

Namibian Elephants Safari



Highlights

Namibia's elephants are the toughest in the world- and they have to be. In a country consisting largely of desert, these animals manage to live amid surroundings at once breathtakingly beautiful and vastly empty. To see them, one must go into the heart of Namibia's Northern Central Plateau, through some of the most awe-inspiring scenery on Earth.

The second least-densely populated country in the world, with the world's largest sand dunes and vast areas of desert, Namibia is a country where Nature rules. In such a dry place, it may seem surprising that large animals can survive at all, let alone animals as large as elephants, but survive they do, superbly adapted to the demands of the climate and terrain. The environment itself, in all its stark magnificence, ensures that this remains first and foremost the animals' place, a land where few humans -except for the Bushmen, themselves as well-adapted to the land as the elephants- choose to make their homes.

Obviously, the elephants themselves are the stars of this trip; with luck you'll get to see representatives of communities of elephants living in the salt pans, the desert, the woodlands and near the river, each with their own idiosyncratic behavioural "dialects", suited to the different demands of life in those areas. You'll pass fields of huge sand dunes that leave you feeling as if you've landed on another world, and the Doros Crater, the eroded remains of an ancient volcanic cataclysm. At Okaukuejo, in Etosha national park, you'll see wildlife aplenty, even at night, as lions, rhino and of course elephants come to drink at the floodlit waterhole; and in wet season, the nearby Etosha Pan floods, forming a vast shallow lake which temporarily transforms the entire landscape.

Is it for me?

If you want to see elephants in the wild, this is the safari par excellence. Eleven days in one of the world's true wildernesses, the only backdrop against which these animals can be truly appreciated. Camping -at well-provisioned sites- is interspersed with more luxurious lodge stays, so you don't have to leave comfort behind altogether, but this is definitely a trip for those passionate about wildlife and wild landscape; much of the day will be spent in vehicles in the desert searching for and watching elephants- a prospect which will either enthrall you, or not. If the former is the case, then this tour is a dream come true.

Accommodation

On such a long and varied tour, you'll be staying in several lodges as well as camping under the stars. The lodges vary from large, luxurious waystations like Twyfelfontein, to smaller, more down-to-Earth, yet still very comfortable, places such as Tsumkwe, which however offer a charm and character all their own. Highlight of the lodges has to be Okaukuejo, which overlooks a permanent waterhole that is illuminated at night, offering 24-hour viewing of visiting animals. Camping is always at established campsites, which offer some basic facilities (including running water, washing places and, of course, toilets) to make the stay more comfortable without impinging on the direct experience of the open country. Food varies from traditional Namibian Braai - meat cooked over charcoal in a barbecue manner- to hearty evening campfire fare made all the more tasty by its being enjoyed beneath the African night sky.

Itinerary

Day 1: Windhoek-Erongo Wilderness Lodge (262 Km)

Prices from

3,304 GBP (12 days) per person

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Your first destination is the stunning Erongo Wilderness Lodge. Lunch is eaten en route. Upon arrival, you'll relax and enjoy a sundowner overlooking the Omaruru River Valley.

Day 2: Erongo Wilderness-Ugab Wilderness (177 Km)

After breakfast you'll head for Omaruru, and then towards the Ugab River, stopping for lunch en route. You'll set up camp at Ugab Wilderness Campsite, then head off along the River bed to search for desert elephants, and observe them from a safe distance. Camping under the stars.

Day 3: Ugab Wilderness-Twyfelfontein Area (150 Km)

After breakfast you'll head North in search of the elusive desert Elephants, this time along the Aba-Huab river. Dinner and rest will be in the luxurious Twyfelfontein Country Lodge.

Day 4: Twyfelfontein-Okaukeujo (367 Km)

Today you'll continue to Etosha National Park. Okaukeujo waterhole will be the end of the road today; the waterhole is floodlit, so you'll be able to continue observing the wildlife that night.

Day 5: Okaukeujo-Onguma Camp site (160 Km)

You'll visit various waterholes to continue searching for elephants and other game. Break for lunch in Halali, then you'll drive further east to Onguma, a game farm that has been turned into a nature reserve, where you'll dine and stay the night.

Day 6: Onguma-Tsumkwe Lodge (420 Km)

After breakfast you'll leave for Tsumkwe, in the Kalahari Desert, home to the biggest elephants in Namibia. Upon arrival and after a short rest a visit to the Nyae-Nyae pans will end of this day. Night at Tsumkwe Lodge.

Day 7: Tsumkwe-Sikeretti (60 Km)

Leaving Tsumkwe, you'll enter the Khaudum Game Reserve. Passing by several waterholes in the Southern part of the Khaudum in search of more elephants. You'll camp under the stars at Sikeretti.

Day 8: Sikeretti-Khaudum (140 Km)

The Khaudum is home to the biggest elephants in Namibia. camp in the Khaudum Camp. Dinner over an open fire.

Day 9: Khaudum-Ngepi (200 Km)

From Khaudum you'll head north for 60 km of sandy roads, then follow the Okavango River as it flows towards Botswana. Our destination for the night is Ngepi Camp on the river's bank.

Day 10: Mahango Area (50 Km)

From Pops Falls, you'll travel to Mahango Game Reserve to see the river elephants, spending another night at Ngepi Camp.

Day 11: Ngepi-Roy's Camp (410 Km)

We start our journey back to Windhoek by camping at Roy's Rest Camp, with a chance to enjoy a Braai dinner.

Day 12: Roy's Camp-Windhoek (552 Km)

From Roy's Rest Camp, you'll return to Windhoek.

Details

Getting there

You need to get to Windhoek. There are flights from most major British airports.

Price includes

Tour as described, including transport, accommodation, meals, guides, transfer to and from Windhoek.

Price details

Price quoted above is based on two sharing. There are discounts available for larger groups.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

12 days

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed