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Unforgettable Namibia Classic Camping Safari





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ITINERARY

Start and end in Windhoek! With the Safari tour Unforgettable Namibia Classic Camping Safari **Sustainable Approach to Travel, you have a 12 days tour package taking you through Windhoek, Namibia and 11 other destinations in Namibia. Unforgettable Namibia Classic Camping Safari **Sustainable Approach to Travel includes accommodation, an expert guide, meals, transport and more.

INTRODUCTION

Book now your Unforgettable Namibia Classic Camping Safari DEPARTING EVERY SATURDAY with World Adventure Tours, and take a sustainable approach to your travels. We are a certified **Travelife Partner**. Namibia is a land of contrasts, and this 12-day safari is perfectly designed to take in nearly all of them. Starting in Windhoek and heading out on the Northern leg of our odyssey, our winding road takes us to the Mt Etjo and Okonjati Nature Reserve, the big game in the iconic Etosha National Park. It includes the privilege of night-time viewing at the world-famous Okaukuejo waterhole. We meet and engage with the Himba Tribespeople, and travel over mountain passes with exotic and beautiful views.

On the southern leg, we spend time in the rugged and forbidding Skeleton Coast National Park, visit 100,000 seals at Cape Cross and take in a shipwreck on our way to the slightly bizarre holiday town of Swakopmund. Here we can shake out a little of the dust and enjoy a hotel bed, great restaurants and many exciting excursions. We cross the Tropic of Capricorn on our way to visit the world's highest sand dunes in the world's oldest desert at Sesriem & Sossusvlei. We see the crumbling yet beautiful and historic architecture in Luderitz, and we learn about the desert diamonds and visit the eerie diamond ghost town at Kolmanskop. The awe inspiring Fish River Canyon, the second largest canyon on planet earth awaits us and last but not least, we visit the unusual and ancient quiver trees.



Day 1

***SATURDAY* WINDHOEK - MT. ETJO & OKONIATI
NATURE RESERVE 230KM | MT. ETJO CAMPSITE**

You will be collected from your accommodation within the Windhoek city limits at 07:15 and transferred to our Headquarters for a short pre-departure meeting. Heading north, we will make our first stop in the small town of Okahandja, where we will find Namibia's largest wood carving market. Craftsmen from all over Namibia come here to showcase a wide variety of large and small items. Here we can collect a genuinely Namibian souvenir and simultaneously support the local artists and communities. Onwards to our overnight destination at Mt. Etjo campsite, adjacent to the private Okonjati Game Reserve. After making camp and preparing lunch we will drive the three kilometers to the lodge, where there will be time to explore the grounds and dip in the pool. The lodge is built in an attractive Moroccan style with red terracotta buildings and abundant palm trees and lawns. Around the lodge and throughout the Okonjati reserve, rainwater dams have been built, creating, after good rains, many large pools and small lakes. Around the main lodge area, the lake is extensive and supports a small population of hippopotamus. The habitat these giant 'water cows' enjoy at the lodge is artificial, as hippos do not occur naturally in this semi-desert region of Namibia. However, it offers us the privilege of perhaps seeing and photographing this iconic African species without traveling many kilometers to the far north of Namibia.

Time for our first game drive. We meet our local guide and climb aboard open game viewing vehicles for our about three-hour excursion into the reserve. The reserve is big, 36,000 hectares (nearly 90,000 acres), and it is as abundant in magnificent scenery as in wildlife. The overall terrain is dotted



with truly huge copper-red and grey termite mounds. It is rich in native vegetation, dominated by Vachellia (formerly Acacia), thorn scrub, and standing mopani trees. Okonjati reserve is mainly free of invasive vegetation, thanks partly to the healthy appetites of the resident pachyderms and other shrub-browsing species found here. This allows for open and semi-open grassland savanna areas crisscrossed with many dry streams and riverbeds. Perfect for the game and perfect for us, as the open landscape makes game viewing and photography a pleasure.

