

# The ultimate guide to Namibia - 30 top things to do in Namibia

By [Johnieka Holtzhausen](#)

12 Aug 2021

Namibia is breathtakingly beautiful, open to travel, safe, affordable and has dispersed humanity. To give you an estimate, Namibia is around 1.5 times the size of France or about half the size of the US state with roughly 93% fewer people.

Being one of the least populated countries in the world, it comes as no surprise that [Namibia](#) would be the ideal place to visit during the coronavirus pandemic. Sossusvlei's mountainous red dunes, the perilous Skeleton Coast and the vast savannahs of Solitaire are just a few places found in Namibia where isolation would come as no challenge.



There are way more things to do in Namibia than one usually hears about when travelling on a Namibian holiday. This article will give you the true insider's journal to the ultimate 30 best things to do in Namibia, written by a born and bred Namibian herself.

Whether you enjoy overlanding in the dunes; surfing skeleton bay; or relaxing with a boot of beer in an authentic German beer garden, this country truly offers a bucket-list of activities to entertain anyone and everyone.

30 top things to do in Namibia in 2021:

## Self-drive 4x4 trips through the world's oldest desert

Estimated to be approximately 80 million years old, the Namib is the world's oldest desert and is the ultimate destination for off-road adventures. The geographical diversity amongst the regions will enchant nature lovers and the experiences are guaranteed to relax the mind and body as well as invigorate the spirits. [Join the Faces of the Namib team](#) as they explore the numerous areas of this spectacular location while demonstrating their dune driving skills in the world's highest boast colonial-style dunes.



Ideal for families, friends or colleagues who enjoy nature and the great outdoors, the Faces of the Namib Desert tour spans 550 kilometres of pristine desert landscape from the savannah-like interior section to the sparse Atlantic coast. The tour is self-drive, which means you bring your own vehicle. For those travelling from abroad, or who do not have their own, [4x4 vehicle rentals to travel around Namibia](#) can be arranged on request.

## Spend a weekend at Omaruru Game Lodge

The grass roof bungalows surround the huge water area under shady palm trees and welcome guests to the [Omaruru Game Lodge](#) - one of the most unique parks in Namibia. It boasts a diverse wildlife population, including most indigenous Namibian species. Visitors are likely to have close stunning wildlife encounters.

Every evening, wild creatures gather around the feeding stations just in front of the restaurant patio for visitors to admire. Some of those wildlife species include the white rhino, giraffe, oryx, kudu, waterbuck, mountain zebra as well as the more common ones. Omaruru Game Lodge also offers the chance to further appreciate the wild through daily off-road safaris

## Indulge in an Eisbein with a boot of beer in Swakopmund

Namibia has some of the most delectable meals on the planet, whether it's a creamy mushroom schnitzel, a magnificent oryx steak, or fresh oysters straight from the Atlantic. On a Namibian vacation, the food never disappoints. Namibia does not only flourish in food, but it also has some of the best beers to offer at astonishingly affordable prices. In fact, in Swakopmund, you can acquire a 2-litre boot of beer for less than a hundred rand!



The greatest spots to enjoy a boot of beer are unquestionably [Brauhaus](#), [Alstadt](#), and [Brewers and Butchers](#). For a true German experience, pair the boot of beer with some crackling Pork Knuckle ("Eisbein") or some rich Goulash soup paired with German Noodles ("Spaetzle").

## Ongongo Waterfalls camping

This oasis is found in a small canyon that has water escaping the mountains in the North-West parts of Namibia. The Ongongo Waterfalls, close to Warmquelle, is a local's paradise that can't be missed. With water so warm, swimming is possible all year round. This campsite is 6km from Warmquelle. Two-wheel drive vehicles are permitted, but caution is advised due to rocky terrain. The gorge is only accessible by 4x4 vehicles.

