

Big Cat Conservation, Game Drives and Desert



Overview

Highlights of this suggested tailor made trip include nature drives to track cheetah and leopard and see ancient rock art in Damaraland, safari drives in the renowned Etosha National Park, rich with wildlife including lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, rhino and giraffe, and watching the sun rise over the Namib Desert at Sossusvlei. The trip includes your own private guide, and fully air conditioned vehicle. The guides we use are local to the area, and have an intense passion for nature and their country. Their ability to speak local languages gives guests a privileged insight into the intriguing local cultures, whilst their well-trained game-spotting skills and expert knowledge of botany and wildlife provide for a unique and thrilling experience.

Accommodation choices range from large lodges to small, luxury permanent tented camps: call or email us for further information.

Trip Highlights

- See first hand how Big Cats are rehabilitated back into the wild
- Game viewing in Etosha National Park with expert guide
- Tracking desert elephants in Damaraland
- See the ancient rock art of the Damara people
- Watching the sun rise over the Namib Desert at Sossusvlei

Day 1 Arrival in Windhoek

You will be met at Windhoek International Airport (or at the designated joining point in the city), and transferred to your private air-conditioned 4X4 vehicle. The afternoon is spent on a guided city tour. Nestling among rolling hills, Namibia's capital is the place where old meets new. In the main street, well-preserved German colonial buildings contrast with modern architecture, and Herero women in their traditional Victorian dresses mingle with people in the latest fashions. Total driving time today 45 mins. (Lunch and dinner included)

There are a number of lovely small accommodations close to Windhoek in a quiet, peaceful area yet within a 15 minute walk or short taxi ride to the city centre.

Day 2 Windhoek to Big Cat Reserve

The drive north today is via Okahandja with its local Craft Market and colourfully clad Herero people. Your guide will provide information on this intriguing culture and their attachment to this town.

Lunch will be at a game reserve dedicated to the conservation of Big Cats: this afternoon you can take part in a planned activity such as cheetah and leopard tracking, seeing the welfare programme in action and going on a bushman walk to learn about tribal culture survival tactics. The lodge has a pool and communal lounge, and guests may choose to relax there. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Accommodation is on the reserve.

Day 3 Big Cat Reserve to Etosha National Park

There's an opportunity for another activity at the Big Cats reserve before heading off for Etosha National park, arriving in time for some late afternoon game viewing. Widely regarded as one of the world's greatest game viewing parks, the availability of water holes in Etosha means that the potential for



viewing game (including lion, elephants, water buffalo, rhinos, giraffe, springboks, zebras amongst others) is greater than some of Africa's other parks where days may be spent searching for wildlife. Your guide is experienced and knowledgeable, and this is where guided wildlife viewing comes into its own: a guide's trained eyes can spot wildlife way out on the horizon as well as when submerged in bush close by, and his ability to speak local languages means getting the low-down on where the big game is to be sighted is a given.

Total driving time today 4 hours. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

There is a range of fabulous accommodation to choose from at Etosha: including luxury permanent tented camps overlooking waterholes, privately run small lodges and chalets within the park

Day 4 Etosha National Park

Today is given over to game driving through Etosha National Park. The Park has several water holes where you may spend some time: the route you take will depend on the game, and you may return to your accommodation for lunch and a short siesta or dip in the pool before venturing back into the park for the afternoon. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Day 5 Etosha National Park

Another day spent game viewing in Etosha in your private safari vehicle: routes again will depend on where wildlife has been spotted and you leave the park through the Southern gate in the later afternoon. After dinner, you can relax with a drink taking in the nocturnal sounds. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

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Day 6 Etosha National Park to Damaraland

Today you will head into Damaraland one of the most scenic areas in Namibia; prehistoric water courses with open plains and grassland, massive granite koppies and distant mountains form the landscape. The sheer vastness of the African landscape becomes clear today; the roads stretch in front; occasionally you may pass a man with donkey and cart and the odd dwelling.

Your guide will supplement the narrative this afternoon at the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Twyfelfontein. The desert climate has actually protected these ancient rock paintings and they are clear and fascinating. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Accommodation in this area ranges from a large lodge or tented camp to small luxury permanent tented accommodation set amongst the rocks. All provide magnificent settings for sundowners.

Day 7 Damaraland

After an early breakfast you depart in search of the elusive desert-adapted elephants in an open 4x4 vehicle. These animals are an ecotype unique to Namibia, behaviourally adapted to hyper-arid conditions. Numerous other species of desert wildlife are often spotted and you return to the lodge for lunch. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure; you can relax by the pool, take a guided walking safari or another game drive. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Day 8 Damaraland to Swakopmund

After breakfast, you head for the coast, passing Namibia's highest mountain, the imposing 2,574m Brandberg. Swakopmund is famous for its seafood: your guide will recommend some of the town's best restaurants. Today's driving time - 4½ hours. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Accommodation in Swakopmund includes colonial hotels and small B&B and guesthouses.

Day 9 Swakopmund

Swakopmund is Namibia's centre for adrenalin-fuelled activities: options include quad biking or sand dune surfing. Marine boat cruises to spot dolphins and seals are also recommended: your guide will organize and help with

requirements. (Breakfast & Dinner included)

Day 10 Swakopmund to Sossusvlei

Depart this morning for the desert, stopping to explore Sesreim Canyon, where centuries of erosion have incised a narrow gorge about 1km in length. The area provides great photography opportunities as you wander round. Total driving time today 6 hours. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Accommodation in this area is surrounded by stunning mountain ranges and the Namib dunes. We recommend small lodge accommodation at Sossusvlei; choices also include luxury tented camps or chalets and larger lodges.