We are hoping for Big Game, elephants and rhinos in particular, but we are also watching out for giraffes and other smaller species. Springbok, wildebeest, impala, and kudu are numerous, but mammals like warthog, steenbok, and Damara dick-dick are all waiting to be spotted by sharp eyes. The game and birdlife are abundant in the bush and around the seasonal waterholes. Not to be outdone by the wildlife, the scenery remains dominant. Pristine bush under truly iconic African Big Sky and with a backdrop of towering red and grey sandstone massifs. It doesn't get much better than this. Around sunset, we will stop for some refreshments before returning to the lodge and then heading back to our campsite, and dinner tonight will be cooked by our guide over an open fire.

We are not done yet, though!

After dinner, we return to the lodge to watch some resident lion enjoy their evening meal. These Big Cats are permanent residents at Mt. Etjo and have their sizeable secure enclosure where they live and where they can hunt naturally. From a safe hide that offers a close-up view, we can watch and photograph these magnificent cats as they arrive to enjoy the extra snack laid out for them. From here, we once again head back to our camp where we can, after a jam-packed day, finally settle down for our first night under canvas.



Accommodation: Twin share tents

Meals: Lunch & Dinner

Start point

Your Hotel within Windhoek City Limits , Windhoek, Khomas, Namibia

Time

07:15

Day 2

***SUNDAY* MT. ETJO - OKAUKUEJO - ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK 280KM | OKAUKUEJO CAMPSITE**

Departing after breakfast, we head back to the main road to continue our journey north en route to Etosha National Park. We make a short stop for essential supplies in the small town of Otjwarongo before continuing to Etosha's main camp at Okaukuejo. We are introduced to the park with a short game drive between the main entrance gate (Anderson Gate), and Okaukuejo Camp, with an excellent chance to spot big game right from the start. Etosha is huge, just over 22,000 square km, and is home to 114 species of mammal, 350 species of bird, 110 species of reptile, uncountable numbers of insect, and, somewhat bizarrely, one species of fish. After setting up our campsite, we will head out into Etosha in search of big game. Elephants, rhinos, giraffes, and big cats are often seen in this area. We also look for smaller species. Several types of antelope and gazelle abound, zebra are shared, and the bird life can be spectacular.

All visitors must return to camp at sunset, but the 'game show' doesn't stop when the sun goes down. Assessable on foot and only a short walk from our campsite, Okaukuejo is justly famous for its flood-lit waterhole, where we can see all of Etosha's treasures. Big cats, elephants, and the whole



spectrum of minor game, but this is our best chance of getting up close to a black rhino. Namibia is the last stronghold of these critically endangered creatures, but here, at Okaukuejo, they are regular visitors.

Accommodation: Twin share tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 3

***MONDAY* OKAUKUEJO - HALALI - OKAUKUEJO -
ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK | OKAUKUEJO CAMPSITE**

We have the whole day to explore Etosha and want to make the most of it. The park gates open at sunrise, and after a quick cup of coffee and a snack, we will aim to be on our way as the sun breaches the horizon. Early morning is usually a productive time for game viewing, and first thing in the morning is an excellent time to catch big cats returning from the hunt. Etosha is a desert landscape; water is the most scarce natural resource. There are, however, numerous waterholes here, both natural and man-made, and our game-driving technique is to take in as many as of these possible. We hope the game will come to us as the animals attend for an early morning drink. Along the way, we will stop at a designated picnic area for a quick breakfast before continuing our game drive en route to the camp at Halali. The name for Halali is taken from a bugle refrain initially used during sport hunting with horses and hounds in Europe. The bugler would sound the Halali to signify that the hunt was over. This was considered appropriate for Etosha as inside the protection of the park, the hunting of animals is over forever.

We will have lunch at Halali. There is a small shop with essential products and a few souvenirs, and there will also be time for a swim in the pool. There is also time to visit the Halali camp waterhole before heading back into the park for our afternoon game drive. On our way back to Okaukuejo, we will



stop to look at the Etosha Pan. The name Etosha translates as 'great white space,' but this name does not do justice to the pan's immensity. Over 4,700 square km of dazzling white mineral pan, so big that it can be seen from space.