The Herero word ongongo means "magical". It truly is a magical, if not marvellous location to camp. [Ongongo Campsite](#) has ten luxurious campsites. In addition to lighting, each campsite has its own private ablution, hot shower and shaded area. Staying at this campground is a bucket-list activity that any tourist should not miss.

## Go on a fishing trip to the Skeleton Coast

The Skeleton Coast is not a destination for every visitor in Namibia. It's a rough part of the country that attracts adventurous visitors, coming to the area in search of shipwrecks or to experience world-renowned Skeleton Coast surfing. The area spans from Swakopmund in the South to the Angolan border in the North and collides with the sand dunes of the Namib desert to its East.





For the ultimate Namibian fishing experience, rough it out and camp in [Torra Bay](#). Here you will not only get to catch some of the best fish Namibia has to offer, but also experience Afrikaans camping culture at its core. If camping isn't your thing, then enjoy a luxurious stay at the exclusive Shipwreck lodge and experience the finer side of the Namibian seas.

## Visit the warm colours and great contrasts of the Kalahari Desert

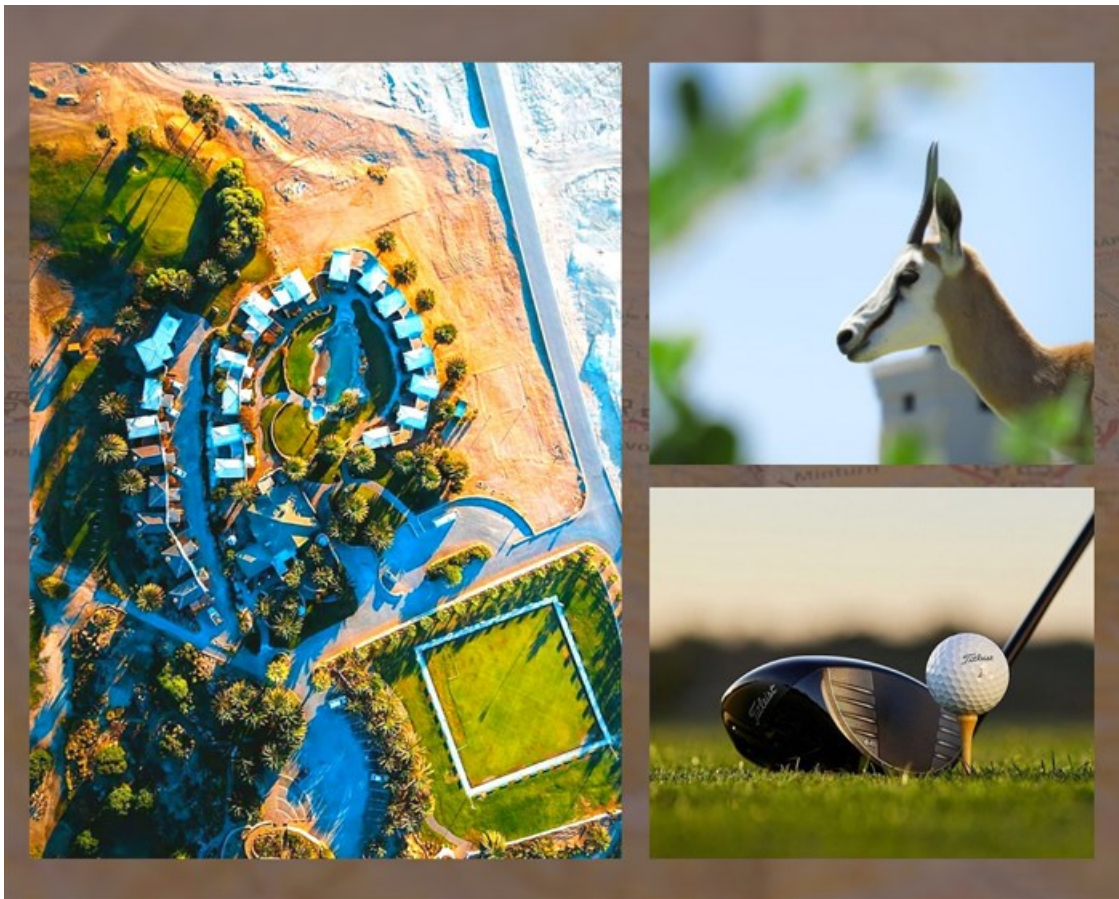
The Kalahari covers the eastern and southern sides of Namibia, large parts of Botswana and the north-western area of South Africa. Fun fact: Did you know that the Kalahari can't actually be defined as a real desert as it receives too much rain, so it is rather referred to as a fossil desert!



