

G A M E P L A N A F R I C A  
*Journeys of a Lifetime*



**THE GREAT NAMIBIAN JOURNEY**

*A Discoverer Exploration - 12 nights / 13 days*

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## *A Discoverer Exploration - 12 nights /13 days*

Combination Wilderness Safaris and Wilderness Adventure camps, hotel (Swakopmund) and fully serviced Discoverer Camp, all in private concession areas.

Namibia is a land of stunning landscapes, endless skies, barren deserts, rugged mountains and spectacular wildlife - and the Great Namibian Journey encompasses it all. This cross-section explores the dunes of Sossusvlei and the Namib Desert, the stark beauty and diversity of the Skeleton Coast, amazing marine life just off Swakopmund, the volcanic rock-strewn landscape of Damaraland and the game-filled savannah of Etosha.

The activities provide a wide range of differing impressions, from a dolphin cruise with private beach lunch, to hiking in Damaraland, walking in the Namib's great dunes and interacting with traditional Himba people.

Wilderness Explorations are led by highly skilled and qualified professional guides with an incredible passion for the natural regions in which they work. Sharing the adventure and guiding you on this journey of discovery combined with their vast knowledge of the natural world, history and culture are their professions and personal hobby. Years of experience in the field and a depth of understanding of animal behavior and the environment will leave you with a sense of complete wonder.

This Exploration traverses the width of central Namibia by road. Most links between areas is by vehicle transfer, which can be lengthy and bumpy (due to Namibia's roads mainly being gravel). Numerous stops at local highlights, with refreshments, snacks and lunches (where appropriate) will be made to ensure optimal comfort. Flights to and from the Skeleton Coast National Park are by light aircraft, affording sensational views of the arid North West and Etosha region by air.

### **Itinerary:**

#### **Days 1 & 2: Kulala Desert Lodge, Sossusvlei**

From Windhoek, travel by vehicle approximately



205 miles to Kulala Desert Lodge in the 91,430 acres private Kulala Wilderness Reserve, enjoying awe-inspiring views of the mountains and the desert floor. En route, we enjoy a lunch close to the Khomas Hochland escarpment, reaching onto sweeping vistas below.

One of the most enduring impressions of the Sossusvlei area is the early morning light on the sea of vivid orange dunes, some as high as 984 feet. Nearby world-famous Sossusvlei is an enormous clay pan, flanked by the famous red sand dunes that stand out starkly against the blue sky. These dunes - the most well-known being Big Daddy or Dune 45 - have developed over millions of years, the wind continuously refashioning the contours of this red sand sea. The 'vlei' itself only fills after rare heavy rainfall when, in a complete turn-around, it transforms into a



spectacular turquoise lake. Afternoon activities include nature walks, drives to scenic viewpoints and marveling at the unique Namib fauna and flora in the private Kulala Wilderness Reserve.

Here we enjoy access to the Sossusvlei dunes through a private access gate, for walks in the immense moving sands of the Namib-Naukluft National Park, game drives (by day and night) on our concession and stargazing. Photography of the dunes in the early morning and late afternoon is particularly stunning with rich reds and dark shadows completing the extraordinary vista that is the enormity of the Namib Desert.

**Kulala Desert Lodge** is situated within the arid Namib Desert on the private 91,430 acres Kulala Wilderness Reserve, and is closest to the iconic red dunes of the Sossusvlei. The lodge comprises 19 thatched and canvas "kulalas" ("to sleep" in Oshiwambo) with en-suite bathrooms and verandas. Each unit is built on a wooden platform to catch the cooling breezes and has a deck on the flat rooftop where bedrolls are placed for guests to sleep under the myriad stars that Namibia's clear skies portray.



The main area, with décor inspired by northern Africa, has a lounge, bar, dining area, plunge pool and wrap-around veranda overlooking the waterhole – a perfect location to view and photograph the desert vista. The overall setting is a true delight to the senses, bringing together the rhythm of Namibia, wholesome meals and intimacy. A waterhole in front of camp attracts a number of local wildlife (such as gemsbok, springbok, ostrich and jackal) and provides a perfect location to view and photograph the desert scenery.

### **Days 3 & 4: Hansa Hotel, Swakopmund**

Travel 224 miles by road north-west via the Kuiseb Canyon with its dark, craggy canyons and via a moon-like landscape of flat gravel plains (with stops along the way that include the Walvis Bay lagoon for some bird watching viewing inter-alia pelicans and flamingos). We arrive at the grand Hansa Hotel in Swakopmund in the early afternoon in time for lunch. The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the towns quaint mix of European and African culture, as well as a little shopping in the vibrant markets.