Keeping a sharp lookout for the game as we wind our way back to Okaukuejo, we aim to arrive at our camp just before sunset and just in time for the best hour of the day at the Okaukuejo waterhole.

Accommodation: Twin share tents
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 4

***TUESDAY* OKAUKUEJO - PALMWAG 320KM |
CAMPSITE NEAR PALMWAG**

Time to leave Etosha and concentrate on some of Namibia's other highlights. We will have an early breakfast and game and drive out of the park and back to the main road. Our first stop is a fascinating cultural visit to the Otjikandero Himba Village, located close to the small town of Kamanjab. The Himba people traditionally have their homeland in the very far north of Namibia in extremely remote yet beautiful areas. Because their communities were so isolated, the influence of the modern world took a little longer to reach these people, and they lived their traditional lifestyle much longer than other ancient cultures. With the advent of tourism and the natural flow of change, many Himba have migrated further to the south. Still, traditions die hard, and amongst all the other ethnic groups in southern Africa, many Himba tribespeople retain and live their practices to this day. The Otjikandero Himba Village is a living village, meaning that people live there



permanently and primarily adhere to their traditional cultures. It is not a time capsule, the 21st century has also arrived here, but it is a good representation of conventional Himba life. We will be invited into the village, our visit will be guided, and we will be encouraged to take photos and ask questions so there are no feelings of invading anyone's privacy.

After visiting Otjikandero, we will have a short stop in Kamanjab before continuing our journey. The next leg of our journey today is truly spectacular. We turn west and head towards the mighty Etendeka Mountains and the Grootberg Pass. Etendeka translates as 'flat top,' and many of the surrounding mountains have flat table tops. The terrain here is covered with small uniform boulders, a legacy of the break-up of Gondwanaland when what is now Southern Africa broke away from what is now South America around 180 million years ago. A time of massive volcanic upheaval, and the same rocks (Etendeka basalts), can be found in great abundance in Brazil. As we travel through this rocky landscape, we can enjoy the sweeping views and spectacular landscapes of this ancient land.

Palmwag is set out abreast of the Uniab River and under waving makalani palm trees, which often provide a refuge for Namibia's unique desert-adapted elephants. Sometimes coming very close to our camp and sometimes coming in for a visit, the elephants have been known to drink water from the swimming pools. We arrive in the late afternoon and set up our camp in time to enjoy a sundowner and hopefully see some of the resident elephant herds.

Accommodation: Twin share tents
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



Day 5

***WEDNESDAY* PALMWAG - CAPE CROSS 320KM |
CAMPSITE NEAR CAPE CROSS**

We have reached the limit of our northern adventure, and today we first head west to the Atlantic Ocean and then directly south, following the coastline to Cape Cross. We set off through more beautiful scenery and passed many weird and wonderful species of vegetation for which this area is famous. In particular, we will see Namibia's National plant, the unique and endemic *Welwitschia Mirabilis*. This species is a dwarf tree and is found only in Namibia and southern Angola. The *Welwitschia* is a drought-resistant superstar and almost as old as the landscape. Some specimens are known to be over 1,500 years old.

We enter the Skeleton Coast National Park through the northern Springbokwasser Gate, and soon afterward, we meet the chilly Atlantic Ocean. It is easy to see why this barren seaboard is called the Skeleton Coast, with its forbidding mountains and empty beaches. The wind, the waves, and the huge fog banks conspire to push ships onto the beach. In olden times, countless mariners found themselves shipwrecked here and faced the stark prospect of no fresh water, no food, no rescue, and a slow death by exposure. Their Shipmates who went down with their ship were thought to be the lucky ones.