This area in Namibia is inhabited by the San people, who used to be hunter-gatherers. They now survive by game hunting and collecting edible plants (like berries or desert melons). Memorious activities in the Kalahari Desert include exploring the Mesosaurus Fossil Site from above, visiting the Kokerboom/Quiver Tree Forest or hopping over the Namibian border to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in Botswana and South Africa.

## **Play golf, surrounded by desert and springboks**

[The Rossmund Golf course](#) is just a 20-minute drive directly out of Swakopmund towards Windhoek. This Golf course is one of the only five all-grass desert golf courses on the planet. The 18-hole par 72 course is uniquely positioned against the striking backdrop of the Namib Desert dunes.



While other desert courses exist, Rössmund may be the only one where springbok footprints put your laying in jeopardy! The course is in line with international standards and offers a great golfing challenge in a beautiful setting. The Rossmund Golf course, conveniently, has a lodge directly on the course. So, end off the perfect day of golfing with dinner at the restaurant and a night in their first-class accommodation.

## Attend an authentic German Carnival

Carnivals come in numerous forms and are celebrated globally. Although Namibia is one of the last locations you'd expect to see a carnival, I am here to tell you otherwise. This desert country has six carnival organizations, the oldest of which is the Karnevalsgesellschaft Windhoek 1952 (Wika).





Wika, founded in 1952, is a lively committee of over 30 individuals that organize the annual event. The creators could not have imagined their "baby" growing into such a powerful adult. A small group of German immigrants organized a cultural event that quickly became a local highlight. Namibia's multi-cultural society honours itself through annual celebrations that involve all of the country's language groups.

## Take a scenic flight over the Sandwich Harbour

This picturesque flight departs from Swakopmund and fully embraces the ancient Namib Desert as well as points out interesting diamond camps.

The Namib Desert Sands contrasted against the Atlantic Coast is a must-see for every visitor. The Namib Desert is the world's oldest Desert and extends over 2000 km. This flight will pass over the Namib Desert, three diamond camps, two shipwrecks, Sandwich Harbour, and Salt Pans before returning to Swakopmund.

## Hit the waves in Skeleton Bay

Skeleton Bay is situated along Namibia's lonely and dangerous Skeleton Coast, a 6-hour journey from the capital city, Windhoek. Hire a guide, or better yet, a guide with an equipped 4x4 vehicle! You may enjoy watching the waves and seals and encounter other animals like hyenas that prowl the beach, before sitting around the campfire and planning the next day's activities.



Numerous South African surfers, including Grant 'Twiggy' Baker, apparently made the trip to Skeleton Bay a few years prior, and surfers are continuously expected to enter Namibia to chase the waves. Skeleton Bay surf conditions are influenced by exceptionally strong tidal rips, brisk offshore winds, and the never-ending walk back to the top of the point after each ride.

## Canoe down Orange River

[The River Rafters](#) is a specialized white water rafting tour operator on the Orange River. They are the oldest river rafting company in South Africa & Namibia.





Enjoy one of their Orange River Rafting excursions on the tranquil Orange River which runs through the scenic Richtersveldt in Southern Namibia. This Namibian must-do bucket-list item can be tailored and will include beautiful scenery, friendly guides, exciting rapids and full catering from the first evening after arrival until the morning's departure.