On our second day we explore the ice-blue Atlantic coast, from the port towns of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund to its incredible marine mammals. A private boat cruise at Walvis Bay and down the coast to Sandwich Harbour (weather permitting) provides a unique chance to see the diverse pelagic (ocean-going) birdlife, Cape fur seals and rare Heaviside's dolphins up close. This activity is rounded off with a private seafood lunch, before returning to the hotel in the afternoon. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before meeting in the evening for dinner.

The grand three-star Hansa Hotel forms part of Swakopmund's architectural culture and dates back to 1905; it is said to be one of the oldest buildings in the town. It is ideally situated in the centre of Swakopmund within easy walking distance of town and the beach. The luxury of the hotel, its excellent cuisine and friendly service are well known and appreciated countrywide and overseas.

### **Day 5: Damaraland Camp, Damaraland**

Travel approximately 174 miles, partly up the legendary Skeleton Coast (named for the numerous

shipwrecks the treacherous shores have claimed over the years). From here we drive the back roads through the game productive Ugab riverbed, travelling north past the Brandberg Mountain - the second largest monolith on earth - to Damaraland. This all-day excursion with lunch en route ends with our arrival at Damaraland Camp.

Damaraland is a land of stark desert beauty. Early morning mists, generated by the clash between the icy Atlantic Ocean and the warm desert air of the Skeleton Coast, drift inland along the



canyons, providing sustenance to the flora and fauna of the region. Rare succulent plants abound in this harsh countryside. Our activities include explorations on foot or 4x4 vehicles, viewing springbok, gemsbok and ostrich, and tracking the unique desert-adapted elephant.

**Damaraland Camp** accommodates guests in 10 comfortable tented rooms, with en-suite facilities including flush toilets and showers with hot and cold running water. (Laundry facilities are limited due to the low rainfall in the area.) The stone living area combines the dining room and pub and an open fire is enjoyed on calm evenings. There is a swimming pool next to the bar.

#### **Days 6 & 7: Desert Rhino Camp, Damaraland**

We depart Damaraland Camp and drive into the Huab riverbed to search for desert-adapted elephants, before heading north to the mountainous and rocky paradise of the massive Palmwag Concession.

**Desert Rhino Camp** is situated in the enormous private Palmwag Reserve in north-west Namibia, between Etosha and the Skeleton Coast - few places on the planet can offer this level of privacy and wilderness experience.

This reserve has a number of freshwater springs that support healthy populations of animals including desert-adapted black rhino and elephant as well as large populations of the rare Hartmann's mountain zebra, giraffe, gemsbok, springbok and greater kudu. On rare occasions predators such as lion, cheetah, leopard, and hyaena may also be seen in the area. Bird life is prolific and diverse featuring most of Namibia's endemics. Welwitschia plants (ancient and highly unusual succulents) dot the plain in front of the camp. The speciality of the area is its growing population of the rare desert-adapted black rhino (the largest concentration in the world outside a national park), which are monitored and protected by the Save the Rhino Trust.

**Desert Rhino Camp** has eight comfortable canvas walled tents slightly elevated on wooden decking, each with an en-suite bathroom comprising dual hand basins, toilet and a spacious walk-in shower. The tented dining and lounge area offers uninterrupted views of the desert and mountains. Welwitschia (ancient desert adapted plants) plants dot the plain in front of the camp. On the second day, the highlight is rhino tracking on foot or by vehicle; other activities include day and night nature drives.



#### **Days 8 & 9: Ongava Tented Camp, Etosha National Park**

We depart Palmwag eastward on an extended combination wildlife viewing (first part of the drive) and transfer drive of approximately 218 miles to Etosha National Park, where we experience the pinnacle of game viewing - but accommodated in the privacy of an exclusive bush camp situated on an extensive private game reserve, Ongava, just on the outside of Etosha National Park.

Activities include day and night drives (in Etosha National Park and on the private Ongava concession), walks and hides (on the Ongava concession). Etosha National Park is a renowned park, boasting the most wildlife prolific game experience on a salt pan in the world. A healthy mix of wildlife, ranging from savanna based species like impala and then desert species like springbuck abound. Elephant roam the pan fringes and large herds of zebra are often highlighted against a mirage background of the white expansive salt pans. Within Etosha we visit numerous perennial springs and pans, encountering a myriad of differing species. Ongava houses healthy populations of the species within the park (except elephant) with rhino and predators often sighted.

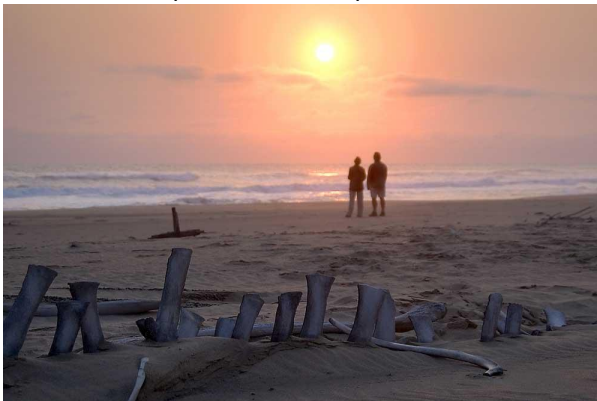


While at Ongava we will do a day trip to Halali, located halfway between Okaukuejo and Namutoni. Situated at the base of a dolomite hill among shady Mopane trees, Halali provides an ambiance of tranquility and space. It is surrounded by some of the most popular waterholes in the park.