There are some remnants of human activity along our road today. In the early 1960s, two pioneering entrepreneurs, Jack Scott, and Ben du Preez, found themselves convinced that both oil and diamonds were to be discovered along the Skeleton Coast and that this was their chance at fame and fortune. At a considerable expense, a massive drilling rig was set up and managed a bore of 1,700 meters before they could finally admit that there was no oil. Not daunted and encouraged by reports of huge diamonds at Cape Cross the same pair



constructed a diamond mine and processing plant at Toscanini, close to where their abandoned oil rig was already rusting. Some diamonds were 'found,' but there was great suspicion that the diamond processor had been 'seeded' with diamonds from elsewhere. A ploy to keep the investors happy for a little bit longer. Both enterprises failed, but we will pass by Toscanini, and we can stop and look at the now-collapsed oil drilling machine.

Exiting the park at the Ugab River crossing with its Instagram-worthy iconic gates, we continue onto one of the largest seal colonies in the world. Nobody knows precisely why the seals chose Cape Cross as their home, but there must be a good reason, as there are usually upwards of 100,000 seals basking on the rocks or swimming just off the beach. These Cape fur seals are found only in South Africa, Namibia, and Angola and are near-endemic to Namibia. Cape Cross is the largest Cape fur seal colony in the world. Still, many smaller colonies are also found on the Namibian beaches, and the Namibian Skeleton Coast hosts by far the majority of the world's population. Cape Cross is a fantastic sight, and a challenge for your nose, the smelliest stop on our safari.

Cape Cross takes its name from the stone crosses that proudly sit close to the seal colony. The first cross to be erected here was done so on the orders of the Portuguese mariner Diego Cao in 1485. In those days, the cross would have been called a 'Padrao,' and the location was thus named Cabo do Padrao or Cape Cross. The original cross is in a museum in Germany, and the two crosses visible today are replicas erected by the German government and the monuments council of South Africa. The concrete discs set around the two replica crosses are set out to represent the stars of the southern cross. A tribute to the navigational skills of the rugged breed of men who made the first voyages of discovery. Diego Cao never made it home to Portugal from this voyage, and his death is



shrouded in mystery.

After visiting the seal colony, it is only a short drive to our overnight stop at Cape Cross. We aim to arrive in the late afternoon, and there should be time for a sunset walk on the beach.

Accommodation: Twin share tents
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 6

***THURSDAY* CAPE CROSS - SWAKOPMUND | HOTEL A LA MER SWAKOPMUND**

We have a more leisurely start today, and after a cooked breakfast, we head south along the coast to the adventure capital of Namibia, Swakopmund. We are heading south on the coast road. A more recent shipwreck is our first stop. 15 km south of the small town of Henties Bay, a fishing trawler, The Zeila, was beached in 2008. She was an old vessel that had been sold for scrap and was under tow at the time. The cable snapped, and, like so many ships before her, she was caught in the swell and currents and ended up on the beach. She lays pretty close to the shore and is well-positioned for photos. Continuing south along the coast road, another exciting stop exists before we arrive in Swakopmund. Namibia is home to a world-record number of lichen, and we find vast fields along the coast. Examples, such as we have here, of this nature and scale are scarce worldwide. Lichen often looks like plants and, to some degree, functions like plants, but they are not plants and can be well described as composite organisms. The lichen we find in such abundance along the Skeleton Coast is called macro-lichen, which typically refers to bush-like or leafy lichen. The curious thing about lichen is that it comprises two



separate organisms, algae, and fungi. Neither organism would be able to survive in this environment on its own (separate them, and they will both die). Still, together they form a symbiotic relationship within which both can thrive. The fungi collect the moisture they use, and the algae are responsible for the food. Unlike plants, lichen has no roots, but like plants, lichen does perform photosynthesis, or rather the algae part of the lichen, which is green, conducts photosynthesis. This process's chemical sugars keep fungi and algae well-fed. It rarely rains on the Skeleton Coast, but the region is famous for its foggy weather. Heavy mist is common, occurring up to 250 days of the year. All the organisms, including lichen that survive on the Skeleton Coast, are specially adapted to utilize fog as their primary water source. Lichen is exceptionally fragile. Typically, it is very easily damaged, with a growth rate of around 1 millimeter per year. Off-road driving is a significant problem for conserving these unique lichen fields, but a lot of damage is done simply by people walking on the lichen. Our guide will direct us to where we can walk as he introduces us to the lichen fields, and great care must be taken that we do not inadvertently cause any damage during our visit.

