

NAMIB DESERT & ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

05Nights / 06Days



This tour is for those who want to experience two of Namibia's main attractions in the shortest possible time - The Namib Desert and the Etosha National Park.

INFORMATION

Sossusvlei

Located in the scenic Namib-Naukluft National Park, Sossusvlei is where you will find the iconic red sand dunes of the Namib. The clear blue skies contrast with the giant red dunes to make this one of the most scenic natural wonders of Africa and a photographer's heaven. This awe-inspiring destination is possibly Namibia's premier attraction, with its unique dunes rising to almost 400 metres - some of the highest in the world. These iconic dunes come alive in morning and evening light and draw photography enthusiasts from around the globe. Sossusvlei is home to a variety of desert wildlife including oryx, springbok, ostrich and a variety of reptiles. Visitors can climb 'Big Daddy', one of Sossusvlei's tallest dunes; explore Deadvlei, a white, salt, claypan dotted with ancient trees; or for the more extravagant, scenic flights and hot air ballooning are on offer, followed by a once-in-a-lifetime champagne breakfast amidst these majestic dunes.

Namib-Naukluft National Park

Stretching almost 50000 square kilometres across the red-orange sands of the Namib Desert over the Naukluft Mountains to the east, the Namib-Naukluft National Park is Africa's biggest wildlife reserve and the fourth largest in the world. Despite the unforgiving conditions, it is inhabited by a plethora of desert-adapted animals, including reptiles, buck, hyenas, jackals, insects and a variety of bird species. One of the main attractions of the park are the ancient dunes of Sossusvlei, home to some of the tallest dunes in the world rising over 300 metres from the desert floor. This magnificent landscape features, rolling dunes, rugged moonscapes, lagoons, wetlands and mudflats. Visitors can look forward to a number of impressive sights including: the picture-perfect Dune 45, standing 170 metres high; the Welwitschia Plains, otherworldly lunar terrain dotted with the endemic plants; and the Dead Vlei, a photographer's dream.

Dead Vlei

This ancient clay pan was once an oasis, studded with acacias and fed by a river that suddenly changed course, leaving the earth to dry up along with the trees it previously supported. So dry were the climatic conditions that the trees never decomposed - instead they were entirely leached of moisture so that today, 900 years later, they remain as desiccated, blackened sentinels dotting the pan's cracked surface. Surrounded by the red-pink dunes of the Namibia Desert, they create a surreal spectacle that is a photographer's dream.

Dune 45

Named for its location 45 kilometres past the town of Sesriem, Dune 45 is renowned for its elegant shape, which – along with its position close to the road – have earned it the distinction of ‘most photographed dune in the world’. If you’re not keen for the strenuous hike to the top of Big Daddy, Dune 45 is a more forgiving alternative, standing at only 80 metres and featuring a much gentler gradient.

Sesriem Canyon

Sesriem Canyon, a deep chasm carved through the rocks by water, is a striking natural feature of the area that is best explored on foot. Stony walls rise up sharply on both sides of the canyon, while birds roost in its crags and lizards dart along the ledges. The canyon’s name was coined when early settlers used it as a water source, using six lengths of leather (‘ses riem – six thongs’) tied together to lower buckets into the water at the base of canyon.

Windhoek

Situated in Central Namibia, the cosmopolitan city of Windhoek serves as the capital of the country. It is home to an international airport and a plethora of restaurants, shops, entertainment venues and accommodation options. The city is clean, safe and well-organised, with a colonial legacy that is reflected in its many German eateries and shops, and the widespread use of the German language. Windhoek has an interesting mix of historical architecture and modern buildings, many of which are worth a look, including the Alte Feste an old fort, the 1896 Christuskirche Christ Church, and the more contemporary Supreme Court.

Etosha South

Located just south of the boundary of Etosha National Park in north-western Namibia, Etosha South makes up the southern region of this wild paradise. Ongava Private Game Reserve shares the southern boundary with Etosha National Park and offers an array of luxury lodges overlooking picturesque landscapes dotted with abundant wildlife. The national park can be accessed via the southern entrance at Andersson’s Gate. Visitors can catch a glimpse of a variety of wildlife including: lion, giraffe, elephant, white and black rhino, and a multitude of plains game. Popular activities include: game drives, tracking rhinos on foot, guided nature walks, or watch the sunset over this magnificent landscape.

Etosha National Park

Situated in north-western Namibia, the Etosha National Park offers a premier game viewing experience. The park’s diverse vegetation ranges from dense bush to open plains attracting a variety of wildlife. Located in the heart of the park is the Etosha Pan - a shallow depression that covers an area of 5000 square kilometres. Dry and shimmering for most of the year, the pans fill up with water after seasonal rains, making it the perfect habitat for wildlife. In the dry season, the wildlife is attracted to the perennial springs and waterholes that makes for excellent game viewing. Visitors can look forward to world-class game viewing including a variety of large mammals such as lion, elephant, leopard, rhino, zebra, giraffe, a diversity of birdlife such as flamingos and pelicans.

Etosha Game Drive

Game drive through Etosha National Park searching for predators, plains game, reptiles & birds.

Game drives are conducted in custom built safari vehicles with a pop-up roof and large opening windows to maximize photographic opportunities.

Depending on the time of year, these game drives take many different routes, but most often focus around the waterholes where you are most likely to see a variety of wildlife taking the chance to get a drink and swim.

