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## Namibian Experience Safari 14 days

**This itinerary details the route as travelling south first, however you may well travel to the north first, covering exactly the same ground but in reverse order to the text here.**

This safari has a guaranteed departure every Friday of the year, with a minimum of 2 people. There is no single supplement, and the price is virtually fully inclusive of everything you will need whilst travelling with us. The style is limited participation, assisted camping. Included in the price of the trip there are two accommodated nights, (day 7 & day 13).

Collection time, from anywhere within the Windhoek city limits is between 07:30 & 08:00 for the first southern section, (to the Namib Desert) of the trip and between 08:30 & 09:00 for the second northern section, (to Okonjima), of the trip.

Two of the world's natural wonders, the Okavango Delta and the mighty Victoria Falls can also be included by combining this trip with our 8 day Delta and Falls Safari.

### **Day one**

Windhoek - Quiver Tree forest (500 km) (LD) (camping)

You will be collected between 07:30 & 08:00.

We start our long journey south on the main B1 highway, travelling through the thin strip of Kalahari Desert that protrudes onto the eastern side of Namibia. Stopping at small towns along the way including Rehoboth, traditional home of the Baster people, we aim to arrive at the Quiver Tree Forest in the middle afternoon. Located just north of the southern centre of Keetmanshoop, (officially the sunniest town in the world), we make camp and have time to explore the area on foot.

Quiver trees are not in fact trees, they are a type of aloe, (*Aloe Dichotoma*), so called because the branches fork "dictomously". These weird looking plants dot the landscape in this part of the world and are locally common, however they are one of the world's rarest flora species.

### **Day two**

Quiver Tree Forest - Fish River Canyon (250 km) (BLD) (camping)

We leave Keetmanshoop and head further south to Fish River Canyon. We are heading to the main view point where we can see how impressive this canyon actually is. This is an ideal opportunity for photos and to spend some time experiencing this amazing sight.

After lunch we then make our way to our campsite for the night which is a few hours drive away but is still based on the top of the Fish River Canyon.

## **Day three**

Fish River Canyon - Klein Aus Vista, southern Namib, (250 km) (BLD) (camping)

It's an early start to make the most of the morning and our visit in to the Canyon. Viewing from the top we can see the river sparkling in the sunlight far below us, and can barely imagine how many millennia it took for the forces of erosion to carve such a magnificent vista.

It's possible to make our way into the canyon and to the bottom of this the second largest Canyon in Africa. We have lunch and a dip in the cool waters before making our way out and back to camp. Time to pack up camp and move on to our next destination, the tiny town of Aus. We sleep tonight at Klein Aus Vista, a private reserve, beautifully located in the Aus Mountain Range, (Huib-Hoch-Plateau region).

## **Day four**

Klein Aus Vista - Luderitz - Klein Aus Vista (250km) (BD) (camping)

We are up with the dawn this morning for the short drive to Luderitz, we travel on the main road and keep a sharp look out for the unique Namib wild horses. These horses are the only feral horses in Namibia and have, very unusually, become adapted to an existence with very limited water. Where they originated from is un-clear, some people think they are the descendants of the horses used by the German cavalry during the First World War. Another theory is that they originally came from a horse farm that used to be run by a German Barron, (von Wolff), in the very early colonial days.

We arrive in Luderitz in time to join an optional extra excursion, a trip on an old wooden sailing ship, "The Sedina". We take a cruise around Luderitz bay and, weather permitting, to Halifax Island to see the Jackass Penguins.

If the weather conditions are suitable we turn off the engines come back to Luderitz under sail. Straight after the Sedina trip we drive out to Kolmanskop, a desert ghost town about 20 km out of Luderitz. It was built in the 1920's during the diamond rush and was abandoned when bigger and better diamonds were found further along the coast. The area is still abandoned and the desert has encroached over the entire town, giving an eerie feeling and real meaning to the word "ghost".

Lunch today is not included in the programme, this is to allow everybody as much flexibility with their time as possible and to give us the opportunity to sample some of the excellent local cafes.

During the middle of the day there is time to explore Luderitz Town with its traditional German architecture and later we will take a drive out to Diaz Point to see the bird life, hopefully a few seals and the stone cross replica, originally erected by the Portuguese mariner Bartholomew Diaz.

Returning to Klein Aus Vista in the late afternoon, the road takes us through the "forbidden Zone" so named because in years gone by, the alluvial diamonds found in Namibia were simply scattered across the desert and we again have time to enjoy sunset over the mountains.

N.B: The "Sedina" excursion is subject to availability and, if undertaken, will be for the clients own risk and expense.

## **Day five**

Klein Aus Vista - Namib Desert Camp, outside of the Namib Naukluft Park (350km) (BLD) (camping)

Turning north, we once again head deep into the ancient southern Namib, travelling on small gravel roads and passing some tiny rural communities along the way. The scenery is harsh, and sometimes forbidding. The process of erosion in these areas is well advanced and we pass time rounded "koppies" arid terrain and outcrops of tortured rock.

Our lunch stop will be near to Maltahohe at a Namib cultural centre, so we can stop and learn a little of the culture and lives of the people of this region.

Traversing this bleak yet beautiful landscape, the terrain begins to change and we cross some open grass savannah and farmlands before the terrain begins to give way to the immense red sand dune desert of the Namib. We aim to arrive at our camp during the late afternoon and watch the colours glow and change on distant mountains to the east.

### **Day six**

Namib Desert Camp - Sossusvlei - Namib Desert Camp, outside of the Namib Naukluft Park (camping) (BLD)

A pre dawn start is essential this morning as we want to catch the soft light of the sunrise on the desert. After passing through Sesriem, the gateway to the dunes and driving into the heart of the dune field, we reach Sossusvlei itself by walking the last 5 km through the dunes.

The walk is like nothing else, in the cool of the morning, with soft sunlight just beginning to play over the dunes creating a sharp light and shadow contrast across the whole desert. Ancient mineral pans, stunted camel thorn trees and the chance of seeing a gemsbok or maybe an ostrich make the photo opportunities perfect.

We spend the morning in and around Sossusvlei, also visiting dune 45, and as the day wears on we return to Sesriem for lunch to escape the heat of the afternoon. As the day cools off in the late afternoon we will take a short excursion to the Sesriem Canyon.

### **Day seven**

Namib Desert Camp - Windhoek (350 km) (BL)

After breakfast we begin our journey, over the mountains and along scenic roads, back to Windhoek. We will travel over the Naukluft Mountains and also the Khomas Hochland Range, through beautiful mountain passes on our way back to civilization.

We are due back into the city around 16:00 and you will be dropped off at your accommodation on our return.

This night's accommodation is included in the price of the safari but dinner tonight will be for the client's own account in a local restaurant.

### **Day eight**

Windhoek - Okonjima (300 km) (LD) (camping)

You will be collected between 08:30 & 09:00.

We will travel north, stopping at small towns along the way including Okahandja, where we have time to visit Namibia's largest wood carving market. The market is operated on a local co-operative basis and is one of the best places to shop for truly Namibian souvenirs.

Continuing north, passing through farmland, we aim to arrive at Okonjima during the middle afternoon, giving us time to set up our camp and to relax in the shade for a while before heading out on to the property to take part in the afternoon's activities.

Okonjima is the home of the Africat Foundation, a specialist conservation concern that centres its operations around the African Big Cats, particularly cheetah.

This afternoon you will be taken on a tour during which you will be able to meet, close-up-and-personal, some of the cheetah that are going through the Africat rehabilitation programme.

Most of the animals currently living at Okonjima have been rescued from various desperate situations, being orphaned or caught in a trap, and the aim of rehabilitation process is to attempt to re-introduce them into the wild.

After our educational tour we will return our accommodation and prepare for dinner under the African stars.

### **Day nine**

Okonjima - Namutoni / East Etosha region (300 km) (BLD) (camping)

An early start and continuing north we pass through some small towns, making short stops for fresh supplies and fuel.

Continuing on to our East Etosha, Namutoni region camp we again aim to arrive in time for lunch, giving us time to relax before heading into the park during the cool of the late afternoon for our first game drive.

### **Day ten**

East Etosha region - Okaukuejo, Etosha National Park (BLD) (camping)

A full day's game driving. We again leave early to enjoy the cool morning air as we game drive our way through Etosha to Halali camp, situated in the middle of the park. Along the way we visit several waterholes and are afforded splendid views of the massive Etosha Pan. The game viewing is usually excellent and we have the chance to tick off a few new species that are not normally seen on the Namutoni side of the park.

We stop at Halali for a rest and a leisurely lunch. There is time to visit the Halali waterhole and to make use of the swimming pool and bar facilities before continuing on our way and game driving down to Okaukuejo.

Okaukuejo is famous for its waterhole, which has been described as one of the "best game viewing opportunities in Southern Africa". Situated on the doorstep of our accommodation, black rhino, elephant, lion and numerous species of antelope are usually seen.

### **Day eleven**

Okaukuejo - Oase Himba Village, Kamanjab (300 km) (BLD) (camping)

Leaving Etosha we begin our journey south with a relatively short drive to the small town of Kamanjab where we will make a short stop here before continuing on to find the Himba Tribesmen.

This is the only traditionally functioning Himba community outside the far north Kaokoland region of Namibia. These tribes-people have migrated here, lifestyle and customs intact, and are following their traditional way-of-life in their village on a farm. Oase Village is located about 15 to 20 km outside Kamanjab, the exact location of the site varies as the Himba occasionally roam to a new location.

During the afternoon we will be invited into Oase Village and will meet with the locals. We will have a specialist guide for the time we are there, who will be able to translate for us and will introduce us to this "alternative lifestyle". We will learn about marriage customs, traditional food and the mysteries of the local religion, "Holy Fire".

### **Day twelve**

Oase Village - Brandberg Mountain (400 km) (BLD) (camping)

Today we head into one of the most beautiful desert regions in Namibia, Damaraland. We drive south to the capital of this region, the small town of Khorixas, and then take a detour to the west to visit the ancient Bushman rock engravings at Twyfelfontien. At this location we will have a local guide to conduct us on a short guided tour.

From here we head deeper into the desert to Namibia's highest mountain, The Brandberg, (2573 m). Brandberg Mountain is an ancient Bushman spiritual site and tonight we will sleep under the shadow of this giant granite monolith.

### **Day thirteen**

Brandberg Mountain - Swakopmund, Skeleton Coast (250 km) (BL) (chalet accommodation)

Starting early to enjoy the cool of the morning we will hike, "into" the mountain with our guide to see the world famous "White Lady" rock painting. Attributed to the Bushman artists, the white lady panel is believed by some to be in excess of 20 000 years old.

Back on the road for more beautiful Damaraland scenery. We make our first stop in the small town of Uis, an old mining town, and one of the best places to buy semi-precious stones, for which Namibia is famous. Here, rough Amethyst, Tourmaline etc can be found at bargain prices.

From here we turn directly west and cross the "gravel plains" on our way to the Atlantic Ocean and the Skeleton Coast. Meeting the ocean at Henties Bay, we first head north along the coast to visit the seal colony at Cape Cross. Here at certain times of the year there can be as many as 100,000 Cape Fur seals in attendance.

The next destination is Swakopmund, following the Skeleton Coast into Namibia's premier seaside town. We aim to arrive in the late afternoon giving us time to explore the town on foot before sunset.

Tonight we take the chance to sample one of the excellent restaurants. The seafood in Swakopmund is superb. Your guide will offer to organise a group meal in a local restaurant for this evening. Participation is recommended but by no means required.

