

Safaris, Skeletons & Shipwrecks

11-day self-drive visiting the Damaraland, Hoanib Valley, the Skeleton Coast and Okonjima



This 11-day Namibia self-drive mixes culture and excitement, wildlife-watching and stunning scenery. Starting in Windhoek, you'll journey north-west through the wild, semi-desert terrain of Damaraland and Kaokoland to reach the remote Hoanib Valley. Here you'll spend two nights and three days at the fabulous Hoanib Valley Camp, looking for the rare desert-adapted elephant amid towering mountains, vast dunes and huge expanses of desert. From Hoanib Valley, you continue west to the starkly beautiful Skeleton Coast, before returning to Windhoek via Okonjima, home of the famous AfriCat Foundation.

Highlights

- *Fully-inclusive, family-friendly safari camps make this self-drive itinerary perfect for families.*
- *Spend time on Namibia's enthralling Atlantic coast, exploring historic shipwrecks and watching the seals at the Möwe Colony.*
- *Come face-to-trunk with desert-dwelling elephant, track black rhino across the sandy riverbeds, and spot zebra, springbok and oryx in the Hoanib Valley.*
- *Meet the nomadic Himba tribe, follow them and their livestock across the desert, and learn about their customs and traditional way of life.*
- *Stay at the newly-opened Hoanib Valley Camp (opened May 2018) and Shipwreck Lodge, in the Skeleton Coast (opened June 2018).*

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.

Day 1: Arrive Windhoek (Heinitzburg Castle)

Arrive Windhoek, collect your hired car (Toyota 4x4 or similar) and drive to Heinitzburg Castle for overnight with breakfast.



Heinitzburg Castle

Hotel Heinitzburg is a renovated castle turned luxury boutique hotel. Built shortly before the outbreak of WWI in 1914 by the German Count of Schwerin, it offers plush accommodation in a distinctly 'colonial' style. While the setting is grand, the hotel itself is small and private, with just sixteen rooms, ensuring an intimate atmosphere. The rooms are furnished in a clean, understated style, but the public areas, particularly the palatial dining room, are extravagant.

The delightful garden with swimming pool (heated in winter) is a lovely spot to relax after your long flight. The restaurant offers a varied a la carte menu, while the wine cellar carries a good selection of South African wines.

Day 2: Erongo Mountains (Erongo Wilderness Lodge)

Depart Windhoek this morning in your hire car and journey north-west to Erongo Wilderness Lodge (220kms; approx. 3 hours), in the heart of the Erongo mountain range. Check in for 1 night (tented chalet, half-board).

Erongo Wilderness Lodge

Erongo Wilderness Lodge is a secluded retreat nestled amid huge granite boulders on the edge of an ancient volcano. This is a region of great beauty, famed for its marvellous landscapes. Walks are the order of the day here, allowing you to get a feel for this unique landscape, and to explore its varied vegetation, animal and birdlife. Mostly, though, Erongo is a marvellous lodge at which to relax, while soaking up the views from the privacy of your own sundeck.



Erongo is a small lodge with just 10 guest chalets, tucked away between the boulders and linked by wooden walkways and stone steps. The main lodge – housing the restaurant, bar and fireplace lounge in a partially open, thatched building – is located on a high hill with expansive views over the surrounding landscape and a floodlit watering hole. A small swimming pool offers a welcome opportunity to cool off during the heat of the day.

Day 3: Twyfelfontein (Camp Kipwe)

Continue your journey north-west to Twyfelfontein (230kms; approx. 3½ hours).

Namibia's first World Heritage site, Twyfelfontein is the setting for one of the most extensive galleries of rock engravings found anywhere in the world, ranging in age from 1,000 to 10,000 years.

On arrival, check-in at Camp Kipwe for one night (bungalow room, half-board basis)

Camp Kipwe

Camp Kipwe is a lovely lodge situated in the Twyfelfontein-Uibasen Conservancy in Damaraland, northern Namibia. Constructed almost entirely of local stone, basalt and mopane wood, it has a natural, earthy feel, so as to blend in perfectly with its natural surrounds.

