

## BLUE SKIES, RED DESERTS & DUNES

13 DAYS IN NAMIBIA MARCH - OCTOBER 2018

Namibia is utterly different to anywhere else in Africa – a land of vast expanses of moving, rippling rusty sands, great blue skies, and grey of the ocean. We appreciate the colours, starkness and beauty of the landscape that is most impressive when seen from the air. Any animal that we see surviving here, thriving here, stands out as an icon of evolution – black and grey gemsboks (oryx), sandy white springboks, unique zebra, desert adapted elephants many other surprising and fascinating animals.



**12-NIGHT/13-DAY ITINERARY** - Meals included in cost - B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner

Day 1	Olive Exclusive, Windhoek (D only)
Days 2&3	Little Kulala Lodge, Sossusvlei Area (B,L,D)
Days 4-6	Desert Rhino Camp, Damaraland (B,L,D)
Days 7-9	Serra Cafema Camp, Kaokoland (B,L,D)
Days 10-12	Onguma Tented / Tree Top Camp, near Etosha National Park (B,L,D)
Day 13	Last Day (B only)

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### ACTIVITIES

Windhoek - Shopping (Cost of all activities in Windhoek not included in safari price)

Sossusvlei area - Game drives, walks, balloon rides (extra cost)

Desert Rhino - Game drives, bush walks, rhino tracking (shared basis & 12 years or more)

Serra Cafema - Himba people visits, game drives, walks, quad bike rides, boat trips, fishing, birding

Onguma (Etosha) - Game drives, walks, night drives (extra cost)

### LOGISTICS

Windhoek International Airport - Olive Exclusive - ½ hour drive

Windhoek - Sossusvlei Area - 1 hour flight (or 6 hour drive)

Sossusvlei - Damaraland- approx 3 hours flight, including refuelling and some scenic flying

Damaraland - Serra Cafema - 2½ hours flying, including some scenic flying

Serra Cafema - Onguma (Etosha) - 2 hour flight

Onguma (Etosha) - Eros (Windhoek) Airport - 2½ hour flight

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## WINDHOEK & THE OLIVE EXCLUSIVE



Windhoek International Airport is 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Windhoek. Upon arrival you are met and transferred by road to the Olive Exclusive Hotel, situated in Windhoek.

The Olive Exclusive is a welcoming boutique hotel situated in the quiet, peaceful suburb of Eros. This luxurious hotel provides exclusive suite accommodation with beautiful views over the olive trees towards the mountains surrounding Windhoek.

Each inviting suite boasts an expansive balcony and plunge pool and has its own lounge area and dining room, providing the option to enjoy meals in your own room, or to join the other guests for meals at the main restaurant. The en-suite rooms offer all the added luxuries of satellite TV, iPod music system, fully-stocked mini-bar, premier wine selection, direct-dial telephone, air conditioning, hair-dryer, wall-mounted safe, personal computer for internet access, complimentary wireless internet access, goose-down duvets, 100% cotton linen and style in abundance. The overall feel is one of indulgent luxury, while still retaining the simplicity and elegance for which Olive Grove has become well-known.



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## SOSSUSVLEI AREA, NAMIBIA

There is hardly a book on Namibia that doesn't show a stunning photograph of the rich red dunes at Sossusvlei. The scenery is outstanding, even by Namibian desert standards. Interestingly, the dunes seem to change colour from a rich deep russet to a golden colour once the sun is high. Ascending a dune in this area at dusk or dawn can be an amazing, spiritual experience. The dunes cover a vast area, including some national and private reserves.



Sossusvlei itself is situated in the middle of the Namib Naukluft National Park. The valley of the Tsauchab River provides convenient dune-free access to Sossusvlei from the Sesreim area to the east. During occasional floods the river flows westwards from its source in the Naukluft and Zaris Mountains and ends at Sossusvlei, where the river is blocked by massive dunes. At such times the water can stay for a while due to a clay-capped

bedrock and this is what supports the vegetation in Sossusvlei. Most of the time Sossusvlei is a sandy dry pan, surrounded by massive dunes, deep in the Namib desert.

## NAMIB NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK

The Namib Naukluft National Park covers an area of 49,768 km<sup>2</sup> (19,216 sq mi), and so is one of the largest national parks in Africa. Climbing one of the dunes near Sossusvlei (some are reportedly the highest in the world at 300m high) is a rewarding feat. A favorite is "Big Daddy" which forms the eastern edge of "Dead vlei" - another adjoining vlei renowned for its unique beauty. The shifting of the dunes has cut off Dead Vlei from all sources of water, except the extremely rare rainfall, so here the only trees are gnarled, dead ones which form natural works of art. This park was originally created to link the former Namib Desert Park with the Naukluft Mountain Zebra Park, guaranteeing freedom of movement for migratory wildlife that depended on the two areas for survival. More land would have enabled this area to be further preserved, but finances did not allow for that. Luckily, the popularity of Sossusvlei and the surrounding dunes, and the wisdom of ranchers in the area wishing to diversify from a livestock dominated industry in this extremely fragile land, resulted in the creation of various private reserves, creating a buffer zone and effectively enlarging the protected area. These also disperse environmental and tourism pressure on the core area.