We complete the final leg of our journey into Swakopmund. No tents tonight. We check into our accommodation. The centrally located Hotel A La Mer Swakopmund was founded by Captain Kurt von François of the imperial colonial army of the German empire in 1892. (He also founded Windhoek in 1890). Swakopmund is an exciting place, to say the least, bound to the north, the east, and the south by the mighty dunes of the Namib Desert and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. Many examples of German colonial architecture exist, and the German language is still widely used. Swakopmund offers many opportunities to keep us busy during our time here. The town center is small and easily explored on foot, but many extra, optional activities are also available. Scenic flights over the desert are very popular, and



for the more adventurous, perhaps try sky diving or quad biking over and in the Namib dunes. Our guide will discuss all the options with you in advance and will be able to facilitate any bookings that we would like to make. There are bicycle tours and the very popular 'living desert' excursions for the more leisurely-minded. Here you will join a group in a vehicle with a specialist guide who will take you into the dunes sea and introduce you to some of the fantastic creatures and plants that survive in one of the most challenging environments in the world.

Lunch and dinner tonight are for your account, Swakopmund boasts some truly excellent restaurants, and again our guide will be able to help you with recommendations and bookings.

Accommodation: Twin share rooms, en-suite bathroom
Meals: Breakfast

Day 7

***FRIDAY* SWAKOPMUND - SESRIEM 350KM | CAMPSITE NEAR SESRIEM**

Making the most of our time at the coast, we only leave Swakopmund this morning at 11:30, giving us plenty of time to wander around town. Alternatively, many more optional activities are available this morning if you wish.

For those who love adrenaline, sandboarding is also very popular if you fancy careering down the slip face of a dune at 60 km per hour. This activity is generally only available in the morning.

Departing Swakopmund no later than 11:30, we head east into the desert. We first cross the Namib gravel plains, essentially



flat and seemingly barren terrain broken up by colossal mountain inselbergs. We have two mountain passes to traverse this afternoon, first is the mighty Kuiseb Pass, and we follow the road from the top of the hills, dropping steeply down into the canyon carved over eons by the Kuiseb River on its way to debouch into the ocean at the port town of Walvis Bay. We climb up from the banks of the river and over the pass, traveling through the mountain peaks and on to the second, more miniature canyon of the Gaub River, a tributary of the Kuiseb. We emerge from the mountains onto a flat road and almost immediately cross the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.5 south degrees. There is a signpost at this bright spot, and we stop along the road for photos.

From here, we continue through the desert landscape to the tiny town of Solitaire, where we can stretch our legs and sample the apple pie that has made this homestead famous. Onwards again to our destination for today, the gateway to the dunes and Sossusvlei at Sesriem.

We make our campsite in anticipation of our day tomorrow in the shadow of the towering red dunes of the world's oldest desert.

Accommodation: Twin share tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day 8

***SATURDAY* SESRIEM - SOUSSUSVLEI 120KM | CAMPSITE NEAR SESRIEM**

Sunrise in the Dunes is the game's name this morning, which means a pre-dawn start. Our first stop will be at Dune 45, so named because it is 45 km from Sesriem, and we cover this first distance in darkness and early morning twilight.

The best time to photograph the dunes is around sunrise and sunset. This is when you can see towering dunes illuminated a



glowing orange, apricot red on one side, and enveloped in shadow on the other. The depth of field is impressive at this time of day.

We arrive at Dune 45 and climb to a vantage point for sunrise, watching the colors grow and change with the ever-altering light. We return to the vehicle for a quick breakfast, carrying on for the last few kilometers to the 2x4 car park, where we board the 4x4 shuttle vehicles into the vlei. From here, we enter the ancient Tsauchab River bed for the last 5km leg to Sossusvlei. The Tsauchab River is ephemeral, it only flows seasonally when there is enough rain, and for the most part, the riverbed is dry. Eons ago, during these rare floods, the Tsauchab sometimes received enough water to flow to the Atlantic Ocean. However, as the millennia passed and the dune fields began to form (around five million years ago), wind-blown sand invaded the riverbeds. The rivers became increasingly constricted by sand until, eventually, the occasional floods could not break through the sand barriers that the wind had erected. The valley we drove along this morning in the darkness is kept free of sand by the Tsauchab, but Sossusvlei is now permanently waters end.

Sossusvlei does still sometimes flood (perhaps once in a decade). After good rains in the Naukluft Mountains, where the river rises, Sossusvlei can become inundated, and the lake that this creates can last for many months, but no longer can the river find its original path to the Atlantic. The 4x4 shuttle service will transport us through the sandy terrain of the riverbed. We will visit Dead Vlei on foot, led by our guide, an ancient pan surrounded by sand strikingly populated with dead, skeletal camelthorn trees. These trees have been a feature of this landscape for over 1000 years. Sossusvlei is almost surrounded by dunes, just one narrow path kept open by the Tsauchab River. We have time to explore the area on foot and to climb one of the highest dunes in the world, some towering 300 m above us. The views are breathtaking and justly famous.

We drive back to Sesriem for lunch and perhaps a dip in the



swimming pool, and in the afternoon, we take a short excursion to see the Sesriem Canyon. Only four km from our campsite, this canyon has been carved out of the landscape by the Tsauchab River. Around two million years ago, there was an ice age in Europe. This caused glaciers to form and resulted in a worldwide drop in sea level. The knock-on effect of this at Sesriem Canyon was that it increased the length and water flow of the Tsauchab River. This greater force of water allowed the Tsauchab to begin cutting through the terrain resulting in the canyon we can see today. We can easily walk into the riverbed, it is usually much more relaxed in the canyon, and we can follow the river for some way along its journey to Sossusvlei.

In the late afternoon, one further option is to close our time in the world's oldest desert. A short drive will take us to Elim Dune for the best golden light before sunset. From here, if you would like to, it is a relatively short walk back, through the desert, to our camp.

Accommodation: Twin share tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

***SUNDAY* SESRIEM - KLEIN AUS VISTA 350KM |
CAMPSITE INSIDE GONDWANA SPERRGEBIET RAND
PARK**

Today's scenic drive is through ever-changing desert scenery, mountains, and open grassland. We are continuing our long drive south, and our destination is the tiny community of Aus, located in the Aus Mountains above the plains of the Namib Desert.

Aus was formally the site of a prisoner-of-war camp set up by



the South African army to house German prisoners during the second world war. Our actual destination today is Klein Aus Vista, located just outside Aus and inside the private Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park. We aim to arrive in the early afternoon and set up camp, giving us time to stretch our legs on the unguided hiking trails on the property. The landscape is wide open vistas, and we hope for a spectacular sunset.

Accommodation: Twin share tents

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

***MONDAY* KLEIN AUS VISTA - LUDERITZ - KLEIN AUS VISTA 250KM | CAMPSITE INSIDE GONDWANA SPERRGEBIET RAND PARK**

We again start early but with the luxury of an adequately sealed tar road today. We travel through grasslands and wide-open desert scenery on our easy drive toward the ocean. Desert-adapted horses run wild in this area, and we must keep a good lookout for these fantastic creatures. Horses are not a part of the true desert ecosystem, and their origins remain open to speculation. Perhaps they are descended from the German cavalry lines during the first world war. It is also documented that Hans Heinrich von Wolf, owner, and resident of Castle Duwisib in 1909, was a keen horse breeder. Maybe the origins of the horses today come from his bloodstock escaping their stables at Duwisib. Whatever their true history, it is a privilege to see these animals in their wild habitat.