**Ongava Tented Camp** comprises 8 large comfortable walk-in tents, each with en-suite facilities, including flush toilet and a hot shower. All meals are enjoyed in the thatched dining area that overlooks an active waterhole. There is a small pool in which to cool off as well.

#### **Days 10, 11 & 12: Skeleton Coast Research Camp, Skeleton Coast National Park**

Enjoy a breathtaking scenic flight over dramatic desert landscapes to the exclusive Skeleton Coast Research Camp situated in a private concession in the Skeleton Coast Park.



This is one of the most inhospitable but hauntingly beautiful places on the planet: desolate and uninhabited. It has everything, from roaring sand dunes, windswept plains, towering canyons and salt pans to seal colonies, bleached whale bones and shipwrecks. Full-day explorations in 4x4 Land Rovers will take all these in, picnicking on the way. Included are cultural visits to the remote villages of the Himba people.

**Skeleton Coast Research Camp** comprises 5 Meru-style tents nestled between granite rocks.

Surrounded by pure wilderness, this camp is truly remote and the perfect setting for a serviced style of camping. The camp is outfitted with necessary comforts and equipment, essential elements to the old and relaxed manner of early explorers.

Discoverer camping aims to bring the guest closer to nature, by means of a lively campfire, lanterns, wide-ranging activities and a warm atmosphere complimenting the comfort and added luxury of the lodges visited. Skeleton Coast Research Camp is specifically outfitted to ensure that old-style camping feel with a clear emphasis on necessary and simple comfortable interiors, creating a peerless wilderness experience.

**Day 13: Charter flight to Windhoek**

Say farewell to the adventure as we return by air charter to Windhoek, arriving at approximately 4pm late afternoon.

**Land Costs**

The Great Namibian Journey operates with a minimum of 2 guests and a maximum of 8 guests for each safari.

January 7 – May 31 and November 1, 2012 – January 2, 2013	From US\$9,036.00 per person From US\$ 823.00 single supplement
June 1 – October 31, 2012	From US\$9,839.00 per person From US\$ 823.00 single supplement

**SAFARI INCLUDES:**

- Accommodations on a per person sharing basis
- All meals from lunch on Day 1 (excluding dinner on the second night in Swakopmund)
- All local drinks (excluding premium brands) while at Desert Rhino Camp, Ongava Tented Camp and Skeleton Coast Research Camp
- National park fees
- Laundry (excluded at Hansa Hotel, Damaraland Camp and Skeleton Coast Research Camp)
- Twice daily scheduled activities
- All internal air transfers as specified in the detailed itinerary

**SAFARI EXCLUDES:**

- Flights (other than those specified in the detailed safari itinerary)
- Visas
- Compulsory comprehensive insurance
- All relevant entry and departure government taxes
- All drinks while in Swakopmund (Hansa Hotel) and at Kulala Desert Lodge and Damaraland Camp
- All personal purchases (including curios, premium brand liquors, telephone calls, etc.)
- Gratuities
- Optional extra activities
- Pre and post safari tours and meals or accommodation before or after the safari
- Any new government taxes, levies, fuel or industry increases which are beyond our control.

**Additional Safari Notes:**

**Exclusive experience:** Most areas in which we travel are private concessions, with Skeleton Coast Camp being for the sole use of Wilderness Explorations guests. At the lodges and hotels en route, as well as Wilderness Air light aircraft transfers, we have the chance to meet other Wilderness Safaris guests.

**International air connection onto the safari:** If arrival is planned for the day of the safari's departure, please ensure that this is with the earliest possible international flight arrival, before 9am. Arrival on a later flight may necessitate additional road or air transfers (as the main group's departure for the first camp/lodge will already have taken place), subject to extra cost.

Please note that if you overnight in Windhoek on the night before the safari begins, you will be collected by the guide in the Explorations' vehicle from the hotel where you stayed. If you arrive by flight on the day the safari commences, you will be collected from the airport.

**International air connections leaving the safari:** Please ensure that your departure flight is booked for after 4pm from Windhoek. For earlier international departure flights, an additional transfer will be required to arrive for this connection, subject to extra cost.

**Routes:** To maximize your travel time, a variety of travel modes that bring out the best of each area is used: flying in private charters and overland transfers provide both a bird's-eye view and an in-depth experience of the contrasting landscapes of Namibia.