## Hot Air Balloon over Sesriem Canyon

Between two and four million years ago, continental upheaval created most of the westward flowing rivers in the Namib Desert region. The Sesriem Canyon is a natural valley created millions of years ago by the once-great Tsauchab River.

Sesriem is a small town with a fueling station and a basic store on the southern end of the Naukluft Mountains in Namibia. Pools of water form in the canyon's narrow, sheltered areas after heavy rains.



These crystal clear pools of water are a welcome sight in the arid and austere surroundings, and some of the larger ponds allow adventurous visitors to swim.

Deeper canyon floor hollows provide permanent water even in the dry months, allowing animals to survive in the tough area. The pools are home to several fish species, so keep an eye out for the barbell.

Close by, amid giant camel-thorn trees, Namibia Wildlife Resort manages a campsite and offers early morning hot air balloon rides over the Sossusvlei dunes which depart from the Sesriem gate.

## **Eat the Giant Omajova mushrooms**

Locals gather termite-hill mushrooms, known as Omajova, to supplement their diet and income. They are significantly more potent than the store varieties and can weigh up to a kilo each. They are ideally fried in butter and lightly salted, like their other more conservative cousins.

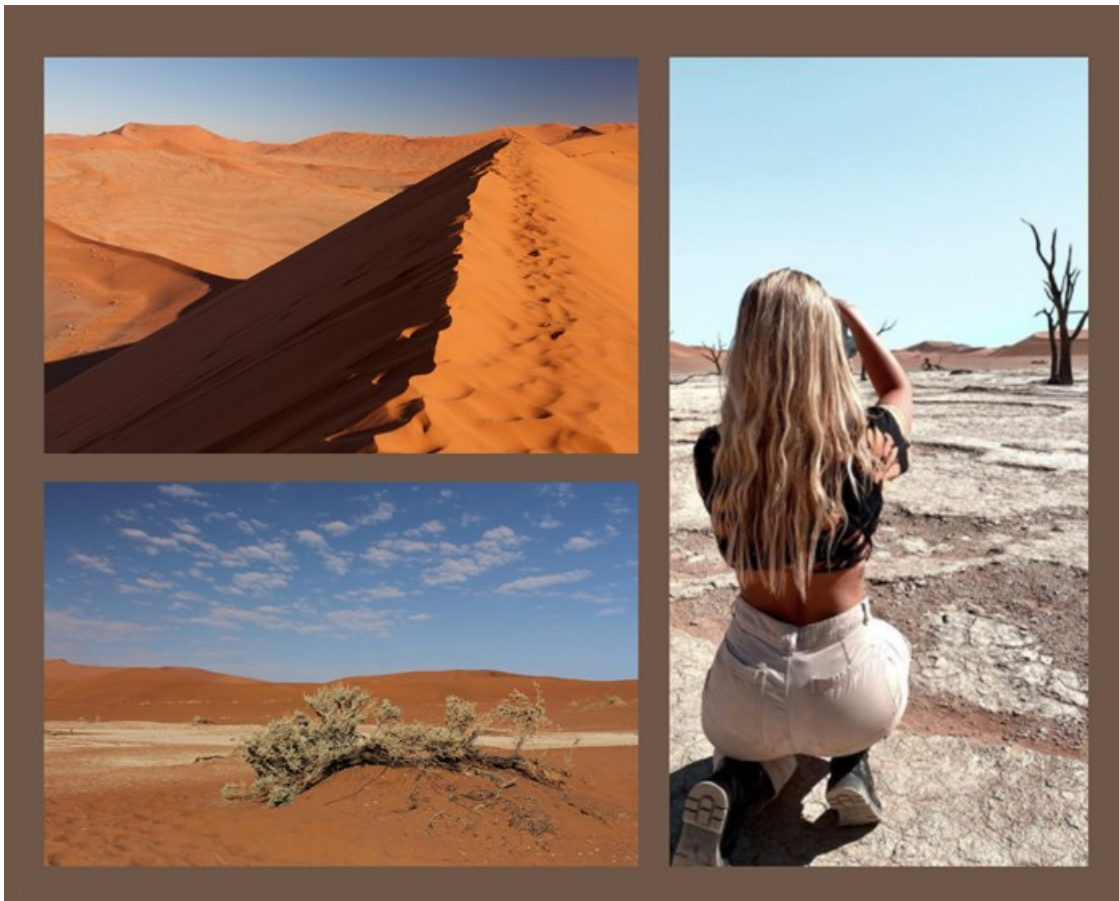


The Omajova, like the Kalahari truffle and mopane worm, is a Namibian delicacy. During the rainy season, Omajova merchants line the roadside or hold them up like enormous fungal flags to attract passing vehicles. They are frequently observed outside Wilhelmstal on the way to Karibib and Tsumeb. The mushrooms are a wonderful treat from the African savannah, to be enjoyed in the bountiful summer season.

## **Visit the iconic Sossusvlei dunes**

Sesriem is a small town in the Namib Desert on the southern end of the Naukluft Mountains. To see Sossusvlei, Dune 45, the Deadvlei, and other Namib sights, enter the Namib-Naukluft National Park at the Sesriem gate and drive about 60 kilometres.





The Namib's dunes were formed by sand which is transported by the coastal winds. Because the wind blows from all directions in Sossusvlei, the dunes are known as "star" dunes, as the sand forms a star shape with several "arms." The dunes scarcely shift as a result of the wind pattern.

The sand on this beach dates back five million years. It is largely made up of microscopic grains of iron oxide coated in a thin coating, which gives the Namib its unique red hue.

## **Experience an authentic Himba cultural experience**

Namibia is such a diverse country, that going on a cultural tour to learn about one of the cultures and traditions, is a serious Namibian Safari bucket-list activity.



When visiting the tribes, your journey into the land of the Himba will begin by aircraft transfer to a luxury lodge, from which you will travel daily to villages, and experience a variety of traditional Himba activities and be allowed to go on some of the most fascinating walks you could ever hope for. Given that the Himba's know the vast and harsh environment of Kunene as well as you do in your backyard, it's an experience like no other.

## Visit Namib Naukluft National Park

In a country known for its deserts, such as Namibia, seeing places like Epupa Falls is always welcoming. The falls are located on the Kunene River, near the border of Angola and Namibia, in the Kunene Region's Kaokoland area. The falls are a major attraction in Namibia because of the largely untouched environment, which includes fig trees, baobabs, makalani palms and the coloured rock walls that frame the falls. The Kunene River is approximately 500 meters wide at the falls, and the series of waterfalls drop over a 1.5-kilometre distance.



The town of Opuwo is the capital of Namibia's Kunene Region, and the trip to the Epupa waterfalls on the Kunene River from there is one of the easier Kaokoland adventures. The trip to the falls takes about 2 to 3 hours, and you don't need a four-wheel-drive vehicle unless you go during the rainy season. The best months to view the falls are April and May. As the Kunene region is very dry the threat of malaria is minimal. Crocodiles inhabit the Kunene River, thus swimming in the river is not advisable!

### **Go for Camel rides in the Namib desert.**

At the Swakopmund Camel Farm, you can ride into the desert-like 'Lawrence of Arabia' on this time-honoured means of transportation. Swakopmund Camel Farm began as a traditional farm with cows, chickens, geese, and donkeys, as well as a camel caravan, 30 years ago. The farm encourages guests to join a camel caravan for rides ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours to promote their traditional way of life.





Even though camels are notoriously grumpy, the handlers manage to keep their herd effectively calm. Camels, which stand over 2 meters tall, can be daunting, yet after lurching to their feet, the ride feels similar to that of a boat. While camels are well-suited to the desert, you'll need a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and drink to protect yourself from the scorching heat.

