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NAMIBIA

Exclusive Journeys – Namibia

9 - Day Itinerary

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Highlights: Sossusvlei, Skeleton Coast and Etosha National Park

Escape to some of the most remote areas in Africa on our Namibian journey.

Explore Sossusvlei, the Skeleton Coast and Etosha in exclusivity while enjoying private charter flights and private game drives

Day 1 – Arrive Windhoek - Kulala Wilderness Reserve

After landing at Windhoek's International Hosea Kutako Airport, which is located about 40 kilometres outside of Windhoek, proceed through customs and immigration. At the arrivals terminal you are welcomed by your guest liaison who assists you upon arrival in Namibia.

You are then introduced to your pilot and board your private charter to Little Kulala Lodge. The flight time is approximately one hour. A Little Kulala lodge representative meets you upon your arrival at the lodge airstrip and transfers you to the lodge. Little Kulala is a fantastic base from which to explore the spectacular Namib Desert and dunes of Sossusvlei.

Little Kulala hosts guests in luxurious, air-conditioned thatched units, each with en-suite bathroom and outdoor shower, wrap-around veranda, private plunge pool and rooftop 'sky bed' for gazing at and sleeping under the stars. The extensive use of neutral colours, gorgeous textures and natural light reproduce the soothing pastel tones of the desert. Pure linens, cottons and mohair dyed with natural vegetable dyes all make for a very organic camp which takes its inspiration from its surroundings, notably from the magnificent Deadvlei. The overall mood and feel is cool, serene, organic and sheltering. The welcoming main area has a lounge, library, dining room, extensive outside dining deck, bar, wine cellar and curio shop, all under thatch; with an inviting communal pool area and sundeck for relaxing afternoons. Activities include excursions to Sossusvlei (via a own private gate), and nature drives and walks providing awe-inspiring views of desert-adapted wildlife and plants, as well as scenic afternoon sundowner drives on the 37,000 hectare acre private Kulala Wilderness Reserve.

This afternoon you have the option to enjoy a private guided excursion on the Kulala Reserve as run by the lodge – activities include guided walks and scenic nature drives.

Overnight: Little Kulala

Day 2 – Kulala Wilderness Reserve

This morning rise early for an excursion with your local lodge guide into the Namib Naukluft National Park, entering the Park gates to capture the dunes whilst the light is soft and shadows accentuate their towering shapes and curves.

This area boasts some of the highest free-standing sand dunes in the world. Your local guide gives 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. Refreshments are served on your tour. Return to Little Kulala in the early afternoon for a late lunch.

The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure (from experience, this is usually welcomed after an exhilarating morning in the dunes) or can be spent on another guided activity within the Kulala Wilderness Reserve as offered by the lodge which is generally an excursion to view Sesriem Canyon.

Sossusvlei: This most frequently visited section of the massive 50,000 km² 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 kilometres 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.

Sesriem Canyon: Sesriem Canyon has evolved through centuries of erosion by the Tsauchab River which has incised a narrow gorge about 1.5 kilometres long and 30

meters deep into the surrounding conglomerates, exposing the varying layers of sedimentation deposited over millions of years. The shaded cool depths of the canyon allow pools of water to gather during the rain season and remain for much of the year round. These pools were a vital source of water for early settlers who drew water for their livestock by knotting six (SES) lengths of rawhide thongs (riems) together, hence the canyon and surrounding area became known as Sesriem.

Overnight: Little Kulala

Day 3 – Kulala Wilderness Reserve

Today is free for you to relax at the lodge and partake in the many scheduled activities offered on the Kulala Reserve as run by the lodge.

NOTE: You have the option to include on a sunrise balloon flight over the Namib Desert (weather permitting and at an additional cost). After a spectacular launch and take-off as the sun rises over the world's oldest desert, your flight (depending on the wind) takes you over desert landscapes with views of the vast sand sea, gravel plains and breath-taking mountain scenery. After an unforgettable hour soaring over the desert, a delicious continental brunch awaits, complete with Champagne, before you head back to your accommodation or continue onwards to your next destination.

Cost for the balloon flight (subject to change without notice) – optional and at an additional cost

Overnight: Little Kulala

Day 4 – Kulala Wilderness Reserve - Skeleton Coast

This morning board your private charter for your scenic flight (weather permitting) via Swakopmund, where you may land to refuel before continuing via Doro Nawas and Hoanib to Möwebay. The flying time is approximately two hours and 30 minutes. Upon arrival at the Möwebay airstrip, you are met by a lodge guide and transferred on an approximate one hour 30 minutes nature drive to the lodge. If time allows, embark on a shared scheduled lodge activity as offered by the lodge this afternoon.

The scenic flight takes you over one of Namibia's entire coastline along the Atlantic Ocean is littered with shipwrecks, however, because of the harsh weather, pounding ocean waves, corrosive sea salt in the fog and water, regular abrasive sand storms and intense sun, very little is left of most of them. Many are inaccessible and only seen by air, but even here it depends on the tides and weather conditions such as the Atlantic Fog which can negatively impact visibility.

The best-preserved shipwreck is the Eduard Bohlen, a German cargo ship that ran aground in 1909 while it was on its way to Table Bay from Swakopmund. It is believed that thick fog caused the ship to founder close to Conception Bay, about 100 kilometres south of Swakopmund. Years after the ship ran aground the desert began to encroach on the ocean and the ship that was once stranded in the ocean slowly became stranded in the desert. The wreck currently sits about 500 metres from the ocean, ensuring that it's the best preserved shipwreck along Namibia's Skeleton Coast and making it a must see for photographers.

Shipwreck Lodge: Shipwreck Lodge is a joint venture partnership with the local communities in the area and it is uniquely designed around the relics of shipwrecks that dot Namibia's Skeleton Coast. There is nowhere on the continent quite like Shipwreck Lodge, and there is nowhere on earth quite like the Skeleton Coast. It's a raw, rugged and impossibly remote slice of African wilderness, where towering dunes and wind-swept plains roll as far as the eye can see, buffeted by the icy Atlantic seas. But there's much more to the area than simple isolation. Stay at Shipwreck Lodge and track desert dwelling elephants and elusive desert lions. Discover the enchanting desert flora (succulents and lichens) then sit atop the dunes as the sun sinks below the horizon. Spend the day beachcombing for whale bones and debris from centuries of shipwrecks or marvel at the geologically-remarkable Clay Castles.

Overnight: Shipwreck Lodge

Day 5 – Skeleton Coast

The next two days are filled with exciting guided activities as arranged by the camp and after discussions with your lodge-based guide – these include scenic nature drives within the northern Skeleton Coast National Park, drive along the Hoarusib River and sundowner drive to the dune fields. All of these expose the astonishing desert adapted wildlife, plants and birdlife of the area. One of the main highlights here is an excursion to the Möwebay seal colony where you also can visit the remnants of the Suiderkus and Karimona shipwrecks.

Skeleton Coast Park: Covering about a third of Namibia's coastline, the legendary Skeleton Coast Park stretches 500 kilometres from the Ugab River in the south, to the Kunene River in the north. The attraction of the remote Skeleton Coast Park lies essentially in the colour, changing moods and untouched profile of its landscape. Its aura of mystery and impenetrability is due to the many shipwrecks, dense coastal fogs and cold sea breeze by the cold Benguela Current. The landscape in the park ranges from sweeping vistas of windswept dunes to rugged canyons with walls of richly coloured volcanic rock and extensive mountain ranges. On their slopes grow a surprising variety of xerophytic plants, whose survival is ensured by a wide spectrum of ingenious adaptations. Over a hundred species of lichen grow on the plains and west facing

mountain slopes, which change colour and become soft and leathery to the touch when the coastal fog pushes inland. The cold Benguela Current that sweeps along Namibia's coastline supports some of the highest concentrations of marine life found anywhere in the world. It also played a crucial role in the formation of the world's oldest desert, the Namib.

Overnight: Shipwreck Lodge

Day 6 – Skeleton Coast - Etosha National Park

This morning you are transferred to the local airstrip, where you board your private charter to the eastern boundary of Etosha National Park (via Doro Nawas). Upon arrival, you are met by a lodge representative and transferred to Onguma the Fort. The afternoon can be spent on a private sundowner drive on the private Onguma reserve.

This Fort is unlike any other, the only one of its kind, with probably one of the best sunset views in Namibia. Overlooking the beautiful Etosha Fishers Pan, accommodation consists of eleven Bush Suites, one Honeymoon Suite as well as a Sultan Suite. The Bush & Honeymoon Suites are equipped with fireplaces for the winter months and air coolers for the summer months. Each Bush & Honeymoon Suite has an indoor and outdoor shower and views that will enchant. With dramatic Moroccan details, there is something new to discover around every corner.

Overnight: Onguma The Fort

Day 7 – Etosha National Park

A morning dedicated to memorable game drives within the eastern section of Etosha National Park with your private local lodge guide. You return to camp for lunch and an early afternoon rest, spending your afternoon on a game drive on the private Onguma Game Reserve, culminating in a sundowner overlooking Fischer's Pan. You then return after sunset with enough time to freshen up and enjoy your 'safari dinner' overlooking the camp's floodlit waterhole.

Etosha National Park: Etosha National Park, translated as the 'Place of Mirages', Land of Dry Water' or the 'Great White Place', covers 22 270 km², of which over 5,000 km² 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 a 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 Pan is

the largest of the pans at 4 760 km² 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.

Onguma Nature Reserve: Situated on the eastern side of Etosha and bordering Fisher's Pan, Onguma Nature Reserve has more than 20,000 hectares of protected land and wildlife. The nature reserve boasts over thirty different animal species consisting of plains game including kudu, giraffe, eland, oryx, hartebeest, zebra, impala and many more roam freely, as well as predators such as lion, cheetah and leopard, being common residents of the area. Onguma Game Reserve is now also proud to be home to a family of black rhinos! More than 300 bird species can also be viewed at Onguma Nature Reserve.

Overnight: Onguma The Fort

Day 8 – Etosha National Park

Today you have the day at your disposal to either take a drive into Etosha National Park again or else take part in the activities offered at the lodge (at additional costs)

- Onguma onkolo hide
- Onguma interpretive bush walks
- Massage therapy (a few options to choose from) Overnight: Onguma The Fort

Day 9 – Day of Departure

Returning to the Windhoek International you are met by a representative who assists you with check-in for your departure flight and to bid you farewell. This is officially the end of your Namibian Safari. We hope to see you again soon, Bon Voyage!

END OF SERVICE