



## **SPLENDORS OF NAMIBIA**

**14 DAYS / 13 NIGHTS / 36 MEALS**

### **ITINERARY**

#### **DAY 1 JOHANNESBURG**

Upon arrival you will be met and transfer to your hotel. No guide. The other fellow travelers and your guide will join you tomorrow in Windhoek airport.

Accommodation: Peermont Metcourt or similar

#### **DAY 2 JOHANNESBURG · WINDHOEK · OTJIWARONGO**

Breakfast. Transfer to Johannesburg airport for your flight to Namibia. Upon arrival, meet and greet with your guide and departure to Okahandja. Appreciate handmade wooden creations in Okahandja. This small town lies approximately 70 kilometres from Walvis Bay and is the commercial centre of the area. The town was originally established as a mission station and its history is closely linked to that of the Herero people in Namibia as it is the location of one of their most important tribal centres. At the entrance and exit of Okahandja, there are two open air craft markets that specialise in wooden carvings made from timber

originating in northern Namibia. The markets are popular browsing spots for tourists who are looking for a special memento of their Namibian travels and purchases from here also help support the local community who sell their carvings at the craft markets on a co-operative basis. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

Accommodation: Out of Africa Town Lodge or similar

### DAY 3 OTJIWARONGO · ETOSHA

Breakfast. Get your feline fix with a visit to the Cheetah Conservation Fund's International Research and Education Centre. Situated 44 km outside Otjiwarongo, the CCF Centre was founded by Dr Laurie Marker and is the world's leading organisation dedicated to saving the cheetah from extinction. Loss of habitat, poaching and prosecution by farmers has led to the cheetah being the most endangered cat in Africa. The CCF Centre provides in-depth information about the cheetah, and what CCF is doing to ensure the survival of this species for future generations. Cheetah that cannot be released into the wild for various reasons are protected in this peaceful sanctuary and visitors can observe these big cats on a drive through one of the cheetah camps. Lunch. Seize the last rays of the day on an afternoon safari in the Etosha National Park. As the sun starts making its descent towards the shimmering horizon, the animals converge upon the waterholes to quench their thirst. The central/southwestern sector of the park offers the best chances of seeing the endangered black rhino and lions attracted by the herds of zebra and wildebeest. The waterholes also draw a large number of elephant, particularly at the aptly named 'Olifantsbad', or 'elephants' bath'. Dinner at the lodge. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Toshari Lodge or similar for 2 nights

### DAY 4 ETOSHA

Breakfast. Full day game drive through the vast wilderness at the Etosha National Park. This spectacular wildlife park is dominated by a massive mineral pan, part of the Kalahari Basin, the floor of which was formed over 1 000 million years ago and fills up only for a short period of time when rains are heavy. Most of the year it is a shimmering mirage against which the long shadows of passing herds of game can be seen, providing a unique and stunningly stark landscape. Despite its aridness, the park is rich in wildlife and boasts the Big Five and over 100 other mammal species as well as thousands of birds that flock to the pan. During your game drive, stop at some of the waterholes to watch animals slake their thirst in the water. **(Optional 4X4 Full day Game drive. Supplement \$CAD105.00 per person).** (B/L/D)

### DAY 5 ETOSHA · KHORIXAS

Breakfast. Leave modernity behind you with a self-drive visit to the Himba people of Namibia. This tribe is one of the last in Africa to still live strictly within their age-old traditional beliefs and are found in semi-nomadic, scattered settlements in the remote regions of northern Namibia. They are characterised by their proud yet friendly stature, and the women are noted for their unusual beauty, enhanced by intricate hairstyles and traditional dress. During your visit you can experience the milking ceremony, traditionally carried out by female tribe members; the smoke bath, where women burn aromatic plants to perfume themselves; and learn all about the beliefs surrounding the holy fire, ancestors, and herbal medicine. Understand how hairstyles and jewellery are used to denote the status of tribe members as you begin to absorb the traditional lifestyle of this ancient tribe that has retained its independence from the Western world. Lunch. Shield your eyes from the glare of the sun as you unearth the harsh beauty of Damaraland. The vast stretches of Damaraland's semi-desert landscape are spectacular and hold rare and unusual sights such as desert-adapted elephants striding along the dusty earth and forests of petrified trees buried in beds of sandstone. Twyfelfontein is a World Heritage Site that conceals one of the continent's largest collections of African rock art and engravings and there are various craters and mountains in the area to explore. The massive Brandberg massif stands as Namibia's highest mountain, dominating the surrounding plains and home to an immense collection of early rock paintings including the famous White Lady. Another well-known landmark is Vingerkilp, a striking pinnacle

of rock and natural obelisk balancing vertically on its own. Black rhino are present throughout the regions as well as many other animals, although these are more readily found in the east of Damaraland where the vegetation is more lush. Dinner at the Lodge. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Mopane Lodge or similar

## DAY 6 KHORIXAS · SWAKOPMUND

Breakfast. Touch trees of stone with a visit to the Petrified Forest, a remarkable site of fossilised tree trunks dating back to the paleontological era. Geological research has revealed that these trees belong to the pine family, and were washed down the continent in a massive flood to their current site, buried beneath hundreds of metres of sediment. Over millions of years, the pressure caused the organic material to be replaced by silica and completely transformed the trees into stone. The effects of erosion have exposed these tree relics, including two trees measuring up to 45 metres. Read the pictures that paint a thousand words at the site of Twyfelfontein in the heart of Damaraland. With over 2 500 rock engravings dating back 6 000 years to the hunter-gatherers of the Stone Age, as well as numerous Khoikhoi rock painting sites estimated to be 2 000 years old, Twyfelfontein has one of the largest concentrations of rock petroglyphs in Africa, and was declared Namibia's first World Heritage Site in 2007. The ancient engravings and paintings depict the lives of lost communities and the animals with whom they shared the landscape. Twyfelfontein is translated to 'doubtful spring' in Afrikaans, referring to the /Ui-//aes spring that lies within the valley along the slopes of the sandstone plateau. Lunch. Travel to Walvis Bay. Alternate between wetlands and sand dunes on a tour of Walvis Bay. Meaning 'Whale Bay' in Afrikaans, the natural harbour forms Namibia's main port. The 7 km long lagoon is one of the most important wetlands in southern Africa and is a paradise for pelicans and pink flamingos. The first European to venture here in 1497 was Diaz, but he only stayed long enough to name the coast "the sands of hell" and the town was only officially founded in 1793 by the Cape Dutch. Despite Diaz's misgivings, Walvis Bay is a thriving town, its fishing industry accounting for 10% of the country's GDP, and a booming adventure tourism sector driven by outdoor enthusiasts who come for the dune activities and sea excursions. Dinner at Cosmopolitan Restaurant & Bar. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Atlantic Villa Guest House or similar for 2 nights

## DAY 7 SWAKOPMUND

Breakfast. Inhale the fresh, salty air as you prepare for a marine dolphin motorboat cruise to Pelican Point. The calm waters of Walvis Bay's lagoon are teeming with marine life. The cruise traverses the oyster lines, Walvis Bay Harbour and Pelican Point with its iconic lighthouse, where Cape fur seals play in the waves and come right up to the boat. Further out bottlenose and Heaviside dolphins swim alongside the boat, and whales can be spotted between July and November. Flamingos, pelicans and even jackass penguins are common sightings during the cruise. Soak up the salty sea breeze on an orientation tour of Swakopmund. A popular seaside resort providing visitors respite from the heat of the desert, the town is a quirky mix of German architecture, stemming from its origins as a harbour town for German South West Africa, and the African love for adrenalin. To this day, the town's main inhabitants and visitors are German-speaking, preserving European heritage at the edge of the Namib Desert. The harbour activities were moved to Walvis Bay in 1915 but tourism continues to thrive as visitors come to see the incongruous Baltic Sea architecture among palm tree-lined streets, and participate in the plethora of outdoor activities on offer. The most iconic remnant of the German colonial era in Swakopmund is the ornate Victorian Hohenzollern building, dominated by a figure of Atlas holding the world upon his shoulders. Other prominent examples of German architecture dating from the early 1900s include the Prinzessin Rupprecht Residenz (originally a military hospital and now a hotel), the Woermannhaus (1905), the youth hostel, the Lutheran Church on Post Street (1911), the court, the railway station which is also now a hotel (1901), the buildings on Sam Nujoma Avenue (previously Kaiser Wilhelm

Strasse), the Arnold Shad Promenade, and the metal pier which was built in 1915, and recently rescued from dereliction. Dinner Strand Hotel. (B/L/D)

**DAY 8 SWAKOPMUND · NAMIB-NAUKLUFT**

Breakfast. Travel to Swakopmund. Walk on the moon Namibian-style at the Namib Moon Landscape, a name given to a part of the valley of the Swakop River near Swakopmund. The lunar-type landscape, eroded by thousands of years of wind and rain, is awe-inspiring. The river that flows from time to time at the bottom of the valley brings a short-lived period of fertility to the region and the water allows some plants to survive in this hostile environment. Man tried to cultivate parts of this valley for agriculture at the beginning of the previous century, with little success due to the harshness of the environment. Discover the *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a botanical curiosity that is found almost exclusively in areas of fog of the Namib Desert. Some specimens are older than 1500 years. Lunch. Capture hypnotic scenic images at the Kuiseb Canyon. The ephemeral Kuiseb River has carved an impressive nine kilometre long canyon which can be seen from the C14 road close to the town of Solitaire. This river is the dividing line between the endless rocky plains of the north and the sand dunes that end near the Orange River. After the rainy season in the summer, the Kuiseb River mostly dries up but some water remains at the canyon. Klipspringer, leopard, hyena, jackal and springbok can sometimes be spotted. Prepare to be mesmerised as you explore the enormous Namib-Naukluft National Park. The park covers an area of just under 50 000 km<sup>2</sup>, and is the largest nature conservation area in Namibia, and the fourth largest in the world. This is a vast, remote area encompassing dramatic landscapes, from an impressive mountain massif to desert plains and high dunes, to deep gorges and an estuarine lagoon. The Naukluft area is situated north-west of Maltahöhe on the road to the coastal town of Swakopmund at the edge of the Namib Desert. Amid the semi-desert landscape and mountainous escarpment, mountain zebra and other species of game can be found. Sesriem, the main entrance gate to the park, lies west of the Naukluft mountains, where the Tsauchab River disappears dramatically down a steep gorge at a huge, dried-up pan, called Sossusvlei. Here, the towering dunes, reaching up to 300 m high - among the tallest dunes in the world - extend as far as the eye can see, and their multi-coloured hues vary from pale apricot to vivid reds and oranges. Sandwich Harbour, 42 km south of the port of Walvis Bay, is a large, reed-lined marine lagoon home to many coastal and freshwater birds and only accessibly by 4x4 vehicles. Dinner at Sossusvlei Lodge. (B/L/D)  
 Accommodation: Desert Quiver Camp or similar for 2 nights

**DAY 9 NAMIB-NAUKLUFT**

Breakfast. Travel by 4x4 shuttle to the incredible site of Sossusvlei. Meaning 'dead-end marsh', Sossusvlei is a salt pan surrounded by ancient dunes that are among the highest in the world, reaching up to 300-400 metres. Visitors from all around the world come to capture haunting images of the towering coral-hued dunes. Skeletal remnants of 550-year-old dead camelthorn trees rise from another dry lake, the Dead Vlei, in stark contrast against its surrounding sea of sand. While it may seem that this stark environment could not sustain life, many species of plants and animals have adapted to the harsh conditions, among them the gemsbok (oryx), which can survive without water for weeks. Stare into the abyss at the Sesriem Canyon located 4,5 km from the Sesriem gate to the Namib-Naukluft National Park. The 50 metre-deep gorge was formed by the Tsauchab River as a result of millions of years of erosion, and is one the few places in the Namib Desert that holds water all year round - there are water pools at the bottom of the canyon even in the dry season. Early Afrikaans explorers tied six (ses) leather ropes (riem) together to pull buckets of water from the canyon for their livestock. Lunch. Dinner at Sossusvlei Lodge. (B/L/D)

**DAY 10 NAMIB-NAUKLUFT · AUS**

Breakfast. Travel to Namib-Naukluft. Lunch. Enter through the imposing doors of Duwisib Castle, built in 1909 by a German baron to resemble a fort and to reflect the baron's commitment to the German Military. Much of

the building supplies were shipped into Lüderitz from Germany and transported by ox-wagon across the desert to the site of the castle, 70 km south-west of Maltahohe. The 22-room castle served as the private residence of the baron and his wife, but following his death in France during World War 1, the castle was sold. It was transferred to the state in the late 1970s and today it is a national monument, filled with antiques, armour and paintings, standing incongruously amid its semi-arid surrounds. Dinner at the hotel. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Klein Aus Vista or similar

#### **DAY 11 AUS · FISH RIVER CANYON**

Travel to Fish River Canyon. Lunch. Sense the magnitude of nature's forces with a visit to the Fish River Canyon. Located in the Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park at the lower reaches of the Fish River - Namibia's longest river - the Fish River Canyon is said to be the world's second largest canyon after America's Grand Canyon. Formed 650-million years ago as a result of tectonic shifts, the canyon spans a depth of 600 metres, a length of 80 kilometres and a width of approximately 20 kilometres. The sight of the massive ravine against a stark desert backdrop is one of the highlights of southern Namibia. Dinner at the hotel. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Canyon RoadHouse or similar

#### **DAY 12 FISH RIVER CANYON · KALAHARI**

Breakfast. Travel to Keetmanshoop. Transcend time with a visit to the Kokerboom Forest south of Keetmanshoop, proclaimed a national monument in 1955 due to its exceptional concentration of quiver trees. Belonging to the aloe family, the quiver tree (aloe dichotoma) is endemic to Namibia and is certainly one of the country's most outlandish plant specimens. Once the branches of this aloe are dry, the fibrous inner contents are removed and the hollow bark is used as a quiver for arrows by the indigenous people. Some specimens can reach a height of 9 metres and the trees in this natural forest are between two and three hundred years old. Lunch. Be blown away by the haunting beauty of the Kalahari Desert. Extending over an area of 500,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Kalahari covers most of Botswana - where it is known as the Kgalagadi - some areas of South Africa, and south-eastern Namibia. Contrary to what the notion of 'desert' might suggest, the Kalahari has a semi-arid climate and receives an average annual rainfall of 100 mm (as opposed to a maximum of 25 mm for a true desert). The rains enable a multitude of life to flourish across the red sands that transform into grassy plains at times of higher rainfall, and numerous species of mammals and birds inhabit the Kalahari, as do the San Bushmen, southern Africa's oldest human inhabitants. The solitary expanses evoke a sense of isolation, yet its lunar landscapes, varied fauna and flora and ancient tribes make the Kalahari an enriching experience. Nature drive in an open 4x4 in the Kalahari. End the day with a sundowner whilst admiring the sunset. Dinner at the Lodge. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Kalahari Anib Lodge or similar

#### **DAY 13 KALAHARI · WINDHOEK**

Breakfast. Travel to Windhoek. Lunch. Saunter the sidewalks on a city tour of Windhoek. The capital of Namibia lies at an altitude of 1 654 metres within the Khomashochland, a hilly plateau in the centre of the country. With its unique blend of European and African architecture, history and culture, the tranquil city has a slightly vintage feel. Its first inhabitants named the city as a "place of vapour, water or fire" due to the numerous hot water springs in the area. Following the arrival of the Germans in 1890 the city grew around a fortress, or the Alte Feste, and the Tintenpalast (Ink Palace), Namibia's parliament building. The Christuskirche, built in neo-Gothic / Art Nouveau style, rises above the city showcasing the German architectural influence of the time. Dinner at the hotel. (B/L/D)

Accommodation: Avani Windhoek Hotel or similar

#### **DAY 14 WINDHOEK**

Breakfast. Transfer to Windhoek airport for your flight to Johannesburg. (B)

## INCLUSIONS

Domestic flights Johannesburg – Windhoek - Johannesburg ▪ Airport taxes of \$265.00 ▪ Transfers ▪ Meet and greet by our local representative ▪ Excursions, meals and accommodation as per itinerary ▪ English speaking local guide ▪ taxes and fees ▪ Group tour maximum 22 passengers

### Not included

International airfare ▪ Optional excursions ▪ beverages ▪ Gratuities to hotel personnel, guides and drivers.

Price per person (\$CAD) Double occupancy Départure date	land portion
<b>Dec. 27, 2018</b> <b>January 17, 2019</b> <b>February 21, 2019</b> <b>March 7,21, 2019</b> <b>April 11, 25, 2019</b> <b>May 2, 16, 2019</b> <b>June 27, 2019</b> <b>July 4, 18, 2019</b> <b>August 1,15, 2019</b> <b>Sept. 4, 19, 2019</b> <b>Oct. 3, 7, 24, 2019</b>	<b>5939</b>
<b>Single Supplement Nov. 1, 2018 - Oct. 31, 2019</b>	<b>769</b>
<b>November 7, 21, 2019</b> <b>December 26, 2019</b>	<b>6189</b>
<b>Single Supplement Nov. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019</b>	<b>769</b>
<b>minimum 2 passengers</b>	