

AFRICA EASY PRESENTS
ULTIMATE NAMIBIA ACCOMMODATED SAFARI
(10 nights / 11 days)
DETAILED DAY-BY-DAY SAFARI/TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1: Windhoek to Sossusvlei area

This morning your transfer will collect you from your respective accommodation establishment or from the Windhoek International Airport (assuming you land before 09h00). You then depart Windhoek in your safari vehicle with your personal guide and drive southwest through the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands before you head down the Great Escarpment into the Namib Desert below. A picnic lunch will be served at a scenic location en-route. You will arrive at Hoodia Desert Camp in the late afternoon where you will stay for two nights whilst you explore the remarkable sights of the Namib Desert with your guide. If there is still time today, your guide will take you to visit Sesriem Canyon, a nearby geological attraction, or you can relax and soak in the scenic and tranquil surroundings at Hoodia Desert Camp.

Sesriem Canyon has evolved through centuries of erosion by the Tsauchab River which has incised a narrow gorge about 1.5 km long and 30 meters deep into the surrounding conglomerates, exposing the varying layers of sedimentation deposited over millions of years. The shaded cool depths of the canyon allow pools of water to gather during the rain season and remain for much of the year round. These pools were a vital source of water for early settlers who drew water for their livestock by knotting six (ses) lengths of rawhide thongs (riems) together, hence the canyon and surrounding area became known as Sesriem.

Hoodia Desert Camp lies nestled on the banks of the Tsauchab River, overlooked by the impressive Naukluft Mountains. The camp offers comfortable accommodation in thatched and tented bungalows equipped with a private open-air bathroom, air-conditioning, minibar, tea and coffee station and a shaded balcony. The camp restaurant serves excellent traditional and international cuisine accompanied by a wide selection of South African wines from the underground wine cellar. A wooden walkway leads you to a refreshing swimming pool sculpted into natural rock. This wonderful camp is a welcomed oasis from which to enjoy your memorable desert experience.

Overnight: Hoodia Desert Camp (Lunch & dinner)

Day 2: Sossusvlei

This morning you will rise early for a magical excursion with your guide into the Namib Naukluft National Park, entering the Park gates at sunrise to capture the dunes whilst the light is soft and shadows accentuate their towering shapes and curves. This area boasts some of the highest free-standing sand dunes in the world. 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 to your hearts content you can enjoy a relaxing picnic breakfast under the shade of a camel thorn tree. Return to Hoodia Desert Camp in the early afternoon for a late lunch, stopping off to view Sesriem Canyon if you haven't already done so the day before. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure (from experience, this is usually welcomed after an exhilarating morning in the dunes).

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 penetrated 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 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.

Overnight: Hoodia Desert Camp (Fully inclusive meals and activities)

Day 3: Sossusvlei to Swakopmund

The fascinating drive today takes you northwest through awesome and ever changing desert landscapes of the Namib Naukluft National Park, including the impressive Gaub and Kuiseb canyons. You will meet the coast at the port town of Walvis Bay and then continue north to Swakopmund where you can enjoy the pleasant seaside location and cooler coastal air for your next two nights. There will be time this afternoon to wander around town and along the waterfront on foot if appeals, before heading off for dinner at the popular Tug Restaurant by the jetty which specialises in fresh seafood.

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 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.

During your two nights in Swakopmund you will be accommodated at a charming and welcoming guesthouse conveniently located just minutes walk from the centre of town and the waterfront.

Overnight: Centrally located guesthouse in Swakopmund (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 4: Swakopmund

After an early breakfast your guide will drive you along the scenic coastal road back to Walvis Bay for a memorable seal and dolphin cruise within the outer lagoon and harbour. This is an ideal way of seeing Cape fur seals, heavyside and bottlenose dolphins, pelicans, flamingos and a wide variety of sea birds. If you are lucky, there is also a chance of seeing whales, leatherback turtles and sunfish. During the course of the cruise snacks will be served along with local sparkling wine and fresh oysters. You will return to the jetty at roughly 12h30 after which you may like to explore Walvis Bay further before returning to Swakopmund for an afternoon at leisure at your guesthouse or in town. You may also like to partake in some of the many activities that Swakopmund has to offer, these include camel rides, hot-air balloon flights, scenic flights, quad-biking in the dunes, sky diving and more (all at extra cost).

Overnight: Centrally located guesthouse in Swakopmund (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 5: Swakopmund to Damaraland

Continue on your safari, heading north and east into the wonderful and diverse region of Damaraland. You will pass Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg which peaks at 2,573 m above sea level, and take time to view game and absorb the vastness of the scenery along the way. 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'.

If time allows this afternoon your guide will take you to visit the nearby attractions and geological sites of Twyfelfontein rock engravings (recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site), Burnt Mountain and the Organ Pipes - if not there is plenty of time to do so tomorrow.

