

Namibia Self-Drive Planning Guide



Namibia
Endless horizons

WELCOME TO NAMIBIA

Enjoy the best of Africa at your own pace. Namibia's great roads, ample car hires, and exceptional record on safety make it a fantastic destination for travelers who like to have some flexibility in their itinerary and explore places off the beaten path. All you need is a reliable vehicle, an international driver's license, a good map and a sense of adventure.

(Cover photo by: Travel News Namibia/Venture Publications)



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Planning Your Route

Deciding on a route is the most difficult - and most fun - part of planning your self-drive holiday through Namibia. Determining the appropriate amount of time to spend at a destination and the driving times between can seem daunting. But don't fret; there is plenty of help out there. You just need to know where to look.

[Find a certified Namibia Specialist near you here.](#)

Self-Drive Operators

Tour operators with local knowledge are an invaluable resource when planning a self-drive holiday in Namibia. Their on-the-ground knowledge and expertise are good assets throughout the planning process. It's best to do some research first and get an idea of which [destinations](#) you would like to visit, prioritizing those that you simply cannot miss. Once you have your list of destinations, an operator will work with you to create an itinerary for the amount of time you have in Namibia.

[You can find directory of self-drive operators here.](#)

Classic Namibia Itinerary

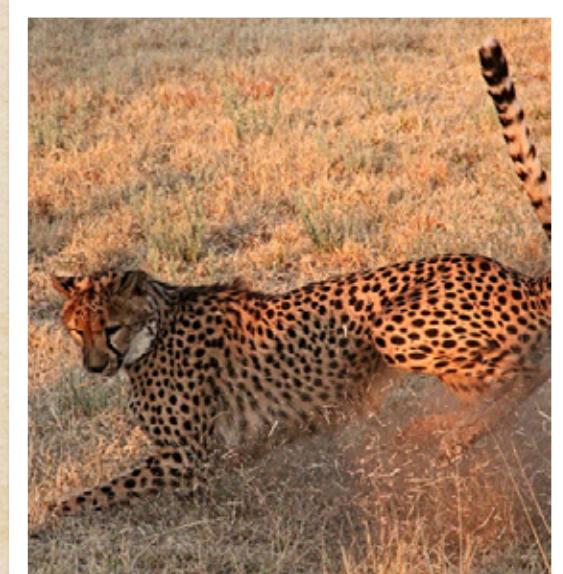
This is an example of a classic two-week Namibia self-drive safari. As you'll see, the circular route means no long distances between attractions and no backtracking.

Day 1: Windhoek

Arrive in Namibia's capital, check into your guesthouse and then head over to the famous [Joe's Beer House](#) for some delicious game steaks, including kudu, zebra and springbok, and wind down with an ice-cold Windhoek lager.

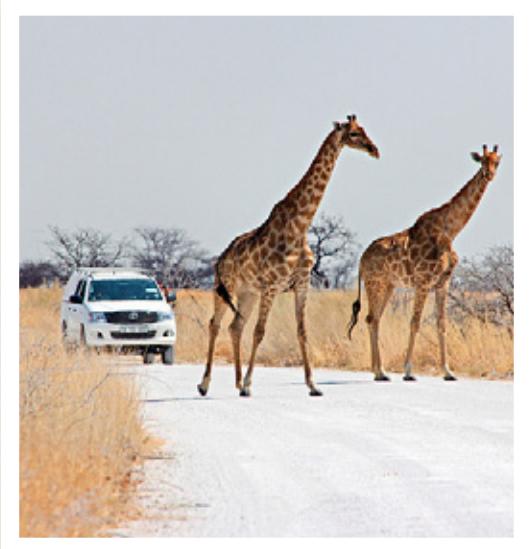
Day 2: Central Highlands

Get up close with some of Namibia's big cats by paying a visit to our renowned conservation organizations, [AfriCat](#) and the [Cheetah Conservation Fund](#).



