



## **NAMIBIA UNDER CANVAS SAFARI SCHEDULED 10 DAY DEPARTURE IN 2023 MINIMUM 2 PAX / MAXIMUM 7 PAX**

Namibia is a vast country, even by African standards, covering an area approximately twice the size of California and four times the size of the United Kingdom, but with a population of a mere 2 million. This gives one of the lowest population densities in the world. It is also an 'ageless land'; visible through our heritage of rock art created by stone-age artists and geological attractions such as the petrified forest where fossilised tree trunks have lain for over 280 million years. When added to the space and silence, these factors all contribute to a feeling of antiquity, solitude and wilderness.

The climate is typical of a semi-desert country. Days are warm to hot, and nights are generally cool. Temperatures are modified by the high plateau in the interior and by the cold Benguela Current that runs along the Atlantic coastline. Except for the first few months of the year, the country is generally dry with very little rain.

This Namibia Under Canvas Safari affords you the chance to experience this magnificent and memorable country in a very personal way. You will have your own professional and experienced safari guide who will enhance your enjoyment of this unique country by making it a fascinating and stress-free journey of discovery amidst very dramatic scenery. The knowledge, experience, and character of our guides are critical to a successful safari which is why we ensure that they are both personable and very professional. Your Ultimate Safaris guide will have an intimate knowledge of each area and camp/lodge that you visit, allowing them to share the local insights and highlights whilst adding continuity and depth to your safari. It goes without saying that they all know exactly what a "True African Safari" is all about. Not only are our guides highly qualified, each has a specific area of expertise. Together they possess the breadth and depth of knowledge to allow them to answer questions and satisfy the interests of each of our guests. The presence and company of your Ultimate Safaris guide will turn your safari into an experience of a lifetime! The Under Canvas camps are designed to offer a true "back to nature" experience with the emphasis being on the experiential aspect of safaris, to go back to the roots of safari, to touch, to smell, to feel and to experience the wild, with one's feet firmly in the dust that covers Africa. This is an experience that is exclusive in the real sense of the word, as well as being very much away from the pressures of 'normal' life!

Since most of the camps are semi-permanent and seasonal, there is a degree of compromise required concerning some of the frills and other 'add-ons' that you might expect in a permanent tented camp or lodge, but there is still a strong focus on ensuring guests' comfort. Those prepared to forego some conventional 'necessities', so that they are unencumbered by buildings and all the paraphernalia that goes with them, will be able to go to sleep hearing only the noisy silence of the desert and to wake up to a chorus that announces the start of a new day. It is the kind of intimacy that can only be achieved by taking guests to the most wild, remote and private places, and giving them access to exclusive areas away from the beaten path.

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### **ITINERARY IN BRIEF**

Day 1, 2 & 3	Arrive in Windhoek by 07h00 or the previous day. Set off by road to Ongava Game Reserve Southern Etosha National Park boundary via the Okonjima Day Visitor Centre, AfriCat Foundation
Day 4, 5 & 6	Drive to //Huab Under Canvas, Damaraland
Day 7	Drive to Desert Breeze Lodge, Swakopmund
Day 8 & 9	Drive to Camp Sossus, Sossusvlei
Day 10	Drive back to Windhoek

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## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel with one of Namibia's most reputable and well-known naturalist guides.
- Visit the world renowned AfriCat Foundation and learn more about conservation initiatives involving Africa's large cats.
- Memorable and exciting guided game drives within the renowned Etosha National Park, from the vantage point of a specially modified, air conditioned 4x4 with pop tops.
- Game viewing at a floodlit waterhole at night.
- Game drive on the private Ongava Reserve
- Explore the Damaraland region whilst staying at the exclusive-use //Huab Under Canvas.
- Search for desert adapted elephant in ephemeral river systems.
- Track for the endangered black rhino in conjunction with Save the Rhino Trust.
- Visit and explore Namibia's central coastal region with canyons, dunes and lagoons.
- Explore the private Namib Tsaris Conservancy on exploratory nature drives and guided walks whilst staying at Camp Sossus.
- Climb some of the world's highest free-standing sand dunes at Sossusvlei and enjoy a magic box picnic in the Namib Naukluft Park afterwards.
- Enjoy spectacular star gazing of the Milky Way on the Namib Tsaris Conservancy.
- Enjoy refreshing moments in desert pools on the Namib Tsaris Conservancy.

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## PRE & POST SAFARI ACCOMMODATION & TRANSFERS

Please contact us to arrange all your pre and post-safari accommodation in Windhoek and Okonjima as well as any airport transfers that may be needed. These are not included in the safari fare so they will have to be charged additionally. We recommend the following establishments in Windhoek; Galton House and The Weinberg.

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## A NOTE ON MOBILITY

These Under Canvas Safaris have elements that require a degree of mobility in order to get the best out of them. These include tracking for desert adapted black rhino across rough terrain on foot, sometimes for up to three or four hours, and climbing some of the free standing dunes in the Sossusvlei area. If you are not sure you are able to do this, it may be better to look at a less active program such as our Ultimate Namibia Safari which does not include rhino tracking on foot. Please note that both of these are group departures and your guide cannot change the advertised program to suit individual needs unless all participants agree, so everyone needs to keep up or risk being left out on occasion. Please therefore make an honest assessment of your fitness levels before deciding to take part. You don't need to be a marathon runner, but you do need 'level three' mobility which means you can walk for two or three kilometers over fairly rough ground where necessary. When you make your assessment, please also consider other medical conditions such as recent injuries to back or neck, or difficulties in hearing, as these can also adversely affect your enjoyment. None of this should be a deterrent to most potential participants, but we feel duty-bound to ensure that guests are aware of what they may need to be able to do before making booking. Assuming all is well with that, you are very welcome to join in, and you are also pretty much guaranteed a great safari experience



## OPTIONAL PRE-SAFARI EXTENSION TO OKONJIMA

You have the option to extend your safari for an additional night or two at Okonjima Bush Camp. This affords you the opportunity to get a more in-depth insight into the work being done by the AfriCat Foundation as well as enjoy a range of activities on offer by the lodge. Accommodation includes all meals, local drinks (excl. premier and imported brands) and 2 activities per person per day. The night hide and night drive activities are excluded but can be arranged direct at the lodge, subject to availability.

*Costs for this extension would be as follows (includes the transfer from Windhoek at 09h00 to Okonjima prior to the start of this safari, your guide meeting you at Okonjima on the official Day 1 of this safari):*

Costs for this extension would be as follows (includes the transfer from Windhoek City at the start):

*Costs are based on minimum 2 persons travelling, please contact us if you have a solo traveler interested in the Okonjima extension:*

### JANUARY TO JUNE 2023

#### **1-NIGHT EXTENSION:**

RACK: NAD/ZAR 14,941.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

RACK: NAD/ZAR 1,540.00 per person

#### **2-NIGHT EXTENSION:**

RACK: NAD/ZAR 25,724.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

RACK: NAD/ZAR 3,080.00 per person

### JULY TO DECEMBER 2023

#### **1-NIGHT EXTENSION:**

RACK: NAD/ZAR 15,984.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

RACK: NAD/ZAR 1,540.00 per person

#### **2-NIGHT EXTENSION:**

RACK: NAD/ZAR 27,810.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

RACK: NAD/ZAR 3,080.00 per person

# NAMIBIA UNDER CANVAS SAFARI DETAILED ITINERARY

## Day 1 (Thursday 2023)

### Windhoek to Southern Etosha National Park via Okonjima

This morning Ultimate Safaris will collect you from your various accommodation establishments or from the Windhoek International Airport (assuming you land before 07h00). You then depart Windhoek in your safari vehicle with your private guide and set off on your journey.

On your way to the Ongava Private Reserve you will visit the Okonjima's AfriCat Day Centre, a wonderful highlight with which to start your safari. Okonjima is home to the AfriCat Foundation, a wildlife sanctuary which focuses on the research and rehabilitation of Africa's big cats, especially injured or captured leopard and cheetah. You will arrive in time to embark on an exciting and informative game drive and tour of the center. Here you will learn about the function and vision of the AfriCat Foundation and will also get to meet some of the Foundation's special captive carnivore ambassadors.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There will be no tracking of wild cats on this visit and should that be required a pre-overnight extension should be booked.

After the excursion you will enjoy a light lunch before your journey continues further north. You arrive in time for an afternoon game drive on the Ongava Game Reserve in an open game viewer with Ongava ranger, on shared basis with other lodge guests.

*Ongava Game Reserve:* The Ongava Game Reserve is effectively a private game reserve, spanning 30,000 hectares along the south-west border of Etosha National Park. The reserve is home to a wide variety of game including lion, leopard, giraffe, rhino, Hartmann's Mountain zebra, gemsbok (oryx), kudu, steenbok and much more. The scenery is attractive with large open plains blending into Mopane tree woodlands and dolomite outcrops.

**Overnight:** Ongava Tented Camp or similar  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Most Local Branded Drinks**  
**Etosha Game Drive with Ultimate Safaris Guide as well as Ongava Game Drive**  
<https://www.ongava.com/>

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## Day 2 (Friday 2023)

### Southern Etosha National Park

Today you will be treated to an exciting morning guided game drive into the Etosha National Park, to see more of the wide variety of game and bird species that are to be found there. There is then time to relax by the refreshing swimming pool before you head out again for an afternoon game drive into Etosha before exiting the park before sunset. Alternatively, you can opt to spend the whole day out in the park and either take lunch by one of the other rest camps in the area or have a picnic while watching game at a particularly productive waterhole in the area. Once you are back (gates close at sunset), the rest of the evening can be spent game viewing at the camp's floodlit waterhole while enjoying dinner, and afterwards.

*Etosha National Park:* Etosha National Park covers 22,270 km<sup>2</sup>, of which approximately 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> is made up of saline depressions or 'pans'. The largest of these pans, the Etosha Pan, can be classified as a saline desert in its own right. The Etosha Pan lies in the Owambo Basin, on the north-western edge of the Namibian Kalahari Desert. Until three million years ago it formed part of huge, shallow lake that was reduced to a complex of salt pans when the major river that fed it, the Kunene, changed course and began to flow to the Atlantic instead. If the lake existed today, it would be the third largest in the world. Etosha is the largest of the pans at 4,760 km<sup>2</sup> in extent. It is nowadays filled with water only when sufficient rain falls to the north in Angola, inducing floods to flow southward along the Cuvelai drainage system. The Park consists of grassland, woodland and savannah. Game-viewing centers around the numerous springs and waterholes where several different species can often be seen at one time. The Park boasts some 114 mammal and over 340 bird species. Wildlife that one might see includes elephant, lion, giraffe, blue wildebeest, eland, kudu, gemsbok (oryx), zebra, rhino, cheetah, leopard, hyena, honey badger and warthog, as well as the endemic black faced impala.

**Overnight:** Ongava Tented Camp or similar  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Most Local Branded Drinks**  
**Etosha Game Drive with Ultimate Safaris Guide**

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### Day 3 (Saturday 2023)

### Etosha National Park / Ongava Game Reserve

Another morning dedicated to memorable game drives within the southern section of Etosha National Park with your guide. You return to camp for lunch and an early afternoon rest, spending your final afternoon on a game drive on the private Ongava Game Reserve. You then return after sunset with enough time to freshen up and enjoy your final 'safari dinner' overlooking the camp's floodlit waterhole.

**Overnight:** Ongava Tented Camp or similar  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner & Most Local Branded Drinks**  
**Etosha Game Drive with Ultimate Safaris Guide, as well as Ongava Game Drive with a Local Guide**

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### Day 4 (Sunday 2023)

### Drive from southern Etosha National Park to Damaraland

This morning after breakfast you will continue your safari to the heart of Namibia, Damaraland, traveling through farmlands and the small towns. Damaraland is typified by displays of colour, 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 splendour which will reward and astound you, giving one an authentic understanding of the word 'wilderness'. You enjoy a delicious Magic Box picnic en route and arrive in time in time to enjoy fireside sundowners at your exclusive //Huab Under Canvas. Please note that today is a long day of travelling, rewarded with another 3 night stay at your next camp.

*Huab Under Canvas:* Located in a core desert adapted black rhino area in the //Huab Conservancy, Huab Under Canvas is nestled in a grove of Mopane trees on the banks of a tributary of the //Huab River in the heart of Damaraland. Protected from all the prevailing winds and sun, the camp is virtually invisible from anywhere around and it carries arguably the lowest environmental footprint of any camp in Namibia. Eight guest tents are raised on mobile platforms and have basic infrastructure such as single beds, cupboards, solar power and some important comforts such as en suite flush toilets and bucket showers. The common area includes a dining room, small lounge (with central charging station), fireplace deck and a plunge pool. However, the essence of the camp remains under canvas, mobile and experiential. Activities include tracking desert adapted rhino which is completely private and done in an area that has the highest tracking success rate in north western Namibia; exploring the upper and less crowded //Huab River in search of desert adapted elephants; nature walks and scenic game drives; and Stellar Escapes (our version of 'sleep outs').

*//Huab Conservancy:* The //Huab Conservancy is largely sparse semi-arid mountainous savanna, with wooded ephemeral river valleys separating hills and plains and it boasts some of the most magnificent views in Damaraland. As it has a number of natural springs providing water throughout the year for desert-adapted wildlife, the area is home to desert-adapted Elephant, black Rhino and general plains game, including Kudu, Giraffe, Springbok, Oryx, Klipspringer and Steenbok, as well as predators such as Cheetah, Leopard, spotted and brown Hyena.

**Overnight:** //Huab Under Canvas  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and activities with Guide (Local Drinks & Limited Laundry included)**  
[www.ultimatesafaris.na](http://www.ultimatesafaris.na)

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### Day 5 (Monday 2023)

### Damaraland

Today you will spend an exciting and memorable morning out rhino tracking 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 tracking animals in an unfenced and uninhibited environment is an absolute privilege. You will return to camp for a freshly prepared lunch and with time to relax at camp 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. //Huab Under Canvas 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.

*Desert Black Rhinoceros:* Namibia is home to the larger of two subspecies of the black rhinoceros found in southern Africa. The only population that remains in the wild, unfenced and outside reserves occupies an arid range in the western Kaokoveld. Their preferred habitat is the mountainous escarpment, but they follow ephemeral rivers into the northern Namib as well, especially when conditions are favorable after rains. They are the only black rhinoceros in Africa that are internationally recognized as a "desert group". Like desert-adapted elephant, they cover great distances.

They walk and feed at night and rest during the day. To meet their nutritional and bulk requirements they browse on no fewer than 74 of the 103 plant species that grow in their range. One of the few animals to eat fibrous *Welwitschia* leaves; they even feed heavily on the milk bush (*Euphorbia virosa*) with its sharp spines and toxic latex, presumably because of the high water and fat content. They are physical defenses of dryland plants without apparent harm. Once widespread in the subcontinent, black rhinoceros are an endangered species. The smaller subspecies, *Diceros bicornis* minor, does not range into Namibia.