Day 11 Sossusvlei

Sunrise over the Namib desert is a spectacle: the shadows cast on the Dunes as the sun appears over the horizon makes for an eerie but beautiful setting. A picnic breakfast is taken under a tree, then the afternoon is free for relaxing. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)

Day 12 Sossusvlei to Windhoek area

This morning you head back towards Windhoek, stopping for lunch before reaching your final night's accommodation in the mid afternoon. (Total drive time today, approx 5 hours). Your lodge tonight is just outside Windhoek, surrounded by the majestic khomas Hochland Mountains with a spectacular 360 view. This exclusive lodge offers 10 luxurious en suite double rooms and thatched chalets. The lodge is tastefully decorated to the smallest details. Enjoy international cuisine with French influence. Take pleasure in the magnificent sunsets viewed from the African lapa or the wooden terrace of your chalet. The lodge is renowned for its big cats experience which enables guests to see lion, leopard, and cheetah in their natural environment, game and bird watching. (Breakfast, lunch & dinner included)



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Day 13 Windhoek to the Airport

After breakfast you can head for Windhoek and some last minute shopping. You are then transferred to Windhoek International Airport in time for your international flight home. (Breakfast & lunch included)

Cost of Trip:

£3,760.00 per person based on 4 pax travelling

£4,895.00 per person based on 2 pax travelling

The cost includes the following:

International flights ex London; Accommodation as stated above, subject to availability; Services of a registered and qualified guide; Transport in an air conditioned private safari vehicle; Meals and activities as stated Entrance fees and excursions where stated in the itinerary; Mineral water on board the vehicle

Day 14

Head back to Windhoek Airport today for your return flight to London.

At Native Escapes, we select accommodation according to particular interests, season of travel, budget and availability. We have travelled extensively in Southern Africa, and have a good level knowledge of the destinations and things to do. When you book, we 'flesh out' your itinerary with suggestions for things to do in each area, and will provide maps and directions to each destination with your final paperwork.

We have on-the-ground services by way of ground handlers, who provide an excellent service in the event of emergency. Because we purchase accommodation through ground handlers who sell to agents such as ourselves around the world, we have access to excellent rates which are not available for direct bookings; you should pay no more for direct bookings than if you book through us.

We comply fully with the UK Package & Travel Regulations 1992. Holidays with flights included are covered by the company's ATOL Bond (Air Travel Organisers' Licence) held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This means that in the unfortunate event that our company should fail, the CAA will, arrange any necessary repatriation and any refund of monies paid to *Native Escapes* in advance. Our ATOL number is 9709.

A package with no flights is made up of accommodation and other ground arrangements where clients have organised their own flights. This kind of trip cannot be covered by an ATOL bond. In the event that *Native Escapes* fail then any suppliers who have not yet been paid for holidays which are current under way will be reimbursed by our Insurance Company. They will also refund any monies for ground arrangements made by *Native Escapes* which have not as yet been taken but for which money has been received by the company in advance.

In this case, reimbursement covers only the elements of the holiday booked with *Native Escapes*. Note that this does **not** cover the client in the event of the failure of an airline with which they have booked their own flights.

Note that booking directly does not provide any financial cover in the event any suppliers going into administration and is often more expensive.

In addition, our self drive holidays in Namibia include a 'Life Saver' insurance policy. This guarantees an instant, no questions emergency launch of private medical rescue and evacuation services. Additionally we have included N\$25,000 of emergency treatment cover at Namibia's private trauma centres, ensuring that no delay in urgent treatment is experienced. Note that this does NOT exclude the need for your own travel insurance.

General Information

Visas are not required for UK or Irish nationals. All visitors require a passport valid for at least six months after the period of their intended stay, and documents for return or onward travel. Passports should have at least two

Book at www.nativeescapes.com

Native Escapes 46 Lincolns Mead, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6TA Tel: 01342 834700

Unused pages for endorsements by the Namibian Immigration Service. It is advisable to carry copies of your passport, flight tickets, visa/s and any other important information in case the originals are stolen or mislaid.

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travellers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy or consulate.

Health

The World Health Organisation (www.who.int/en/) recommends that all travellers are inoculated against diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio as well as for hepatitis B.

Hepatitis A, malaria and typhoid are also recommended by the Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (www.cdc.gov) for travel in Namibia. All travellers should seek advice from their local GP or travel clinic for up to date advice on vaccinations and different malarial options.

Insurance

As part of the Terms and Conditions of your safari with Native Escapes it is **essential** that you have comprehensive travel insurance for your trip. Your insurance should be inclusive of full medical cover including costs of emergency repatriation, cancellation and travel delay.

Money

Currency is the Namibian dollar which is linked to the South African rand. The South African Rand is also legal tender in Namibia at a rate of 1:1. Current exchange rates can be found at www.xe.com.

Electricity supply

220v, 3pin South African plug. Adaptors are required to charge cameras, etc.

What to bring

Binoculars, torch, walking shoes, swimming gear, plenty of high factor sunscreen, sunhat, insect repellent, camera, a day pack. Warm clothing is recommended for evenings, and a waterproof jacket. Lightweight clothing is recommended for the day. Avoid brightly coloured clothing for game viewing. If travelling in the winter season (April - September), bring warm clothes for early morning game drives (gloves, hat, fleece).

Tipping

It is normal to tip for good service in bars and restaurants in Namibia. Guests may also consider tipping their guide at their discretion.