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Etosha East

Located in North-western Namibia, Etosha East is a protected sanctuary in the eastern part of the world-renowned Etosha National Park, known as one of the most accessible game reserves in Southern Africa. Etosha East boasts vast open plains scattered with semi-arid savannah grasslands dotted with watering holes and secluded bush camps. An impressive 5000-square-kilometre Etosha salt pan makes up a large area of the eastern side of the park and can even be seen from space. This remote area teems with abundant wildlife such as lions, elephants, black rhinos and giraffes, as well as a variety of birdlife featuring flamingos, ostriches, eagles, hornbills, and owls.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Namib Desert Lodge Gondwana Collection Namibia, Sossusvlei

Collection time is between 08:00 and 08:30 from anywhere within Windhoek. Windhoek is surrounded by mountains and we have to climb out, first over the Eros Mountains and then over the Khomas Hochland Range. As we come through the mountains, we drop down from the central plateau to grassy desert savannah. We stop at Solitaire for petrol and perhaps also afternoon tea. We aim to arrive at our lodge during the early afternoon and have time to relax and explore the surroundings before the sunset when the colours glow and change on the distant mountains to the east. Dinner will be served at the lodge.

Overnight: Namib Desert Lodge Gondwana Collection Namibia – Full Board Basis

Namib Desert Lodge Gondwana Collection Namibia

Set below striking fossilised dunes, the comfortable lodge provides a spectacular experience of ancient desert. 65 rooms, two swimming pools and a waterhole are surrounded by sandy splendour. Breathe in the grandeur on a sunset drive and feel the earth underfoot. Relax in the arms of the Namib.



Day 2: Namib Desert Lodge Gondwana Collection Namibia, Sossusvlei

Early start to catch the soft light of the sunrise over the desert. Continue towards Sossusvlei along distant sand dunes on both sides of the road. We make a stop at the famous Dune 45. Those who feel fit may climb the dune and get a breath-taking view of the surrounding desert. After breakfast we take a desert walk in the cool of the morning, with chance to see gemsboks, springboks, black-backed jackals and ostriches. As the day cools off in the afternoon, we make a short excursion to Sesriem Canyon before heading back to our lodge

Overnight: Namib Desert Lodge Gondwana Collection Namibia – Full Board Basis + Park Fees + Sossusvlei Excursion + Deadvlei Excursion + Dune 45 Excursion + Sesriem Canyon Excursion

Day 3: Villa Vista Guesthouse, Windhoek

Back to civilization on scenic roads through the Khomas Hochland mountain range. We are likely to arrive back in the city at around 15:00pm and you will be dropped off at your accommodation on our return that is included in the tour.

Overnight: Villa Vista Guesthouse – Breakfast & Lunch

Villa Vista Guesthouse

Villa Vista is an upmarket family owned and managed guesthouse situated in a quiet neighbourhood close to the Windhoek city centre. Being well situated makes it a true home hidden in the big city life. All the rooms are individually decorated in a unique style, using wood, glass, candles and natural elements.

Looking out over the garden, swimming pool, town, western mountains and afternoon sunsets, the open terrace offers a romantic and peaceful experience.



Day 4: Okaukuejo Resort, Etosha South

You will be collected from your hotel between 08:00 and 08:30. We have a long drive today. On our way we will stop in Otjiwarongo to fill up with petrol and provisions. A picnic lunch will be served along the way as we later arrive in Okaukuejo and check in the afternoon. We have time to explore the surroundings and enjoy the swimming pool before a late afternoon game drive. After dinner, a visit to the floodlit waterhole is strongly recommended as there are good chances to see rhinos and lions come to drink

Overnight: Okaukuejo Resort – Full Board Basis + Park Fees + Late Afternoon Game Drive with a Guide

Okaukuejo Resort

Okaukuejo is located 17 km from the southern entrance of the park, and famous for its flood-lit waterhole, where visitors can observe at close quarters a spectacle of wildlife congregating and interacting. Accommodation is provided to suit every need, in premier bush chalets overlooking the waterhole; bush chalets and double rooms; or family chalets. Other facilities include a restaurant, bar, shop, swimming pool, kiosk and camping facilities.



Day 5: Namutoni Resort, Etosha East

Spending most of the day on a game drive. We visit a number of waterholes and make a stop at the Etosha Pan, the “place of dry water”. The Pan is an extensive flat depression of about 5,000 km². This great, white expanse is a place of shimmering mirages, and seeing large herds of game in this setting makes Etosha a unique experience in Africa. We may stop at Halali middle camp to have lunch before we continue our game drive to Namutoni. We have time to relax at the swimming pool in Namutoni or at the waterhole before a late afternoon game drive. The game viewing is usually excellent with close views of springboks, zebras, impalas, giraffes, gemsboks and plenty of birds. If we are lucky, we may also have some close encounters with elephants and lions. Back at the lodge we may enjoy a glass of wine and experience a fabulous sunset from the tower of the old German fort before dinner

Overnight: Namutoni Resort – Full Board Basis + Game Drive with a Guide

Namutoni Resort

The lodge centres on an old German Fort overlooking the King Nehale waterhole; an elevated decked walkway provides excellent opportunities for enjoying the surrounding scenery, wildlife and the spectacular sunsets. The Fort has been developed into a hub of activity, offering two restaurants, a relaxation lounge, a bar, crafts boutique, curio shop, jewellers and bookstore. Accommodation is provided in comfortable double rooms or bush chalets. Camping is also available.



Day 6: End of Itinerary

After a morning game drive, with the chance to get some more pictures of Etosha's wildlife in the soft morning light, we head back to the city. We travel on the main road, passing through farmland and small towns, with time to stop in the small town of Okahandja with Namibia's largest woodcarving market. We are likely to arrive back into the city at around 16:30 and you will be dropped off at your accommodation on our return.

Break & Lunch + Morning Game Drive with your Guide