

NAMIBIA - GENERAL INFORMATION

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Namibia is a vast country dominated by the Namib Desert, an extensive inland plateau and geologically stunning mountain ranges. From the lush, northern Caprivi Strip and the wildlife of Etosha National Park to the vast and unforgettable Namib Desert and the desolate Skeleton Coast, Namibia has something for everyone. Travel here is safe and relatively uncomplicated; the infrastructure is excellent with well-maintained roads, frequently situated fuel stations and a wide variety of shops.

In the Namib, litter may last longer than a human's lifespan. Vehicle tracks leave ugly scars on the landscape. In some areas, these tracks may take a hundred years to disappear. Namibia tends to leave its mark on people. Unfortunately, some people tend to leave their mark on the Namibian landscape as well. Every year, irresponsible off-road driving defaces our heritage, causing damage that takes decades to heal. Which means a day's worth of joy-riding for you can translate into a century's worth of damage for the rest of us. Protect the Namibian heritage.

COUNTRY

Area: Namibia covers 824,292 sq km (318,259 sq mi).
Location: Situated on the south western coast of Africa, Namibia borders Angola and Zambia in the north, South Africa in the south and Botswana in the east.
Population: Slightly more than 2.2 million.
Capital City: Windhoek

STATEHOOD

Official Name: Republic of Namibia
Date of Independence: 21 March 1990
System of Government: Multi-party Democracy

CULTURAL

Language: English (official language), German, Afrikaans, Bantu and Khoisan are amongst the 13 other languages spoken
Literacy: The current literacy rate in Namibia is about 83%, one of the highest in Africa.
Religion: Freedom of religion was adopted through Namibia's Bill of Fundamental Rights. About 90% of the population is Christian.

PASSPORT / VISA REQUIREMENTS

The Namibian Government requires all visitors to Namibia to have a minimum of two full blank pages in their passports on arrival into the country. The passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the intended departure date from Namibia. Proof of onward travel documents will also be required. Upon entry into the country, the passport is stamped with a tourist visa (maximum stay three months). Citizens of certain countries do require VISA's in advance – *please enquire with the nearest Namibian Embassy or your local Immigration Office.*

CURRENCY, CREDIT CARDS AND BANKS

The currency in Namibia is the Namibia Dollar, which is fixed to and equals the South African Rand. The Namibian Dollar and South African Rand are the only legal tender in Namibia and can be used freely to purchase goods and services. The Namibia Dollar however is not legal tender in South Africa.

Foreign currency can be exchanged easily at any of the commercial banks. Normal opening hours are Mondays to Fridays from 09h00 to 15h30, and on Saturdays from 09h00 to 11h00 and they are well represented throughout the country. International Visa and MasterCard credit cards are generally accepted at most shops and hotels.



Note: No credit cards are accepted at the petrol service stations.

ATMS

Keep in mind that although there are some ATMs available in larger towns, they are few and far between. Please do not rely on the use of ATMs to access your cash. Any money withdrawn from ATM's will be in the local currency.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year – refer below. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday, then the Monday is also declared a public holiday. Most shops are closed with only some grocery shops that are open for limited hours on these days. We recommend you avoid staying in the cities over long weekends or public holidays.

01 January	New Year's Day
21 March	Independence Day
Varies	Good Friday
Varies	Easter Monday
01 May	Worker's Day
04 May	Cassinga Day
Varies	Ascension Day
25 May	Africa Day
26 August	Heroes' Day
10 December	International Human Rights Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

TAX AND CUSTOMS

All goods and services in Namibia are priced to include value added tax (VAT) of 15%. Visitors to Namibia may reclaim VAT on their purchases at the Hosea Kutako International Airport, Eros Airport and Walvis Bay Airport. The minimum amount required for reimbursement is NAD 250-00. To apply for reimbursement, follow these steps:

Ensure you have received a tax invoice from the seller - the following information must be clear:

- A) The document must contain the word tax invoice
- B) The document must contain the date, name of the shop, address and VAT number ending with 5
- C) The document must contain the name and address of foreign tourists
- D) Description of goods sold
- E) Number and volume of goods purchased
- F) Full item price, showing price including and excluding VAT

Further enquiries can be made with the Ministry of Finance : Telephone +264 61 209 2405.

VAT on services rendered or goods consumed cannot be refunded!

SAFETY

Namibia is a peaceful and democratic country, and crime is relatively low. However, as in any other country in the world, opportunistic petty crime can occur. For a safe journey and pleasant stay, we recommend the following precautions:

- When leaving the vehicle, make sure it is locked and the alarm activated. Make sure nothing of value is left in your car. If you cannot take it with you, make sure it is not visible.
- Especially in urban areas, keep track of your valuables and camera when walking about.
- If you have traveler's cheques, always remember to write down the serial number on a separate paper which you should keep somewhere different than the originals.
- Make sure you always have a photocopy of your passport and flight ticket. Keep these in a safe place - separate from the originals.



TIME

Summer: From the first Sunday in September to the first Sunday in April. GMT + 2

Winter: From the first Sunday in April to the first Sunday in September. GMT + 1

CLIMATE

Namibia boasts 320 days of sunshine a year! The climate is typical of semi-desert areas where droughts occur regularly. From September to April daytime temperatures in the interior of the country range from approximately 15 ° C to 35 ° C, and along the coast the temperature varies from 12 ° C and 22 ° C. During the winter months from May to August, the average daytime temperature is between 7 ° C in the morning to 28 ° C early in the afternoon. At night the temperature occasionally drops to 0° C. Along the coast, during the winter months, there may be a dry climate combined with the warm wind of the east. The rainy season is from October to April, with most showers occurring between January and April.

Namibia is a destination for lovers of flora and fauna throughout the year. From November to March, bird life is abundant. December to May is particularly interesting from the botanical point of view, when the vegetation is green and most of the plants are in bloom.

WATER

The water is safe to drink throughout the majority of Namibia. When visiting the remote areas purification tablets should be used, or bottled mineral water bought en-route. Plenty of water must be drunk to prevent dehydration. We recommend 2-3 liters minimum, excluding beverages such as tea, coffee, juice and alcohol. Dehydration is responsible for many emergency evacuations and can cause very serious problems, it is totally avoidable, so don't let this spoil your holiday!

VOLTAGE

220/240 volts AC. 3-Pin Plugs are used.

The main supply of electrical current in Southern Africa is 220 volts using both three and two round pin plugs. We recommend bringing an adapter with you as these are not always available at all lodges. Adapters are widely available for purchase in the UK before travel. Some camps use either solar panels, generators or mains electricity depending on their remoteness but all are used to charging camera batteries and phones.

LAUNDRY

Most camps/lodges/hotels in Namibia provide laundry service (although some may charge a nominal fee). Please keep this in mind when packing so that you can keep your luggage down to the basics.

CHECK-IN/OUT TIMES

Hotels in the Namibia towns and cities generally have a check in time of 14h00 and a check out time of 10h00, though many lodges and hotels will try to be accommodating and flexible if they are not too fully booked the preceding night. Otherwise we recommend you book a day room in advance to secure a longer stay in your room.

DRIVING IN NAMIBIA

It is not necessary to have an international driving license to rent a vehicle and drive in Namibia, the license from your country will be valid (however the license needs to be in English). Please do not forget to bring this with should you be hiring a vehicle and self-driving. In Namibia we drive on the left side of the road. Speed limits are usually 80km/h on dirt/gravel roads, 120 km/h on long distance tarred roads, and 60km/h in residential areas. However please take careful note of road signs as they may indicate otherwise in certain areas. **The law requires that all drivers and passengers wear their seat belts.**

Avoid driving at night and before dawn. If absolutely necessary because of an emergency, make sure your headlights are on (as well as the brights, unless there is an oncoming vehicle – the brights help you to see further, in case of obstacles or animals).

Roads are generally quiet although they can get very busy on weekends and around public holidays. It is an unfortunate fact that some vehicles you encounter on the road may not be in a good condition. Please be cautious of other drivers.



COMMUNICATION

Mobile telephoned roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone operators. Coverage is limited to urban area.

INTERNET

There are internet cafes stated throughout the country. Some lodges and hotels do have Wi-Fi available or internet connection, for guests use

MEDIA

Freedom of the press is provided for by the constitution and largely respected by the government. Newspapers are printed Monday to Friday. English-language dailies include The Namibian, Economist and New Era; weeklies include the Windhoek Observer, Die Republikein is a daily Afrikaans-language newspaper. Allgemeine Zeitung is published daily in German.

The state-owned Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) broadcasts television nationwide. One Africa television is a Windhoek-based private TV station. State-run radio is operated by NBC. Private music stations include Radio Kudu, Radio Wave, Radio Energy and Radio Kosmos, amongst others.

POST

Good postal service. Airmail to Europe takes approximately four days to two weeks. Postal service affiliated with Universal Postal Union.

HEALTH TIPS

Namibia is characterized by hot dry climates and is therefore virtually free of tropical diseases.

Malaria is caused by a blood parasite which is spread by the Anopheles mosquito. In Namibia, malaria is found mainly in the northern parts of the country, although cases are occasionally reported in the central and southern area. Malaria is a serious disease and can be fatal if not treated immediately. You can reduce the risk of infection by taking a prophylaxis (treatment should start one week before arrival in Namibia and under the advice of your doctor); however you should also make use of insect repellants which can be applied to the skin.

