

Quintessential Namibia



This eleven night itinerary offers a terrific overview of central Namibia. The emphasis is on wildlife-viewing, with time spent exploring the rugged region of Damaraland, the vast salt pans of Etosha, and, in the Central Highlands, Okonjima, home of the AfriCat Foundation. But this comprehensive itinerary also gives you time to take in the urban attractions of Windhoek and Swakopmund, and to explore Namibia's most famous wonders, magnificent Sossusvlei and enigmatic Twyfelfontein. We've even included a spot of sea-kayaking!

This itinerary can be booked as a self-drive holiday (as below) or a privately guided tour. If booked as a self-drive, we will provide a detailed route guide.

Day 1: Windhoek

On arrival at Windhoek International Airport you will be met by our driver and transferred to the Olive Grove Guesthouse, where you stay for one night on B&B basis.

Olive Grove Guesthouse

The Olive Grove is a stylish boutique guesthouse situated in a quiet pocket of Windhoek, not far from the town centre. It's a discrete retreat, with just 11 rooms, a small restaurant, and a spa offering a selection of services. Other facilities include a small pool and patio. The rooms are comfortably albeit simply furnished. Moroccan lights and prominent use of natural stone cement give them an earthy, natural feel, and a warm atmosphere that is further complemented by the open-plan kitchen and the lounge with fireplace.



Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.



The rest of the day is free for you to explore Windhoek. Enjoy a stroll through the city centre, characterised by its German colonial-era architecture. Time-allowing, we recommend a visit to the Old Fort (Alte Feste), Christuskirche & Tintenpalast (the parliament buildings), and St Mary's Cathedral.

Your hire car – a Ford Ranger 4x4 or similar – will be dropped off at the Olive Grove this evening.

Day 2: Sossusvlei

After breakfast at the Olive Grove, set off in your hired 4x4 vehicle for Sossusvlei, the oldest desert in the world, where you check into Desert Homestead Lodge for two nights (half-board).

Desert Homestead Lodge

Desert Homestead is a restored farmhouse that offers homely accommodation in a convenient location. Tucked away in a remote valley, surrounded by the Naukluft, Tsari, and Nubib Mountains, and with views of the seemingly endless Namib Desert, this a true wilderness retreat.

There are twenty thatched en-suite chalets, each with its own private viewing deck overlooking the vast desert plains, where cheetah can occasionally be seen roaming against a mountainous backdrop.

Meals at the Homestead are served in the dining room of the restored farmhouse or outside on the shaded verandah. Braai (barbecue) are prepared when the weather suits. Guest facilities include a small swimming pool for relaxing.



Activities at Desert Homestead include riding safaris as well as driven excursions to explore the surrounding desert. The sunset riding safaris are a joy, and really allow you to get a feel for the landscape!

Day 3: Sossusvlei

After breakfast at the homestead, leave for Sossusvlei in the Namib-Naukluft National Park. We recommend an early start. It's a 70km drive from the entrance of the park at Sesriem to

Sossusvlei, a journey which takes you through beautiful desert landscapes, awe-inspiring in their vastness.

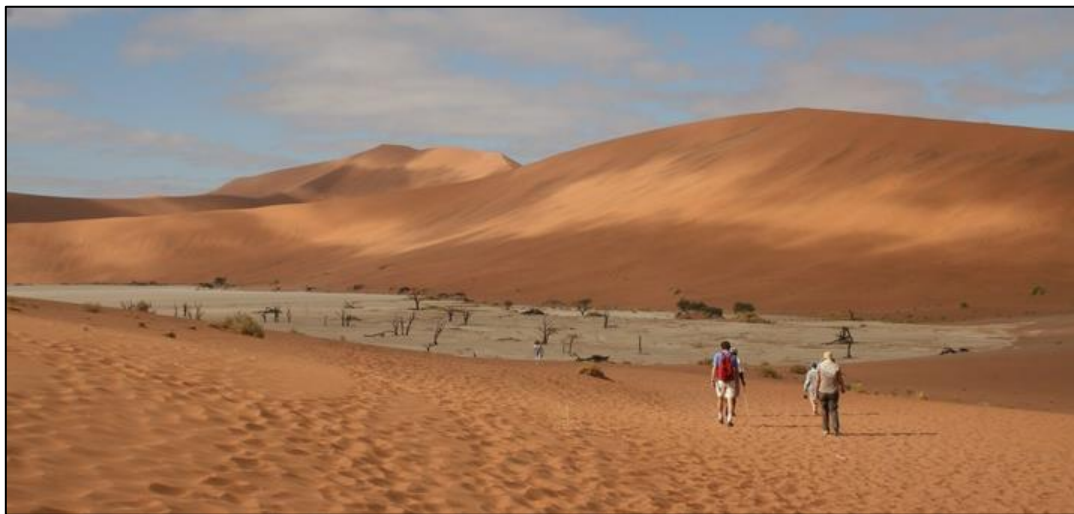
But nothing during the drive will quite prepare you for the Namib-Naukluft's most famous attraction, the monumental sand dunes of Sossusvlei. These towering dunes rise up to 325m at their highest point. From a distance, they appear as a rich maroon sea of sand, all graceful curves and shadows, in sharp contrast to the harsh whiteness and flatness of the claypans at their base.