Strewn over a hillside amongst flat-topped mountains of red sandstone, Twyfelfontein's boulders and slabs of red sandstone hold some 2,500 prehistoric engravings that depict wildlife, animal spoor and abstract motifs. It is perhaps the largest and finest collection of petroglyphs in Africa. The engravings show animals such as elephant, giraffe, kudu, lion, rhinoceros, springbok, zebra and ostrich that once used to drink from a fountain at the bottom of the hill. In some cases footprints were engraved instead of hooves or paws. The abstract motifs feature mainly circles. Stone tools and other artifacts found at Twyfelfontein suggest that hunter-gatherers occupied the site over a period of perhaps 7,000 years. These days a local guide accompanies visitors to showcase the rock art. 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 has recently become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A rounded hill located a few kilometers from Twyfelfontein and the Organ Pipes, known as the Burnt Mountain, seems to catch fire again at sunrise and sunset. Its fantastic range of colours at dawn and dusk are due to a chemical reaction that took place roughly 125 million years ago when molten lava penetrated organic shale and limestone deposits, resulting in contact metamorphism. In ordinary sunlight it is a dull black. Blackened rubble lies to one side like cinders from the original fire. The Organ Pipes are another geological curiosity in the area consisting of a mass of perpendicular dolerite columns that intruded the surrounding rocks also about 125 million years ago and have since been exposed in a ravine due to river erosion.

Camp Kipwe lies in the heart of Damaraland, ideally located a short drive from the local attractions in the area. The Camp is nestled amongst an outcrop of giant granite boulders, a stones throw away from the ephemeral Aba Huab riverbed where desert adapted elephants often traverse. Each comfortable thatched bungalow is simply but tastefully furnished with en-suite bathroom. In the centre of the camp lies a large alfresco dining area, bar, lounge and reception with an inviting fireplace nearby to relax beside in the evenings. A refreshing swimming pool and lovely views also complement the Camp.

Overnight: Camp Kipwe (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 6: Swakopmund to Damaraland

After an early breakfast you will be treated to an exciting 4x4 excursion along the ephemeral Aba Huab River valley to explore this remarkable region and to search for game, including the elusive desert adapted elephants if they are in the area. Damaraland is home to a variety of desert adapted wildlife and hidden desert treasures. You will return to Camp for lunch and this afternoon you may visit Twyfelfontein and other nearby attractions if you haven't already done so, or take a walk with your guide into the local area around Camp, or relax and enjoy some well deserved leisure time.

In habitats with sufficient vegetation and water an adult elephant consumes as much as 300 kg of roughage and 230 litres 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 as well, such as black rhinoceros and giraffe. 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, behaviourally 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 Kipwe (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 7: Damaraland to Hobatere Concession

You may like to begin with a gentle walk into the local area before breakfast, or enjoy a more leisurely start to your day if preferred. After breakfast, depart and head northeast through northern Damaraland to reach the Hobatere Concession, stopping off to see the Petrified Forest enroute. Hobatere Concession is effectively a private game reserve, spanning 32,000 hectares along the western border of the Etosha National Park. The concession is home to a wide variety of game, including lion, elephant, leopard, cheetah, eland, Hartmann's mountain zebra, gemsbok (oryx), kudu, steenbok, and much more. The scenery is attractive, with large open plains blending into Mopane tree woodlands and granite outcrops.

Let the game viewing really begin! You will start with the afternoon game drive followed by a night drive after dinner this evening, both in a specially modified open 4X4 game viewing vehicle. The night drive is highly recommended as it offers a good chance of seeing nocturnal animals such as spring hares, aardvark, Cape and bat-eared foxes, aardwolf, and genets.

At the Petrified Forest, you will find huge trees that turned to stone 280 million years ago. Broken into segments but aligned, they are clearly recognizable fallen trees, some as long as 45m, and 1.2m in diameter, complete with wood grain and growth rings. It is the biggest accumulation of petrified logs in southern Africa. Floodwaters uprooted the trees elsewhere and carried them to their present position toward the end of the ice age on the Gondwana super continent. The trees were conifers, early conifers, which are now extinct.

Hobatere Lodge has prime location within its 32,000 ha Concession. Two nearby waterholes draw game close to the lodge, affording guests memorable game viewing opportunities from the comfort of a raised viewing deck. Accommodation is provided in homely en-suite bungalows and rooms with wooden decks where you can relax and soak in the peaceful garden and bush settings. The welcoming living area consists of an outside braai area, a verandah where breakfast is served and various birds visit for a morning drink, split level bar and lounge, and curio shop. The lodge also has a swimming pool and a nearby hide where you can view game coming and going from the waterhole. The lodge owner, Steve Braine, is one of Namibia's top birders and naturalists and the concession is home to many of Namibia's near endemic birdlife, making it a sought after destination for other keen birders.

