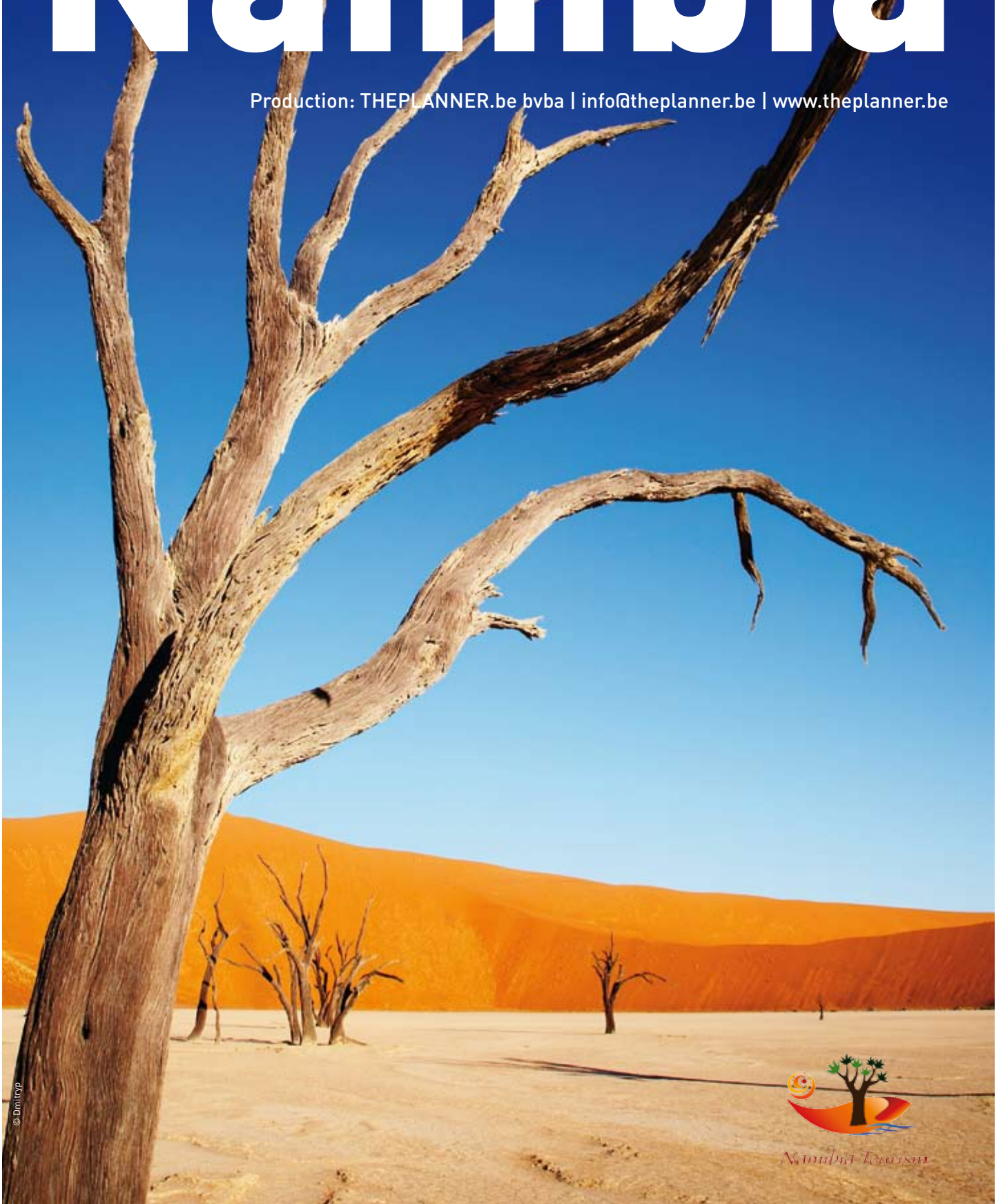


Namibia

Production: THEPLANNER.be bvba | info@theplanner.be | www.theplanner.be



© Dmitry



Namibia Tourism

Kempinski Mokuti Lodge



Located on the eastern edge of the Etosha National Park, Kempinski Mokuti Lodge boasts unique Namibian charm combined with international standards of luxury.