Of these pans, the most famous is Dead Vlei, a ghostly expanse of cracked white clay punctuated by the skeletons of dead camel-thorn trees over half a millennium old.



After exploring Sossusvlei, stop for a picnic lunch under the shade of a camel-thorn tree, before going on to visit Sesriem Canyon. Return to the Desert Homestead in time for supper.

NB. The Namib Desert is extremely hot in the afternoon, so do remember to bring a hat and a supply of water! Good walking shoes are also a necessity for Sossusvlei.



Day 4: Swakopmund

After breakfast at the homestead, say goodbye to your hosts and set off for the coastal city of Swakopmund, a six hour drive. It's a leisurely journey – the route is mostly along gravel roads until you make it to Walvis Bay – though with a few steep mountain passes to traverse. On arrival in Swakopmund, check into the Strand Hotel for two nights (B&B).

The Strand Hotel

The newly-opened Strand Hotel enjoys a marvellous location on the Mole, Swakopmund's breezy promenade. In contrast to the colonial aesthetic adopted by many of Swakopmund's upmarket hotels, the Strand has a distinctly modern aesthetic. At its centre is a 13m high atrium, which runs across the hotel (with sea views at either end). The atrium serves as a central hub and lobby, connecting guests to the reception area, with its cosy lounge and fireplace, the open-air deli, bar and three restaurants, which in turn open onto a sea-facing terrace and beer garden.

The Strand offers 125 en-suite rooms, almost all of which enjoy sea views (a handful of the lower category rooms instead overlook the garden). The rooms are generously sized, and furnished in a clean, modern style. They're designed to accommodate two adults and one child (two inter-connecting rooms can accommodate larger families).

Guests at the Strand have direct access to the beach via a private beach pavilion and kiosk (Swakopmund Beach is public).



Day 5: Sea-kayaking / Swakopmund

An early start, as you depart Swakopmund for Walvis Bay (45 mins), aiming to arrive just before 8am for the start of your sea kayaking adventure! The meeting point for the kayaking is the Dolphin coffee shop in Walvis Bay. From here, you'll take a 4x4 to Pelican Point, the starting point for the kayaking. You will be given a lifejacket – waterproof clothing, shoes, towels and dry bags are also available if you haven't packed your own.

A guided kayaking tour is a wonderful way to experience the beauty of the Swakopmund coast and wetlands at a leisurely pace. You can hope to see flamingos, pelicans, seals and, with luck, dolphins during the journey. The kayaking will be led by an experienced sea guide, with an in-depth knowledge of the local wildlife.

Much of the morning will be spent at sea. Afterwards, return to land for a drink and bite to eat before heading back to Swakopmund via Walvis Bay. The afternoon is free for you to explore Swakopmund at your own pace.

Day 6: Damaraland

Depart Swakopmund after breakfast and travel towards Henties Bay, then Uis, and finally Sorris Lodge in Damaraland, where you check in for two nights (half board).

Sorris Sorris Lodge

The Sorris Sorris Conservancy encompasses a beautiful region of the Damaraland, characterised by its dramatic mountain and desert scenery, as well as its unique desert-adapted wildlife.

Sorris Sorris Lodge enjoys an enviable location within this environment, situated on a hill of granite boulders with a view of the Brandberg Massif and Ugab River. It's very much a luxury lodge, constructed with a keen attention to detail, but its rammed earth structures give Sorris Sorris a rustic, earthy character in keeping with the rugged natural environment that surrounds it. Guests

sleep in spacious suites with thick stone walls, designed to keep out the heat of the midday sun. Public areas include a bar and lounge, indoor dining area, and outdoor pool deck with a view of the mountains.

Sorris Sorris offers nine private suites, each of them carefully nestled among granite boulders and spaced well apart to ensure privacy. The rooms feature open-plan living and sleeping areas, en-suite bathrooms and private verandahs. There is one luxury suite.



Activities at Sorris Sorris consist of game drives in the Damaraland region and guided tours of the Brandberg massif and rock art sites. Many come to the Damaraland region to see the endangered desert-adapted elephant.

Day 7: Damaraland

Embark on a desert elephant-tracking safari this morning – a chance to explore the rugged Damaraland landscape and Ugab River in search of these gentle giants. Do note that the elephants are rare and sightings are not guaranteed.

After returning to Sorris Sorris for lunch, set off in the afternoon for Brandberg Massif to explore its famous ancient rock art sites.



Return to Sorris Sorris for dinner and overnight.

Day 8: Central Etosha

After breakfast, depart Sorris Sorris Lodge and Damaraland for Etosha National Park, where you check-in at Ongava Tented Camp for two nights (full board).



Ongava Tented Camp

Ongava Tented Camp is a small bush camp situated in the private Ongava Game Reserve, just outside Etosha National Park. It's a traditional bush camp, comprising ten East African-style safari tents and a cosy central hub constructed of natural stone and thatch. The location is great, offering easy access to Etosha NP, but also good game-viewing on the exclusive Ongava Reserve, where lion, leopard, cheetah and black and white rhino can be spotted.