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## LITTLE KULALA CAMP, KULALA WILDERNESS RESERVE, NEAR SOSSUSVLEI

Kulala Wilderness Reserve borders Namib Naukluft National Park, and part of this reserve lies adjacent to the Sesriem gate and the road to Sossusvlei. At the time of writing it is possible to enter the Namib Naukluft National Park through a private entrance gate, nearer to Sossusvlei, meaning that this is the ideal place to stay if you wish to be at the enormous dunes before most tourists, at dawn.



Little Kulala Camp is one of two camps within this reserve. The camp's main building overlooks a small waterhole frequented by wildlife such as ostrich, springbok and black-backed jackal. The main building has a cosy indoor lounge and library for cold winter nights, and a large veranda to benefit from sunny days or starlit evenings for al fresco dining.



It has 11 luxury climate-controlled villas. Each has a private plunge pool, a rooftop 'sky bed' for romantic stargazing and both indoor and outdoor showers.

Here it is possible to go for drives into the desert in four 4x4 vehicles, hike walking trails (such as the Black Mountain Trail), visit Sesriem Canyon and the massive dunes of Sossusvlei. It is also possible to take a scenic hot air balloon flight at dawn (extra cost).

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## **PALMWAG RESERVE, DAMARALAND**

Desert Rhino Camp is in the heart of the dramatic mountainous and stony desert known as Damaraland, on the million acre, private Palmwag Reserve. The reserve's freshwater springs support healthy populations of the famous desert-adapted black rhino, elephant, Hartmann's mountain zebra, giraffe, oryx, springbok and kudu, as well as large numbers of predators such as lion, cheetah, leopard and brown and spotted hyena.



During our stay we can track rhino on foot or by vehicle, or we can take a full day outing with a picnic lunch. We can also go on night game drives. Desert Rhino Camp is involved with the Save the Rhino Trust, an organization that has been responsible for the survival of the rare black rhino in the area. While here we have our own private vehicle.



## **DESERT RHINO CAMP, DAMARALAND**

Accommodation consists of eight large meru-style tents, offering wonderful views of the desert and mountains. The en-suite bathroom has a flush toilet and bucket showers.

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## THE SKELETON COAST & KAOKOLAND

Kaokoland is one of the most remote destinations in all of Africa and we will be based on the banks of the Kunene River, bordering Angola. Here we prepare for one of the most memorable experiences; wildness, desert and the chance to encounter the wonderful and colourful Himba people, some of the last true nomadic people of Africa. When we leave, we take a 2-hour scenic flight down the Skeleton Coast. We fly over this starkly beautiful environment, occasionally sighting a shipwreck covered in drifting sand on the beach below. The name "Skeleton Coast" came from the stranded hulks of these ships in former times.



### SERRA CAFEMA CAMP, KAOKOLAND

Serra Cafema Camp is situated in the most northerly corner of Namibia, at the foot of the Hartmann Valley on the southern bank of the Kunene River. The camp has nine canvas and thatched chalets on decks, each with its own en-suite bathroom. One falls asleep to the gurgling water sounds from the cataract downstream from camp. The variety of activities to explore this breathtaking landscape includes traversing the sand dunes on carefully guided quad-bikes that are gentle on the dunes and boating on the Kunene River. Walking in the remote mountain and river valleys, sparsely populated with springbok, ostrich and oryx, is also a highlight.



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## ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK

2½ hours flight from Windhoek. This is Namibia's most popular game viewing national park, and covers an area of 22.000 kms<sup>2</sup>. The centre of the park is a huge salt pan (salt lake), which covers about ¼ of the park and is usually dry. Etosha Pan is surrounded mainly by open woodland habitat interspersed with grasslands, making wildlife viewing easy. In the west of the park Mopane woodland dominates. Especially in the south and east of the park there are numerous waterholes where wildlife congregates. Game drives consist mainly of visiting these waterholes, and relaxing and watching the wildlife come down to drink. Here, a wide variety of game may be seen including elephant, giraffe, black and white rhino, Hartmann's (Mountain) and Burchells (Plains) zebra. The antelope range from huge eland and stunning greater kudu to tiny dik dik, and, of course, include Namibia's signature species - the desert-adapted gemsbok (oryx) and springbok (gazelle). Naturally predators such as lion, leopard or cheetah also frequent these waterholes, in the hope of surprising a thirsty animal. A large variety of birdlife is attracted to the area, and Etosha Pan is especially well-known for the multitudes of waders and flamingos seen there.



