

Namibia

Dunes and Skies: Exploring Namibia's Wild Heart

April 1 to 18, 2027



Watering Hole Activity

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Embark on an unforgettable safari through **Namibia's raw and remarkable wilderness**, where dramatic landscapes and rare wildlife create a truly immersive experience. Climb the world's tallest sand dunes at **Sossusvlei**, track desert-adapted elephants and rhinos across the rugged terrain of **Damaraland** and feel the thrill of quad biking through a remote private reserve. Take to the skies for a scenic flight along the hauntingly beautiful **Diamond Coast**—passing shipwrecks, seal colonies, and abandoned diamond camps frozen in time. Explore the waters of **Walvis Bay**, teeming with marine life, before heading north to **Etosha National Park**. Here, enjoy exclusive wildlife encounters on a private reserve, including time in an underground photographic hide overlooking a busy waterhole and nighttime game viewing under starlight skies. Evenings offer dazzling stargazing in the Southern Hemisphere's clear night skies. This expert-led, small-group safari balances high-adrenaline adventure with immersive wildlife observation, an unforgettable way to experience Namibia's raw and remarkable wilderness.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Discover Namibia by Land, Sea & Sky:** Journey through spectacular landscapes by 4x4 vehicle, a scenic flight along the Diamond Coast, quad bike, kayak, and catamaran for an immersive experience.
- **Sunrise at the Iconic Sossusvlei Dunes:** Enjoy exclusive early access for breathtaking sunrise views and crowd-free photography.
- **Track Rare Desert-Adapted Wildlife:** Encounter desert-adapted black rhinos and elephants in the rugged terrain of Damaraland.

- **Big Game Viewing in Etosha & Beyond:** See lions, leopards, cheetahs, rhinos, giraffes, and more in Etosha National Park and private reserves.
- **Luxury Lodges & Authentic Cultural Experiences:** Stay in handpicked luxury safari camps and visit the Himba Living Museum, learning about their traditions.

LEADER: Scott Davis with expert local guides.

DAYS: 18, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$15,950 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one internal scenic flight), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 8.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation will be in two luxury air-conditioned 4x4 Land Cruisers that feature roof pop-tops for superior photography and game viewing, onboard fridge/freezers with ample water, a personal library of guidebooks and maps, 220V charging points, guaranteed window seats on every safari, and VHF inter-vehicle radios for seamless communication between vehicles.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Apr 1 – 2	Travel to Windhoek, Namibia.		
Apr 3	Arrive in Windhoek & Welcome Dinner.	Galton House, Windhoek	D
Apr 4 – 5	Sossusvlei Dunes & Sesriem Canyon. Explore the towering dunes and shimmering salt pans in the golden light of sunrise.	Dead Valley Lodge, Sossusvlei Park	B, L, D
Apr 6 – 7	NamibRand Nature Reserve Exploration. Take an optional scenic helicopter flight or hot air balloon ride over the dunes and enjoy quad biking in the desert and star gazing under crystal clear skies.	Kwessi Dunes Lodge, NamibRand Nature Reserve	B, L, D
Apr 8 – 9	Fly to Swakopmund & Walvis Bay Marine Safari. Take a private scenic flight to Swakopmund and explore the coast by land and water. Kayak with seals and enjoy a relaxing catamaran cruise.	The Delight, Swakopmund	B, L, D
Apr 10 – 12	Damaraland Wildlife Tracking. Search for desert-adapted rhinos and elephants. Great opportunities for dramatic landscape photography.	Camp Doros, Damaraland	B, L, D
Apr 13 – 15	Etosha National Park Safari. Enjoy private game drives and thrilling night safaris in Ongava Reserve and gain insight into local conservation efforts with a visit to the Ongava Research Center.	Ongava Lodge, Etosha National Park	B, L, D
Apr 16	Return to Windhoek. Enjoy a farewell dinner.	Galton House, Windhoek	B, L, D
Apr 17	Depart for Home.		B
Apr 18	Arrive Home.		

LEADER



Scott Davis

Scott, co-owner and co-CEO of Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is an expert wildlife, nature, and travel photographer. Trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, he's explored all seven continents for research and photography. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, NY Times, and other prestigious publications have featured his inspiring work. Scott's passion for teaching and talent for capturing the essence of his subjects make him a highly sought-after tour leader.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Apr 1 – 2 ~ Travel to Windhoek, Namibia from home.

