

NAMIBIA

The Wild Namibia: Exploring the Natural Wonders

15 DAYS | Choose your dates | Best season to travel: **MAY - OCT**

Namibia draws in visitors with its wide open spaces, and yet the country is packed with potential. Take time to visit the world's oldest desert, the Namib, as well as surrounding safari areas with exquisite flora, towering red dunes, and fascinating geological formations. Game drives in Etosha National Park include the "Big Five," plus giraffes, zebras, wildebeest, antelopes, and more. Help with tracking leopards and spotted hyenas that have been rehabilitated and released by the AfriCat Foundation. You'll also have the chance to learn about Namibia's cultural history as you visit Twyfelfontein, home to one of the largest concentrations of petroglyphs in Africa, and learn about the Himba, one of the last truly traditional peoples of Namibia.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the 1,000-foot-high red dunes of Sossusvlei and hike amid the dramatic landscapes of the Dead Vlei's white chalk plains and 900-year-old Acacia trees.
- Meet local residents, visit markets and taverns, and enjoy a traditional meal during a township tour in Swakopmund.
- Discover the Skeleton Coast and the largest colony of Cape fur seals at Cape Cross Seal Reserve.
- Immerse yourself in the colorful landscapes, tabletop mountains, rock formations, giant granite boulders, and bizarre-looking vegetation in Damaraland.
- Embark on thrilling game drives in Etosha National Park, where possible species sightings include 114 mammals, 340-plus birds, and 126 reptiles and amphibians.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Bilingual local guide
- Driver
- Accommodations
- Activities
- Private transportation
- Meals
- Beverages with meals
- Carbon offsetting


CAPE FUR SEAL BY PELIN KARACA



SOSSUSVLEI DUNES BY PELIN KARACA

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DAY 1 - DEPART U.S.

Depart on your overnight flight to Namibia.

DAY 2 - WINDHOEK

Welcome to Namibia! Upon arrival at the Hosea Kutako International Airport, after clearing customs and immigration, you will be greeted by a Holbrook representative. Transfer approximately 25 miles into Windhoek. Namibia's capital reflects a blend of African and European influences. On Independence Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare, well-preserved German colonial buildings stand side-by-side with modern architectural styles, and you can see executives in business suits alongside Herero women in traditional Victorian dress. Check in at your hotel with time to rest from your long journey. This evening, meet your naturalist guide, who will accompany you for the duration of your program. Receive a comprehensive briefing as well as an introduction to Namibia. Dinner tonight is at the hotel with your guide. *Overnight at Galton House. (D)*

DAY 3 - SOSSUSVLEI

This morning after breakfast, check out and depart Windhoek. Travel southwest by safari vehicle through the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands before heading down the Great Escarpment into the Namib Desert below. Stop for a picnic lunch at a scenic location along the way. Arrive in the mid-afternoon at Dead Valley Lodge, where you will spend the next two days exploring the remarkable sights of the Namib Desert, considered the oldest desert in the world. Relax and soak in the scenic and tranquil surroundings at the lodge, or if desired, your guide can take you on a scenic sundowner drive in the nearby area. *Overnight at Dead Valley Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 4 - SOSSUSVLEI

Rise early for a magical excursion to Sossusvlei within Namib-Naukluft National Park, one of the largest conservation areas in Africa. Sossusvlei is a large, white, salt-and-clay pan that contrasts with the red dunes that surround it. This area boasts some of the highest free-standing sand dunes in the world, reaching up over

1,000 feet. Enter the park gates at sunrise to capture the dunes while the light is soft and shadows accentuate their towering shapes and curves. Your guide will explain the history and formation of the Namib Desert and talk about the fascinating creatures and plants that have adapted to survive in these harsh conditions. Explore the dune fields, with time to enjoy a relaxed picnic breakfast in the shade of a camel thorn tree. On your way back to the hotel, stop to view Sesriem Canyon, a narrow gorge about a mile long and 98 feet deep that was formed 2 million years ago by the Tsauchab River. The canyon provides an excellent visual history of the area's geology. Also be on the lookout for bird life such as Pied Crows, Lanner Falcons, and Lappet-faced Vultures. After lunch at the hotel, enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure, with the option to head out on another nature drive with your guide later in the day. *Overnight at Dead Valley Lodge. (BLD)*

DAY 5 - SWAKOPMUND

The drive today takes you northwest through the awesome and ever-changing desert landscapes of Namib-Naukluft National Park, including the impressive Gaub and Kuiseb canyons. Arrive at the port town of Walvis Bay, where you have the option to visit the lagoon, known for its impressive bird life. In the summer months, the lagoon provides a feeding ground for up to 150,000 birds representing over 150 recorded species, including flamingos, pelicans, gulls, and cormorants. Continue north to Swakopmund, where you can enjoy the pleasant seaside location and cooler coastal air. Swakopmund resembles a small, German coastal resort town, with a variety of shops, restaurants, museums, craft centers, and galleries. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure to relax at the hotel or explore the town and wander along the waterfront on foot. Although the sea is normally cold for swimming, there are pleasant beaches, and the cooler climate is usually refreshing after being in the desert. Dinner this evening will be at one of the popular restaurants in town with your guide. *Overnight at The Delight. (BLD)*

DAY 6 - SWAKOPMUND

This morning is at leisure; relax at the hotel, explore the town, or take part in one of the many adventure activities available in and around Swakopmund and Walvis Bay (at additional cost—it is advisable to pre-book activities to avoid disappointment). Some options include sand boarding, a marine cruise on the Walvis

Bay Lagoon and outer harbor, sea kayaking off Pelican Point, scenic flights, camel rides, and a “Living Desert” excursion to the Namib coastal dune belt. Later, meet up with your guide for lunch in town. This afternoon, take a fascinating township tour to learn about life in the township, as well as the customs and traditions of some of Namibia’s different cultures. You will also get to meet residents, visit local markets and shebeens (taverns), and try out some traditional food at dinner, which will be set up to emulate a “home-style” occasion. *Overnight at The Delight. (BLD)*

DAY 7 - DAMARALAND

Check out and continue your journey north along the Skeleton Coast to Cape Cross Seal Reserve, where you can view the world’s largest breeding colony of Cape fur seals (*Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*). Then head east into the biodiverse region of Damaraland, taking time to view game and absorb the vastness of the scenery along the way. Damaraland is typified by displays of color, tabletop mountains, rock formations, and bizarre-looking vegetation. If time allows this afternoon, visit nearby Twyfelfontein. (If not, there is plenty of time to see it tomorrow.) Strewn over a hillside among flat-topped mountains, Twyfelfontein’s boulders and slabs of red sandstone hold some 2,500 prehistoric engravings, probably originating from San people, that depict wildlife, animal tracks, and abstract motifs. Stone tools and other artifacts found at Twyfelfontein suggest that hunter-gatherers occupied the site over a period of perhaps 7,000 years. The engravings lie along two circular routes, one an hour’s climb and the other 40 minutes longer. Twyfelfontein is one of Namibia’s key National Monuments and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. *Overnight at Camp Kipwe. (BLD)*

DAY 8 - DAMARALAND

After an early breakfast, you will be treated to a memorable 4x4 excursion along the valleys of the ephemeral Aba-Huab River to explore this remarkable region and search for game. Damaraland is home to a variety of desert-adapted wildlife, including desert elephants. The elephants are elusive, but as they are mostly active in the morning, this will be your best chance to see them. Have a picnic lunch in the shade of a large ana tree by the riverbed today. After returning to camp, there should be time to relax and have some pre-dinner drinks while admiring the stunning views of your surroundings at sunset. *Overnight at Camp Kipwe. (BLD)*

DAY 9 - ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

Today after a very early breakfast, set off on your journey north toward Etosha National Park, traveling via the scenic Grootberg Pass. Along the way, stop to visit an indigenous Himba settlement, traversing rocky terrain to reach them. The Himba have maintained their traditional way of life; learn about their customs and gain insight into their beliefs, practices, and everyday routine. After visiting the Himba, continue to Andersson’s at Ongava, located inside the private Ongava Game Reserve on the southern boundary of Etosha National Park. A picnic lunch will be provided at a scenic location along the way, and arrival will be in the very late afternoon or early evening

(after a long but rewarding day). After your arrival, you will have some time at leisure, which can be spent appreciating the unique surroundings and viewing game at the lodge’s floodlit waterhole. *Overnight at Andersson’s at Ongava. (BLD)*

DAY 10 - ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

The next two days are dedicated to memorable game drives inside Etosha National Park and on the private Ongava Game Reserve. Etosha, which was declared a game reserve by the German colonial administration back in 1907, covers an area of 8,600 square miles and consists of grassland, woodland, and savanna. Almost all African game species are represented here, including the “Big Five”—elephant, rhino, Cape buffalo, lion, and leopard. Other highlights include giraffes, zebras, wildebeests, antelopes, hyenas, honey badgers, and warthogs. More than 340 bird species have also been recorded in the park. Your guides will take you into Etosha in the mornings to explore the southern and central areas from the comfort of your specially modified safari vehicles, and in the afternoons you will be treated to game drives on the private Ongava Game Reserve. However, if all guests are in agreement, you could opt to spend

the whole day inside Etosha, with lunch in the park, heading east to spend more time in the area around Halali. Either way, you’ll return to the comfort of your lodge with enough time to freshen up and enjoy your safari dinner overlooking the camp’s floodlit waterhole. *Overnight at Andersson’s at Ongava. (BLD)*

DAY 11 - ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

Continue game drives in Etosha. *Overnight at Andersson’s at Ongava. (BLD)*

DAY 12 - OKONJIMA PLAINS

Today’s journey takes you southeast onto Okonjima Plains Camp, located at the base of the Omboroko Mountains near Waterberg. Okonjima is home to the AfriCat Foundation,

a wildlife sanctuary founded in 1991 that is dedicated to raising conservation awareness, preserving habitat, promoting environmental educational research, and supporting animal welfare. Their main focus is Africa’s big cats, especially injured or captured leopards and cheetahs: AfriCat runs the largest cheetah and leopard rescue-and-release program in the world. In the last 17 years, over 1,000 of these predators have been rescued, with over 85% being released back into the wild. Close encounters with leopards and cheetahs are an unforgettable highlight. Activities include tracking leopards by vehicle, visiting the cheetah welfare project, tracking large carnivores (including cheetahs, wild dogs, and spotted hyenas) on foot, taking a fun guided hike on the Bushman Trail, and exploring various self-guided walking trails. *Overnight at Okonjima Plains Camp. (BLD)*

DAY 13 - OKONJIMA PLAINS

Today take part in various activities with your lodge guides, learning about the function and vision of the AfriCat Foundation. Take a morning guided excursion followed by a hearty brunch. Relax through the heat of the day before heading



out again on your afternoon excursion. You will also have time in between activities to relax and enjoy your chalet or lounge by the pool amid your idyllic bush surroundings. *Overnight at Okonjima Plains Camp. (BLD)*

DAY 14 - WINDHOEK

Rise early this morning for one last memorable guided activity before returning to Plains Camp for a sumptuous brunch. After freshening up, check out and make your way back to Windhoek. The road takes you through Namibia's central highlands and commercial farmlands to reach Windhoek, where you will spend your last night in the comfort of Galton House. Enjoy a farewell dinner with your guide at one of the popular restaurants in town. *Overnight at Galton House. (BLD)*

DAY 15 - DEPART

Spend your final morning relaxing at your guesthouse, exploring Windhoek, visiting NamCrafts and the Craft Center, or doing some last-minute souvenir shopping if time allows, before transferring out to the international airport. (B)

LAND PRICING

\$7,495 (15 participants + 1 leader)

\$7,695 (10 participants + 1 leader)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local guides in each region for duration of program, and carbon offset.

International airfare, gratuities, visa fees, and items of a personal nature are not included.

Valid for travel in 2021.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Refer to the Plan Document for more details.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to secure your reservation. This deposit is refundable until 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Final non-refundable payments are due no later than 95 days prior to departure.



ACTIVITY LEVEL

2

EASY-MODERATE

WHAT TO EXPECT

This safari has a cultural and natural focus, and covers diverse ecosystems: the fur seal colonies of the (Atlantic) Skeleton Coast, the Namib Desert, the bushlands of Etosha National Park, the giant Sossusvlei dunes, and beyond. Daily hikes and walks last from about 30 minutes to 2.5 hours. Most challenging are the 1.8-mile roundtrip walk through the Sossusvlei dunes; a 100-foot canyon descent/ascent; and a 1–1.5 hour hike over unsteady terrain at Twyfelfontein. There are some early morning game drives and picnic lunches in the bush so you may observe wildlife at their most active times. Except for the first few months of the year, the weather is generally warm to hot and dry (70°–90°F), with little rain. Overland transfers and game drives use state-of-the-art, air-conditioned, 4x4 Toyota Land Cruisers, with large windows and pop-up roofs for optimal viewing. Some days involve long but scenic drives of up to 6 hours, often over bumpy and dusty terrain.



GIRAFFES BY PELIN KARACA



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe

