

# NAMIB DESERT, COAST & ETOSHA TOUR

## 06Night / 07Days



This tour has been chosen perfectly for those that want to see the 3 top highlights of Namibia. On this tour you will visit the oldest desert and highest sand dunes in the world, the Namib desert (Sossusvlei). Then you will visit the coast, Walvisbay & Swakopmund and 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.

### 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.

### Swakopmund

Set along Namibia's spectacularly scenic coast, the seaside town of Swakopmund is known for its wide-open avenues, colonial architecture, and its surrounding otherworldly desert terrain. Founded in 1892 as the main harbour for German South West Africa, Swakopmund is often described as being more German than Germany. Now a seaside resort town, Swakopmund is the capital of the Skeleton Coast tourism area and has plenty to keep visitors happy. The quirky mix of German and Namibian influences, adventure options, laid-back atmosphere and cool sea breeze make it a very popular Namibian destination. Visitors can look forward to a number of exciting activities including: quad biking, horse riding, paragliding, fishing, sightseeing and fascinating desert tours.

### Kuiseb Pass

Kuiseb Pass takes you through the Kuiseb Canyon, the watercourse of which only flows occasionally but often enough to halt the advance of the red sands of the Namib.

### Walvis Bay Lagoon

Walvis Bay's calm natural lagoon is a twitcher's paradise, teeming with roughly 50 species of seabirds, including vivid flocks of flamingos, bulky-billed pelicans and glossy black cormorants. It's also a popular spot for windsurfing, kitesurfing and kayaking, while the promenade stretching for three kilometres along the water's edge is a great place for a scenic stroll.

### Cape Cross Seal Colony

This colony of Cape Fur Seals is one of the largest in the world, home to approximately 80 000 to 100 000 of these so-called 'seals', which are in fact a species of sea lion. Day trips to the colony are offered and the seals can be viewed from a walkway at a distance of roughly 200 metres.

### 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.

### 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.

## Etosha Pan

Aeons ago, Etosha Pan was the bed of a vast lake; today what remains is a glittering, silvery-green salt pan that stretches across roughly 5000 square kilometres. Etosha is protected by the Etosha Pan National Park surrounded by savannah plains and woodlands supporting large herds of elephants. When dry, the pan sustains little life except for the algae that gives it its distinctive colour, and migratory birds that use it as a pit stop, but with heavy rain it becomes a shallow lake where flamingos breed, pelicans wade and feed, and a variety of mammal species come to quench their thirst, including leopards, lions, white rhinos, hunting dogs and antelopes.

## 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 pass both the Eros Mountains and 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 before we continue to our first night at Namib desert lodge. We aim to arrive at our lodge during the early afternoon.

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. After passing through Sesriem we continue towards Sossusvlei along distant sand dunes on both sides of the road. We will stop at the famous Dune 45. Those who feel fit may climb the dune and get a breath-taking view of the surrounding desert and dunes. After breakfast we will 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 will make a short excursion to Sesriem Canyon. Then we will return back to our lodge

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

### **Day 3: Hotel Zum Kaiser, Swakopmund**

Namibia being a country of contrasts. Today we will move from desert to sea. On our way we will cross the Tropic of Capricorn and transverse the Gaub and the Kuiseb passes, driving down to the dry river bed at the bottom of the Kuiseb Canyon before climbing up the other side, watching the spectacular desert landscape unfold before us. Having arrived at the coast, we will make a stop in Walvis Bay to enjoy the view of flamingos and other birds in the lagoons and to visit the salt works. Overnight in a Guesthouse. Dinner tonight is on the client's own expense in a local restaurant.

Overnight: Hotel Zum Kaiser - Breakfast and Lunch + Walvis Bay Lagoon + Walvis Bay Salt Works

### Hotel Zum Kaiser

Perfectly positioned on Sam Nujoma Avenue in the picturesque Swakopmund, the luxurious Hotel Zum Kaiser offers direct access to the beach and the town's vibrant street life, quaint architecture, shopping and fine dining. This exclusive hotel houses 21 fully air-conditioned bedrooms, each featuring a full en-suite bathroom, television, coffee-and tea making facilities, bar fridge, electronic safe and wireless internet.

The tastefully decorated hotel offers a combination of Court Yard Suites, Front Facing Suites and 3 family rooms with inter-leading doors. Each of the Front Facing Suites is equipped with a private balcony to enjoy splendid views of the historic town and partial views of the nearby Atlantic seaboard. Uniquely



combining modern furnishings with a touch of classic elegance dating from imperial times, the Hotel Zum Kaiser creates a truly authentic and intimate ambiance.

Enjoy delectable cuisine at the on-site Bistro Zum Kaiser and sip sun-downers whilst experiencing the spectacular sunsets over the Atlantic from the hotel's idyllic Roof Terrace. The Hotel Zum Kaiser is fully equipped and offers the ideal setting for conferences, banqueting and celebrations. Exciting activities in the area can be booked directly at reception.

Let our attentive team welcome you to our kingdom and make you feel like an Emperor

#### **Day 4: Hotel Zum Kaiser, Swakopmund**

In the morning we will make an excursion to the seal colony at Cape Cross north of Swakopmund where we will be able to experience thousands of fur seals at close range. The rest of the day will be free with plenty of time to explore the town. Swakopmund is a very pleasant seaside town with lots of shops, a good stretch of beach (although the Atlantic is quite cold here) and an open-air curio market. There is also a very good museum and the Namibian National Marine Aquarium is located in Swakopmund. Alternatively, there are various optional activities that can be arranged. These include a boat-tour (with oysters and champagne!), scenic flights and micro-light flights over the desert, fishing trips (either from the beach or in a boat), quad-bike trips into the desert and over the sand dunes around Swakopmund, sand boarding, skydiving and many other activities. Your guide will discuss all the possible optional activities with you and offer to make pre-booking in advance. (N.B. all extra activities in Swakopmund are subject to availability and are made at the client's own risk and expense). Dinner today is not included in the price of the safari and will be on the client's own expense.

Overnight: Hotel Zum Kaiser - Breakfast and Lunch + Seal Colony excursion

#### **Day 5: Okaukuejo Resort, Etosha South**

You will start between 08:00 and 08:30. On our way we will stop in Usakos to fill up with petrol and provisions. We will have a picnic lunch along the way and arrive in Okaukuejo and check-in to our rooms in the afternoon. We will 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 + Afternoon Game Drive + Park Fees

##### 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 6: Namutoni Resort, Etosha East**

Today we will spend most of the day game driving. We will 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 km<sup>2</sup>. This great, white expanse is a place of shimmering mirages, and being able to see 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. In the evening 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 drives with your guide + Etosha Pan

### 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 7: 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 will 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 wood-carving 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

Breakfast & Lunch