Sesriem Canyon and explore its cool depths, if you didn't already do this activity the afternoon beforehand. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to relax or take a stroll in the local area.

Sossus Dune Lodge to Sossusvlei to Sossus Dune Lodge: approx. 3.5 hours (140km)  
Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### Day 4 – Swakopmund

After breakfast, you continue on your lodge safari, travelling north and west to reach the Atlantic coast. Much of your journey is through contrasting areas of the Namib-Naukluft National Park. Your route to the coast offers a series of spectacular views as you cross the desert plains before descending into the depths of the Gaub and Kuiseb Canyons

and climbing back out again. Around mid-afternoon you arrive at your comfortable guesthouse, centrally situated in Swakopmund, with time to wander around this pleasant coastal town or take a short siesta.

Your guide knows the restaurant choices in Swakopmund well, so this evening takes you to one of his/her favourites; often The Tug Restaurant by the jetty. This is your chance to sample the excellent local seafood that the coast of Namibia is known for.

**Notes:** You have the option to include a spectacular sunrise balloon flight over the desert before you depart for Swakopmund. The cost for this is roughly GBP £390 / US\$497 per person valid up until June 2019. This includes approximately a 50 minute balloon flight followed by champagne breakfast in the desert.

As an alternative to the drive from Sossus Dune Lodge to Swakopmund, you may opt to take a scenic flight transfer departing at about 10.45 and arriving midday. This would take you over the Namib Desert and along part of the Skeleton Coast (fog permitting); flying over vast dune fields, abandoned mining camps, shipwrecks, Sandwich Harbour and Walvis Bay salt pans before landing at Swakopmund Airport. You will then be transferred to your guesthouse where your guide will meet you later in the day. There will be an additional cost for this, and the amount will depend on how many passengers are in the plane (expect something in the region of about GBP £580 / US\$740 for this scenic flight transfer).

Sossus Dune Lodge to Swakopmund: approx. 6.5 hours (345km)  
Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **Day 5 – Swakopmund**

This morning you drive south to Walvis Bay for a memorable kayaking adventure. After meeting your kayaking guide you'll be taken on a short scenic drive past salt works and a myriad of bird life to Pelican Point, on the outer edge of the lagoon. There's a colony of Cape fur seals based around a lighthouse here and you spend your morning kayaking in single or tandem kayaks amongst these gregarious creatures. There's also the possibility of seeing heaviside and bottlenose dolphins, pelicans, flamingos and a wide variety of other sea birds. Light refreshments will be served on the beach before you head back to Walvis Bay. If the kayaking doesn't appeal to you, ask us about taking a boat trip to seek out the Atlantic's plentiful marine life instead.

You usually head back to Swakopmund around midday for an afternoon at leisure, perhaps checking out the town's museums, colonial architecture, curio markets and other attractions. The day ends with dinner in one of the many good restaurants.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.



### **Day 6 - Damaraland**

Leaving Swakopmund early, you first travel along part of the infamous Skeleton Coast. Then you turn inland, across one of the Namib Desert's harshest, flattest areas, before gradually climbing into the beautiful mountains of Damaraland. As always whilst on this lodge safari, you stop periodically for your guide to show you points of interest and to explain the changes of landscapes, flora and fauna that occur as the desert gives way to relatively verdant mountains.

You stay in the heart of this region at Camp Kipwe. The camp is made up of comfortable thatched chalets, with private open-air bathrooms, nestled amongst an outcrop of giant granite boulders.

Swakopmund to Twyfelfontein: approx. 6 hours (325km)  
Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **Day 7 – Damaraland**

After an early breakfast you will be treated to an exciting 4WD nature drive along the ephemeral Aba-Huab River valley. This is a remarkable region and offers some of the most beautiful scenery found in Namibia. At certain times of year the Aba-Huab River valley is a ribbon of vegetation in an otherwise barren landscape. This food source attracts a variety of desert-adapted wildlife including elephant, giraffe and kudu. Whilst you drive and enjoy the magnificent scenery, your guide will be on the lookout for signs of the special desert-adapted game that can be found here. You will return to Camp Kipwe for lunch and time to relax during the heat of the day (or if the entire group agrees, you can enjoy a picnic lunch along the river bed, in the shade of an Ana Tree). Later in the afternoon you may visit some of the interesting sites of

southern Damaraland that you didn't experience the previous day, including the ancient Bushmen rock art at Twyfelfontein and the 'Organ Pipe' rock formations.