Southern Africa has recorded the highest rate of skin cancer caused by the sun, therefore it is essential to apply high SPF sunscreen regularly, several times a day, especially when outdoors doing activities such as hiking or swimming.

Medicines and Pharmacies

Namibian pharmacies are more like a traditional chemist's shop. The pharmacy section is usually limited to an area behind a counter in the back of the premises. Most pharmacists are available to give sound advice. Many types of medicines are available without prescription and cost less than in Europe or North America. Stock up on your supply of medicines in time, as only the larger towns have pharmacies. Some pharmacies have extended hours and some run emergency services. Pharmacies are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory. Contact the local hospital in emergencies during weekends and after hours.

Doctors and Hospitals

Medical care in towns and cities is excellent, especially in the capital city, Windhoek. There are several private clinics, which maintain international standards. Most remote towns have a modest hospital or first-aid-clinic. All of them are listed on the first page of the local telephone directory under 'Emergency Services'. Doctor listings are located in the Orange Pages under 'Classified Medical Listings'. Alternatively, ask your accommodation establishment for recommendations. Since Namibia is scarcely populated and the distances between towns and villages are vast, bear in mind that in some places it may take the majority of a day to reach a doctor or a hospital.

Rescue Services:

Competent assistance by ambulance or ambulance plane is offered by International SOS:

P.O. Box 31220, Windhoek

24 hour emergency service

Tel +264 - (0)61 – 230 505

Fax +264 - (0)61 – 248 113



Stored Blood

Namibia's Blood Transfusion Service only uses blood donations by unpaid volunteers. Donations are thoroughly tested for transmittable diseases, including HIV. Tests are carried out according to internationally recognized standard methods and are regularly submitted to strict quality controls.

Snakes & Scorpions

Just to put you at ease: most visitors never see a snake or scorpion during their stay in Namibia. In any event, about 75% of Namibia's snakes are not venomous. Most snakes beat a hasty retreat when humans approach and therefore are never spotted – they pick up the tremors caused by footsteps. The lazy puff adder may become dangerous, as it is not able to disappear fast enough and you might unwittingly get too close. When walking in the "wild" you should always wear sturdy shoes, preferably covering the ankle. Watch your step and listen to sounds – snakes usually warn you before they attack. Refrain from picking up or turning pieces of rock, and do not put your hand into holes in the ground or into rock crevices, as these are favourite hiding places for snakes and scorpions. Always carry a torch in the dark. When camping, zip your tent completely and shake out your shoes before putting them on in the morning.

WHAT TO PACK

In general we recommend practical clothing such as sportswear, shorts, t-shirts etc, long sleeved shirts and long pants for evenings and early mornings, comfortable shoes, sandals, walking shoes, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen with a high SPF. Do not forget a sweater and jacket, especially for any open vehicle drives and along the coast where there may be fog and wind.

In the summer, the weather is generally very hot, about 35 degrees Celsius in the day. The temperature at night is usually pleasant throughout most of the country; however the Deserts and coast can get cold at night. In winter, the days are usually warm; however the temperature at night can go below 0 degrees Celsius on occasion. It is advisable therefore to be prepared for hot and cold weather.

Most of the hotels in Namibia do not have heating. Many of the hotels / lodges have swimming pools.

Suggested Clothing:

1. Sun hat/bush hat.
2. Headscarf/bandana – particularly for dusty dry regions.
3. Golf-shirts and/or T-shirts – preferably with sleeves to protect your shoulders from the sun.
4. Long-sleeved cotton shirts.
5. Shorts and/or skirts – (short skirts are not practical for getting in and out of game drive vehicles)
6. Long trousers/slacks.
7. Track suit.
8. Pajamas – Lighter set for summer and a warmer set for cooler nights.
9. Underwear (sports bra recommended for game drives as the roads can be bumpy and uneven) and socks.
10. Good closed walking shoes (running/tennis shoes are fine).
11. Sandals – preferably low heeled or flat if you are going on safari.
12. Swimming costume.
13. Warm winter jersey.
14. Warm anorak or parka and scarf / gloves for cold winter months (May to September).
15. Light rain gear for summer months (late November to April).
16. More formal attire for your stay at prestigious city hotels or on one of the luxury trains.



