

Rhino Tracking, Game Drives and Big Cat Conservation (self-drive)



Overview

This trip gives an opportunity to view the Big Five, plus a huge range of mammal, bird and reptile species in their natural habitat. You will also see how injured or orphaned big cats are rehabilitated back into the wild, visit the geological wonders which define Namibia, and gain an insight into the ancient culture of the Damara and Herero tribes. There is a choice of activity options which enable you to get the most out of your visit to this amazing country.

The accommodation you select will depend on your budget; there is always a wide range in the areas you visit. The examples *in italics* given in this dossier are luxury lodges and permanent tents comprising some of the finest in Namibia. Details of alternative accommodations are available on request.

Trip Highlights

- Luxury unique accommodation offering contrasting views of Namibia's varied scenery
- Tracking desert adapted black rhino in Damaraland
- See the ancient rock art of the Damara people
- Game viewing in Etosha National Park with expert guide
- See first hand how Big Cats are rehabilitated back into the wild
- Activities include game drives, guided walks and night drives



DAY 1:

Fly from London (overnight)

DAY 2: Windhoek to Erongo Mountains

On arrival at Windhoek Airport, collect your self-drive vehicle and drive 2 hours north, perhaps stopping to shop at a craft market at Okahandja, a town identifiable by the Herero women inhabitants, with their colourful traditional dresses and tall headwear. You will drive on to the Erongo Mountains and check into your accommodation in the late afternoon. (Total drive time today: approx 3½ hours).

The lodge for the guided tour has 10 tented chalets, built on stilts, set against towering granite formations. Each chalet has its own private deck, bush-style mini-bar and niche amongst the rocks, ensuring peace, privacy and exclusivity.

DAY 3: Erongo Mountains to Damaraland

After an early morning guided walk in this unique environment where desert, mountain and bushveld ecosystems combine, you drive on to Damaraland. 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, Elephant, Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Springbox, Zebra, Oryx and Ostrich. Its unique geological formations include petrified forests, ancient petroglyph-engraved sandstone slabs and volcanic mounds. (Total drive time today approx. 3½ hours).

Accommodation is in a luxury mountain camp with 12 en suite safari tents built on raised wooden platforms, each with a canvas verandah and splendid views over the Aba Huab valley. The main lounge overlooks a waterhole where elephants and other animals quench their thirst, and makes a great place to relax after dinner.

DAY 4 Damaraland

After breakfast, you can visit the prehistoric Twyfelfontein Rock Engravings, perhaps the finest collection of petroglyphs in Africa, depicting wildlife, animal spoor and abstract motifs, and created by the hunter-gatherers who occupied the site over a 7,000-year period. You drive on north further into Damaraland* in time to pick up in an open 4x4 Land Rover for a 3-hour nature drive towards your next accommodation. (Total driving time today approx 2 hours plus 3 hour game drive).

The camp for the next two nights offers a fascinating insight into the ecology and conservation of the area. It has eight large East African-styled "Meru" tents each with an en-suite bathroom comprising hand basin, flush toilet and a classic bucket shower. The tented dining room offers uninterrupted views of the desert and mountains.

DAY 5: Damaraland

Today is spent tracking desert adapted black rhino. This is usually by vehicle until a sighting is made by trackers, and then on foot. The area boasts the largest concentration of rhino anywhere on the planet outside of a national park, and you will also encounter Elephants as well as large populations of the rare Hartmann's Mountain Zebra, Giraffe, Oryx, Springbok and Kudu. The predator population comprises Lions, Cheetah, Leopard, Brown and Spotted Hyena. Bird life is also prolific.

Rhino Tracking, Game Drives and Big Cat Conservation (self-drive)



DAY 6: Damaraland Etosha National Park

After breakfast, you drive towards the Etosha National Park. En route, you can visit the Petrified Forest, where huge trees, complete with wood grain and growth rings, turned to stone 280 million years ago. This afternoon, you can embark on a game drive on the private Reserve where you will stay, where Lion, Elephant, Cheetah, Gemsbok, Springbok and Hartebeest can be seen at many of the waterholes. (Total driving time today - approx 5 hours).

Accommodation can either be inside the park or on a game reserve outside its perimeter where choices include comfortable lodges or luxury suites.

DAY 7: Etosha National Park

Today is spent game viewing in the Etosha National Park. 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 excellent. Your drive today will take you across the park to leave through the Eastern gate in the later afternoon.

There is a range of fabulous accommodation to choose from at Etosha: including luxury permanent tented camps overlooking waterhole and privately run small lodges.

DAY 8: Etosha National Park

Today you can either take a guided game drive from your accommodation or self drive in Etosha National Park. The Park has several water holes where you can spend some time.

DAY 9: Etosha National Park - Big Cats Conservation Reserve

Heading south after breakfast, you will arrive at a game reserve dedicated to the conservation of Big Cats in time for lunch: this afternoon you can take part in a planned activity such as cheetah and leopard tracking. The lodge has a pool and communal lounge, and guests may choose to relax there. Total drive time today - approx 4 hours.

You stay at a beautifully appointed lodge on the reserve; accommodation is in

luxury African style chalets. Dinner is in the main lodge area overlooking a waterhole where various antelope may pause for a drink, and afterwards you may choose to sit under the stars around the boma. You will wake up to views of the African bushveld without needing to move from your bed!

DAY 10: Big Cats Conservation Reserve

You spend the day at the Big Cats Reserve: there are planned activities included, such as seeing the welfare programme in action and going on a bushman walk to learn about tribal culture survival tactics.

DAY 11: Big Cats Conservation Reserve - Windhoek

After an early activity and a late breakfast, you head back to Windhoek, checking into your accommodation in mid-afternoon. (Driving time today - approx 3½ hours).

For dinner tonight, you may wish to go to the world famous Joe's Beerhouse, where you can sit indoors or under the lapas, enjoying the excellent Namibian food.

DAY 12: Departure

Today you can explore Windhoek. 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.



Rhino Tracking, Game Drives and Big Cat Conservation (self-drive)

Later you will drive to Windhoek Airport, where you can return your car, in time for your international flight home. (Drive time less than 1 hour).

DAY 13 Arrive in the UK

*Please note a 4X4 vehicle is necessary for the roads involved in this itinerary.

Trip Extension Options

Namibia is an excellent destination for trip extensions: customers could elect to take a few days' break in Cape Town or visit Victoria Falls. Extensions are booked on a tailor made basis: please contact us for more details and a quote.

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.

Our ground handlers 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 are ATOL bonded, and your money is therefore protected when you book with us.

General Information

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.

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

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. Guests on group departures must take their policy documents with them on the trip as the guide will ask to see this at the start. The documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for the period of travel. The policy document must also indicate that medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover is included and a 24 hour contact telephone number for the insurance company must be shown on the documentation in case of emergency. Guests unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip will be asked to purchase a policy prior to joining the trip.

Electricity supply

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



Money

Currency is the Namibian dollar which is linked to the South African rand. The rand is also legal tender in Namibia at a rate of 1:1.

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.