**Overnight:** //Huab Under Canvas

**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and activities with Guide (Local Drinks & Limited Laundry included)**

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## Day 6 (Tuesday 2023)

## Damaraland

Today you continue your adventures exploring Damaraland, enjoying the freedom to discover the fascinating landscapes with your private naturalist guide both by vehicle and on foot. 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. Today's focus will be largely on tracking the elusive desert adapted elephants in the ephemeral river systems, an activity which will mean spending most of the day out. Your guide will take along a delicious picnic lunch and you will return to camp in the late afternoon.

*Desert Adapted Elephant:* In habitats with sufficient vegetation and water an adult elephant consumes as much as 300 kg of roughage and 230 liters of water every day of its life. Consider what a herd of them would eat and drink in a week or a month or a year. African elephant in a desert? Well, yes! Not only elephant, but other large mammals like black rhinoceros and giraffe as well. Their ranges extend from river catchments in northern Kaokoveld as far south as the northern Namib. Apart from the Kunene River, seven river courses northwards from the Ugab provide them with possible routes across the desert, right to the Skeleton Coast. The biggest are the Hoarusib, the Hoanib, the Huab and the Ugab Rivers. Desert adapted elephant in Kaokoland, and the Namib walk further for water and fodder than any other elephant in Africa. The distances between waterholes and feeding grounds can be as great as 68 km. The typical home range of a family herd is larger than 2,000 km<sup>2</sup>, or eight times as big as ranges in central Africa where rainfall is much higher. They walk and feed at night and rest during the day. To meet their nutritional and bulk requirements they browse on no fewer than 74 of the 103 plant species that grow in their range. Not a separate species or even a subspecies, they are an ecotype unique to Namibia in Africa south of the equator, behaviorally adapted to hyper-arid conditions. Elephant in Mali on the southwestern fringe of the Sahara Desert are the only others known to survive in similar conditions.

**Overnight:** //Huab Under Canvas

**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and activities with Guide (Local Drinks & Limited Laundry included)**

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## Day 7 (Wednesday 2023)

## Damaraland to Swakopmund

After an early breakfast the drive today takes you south past Namibia's highest mountain, the Brandberg which peaks at 2,573m above sea level, and west to meet the coast at Henties Bay. You then continue south to the coastal town of Swakopmund where you can enjoy the pleasant seaside location and cooler coastal air for the night.

You stay on the eastern outskirts of the town, overlooking the Swakop River valley and desolate desert dune landscapes. Tonight, includes dinner at a popular restaurant which specializes in locally harvested fresh seafood as well as other local and international dishes.

*Swakopmund:* Swakopmund resembles a small, German coastal resort nestled between the desert and the sea. It boasts a charming combination of German colonial architecture blended with good hotels, shops, restaurants, museums, craft centres, galleries and cafés. Swakopmund had its beginnings as a landing station in 1892 when the Imperial Navy erected beacons on the site. Settlers followed and attempted to create a harbour town by constructing a concrete Mole and then iron jetty failed. The advent of World War 1 halted developments and the town sank into decline until half a century later when infrastructures improved, and an asphalt road opened between Windhoek and Swakopmund. This made reaching the previously isolated town quicker and easier and it prospered once again to become Namibia's premier resort town. Although the sea is normally cold for swimming there are pleasant beaches, and the cooler climate is refreshing after the time spent in the desert.

*Desert Breeze*: Located on the banks of the ephemeral Swakop River and just a few minutes' drive from the center of town, Desert Breeze provides the perfect escape to experience space, tranquility and serenity. There are twelve en-suite, luxury bungalows and one exquisite villa, each with a private sun deck to admire the breath-taking view of the dunes. Expressing sophisticated style and luxury from their accommodation right through to their breakfast facilities makes guests feel pampered and spoiled. Each bungalow and villa is equipped with wireless internet, mini bar, coffee and tea making facilities and digital safes. Only the freshest of produce is provided for breakfast and seating is available indoors or on the deck for guests to enjoy the view and peaceful atmosphere. Big basalt sculptures along with colorful and very unique architecture stand in contrast to the desert landscape, yet also compliments it. The creative luxury offered in the bungalows along with the friendly staff will make your stay very memorable

**Overnight:** Desert Breeze  
**Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner (Local Drinks included)**  
[www.desertbreezeswakopmund.com](http://www.desertbreezeswakopmund.com)

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## Day 8 (Thursday 2023)

## Swakopmund to Namib Tsis Conservancy, Sossusvlei

After an early breakfast you depart on a fascinating drive which takes you south-east through awesome and ever-changing desert landscapes via the impressive Gaub and Kuiseb canyons to meet the dunes at the settlement of Solitaire. A picnic lunch will be had en route and you will continue onto the Namib Tsis Conservancy, where you will spend your final two nights of your safari at Camp Sossus. Arrival should be in the mid to late afternoon with enough time to acquaint yourself with the camp and enjoy a hot bucket shower before dinner.

