

NAMIBIA

As a guest of Wilderness Safaris, the following information has been compiled to provide you with guidelines and interesting facts about the country you will be visiting. Further information is available to you on our website www.wilderness-safaris.com or the official Namibian Tourism Authority's website www.namibiaturism.com.na.



Namibia is a country of stunning contrasts with two great deserts: the Namib and its sea of red sand runs along the entire Atlantic coastline, while the Kalahari in the eastern interior is a sparsely vegetated savannah that sprawls across the border into neighbouring countries. In-between lies the Central Plateau, with open plains and rugged mountains. Famed for its vast open landscapes, endless blue skies, sunny weather and tranquil starry nights, Namibia is the fifth largest country in Africa, encompassing 824 292 square kilometres.

INTERESTING FACTS



Red represents Namibia's most important resource – its people! It refers to their heroism and their determination to build a future of equal opportunity for all. White refers to peace and unity, green symbolises vegetation and agricultural resources while the blue represents the clear Namibian sky and the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the country's precious water resources and rain.

Government

Namibia, previously under German, British and South African rule, gained its independence in 1990. In 1966, the South West People's organization (SWAPO) launched a war of independence through its military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), for the area that would become Namibia. However, it was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to end its administration in accordance with a UN peace plan for the entire region. Namibia has been governed by the SWAPO Party since and is a democracy ruled by a multi-party Parliament. Bicameral legislature consists of the National Council and the National Assembly. The President is voted in directly by the electorate for a five year term and is supported by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. The government's policy of national reconciliation and unity embraces the concepts of tolerance, respect for differing political views, racial and ethnic harmony.

Economy

The most important sectors of the Namibian economy are mining, fishing, agriculture and tourism; with the latter being the fastest growing sector. Mining accounts for 8% of GDP, however, provides more than 50% of foreign exchange earnings. Rich in alluvial diamond deposits, Namibia is also the fourth-largest exporter of nonfuel minerals in Africa, the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium, and the producer of large quantities of lead, zinc, tin, silver, copper and tungsten. Agriculture is Namibia's largest employer, with an estimated 46% of the workforce; however, it normally imports about 50% of its cereal requirements. The Namibian economy is closely linked to South Africa with the Namibian Dollar pegged one-to-one to the South African rand.

Currency

The currency in Namibia is the Namibian Dollar (NAD) which is fixed to and therefore equivalent to the South African Rand (ZAR).

Language

The official language is English, while Afrikaans and German are also widely used. There are numerous African languages and dialects which fall into two main groups, namely Bantu and Khoisan.

Time

Namibia operates on daylight saving time as follows –

Summer: From the first Sunday in September to the first Sunday in April – Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) + 2 hours.

Winter: From the first Sunday in April to the first Sunday in September – Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) + 1 hour.

Climate

The weather in southern Africa is generally pleasant throughout the year – warm to hot days, and cool to warm nights. During our winter months however (May to September), it can get really cold at night and in the early morning, particularly when on safari, so we would like to suggest that you pack accordingly – very warm clothing including an anorak/winter jacket, a beanie, scarf and gloves are recommended. Please also refer to our packing suggestions list.

The climate is typically semi-desert with hot days and cool nights. The cold Benguela Current keeps the coast cool and free of rain most of the year – Namibia averages about 300 days of sunshine annually. The rainy season lasts from October to April, while the rest of the year is dry and cloudless.

Humidity is generally very low in most parts, however, can reach as high as 80% in the extreme north during summer. The average rainfall is 50 millimetres (1.97 inches) along the coast to 350 millimetres (13.78 inches) in the central interior and 700 millimetres (27.56 inches) in the Caprivi. If you are travelling on a self-drive basis, you must exercise caution when crossing riverbeds and camping during the summer months as flash floods can occur from the sporadic rains. It is perfectly safe to travel by road at this time, although a 4x4 or vehicle with high ground clearance is recommended.

Mid-summer temperatures may rise to over 40°C (104°F). Winter days are warm, however, dawn temperatures may drop to freezing. Along the coast it is cool with low rainfall and fog prevails from late afternoon until mid-morning.

Spring starts in September with all the vegetation coming into leaf and days are much warmer with the occasional cool evening and morning. From October we experience very warm sunny days with warm evenings. Some rains are experienced sporadically, though larger showers can be expected usually only around December.

Wildlife sightings can vary depending how early the rains have started. December can be among the hottest months of the year, often averaging 35°C to 40°C in the shade. Along the coastline, it can be cool with low rainfall and fog prevailing from late afternoon until mid-morning.

Below is a rough guideline to understanding Namibian weather patterns, with the towns mentioned being a general indication of temperatures and rainfall.