We are en route to the ghost town at Kolmanskop, about 15 km from the port town of Luderitz. For centuries, amongst early mariners, there have been rumors and stories of untold riches on one far-flung coast or another. Most often, these claims turned out to be just stories, but in the case of the far southwest of Namibia, it happened to be true. When diamonds



were first discovered here, you could walk along the beach and fill your pockets with these precious stones. The first diamond mine was called Kolmanskop. Founded in 1908, it was built in the architectural style of a German village and was supplied with the most modern amenities of the age. A hospital boasted the first X-ray machine in the southern hemisphere, a power station, a school, a ballroom, and an ice factory. The decline of Kolmanskop started around 1920 when the diamonds began to run out. Then in 1928, the richest diamond deposits that the world had, at the time, ever known, were discovered 270 km away to the south at the Orange River.

Kolmanskop became deserted, and so started the slow reclamation of the town by the desert. Still a striking sight today, we will stop at Kolmanskop for a guided tour of the city and the opportunity to photograph this unique and exciting site.

On departure from Kolmanskop, we quickly cover the last few kilometers to Luderitz, well known for its unique and colorful colonial-style buildings. We drive out onto the Luderitz peninsula and enjoy the scenery on the way to the historical monument at Diaz Point. As at Cape Cross, the first sign of European interest in this land was from the Portuguese, and in this case, the navigator Bartolomeu Diaz landed here in 1487 and caused a stone cross to be erected. This time the name given to the area was Angra das Voltas or 'Bay of Tacks' concerning the many times Diaz had to 'tack' his ship against the southern gales. Luderitz is still today one of the windiest places on planet Earth, so some things at least have not changed over the centuries. We head back to our accommodation at Klein Aus Vista, taking a second opportunity to see the desert horses and arriving in time for a sundowner at Klein Aus Vista.

Accommodation: Twin share tents
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



Day 11

***TUESDAY* KLEIN AUS VISTA - QUIVER TREE 550KM | CAMPSITE**

Long drive today, but we take advantage of the tar road for the first part of the morning. We are heading east but will soon turn south again to complete our traverse of Namibia's southern region. This morning's first main stop will be the incredible Fish River Canyon in the /Ai-/Ais Richtersveldt Transfrontier National Park. We enter the park at the Hobas gate, and from there, it is only a short drive to the main lookout point over the Fish River Canyon.

Second only in size to the Grand Canyon in Arizona, the vistas across this most immense of nature's sculptures are breathtaking. From our vantage point high up on the plateau, we overlook the so-called 'Hell's Bend,' which takes the form of a colossal meander along the course of the Fish River. The canyon itself is around 160 km long, 27 km wide at its widest point, and in places, 550 m deep. The origins of the Fish River Canyon can be traced back about 1,800 million years, and the canyon's formation can be attributed to just about every possible geological force known to man. Massive seismic forces, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, glacial activity, relentless erosion of every kind, and finally, deepened by the Fish River that we can see glinting in the sunlight far below us. This is a perfect example of tortured rock that inspires our awe with its massive size.

It is hard to leave such an impressive sight, but we journey onwards, turning our heads again to the north as the canyon marks the end of the southern leg of our trip. We are en route



to Keetmanshoop, the main commercial and political center of Namibia's south. A short stop here and then on to our overnight camp at the Quiver Tree Forrest. Quiver trees are Namibia's National Tree and are so named because the San tribes of Southern Africa used to strip the scaly bark from these trees and construct from it a narrow cylinder. From this, they would manufacture a quiver to keep their poisoned arrows. Despite its very tree-like appearance, a quiver tree is not a tree at all. Its real name is *Aloidendron Dichotomum* (formally *Aloe dichotoma*), and so is an aloe; aloe is a plant, not a tree. This does not diminish their impact on the landscape. Weird and beautiful shapes abound from this collection of around 250 quiver plants/trees/aloes. The oldest specimens here are estimated to be about 200 years old, and it is thought that they can achieve an age of up to 300 years. Dating a quiver tree, however, is difficult, as it does not have rings of bark to count, the tree's center is fibrous, and there is no established aging method.

This is the last night of our safari, and time to reflect on our fantastic adventure as we sit around our campfire one last time.

Accommodation: Twin share tents
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12

***WEDNESDAY* QUIVER TREE FORREST - WINDHOEK**
500KM

We head north today, and we have the luxury of the main tar road for our whole journey, no gravel road 'African Massage' to contend with, as we head back to Windhoek.



Namibia is so rich in exciting things that it is impossible to drive for any distance without passing places of interest. There are several worth mentioning along the way today. After about 80 km from Keetmanshoop, in the distance and off to the west, we can see a tall mountain peak. This is Brukkaros, another volcano but quite an unusual one. Brukkaros formed around 180 million years ago when molten magma from deep below the surface was pushed upwards until it intruded into the overlying, relatively soft, sedimentary formations that made up the surface. Molten magma intrusions are common in worldwide geology. Still, Brukkaros is unusual because, in this case, the upward-moving magma hit an underground lake leading to a large explosion powered by super-heated steam. What was left formed a hollow cave that was once the magma chamber but with an overhead caldera forming a partial roof. Eighty million years later, the weight of the caldera was too much, and collapsed into the magma cave. Brukkaros is 1,590 m tall at its highest point. The collapsed caldera measures about 4 km in diameter. The mountain is 650m higher than anything else, and the crater floor is 350 m below the rim. Steam-formed volcanoes are rare, and although Brukkaros is too far away to be included on this itinerary, it is an exciting landmark to look out for on our drive today.

We will pass a signpost to Gibeon about 150 km into our long road today. Again, like Brukkaros, Gibeon is too far away to be included in this itinerary, but there is an exciting story that is worth telling. Near here, in ancient prehistoric times, the area around what is now Gibeon was subjected to a Meteor strike of very significant proportions. The meteor, when intact, was thought to measure 4 x 4 x 3 meters, and we know that it was made of solid metal. As it entered the earth's atmosphere, the metal began to melt, and in due course, the meteor fragmented in a vast explosion scattering chunks of molten metal across the countryside. Meteors from this event have



been found as far away as Brukkaros Volcano to the south and as far away again towards the north. Still, the greatest concentration of meteor material has been found in and around Gibeon.

If you have time in Windhoek after our safari, it is worth going to Post Street Mall in the city center, where you will find a public display of Gibeon Meteorites.

Still heading ever north, our journey today takes us through the small centers of Mariental and Rehoboth, and we will stop along the road today for a light lunch. We aim to be back in Windhoek in the late afternoon.

A shuttle service will take you to your accommodation within the Windhoek City limits.

We recommend that departure flights are not scheduled for today.

Accommodation: None

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

End point

Your Hotel within Windhoek City Limits , Windhoek, Khomas, Namibia



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What's Included

Accommodation

10 nights camping + 1 night's accommodation in twin share rooms with en-suite bathrooms

Guide

Services of a professional English-speaking guide & camp assistant

Meals

Please check the itinerary for meal specifications.

Additional Services

- * Transport in a custom-built safari vehicle with a pop-up roof (no air-conditioning)
- * Services of a professional English-speaking guide & camp assistant
- * 10 nights camping + 1 night's accommodation in twin share rooms with en-suite bathrooms
- * Camping equipment (excluding sleeping bags which can be hired)
- * Meals as above (B – breakfast, L – lunch, D – dinner)
- * Tap water



- * National Park entry fees
- * Activities including:
 - Game drive at Mt Etjo and Okonjati Nature Reserve
 - Game drives in Chameleon Safaris vehicle in Etosha National Park
 - Himba Village visit
 - Visit to Cape Cross Seal Colony
 - Guided excursion to Sossusvlei including 4x4 shuttle
 - Guided tour at Kolmanskop
 - Visit to Diaz Point
 - Visit to Fish River Canyon viewpoint
 - Visit to Quiver Tree Forest
- * Pick up and drop off within Windhoek city limits

Transport

Transport in a custom-built safari vehicle with a pop-up roof (no air-conditioning)

What's Excluded

Flights

International and Domestic Flights are excluded.

Insurance

Health and Travel Insurance are excluded, but we highly recommend getting insurance from your home country before your trip.