Embark on your journey to **Windhoek, Namibia**, the gateway to one of Africa's most breathtaking landscapes. After a long-haul flight, you'll prepare for an adventure filled with vast deserts, towering dunes, and unparalleled wildlife encounters.

Apr 3 ~ Arrive in Windhoek.

After landing at Windhoek's International Hosea Kutako Airport, about 40km outside the city, you will be welcomed by our local agent who will transfer you to Galton House, a charming guesthouse offering a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax and recuperate from your flight. Later this afternoon you will be met by Scott and your local guides to brief you on trip logistics as well as to answer any questions you may have about the trip before joining you for dinner. If you'd like to arrive earlier, we can arrange divergent airport transfers and additional nights, allowing you time to unwind before your adventure begins.

Apr 4 – 5 ~ Namib-Naukluft National Park

Today you will travel southwest through the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands, descending the dramatic Great Escarpment en route to the **Namib Desert**. Along the way, pause for a picnic lunch at a panoramic viewpoint, where sweeping vistas offer your first glimpse of the vast desert below.

Thanks to your lodge's prime location inside the park, you'll enjoy exclusive early access to the dunes—perfect for capturing the golden light of sunrise before the gates open to other visitors. After a morning of photography, relax with breakfast beneath the shade of towering camelthorn trees. Over the next two days, explore three of Namibia's most iconic desert landscapes: **Sossusvlei**, **Deadvlei**, and **Sesriem Canyon**—each offering a distinct window into the ancient Namib's geological wonders.



Gemsbok

Sossusvlei is a vast salt and clay pan surrounded by some of the world's tallest sand dunes, with peaks soaring up to 325 meters. Its name, meaning "dead-end marsh," refers to the Tsauchab River that flows into the area before disappearing into the sands. The dunes' vivid orange and red hues come from oxidized iron, and their contours shift continuously in the wind. The interplay of light and shadow at sunrise and sunset makes this a dream location for photographers.

Just nearby, **Deadvlei** offers an equally surreal experience. This white clay pan, framed by towering red dunes, is home to ancient, blackened camelthorn trees—long dead but perfectly preserved in the dry desert air. With its stark contrasts and haunting stillness, Deadvlei has become one of the most photographed and iconic sites in Namibia.

Sesriem Canyon, carved over millions of years by the Tsauchab River, is a narrow chasm about one kilometer long and up to 30 meters deep. Its exposed layers of sedimentary rock tell a fascinating geological story. Early settlers named it "Sesriem" after the six rawhide straps they tied together to lower buckets into the canyon to collect water. Today, it remains a cool, shaded place to explore on foot—and a vital source of water for local wildlife.

Together, these desert landmarks showcase the timeless beauty of Namibia's Namib-Naukluft region. From shifting dunes to ancient trees and sculpted canyons, each stop offers a different perspective on one of the oldest deserts on Earth.

Apr 6 – 7 ~ NamibRand Nature Reserve

Enjoy a final visit into the park before returning to the lodge for brunch. Later, you depart the Sossusvlei area and travel southwards through the striking landscapes of the Namib Desert towards the **NamibRand Nature Reserve**—the heart of one of Namibia's most pristine and awe-inspiring desert landscapes. Spanning over 200,000 hectares, this privately protected reserve was founded in the 1980s by conservationist Albi Bruckner, who rewilded former livestock farms into a thriving ecosystem. With only a handful of lodges permitted across its vast expanse, NamibRand offers a rare sense of solitude and exclusivity in the wilderness.



Zebras

You might not find the Big Five wandering around the harsh desert of the NamibRand, but the dunes are home to a variety of wildlife that has adapted in many fascinating ways to survive. Take, for example, the gemsbok with their white bellies that reflect the heat of the sand and their sophisticated vascular system that cools the blood around the brain. Or the bat-eared fox – those giant ears aren't just for comic value but help to amplify the sound of their predators approaching. What you'll undoubtedly see most of are antelope. From gemsbok to springbok, kudu to steenbok, they can be found in most corners of the reserve, silhouetted against the red sand. You may also spot Burchell's zebra amid the dunes as well as the more unusual black-backed jackals, aardwolves and African wild cats, which can be surprisingly easy to find compared to other reserves on the continent. Leopard and cheetah are rare but there are small numbers of both.