## **Kolmanskop Ghost Town**

After becoming one of the richest towns in Africa during a diamond boom in 1910, Kolmanskop was left by all inhabitants in the following decades. Kolmanskop is now a ghost town in the desert - how enchanting!



In 1980, whilst Lüderitz underwent an economic boom, the touristic potential of the ghost town was rediscovered and some houses were dug out of the sands and restored, which is open to visitors today. Interesting and highly informative guided tours about the ghost town's history are offered in English, German and Afrikaans.

## Try Kapana in the Katutura Township

Kapana is a meat dish in which finely chopped onion, tomatoes, vinegar, chillies, and spice are grilled and served with a salad of finely chopped onion, tomatoes, vinegar, chillies, and spice. Single Quarters, also known as Oshetu Community Market in Windhoek, Namibia's capital, is the greatest place to try kapana.

When walking inside Single Quarters, the buzz and atmosphere hit you right away. It's sensory overload. Vendors and hawkers splay meat out like butchers, cutting the tastiest bits according to customer requirements.

The aroma of barbecued meat, spices, and wood will tickle your noses. It's not for the faint-hearted, nor is it suitable for vegetarians since we're a predominantly meat-eating nation. Vendors entice you to sample their barbecued delights from the moment you walk in. A word of warning: do not buy right away. You must first encounter kapana. Before deciding on your favourite, try a few pieces from other merchants. It's not a matter of being cheap; it's a matter of etiquette.

## Go Sand Boarding on the Perfect Dune

[Alter-Action CC](#) was formed by Chris Jason and Beth Sarro in 1996, the first professional sandboarding operation on the Namibian Coast. With time and experience, Alter-Action developed the safest and most effective method of sliding on the dunes.

The "perfect" sandboarding dune was chosen - a star dune with six different faces and a towering height of 100 meters. This dune is located approximately 11 km from Swakopmund. (Five kilometres as the crow flies.)



There are two options when choosing how to sandboard:

**Lie Down Boarding:** No experience necessary. The sandboarder lies on their stomach shooting headfirst down the dune.

**Stand Up Boarding:** No experience necessary, but previous boarding experience and a sense of balance is a bonus. The boards we use for this are snowboards with soft boots and bindings. For more experienced boarders we have snowboards with Formica bases.

The experienced snowboarder must bear in mind that snowboarding and sandboarding are two entirely different sports, so they will need to adjust their stance and technique from snow to sand. But after a ride or two, it feels just like boarding in very thick powder.

## **Watch the Namibian Sunset while quad biking the Namib Dunes**

The ultimate daredevil experience right in the heart of the beautiful Namib Desert. From a trip through some of the highest dunes in the world to a ride around their safely designed kiddies track, daredevil adventures in Swakopmund have something for everyone.