### Special Species to see:

Hartmann's mountain zebra, white rhinoceros, black rhinoceros, cheetah, black-faced impala, Damaraland dik-dik

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### ONGUMA GAME RESERVE (ETOSHA)

This private Game Reserve borders eastern Etosha and covers more than 20,000 hectares. The vegetation is similar to Etosha - a blend of grassland and woodland interspersed with pans. Here it is possible to game drive and night drive. The reserve is home to giraffe, white rhino and a variety of antelope including kudu, eland, oryx, hartebeest, zebra, impala and dik dik. The predators resident in the area include the four large species lion, cheetah, leopard and spotted hyena, and several smaller species such as serval cat, and various species of mongooses.



While the daily plans are flexible from camp, we are likely to go for morning game drives into Etosha National Park and return to camp for lunch, leaving again in the late afternoon if we wish for afternoon or night drives on the Onguma Game Reserve.

### ONGUMA TREE TOP CAMP

Onguma Tree Top camp is built on wooden stilts overlooking a watering hole in the middle of the Onguma Game Reserve. There are only 4 thatched accommodation rooms with canvas walls, and en suite shower and bathroom accommodating a total of 8 guests. There is a separate dining room and lounge which is also built on stilts.

### OR ONGUMA TENTED CAMP

Onguma Tented Camp comprises 7 luxury tents and a main dining/lounge tent built around a waterhole, and accommodating up to 14 guests. Children under 12 years are not allowed.



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### **COSTS PER PERSON FOR THE ABOVE 13 DAY ITINERARY JUNE-OCTOBER 2018**

Actual amount is billed in Namibia Dollars, so depends on the US\$-Namibian \$ rate at the time of payment. Costs include internal flights beginning and ending in Windhoek, and are based on sharing a twin or double bedded tent/room. In November 2017 US \$1 was equivalent to approximately N\$ 12.50

#### **OPTION A - With an A Step Ahead professional guide and a private vehicle throughout (Days 2- 12).**

Number of guests in the group	4	6	8
<b>High season (June-Oct) in N\$ (ZAR)</b>	<b>N\$ 265,500</b>	<b>N\$ 223,000</b>	<b>N\$ 223,000</b>
Approximately	\$ 21,240	\$ 17,840	\$ 17,840

Your A Step Ahead guide is there to orchestrate your whole safari, to provide continuity from one camp to another, to see to any special requests and arrange for unusual touches to your safari. He ensures that it is varied and fun, by adding anecdotes as an African professional with years of experience, and adds to the trip by providing extra, often broader knowledge to the excellent resident guides in the various camps, who have their valued local knowledge to offer.

#### **OPTION B -In Onguma Tented Camp with excellent regional camp/lodge guides and activities shared with other guests (Does NOT INCLUDE A Step Ahead professional guide or private vehicle).**

Number of guests in the group	4,6 or 8
<b>High season (June-Oct) in N\$ (ZAR)</b>	<b>N\$ 180,000 (approx US \$14,400)</b>

**INTERNAL FLIGHTS:** These costs are calculated using 1 x Cessna 210 for a group of 4 people and 2 x Cessna 210s for groups of 5-8 people. These internal flights link Windhoek (Eros) - Sossusvlei area (via Swakopmund) - Desert Rhino (Palmwag) - Serra Cafema - Onguma (Etosha) - Windhoek (Eros or International).

#### **NOTES:**

1. The Namibian dollar is pegged to the South African Rand so the Namibian dollar is worth the same as the South African Rand.
2. Low season rates (11 January-31 March), Mid-season (April & May) & other periods are available on request.
3. April & May are excellent months for a safari in Namibia, with significant savings on the above rates.
4. It is possible to extend this safari to include a stay in parts of Botswana or South Africa.
5. We will need to check how much each participant weighs before we can confirm the number of planes used and the exact costs.

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### INCLUDED / NOT INCLUDED

**Included in the above safari cost:** Accommodation in best available twin-bedded tent/room on shared basis (2 people per room) everywhere; all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 13; two activities per day - a morning and an afternoon activity while in the camps (not in Windhoek); the services of local resident guides; all game drives and other activities indicated in the itinerary (with private safari vehicle and A Step Ahead guide if you select Option A); all park entry fees; airport transfers to the camps and to/from Windhoek airport; laundry services (reasonable amounts) at safari camps (not in Windhoek or Onguma); soft and local alcoholic drinks (except premium brands) at safari camps (not in Windhoek).

**Not included in the above safari price:** Any lunches, drinks or activities in Windhoek; premium or imported brand alcoholic drinks anywhere; activities not included in the normal lodge/camp rates, e.g. night drives at Onguma, helicopter rides or balloon flights; laundry in Windhoek or at Onguma; items of a personal nature (e.g. visas, airport taxes, telephone or fax services, massages, internet services etc.); any medical services or emergency medical evacuation; any kind of insurance (medical, health, trip & travel, or any other insurance); gratuities, any regional flights other than the flights stated in the itinerary; international flights to/from and within Africa. An A Step Ahead professional guide is not included in the Option B rates.



PLEASE SEE OUR **TERMS & CONDITIONS (2017)** DOCUMENT FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON TERMS AND INCLUSIONS & EXCLUSIONS

**Note:** This safari is sold and organized by **A Step Ahead S.L.**

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