After an extensive refurbishment and rebranding, Kempinski Mokuti Lodge, will be offering 5-star hospitality, quality and service.

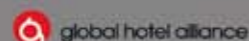
Grill and carvery buffet • à la carte and boma restaurant • various outdoor bush dinner venues
congenial indoor and pool bar • professional conference facilities for up to 160 delegates
daily private and scheduled guided game drives into Etosha National Park • walking trails
swimming pools • children splash pool • floodlit tennis courts • snake park • star gazing



**Kempinski
Mokuti Lodge**

ETOSHA • NAMIBIA

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www.kempinski.com



Namibia has 2 million inhabitants and is larger in size than Great Britain and France together. An African diamond that effortlessly blinds European certitudes through its brilliance: through the immense expanse, the silence and the pristine landscape with its vivid colour contrasts and unique flora and fauna. Travelling to Namibia is a journey to the beginning of Creation. To the land of Noah's Ark...

A 45-minute drive from the airport (which is 1,650 meters above sea level) brings you to Windhoek, nestled against the flanks of the Auas mountains. This mini-metropolis is home to some 300,000 inhabitants and is the economic and political heart of Namibia. The residents of the city – which seamlessly combines German colonial architectural styles with colourful apartment buildings awash in African hues – vividly reflect the country's rich ethnic and cultural diversity.

Meeting in safari

Thanks to its excellent infrastructure, Windhoek is one of the major venues in Namibia for holding residential meetings or congresses. The hotels of The Safari Hotels Group are a striking example of this. The Safari Court Hotel is a 4-star hotel with 234 guest rooms and lots of meeting capacity. Hotel Safari, a 3-star hotel with 192 rooms, even has a ballroom for 2400 persons in theatre style. There is also the NamPower Convention Centre, in the centre of Windhoek, with an auditorium for 600 guests.

A step away outside the capital city, you find the Windhoek Country Club Resort, opened in 1995 and one of the gems of Legacy Hotels & Resorts. The hotel has 152 rooms and the Oryx Conference Centre's auditorium holds 800 persons. Of course, Windhoek is in constant evolution, and so new projects are always underway – a prominent one at the moment is preparing for the opening of a Kempinski hotel in 2010.



Township tour through Katutura

Katutura is the best known 'township' of Windhoek. Its name translates as "the place we never want to live in" – referring to 1959, during the South African apartheid regime, when the black Namibians were compelled to live there. Over 100,000 souls reside in Katutura, about a third of Windhoek's total population.

All of the major ethnic groups are represented there – including Ovambo, Nama, Herero and Damara. For this reason alone, a visit to Katutura is an interesting stop. Be sure to visit 'Penduka', an initiative by the local women. In the midst of Katutura, Penduka is an oasis of artistic crafts and small shops. But above all, this project is a spirited and hopeful illustration of how the local population is able to transcend poverty through united initiatives.



SOSSUSVLEI

RED-HOT DUNE DESERT COUNTRY

© Dmitry

Of all the nights in all four corners of the world, the nights in Namibia are the loveliest. And not only because of the fabulously beautiful lodges. The star-spangled sky plays its part too: a blue-black background strewn with a galaxy of innumerable, glittering stars and – unique for the Southern Hemisphere – the scintillating Southern Cross. Spending hours star-gazing is an incentive in itself. But be sure that you're fresh and lively the next morning to discover Sossusvlei. The Namib Desert is generally considered to be one of the oldest deserts in the world. This immense landscape of infinite grains of sand is about 100 kilometres wide and extends from north to south along the Atlantic coast of Namibia over a length of nearly 2000 kilometres.



This desert is a protected spot on Earth, and in the heart of this natural treasure lies a polished pearl called Sossusvlei. Sossusvlei itself is a clayey basin in the Namib Desert. It's within walking distance of Deadvlei, the dead, waterless valley where parched, 500 year-old trees silently stand witness to the advance of the dunes. For many visitors, the glowing red sunrise in Sossusvlei or Deadvlei is the highlight of an incentive trip through Namibia.