*Camp Sossus*: Located on the private 24,000 ha Namib Tsis Conservancy, this camp is a mere thirty minutes' drive from the Sossusvlei gate, the gateway to the Great Namib Sand Sea, a declared UNESCO World Heritage Site. Camp Sossus is built in a naturally formed amphitheater of a south-facing granite outcrop within striking distance of Sossusvlei and is ideally positioned to avoid the harsh desert sun. The severe desert climate was a primary consideration in the camp's design, and tents are protected from the stormy east winds by natural stone walls and shaded by roofs built from almost 500 recycled oil drums. It is also equipped with furniture built in part from recycled metals, Oregon pine floorboards and wooden pallets. As a result of this design, the camp is virtually invisible from any distance and carries one of the lowest environmental footprints of any camp in Namibia. The large west-facing windows and south-facing doors allow natural cooling by the predominant afternoon south westerly wind and the tents are stylishly furnished, offering important comforts such as en suite flush toilets and bucket showers. They also have comfortable twin beds, solar power (with charging station), a shaded day-bed and a star bed, but the essence of the camp still remains 'under canvas' and experiential. Activities include visits to Sossusvlei with your private guide and general exploration of the private Namib Tsis Conservancy, including nature walks and drives, guided Mountain Plus Biking, magic moments in desert pools (yes, isn't that intriguing), our famous Trail Treats, star gazing and sleeping out under the stars from your private star bed. In addition to this, Camp Sossus provides a convenient base from which to go on hot air balloon flights as well as scenic helicopter and fixed wing aircraft flights over the local area. It is also a great venue for photographers, offering fantastic landscapes, iconic quiver trees, and the opportunity for nighttime photography which is often very difficult to arrange elsewhere.

*Namib Tsis Conservancy*: The Namib Tsis Conservancy is nestled between the Nubib and Zaris Mountains, close to the Great Namib Sand Sea and the famous Sossusvlei Dunes. The Conservancy was founded by Landscape Conservationist Swen Bachran in 2010, and it serves as a natural buffer from the harshest desert conditions and a refuge that is vital to wildlife through the dry season. Eight years of intensive work to reverse sixty years of inappropriate farming practices, including the removal of 89 km of internal fencing, the installation of wildlife watering points, the improvement of road networks, the rehabilitation of land and the reintroduction of wildlife that historically occurred here, has resulted in one of the most picturesque and ecologically sound tracts of land in the area. The Conservancy has gravel plains, mountainous areas with dry river valleys as well as a large, raised plateau which towers above the desert below, and it is now home to some of the largest concentrations of wildlife in the area, including Oryx, Springbok, Hartmann's Mountain Zebra, Burchell's Zebra, Kudu, Hartebeest, Giraffe, Steenbok, Klipspringer, Bat-eared Fox, and Aardwolf, as well as predators such as Leopard, Cheetah and Spotted Hyena. Plans for the acquisition of adjoining land to extension of the Conservancy are ongoing, as well as dropping fences to neighboring like-minded conservation areas.

**Overnight:** Camp Sossus  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Nature Based Activities with Guide (Local Drinks included)**  
[www.ultimatesafaris.na](http://www.ultimatesafaris.na)

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## Day 9 (Friday 2023)

## Namib Tsaris Conservancy / Sossusvlei

This morning you will need to rise early for a magical excursion with your guide to Sossusvlei in the Namib Naukluft National Park, normally setting off before sunrise to enter the park at sunrise and capture the dunes whilst the light is soft and shadows accentuate the towering shapes and curves. The Sossusvlei area boasts some of the highest free-standing sand dunes in the world and your guide will give you an insight on the formation of the Namib Desert and its myriad of fascinating creatures and plants that have adapted to survive these harsh environs. Once you have explored Sossusvlei, Deadvlei and surrounding dune fields to your heart's content you can enjoy a relaxed picnic brunch in the shade of a camel thorn tree.

You will return to camp with time to relax at camp 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 and to enjoy a magnificent final safari sundowner.

**Sossusvlei:** This most frequently visited section of the massive 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> Namib Naukluft National Park has become known as Sossusvlei, famous for its towering apricot coloured sand dunes which can be reached by following the Tsauchab River valley. Sossusvlei itself is actually a clay pan set amidst these star shaped dunes which stand up to 300 meters above the surrounding plains, ranking them among the tallest dunes on earth. The deathly white clay pan contrasts against the orange sands and forms the endpoint of the ephemeral Tsauchab River, within the interior of the Great Sand Sea. The river course rises south of the Naukluft Mountains in the Great Escarpment. It penetrates the sand sea for some 55 km before it finally peters out at Sossusvlei, about the same distance from the Atlantic Ocean. Until the encroaching dunes blocked its course around 60,000 years ago, the Tsauchab River once reached the sea; as ephemeral rivers still do in the northern half of the Namib. Sand-locked pans to the west show where the river previously flowed to before dunes shifted its endpoint to where it currently gathers at Sossusvlei. Roughly once a decade rainfall over the catchment area is sufficient to bring the river down in flood and fill the pan.