Equipment/Other:

1. Good quality sunglasses - preferably polarised. Tinted fashion glasses are not good in strong light.
2. Flashlight with batteries.
3. If you wear contact lenses, we recommend that you bring along a pair of glasses in case you get irritation from the dust
4. Southern African bird guide if you are a keen birder, e.g. Newman's or Sasol
5. Personal toiletries (basic amenities supplied by most establishments).
6. Malaria tablets (if applicable). *Please note that Namibia is a very low-risk malaria area, and that the best defense against malaria is to avoid mosquito bites. To avoid being bitten, pack long-sleeved shirts, trousers, socks and shoes (in addition to your insect repellent), to wear in the evening when mosquitoes are most active.*
7. Antihistamine tablets if you suffer from any allergies.
8. Anti nausea tablets if you suffer from motion sickness.
9. Moisturising cream and suntan lotion – SPF 20 or higher recommended.
10. Insect repellent for body application, e.g. Tabard, Rid, Jungle Juice, etc.
11. Basic medical kit (aspirins, plasters, Imodium, antiseptic cream and Anti-histamine cream, etc.)
12. Tissues/"Wet Ones"
13. Visas, tickets, passports, money, etc.
14. Camera equipment and plenty of film/memory sticks – refer to photo tips
15. Waterproof/dustproof bag/cover for your camera.
16. BINOCULARS ARE ESSENTIAL (night vision binoculars are not essential, but highly recommended if your safari includes night activities)

Note 1: Bright colours and white are not advised while on safari. Camouflage clothing is not recommended for travel in southern African countries.

Note 2: Space in vehicles and aircrafts is limited and therefore we recommend that you adhere to the 20kg luggage limit (unless specified otherwise). Please ensure that you use soft bags and not hard suitcases – please ensure that you have the details from your agent according to your itinerary and that you ask your agent ahead of time if you would like details regarding the feasibility and cost of taking excess luggage with you on any of these restricted luggage safaris.

USEFUL TIPS:

- Do not go on any walks without drinking water
- Take snacks and water along in the vehicle as the routes are often long without places to stop and eat
- Don't walk away from lodge / resort at night. Most predators and dangerous animals are nocturnal.
- Be aware even at the lodge / resort. Wildlife can enter the lodge areas, especially at night.
- Do not approach wild animals, even if they appear relaxed. Their feelings about our presence can change quickly.
- Do not sleep with parts of your body exposed or on the ground without protection around you. Sleep in your tent when camping.
- Do not disturb wildlife in anyway. Excessive noise can irritate and scare the animals. A sudden gesture could be viewed as a threat to the animals.
- Do not drive off road. You may damage vegetation and soil especially in a delicate and fragile eco-system as you will find in Namibia. Damaged areas are also unsightly. Avoid night drives as it can upset animals and the light can damage their eyes.
- Do not offer food to wild animals. Even small, cute animals can give a nasty bite and may carry diseases harmful to humans.
- Monkeys and Baboons can cause havoc and steal food. Always make sure vehicles / tents are closed properly and food is packed away safely.
- Do not leave any rubbish. Take it with you and discard of it into a rubbish bin.
- Be courteous and respectful of people of other cultures and races.



RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT PARKS AND RESERVES

This below is a brief summary of the main rules of the park. Please read your permit carefully for further details.

- Gates open after sunrise and close before sunset. You must return to your resort before sunset. At the entrance of the park, take note of the opening and closing times of the gates
- At the entrance to each park / reserve, you must report to the office nearest you and pay the park entrance fee (usually NAD 80-00 per person and NAD 10-00 per standard vehicle, per day)
- You must follow the paths already marked – it is forbidden to drive off the roads
- It is forbidden to enter any areas with No Entry signs
- The speed limit within the parks is 60 km/h. Costly fines will be charged to visitors who exceed the speed limits. The speed limits are in place to ensure the safety of visitors and animals
- It is forbidden to throw any object from the window of his vehicle, including rubbish and cigarette butts. All waste must be stored in your car and placed in rubbish bins which can be found at the resorts.
- Do not disturb, harm or kill any animals
- Do not shout or make any noise which can be a nuisance to other visitors and animals
- Do not exit your vehicle while in Etosha National Park. You may have windows open but it is advisable to not make any sudden movement with hands and arms, as cats hiding in the bushes may be attracted by a simple movement. Do not let any part of your body lean out of the window.
- Do not get too close to the animals to take a photo, or make noises to get their attention.
- Do not feed the animals
- If an animal happens to get too close to your vehicle, do not panic and make a noise. If possible you can drive away slowly, otherwise just remain calm and still until the animal moves away.
- Do not camp outside of the resorts
- Do not drive around at night
- When you are a waterhole, please turn off your vehicle's engine and park in a way that does not obstruct other visitors view. Please also talk quietly.
- Visitors enter the park / reserve at their own risk
- The park staff may at any time request the proof of payment of the park fees, so keep this with you at all times
- All visitors have permission to travel in the park provided that you adhere to the rules and conditions stipulated on the permit. Therefore please read the permit carefully.

TIPS

Although a long standing tradition, staff tips are at the **GUEST'S** discretion.

