AFRIQUE UNIE · TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

Namibia in 14 days: a day-by-day road trip

Namibia is made for self-driving: gravel roads stretching to the horizon, little traffic and landscapes that change at every stage. Over fourteen days, this loop from Windhoek links the giant dunes of Sossusvlei, the seaside town of Swakopmund, the Skeleton Coast, Damaraland and its desert elephants, and finally the waterholes of Etosha.

Day by day

Day 1 · Windhoek and getting to know your 4x4 (night : Windhoek)
The international airport is about forty-five minutes' drive east of Windhoek. Collect your vehicle and take time to check the equipment with the hire company: two spare wheels, jack, compressor and sometimes a rooftop tent and fridge. Then stock up for the first few days, with plenty of water, and withdraw some cash. In the afternoon, explore the centre of this small highland capital: the Lutheran Christuskirche, buildings from the German colonial era and the Independence Memorial Museum, whose terrace has a fine view. Have an early dinner and an early night: tomorrow's drive is a long one.

Days 2-3 · Sossusvlei and Deadvlei (night : Sesriem)
Allow five to six hours on gravel heading south-west, over one of the passes that drop from the central plateau to the Namib Desert. Stay near Sesriem, ideally inside the park gate, which lets you enter before sunrise. The next morning, drive the tarred road to Dune 45, then the last few kilometres of sand, for experienced 4x4 drivers or by shuttle. A walk of about twenty minutes leads to Deadvlei, a white clay pan dotted with camel thorn trees that died centuries ago, beneath dunes more than three hundred metres high. In the afternoon, explore the small Sesriem Canyon.

Days 4-5 · Swakopmund, between desert and Atlantic (night : Swakopmund)
Five to six hours' drive lies ahead, via the hamlet of Solitaire, the Tropic of Capricorn sign and the Gaub and Kuiseb passes, before you reach the coast at Walvis Bay. The contrast is striking: cool fog, an icy ocean and German architecture in Swakopmund. The next day, choose from a wide range of activities: a kayak or boat trip among the seals and dolphins of Walvis Bay, a 4x4 excursion to Sandwich Harbour, where the dunes plunge into the ocean, or a guided desert tour in search of the small creatures that survive there. Make the most of it to refuel, do your laundry and eat fresh fish.

Days 6-7 · The Skeleton Coast and Damaraland (night : Damaraland (Twyfelfontein))
Head north along the coast on a dead-straight road between ocean and desert, often shrouded in fog. Stop at Cape Cross, home to one of the largest colonies of fur seals in the world: the noise and the smell match the spectacle. Then turn inland via Uis and the Brandberg massif, the country's highest point, to reach Damaraland. The next day, visit Twyfelfontein, listed by UNESCO for its thousands of rock engravings, then Burnt Mountain and the Organ Pipes, a cluster of basalt columns. With a local guide, head into the dry riverbeds in search of desert-adapted elephants.

Days 8-10 · Three days in Etosha (night : Etosha National Park)
Four to five hours' drive via Khorixas and Outjo brings you to Etosha's south-western gate. The park is built around a vast white salt pan, visible from space, and wildlife gathers at waterholes spread along the roads. The method is simple: park, switch off the engine and wait. Elephants, giraffes, zebra, oryx, springbok, lions and rhinos eventually come to drink. Cross the park from west to east, sleeping in two different areas, Okaukuejo then Halali or Namutoni. Some camps have a floodlit waterhole, where black rhinos are sometimes seen at night from a bench just a few metres from the fence.

Days 11-12 · The Waterberg Plateau (night : Waterberg)
Leave Etosha through the eastern gate and drive three to four hours, via Tsumeb and Otavi, to the Waterberg Plateau. This red sandstone table rises above the savannah, its vegetation greener than the surroundings thanks to springs at its base. In 1904, the site was also the scene of a decisive battle in the colonial war waged against the Herero, remembered by a cemetery. The next day, walk up to the edge of the plateau, a fairly steep climb, for the huge view over the plain. Wildlife lovers can visit a cheetah conservation centre open to the public near Otjiwarongo.

Days 13-14 · Back to Windhoek and home (night : Windhoek)
Three to four hours on tarred roads separate the Waterberg from Windhoek. Stop in Okahandja, whose woodcarvers' markets sell masks, animals and everyday objects: haggle gently, as the work is often remarkable. Back in Windhoek, have the car cleaned if your contract requires it and enjoy a final dinner, often featuring game such as oryx or kudu, with a local beer brewed in the German tradition. The next day, return the vehicle at the airport with time to spare: the inspection can take a while, especially if the windscreen or tyres have suffered on the gravel. Long-haul flights usually leave in the evening or via Johannesburg.

Getting around

Hire a 4x4 or a high-clearance SUV with two spare wheels: most roads are gravel. You drive on the left. Keep to around 80 km/h on gravel, slow down in sand and on bends, and never drive at night because of wildlife. Fill up whenever you can. Book accommodation at Sesriem and Etosha early, as it is in high demand in peak season.

When to go

The dry season, from May to October, is ideal: clear skies, roads in good condition and wildlife gathered at Etosha's waterholes, especially from August to October. In June and July, nights are cold, sometimes close to freezing in the desert. From November to April, the summer rains turn the country green and bring the birds, but the heat at Sossusvlei is intense. On the coast, fog is common all year.

Practical information

Namibia

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/namibia/
Yellow fever	Certificate required if arriving from a risk country
Malaria	in some areas
Currency	Namibian dollar (NAD)
Languages	English, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo
Plugs	type D, M · dialling code +264 · UTC+2
Emergencies	police 10111 · ambulance 112 ou +264 61 211 111 · fire 112 ou +264 61 211 111

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

Notebook made from visiterafriqueunie.com/en/itineraries/namibia-in-14-days/ · information checked in November 2026 against official sources. Entry, health and safety rules change: check them again before you leave (your country's official advice, the embassy of the country you visit).