On such occasions the mirror images of dunes and camel thorn trees around the pan are reflected in the water. Sossusvlei is the biggest of four pans in the vicinity. Another, famous for its gnarled and ghostly camel thorn trees, is Deadvlei which can be reached on foot over 1 km of sand. Deadvlei's striking camel thorn trees, dead for want of water, still stand erect as they once grew. They survived until about 900 years ago when the sand sea finally blocked the river from occasionally flooding the pan.

**Overnight:      Camp Sossus**  
**Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Nature Based Activities with Guide (Local Drinks included)**

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## Day 10 (Saturday 2023)

## Namib Tsaris Conservancy to Windhoek

After a leisurely breakfast this morning you will depart from Sossusvlei and return to Windhoek, driving northeast up the Great Escarpment and through the scenic Khomas Hochland highlands. A tasty picnic lunch will again be served en route and arrival in Windhoek should be by the mid-afternoon.

Upon your arrival in Windhoek, you will be transferred to your accommodation establishment of choice, or out to the Windhoek International Airport (transfer to be booked additionally) if flying out in the evening - departure flights must be no earlier than 18h00 to allow sufficient time for the journey back to Windhoek, or a final night in Windhoek can be arranged at additional cost if required. A final night in Windhoek is highly recommended!

## Breakfast & Lunch

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## RECOMMENDED SELLING RATES

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES  
(MINIMUM 2 / MAXIMUM 7 PAX)

LOW SEASON  
(commencing in April, May, June 2023)  
NAD/ZAR 68,543.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT  
NAD/ZAR11,828.00 single supplement

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES  
(MINIMUM 2 / MAXIMUM 7 PAX)

HIGH SEASON  
(commencing in July to October 2023)  
NAD/ZAR 75,196.00 per person sharing

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT  
NAD/ZAR 13,738.00 single supplement

### INCLUDED:

- Accommodation as stated above.
- Transportation in a luxury air-conditioned safari vehicle.
- All meals.
- Services of a registered and experienced naturalist English-speaking safari guide.
- Entrance fees and excursions as described in above itinerary.
- Mineral water on board the safari vehicle.
- Local drinks at meals (this includes water, soft drinks, beers and table wine).
- Two Ongava afternoon property drives in open game viewer with lodge guide.
- Welcome pack.

### EXCLUDED:

- International, regional & local flights to Namibia and airport taxes.
- Return airport transfers from Windhoek International Airport – Windhoek – Windhoek International Airport.
- Pre and post safari accommodation in Windhoek.
- Any entrance fees and excursions not included in the above itinerary such as scenic flights.
- All premium and imported wines, champagnes and spirits
- Laundry (laundry service available at lodges at extra cost) – //Huab Under Canvas will offer a limited complimentary laundry service to assist with a 'mid-point laundry' opportunity.
- Gratuities.
- Items of personal nature (telephone expenses, curios, medicines etc).
- ENTRY VISA FEES.
- BANK CHARGES (as per bank or 3.5% commission for VISA/MASTER and 4.5% commission for AMEX).

### NOTES:

- Services subject to availability at the time of booking.
- Rates subject to change without prior notice due to circumstances beyond our control e.g., fuel increases, currency fluctuation etc.
- Given the nature of this safari, the age restriction is a minimum of 12 years paying full fare.
- **PLEASE NOTE** that whilst we endeavor to accommodate guests at the above stipulated lodges/camps, Ultimate Safaris reserves the right to replace such with one of a similar standard and location.
- Terms and conditions apply.

### HANDY TIPS:

- **Visas/Passports:** Please ensure: 1) that you have pre-arranged your entry visa if required; 2) that your passport is valid for at least six months after your scheduled departure date from Namibia; 3) that you have a minimum of 2 consecutive clear pages for visas. If this is not the case, there is a danger of being turned away by the Immigration Service on arrival at the airport – assuming your airline has agreed to bring you and risk a fine in the first place.
- **Health:** No vaccinations are mandatory but please consult your doctor for medical advice. Parts of Namibia are considered to be malarial so we recommend the use of anti-malarial prophylactics (normally Malarone), especially if visiting during the Namibian summer (December to April) – subject to advice from your own doctor.
- **Luggage:** Is strictly restricted to 20 kg (including photographic equipment) per person in a **soft**, hold all type bag. If adding extensions that involve light aircraft transfers the luggage limit may be reduced further to 15 kg in soft bags (please enquire if this may apply to you). If required, any extra luggage can be stored at our base when visitors are away on safari.

- **Vehicles:** Vehicles used are normally specialized 4x4 safari vehicle, equipped with pop up roofs, air-conditioning and fridges for drinks and snacks.