Dinner this evening is not included in the price of the safari and will be for the client's own account

### **Day fourteen**

Swakopmund - Windhoek (BL) (350 km)

The drive back to Windhoek today will take about 4 and a half hours. We will only depart after lunch, giving us time to spend the morning relaxing in Swakopmund. Swakopmund is a very pleasant seaside town with lots of shops, a good stretch of beach (although the Atlantic here is quite cold) and an open-air curio market. There is also a very good museum and the Namibian National Marine Aquarium is located in Swakopmund.

Alternatively, there are various optional activities that can be arranged. These include aeroplane and microlight flights over the desert, scenic drives, fishing trips (both from the beach or in a boat), four-wheel motorcycle (quad bike) trips into the desert and over the sand dunes around Swakopmund, sand boarding trips (also in the dunes), skydiving, surfing, bird-watching and many other activities are available.

Your tour guide will discuss all the possible options with you before you reach Swakopmund and will offer to make bookings in advance of your arrival. (N.B. All extra activities and excursions in Swakopmund are subject to availability and are made at the clients' own risk and expense).

This is the last day of our trip and after lunch we will transfer back to the capital city where you will be dropped off at your accommodation.

Tonight the accommodation is not included in the price of the safari

## Important Info

It is strongly recommended that you purchase comprehensive personal travel insurance before you embark on your safari. Travel insurance is for your own protection and we consider it to be an essential part of modern international travel.

Maximum group size is 14 people, with a minimum of 2 participants. Transport for up to 8 people will be in a minibus and for 9 people and more in a Toyota bus / truck.

The style of safari is limited participation, you will be asked to assist put up and take down your own tent, however there will be a camp assistant to complete all the other campsite chores. Your tour guide will do all the shopping, cooking and day-to-day organization of the safari. Unless otherwise specified, all safaris will be conducted in English

### **Safaris include:**

1. All transport
2. Three meals a day (unless differently specified)
3. Tap drinking water
4. Tea & coffee in camp
5. All camping equipment
6. Park entrance fees
7. Camping fees
8. Professional guide
9. Camp Assistant
10. Pick up & drop off from accommodation in Windhoek

### **Safaris exclude:**

1. Sleeping bag (can be hired)
2. Alcoholic beverages
3. Soft drinks
4. Personal travel insurance

### **Useful items to bring with you:**

1. Two litre water bottle
2. Torch
3. Towel
4. Sun hat
5. Pillow

The tents are dome type, which are easy to assemble and your mattresses are approximately 5 cm thick with your own mattress cover, and everyone has a camp chair with a backrest.

Clients are limited to one soft, barrel type bag per person with maximum weight of 15kg, one medium sized hand luggage bag, one medium sized camera bag and a sleeping bag.

We suggest a sleeping bag range of "3 - 4 season". Sleeping bags can be hired by prior arrangement for a cost of N\$: 140.00 per 14 day trip.

When packing your clothing please be aware that Namibian summer temperatures (December - March) can reach 45°C, and winter temperatures (June - September) can be as low as -5°C. The rainy season is between December and April.

All evening meals on camping safaris, (unless stipulated), are cooked on an open fire by your guide. Salads and fresh vegetables will be served where possible, but please note in some areas this is not necessarily every day. Fresh fruit will also be supplied when possible. Vegetarians can be catered for but please notify us prior to safari departure.

Namibia is a low risk malarial destination but we recommend that you seek professional medical advice to enable you to make decisions on personal malaria protection.

Tap water in Namibia has been purified or comes directly from boreholes and is safe to drink. We supply tap drinking water but bottled mineral water is easily available at shops and rest camps should you prefer to drink this.

Electrical plugs are 220 V and are 3 pin (round pin as opposed to square pin). Adaptors can be purchased in Windhoek. It is possible to re-charge batteries at some campsites.

The Namibian Dollar (N\$) is tied permanently 1-1 to the South African Rand (SAR). SAR, notes and coins are legal tender in Namibia.

Airport transfers and pre-and-post safari accommodation can be arranged on request

It is customary to tip in Namibia, usually, around 10% at restaurants. Your guide and assistant can be tipped at your own discretion for good service only, but we ask that the guide be tipped separately from your assistant.

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us.