Only at sunrise or sunset is the full extent of Sossusvlei's legendary beauty truly revealed: an endless, light-green and yellow valley covered with a swaying carpet of tall grass, surrounded by softly glowing hills and flame-coloured, star-shaped sand dunes, with one flank set in shadow by the low-hanging sun. These are the cathedrals of the desert, which in Namibia can soar up to 300 metres high. The highest dunes in the world, ascending in one of the oldest deserts on Earth. A desert that stretches the entire length of the coastline, running from Swakopmund in the north to Oranjemund in the south of the country.

ENJOY A PANORAMIC TRIP OVER RED-HOT DUNES AND CLIMB DEADVLEI "BIG DADDY" TO THE 325 METRE HIGH SUMMIT.

Balloon ride over a sea of dunes

An ideal way to admire the area around Sossusvlei is a balloon trip at sunrise, where the 'sky boys' let you skim over the tops of the dunes and you can see the 'toktokkie' (black beetles with long, quick legs) spurt away on the sand ridges. Group balloon trips are arranged so that up to 4 balloons can take off together at half-hour intervals. This way, 100 persons can be easily sent aloft in just 1.5 - 2 hours. The breathtaking event is concluded with a magical deluxe breakfast in the middle of the desert.



Sandcastle nights and canyon dinners

The area around Sossusvlei has several special lodges. One of the most striking is 'Le Mirage Desert Lodge & Spa'. Guests can arrive on the landing strip nearby, where a DC-6 (60 persons), DC-4 (50 persons) or DC-3 (30 persons) can easily touch down (this is also the case at many other lodges in Namibia, by the way). This 4-star lodge with its intimate spa, covered in the back by the rock formations of the Namib, has 30 guest rooms (26 doubles and 4 singles) and is actually in the shape of a desert castle. So, this is an especially mysterious venue in the middle of the desert, and the setting for evening quad trips as well.



Groups that would like to enjoy a dinner outside the lodge can travel to Sesriem Canyon, a deep gorge carved out by the Tsauchab River, about 25 km from Le Mirage. Sesriem Canyon, a natural phenomenon set in the shadow of the red desert dunes of Sossusvlei, has often been featured in films and is a dream venue for candlelight suppers. The canyon is some 30 meters deep and 1.5 kilometres long. In some places, the canyon is so narrow that you can jump over it!

A couple of kilometres from this canyon is yet another desert lodge – Sossus Dune Lodge – which belongs to Namibia Wildlife Resorts and comprises a swimming pool and 25 luxury chalets, each for two persons. All of the chalets look out onto the gorgeous views of the savannah. Sossus Dune Lodge, exclusively for hire to incentive groups, is the only lodge situated within the borders of the Namib Naukluft National Park around Sossusvlei. The important advantage of this location is that, in the morning before the other park visitors arrive, the lodge guests can already set off trekking with a 4x4 or overland trucks to Sossusvlei.



Another lodge – this one located just outside the national park – is Sossusvlei Lodge, with 45 twin rooms whose canvas façades can be zipped open like a tent. The lodge is also often used for lunches, following the group's visit to Sossusvlei.

Up in the Cessna

From barely 1500 metres up in the air, you have an ideal view of Nature's masterpieces, painted by millions of years of wind and weather in palettes ranging from red to golden yellow. Incentive groups often fly on board a Cessna from the Sossusvlei region to Swakopmund on the Namibian coast. This panoramic flight, with one pilot and four passengers per plane, flies over stunning, ever-changing landscapes. Only then do you really realise that a mere 2% of Namibia's over 820,000 square kilometres contains paved or gravel roads and habitation. The local DMC Abenteuer Afrika Safari has let the historic DC-6, DC-4 and DC-3 fly in formation for a transfer through the Namibian airspace. It's true, transfers via airplane make the incentive trip a bit more expensive (ca. 300 euro per person), but a once-in-a-lifetime experience like this makes these extra euros more than worth it. And Champagne after the flight is included! The transfer between Sossusvlei and Swakopmund can also be made by car, but then you have to factor in some four hours of transfer time – albeit, indeed, through colourful, fascinating scenery.



