



TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



This Namibia Under Canvas Safari affords you the chance to experience this magnificent and memorable country in a very personal way. You will have your own professional and experienced safari guide who will enhance your enjoyment of this unique country by making it a fascinating and stress-free journey of discovery amidst very dramatic scenery.

Namibia is a vast country, even by African standards, covering an area approximately twice the size of California and four times the size of the United Kingdom, but with a population of a mere 2 million. This gives one of the lowest population densities in the world. It is also an 'ageless land'; visible through our heritage of rock art created by stone-age artists and geological attractions such as the petrified forest where fossilised tree trunks have lain for over 280 million years. When added to the space and silence, these factors all contribute to a feeling of antiquity, solitude and wilderness.



The climate is typical of a semi-desert country. Days are warm to hot and nights are generally cool. Temperatures are modified by the high plateau in the interior and by the cold Benguela Current that runs along the Atlantic coastline. Except for the first few months of the year, the country is generally dry with very little rain.

The knowledge, experience, and character of guides used on this trip are critical to a successful safari - which is why we ensure that they are both personable and very professional. Your guide will have an intimate knowledge of each area and camp/lodge that you visit, allowing them to share the local insights and highlights whilst adding continuity and depth to your safari. It goes without saying that they all know exactly what a "True African Safari" is all about. Not only are our guides highly qualified, each has a specific area of expertise. Together they possess the breadth and depth of knowledge to allow them to answer questions and satisfy the interests of each of our guests. The presence and company of your guide will turn your safari into an experience of a lifetime!

The Under Canvas camps are designed to offer a true "back to nature" experience with the emphasis being on the experiential aspect of safaris, to go back to the roots of safari, to touch, to smell, to feel and to experience the wild, with one's feet firmly in the dust that covers Africa. This is an experience that is exclusive in the real sense of the word, as well as being very much away from the pressures of 'normal' life!

Since most of the camps are semi-permanent and seasonal, there is a degree of compromise required concerning some of the frills and other 'add-ons' that you might expect in a permanent tented camp or lodge, but there is still a strong focus on ensuring guests' comfort. Those prepared to forego some conventional 'necessities', so that they are unencumbered by buildings and all the paraphernalia that goes with them, will be able to go to sleep hearing only the noisy silence of the desert and to wake up to a chorus that announces the start of a new day. It is the kind of intimacy that can only be achieved by taking guests to the most wild, remote and private places, and giving them access to exclusive areas away from the beaten path.

Book at www.nativeescapes.com

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

Page 1 of 9

TRIP ITINERARY

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Highlights:

- Travel with one of Namibia's most reputable and well-known naturalist guides.
- Visit the world renowned AfriCat Foundation and learn more about conservation initiatives involving Africa's large cats.
- Memorable and exciting guided game drives within the renowned Etosha National Park, from the vantage point of a specially modified, air conditioned 4x4 with pop tops.
- Explore the Damaraland region whilst staying at the exclusive-use //Huab Under Canvas.
- Search for desert adapted elephant in ephemeral river systems.
- Track for the endangered black rhino in conjunction with Save the Rhino Trust.
- Visit and explore Namibia's central coastal region with canyons, dunes and lagoons.
- Explore the private Namib Tsaris Conservancy on exploratory nature drives and guided walks whilst staying in the exclusive-use Camp Sossus.
- Climb some of the world's highest free-standing sand dunes at Sossusvlei and enjoy a magic box picnic in the Namib Naukluft Park afterwards.
- Enjoy spectacular star gazing of the Milky Way on the Namib Tsaris Conservancy.
- Enjoy refreshing moments in desert pools on the Namib Tsaris Conservancy.

At Native Escapes, we have undertaken a large amount of research in Namibia to find the best small group trip available – and believe we have it here: the standard of guiding is superb, the itinerary allows for time to appreciate the destination and the standard of accommodation is excellent. Meals and excursions as per the itinerary are included. The trips are guaranteed to depart with a minimum of 2 guests, and maximum of 7.

Day 1

Transfer from Windhoek Airport to a local B&B. Depending on arrival time, this afternoon, you may choose to take a guided tour of the City. The city mixes modern architecture and latest fashions alongside old colonial German buildings and Herero women in their traditional Victorian dress.

Overnight: Windhoek B&B / Guesthouse

Day 2

This morning you depart Windhoek in your safari vehicle with your private guide and set off on your journey.

On your way to Etosha you will visit the Okonjima's AfriCat Day Centre, a wonderful highlight with which to start your safari. Okonjima is home to the AfriCat Foundation, a wildlife sanctuary which focuses on the research and rehabilitation of Africa's big cats, especially injured or captured leopard and cheetah. You will arrive in time to embark on an exciting and informative game drive and tour of the centre. Here you will learn about the function and vision of the AfriCat Foundation and will also get to meet some of the Foundation's special captive carnivore ambassadors.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be no tracking of wild cats on this visit and should that be required a pre-overnight extension should be booked. Please contact us for information on availability and costs to add a stay at Okonjima.

TRIP ITINERARY

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After the excursion you will enjoy a light lunch before your journey continues further north. You arrive in time for an afternoon game drive on the Ongava Game Reserve in an open game viewer with Ongava ranger, on shared basis with other lodge guests.
Overnight: Ongava Tented Camp or similar Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner. Journey time to Okonjima: 3 hours. Journey time to Ongava Tented Camp: approx. 3 hours.

Day 3

Today you will be treated to an exciting morning guided game drive into the Etosha National Park, to see more of the wide variety of game and bird species that are to be found there. There is then time to relax by the refreshing swimming pool before you head out again for an afternoon game drive into Etosha before exiting the park before sunset. Alternatively, you can opt to spend the whole day out in the park and either take lunch by one of the other rest camps in the area, or have a picnic while watching game at a particularly productive waterhole in the area. Once you are back (gates close at sunset), the rest of the evening can be spent game viewing at the camp's floodlit waterhole while enjoying dinner, and afterwards..

Etosha National Park: Etosha National Park, translated as the 'Place of Mirages', Land of Dry Water' or the 'Great White Place', covers 22 270 km², of which over 5,000 km² is made up of saline depressions or 'pans'. The largest of these pans, the Etosha Pan, can be classified as a saline desert in its own right. The Etosha Pan lies in the Owambo Basin, on the north-western edge of the Namibian Kalahari Desert. Until three million years ago it formed part of a huge, shallow lake that was reduced to a complex of salt pans when the major river that fed it, the Kunene, changed course and began to flow to the Atlantic instead. If the lake existed today, it would be the third largest in the world. Etosha Pan is the largest of the pans at 4 760 km² in extent. It is nowadays filled with water only when sufficient rain falls to the north in Angola, inducing floods to flow southward along the Cuvelai drainage system. The Park consists of grassland, woodland and savannah. Game-viewing centers around the numerous springs and waterholes where several different species can often be seen at one time. The Park boasts some 114 mammal and over 340 bird species. Wildlife that one might see includes elephant, lion, giraffe, blue wildebeest, eland, kudu, gemsbok (oryx), zebra, rhino, cheetah, leopard, hyena, honey badger and warthog, as well as the endemic black faced impala.

Overnight: Ongava Tented Camp or similar. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner (local drinks included)
Etosha game drive with Guide

Day 4

This morning after breakfast you will continue your safari to the heart of Namibia, Damaraland, traveling through farmlands and the small towns. Damaraland is typified by displays of colour, magnificent table topped mountains, rock formations and bizarre-looking vegetation. The present-day landscape has been formed by the erosion of wind, water and geological forces which have formed rolling hills, dunes, gravel plains and ancient river terraces. It is the variety and loneliness of the area as well as the scenic splendour which will reward and astound you, giving one an authentic understanding of the word 'wilderness'. You enjoy a delicious Magic Box picnic en route and arrive in time to enjoy fireside sundowners at Camp Doros. Please note that today is a long day of travelling, rewarded with another 3 night stay at your next camp.

Camp Doros: The camp is deliberately small and intimate, and it is located in a core area for desert adapted black rhino with activities largely focused on tracking rhino with an experienced and qualified Rhino Ranger team. Camp Doros is perched on a high bank overlooking a (generally) dry riverbed and groves of Mopane trees in the heart of Damaraland. Protected from the

TRIP ITINERARY

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Namibia



prevailing winds, the camp carries arguably the lowest environmental footprint of any camp in Namibia. Six shaded guest tents (one of which is a family unit) are raised on platforms and have basic infrastructure including twin beds, cupboards, solar power for lighting and charging points, and some important comforts such as showers and en suite flush toilets. The camp also has a spacious common area including bar, dining room and lounge, as well as a welcome plunge pool. There is a focus on personalized service delivery, and this includes hearty and scrumptious meals which are prepared in a largely solar and wood-fired kitchen. The essence of the camp is 'under canvas and experiential'.

Doros Joint Management Area: The Doros Joint Management Area is largely sparse semi-arid mountainous savanna, with wooded ephemeral river valleys separating hills and plains and it boasts some of the most magnificent views in Damaraland. As it has a number of natural springs providing water throughout the year for desert-adapted wildlife, the area is home to desert-adapted Elephant, black Rhino and general plains game, including Kudu, Giraffe, Springbok, Oryx, Klipspringer and Steenbok, as well as predators such as Cheetah, Leopard, spotted and brown Hyena.

Overnight: Camp Doros. Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and nature based activities with Guide (local drinks & limited laundry included)

Day 5

Today you will spend an exciting and memorable morning out rhino tracking with the assistance of local trackers. It is worth noting that these black rhino form part of one of the only free-roaming black rhino populations in Africa and tracking animals in an unfenced and uninhibited environment is an absolute privilege. You will return to camp for a freshly prepared lunch and with time to relax at camp during the heat of the day. Later in the afternoon you head out again for a scenic nature drive or walk to explore this vast and astounding ecosystem. //Huab Under Canvas works together with the Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) - an NGO that has been instrumental in the preservation of the rare, endangered, desert adapted black rhino. Having barely survived the slaughter in many parts of Africa during the '80s and '90s, the black rhino population of Namibia increased substantially since the formation of SRT.

Desert Black Rhinoceros: Namibia is home to the larger of two subspecies of the black rhinoceros found in southern Africa. The only population that remains in the wild, unfenced and outside reserves occupies an arid range in the western Kaokoveld. Their preferred habitat is the mountainous escarpment, but they follow ephemeral rivers into the northern Namib as well, especially when conditions are favorable after rains. They are the only black rhinoceros in Africa that are internationally recognized as a "desert group". Like desert-adapted elephant, they cover great distances. They walk and feed at night and rest during the day. To meet their nutritional and bulk requirements they browse on no fewer than 74 of the 103 plant species that grow in their range. One of the few animals to eat fibrous Welwitschia leaves; they even feed heavily on the milkbush (*Euphorbia virosa*) with its sharp spines and toxic latex, presumably because of the high water and fat content. They are physical defenses of dryland plants without apparent harm. Once widespread in the subcontinent, black rhinoceros are an endangered species. The smaller subspecies, *Diceros bicornis minor*, does not range into Namibia.

Overnight Camp Doros: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and nature based activities with Guide (local drinks & limited laundry included)

TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



Day 6

Today you continue your adventures exploring Damaraland, enjoying the freedom to discover the fascinating landscapes with your private naturalist guide both by vehicle and on foot. Damaraland is a surprising refuge for desert adapted wildlife that may include elephant, giraffe, oryx, springbok and even some predators such as lion. However, as with any wildlife sightings in Namibia, this depends on many factors including seasonality so specific sightings are never guaranteed. The wildlife roams large tracks of unfenced desert landscapes and finding game can be challenging, but this is all part of the adventure of exploring this wild untouched gem of Namibia. Today's focus will be largely on tracking the elusive desert adapted elephants in the ephemeral river systems, an activity which will mean spending most of the day out. Your guide will take along a delicious picnic lunch and you will return to camp in the late afternoon.

Desert Adapted Elephant: In habitats with sufficient vegetation and water an adult elephant consumes as much as 300 kg of roughage and 230 liters of water every day of its life. Consider what a herd of them would eat and drink in a week or a month or a year. African elephant in a desert? Well, yes! Not only elephant, but other large mammals like black rhinoceros and giraffe as well. Their ranges extend from river catchments in northern Kaokoveld as far south as the northern Namib. Apart from the Kunene River, seven river courses northwards from the Ugab provide them with possible routes across the desert, right to the Skeleton Coast. The biggest are the Hoarusib, the Hoanib, the Huab and the Ugab Rivers. Desert adapted elephant in Kaokoland and the Namib walk further for water and fodder than any other elephant in Africa. The distances between waterholes and feeding grounds can be as great as 68 km. The typical home range of a family herd is larger than 2,000 km², or eight times as big as ranges in central Africa where rainfall is much higher. They walk and feed at night and rest during the day. To meet their nutritional and bulk requirements they browse on no fewer than 74 of the 103 plant species that grow in their range. Not a separate species or even a subspecies, they are an ecotype unique to Namibia in Africa south of the equator, behaviorally adapted to hyper-arid conditions. Elephant in Mali on the southwestern fringe of the Sahara Desert are the only others known to survive in similar conditions.

Overnight: Camp Doros: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and nature based activities with Guide (local drinks & limited laundry included)

Day 7

After an early breakfast and departure the drive today takes you south past Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg which peaks at 2,573 m above sea level, and west to meet the coast at Henties Bay. You then continue south to the coastal town of Swakopmund where you can enjoy the pleasant seaside location and cooler coastal air for the night. You stay on the eastern outskirts of the town, overlooking the Swakop River valley and desolate desert dune landscapes. Tonight includes dinner at a popular restaurant which specializes in locally harvested fresh seafood as well as other local and international dishes.

Swakopmund: Swakopmund resembles a small, German coastal resort nestled between the desert and the sea. It boasts a charming combination of German colonial architecture blended with good hotels, shops, restaurants, museums, craft centres, galleries and cafés. Swakopmund had its beginnings as a landing station in 1892 when the Imperial Navy erected beacons on the site. Settlers followed and attempts to create a harbour town by constructing a concrete Mole and then iron jetty failed. The advent of World War 1 halted developments and the town sank into decline until half a century later when infrastructures improved and an asphalt road opened between Windhoek and Swakopmund. This made reaching the previously isolated town

TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



quicker and easier and it prospered once again to become Namibia's premier resort town. Although the sea is normally cold for swimming there are pleasant beaches and the cooler climate is refreshing after the time spent in the desert.

Desert Breeze: Located on the banks of the ephemeral Swakop River and just a few minutes' drive from the centre of town, Desert Breeze provides the perfect escape to experience space, tranquility and serenity. There are twelve en-suite, luxury bungalows and one exquisite villa, each with a private sun deck to admire the breath-taking view of the dunes. Expressing sophisticated style and luxury from their accommodation right through to their breakfast facilities makes guests feel pampered and spoiled. Each bungalow and villa is equipped with wireless internet, mini bar, coffee and tea making facilities and digital safes. Only the freshest of produce is provided for breakfast and seating is available indoors or on the deck for guests to enjoy the view and peaceful atmosphere. Big basalt sculptures along with colourful and very unique architecture stand in contrast to the desert landscape, yet also compliments it. The creative luxury offered in the bungalows along with the friendly staff will make your stay very memorable

Overnight: Desert Breeze. Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner (local drinks included). Journey time approx. 4-5 hours.

Day 8

After an early breakfast you depart on a fascinating drive which takes you south-east through awesome and ever-changing desert landscapes via the impressive Gaub and Kuiseb canyons to meet the dunes at the settlement of Solitaire. A picnic lunch will be had en route and you will continue onto the Namib Tsaris Conservancy, where you will spend your final two nights of your safari at the exclusive-use Camp Sossus. Arrival should be in the mid to late afternoon with enough time to acquaint yourself with the camp and enjoy a hot bucket shower before dinner.

Camp Sossus: Located on the private 24,000 ha Namib Tsaris Conservancy, this camp is a mere thirty minutes' drive from the Sossusvlei gate, the gateway to the Great Namib Sand Sea, a declared UNESCO World Heritage Site. Camp Sossus is built in a naturally formed amphitheatre of a south-facing granite outcrop within striking distance of Sossusvlei and is ideally positioned to avoid the harsh desert sun. The severe desert climate was a primary consideration in the camp's design, and tents are protected from the stormy east winds by natural stone walls and shaded by roofs built from almost 500 recycled oil drums. It is also equipped with furniture built in part from recycled metals, Oregon pine floor boards and wooden pallets. As a result of this design, the camp is virtually invisible from any distance and carries one of the lowest environmental footprints of any camp in Namibia.

The large west-facing windows and south-facing doors allow natural cooling by the predominant afternoon south westerly wind and the tents are stylishly furnished, offering important comforts such as en suite flush toilets and bucket showers. They also have comfortable twin beds, solar power (with charging station), a shaded day-bed and a star bed, but the essence of the camp still remains 'under canvas' and experiential.

Activities include visits to Sossusvlei with your private guide and general exploration of the private Namib Tsaris Conservancy, including nature walks and drives, guided Mountain Plus Biking, magic moments in desert pools (yes, isn't that intriguing), our famous Trail Treats, star gazing and sleeping out under the stars from your private star bed. In addition to this, Camp Sossus provides a convenient base from which to go on hot air balloon flights as well as scenic helicopter and fixed wing aircraft flights over the local area. It is also a great venue for photographers, offering fantastic landscapes, iconic quiver trees, and the opportunity for night time photography which is often very difficult to arrange elsewhere.

TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



Namib Tsaris Conservancy: The 24 000 hectare Namib Tsaris Conservancy was founded by Landscape Conservationist and Philanthropist Swen Bachran in 2010, and it serves as a natural buffer from the harshest desert conditions and a refuge that is vital to wildlife through the dry season. Eight years of intensive work to reverse sixty years of inappropriate farming practices, including the removal of 120 km of internal fencing, the installation of wildlife watering points, the improvement of road networks, the rehabilitation of land and the reintroduction of wildlife that historically occurred here, has resulted in one of the most picturesque and ecologically sound tracts of land in the area. The Conservancy has gravel plains, mountainous areas with dry river valleys as well as a large raised plateau which towers above the desert below, and it is now home to some of the largest concentrations of wildlife in the area, including oryx, springbok, Hartmann's mountain zebra, Burchell's zebra, kudu, hartebeest, giraffe, steenbok, klipspringer, bat-eared fox, and aardwolf, as well as predators such as leopard, cheetah, brown and spotted hyena. Plans for the future which include the reintroduction of critically endangered black rhino and the acquisition of adjoining land are already well underway!

Overnight: Camp Sossus Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and nature based activities with Guide (local drinks included)
Journey time approx. 5-6 hours.

Day 9

This morning you will need to rise early for a magical excursion with your guide to Sossusvlei in the Namib Naukluft National Park, normally setting off before sunrise to enter the park at sunrise and capture the dunes whilst the light is soft and shadows accentuate the towering shapes and curves. The Sossusvlei area boasts some of the highest free-standing sand dunes in the world and your guide will give you an insight on the formation of the Namib Desert and its myriad of fascinating creatures and plants that have adapted to survive these harsh environs. Once you have explored Sossusvlei, Deadvlei and surrounding dune fields to your heart's content you can enjoy a relaxed picnic brunch in the shade of a camel thorn tree.

You will return to camp for a late freshly prepared lunch and with time to relax at camp during the heat of the day. Later in the afternoon you head out again for a scenic nature drive or walk to explore this vast and astounding ecosystem and to enjoy a magnificent final safari sundowner.

