



Nuggets of Knowledge

NAMIBIA



Namibia is a country of stunning contrasts with two great deserts namely the Namib with its sea of red sand that runs along the entire Atlantic coastline and the Kalahari in the eastern interior which is a sparsely vegetated savannah that sprawls across the border into neighbouring countries.

In-between lays the Central Plateau with open plains and rugged mountains. Famed for its vast open landscapes, endless blue skies, sunny weather and tranquil starry nights Namibia is the fifth largest country in Africa, encompassing 824 292 square kilometres. The country is however also one of the most sparsely populated countries with a population of only 2.2 million people.

GETTING AROUND

For the visitor to Namibia the choices of getting around include air safari or self-drive.

Self-drive

Namibia is scenically spectacular and traveling by road allows you to completely immerse yourselves into the scenery, discover and stop at little places off the beaten track and really get an appreciation of Namibia at your own pace. In Namibia one drives on the left hand side of the road.

The speed limit is usually 60 kilometres per hour in built up areas, 70 kilometres per hour on gravel roads and 120 kilometres per hour on major tar roads. Safety belts must be used at all times. The driver or any authorized co-driver must produce a valid driver's license at time of rental and must not have been convicted of any criminal offence which resulted in the endorsement or cancellation of his/her driving license. The driver's license needs to be in English with a photograph. If not, an International driver's license will be required.

Please check with your travel consultant on minimum age for car rental on self-drive programs. Unfortunately accidents are common on self-drive programs as most people are unfamiliar with the unique road conditions in Namibia.

By air

The network of charter flights in Namibia provides a quick and easy way to explore the country. They allow you to discover great distances in a relatively short period of time. Flying over Namibia gives one a true understanding and appreciation of its size, especially a flight over the Namib Desert, which looks like a rippling strip of sand and the flight, is an experience in itself. Flights from Sossusvlei in the South of Namibia to Etosha National Park in the North of Namibia, allow you to combine these two most popular destinations in a matter of a few days.

LUGGAGE ON CHARTER FLIGHTS

As most of the air transfers to remote camps are done in light aircraft there are certain luggage restrictions. If you need to bring luggage in excess of your allowance, you may have the option of buying an extra seat which will allow an additional 70 kgs (soft bag only). The additional cost of this varies depending on your flight schedule so please contact your agent for further details. This "seat in plane" allows for a maximum of 70 kg (154 lb) excess weight, on the provision that the bag/s conforms to the dimensions 40 x 40 x 80 cm (16 x 16 x 31 inches); soft bag, i.e. no wheels/frame/rigid structures; able to physically fit onto a light aircraft seat; able to be physically secured with one seatbelt; will not impact on the comfort of other guests on the flight. The additional cost of this varies depending on your flight schedule so please contact your travel consultant for further details. Please note to take advantage of this service prior notice is essential and the same dimensions as above apply for unaccompanied baggage.

Should guests be starting and ending their trip in Windhoek, and do not require the excess luggage to accompany on the trip, this can be stored there. Please contact us for details. Guests must ensure that they are in possession of full travel insurance including luggage cover.

THE BEST TIME TO TRAVEL

The dry winter season (May to October) is the most pleasant time to visit Namibia. During this period you can expect warm, sunny days and cold nights, often with temperatures falling below freezing. It's best to avoid Namib-Naukluft Park and Etosha National Park in the extreme heat (December to March), and Fish River Canyon is closed to the public between December and April. The northeastern rivers may flood during this time too, making some roads either impassable or hard to negotiate. Resort areas such as Swakopmund are busiest during both Namibian and South African school holidays - usually from mid-December to mid-January, late-April to early June, and late-August to mid-September. June to October is also very popular with International tourists.

VISAS REQUIREMENTS AND PASSPORTS

All visitors require a passport to enter Namibia. This passport must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the intended stay and have sufficient pages for entry and exit stamps. All visitors must also have a valid return ticket. Visitors from the following countries do not require visas for stays of up to 90 days: Angola, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Cuba, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, UK, USA, Mozambique, New Zealand, Portugal, Iceland, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Singapore, the Scandinavian countries, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For visitors from other countries, please check with your nearest Namibian Consulate about obtaining a visa.



PLACES OF INTEREST

Etosha National Park

The Etosha National Park is centered around the vast Etosha salt pan in the north of Namibia. The pan itself is usually dry and only fills with water briefly in the summer, but is enough to stimulate the growth of a blue-green algae which lures thousands of flamingos. Most of the wildlife, including herds of zebra, wildebeest and antelope, can be seen around the waterholes that border the pan. Etosha offers a great self-drive safari experience.

Sossusvlei

Located in the Namib Desert in the south-western part of Namibia, Sossusvlei is an enormous clay pan surrounded by gigantic, red sand dunes. The Tsauchab River flows through the desert, and its rare flooding waters the vegetation that survives in the clay soil. During sunrise and sunset, the colors of the sand dunes are constantly changing and provide an opportunity for photographers. The fierce desert winds continually alter the shape and texture of the dunes, providing an ever-changing desert landscape.

Swakopmund

Swakopmund on the west-coast of Namibia is its biggest coastal town and a popular beach resort for Namibians on holiday. The city's German origins are quite pronounced in beautiful old German Colonial buildings throughout the city, making a stark contrast with the Namib Desert at the edge of town. The nearby sand dunes provide several activities such as sandboarding, horse riding and quad biking while the beaches of Swakopmund provide plenty of surf and sand.

Spitzkoppe

Nicknamed the "Matterhorn of Namibia", The Spitzkoppe is a group of bald granite peaks in the Namib desert. The highest peak stands out about 700 meter (2,300 ft) above the flat desert floor. The granite massif was created by the collapse of a gigantic volcano more than 100 million years ago and the subsequent erosion exposed the volcanic rock. Attractions include the many bizarre rock formations and several San (Bushman) paintings found in various places.

Kolmanskop

Kolmanskop is a ghost town in the Namib desert, a few kilometers inland from the port town of Lüderitz. Lots of German settled in this area after a diamond was found here in 1908. Driven by the enormous wealth of the first diamond miners, the residents built Kolmanskop in the architectural style of a German town. The town declined when the diamond-field slowly exhausted and was ultimately abandoned in 1954. The forces of the desert mean that tourists now walk through houses knee-deep in sand.

Skeleton Coast

The Skeleton Coast is the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean coast of Namibia. Dense fogs, mighty storms and violent surf caused many ships in the past to run aground along the Skeleton Coast, and the desolate coastline has become known as the world's biggest ship graveyard. Those who were shipwrecked and managed to swim through the heavy surf and reach the coast, still had to face the waterless, hostile coastal desert. The coast north of Terrace Bay, which is dominated by high sand dunes, is the most attractive stretch of the Skeleton Coast.

