Tour Code
NA2

ADVENTURESABROAD

NAMIBIA & BOTSWANA

with Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

20 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Namibia

Arrival in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia.

As capital cities go, Windhoek is very relaxed with a whole mixture of Namibia's tribes strolling the streets. Many are in traditional dress and others are in stylish contemporary clothes often with magnificent plaited hairstyles. The city is full of trees and gardens, plus some splendid buildings dating from the turn of the century, all jumbled up with post-modernist office blocks in a swirl of ethnic mix.

Today you will meet our Namibia-based Tour Leader and enjoy a welcome dinner this evening.

Please note: Due to space availability and other considerations, our Namibia itinerary may run in reverse order (Windhoek to Windhoek).

Overnight in Windhoek.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

Day 2 Windhoek - Namib-Naukluft National Park

Today we leave the interior plateau region and head southwest through the Gamsberg Pass to the Namib Desert, through magnificent colours, pastel-basted rock formations, and waves of taupe-coloured grasses. Even the clouds are tinged orange-pink as distant dunes reflect their colour skywards. In the Nama language, Namib means vast, and this is an understatement. At the opposite end of the moisture scale is the parched Namib Desert with endless orange dunes blown into razor sharp ridges by the sand-shifting wind. The famous Sossusvlei sand dunes at 300m (1,000 ft), are the highest in the world, towering over their nearest rivals in Arabia, and just begging to be climbed barefoot.

Animals, insects, and plants have adapted to live in this generally inhospitable region and apart from infrequent rains, rely on the sea mist that rolls far inland. En route we have the chance to see kudu, springbok, gemsbok and black eagles set againstsome of the most expansive and dramatically rugged scenery in the world.

En route we have several stops for scenery viewing and photos. Upon arrival this afternoon you will have time to wander the land around our lodge and enjoy the multi-hued sands, strange twisted acacia trees, and almost guaranteed perfect sunset.

We will have a picnic lunch en route.

Overnight in the vicinity of the Namib-Naklauft National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 Namib-Naukluft National Park

Very early this morning we drive into the park to a special place called Sossusvlei, a huge dried up pan (vlei) which sporadically holds water, at the base of some of the most spectacular dunes in the Namib. We watch the morning sun light up the apricot coloured sands, the long shadows accentuating the graceful, almost feminine curves of the dune crests.

These immense rich ochre sand dunes are one of the most wondrous sights in the world. Geologists say that this desert, covering most of the Namib-Naklauft Park, could be the oldest in the world. The older the dune, the brighter the colour from slow iron oxidisation and minute fragments of garnets. Dwarfed by the sheer size of the dunes, your footprints look like insect trails and each step forward forms a mini sand-slide. The solitude is immeasurable and your place in the great scheme of life takes on a curious insignificance. Visually powerful and deafeningly silent, this unforgettable experience is a high point of our visit to the Namib. Possible game sightings include oryx antelope, springbok, or ostrich.

At Sossusvlei we have plenty of time to walk into the heart of the dunes, scale a dune or two for panoramic views, and walk across the sand to

a pan called Dead Vlei. This spooky place is named as such because of the blackened dead acacia trees that "sprout" from a blinding white pan against an orange dune backdrop. Stupendous.

On our way back to our accommodation we will make a stop at Sesriem Canyon, located near the entry gate to Sossussvlei. It was an important source of water for early inhabitants and even during dry times there is water in the upper reaches, where deep clefts in the rock reduce evaporation. Explorers, transport riders and early travellers used to lower a bucket
down to collect the water and it normally took 6 lengths of thong tied together, hence the Afrikaans name 'Ses' meaning six, and 'Riem' meaning thong. The canyon was formed by the Tsauchab River rising in the Naukluft and Zaris Mountains to the east, and flowing through to Sossusvlei. Walking through the canyon takes you on a journey back 10-20 million years ago
when sedimentary layers of gravel and sand were deposited and cemented together by lime. The ledges are now inhabited by pigeons, raucous pied crows and chattering starlings.

We'll have a picnic breakfast en route and likely a late lunch upon return to our lodge.

Overnight in the vicinity of the Namib-Naklauft National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Namib-Naukluft Park - Swakopmund

We continue our journey north through Namib-Naukluft Park via Solitaire and the spectacular rocky Kuiseb Canyon (photo stops en route) -- with possible sightings of baboon, rock hyrax, or, if lucky, leopard -- to the German colonial resort town of Swakopmund. This is Namibia's second biggest town and traditional "summer capital", and one of themost surreal places in this surreal country. You approach the town through the endless expanses of the Namib Desert, one of the world's largest wilderness areas. Then, through the mists (it is almost always misty in the morning and late afternoon) Bavarian spires and elaborate Germanic architecture rise through the fog banks. The boom of the surf on the notorious Skeleton Coast is an ever-present reminder of the icy Atlantic Ocean beyond.

We will have some time for a stroll around town before dinner.

Overnight in Swakopmund.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 Swakopmund: Leisure Time & Optional Activities

Today is free to wander the streets of charming Swakopmund. The town is an eclectic mixture of Bohemian and Bavarian, home to an intriguing mix of artists, hippies, strait-laced descendants of German settlers, stately Herero women in Victorian dress, and hardened miners, game rangers, safari operators and fishermen. Swakopmund exudes romance and history, a rich cultural melting pot of old and new. Nighttime entertainment ranges from sophisticated spins on the casino's roulette wheels, through raucous parties at the many pubs and restaurants, to an assortment of drama, music and cultural events. It is indeed odd to be in a little corner of old Bavaria wedged between one of the world's harshest deserts and even harsher coastlines.

You may wish to participate in an optional activity, including "Living Desert" excursions of the amazingly diverse Namib Desert biosphere; marine cruises on the Walvis Bay lagoon and outer harbour, scenic flights, camel rides, and many more (your Tour Leader can advise on current pricing and book in advance once you arrive on the tour).

Overnight in Swakopmund.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Swakopmund - Damaraland

After an early breakfast the road takes us north and east into the wonderful and diverse region of Damaraland. We pass Namibia’s highest mountain, the Brandberg, which peaks at 2573 m above sea level, and take time to view game and absorb the vastness of the scenery along

the way. Weu make our way into the heart of Damaraland where we will spend the next two nights at our specially erected Under Canvas Camp ("Huab Under Canvas").

Damaraland is typified by displays of colour, magnificent table-top 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 created 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 (or tomorrow if we are running late) we will visit the nearby attractions and geological sites of the pre-historic Twyfelfontein rock engravings (recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site). We will arrive in the late afternoon after a long yet rewarding day -– with time to enjoy sundowners before dinner.

Overnight in Damaraland.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7 Damaraland Touring

Today is dedicated to exploring this remarkable and fascinating area with our guides. After an early breakfast we will be treated to a memorable 4x4 excursion along the ephemeral Aba Huab River valleys 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. As the elephants are mostly active in the mornings we will normally have the best chance to see them then before returning to camp for lunch. However, if all avellers are in agreement, we could possibly take a picnic lunch and stop to enjoy that in the shade of a large Ana tree by the riverbed, ideally while watching a herd of elephant browsing nearby. On return to camp there should be time to relax and enjoy some pre-dinner drinks while admiring the stunning views of your surroundings at sunset.

Overnight in Damaraland.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Damaraland - Etosha National Park

This morning after breakfast we will continue our safari to Etosha National Park. Lunch is had en route and if time allows this afternoon our guide will take us on a game drive into Etosha, exiting the park before the gates close at sunset. The rest of the evening can be spent game viewing at the camp's floodlit waterhole.