Nature drives.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **Day 8 – Southern Etosha**

Your route this morning takes you north through more striking landscapes as you climb the majestic Grootberg Pass. You then go off the beaten track to visit a small Himba settlement – your guide may have to seek the community out as the Himba are semi-nomadic and move location with no notice. These fascinating people are one of the last tribes in Namibia to essentially retain their traditional way of life, having little need for conventional practices. You'll gain an insight into their beliefs and customs as well as have the opportunity to meet members of the village in a relaxed and authentic setting.

STOP PRESS: Visiting the Himba village included on this tour is only possible because its location not far off the route from Damaraland to Etosha Park. Normally, visiting an authentic Himba community would involve travelling considerably further north; adding a couple of extra days and costs to the itinerary.

Himba communities are nomadic and they tend to move on when circumstances in the area they are living in change. We have been lucky that the community visited on this tour has been static over the last few years. The villagers have decided it's time to move on and the area they have been living in has now been designated as a wildlife area to allow populations of desert dwelling fauna such as lion and rhino to be re-settled there.

The safari operator is actively looking for a similar community that is not too far away and that they can work with on a mutually beneficial basis. However, for now at least, the only Himba visit that can be guaranteed on route between Damaraland and Etosha is one that takes place at the Himba demonstration village near Kamanjab, which acts as a "Himba Living Museum". This was established to allow visitors the opportunity to see a Himba settlement, these fascinating people, and learn something of their culture and traditions.

Please note that there are factors in this situation that are completely beyond our control and that we are only constrained by our determination to offer authentic yet respectful and mutually beneficial cultural experience. We intend to continue with this principle, and hope to have a suitable alternative that we can offer before too long.

After the cultural experience you continue on to a private reserve, bordering one of Africa's premier game areas: Etosha National Park. Your accommodation is Etosha Mountain Lodge, located on the private Etosha Heights Reserve, which borders Etosha. Made up of 9 farms, regenerated back into wilderness, the reserve is home to an array of wildlife. As you'll arrive late afternoon, or early evening, the remainder of your day will be spent relaxing in camp, with great views over the wilderness.



Twyfelfontein to Southern Etosha: approx. 6 hours (490km)

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **Days 9 & 10 – Etosha National Park**

Today you game drive your way east, through Namibia's Etosha National Park, taking your time to watch animals and discuss your sightings with your guide. You stop at Halali Camp for lunch, and a chance to stretch your legs as you walk up a gentle slope to a rocky outcrop overlooking the camp's waterhole.

Etosha National Park covers 22,270km<sup>2</sup> and at its centre is a vast salt pan. Along the southern rim of the pan lies a series of springs and waterholes which attract numerous animals, both big and small, so keep your eyes peeled for elephant, giraffe, blue wildebeest, kudu, zebra, rhino, cheetah, warthog, leopard, hyena and lion, as well as the endemic black-faced impala and diminutive Damara dik dik.

Towards the end of the day you'll exit the park from its eastern gate and enter the private Onguma Game Reserve. Your destination is the unique Onguma Tree Top Camp. With only four en-suite 'tree-houses', this small and intimate camp is built up on wooden stilts overlooking a waterhole.

Safari drives.

Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### **Day 11 – AfriCat Foundation & Windhoek**

It's an early start today as you head south to Okonjima and the home of the *AfriCat Foundation*, which has long been involved with the conservation of Namibia's big predators, especially its cheetah, but also leopard and spotted hyena. Arrive in time for lunch, after which you'll visit the fascinating day centre where you'll learn more about the rescue, relocation and education work of the *AfriCat Foundation* and enjoy a game drive on the reserve.

Later in the afternoon you'll continue your journey on to Windhoek, arriving at your guesthouse in the early evening. Dinner tonight is not included, allowing you to enjoy one of the city's many good restaurants or to relax and dine in at the guesthouse.

**Note:** You have the option to extend your safari for an additional night or two and stay at Okonjima's smart Bush Camp. This allows you to get more of an insight of the work done by the *AfriCat Foundation*, as well as the chance to get close to some of the reserves big cats or resident pack of wild dogs. Other activities available from the lodge include nature drives, bird watching and visits to their night hide where honey badgers, porcupines and other small nocturnal animals often appear. The photographic opportunities at Okonjima are often unbeatable and this is a wonderful highlight to end your Namibia lodge safari on. At the end of your stay, you'll be transferred on to Windhoek for a final night in a guesthouse there.

A one-night extension to your holiday would cost about an additional GBP £580 / US \$750 per person. Solo travellers incur a single supplement surcharge of about GBP £250 / US \$320. The price includes accommodation, meals and all activities.

A two-night extension to your holiday would cost about an additional GBP £970 / US \$1,250 per person. Solo travellers incur a single supplement surcharge of about GBP £310 / US \$400. The price includes accommodation, meals and all activities.

Eastern Etosha to Windhoek: approx. 6.5 hours (530km)  
Includes breakfast and lunch.

## **Day 12 – Flight home**

After a leisurely morning, you will be met at the guesthouse and transferred to Windhoek Airport in time for your departing flight.

Includes breakfast.

## **SAFARI INFORMATION**

The Ultimate Namibia Journey is ideal for travellers looking for a Namibian lodge safari that encompasses the country's top highlights in a comfortable and informative manner. All aspects are taken care of by a personable and knowledgeable guide. You will be accommodated in a range of welcoming lodges, guesthouses and camps selected for their location and comfort.

### **Guide**

You will be led by a professional and experienced guide throughout the Ultimate Namibia Journey. Your guide will be a top local expert in their own right, with a wide understanding of Namibia's culture, wildlife, flora, history and geography. Your guide will enhance your safari experience by sharing Namibia's diversity with you whilst also being a charming companion.

### **Accommodation**

Whilst on the Ultimate Namibia Journey you will stay at small guesthouses, camps and stylish lodges where there's a personal welcome. The accommodation is usually 4\*. Each room or chalet will usually be furnished with twin beds or a double bed and will have an en-suite bathroom.

### **Vehicles**

This lodge safari is conducted in a specially modified 4WD safari vehicle, equipped with air-conditioning and fridge for cool drinks. An air-conditioned minibus may be used for the transfers between the airport and your guesthouse in Windhoek.

### **Driving distances**

The itinerary description includes estimated distances and the time spent in the vehicle driving between point A and point B. This does not include the time spent on excursions on route. Note that some of these excursions may include more travel by vehicle. Namibia is a vast country and any driven holiday there includes a significant period in a vehicle. This itinerary is planned with two nights at most locations to both break the journeys, and give you time to explore the surroundings. On travel days you'll often stop at points of interest on route to break up the journey.

### **Language**

The Ultimate Namibia Journey is led by an English speaking guide.

### **Costs**

The Ultimate Namibia Journey includes transport in an air-conditioned safari vehicle; airport transfers; accommodation in a mixture of guesthouses, camps and lodges; park entrance fees; mineral water whilst travelling in the safari vehicle and usually three meals a day as specified in the itinerary.

### **Meals**

The Ultimate Namibia Journey includes all meals except for lunch and dinner in Windhoek on Day 1, dinner in Windhoek on Day 11 and lunch on Day 12.

### **Drinks**

A complimentary stock of mineral water is always available to you on your safari vehicle. All other drinks will be at additional cost to you, payable locally. Your safari vehicle is equipped with a fridge in which you are welcome to store your drinks.

### **Single travellers**

If you are willing to share a twin room with another traveller of the same gender whilst on this lodge safari to Namibia, we will try to find a suitable match and thus waive part of or the entire single supplement. However, if another guest also willing to share a twin room cannot be found, you will stay in single rooms and the supplement will be charged.

### **Age of travellers**

Children aged over 12 years are welcome on the Ultimate Namibia Journey. Younger children may be permitted on a scheduled departure at the safari operators discretion (depending on other travellers), or families with young children are encouraged to request a private departure.

### **Laundry**

Most of the lodges whilst on this Ultimate Namibian Journey offer a laundry service at an additional cost. Laundry is generally only possible when spending more than one night at a lodge.

### **Visa & passport requirements**

It is our understanding that British, Canadian, American and Australian passport holders do not require a visa to visit South Africa or Namibia. However, it is imperative that you have onward travel documents, that your passport is valid for at least **6 months** from your departure date, and that you have at least **3 clear visa pages** in your passport for immigration stamps. If you do not fulfill these requirements you may be refused entry into the country.

Note that these are only guidelines. Immigration regulations in Africa can change with very little notice so it is **your responsibility** to double check requirements with the embassy or high commission nearest to you.