Running north-south straight through Namibia is a plateau, flanked by the Kalahari in the east (the natural habitat of the Bushmen or San) and the Namib in the west. The enormous dunes of the Namib are halted only by the rolling surf of the Atlantic Ocean. One of the most well-known coastal towns there is Swakopmund, about 350 km from Windhoek. This summertime capital is also sometimes known as the 'adventure capital' of Namibia.

The atmosphere on Namibia's Atlantic coast is radically different from that in the desert interior. While it can be blistering hot in the central parts of the Namib, the temperature drops off at the coast due to the Benguela current, which comes from the southern seas around Antarctica. So, a silver-grey mist frequently hangs above seaside resorts like Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. Not a thundery inclement mist, but rather a refreshing screen in front of the sun that keeps the temperature around 20 °C so the 40,000 inhabitants of Swakopmund and its visitors enjoy a mild climate.

Base of operations for adventurous incentives

Swakopmund is the base of operations in Namibia for exciting or active incentives – and that makes this desert town and its environs an absolute must for groups.

Eco-quad biking is one of the possibilities and can be organised for groups of up to 120 persons (usually divided into sub-groups of 30 - 40 persons). By turns, the others can try 'Dune Olympics', which includes 'extreme dune driving', where 10 passengers in an open vehicle with a throbbing V8 motor plunge down the sides of the dunes. You can also make this downhill plunge lying on a 'sand board' – the speedometer shows you how fast you are surfing down the sand wave. Speeds of 35 - 45 km/hour are not unusual! Ideal activity for teambuilding – and it's totally safe!



Those looking for something a bit loftier can also go parasailing behind a 4x4 to enjoy the bird's-eye view above the desert. And for the participants that would prefer something calmer, a desert trek with guide Tommy Collard is highly recommended. This mini-expedition, which lasts two hours or longer, can even be done after sunset. During a so-called "Living Desert Tour" with this expert desert freak, you discover that a tremendous amount of life lurks in an apparently desolate sand flat: snakes, geckoes, lizards, chameleons, all manner of insects, scorpions and many other beauties.



Dining on the moon

Driving from Swakopmund for a half hour towards the southeast, a particularly special venue looms into view for unique cocktails or dinners with groups of up to 180 persons. The name of this part of Namibia says it all: "Moon Landscape" – a bizarre picture of knobby hills, aiguilles and warm canyons. A picturesque setting, where the local DMC Abenteuer Afrika Safari can provide incomparable memories, like bottles of Champagne being dropped by trained parachutists (more than amazing – gives you bubbles and shudders at the same time!). And after the heavenly cocktail comes a divine dinner – al fresco or in tents – in one of the canyons.

These tents can also be set up on the Swakopmund beach, with a glass wall facing the sea. Or in the desert, of course, some 20 km from the city. Mobile tent camps are often used for incentive groups (even for overnight stays) and are ideal for up to 150 persons. Upon arrival in the campsite, a real African market can also be installed for a bit of shopping before or after dinner. And in the late hours, after a short ride on the back of a camel, the group can spot planets like Venus, Uranus, Jupiter, Saturn or Mars under the guidance of an expert with a powerful telescope.

The first European to sail into Walvis Bay was the Portuguese sailor Bartholomeus Diaz in 1487. Today, a boat trip across these waters, 33 km from Swakopmund, is an ideal activity for incentive groups. Especially if you can be on board the 'Flipper' with Captain Johnny!



Between his stories about the harvesting of guano (the white gold of Namibia) and about the Namibian oyster culture, this bloke with seaman's legs invites sea lions on board for a fish feast! An astonishing moment, in which the guests become part of a kind of circus act. These clever animals come and go over the side of the deck – Piccolo and Sally the Surfer being the most famous ones.

During the trip – in which the group can sample ample oysters – you encounter still more marine animals like bottle nose dolphins, pelicans, sea turtles or whales (especially prevalent in August and September). From time to time in fish-rich Walvis Bay, you also come upon a ghostly shipwreck. But, in fact, the Skeleton Coast in Namibia is most famous for this. The Skeleton Coast lies to the north of Swakopmund – where you'll find tall dunes, vast pastel-coloured plains, mountain ranges, deep canyons, salt pans and ... over 400 shipwrecks (which give the coast its name). The scenic beauty around the Skeleton Coast is especially impressive during a panoramic flight.