Overnight at Etosha (West).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9 Etosha National Park

Today is dedicated to a full day of exciting game viewing within the central and eastern sections of Etosha National Park from the comfort of our private safari vehicle/s. We drive our way from the southern Andersson's Gate to Halali (where we may stop for lunch) and then on across via selected waterholes such as Goas, which are normally particularly good for
game viewing, to Namutoni Camp in the east, eventually leaving the park before sunset, arriving with enough time to relax and freshen up before for dinner.

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 a 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, inducing

floods to flow southward along the Cuvelai drainage system.

The park consists of grassland, woodland and savannah. Game-viewing centers on 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, blue wildebeest, eland and kudu.

Overnight Etosha (East).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10 Etosha National Park

Full day of exciting game viewing within the eastern section of Etosha National Park. Our day and lunch placement are somewhat free-form to take into account seasonal variations, weather, and travellers' interest.

Overnight at Etosha-East.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Etosha - Windhoek

After a leisurely breakfast we set off on our journey back to Windhoek. The road takes us south through Namibia's central highlands and commercial farmlands to reach Windhoek for the last night of our safari. We can visit Lake Otjikoto along the way and spend some time in Okahandja at the local woodcarver's craft market where you can do some last minute curio shopping if desired.

Overnight in Windhoek.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Windhoek: City Touring

Today we have a a half-day guided tour of Windhoek, a small, rather elegant city with a distinctly German feel about it located in the country's central highlands. The city is full of trees and gardens, plus some splendid buildings dating from the turn of the century. The multicultural nature of Namibia is most evident on the streets, where you can see influences of the Wambo, Herero and Damara people, among many others.

Remainder of the day for relaxation in some of the city's fine German konditerais (German-style pastry and bake shops) and/or shopping for souvenirs such as gemstones and traditional crafts.

Overnight in Windhoek.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Windhoek, Namibia - Fly to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Today we fly from Windhoek to Victoria Falls.

This area has been inhabited for hundreds of thousands of years. The first known name of the falls was "Shongwe," and the current name did not come into being until the Scottish missionary David Livingstone was brought to the falls in 1855 and named them after Queen Victoria. The falls and the nearby town are on the mighty Zambezi River, the fourth longest in
Africa, and forming the border with neighbouring Zambia.

After settling into our hotel, we'll travel by road a short distance to the Zambezi River on which we will enjoy a scenic sunset cruise above the falls. The river here is wide and slow moving; be on the lookout for hippo, elephant, antelope, giraffe and myriad bird species for which the region is famous.

Overnight in Victoria Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Victoria Falls Touring

Today we have a guided walking tour of Victoria Falls and adjacent national park.

Mosi-oa-Tunya ("The Smoke That Thunders") is one of the most amazing sights in the world: twice as high as Niagara Falls and several times longer. It took thousands of years of erosion for Victoria Falls to appear as and where it does now. During the Jurassic Period (150-200 million years ago), volcanic activity resulted in thick basalt deposits covering large parts of Southern Africa. As the lava cooled and solidified, cracks appeared in the hard basalt crust, which were filled with clay and lime. Erosion and the course of the mighty Zambezi River cut through these softer materials, forming the first of a series of waterfalls.

Our tour is conducted on level paved paths, much of which is shaded by the dense rainforest that exists due to spray from the falls. To walk to the farthest extent, with viewpoints along the way, is about one kilometre, the last part of which is without shade. We encourage you to go right to the dn, as the views are fantastic, including the best look at the famous Victoria Falls Bridge, the brainchild of Cecil Rhodes, part of his grand and unfulfilled Cape to Cairo railway scheme, even though he never visited the falls and died before construction of the bridge began.

The afternoon is yours to enjoy optional activities. You may relax by the pool, do some shopping in the village famous for local artisan crafts, or go sightseeing by micro-light aircraft or helicopter. Your guide can help plan your afternoon.