Overnight: Hobatere Lodge (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 8: Hobatere Concession to Etosha National Park

the Park through Galton Gate on the western boundary. We have a special permit which allows us through this western section of Etosha National Park, an area that is closed to 'normal tourist traffic' for research and rehabilitation of game. You will game drive your way across the Park to arrive at Okaukuejo Restcamp in the afternoon. This evening you can relax by Okaukuejo's excellent floodlit waterhole where game comes and goes throughout the night.

Etosha National Park covers 22,270 km², of which approximately 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 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 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 to induce 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, wildebeest, eland, kudu, gemsbok (oryx), zebra, rhino, cheetah, leopard, hyena, honey badger, and warthog, as well as the endemic black faced impala.

Okaukuejo was the first tourist camp to open in Etosha. It is famous for its floodlit waterhole where visitors can observe, at close quarters, a spectacle of wildlife congregating and interacting. Facilities include accommodation in comfortable en-suite chalets located a short walk from the waterhole, a buffet restaurant, bar, swimming pool, curio shop, post office and viewing tower.

Overnight: Okaukuejo Resort (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 9: Etosha National Park

Full day of exciting game viewing within Etosha National Park today, on game drives with your guide and at Okaukuejo's busy waterhole.

Overnight: Okaukuejo Resort (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 10: Etosha National Park to AfriCat Foundation (Okonjima)

Game drive your way from Okaukuejo Resort to exit Etosha National Park at Andersson Gate and then continue south to stay at Okonjima Bush Camp, located at the base of the Omboroko Mountains near Waterberg. This is a wonderful highlight to conclude your safari on. Here you can enjoy the welcoming atmosphere, superb accommodation and fantastic activities; starting with a guided afternoon excursion and a visit to the night hide after dinner.

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. Close encounters with leopard and cheetah are an unforgettable highlight. Activities include leopard tracking by vehicle, a visit to the cheetah welfare project and a visit to the night hide where nocturnal animals such as porcupine, caracal, honey badger, and even leopard may be seen.

The delightful accommodation at Okonjima Bush Camp consists of thatched African style chalets, well spaced out for privacy in the tranquil bush surroundings, plus a central main Lapa area in the form of a camel thorn pod where meals are taken and activities commence. Each exclusive en-suite chalet is completely private and the green canvas 'walls' can be rolled up to give you an 180 degree view so you can lie in bed and watch life in the bush going on around you whilst you relax in total comfort.

Overnight: Okonjima Bush Camp (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)

Day 11: AfriCat Foundation (Okonjima) to Windhoek

Bush Camp for a sumptuous breakfast. After freshening up you will depart for Windhoek in the late morning, via the town of Okahandja, to arrive back at roughly 14h00. Upon your arrival into Windhoek you will be transferred to your accommodation establishment of choice, or to Windhoek International Airport to check-in for your ongoing flight (departure flights must be no earlier than 16h00 or a final night in Windhoek can be arranged at additional cost if required).

(Breakfast & lunch)

TOUR BOOKINGS:

To reserve space on the above tour or on any of the tours on the *Africa Easy* website, please complete the **REQUEST INFO FORM** on the site (you will hear back within 24 hours). Or you may contact Africa Easy by telephone at 206-284-2319 (toll free: 800-617-2319) or e-mail: Nadia@AfricaEasy.com so that we can mail a reservation form to you.

Please familiarize yourself with the *Africa Easy* **TERMS AND CONDITIONS** before booking any of our tours

LOCAL NAMIBIAN OPERATOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Includes: All meals (except lunch and dinner on the first day), all accommodation as described, overland transportation in a private vehicle driven by a professional and experienced guide, all park entry fees and other necessary permits, and airport transfers.

Excludes: All international and regional scheduled flights, plus Airport departure taxes; lunch and dinner in Windhoek on the first day; travel insurance; items of a personal nature, all beverages, telephone calls, laundry, medicines, and gratuities, as well as any unscheduled additions to the safari. Visas/Passports: Please ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months after your scheduled departure date from Namibia. If this is not the case, there is a danger of being turned away by the Immigration Service on arrival at the airport – assuming your airline has agreed to bring you and risk a fine in the first place.

Health: No vaccinations are mandatory but please consult your doctor for medical advice. Parts of Namibia are considered to be malarial so we recommend the use of anti-malarial prophylaxis (normally Malarone), especially if visiting during the Namibian summer (December to April) – subject to advice from your own doctor.

Luggage: Is normally restricted to 20kg (not including photographic equipment) per person in a *soft*, hold all type bag. Weight is generally less important than volume as everything is carried with you on safari. If adding extensions that involve light aircraft transfers the luggage limit is reduced further to 12 kg in soft bags. If required, any extra luggage can be stored at our base when visitors are away on excursions.

Vehicles: Vehicles used are normally comfortable seven-seater Volkswagen Minibuses, equipped with air-conditioning and cool boxes or fridges for drinks and snacks. A trailer for luggage is taken if required.

We reserve the right to change the vehicles used to 4 x 4 safari vehicles if the road conditions at the time indicate that this is necessary for the success of the safari