Hotels in Swakopmund

There are a number of hotels in Swakopmund that are ideal for smaller or medium-sized incentive groups. In 2010, a Kempinski Hotel – ideal for larger groups – will appear on the spot where the famous Strand Hotel used to stand. Swakopmund Hotel, erected in a former German train station, is also highly recommendable and has 89 guest rooms.

For smaller groups, we can recommend Rössmund Lodge (24 rooms), about 10 kilometres east of Swakopmund.

Near the lodge, by the way, is the Rössmund Golf Course, where incentive groups can play golf on grass (in the middle of the desert!), while the springboks quietly graze...





ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

THE NAMIBIAN WILDLIFE KINGDOM

In addition to the stunning mosaic of cultures and landscapes, Namibia offers a breathtaking array of fauna: elephants, cheetahs, jackals, flamingos, giraffes, baboons, lions, zebras, warthogs, kudu, oryx, springbok and many others. Most of these animals live like kings in the kingdom called Etosha National Park. A realm surrounded by the best lodges in Namibia.

A flight from Swakopmund to Etosha National Park, over the Skeleton Coast and past the Brandberg, takes about 1.5 hours. This predominantly flat park in the north of Namibia is one of Africa's most beautiful and interesting wildlife parks. 'Etosha' literally means 'dry water', referring to the Etosha Pan in the heart of the park. Etosha Pan, with a surface area of 5000 square kilometres, is a saltpan that was created from a dried-up lake. Only in the rainy season is the pan filled with water that flows down from the highlands in southern Angola. Each year, the alga that grows in the water attracts thousands of flamingos, forming huge nesting grounds in the Etosha Pan.



But at the edge of the pan, all year round in fact, there are springs that attract large flocks of birds and wild animals during the dry winter months. So, the fauna of Etosha National Park is overwhelming. In this park of 20,230 square kilometres live 114 mammalian species, 340 species of bird, 16 species of reptiles and amphibians, and a great variety of insects. Among all these wild animals, we also find protected animals, like the black-faced impala and the black rhinoceros.

Wild Namibian nights

There are magnificent lodges in the northern part of Namibia, providing incentive groups with spectacular panoramic views of Etosha National Park. The luxurious Kempinski Mokuti Lodge, just outside the park to the east, is a perfect example. This lodge with private airstrip has a capacity of no less than 300 beds.

Another venue, to the east of Etosha as well, is Namutoni Resort, which belongs to Namibia Wildlife Resorts. Namutoni Resort is built around a former German fort that borders on the King Nehale water hole. So, view of the wildlife is guaranteed! The resort comprises 20 bush chalets and another 24 double rooms.

Drifting down a bit to the south, you reach Taleni Etosha Village, consisting of about 40 chalets, with open-air showers. Opening its doors in October 2008, Taleni Etosha Village is also perfect for large groups.



For smaller and more exclusive incentive groups, Epacha Game Lodge & Spa offers the ideal Out of Africa feeling. This lodge has 18 luxury chalets and 5 presidential suites, with an antique interior, an open-air shower and a balcony with views on the surrounding 21,000 hectares of bush – where a 'game drive' can be organised, or a unique 'bar-b-que' in the wild. The Mystique Spa, the specially situated swimming pool, the cigar bar and the stylish library make Epacha Game Lodge & Spa a luxury oasis less than 50 kilometres from Etosha National Park. Groups preferring to spend the night in luxury safari tents can do so in one of the 16 tents of the Eagle Tented Lodge & Spa, located right next to Epacha.



The perfume of the Himba

Of all the tribes in Namibia, the Himba, with their traditional way of life, appeal most to the imagination. In the particularly inaccessible Kaoko regio in the northwest, they lead a more or less nomadic existence with their herds. The Himba live in huts of woven twigs plastered with a mixture of mud and dung. As soon as the girls become women, they no longer wash themselves. To keep their skin supple and to give it a lovely glow, they rub themselves with an ointment of butter and powder made of red earth. The perfume of the Himba.

Tip for groups that don't have enough time to travel all the way to the northwest: you can also visit this tribe in Oasis Farm – about 150 km from Epacha Game Lodge & Spa – where there's a protected Himba village.

