

Big Cat Conservation, Game Drives and Desert



Overview

This suggested self drive itinerary in Namibia gives an opportunity to view the Big Five in their natural habitat, see how injured or orphaned big cats are rehabilitated back into the wild, gain an insight into the ancient culture of the San and Herero tribes, provides a choice of water, land or dune-based activity options and includes a sunrise excursion into the colourful Namibian desert. Namibia's scenery is starkly varied, and the itinerary takes in the contrasts in landscapes.

The accommodation you select will depend on your budget; there is always a wide range in the areas you visit, including some wonderful luxury permanent tented camps and lodges. We can amend this itinerary to suit different budgets and durations, so remember to take this itinerary as a guide and contact us on 01342 834700 or at info@nativeescapes.com for a tailor made version.

Trip Highlights

- A choice of accommodation offering contrasting views of Namibia's varied scenery
- Game viewing in Etosha National Park with expert guide
- See how Big Cats are rehabilitated back into the wild
- See the ancient rock art of the San people
- Take a hot air balloon ride over the desert or eco-quad bike over the sand dunes
- Catch the desert at sunrise as the red & orange hues change

DAY 1:

Overnight flight to Windhoek

DAY 2:

Arrive Windhoek. You will be transferred to your guesthouse accommodation tonight, where you will stay for 1 night in a luxury room on a bed and breakfast basis.

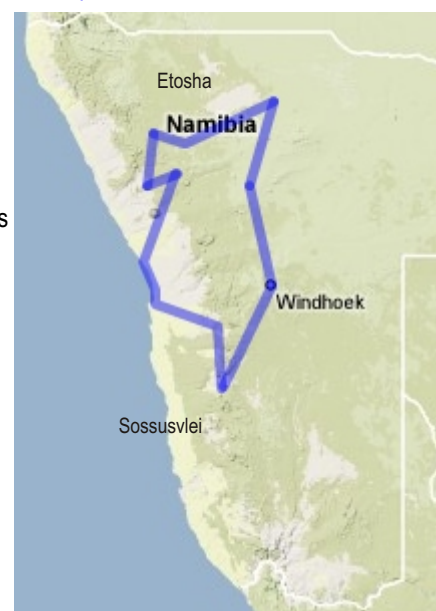
DAY 3:

Today, you take delivery of your hire vehicle and drive south, making your way towards the Namib Desert, perhaps stopping to explore Sesreim Canyon, where centuries of erosion have incised a narrow gorge about 1km in length. The area provides great photography opportunities. (Drive time 5-6 hours).

The Namib known as 'The Living Desert' is a world of vast space, endless horizons, dramatic desertscapes and jagged mountain heights. These dunes which are constantly changing shape with the wind - reach the height of a 70 storey skyscraper and are part of one of the world's oldest ecosystems. The colourful quartz sand in the early morning provides hues of creams, oranges, reds and violets: a photographers dream. There is a range of accommodation available in the area which we can recommend.

DAY 4:

This morning, rise early for a visit to the incredible sand dunes at Sossusvlei. The Namib known as 'The Living Desert' is a world of vast space, endless horizons, dramatic desertscapes and jagged mountain heights. These dunes - which are constantly changing shape with the wind - reach the height of a 70



storey skyscraper and are part of one of the world's oldest ecosystems. The colourful quartz sand in the early morning provides hues of creams, oranges, reds and violets: a photographers dream. Return to your lodge for a relaxing afternoon.

DAY 5:

Today, you drive towards the coast and the resort town of Swakopmund (Drive time 5-6 hours). The town is characterised by its German half wooden architecture, monuments, historic buildings, well maintained gardens and palm lined avenues, coffee bars and great seafood restaurants. It is also a great place for souvenir shopping as well as offering some highly memorable activities and excursions.

You stay for 2 nights in excellent local guesthouse accommodation, where the focus is on hospitality.

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All Images : Ute von Lwiger

DAY 6:

Spend the day in or around Swakopmund: the town is full of activity options: choices include a dolphin & seal cruise, scenic flights over the Skeleton Coast and desert, an excursion to visit a Himba Tribe, eco-sensitive quad biking or sandboarding down the dunes, taking a camel safari, deep sea fishing, hot air ballooning over the desert, horseriding, kayaking or perhaps simply taking a walk along miles of deserted beaches and watching flamingos, pelicans, coromants and other birds at the river mouth.

DAY 7:

After breakfast you depart and head into the Damaraland area of north western Namibia. You head inland and pass Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg, and make your way towards Twyfelfontein. This area is a desert wilderness and is sparsely populated by the Damara people who share their land with a range of wildlife including the Desert adapted Elephant, Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Springbok, Zebra, Oryx, and Ostrich. Its unique geological formations include petrified forests, ancient petroglyph-engraved sandstone slabs and volcanic mounds.

Your accommodation is for 2 nights on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis, including rhino tracking activity. The lodge also offers a number of activities, including guided nature walks, elephant tracking, rhino tracking and a visit to a Himba village. (extra cost).

The 12 000 hectare exclusive use area that the lodge encompasses boasts a myriad of Damaraland flora and fauna, with Desert elephant, Black rhino and even lion occasionally ghosting an appearance.

Nearby, Twyfelfontein is one of the most extensive rock-art galleries on the continent, most likely made by the San Bushmen hunters who left their marks on the surrounding rocks some 6000 years ago. The rock art is situated along two circular routes which can be followed with a local guide. (Breakfast and Dinner included).

DAY 8:

Spend the day rhino tracking. The guide, along with the game trackers, will track the rhinos from the 4x4 vehicle. Part of the tracking will take place on foot, with the possibility of between 1 to 3 hours walk at the most.

DAY 9:

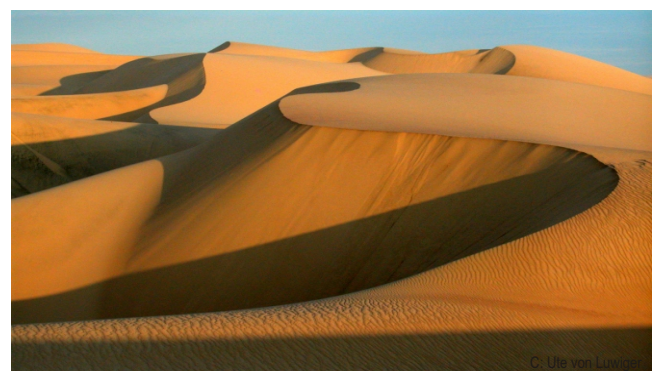
Drive north today towards the south gate of Etosha National Park (Drive time approx 4 hours). You are heading for accommodation at the Southern side of the park: there are a number of options which are beautifully situated overlooking waterholes where guests can sit and watch the nighttime wildlife activity. The park has 30 springs and waterholes, joined by a network of well maintained gravel roads to enable visitors the best chances of seeing the many inhabitants of Namibia's premier wildlife reserve. Species present in the Park include lion, leopard, cheetah, elephant, giraffe, zebra including the rare and endangered black rhino and the black faced impala in addition to many antelope and 340 bird species.

DAY 10:

Spend the day making your way slowly across Etosha National Park to Eastern Gate. You may like to stop at the central, Halali camp for lunch before continuing later this afternoon to your next accommodation for 2 nights. Make time to stop at the many waterholes: you can expect to come across elephant, giraffe, wildebeest and numerous species of antelope.

DAY 11:

Spend the day taking game drives in the Etosha National Park.



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DAY 12:

Today, make your way south towards the Africat Foundation, where you will stay for 2 nights on a fully inclusive basis. After dinner you will also be offered the opportunity to visit a night hide where many nocturnal animals, including porcupine, honey badger and leopard are frequently sighted. The Africat Foundation is dedicated to the conservation, management and rehabilitation of leopard and cheetah. Over 13.5 years, the Foundation has rescued more than 870 cats, of which 86.7% have been released back into the wild. Activities include cheetah tracking on foot, leopard viewing from a hide or from game viewing vehicles, a visit to the cheetah project for an insight into the welfare work of the Africat Foundation, watching game activity from the hide, and taking a self-guided walk along a nature trail.

Day 13

Today will be spent on activities at Okonjima.

Day 14

Today you make your way back to Windhoek for one final night: you might have time for an afternoon city tour, or for last minute shopping at the city's market stalls.

Day 15

Return flight from Windhoek to London.

Day 16

Arrive London

Why Book With Us...

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 plus useful information such as personal recommendations for restaurants 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. Our vehicle hire costs are based on no excess insurance charges: items such as windscreen and tyre damage are included, and we are clear on the exclusion charges which are payable locally. We provide full directions and maps for self drive trips. The 'on-the-ground' advice means we are able to provide the best advice with regards to appropriate vehicle types for the time of year, the best routes to take and local knowledge that companies without a local base cannot provide.

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.

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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please ensure the following:-

Your passports are valid for travel and that you are in possession of valid visas (if required see below).

You consult your doctor prior to your safari for information and advice on the use of anti-malaria medication.

You take out comprehensive travel insurance to safeguard against cancellation and curtailment, medical expenses, repatriation expenses, damage/theft/loss of personal baggage, money and personal belongings.

Visas

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

Inoculation against Hepatitis A and Typhoid is also recommended by the [Centres for Disease Control & Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov) (www.cdc.gov) for travel in South Africa. Depending on the area visited, anti-malarial drugs may also be recommended. 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.



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