Temperature (°C) – These are the average lows and highs:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	17/30	17/29	15/27	13/25	9/22	7/20	7/20	8/23	12/26	14/29	16/29	17/31
SWP	12/22	14/23	12/23	9/22	8/22	8/22	7/21	6/19	7/19	8/19	10/21	11/22

Temperature (°F) – These are the average lows and highs:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	63/86	63/84	59/81	55/77	48/72	45/68	45/68	46/73	54/79	57/84	61/84	63/88
SWP	54/72	57/73	54/73	48/72	46/72	46/72	45/70	43/66	45/66	46/66	50/70	52/72

Average Rainfall (mm) – This varies according to the year and location:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	43	53	56	28	5	3	3	3	3	10	23	26
SWP	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Average Rainfall (inches) – This varies according to the year and location:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	1.7	2.1	2.2	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.9	3.7
SWP	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0

WDH = Windhoek

SWP = Swakopmund

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. During this time, most shops are closed or only some grocery shops are open for limited hours. 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
25 May	Africa Day
26 August	Heroes Day
10 December	International Human Rights Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

USEFUL INFORMATION

Payment

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 Namibian Dollar, however, is not legal tender in South Africa.**

Visitors may bring any amount of foreign currency into the country, however, Travellers Cheques and foreign currency can only be exchanged at any of the main commercial banks in the major centres of the country. Travellers Cheques are also generally not accepted by the camps/lodges so our recommendation is to rather make use of cash or credit cards.

Wilderness Safaris and Wilderness Adventures camps in Namibia also accept US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euro as payment for curios, drinks, gratuities, etc.

Note that for Serra Cafema Camp, specifically, guests must use the local currency – NAD or ZAR – for cash transactions only when purchasing curios from the Himba people (a group of semi-nomadic pastoralists who live in the Kaokoveld area). The camp is not in a position to provide a Forex service exchanging US Dollars, GBP Sterling or Euro so please obtain some local currency on arrival for this purpose – either in South Africa (ZAR) or Namibia (NAD). The equivalent of US\$ 50.00 to US\$ 100.00 per person is generally sufficient although “big spenders” may require more.

Credit Cards

MasterCard and Visa (both with raised credit card numbers so that an imprint may be taken) are generally accepted throughout Namibia, including Wilderness Safaris and Wilderness Adventures camps. Holders of other cards are advised to clarify with a commercial bank whether their card is acceptable in Namibia. American Express and Diners Club specifically are no longer accepted in Namibia and, therefore, not at our camps/lodges either. Most fuel filling stations will not accept credit cards as a form of payment – cash is recommended.

Debit Cards

Please note that debit cards are not accepted as a form of payment at our camps/lodges.

Banks

Banking Hours:

Monday – Friday: 09:00 – 15:30

Saturday: 09:00 – 11:00

Shopping

In the major centres, such as Windhoek and Swakopmund, many shops specialize in attractive local products and curios, such as the popular dolls dressed in traditional Herero style made by Herero women; hand-carved wooden objects, leather products, the popular woven Karakul carpets and Nakara garments, and beautifully fashioned jewelry incorporating Namibia's wealth of precious and semi precious stones. A visit to the Namibia Craft Centre in the Old Breweries Building in Windhoek is recommended as it showcases Namibian crafts, art, fashion and products, all made in Namibia by Namibians. The Center also offers art galleries, restaurants and cafés specializing in Namibian cuisine. Some shops are open on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings, however, are closed on public holidays.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

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 (Windhoek), Eros Airport (Windhoek) and Walvis Bay Airport. A 30% luxury items tax is subtracted from the cost of luxury items such as jewellery or Swakara garments when tourists present their passport and air ticket at the time of purchase. Further enquiries can be made through the Ministry of Finance – Telephone: + 264 61 209 2405, Fax: + 264 61 209 2001.

Joining your Safari

Please carefully check which of the two Windhoek airports you will be flying to/from as transfer times differ greatly. Hosea Kutako International Airport (Windhoek) is about 40 kilometres out of town, whereas Eros Airport (Windhoek) is in the centre of town. Wilderness Safaris Namibia has an airport support office at Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport. This is used for arriving and departing Wilderness Safaris and Wilderness Adventures guests for Meet & Assists, for pre-departure briefing and/or itinerary reviewing plus assistance with excess luggage.

Driving in Namibia

In Namibia, one drives on the left hand side of the road. The speed limit is usually 60 kilometres per hour in built up areas, 70 kilometres per hour on gravel roads and 120 kilometres per hour on major tar roads. Safety belts must be used at all times.

The driver or any authorized co-driver must produce a valid driver's license at time of rental and must not have been convicted of any criminal offence which resulted in the endorsement or cancellation of his/her driving license. The driver's license needs to be in

English with a photograph. If not, an International driver's license will be required. In addition, please check with your travel consultant regarding the minimum age.

Whilst conducting your own self-drive itinerary, there are many factors beyond our control, e.g. parking of a vehicle/s at a meeting point or pick-up/drop-off point will be at own risk. Wilderness Safaris will therefore not accept any liability, responsibility or claim for compensation, for any incident or accident involving you (the client), your vehicle and/or any third party.

Excess Luggage

Should you need to bring luggage in excess of the stipulated allowance, you have the option of purchasing additional weight allowance on the applicable air transfer. This allows for a maximum of 70 kg (154 lb) excess weight, on the proviso that the bag/s conform/s to our standard dimensions as above: soft bags (no frames or rigid structures), wheels only if they are not part of a solid frame or rigid structure and 25 cm (10 inches) wide x 30 cm (12 inches) high and 62 cm (24 inches) long for each bag/s. At the discretion of the pilot, the bag/s may be placed on the light aircraft seat – as long as they can be physically secured with one seatbelt and do not impact on the comfort of other guests on the air transfer. The additional cost of this varies depending on the flight schedule and routing so please contact your travel consultant for further details.

If you do not require the excess luggage to accompany you on your trip and you arrive/depart via Windhoek, we can make storage arrangements at our Windhoek town or airport offices. The luggage can then be returned to you either at your hotel in Windhoek (if you are staying overnight) or by baggage transfer to the airport. This service, which is normally the most economical method of handling excess luggage in Namibia, is charged for at a nominal rate and you are advised to pre-book it through your agent prior to travel. While there is no actual luggage storage cost involved, this nominal rate applies to any luggage that needs to be transferred from one point to another, whether between Hosea Kutako International Airport (Windhoek) or Eros Airport, our Windhoek town or airport offices or a hotel in Windhoek.

We do not anticipate any problems with stored luggage being damaged or stolen, however, guests must ensure that they are in possession of full travel insurance including luggage cover. Wilderness Holdings and its subsidiary companies, and any person or agent acting for, through or on behalf of said companies, will not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from any cause whatsoever.

Power Supply

While some camps/lodges are linked to the national power grid, most of our camps/lodges are situated in pristine and remote wilderness areas where we need to generate our own electricity. This is achieved through making use of generators which charge a bank of batteries and provide electricity to the camp/lodge through an inverter system.

This, in turn, provides 220V power in each tented room for lighting and fans. Where generators alone are used, these run for approximately 7 – 9 hours per day (mostly when guests are out on activities) charging the aforementioned battery bank during this time. The exceptions being Kulala Desert Lodge and Little Kulala which uses a combination of solar power and generator power through a battery and inverter system, while Hoanib Skeleton Coast is a 100% solar generated system.

Power supplied to all the camps/lodges for both the rooms and main areas is by way of alternating current (AC).

Hot water is mainly provided through solar geysers, eliminating the need to provide electricity to power demanding electrical geysers. In some cases, inclement weather may reduce the efficiency of the solar geysers and in the event that this occurs, camp managers can be contacted for alternative arrangements.

Most Wilderness camps/lodges in Namibia have 220V plug points (3-prong round/2-prong round) in the rooms which can be used to charge batteries and sleep apnoea machines, however, these are not suitable for hairdryers and electric shavers. Where there are no plug points in the rooms, facilities for charging batteries are available in the main area.

Sleep apnoea machines can be used in the rooms at all camps/lodges as there are electrical plug points and provided the power usage is below 200W. Please ensure that you bring a spare battery/ies as a back-up as power outages may occur.

Desert Rhino Camp, Doro Nawas Camp, Hoanib Skeleton Coast, Kulala Desert Lodge and Serra Cafema Camp have a 220V electrical plug points in each guest tent, however, these can be used for the charging of batteries only. The exception being Damaraland Camp where there are no plug points in the rooms. Therefore, any batteries which need to be charged need to be handed to the camp staff who will charge these for you in the main area while you are out on activity so please bring spare batteries for use.

There are 220V electrical plug points in the rooms at Little Kulala. It is, therefore, possible to charge batteries as well as use appliances such as hairdryers or electric shavers during your stay.

Doro Nawas Camp is linked to the national power grid.

Serious digital photographers may wish to bring a mobile device for the downloading of images. All equipment needs to be compatible with 220V power or have an adaptor to convert the 220V to 110V. You are advised to bring a spare battery for use while the other one is being charged, a power converter/adaptor if applicable, cables for computers or cameras and additional flash cards.

In cities and towns all electrical appliances run on 220V/240V. Outlets are round 3-pin, 15-amp plugs. While some camps/lodges can supply adaptors (3-prong round, 3-prong square, 2-prong round, 2-prong flat) it is advisable that you carry your own.

As a responsible ecotourism operator with conservation as our core value we strive to reduce our own energy use. Please help us save energy by using appliances sparingly.

Sightseeing

If you are visiting Windhoek and/or Swakopmund, there are a number of optional tours available. Please contact your travel consultant for further details, however, we do recommend that these are pre-booked to avoid disappointment.