African paradise

Between Etosha National Park in Namibia and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe lies a jewel of a lodge: Divava Lodge, with 20 rooms that offer views on the Okavango River, in a unique marshland that is sometimes called 'Little Botswana'. Divava Lodge opened in 2007 and is well worth the visit! And be sure to relax in one of the glass saunas, looking out on the hippos!



Dr. Livingstone, I presume

For those who have visited Namibia previously, this can be an interesting detour: take the hundreds of kilometres long Caprivi trip between Angola and Botswana, arriving at the majestic Victoria Falls, first beheld in the 19th century by the Scottish explorer David Livingstone and named after the English queen. Vic Falls and Namibia are an ideal combination. A canoe trip over the wild rapids of the Zambezi is definitely an adventurous incentive. Skydiving is also possible, or bungee jumping from the bridge over the Zambezi. At 111 meters, the drop is known as the longest in the world. For the daredevils amongst you!

NAMIBIA IN A NUTSHELL

Capital: Windhoek (300,000 inhabitants)

Population density: 2 inhabitants per square kilometre

Surface area: 824,268 km²

Monetary unit: Namibian dollar (12 dollars = 1 euro)

Language: English, Afrikaans and German

Climate: desert climate.

Summer (max. 35°C) between October and April.

Winter (max. 25°C) between May and September

Ideal period for safaris: June to November

Ideal months with regard to temperature: May and June

Official documents:

EU citizens do not need a visa for a stay of less than 90 days

Time difference:

GMT +2 hours in the winter, and GMT +1 hour in the summer

Vaccinations:

only vaccination against malaria is necessary when you travel to the extreme north of the country

Did you know that...

In Namibia, you must drive on the left. Namibia is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. Before starting production, Volkswagen and Mercedes test their vehicles under extreme conditions in Namibia. Namibia can boast of "fairy circles": bone-dry circular places in the open savannah and along the sides of mountains where, for mysterious reasons, nothing can grow. In Namibia, you eat the best meat in the world! 13 different population groups live in Namibia. Bizarre trees and plants grow in Namibia, like the "kanniedoodnie", an appropriate name for a plant that lives to be over 500 years old.

AN AVERAGE INCENTIVE TRIP TO NAMIBIA LASTS 5 DAYS AND COSTS ABOUT 380 EURO PER PERSON PER DAY, EXCL. CONTINENTAL AIRFARE.

A selection of creative DMCs

There are a handful of professional DMCs in Namibia. We've listed the most prominent ones for you:

Royal Tours (Windhoek)

E: info@royaltours.com.na

W: www.royaltours.com.na

Springbok Atlas (Windhoek)

E: Martin.Wiemers@springbokatlas.com

W: www.springbokatlas.com

Terra Nova (Swakopmund)

E: simone@terra-nova.com.na

W: www.terra-nova.co.za

XO Africa (Windhoek)

E: info@xoafrika.com

W: www.xoafrika.com

Abenteuer Afrika Safari

This report was prepared in collaboration with the DMC Abenteuer Afrika Safari, whose home office is in Swakopmund. Abenteuer Afrika Safari has years of experience in Namibia and may unblushingly be regarded as one of the best and most creative DMCs in the country.



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Sossus Dune LODGE

Built in an environmentally sensitive manner, primarily from wood, canvas and thatch, in an attractive 'afro-village' style, Sossus Dune Lodge has been in operation since July 2007. Situated within the Namib-Naukluft Park, close to the Sesriem Canyon, and providing sweeping vistas of the dunes to the west, guests benefit from being able to reach Sossusvlei before sunrise, or to stay until after sunset, and on their return after an exhilarating day, to relax in the tranquility and splendour of the Namib Desert, under the spectacular African sky.

Namutoni ETOSHA

On the eastern side of Etosha National Park, Namutoni centers on a beautiful old German Fort, overlooking the flood-lit King Nehale waterhole. The Fort has now been developed into the hub of activity, offering two restaurants, private chill lounges, a bar, crafts boutique, curio shop, jewellery and bookstore. The Fort area is for pedestrian access only, and an elevated decked walkway along the water-hole facing wall provides opportunities for enjoying the surrounding scenery, wildlife and the spectacular sunsets over the flood-lit waterhole.

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