Sossusvlei: This most frequently visited section of the massive 50,000 km² Namib Naukluft National Park has become known as Sossusvlei, famous for its towering apricot coloured sand dunes which can be reached by following the Tsauchab River valley. Sossusvlei itself is actually a clay pan set amidst these star shaped dunes which stand up to 300 meters above the surrounding plains, ranking them among the tallest dunes on earth. The deathly white clay pan contrasts against the orange sands and forms the endpoint of the ephemeral Tsauchab River, within the interior of the Great Sand Sea. The river course rises south of the Naukluft Mountains in the Great Escarpment.

It penetrates the sand sea for some 55 km before it finally peters out at Sossusvlei, about the same distance from the Atlantic Ocean. Until the encroaching dunes blocked its course around 60,000 years ago, the Tsauchab River once reached the sea; as ephemeral rivers still do in the northern half of the Namib. Sand-locked pans to the west show where the river previously flowed to before dunes shifted its endpoint to where it currently gathers at Sossusvlei. Roughly once a decade rainfall over the catchment area is sufficient to bring the river down in flood and fill the pan. On such occasions the mirror images of dunes and camel thorn trees around the pan are reflected in the water. Sossusvlei is the biggest of four pans in the vicinity. Another, famous



TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



for its gnarled and ghostly camel thorn trees, is Deadvlei which can be reached on foot over 1 km of sand. Deadvlei's striking camel thorn trees, dead for want of water, still stand erect as they once grew. They survived until about 900 years ago when the sand sea finally blocked the river from occasionally flooding the pan.

Camp Sossus; Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and nature based activities with Guide (local drinks included)

Day 10

After a leisurely breakfast this morning you will depart from Sossusvlei and return to Windhoek, driving northeast up the Great Escarpment and through the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands. A tasty picnic lunch will again be served en route and arrival in Windhoek should be by the mid-afternoon.

Upon your arrival in Windhoek you will be transferred to a local guesthouse for overnight.

Breakfast & Lunch included. Journey time approx. 5.5-6 hours.

Optional Extension: You have the option to extend your safari for an additional two nights at Wolwedans Dunes Lodge, located on one of the largest private nature reserves in the world, NamibRand Nature Reserve, an awe-inspiring desert landscape of red dune fields and champagne colored plains.

Arrangements include a scenic land transfer from Camp Sossus to Wolwedans and a scheduled air taxi from Wolwedans to Windhoek International Airport.

NOTE: To make use of this post-safari extension, please be aware that the air taxi arrives back at the Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport at 10h45 and again at 15h15. You need to book flights departing after 13h00 or after 17h15 respectively from the Windhoek International Airport to allow for a 2 hour check-in time.

Day 11

You will be transferred back to Windhoek airport in time for your outbound flight.

This trip departs with a minimum of 2 / maximum of 7 guests.

Please note that this trip books up well in advance: we recommend early booking.



TRIP ITINERARY

Namibia Under Canvas (Guided)

Namibia



This trip includes all accommodation, transportation in a luxury air-conditioned safari vehicle, Meals stipulated above, Services of a registered and experienced English-speaking safari guide, Entrance fees and excursions as described in above itinerary, Return airport transfers from Windhoek International Airport – Windhoek – Windhoek International Airport, Mineral water on board the safari vehicle, Welcome pack.

GENERAL INFORMATION – PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE FOLLOWING

Passports: Please ensure these are valid for travel and that you are in possession of valid visas (if required see below). You are required to 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: Not required for South Africa, Namibia or Botswana for UK or Irish nationals for stays of up to 90 days. An onward or return ticket is required, as well as sufficient funds and documents needed for further travel. Please note that visitors to South Africa must have a MINIMUM of two blank/empty VISA pages in their passport each time entry is sought. Visitors to South Africa with foreign passports who do not comply with these requirements will either be stopped from boarding their aircraft at their point of departure or risk deportation on arrival in South Africa.

Health: The World Health Organisation (www.who.int/en/) recommends that all travellers to Southern Africa 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 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. Travel insurance is part of the Terms and Conditions of your trip with Native Escapes it is essential that you purchase comprehensive travel insurance for your trip. Your insurance should be inclusive of full medical cover including costs of emergency repatriation, cancellation and travel delay.

Native Escapes complies 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. We have testimonials on our website: visit www.nativeescapes.com/aboutus for more information.