Day 3-5: Etosha National Park

The famed [Etosha National Park](#) is your next destination. Spend your days taking leisurely drives through park, with frequent stops at [waterholes](#) along the way to sit and watch the animals in this magnificent setting. [View our photographic Geostory of Etosha National Park here.](#)



Day 6: Twyfelfontein

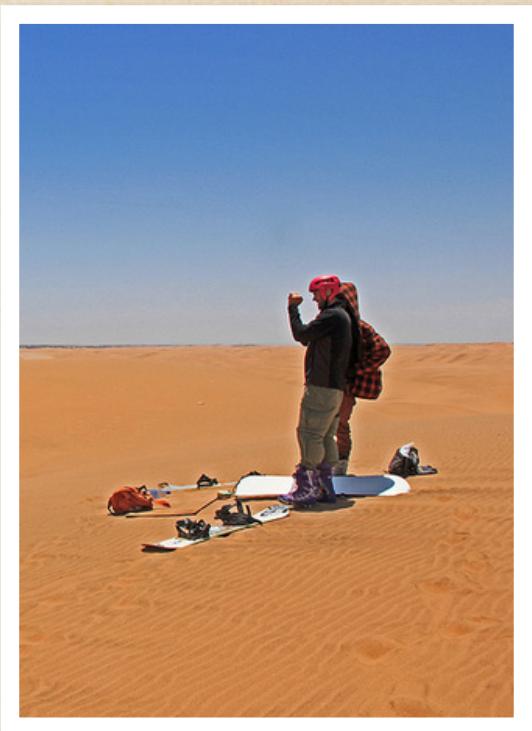
Leave Etosha through the Andersson Gate and head west for a visit to [Twyfelfontein](#), Namibia's only UNESCO World Heritage Site. Twyfelfontein hosts some of Africa's largest and most important rock-art concentrations – some date back 6,000 years!

Day 7: Damaraland

Explore the magic of [Damaraland](#), including the Burnt Mountain, the Petrified Forest and the Organ Pipes – a mass of basalt slabs in a ravine. Here, you also have the opportunity to experience local culture at the [Living Museum of the Damara](#).

Day 8: The Skeleton Coast

Drive through the desert landscape of northwestern Namibia to the cool and often foggy [Skeleton Coast](#). Visit one of the many famous shipwrecks which give the area its name, and see thousands of seals laying upon the rocks at Cape Cross Seal Reserve. [View our photographic Geostory of the Skeleton Coast National Park here.](#)



Day 9: Swakopmund

Spend the day in the coastal town of [Swakopmund](#) with its distinctive German character rooted in the German colonial era of the previous century. This is your chance to take on Namibia's towering dunes on a quad bike, go shark fishing, beach angling, sky diving or [sand boarding](#).

Day 10: Walvis Bay

Further adventure awaits, with options for kite surfing; kayaking; 4x4 trips into the dunes; angling from a boat; day trips to visit the Topnaar people by the Kuiseb River; township tours; day visit to Sandwich Harbour; dolphin cruises in the bay; or bird watching on the lagoon.



Day 11: Namib Naukluft Park

Head south on the C14 towards [Sossusvlei](#) through the Namib-Naukluft National Park. Stop at Solitaire for coffee and a slice of Moose's famous apple pie before spending the night at the foot of the petrified dunes. [View our photographic Geostory of the Road to Sossusvlei here.](#)

Day 12: Sossusvlei

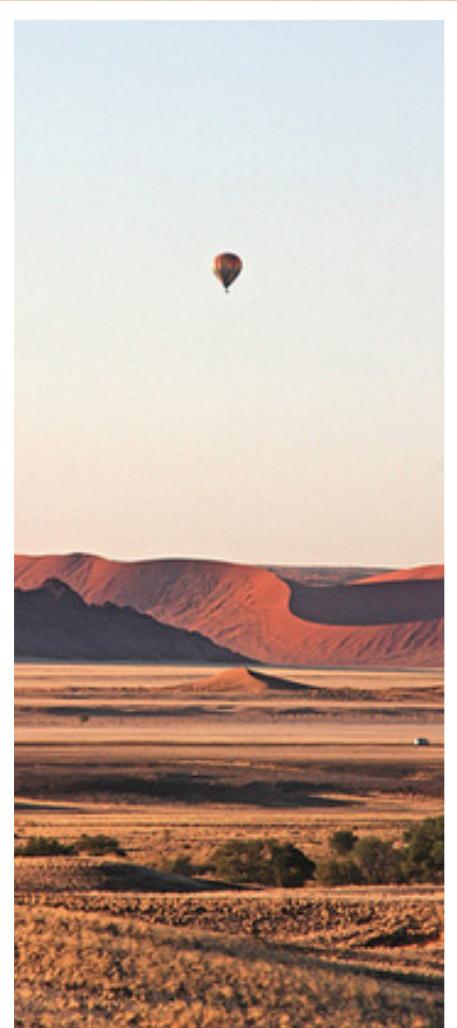
Awake before sunrise and enter the park at Sesriem for the 64km drive between the high, red dunes of Sossusvlei. Hike up the famous Dune 45 or even taller [Big Daddy](#), and continue into Deadvlei with its photogenic camelthorn tree skeletons. Return to Sesriem for a stroll into Sesriem Canyon and a desert sundowner.