## NAMIBIA UNDER CANVAS SAFARI DATES – DEPARTURES ON THURSDAYS and ENDS ON SATURDAYS

NUC #1: Thursday, 06 April 2023 – Saturday, 15 April 2023  
NUC #2: Thursday, 20 April 2023 – Saturday, 29 April 2023  
NUC #3: Thursday, 04 May 2023 – Saturday, 13 May 2023  
NUC #4: Thursday, 25 May 2023 – Saturday, 03 June 2023  
NUC #5: Thursday, 01 June 2023 – Saturday, 10 June 2023  
NUC #6: Thursday, 22 June 2023 – Saturday, 01 July 2023  
NUC #7: Thursday, 29 June 2023 – Saturday, 08 July 2023  
NUC #8: Thursday, 13 July 2023 – Saturday, 22 July 2023  
NUC #9: Thursday, 20 July 2023 – Saturday, 29 July 2023  
NUC #10: Thursday, 03 August 2023 – Saturday, 12 August 2023  
NUC #11: Thursday, 17 August 2023 – Saturday, 26 August 2023  
NUC #12: Thursday, 24 August 2023 – Saturday, 02 September 2023  
NUC #13: Thursday, 31 August 2023 – Saturday, 09 September 2023  
NUC #14: Thursday, 14 September 2023 – Saturday, 23 September 2023  
NUC #15: Thursday, 05 October 2023 – Saturday, 14 October 2023

These Under Canvas Safaris have elements that require a **degree of mobility** in order to get the best out of them. These include tracking for desert adapted black rhino across rough terrain on foot, sometimes for up to three or four hours, and climbing some of the free standing dunes in the Sossusvlei area. If you are not sure you are able to do this, it may be better to look at a less active programme such as our Ultimate Namibia Safari which does not include rhino tracking on foot. Please note that both of these are group departures and your guide cannot change the advertised programme to suit individual needs unless all participants agree, so everyone needs to keep up or risk being left out on occasion. Please therefore make an honest assessment of your fitness levels before deciding to take part. You don't need to be a marathon runner, but you do need 'level three' mobility which means you can walk for two or three kilometres over fairly rough ground where necessary. When you make your assessment, please also consider other medical conditions such as recent injuries to back or neck, or difficulties in hearing, as these can also adversely affect your enjoyment. None of this should be a deterrent to most potential participants, but we feel duty-bound to ensure that guests are aware of what they may need to be able to do before making booking. Assuming all is well with that, you are very welcome to join in, and you are also pretty much guaranteed a great safari experience

### //HUAB UNDER CANVAS RHINO TRACKING

//Huab Under Canvas offers a genuine "back to nature" experience, with the main emphasis being the tracking of desert adapted black rhino. Being out on the edges of the Namib Desert on foot and observing these critically endangered animals in their natural habitat offers an extraordinary experience. We accept that it is easier to view black rhino in National Parks or private game reserves, but the North West of Namibia is the only place in the world where black rhino still occur completely naturally in areas devoid of fences or anything which would limit their movement. This makes it one of the last great wilderness areas left in Africa that supports the last truly wild population of black rhino on earth. Black rhino occupy massive home ranges, and by protecting them we are also protecting the rest of the fauna and flora of the region, allowing entire ecosystems to prosper. Tracking black rhino in a completely unfenced area takes skill and patience, and viewing them in this terrain is truly life enriching.

Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) was instrumental in the translocation of black rhino back into this conservancy area after years of poaching had resulted in them becoming locally extinct, and SRT has a long standing relationship with both Ultimate Safaris and the //Huab Conservancy. The initial number of rhinos re-introduced was small, but they have been constantly monitored by the Conservancy Rhino Rangers to ensure they remain safe and that this confirms the sustainability of the project. The introduction of light footprint tourism has provided more funding, increased the protection of rhino, and paved the way to increase numbers. This brings higher tourism demand and therefore more revenue generated from rhino tourism which then goes to the custodians of this area, the communities that live here.

### DESERT ADAPTED BLACK RHINO IN NAMIBIA

The black rhino population of Namibia's north western Kunene region is unique in that it is one of the world's most important groups to have survived outside a formally protected National Park or Game Reserve. Historically, desert adapted black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*) were found across almost all of Namibia and the western parts of South Africa but, as a result of droughts and poaching, they are now limited to just northwest Namibia where 90% of this subspecies occurs. Their distribution stretches across 23 000 square kilometers (5.7 million acres) of arid communal rangelands in the Kunene region.

This particular population survives in the most extreme conditions, generally with less than 100mm of rainfall per year on a sparsely vegetated landscape. Black rhino are exclusively browsers and use their prehensile lips to clip vegetation from bushes, shrubs and trees, showing a preference for the *Euphorbia damarana*, *Euphorbia virosa* and *Terminalia prunoides* found in this region. As a result of the harsh environment and the limited resources, home ranges can be up to ten times the size of those of other rhino populations, making space and habitat some of the key conservation variables for the species in these conditions. Desert adapted black rhino are known to be shy and easily agitated, and therefore liable to move out of protected areas to get away from people. This can make them hard to protect and it means the conservation efforts directed towards helping them to survive in these remote areas are especially important.

### **POACHING THREAT IN NAMIBIA**

The greatest threat to rhino worldwide is poaching, where demand for the perceived medicinal benefits from their horn has seen prices exceed US\$ 65,000 per kilogram. This makes it the most expensive commodity on earth, worth more per kilogram than gold, diamonds or cocaine. There are no easy solutions or 'silver bullets' here. Rhino poaching is complex but our role is to be creative and collaborative in our efforts to combat poaching at a local level. Long term success will require the support from local people living alongside the rhino, ultimately ensuring that a live rhino is worth more to them than a dead one. This is a unique Namibian approach to this challenge and your presence here is part of the solution

### **TRACKING THE ELUSIVE DESERT ADAPTED BLACK RHINO**

Unlike the majority of game viewing you might do while in Namibia, the tracking of desert adapted rhino needs to be done on foot. The rhino in these dry parts of Namibia can seldom be seen from roads as they prefer the protection of hills and small tree-lined dry runoff lines. This means you can't just see them from a vehicle, you need to go out to look for them, and the distances that have to be covered to do so can vary.

Black rhinos are large animals, and potentially aggressive on account of their fairly poor eyesight. As a result, going out to look for them is not an activity that should be taken lightly. Added to that, our aim is to have as little impact on the animals as possible, so our hope is to enjoy a sighting and then leave without them ever being aware of our presence.

On the //Huab Conservancy we have two teams of highly trained and experienced rhino rangers, all of whom hail from the local area. Namibia currently has sixty full time rhino rangers, five of whom operate here. The presence of these rhino rangers has increased field patrols by 750%, rhino sightings by 450%, and is estimated to have helped reduce poaching by 80% between 2013 and 2018. The rhino ranger teams head out into the field at sunrise to visit the limited water sources in the area, mostly natural springs, where rhino drink frequently. Desert adapted rhino drink mostly at night as there is then more water available at the natural springs than there is during the day when evaporation levels are higher. Rhino rangers therefore start to track from here if they find fresh signs.

One team will normally be taken out and dropped off by your guide while the other team heads out on their solar E-mountain bikes which allow them to cover far greater distances than they could when patrolling on foot. When a rhino is located they communicate with your guide via radio to let him know where they are and he will then take you out to join them.

Unfortunately, the character of these rhino means that it is not safe for untrained individuals to be part of the tracking procedure, and your safety has to be our priority. Added to that, untrained participants in the actual tracking could compromise a potential sighting. As a result, guests will join the trackers once they have confirmed a sighting, and once the viewing is complete, the rangers will spend time retracing their tracking experience for guests to give them an insight into the art of tracking in this terrain.

The rhino rangers have to take charge of this experience as they know each individual animal and their habits. They will therefore decide how close you can approach with safety, how long you can stay, and when you need to move away. During this time, they also have to complete their observation tasks as the rhino rangers are financially incentivized when it comes to sightings.

For them, the sightings must also include a number of tasks which include documenting observations, photographing the rhino and, most importantly, not disturbing the rhino whilst doing all of this. Photo opportunities might be limited but, unlike other rhino sightings you may have had elsewhere in Africa, this is an experiential activity which also has a very positive conservation impact. Sightings are not guaranteed, and this is influenced by many factors, including weather conditions. Sightings are also not always perfect, but being part of a genuine conservation effort and having a bond with these a specific rhino assists us in protecting these animals whilst offering you a truly life enriching experience.

## TRACKING PREPARATION

Here are some important points that need to be taken into account when preparing yourself, both mentally and physically, before embarking on the rhino tracking activity:

- The three most important factors to take into consideration; firstly, your SAFETY, secondly, CONSERVATION CONCERNS and not disturbing the rhino, and thirdly, your ENJOYMENT.
- The rangers are in control of the sighting and guests should follow all their instructions.
- The viewing distance and time spent with the rhino is determined by a viewing protocol, which takes into account terrain and conditions but, on average, this is approximately 15 minutes at 300 feet.
- Once you get out of the vehicle your guide will give you a safety briefing.
- Everybody should approach the sighting in single file. The rangers will position you for the best possible viewing and you should remain there unless instructed otherwise.
- Guests should avoid wearing perfume and aftershave as rhino have excellent smell.
- Although the rhino does not have good eye sight, guests must wear natural colored clothing as the rhino can be disturbed by movement of brighter colored clothing.
- Bring hats, sunglasses, cameras and wear trousers as well as comfortable walking shoes.
- Should you need to take any medication during the morning ensure you bring it along with you.
- Each tent is supplied with a pair of Swarovski Binoculars, the perfect equipment for optimal viewing.
- All questions should be kept until you have returned to the vehicle as rhino have very good hearing and can be alarmed by the sound of voices.

This rhino tracking experience is designed to give you an understanding of the needs of this unique rhino species, as well as the conservation issues faced in this area and the value of the partnerships between //Huab Conservancy, Save the Rhino Trust and Ultimate Safaris who all assist with the protection of this population and the long term sustainability of this project