There are 9 'stone igloos' at Camp Kipwe. These unique rooms (essentially stone rondavels) are scattered among the boulders. The interiors are well-lit and comfortably, if rather simply furnished, with large beds, carved wooden furniture, and the expected amenities (safe, electric fan, air-con, hair dryer). Neutral, earthy tones complement the natural building materials. Each room has a shaded verandah and an open-air en-suite bathroom, sheltered between the rocks. Hot water is supplied via a wood-burning boiler.

Camp Kipwe's lounge area is open to make the most of the dramatic views. There is also a small swimming pool built into the rocks.



Days 4 & 5: Kaokoveld (Hoanib Valley Camp)

Continue your journey north into the Kaokoveld, to Fort Sesriem (220kms; approx. 3 hrs). This is one of the most beautiful regions of Namibia – a breathtaking landscape of towering sand dunes, dry riverbeds and vast savannah plains.

Accommodation here is in the new and lovely Hoanib Valley Camp, an excellent base from which to explore the fascinating scenery of the Kaokoveld. Leaving your hired vehicle at Fort Sesfontein,

you will be picked up by your guide and driver and transferred to Hoanib Valley Camp (2 nights, tented chalet, fully-inclusive incl. all meals and activities).

Hoanib Valley Camp

Opened in May 2018, the design of this boutique camp is stylish yet simple. Built on a wooden platform, the main area is made of canvas fabric and is fully open at the front allowing for fantastic views of the surrounding wilderness. The interior is modern African, with a blend of light and rich earthy tones. There is a small dining area, as well as a bar and a comfortable lounge.

Each of the camp's six tented chalets are raised off the ground and feature a collapsible glass door. There is also a family tent, which offers enough space for up to four people. All tents have an en-suite bathroom with separate toilet, a desk, two armchairs and a fan. A covered porch invites you to enjoy nature, while three of the tent walls can be rolled up completely to grant a 360-degree view of the riverbed and the surrounding countryside.



The next two days will be spent exploring the Kaokoveld from your base at Hoanib Valley Camp. You'll learn much about the unique flora and fauna that has adapted to this arid region, in particular the desert elephant, on guided game drives and walks, during which you can also hope to see giraffe, springbok, oryx and, with luck, desert lion. During your stay at Hoanib Valley, there will also be the opportunity to join your guide for a visit to the local tribes of Himba, Herero or Damara.

Days 6 & 7: Skeleton Coast (Shipwreck Lodge)

Today you will be picked up from Hoanib Valley Camp and driven to the Skeleton Coast, where you stay at the new and lovely Shipwreck Lodge (2 nights, luxury chalet, fully-inclusive incl. all meals and activities).

Namibia's most scenically dramatic destination, the Skeleton Coast is a region of haunting beauty, a landscape of vast sand dunes and mile after mile of windswept beaches, interrupted only occasionally by the shipwrecks and whale carcasses that give the Skeleton Coast its name and much of its ominous character.

An amazing number of animals and plants manage to eke out an existence in this harsh environment, as fresh water springs permeate through the sands to create oases which sustain small pockets of life. Springbok, gemsbok, desert elephant, ostrich, jackal and brown hyena and plants like welwitschia have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Skeleton Coast. Other wildlife

includes seals, which thrive in huge colonies, bottlenose dolphins, whales and fantastic seabirds, including African penguins, pelicans, petrels, gannets, cormorants and flamingos.

Shipwreck Lodge

Opened in June 2018, Shipwreck Lodge lies north of Möwe Bay at the mouth of the Hoarusib River. One of only a small number of accommodations on the Skeleton Coast, Shipwreck Lodge offers 8 double rooms and 2 spacious family rooms. In a unique touch, each room has been built in the shape of a typical shipwreck. The rooms have solar electricity, Wi-Fi and an en-suite bathroom with shower. Each unit has a private terrace and wide windows granting amazing views of the coast.



The main building of the lodge has been built using natural materials in earthy hues. The lounge has an open fire, which is most welcoming during the typically cool evenings.

During your stay at Shipwreck Lodge, you will have the opportunity to take a full day excursion with a 4x4 vehicle to Möwe Bay and its seal colony, passing two shipwrecks and a disused diamond mine en route. There will also be time to explore the Skeleton Coast Park on a guided game drive, in search of desert elephant and lion, and to see the Clay Castles, which are natural geological rock formations. An afternoon visit to a local Himba village can also be arranged.

Day 8: Damaraland (Grootberg Lodge)

This morning, embark on a spectacular light aircraft flight from Shipwreck Lodge to Hoanib Valley, taking you over the Skeleton Coast and the desert dunes (NB. please note that there is a luggage allowance of 12kgs on this flight). From here you will have a short transfer to pick up your hired car and continue your self-drive to Grootberg Lodge, in the Damaraland (140kms; approx. 3 hrs). Check-in at Grootberg Lodge for one night (twin/double chalet, half-board).

Grootberg Lodge

Grootberg Lodge perches on the edge of the Etendeka Plateau, from where it enjoys spectacular views across the Klip River Valley.

Grootberg offers 16 double & family chalets, each with an en-suite bathroom or shower (with large viewing window) and toilet, twin beds, wall hangings by local artisans and mosquito nets. Sliding doors take you outside to a verandah for your own view of this special landscape, where Black Eagles hunt just below the level of your private deck.

The main thatched lodge has a restaurant, lounge and bar, a swimming pool and a massage room.

Activities at Grootberg Lodge include guided game walks in the company of local guides, allowing you to learn how they track desert-adapted elephant and follow black rhino on foot. Morning and afternoon scenic drives on the plateau are also offered.



Days 9 & 10: Okonjima, AfriCat Foundation (Plains Camp)

Depart Grootberg at your leisure and journey south-east to Okonjima Nature Reserve (400kms; approx. 4½ hours). Check-in at Okonjima Plains Camp for 2 nights (half-board basis).

Okonjima

Okonjima is a collection of camps, lodges and private bush homes that centre on an old farmhouse in the Okonjima Reserve. Home to the AfriCat Foundation, the main attraction of Okonjima is its resident population of big cats.

Okonjima Plains Camp (formerly Okonjima Main Camp) is a wonderful retreat hidden away in the Omboroko Mountains, west of Waterberg in Namibia's Central Highlands. It is the original camp in the Okonjima collection (there are four others), constructed around an old farmhouse owned by the Hanssen family, and one of the oldest lodges in Namibia, having opened as a guest farm in 1986. The lodge is large (and constantly expanding) with 30 twin/double rooms scattered among pretty gardens.

The next 2 days are free for you to explore the Okonjima Nature Reserve in the company of the talented local guides.

The reserve is home to the 'AfriCat Foundation', which is dedicated to preserving the big cats of Namibia. Special emphasis is placed on leopard, but the AfriCat Foundation also has research projects focused on lion and desert lynx (caracal), as well as other endangered species including pangolin, brown hyena and aardvark. In addition to the big cats, there are over 300 indigenous species of bird. In short, the wildlife viewing at Okonjima is superb!



Day 11 – Windhoek Airport

Breakfast at Okonjima and then drive south to Windhoek International Airport (300kms; approx. 3½ hours). Drop off your hired car at the airport and check-in for your international flight home.

Price Guide:

From **£5,768 per person**, based on two travellers in twin/double accommodation and subject to availability at the time of booking. For a family of 4, the total group booking cost is **£17,183**. Costs apply to travel in high season (Jun-Oct); low season (Nov-May) costs start from £4,980 per person for two travellers, or from £14,990 total for a family of 4.

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 (Toyota 4x4, or similar)
- Accommodation and meals as described
- National Park entry fees
- Activities, excursions and transfers as specified

Excludes:

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