Your home for the next two nights is **Kwessi Dunes**, set against a backdrop of sweeping red sand dunes, rugged mountains, and wide, open plains. This striking location immerses you in the remote, unfiltered beauty

of the Namib, far from any crowds or distractions. Explore a landscape shaped by wind and time. Marvel at the curious “**fairy circles**” that dot the desert floor—perfectly round, vegetation-free patches whose origins continue to puzzle scientists. Wildlife here is as uniquely adapted as the land itself: look for graceful gemsbok (oryx), curious bat-eared foxes, and other hardy desert species that thrive in this harsh, dry environment.

Adventure awaits as you set out on **quad bike excursions**, traversing the undulating dunes and soaking in the endless vistas. And for a truly unforgettable finale, take to the skies on an *optional* 90-minute scenic helicopter flight over the **Namib** or an *optional* 60-minute hot air balloon ride at sunrise. From above, you’ll witness the full scale of this ancient desert—gliding past the towering red dunes of Sossusvlei, the chalky basin of Deadvlei, and the winding channel of Sesriem Canyon. This aerial view captures the immense, untouched beauty of the Namib in a way few ever experience—a spectacular conclusion to your time in NamibRand, and a memory that will linger long after your journey ends.

You will have the opportunity to experience the **Skybed Experience**—spending the night under a canopy of stars in a purpose-built star bed, surrounded by the silence and stillness of the Namib. Alternatively, enjoy a stargazing session with your guide; with zero light pollution and crystal-clear skies, this part of the NamibRand is part of Africa’s first designated International Dark Sky Reserve, making it one of the best stargazing spots on the continent.

Apr 8 – 9 ~ Swakopmund

You will be transferred to the local airstrip for your private light aircraft flight to **Swakopmund**. This flight includes flying over the Namib Sea Sand two shipwrecks, **Cape fur seal** colonies along the Atlantic Ocean, abandoned diamond camps and Walvis Bay lagoon and salt works. Visibility of attractions will depend on the weather. This breathtaking transition from desert to ocean sets the tone for your time on the coast.

Swakopmund offers a striking contrast to the arid interior. Nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the Namib Desert, the town is known for its cool, misty climate and distinctive German colonial charm, with palm-lined streets, seaside promenades, and a relaxed atmosphere.

A highlight is the flight over the Eduard Bohlen, a German cargo ship that ran aground in 1909 while it was on its way to Table Bay from Swakopmund. It is believed that thick fog caused the ship to founder close to Conception Bay. Years after the ship ran aground the desert began to encroach on the ocean and the ship that was once stranded in the ocean slowly became stranded in the desert. The wreck currently sits about 500 meters from the ocean, ensuring that it’s the best-preserved shipwreck along **Namibia’s Skeleton Coast** and making it a must see for photographers if the weather allows for clear visibility.



Flamingo
© Scott Davis

Upon arrival at Swakopmund Airport, you will transfer to your accommodation. The rest of the afternoon is there for you to relax and settle into your charming accommodation, with the option to explore Swakopmund by foot before heading out to dinner with your guides at a popular restaurant in town.

The following day, head to nearby **Walvis Bay** for a marine adventure in one of Namibia's richest coastal ecosystems. Begin with a morning marine cruise departing from the Walvis Bay Waterfront to Pelican Point Peninsula, you will be surprised with sea and bird life, where pelicans and seagulls greet you and seals often join you on board.

Stepping directly onto the beach at Pelican Point Peninsula, your guide will lead you to the kayak set-up, where you will be provided with your kayaking equipment. Setting off on the water in your kayak, you will be able to explore the nearby waters, you can look forward to inquisitive **Cape fur seals** popping up around you, even **Heaviside's** and **bottlenose dolphins** may make an appearance! The waters here are also home to pelicans, flamingos, and, if you're lucky, seasonal visitors like whales, sunfish, or leatherback turtles.

After your kayaking adventure, enjoy a Beach Braai (barbeque). Soak in the stunning deserted beach setting, while enjoying an authentic Namibian culinary experience. Energized and restored, you return to the Walvis Bay Waterfront with a 4x4 transfer, exploring Pelican Point, the Salt Pans, and the flamingos at the Walvis Bay lagoon.

Apr 10 – 12 ~ Damaraland

Continuing your safari today, the road takes you north and east into the wonderful and diverse region of **Damaraland**. You pass Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg which peaks at 2,573m above sea level and take time to view game and absorb the vastness of the scenery along the way. Damaraland is typified by displays of color, magnificent table topped mountains, rock formations and bizarre-looking vegetation. The present-day landscape has been formed by the erosion of wind, water and geological forces which have formed rolling hills, dunes, gravel plains and ancient river terraces. It is the variety and loneliness of the area as well as the scenic splendor which will reward and astound you, giving one an authentic understanding of the word 'wilderness'.



Black Rhinos

The dramatic barren landscape of the iconic Damaraland is home to some of the most fascinating flora and fauna in Namibia, and the best place to spot **desert-adapted elephant, rhino, lion, and zebra**. The arid region's attractions include a petrified forest of fossilized 280-million-year-old trees, some of the best-preserved etchings and rock art dating back 6,000 years both at **Twyfelfontein**, and at the highest mountain in the country, the Brandberg. The Brandberg especially is covered in thousands of incredible ancient rock paintings. The Late Stone Age art is thought to have been produced to pass on information about hunting expeditions, but the area has predominantly been used by pastoralists, such as the Damara and Herero, as well as more recently by the Himba, semi-nomadic herders whose female members distinctly cover their hair and skin with ochre colored paste.

You will spend an exciting and memorable morning out rhino searching with the assistance of local trackers. It is worth noting that these black rhino form part of one of the only free-roaming black rhino populations in Africa and searching for animals in an unfenced and uninhabited environment is an absolute privilege. You will return to camp for a freshly prepared lunch and have time to relax during the heat of the day. Later in the

afternoon, you head out again for a scenic nature drive or walk to explore this vast and astounding ecosystem. Camp Doros works together with the **Save the Rhino Trust (SRT)** - an NGO that has been instrumental in the preservation of the rare, endangered, desert adapted black rhino. Having barely survived the slaughter in many parts of Africa during the '80s and '90s, the black rhino population of Namibia increased substantially since the formation of SRT.

Damaraland is a surprising refuge for desert adapted wildlife that may include elephant, giraffe, oryx, springbok and even some predators such as lion. However, as with any wildlife sightings in Namibia, this depends on many factors including seasonality, so specific sightings are never guaranteed. The wildlife roams large tracks of unfenced desert landscapes and finding game can be challenging, but this is all part of the adventure of exploring this wild untouched gem of Namibia. You will search for the elusive desert adapted elephants in the ephemeral river systems, an activity which will mean spending most of the day out.

Desert-Adapted Black Rhinoceros: Namibia is home to the only wild and unfenced population of desert-adapted black rhinos, found mainly in the remote Kaokoveld. They range across the escarpment and follow seasonal rivers into the northern Namib, especially after rains. Like desert elephants, they cover long distances, feeding mostly at night and resting during the day. Highly adaptable, they browse more than 70 plant species, including Welwitschia and the spiny, toxic milk bush, which provides both water and fat. Once widespread across southern Africa, black rhinos are now endangered, and Namibia's population represents the larger of the two subspecies.

Desert-Adapted Elephant: In northern Namibia, elephants endure some of the harshest conditions in Africa, ranging from the Kunene River through dry riverbeds that cut into the Namib. An adult can eat up to 300 kilograms of vegetation and drink 230 liters of water in a single day, so herds must cover vast distances to survive. They browse on more than 70 plant species and rely on ephemeral rivers that flow only after rains. Though not a separate species, these elephants form a distinct ecotype south of the equator, uniquely adapted to hyper-arid deserts. Their only counterparts are the desert elephants of Mali on the fringes of the Sahara.

Apr 13 – 15 ~ Etosha National Park

Today after an early breakfast you set off on your journey towards the southern boundary of the **Etosha National Park**. Along the way, you will visit a **Himba 'Living Museum'**. Here you will be able to meet some of the local community who will be happy to demonstrate elements of their traditional lifestyle. Watch age-old skills come to life—pottery, blacksmithing, and hut building—join in rhythmic dancing and learn the meaning behind sacred customs like the Holy Fire. This immersive visit offers a rare, respectful glimpse into one of Namibia's most iconic cultures while directly supporting the community's heritage and livelihood. The Himba are one of the last truly traditional peoples of Namibia and they are normally nomadic, but those that have settled here are now firmly established and unlikely to move on.



Lion

Himba people have little time for conventional practices but welcome visitors who want to learn about the customs and traditions of this very proud nation, and they are very willing to offer insight into their beliefs, way of life and everyday routine. After visiting the Himba community, you can go on to enjoy a refreshing

picnic lunch at a scenic location before you head towards your lodge situated on the southern boundary of the Etosha National Park. Arrival will be in the late afternoon, after a long but rewarding day, with time to enjoy sundowners while appreciating the unique surroundings of your lodge and enjoying seeing any game that comes in to visit any local waterholes that are close enough to the lodge to be observed.

Over the next two days, you will enjoy a balance of exploration and relaxation. Each morning begins with a game drive in the southern areas of Etosha National Park, accompanied by your guide who will help you find and identify the park’s varied wildlife. You return to camp for lunch and some time to rest during the heat of the day. Later in the day, head out on a guided game drive in the private **Ongava Game Reserve**, returning to camp shortly after sunset, with enough time to freshen up before dinner. During your stay, there will also be an opportunity to visit the **Ongava Research Center** and learn more about the conservation efforts taking place on the reserve.

Apr 16 ~ Return to Windhoek

Enjoy an early breakfast before departing for Windhoek, traveling through Namibia’s central highlands and farmlands. Conclude your adventure with a farewell dinner, celebrating an unforgettable journey across Namibia’s most spectacular landscapes. After breakfast, you will begin your journey back to Windhoek, traveling south through Namibia’s central highlands and commercial farmland. On arrival, you continue to your guesthouse, with the remainder of the afternoon at leisure. In the evening, your guides will take you to a popular restaurant in the city, where you can enjoy dinner together, share highlights, and reflect on the memorable experiences of your journey.

Apr 17 ~ Depart for home.

Bid farewell to Namibia as you board your flight home, reflecting on the once-in-a-lifetime experiences and the unparalleled beauty of Namibia’s wild landscapes.

Apr 18 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$15,950
Single Supplement	\$1,800

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one internal scenic flight), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	October 23, 2026	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transportation in a luxury air-conditioned safari vehicle, park entry fees, landing fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Private scenic charter flight from Kwessi Dunes to Swakopmund on April 8.
- Marine cruise & kayaking including a beach braai on April 9 whilst in Swakopmund.
- Accommodations (double occupancy) for the nights of April 3 through April 16.
- Meals from dinner on April 3 through breakfast on April 17, except meals listed in *Not Included* section.
- Local branded beverages whilst at Kwessi Dunes Lodge and Camp Doros.
- Mineral water on board the safari vehicle.
- Transfers on April 3 and April 17 between the Galton House and the Windhoek airport.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Divergent airport transfers (arranged by us) and extra hotel nights.
- Optional ninety-minute helicopter excursion in Sossusvlei.
- Optional sixty-minute hot air balloon ride over the Namib Desert.
- All local beverages except for mineral water on board the safari vehicle and whilst at Kwessi Dunes Lodge and Camp Doros.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$20 to \$30 per participant per day for 14 days with our leaders. (about \$280 to \$420 total per participant).
- Optional [trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other premium/imported beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and fill out a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Namibia in April experiences a transition from the rainy season to the dry season, with rain becoming less frequent and mostly short, isolated showers. The skies are generally clear to partly cloudy, often showcasing dramatic sunsets. Daytime temperatures are pleasant, typically ranging from 75 to 90°F (24 to 32°C) depending on the region, while nights can be cool, especially in the desert areas where temperatures may drop to around 50 to 59°F (10 to 15°C). Humidity levels decrease throughout the month, making the climate comfortable for travel and outdoor activities.

Fitness Level

This is an active adventure designed for travelers with good energy and a moderate level of fitness. The itinerary includes a mix of activities such as game drives, a scenic flight, quad biking, and kayaking, most of which are accessible to anyone in generally good health. That said, some experiences, like climbing the towering dunes of Sossusvlei or trekking in Damaraland, may require a bit more stamina. The trip is thoughtfully paced to suit a range of fitness levels, so everyone can fully enjoy Namibia's incredible landscapes and wildlife. If you have any health concerns that might affect your participation, feel free to reach out—we're happy to talk it through with you.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Windhoek, Namibia (WDH) by 4:00pm on April 3.
- Depart from Windhoek, Namibia (WDH) after 5:00am on April 17.

Flights we book

- Private scenic charter flight from Kwessi Dunes to Swakopmund on April 8
- *Optional* 90-minute helicopter ride in Sossusvlei on April 6 or 7
- *Optional* 60-minute sunrise hot air balloon ride with brunch on April 7 or 8

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Cheesemans' Trips are [Carbon Neutral](#).**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.