Day 13: Sossusvlei

Start your last day on safari with an iconic [balloon trip](#) over the dunes as the sun rises, followed by a champagne breakfast in the middle of nowhere. Take in the vastness of the landscape, spot desert dwelling animals, and take your last 100 photos for the family back home.

Day 14: Spreetshoogte pass

Take the scenic Spreetshoogte pass back to Windhoek. Relish in the memories of your amazing trip and use the plane ride home to start planning your next one!





How to Choose a Vehicle

Car rental companies are frequently asked which vehicles are the most suitable for Namibia. Below are some important factors to consider when renting a vehicle:

- 4WD vehicles cost more to hire and run, but have good ground clearance and are normally fitted with tires that are better suited to Namibia's roads.
- 2WD vehicles have less ground clearance and carry less.
- 2WD camping cars come equipped with everything you'll need.
- 4WD camping cars come equipped with everything you'll need and are more versatile than normal sedans or other two-wheel-drive vehicles equipped for camping.
- Motor homes are usually better suited to tarred roads as they tend to be top heavy and have poor ground clearance.
- Major attractions such as Swakopmund, Sossusvlei and Etosha can be reached on paved or gravel roads in a 2WD vehicle.

[CARAN](#), the Car Rental Association of Namibia, is a non-profit association of 18 members that was established to protect tourists and the car-rental industry against sub-standard service. Car rental companies must subscribe to minimum standards before they can be accepted as members of the association.

What to Pack

Thorough planning is a vital prerequisite for any camping trip. Imagine erecting your tent and finding you forgot to pack the tent poles, or trying to light a campfire without matches. All visitors wishing to travel independently through the awesome, but sometimes isolated, Namibian landscapes should ensure that they are fully equipped and self-sufficient.

Travellers using either their own car or hiring an unequipped vehicle will find several specialist outlets in Windhoek, including [Cymot](#) ([Greensport](#)), [Bushwhackers](#) and [Safari Den](#), where equipment can be purchased. Those preferring to simply hire equipment can contact [Camping Hire](#), amongst others.



The choice between ground tents and vehicle rooftop versions is a personal one. The latter is preferred by many for its ease of use and integrated mattress, superior view, better probability of catching the breeze and less chance of encountering scorpions and other creepy crawlies.

There are many excellent sleeping bags on the market; a down filling being ideal both for its warmth on cool nights and for its lightness.

Here is a sample packing list:

Table and chairs, a small stove (gas or methylated spirits), a *potjie* (a classic black three-legged cooking pot), pans, plates, bowls, mugs, cutlery, kettle, braai (barbecue) grid, copious water containers or jerry cans, washing-up bowl with liquid soap and cloths, a good cool box and preferably a fridge securely wired to your vehicle. Further kitchen equipment includes knives, a chopping board, vegetable peeler, can and bottle opener, corkscrew, scissors, salt, pepper and spices, tongs and an extremely useful head-mounted torch.

Firewood should always be purchased in a pre-packed form, never collected loose in the bush. Take along a small hatchet, firelighters and matches, two powerful torches and plenty of spare batteries.

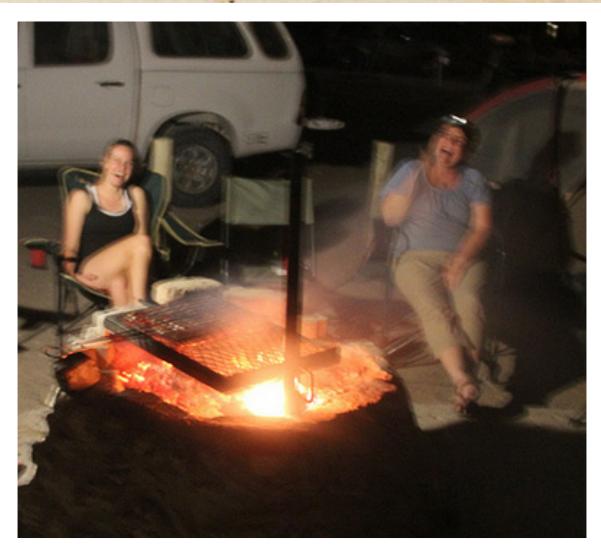
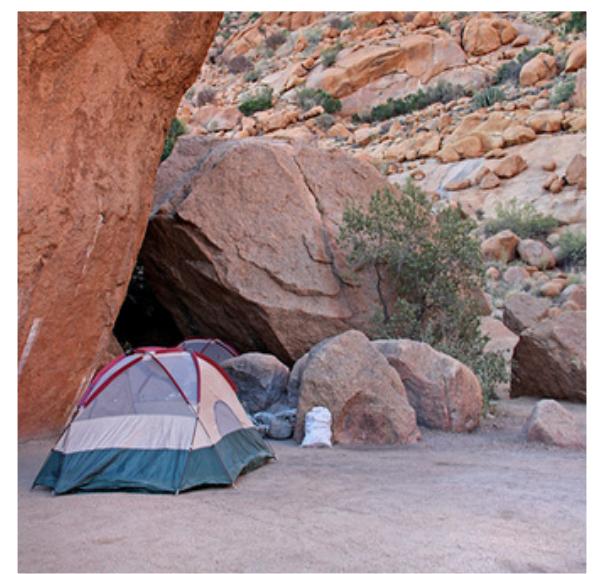
Vehicle spares should include a spare wheel (preferably two), air compressor or pump, tyre gauge, battery leads, towrope, shovel and basic toolkit.

Lastly, remember to take along sensible clothing and footwear, hats, sunblock, anti-malaria treatments if travelling to an affected region, toiletries and personal items.

And don't forget binoculars, a camera, a battery charger and spare memory cards!

How Much to Budget

Budgets for self-drive safaris will vary depending on accommodation, dining, and other miscellaneous expenses. Meeting up with fellow travellers and sharing costs is one way of reducing your budget. You can connect with other travellers visiting Namibia [here](#).



The following are a list of standard items to help you prepare a rough budget estimate:

- **Full tank of unleaded petrol for an SUV:** N\$800
- **Campsite:** N\$120 per person per night
- **Dining out:** N\$60-150 per person
- **Beer:** N\$12
- **Park Entrance Fees (foreign visitors):** N\$80-100

Money and Internet Access

Withdrawing Money/ATM Machines

Money can be withdrawn with credit and debit cards at most ATM machines, located in all big towns throughout the country. Keep in mind that no ATM facilities are available in small towns and villages. Money can also be withdrawn with a credit card over the counter at most banks.

Using Credit Cards in Namibia

Credit cards are useful in major cities and luxury accommodation facilities but may not be accepted in smaller establishments and shops in small towns, and never at street markets or rural craft centers (though [Windhoek's main Craft Centre](#) will accept them).

International Visa and MasterCard are generally accepted and Diners Club, American Express mostly in large shops and big establishments. Keep the exchange rate in mind and also the fact that additional fees will be charged for using the facilities.



Internet Access

The majority of accommodation facilities have Internet access available to their guests, and some restaurants and coffee shops have Wi-Fi. Internet cafes are found in all major towns.

COME AND EXPLORE ENDLESS HORIZONS.

Interested in booking a trip to Namibia?

[Click here](#) to view Namibia travel specialists near you.

[Download](#) our other Namibia Travel Planning Guides to learn what else Namibia has in store for you.