

AFRICA · DESERT · WILDLIFE · ROAD TRIPS · ADVENTURE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH



Namibia

One of the least densely populated countries on Earth, Namibia is made for self-driving: red dunes at Sossusvlei, rhinos and elephants at Etosha's waterholes, the fog-bound Skeleton Coast and the vast Fish River Canyon. Swakopmund adds German bakeries and adventure sports. Gravel roads are generally good, distances are long and the night skies are spectacular.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Namibia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 10 December 2025.

 CAPITAL Windhoek	 CURRENCY Namibian dollar (NAD) £1 ≈ NAD 21.93	 LANGUAGE English, Oshiwambo Afrikaans, German	 BEST TIME May–Oct
 DAILY BUDGET £55–£380 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type D, M 220V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 15h via Johannesburg or Frankfurt ~£800–£1,350 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+2 standard time

Namibia is more than three times the size of the UK yet home to only about three million people. A first trip is usually a two- to three-week self-drive loop from Windhoek: south-west to the dunes of Sossusvlei, west to Swakopmund on the coast, north through Damaraland's rock art and desert-adapted elephants, then east to Etosha National Park before returning to the capital. With more time, add the Fish River Canyon and the diamond-rush ghost town of Kolmanskop in the far south, or the river-fed Zambezi Region in the north-east.

Distances dominate: you may drive five hours between stops, mostly on gravel, so plan one long drive a day and avoid driving after dark. Costs are higher than many expect, because lodges near the big sights charge safari prices, but camping with a rooftop tent on a hired 4x4 cuts them sharply. Crowds are light outside Etosha and Sossusvlei, and the dry winter months bring cold nights, clear skies and the best wildlife viewing. Namibia suits self-sufficient road-trippers, photographers and families wanting an easy introduction to safari.

Top 5 highlights

1 NATURE Sossusvlei and Deadvlei Some of the world's tallest dunes, rusty red with iron oxide, surround these clay pans in the Namib-Naukluft park. Climb Big Daddy at sunrise and photograph Deadvlei's centuries-old dead camel thorn trees against the orange sand.	2 WILDLIFE Etosha National Park Etosha's vast salt pan draws elephants, lions, black rhinos and big herds of zebra and springbok to its waterholes in the dry season. Self-drive the park and stay at Okaukuejo for its floodlit waterhole.
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HISTORY

Damaraland and Twyfelfontein

In rugged Damaraland, Twyfelfontein's sandstone slabs carry thousands of rock engravings made by hunter-gatherers, and became Namibia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. Guided drives along dry riverbeds track desert-adapted elephants.

4

NATURE

Fish River Canyon

About 160 km long and up to 549 m deep, the canyon is best seen from the viewpoints near Hobas at sunset. Fit walkers can tackle the multi-day hiking trail, permitted only between May and mid-September.

5

WILDLIFE

Skeleton Coast and Cape Cross

Fog, shipwrecks and gravel plains define this Atlantic shore. At Cape Cross, one of the world's largest Cape fur seal colonies crowds the rocks beside a replica of the stone cross that Portuguese navigator Diogo Cão raised in 1486.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Windhoek

≈ 486,000 people

A tidy, low-rise capital where most trips start and end; stay a night for the Christuskirche, dinner at Joe's Beerhouse and kapana stalls in Katutura before collecting your hire car.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Rundu

≈ 119,000 people

Facing Angola across the Okavango River, Rundu is a fast-growing northern trading town; few visitors linger, but riverside lodges make it a natural stop en route to the Zambezi Region.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Walvis Bay

≈ 103,000 people

Namibia's main port has a lagoon full of flamingos, kayaking trips among seals and dolphins, and 4x4 tours to Sandwich Harbour, where giant dunes meet the Atlantic.

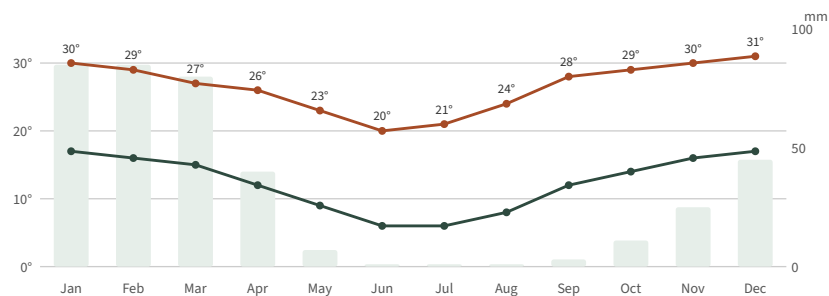
Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Namibia

Best time: **May–Oct.**

**Average climate in Windhoek**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Aug	Herero Day On the weekend nearest 26 August, Herero people in Victorian-style dresses and military uniforms parade through Okahandja to honour their chiefs, a striking reminder of the colonial past.
Oct	Windhoek Oktoberfest A legacy of German settlement, Windhoek's Oktoberfest brings oompah bands, lederhosen and local beer brewed to the 1516 German purity law to the capital each October.