Overnight in Victoria Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe - Chobe National Park, Botswana

Today our overland journey continues across the border to nearby Botswana and Chobe National Park near the town of Kasane. The original inhabitants of what is now the park were the San people. They were hunter-gatherers who lived by moving from one area to another in search of water, wild fruits and wild animals. In 1967, the area was declared a national park, the first in Botswana.

A major feature of Chobe National Park is its elephant population, which is probably the largest in the world. This population covers most of northern Botswana plus north-western Zimbabwe and is currently estimated at around 100,000 individuals. This elephant population has been built up steadily from a few thousand since the early 1900s, having escaped the massive poaching that decimated other populations elsewhere on the continent during the 1970s and 1980s.

The Chobe elephants are migratory, making seasonal movements of up to 200 kilometres from the Chobe and Linyanti rivers where they concentrate in the dry season, to the pans in the south-east of the park, to which they disperse in the rains.

Overnight in Chobe Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 16 Chobe National Park

The Chobe National Park covers 10,566 sq km and has one of the greatest concentrations of game found on the African continent. This park has an amazing variety of habitats, ranging from floodplains, baobab, and mopane trees and acacia woodlands, to verdant flood grasslands and thickets bordering the Chobe River.

Our safari starts with a cruise on the Chobe River (shade and refreshments available), which takes us close to the waterfowl and wildlife on the river. Large flocks of birds, big pods of hippo and very large crocodiles can be viewed from the safety of your boat.

After lunch we board open (covered) safari vehicles and head off into the park to view some of the elephants, buffalo herds, sable, wildebeest, giraffe, and with luck, some resident lion and hyena.

Overnight in Chobe National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 17 Chobe Park - Fly to Okavango

Today we double back to Kasane from where we connect with our flight into the Okavango Delta.

Our comfortable lodge is centrally situated in the Okavango Delta, deep amongst grass covered islands. Most of our game viewing will be on foot and by mokoro (dug-out boat); without the noise of a vehicle you will experience the bush in it's true form and be at one with nature. The silence will allow you to pick up the previously unheard sounds of the bush usually hidden by the mechanical hum of a car. Motorboat excursions may also be available, as well as game viewing in 4x4 vehicles further afield, depending on water level.

** Please note that gratuities for camp staff and guide in the Okavango are NOT included in your tour price -- further details provided in your pre-trip notes once booked.

Overnight in the Okavango.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 18 Okavango Delta

We have a full day exploring the waterways of the Okavango Delta. Depending on water levels, we may do our sightseeing either by mokoro canoes or by 4WD vehicles, or a little of both.

The Okavango Delta is unique. It is the largest inland delta in the world; instead of flowing into the sea, the annual flood of fresh water flows inland, spreading over 15000 sq km of the Kalahari sand in a maze of lagoons and channels. The Okavango Delta is a lush wonderland surrounded by the arid Kalahari Desert and home to many species of antelope, such as Lechwe and Tsessebe. Herds of buffalo, zebra and elephant that number in their thousands pass through annually on their migration routes.

Overnight in the Okavango.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 19 Okavango Delta

We have another full day exploration of the wonders of the delta.

In the lush indigenous forests of the delta and its islands, and along the floodplains spawned by this great marriage of water and sand, more than 400 species of birds flourish. On the mainland and among the islands in the delta, lion, elephant, hyena, wild dog, buffalo, hippo and crocodile congregate with a teeming variety of antelope and other smaller animals -- warthog, mongoose, spotted genets, monkeys, bush babies and tree squirrels.

Fishing, bird watching, game viewing, photography or simple relaxation; indulging in any of these in the Okavango are experiences without parallel.

Overnight in the Okavango.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 20 Okavango Delta - Fly to Maun - Departure

Today we fly to Maun, the main town and airport serving the Okavango region and connect with onward flights.

PLEASE NOTE: If you booking your own flights from Maun, we suggest that you ensure that your departure time is is no earlier than 2:00 PM in order to account for our morning flight to Maun.

BON VOYAGE!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast