



Namibia Wildlife Safari: Desert Landscapes & National Parks

13 days | 17 days with Cape Town extension

The largest national parks and tallest sand dunes in all of Africa. The oldest desert in the whole world. Namibia packs so much into a footprint just larger than the state of Texas that no amount of writing would do the country justice. So, let these words be your starting point: If you want to tread Sossusvlei's timeless sands, sail the Atlantic's waves off Swakopmund, rumble past wildebeest on a game drive in Etosha, and come face-to-face with millennia of history at Twyfelfontein, this tour's the ticket. Want to check off South Africa, too? Stretch your trip by a few days and add the extension to lush Cape Town.



Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels
- 10 breakfasts
- 6 lunches
- 8 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 food tasting
- 3 sightseeing tours
- 4 game drives
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private motor coach

Included highlights

- Sossusvlei's sand dunes
- Deadvlei's Skeleton Trees
- Namib-Naukluft National Park
- Swakopmund catamaran cruise
- Skeleton Coast
- Twyfelfontein
- Petrified Forest National Monument
- Etosha National Park game drives
- Cheetah Conservation Project
- Rhino tracking

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for about two hours daily across moderately uneven terrain, including paved roads and unpaved trails, with some steep hills.

Group size

12-22

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Johannesburg, South Africa, today.

Johannesburg → 1 night

Day 2: Arrival in Johannesburg

Welcome to South Africa! Meet a Go Ahead representative in the arrivals lounge, then walk together to the airport's hotel. Get a good night's rest: You'll be flying to Namibia tomorrow.

Sossusvlei → 2 nights

Day 3: Flight to Windhoek & transfer to Sossusvlei

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

This morning, board a short flight from Johannesburg to the Namibian capital city of Windhoek. (Say it "VIND-hoke.") Then, make your way to the Sossusvlei Region with your Tour Director and fellow travelers, stopping for a packed lunch as you go. At your hotel this evening, meet back up with your group and keep getting to know one another over an included dinner, served with beer or wine. Once you're done, settle back in for the night and start preparing for the next day's sightseeing.

Day 4: Sightseeing tour of Sossusvlei

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Surrounded by the towering red dunes of the world's oldest desert, punctuated by the sand-smoothed husks of dead trees, the Sossusvlei (pronounced "SAUCE-us-vlai") salt pan wouldn't look out of place in a surrealist painting. However, we assure you it's very real; head out early this morning to explore the eerie landscape of this natural work of art, sculpted by years of natural evaporation.

- Walk through Deadvlei: Directly translating from the original Afrikaans as "dead marsh," this white-clay pan is home to a unique attraction—the 600-year-old skeletons of desiccated camel thorn trees, scorched black by the searing sun.

- Take in the titanic form of Sossusvlei's largest sand dune, a 1,066-foot-tall behemoth affectionately nicknamed "Big Daddy."
- Climb up a neighboring dune—part of the tallest collection of such features on the planet—and gaze upon the ancient Namib Desert from a new perspective. (If you aren't up for it, don't worry: This hike is optional.)
- Head to the Sesriem Canyon—a gnarled gorge created over millions of years—and learn how the Tsauchab River honed its walls.

After your first day in the desert, head back to your hotel and freshen up before reconvening for tonight's included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Swakopmund → 2 nights

Day 5: Transfer to Swakopmund

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Emerge from the UNESCO-listed landscapes of the Namib Desert and arrive in Swakopmund—a laidback, bohemian city on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. Named after the nearby Swakop River, it boasts an interesting blend of German and African architecture: Snap some pictures ahead of tomorrow's outing, then join your group in the evening for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 6: Catamaran lunch & marine life cruise

Included meals: breakfast, light lunch

Board a catamaran, cruise out into the Atlantic Ocean, and spend a few blissful hours skimming the surf.

- Enjoy a light lunch, including oysters and sparkling wine, as you sail along the Namibian coastline.
- As you relax, hear about the creatures that call these waters home. Humpbacks and southern right whales are native to this part of the Atlantic, and you'll learn about their migratory habits while you sail.
- Keep your eyes peeled for leatherback sea turtles, sunfishes, and members of the Marine Big Five: dolphins, sharks, seals, penguins (yes, penguins!), and, of course, whales.

Please note: Due to their seasonal migratory patterns, you may not see any whales while on your cruise.

Once you dock, take up an optional excursion and head south to the seaside city of Walvis Bay for a scenic stroll and a safari through its neighboring dunes. Alternatively, hang back and spend a free afternoon strolling Swakopmund Mole, an old seawall built during German rule.
+ Walvis Bay & Dune Safari

Damaraland → 1 night

Day 7: Transfer to Damaraland

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Make your way to Damaraland by way of the Skeleton Coast, an arid terrain that has more than earned its menacing nickname. So dubbed for the bones of whales and seals that have washed ashore over the years, this treacherous stretch of the Namibian coast holds over 1,000 shipwrecks in various states of decay. It isn't all gloomy, though: One of the world's largest fur seal colonies, 200,000 strong, has settled here. Take in the powerful views of this protected expanse, then stop for an included lunch along the way. Rev back up to finish your journey to Damaraland, settling into your safari lodge before rejoining your group for an included dinner, served with beer or wine, at the property's restaurant.

Etosha → 2 nights

Day 8: Etosha via Twyfelfontein & the Petrified Forest

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Depart Damaraland, setting a course for Etosha—one of the largest national parks in all of Africa. As you traverse the rocky desert, you'll make a pair of pitstops.

- First, detour to Twyfelfontein. Officially known as /Ui-//aes—"jumping waterhole" in the indigenous Khoekhoe language—this archaeological trove was named Namibia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2007. It lays claim to roughly 2,500 rock paintings and engravings, showcasing over 6,000 years of human settlement. (It also happens to be one of the largest collections of petroglyphs on the African continent.)
- From there, stop for an included buffet-style

lunch before moving on to another Namibian National Monument: the Petrified Forest. Deposited in their current location by a massive flood millions of years ago, these fossilized trees have, quite literally, been turned to stone. Learn how they were petrified through a process called silicification and examine them where they lay, surrounded by sandstone and silica.

Continue to Etosha. After settling into your hotel, sit down to an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Please note: The visit to Twyfelfontein and the Petrified Forest may take place on day 7, based on the location of your hotel.

Day 9: Etosha National Park game drives

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Spend the day on a game drive through Etosha National Park. Encompassing some 8,600 square miles, this 111-year-old conservation area is home to several endangered species, including the black rhino and the black-faced impala. Roll out and back on a 4x4 safari vehicle, enjoying a midday lunch at your lodge before setting out once again. Four of the Big Five, Africa's most famous game animals, roam Etosha's lands. See if you can spot a lion, leopard, rhino, or elephant—maybe you'll find them all! After your final game drive of the day, freshen up back in your room before enjoying an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Okonjima Region → 1 night

Day 10: Cheetah Conservation Fund

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

More cheetahs roam Namibia than any other country in the world, and today, you'll visit the Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF), a nonprofit in the Waterberg Region dedicated to preserving their habitat. After an included lunch, you'll follow a guide to see cheetahs that can't be let back into the wild. In the process, you'll learn about the CCF's rescue, rehabilitation, and release programs, as well as the group's efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between rural communities and these famed predators. One inspiring outing later, you'll return to your accommodations and join your group for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Windhoek → 1 night

Day 11: Rhino tracking & transfer to Windhoek

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, farewell dinner

Today, join a dedicated guide and a specialized anti-poaching team and spend the morning on foot, tracking a population of southern white rhinos. They may not look it, but these beasts are quite easygoing—especially compared to their aggressive cousins, the black rhino. Their calmer dispositions allow for safer, more intimate observation, letting you and your group see them in their natural habitat.

Please note: Your guide will make a full safety assessment before allowing your group out of the safari vehicle. Only upon successful completion will you proceed to track the rhinos on foot.

Wrap up your adventure by returning to Windhoek and joining your Tour Director for a short tasting of local specialties. Then, celebrate your trip with your fellow travelers during tonight's farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 12: Flight to Johannesburg & departure

Included meals: breakfast

Fly back to Johannesburg, South Africa, where you'll board your overnight flight home.

Arrive Home

Day 13: Travel day

Bid Africa farewell as you take off for home—or extend your trip and stay a while longer on the continent's southern tip, discovering why Cape Town was named a UNESCO City of Design.

+ Cape Town extension

From the top of Table Mountain to the very tip of the African continent, Cape Town is, in a word, impressive. Over the course of a four-night stay, you'll come to appreciate South Africa's cultural capital, letting local guides lead you through this magnificent metropolis and its stunning surroundings.

Cape Town → 4 nights

Day 12: Flight to Cape Town

Included meals: breakfast

Fly from Windhoek to “the Mother City:” Cape Town.

Day 13: Sightseeing tour of Cape Town

Included meals: breakfast

Founded in 1652, Cape Town is the oldest city in South Africa, and has the cultural heritage to match. Start your first full day here by joining your Tour Director for some guided sightseeing.

- Ride a cable car up Table Mountain—one of Cape Town's defining features—and revel in the panorama unfolding below you.
- See the flat-topped peak of Signal Hill and the Castle of Good Hope, a 17th-century bastion fort erected by the Dutch East India Company.
- Drive on through the city, catching glimpses of City Hall—distinguishable by its Edwardian style—and the Neoclassical Houses of Parliament as you go.
- Leave your bus and set out on a walking tour of Bo-Kaap. Painting the slopes of Signal Hill in flashes of color, the pastel homes and cobbled roads of this diverse neighborhood nurtured the Cape Malay culture created by Muslims who arrived in the country in the 1700s.
- Visit the District Six Museum to learn about those who were forcibly removed under Apartheid—a ruthless system of racial segregation that only ended in the '90s. While there, see how its employees are helping to rebuild and strengthen communities in District Six and beyond.

Please note: The cable car ride up Table Mountain is weather-dependent. Also, on some departures, the optional excursion will be offered in the morning and the sightseeing tour will take place in the afternoon. For departures during July and August, travelers will visit Signal Hill and enjoy an included lunch due to annual maintenance of the Table Mountain cable car.

After wrapping up your morning tour, join your group for an optional excursion to Robben Island, site of a notorious prison that once held Nelson Mandela captive. Or, enjoy a free afternoon in Cape Town, sunbathing on one of its 10 Blue Flag beaches—strips of shore recognized worldwide for their quality and sustainability. + Robben Island

Day 14: Sightseeing tour of the Cape Peninsula

Included meals: breakfast

Spend the day exploring the rocky Cape Peninsula, hopping on and off your bus to see interesting sights up close.

- Drive along the Atlantic seaboard, passing the beaches of Clifton and Camps Bay.
- Visit the Cape of Good Hope—an instantly recognizable headland long used as a landmark by mariners—and the Cape Point lighthouse, soaking in beautiful views all the while.
- Head to coastal Simon's Town, where you'll have free time for lunch or a walk along the beach. Then, go to Boulders Beach, a protected marine habitat and home to a colony of endangered African penguins. While there, learn how your visit helps support a local nongovernmental organization: the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds.

Day 15: Free day in Cape Town & farewell dinner experience

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Choose to spend the day on an optional excursion, sampling wines crafted in the fertile Cape Winelands. You could also take a free day in Cape Town: We suggest familiarizing yourself with the native flora at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden.

Then, spend the evening taking part in a unique African dining experience at GOLD Restaurant—a culinary destination famous for its immersive meal services.

- Join in an authentic djembe drumming performance, where you'll be given your own drum to play along with the performers.
- Sit down in a private room for a one-of-a-kind banquet, complete with a history of local spices, a guided sensory analysis, and a tasting of 14 traditional dishes.
- Celebrate your trip with an evening full of entertainment, enlivened by storytelling staff and a number of different performances.

+ Cape Winelands Tasting & Lunch

Day 17: Travel day

Arrive home today.

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 16: Departure

Included meals: breakfast

This afternoon, transfer to the airport for your overnight flight home.

Arrive Home

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: goaheadtours.com/NAM | 1-800-597-0350

Day 6: Walvis Bay & Dune Safari

\$149/\$159* (5.5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

For centuries, the port town of Walvis Bay was known for whaling and its deep-water harbor; today, the thriving wildlife and undulating sand dunes of Namibia's second-largest city make it a popular destination for holidaymakers. Begin your excursion with a stop at Walvis Bay Lagoon—a protected inlet that's home to pelicans, avocets, and some 250,000 flamingos. Then, depending on the weather and tides, drive to Sandwich Harbour: Wedged between the Atlantic Ocean and the Namib Sand Sea, this important coastal wetland supports eight endangered species and a large population of wading birds. Take a break to enjoy a spread of oysters, sparkling wine, and other snacks and drinks before picking up the pace in Namib-Naukluft National Park. Hop aboard a 4x4 vehicle and drive along its epic dunes, stopping at scenic overlooks as you go. Wrap up by returning to Walvis Bay, then board your bus back to your hotel in Swakopmund.

Please note: Each dune buggy accommodates five or fewer passengers; travelers will be split into groups. Additionally, the ride may be bumpy, and isn't suitable for travelers with back issues or mobility restrictions.

Extension excursion options

Day 13: Robben Island

\$85 (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Today, board a ferry to Robben Island—an enduring reminder of apartheid and South Africa's struggle for freedom. First fortified in the 17th century and used as a jail until 1996, this UNESCO-recognized site imprisoned Nelson Mandela and other political activists and dissidents. There, you'll set off on a tour, guided by a former political prisoner. You'll see the cell where Mandela was held for 18 years, and learn more about the Nobel laureate's life and work. Afterward, take the ferry back to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and enjoy free time in the area before ending your outing.

Please note: This excursion is weather-dependent. In case of inclement weather, it will take place on the afternoon of day 4. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 15: Cape Winelands Tasting & Lunch

\$109/\$119* (6 hours, departs in the morning with lunch)

Leave the city behind for a sensational day in the Cape Winelands—a trio of valleys and the largest winemaking region in South Africa. Depart Cape Town, driving through mountainous, tree-lined terrain, en route to a vineyard in the Stellenbosch Region. Here, you'll get a taste of some of the area's finest vintages—like pinotage, a distinctly South African varietal first created and cultivated in the country. Then, continue to another estate for a second tasting, accompanied by a light lunch. Relax and soak in the scenery, then make your way back to Cape Town.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at goaheadtours.com/terms