How much does Namibia cost?

SHOESTRING £55 per person / day ≈ NAD 1,206 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £140 per person / day ≈ NAD 3,070 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £380 per person / day ≈ NAD 8,332 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Kapana Strips of beef grilled over open fires at Windhoek's Single Quarters market, dipped in spiced salt and chilli, and eaten standing up with fresh tomato salsa.	Oryx steak Oryx (gemsbok), kudu and springbok appear on menus nationwide, usually grilled as lean, rich steaks; Joe's Beerhouse in Windhoek is the classic place to try them.	Oshifima A stiff porridge of mahangu (pearl millet), the staple of northern Namibia, rolled into balls by hand and dipped into meat or spinach stews.
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Getting around

Most visitors hire a car, ideally a 4x4 or high-clearance vehicle, as most roads to the main sights are gravel. Drive on the left, keep speeds down on gravel and refuel whenever you can. Intercape coaches link Windhoek with Swakopmund, Walvis Bay and the north, and shuttle minibuses run to the coast. FlyNamibia operates domestic flights, and fly-in safaris reach remote lodges.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  D M 220V — bring a UK-to-D/M adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 10111, 999, 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +264	TIME ZONE UTC+2 (standard time)
TAP WATER Generally safe to drink	DRIVING On the left
TIPPING Tip about 10% in restaurants, and give small amounts to petrol attendants who clean your windscreen, car guards, and safari guides and trackers.	

ETIQUETTE

Greet people before asking anything and shake hands. Ask before photographing anyone, and visit Himba villages only with a guide who agrees a fair payment or gifts with the community in advance.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Hosea Kutako International Airport (WDH), Windhoek; Walvis Bay Airport (WVB), Walvis Bay

Visas & entry for Namibia

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

From 1 April 2025 you will need a visa to visit Namibia. The Namibian authorities have launched a visa on arrival scheme, which is extended to UK passport holders.

You can either apply for a visa on arrival when you arrive at a Port of Entry for Namibia, or you can apply online before you travel for an e-visa. For either route, the cost is 1,600 Namibian dollars for travellers over 11 years old. Children between the ages of 11 to 6 will be charged 800 Namibian dollars. Children under the age of 6 will not be charged a fee for a visa on arrival. When granted a visa on arrival, you will receive a multiple entry visa valid for the period that you have requested.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Measles

Polio

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria all year in the Kavango East, Kavango West and Zambezi (including Caprivi) regions: atovoquone/proguanil OR doxycycline OR mefloquine recommended.
- There is also a high risk of malaria from December to April inclusive in Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa regions: atovoquone/proguanil OR doxycycline OR mefloquine recommended.
- There is a low risk of malaria from May to November in Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa regions: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is a very low risk of malaria in the rest of Namibia: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Namibia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Family Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sun 21 Mar 2027	Independence Day
Mon 22 Mar 2027	Independence Day (observed)
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Workers' Day
Tue 4 May 2027	Cassinga Day
Thu 6 May 2027	Ascension Day
Tue 25 May 2027	Africa Day
Fri 28 May 2027	Genocide Remembrance Day
Thu 26 Aug 2027	Heroes' Day
Fri 10 Sep 2027	Day of the Namibian Women and International Human Rights Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Afrikaans

ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS	SAY IT
Hello	Goeiedag	<i>KHOO-yuh-dakh</i>
Thank you	Dankie	<i>DUN-kee</i>
Please	Asseblief	<i>AH-suh-bleef</i>
Excuse me	Verskoon my	<i>fer-SKOO-un may</i>
How much is this?	Hoeveel kos dit?	<i>HOO-fee-ul kos dit</i>

Know before you go

- Keep to about 80 km/h on gravel, slow right down for loose patches and bends, and avoid driving at dusk; rollovers on gravel are a common cause of accidents involving visitors.
- Book Etosha's camps and lodges near Sossusvlei several months ahead for July to October; staying inside the Sesriem gate lets you reach the dunes for sunrise.
- South African rand are accepted at par throughout Namibia, but Namibian dollars are not accepted in South Africa, so spend or change them before you cross.