The tents at Ongava are traditional Meru-style tents – permanent structures built on raised platforms and accessed via wooden double doors. Inside they are spacious and tastefully furnished. Each has access to a bathroom en-suite at the back, with open-air private shower, and private verandah at the front.

Ongava Camp overlooks a small waterhole, where black and white rhino, lion and the occasional leopard can sometimes be seen at night.



Activities at Ongava include guided walks and night drives around the reserve, and game drives during the day into the Etosha National Park. Walking can also be requested, but is best organised in advance.

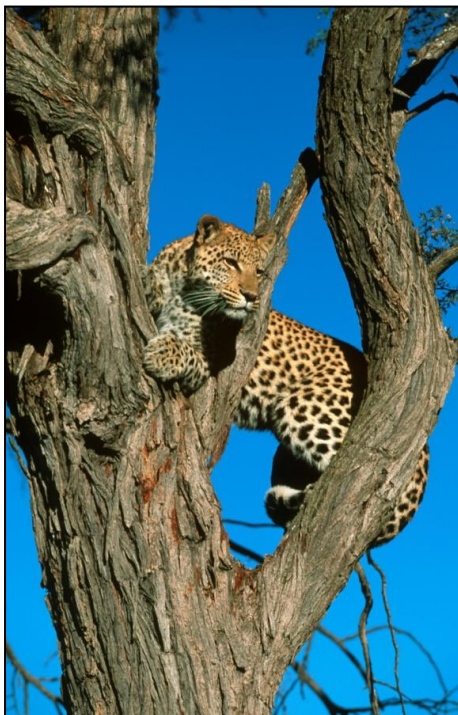
Day 9: Etosha National Park

Today is free to explore Ongava Game Reserve and Etosha National Park, Namibia's premier wildlife reserve.

Dominated by the vast Etosha salt pan, Etosha NP is a mostly dry and arid landscape, interrupted by isolated watering holes where the wild animals congregate in large numbers. This, combined with the relative lack of vegetation, makes game-viewing here easy and rewarding at all times of year. Giraffe, elephant, zebra, lion, leopard and rhino are present in the park and regularly sighted at its busy watering holes.



You'll have the chance to explore Etosha today with an experienced guide, either on a full-day game drive or on a half-day drive returning to the lodge for lunch. You may prefer to restrict yourself to Ongava Game Reserve, where vehicle traffic is lower, but the best game-viewing is generally to be had within the boundaries of the National Park.



Day 10: Okonjima

Depart Ongava this morning and drive south, through Outjo and Otjiwarongo (a convenient spot to stop for lunch), and then on to Okonjima Reserve. Expect to arrive at Okonjima in the early afternoon. On arrival, check in at Plains Camp (full-board) and then set off on a late afternoon game activity.

Shortly before you reach Okonjima, you will have the option to make a stop at the centre of the Rare and Endangered Species Trust (REST), and learn more about the various species that the trust works to protect, including pangolin, dik-dik, wild dog, and dwarf pythons. There is no entry fee, but donations will be gratefully received.

Okonjima

Okonjima Plains Camp is a wonderful retreat hidden away in the Omboroko Mountains, in Namibia's Central Highlands, just west of Waterberg. It is the original camp in the Okonjima collection, constructed around an old farm

house formerly owned by the Hanssen family. It is also one of the oldest lodges in Namibia, having opened as a guest farm in 1986. The lodge sleeps up to 40 guests in 20 twin/double rooms, which lie scattered around the pretty gardens.



Okonjima is best-known as the home of AfriCat Foundation, a conservation project set up by the owners of Okonjima in 1993 that aims to provide sanctuary for endangered local populations of leopard. The opportunity to track these African big cats, on foot or by 4x4, is the main draw at Okonjima. Sightings of wild cats are not guaranteed, but they are generally expected.

On arrival at Okonjima, you will have the option to take part in a game activity, such as leopard tracking (the best sightings are usually during the early evening). At night, after dinner at the lodge, visit the nearby night hide, from where you can often spy nocturnal species such as honey badger!

Day 11: Okonjima

This morning, enjoy a game drive on Okonjima's immense reserve. During the drive, you'll also have the chance to learn more about the AfriCat Foundation, and it's work to preserve the wildlife of Okonjima, with a special emphasis on leopard.

Possible afternoon activities include lion and leopard tracking, and guided bushman walks.



Day 12: Departure

After breakfast, journey back to Windhoek and to Hosea Kutako International Airport. Return your hire car at the airport and check-in for your international flight home.

NB. Depending on your international flight schedule, it may be necessary to include a night in Windhoek at the end of your itinerary.



Price Guide: The cost of this itinerary is from **£3,185 per person**, based on twin share and subject to availability at the time of booking. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Vehicle hire (Ford Ranger Double Hire, or similar)
- Accommodation and meals as described
- National Park entry fees
- Activities as per itinerary
- Return airport transfers

Excludes:

- International flights – ask us for a quote
- Travel Insurance – ask us for a quote
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional activities