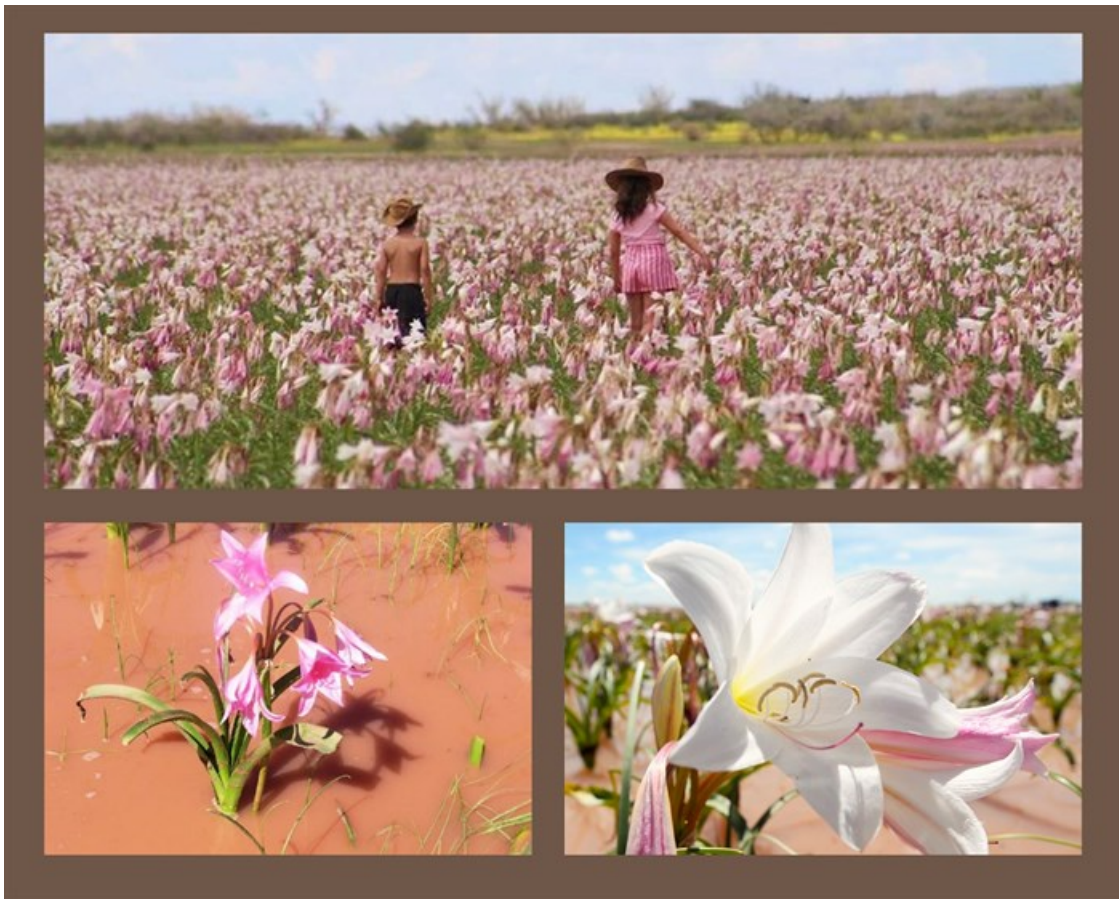




Enjoy a stunning sunset ride while exploring one of the only places on earth where the sand meets the ocean. This bucket-list activity in Namibia is most certainly a must on any Namibian holiday.

### **Experience the desert in bloom: Sandhof's Lilies**

After a lengthy drought in Namibia, the year 2020 delivered an abundance of rainfall and a beautiful lily bloom in 2021 on the Sandhof Farm, roughly 40 kilometres outside of Maltahohe in southern Namibia. The funnel-shaped flowers (*Crinum Paludosum*), also known as bushveld vlei lilies, bloom in marshy environments for just six or seven days before turning from pink to white and withering.



According to Mark Morgan, the farm's owner, the profusion of blooms depicted above began blooming in a clay pan on SandhoffkilometresSandhoff Farm in early 2021, attracting about 2,000 people. It's the first time they've bloomed since the drought began. Only when there has been enough rain, roughly 30cm of water on the claypan, do the bulbs blossom.

## Have a dip in the /Ai-/Ais Hot Springs

[Ai Ais Resort](#) is the perfect place to visit after Hiking the Fish River Canyon in Namibia. Ai Ais Resort offers quality accommodation in Fish River Canyon for holiday or business travel.



Offering an excellent place to relax around the thermal baths & heated swimming pool, especially after a hot, dusty drive or when completing the Fish River Hiking Trail. It is the ideal destination when heading towards South Africa, or north to Sossusvlei and Windhoek, for individual travellers and families alike.

## Help save the Cheetahs at N/a'an KuAi-AisAi-Ais sê

[The Naankuse Foundation](#) is a conservation charity dedicated to preserving the landscapes, cultures and wildlife of Namibia. Originating as a small wildlife sanctuary nestled in the Namibian bush, Naankuse is now a world-famous conservation organisation.

The Naankuse Foundation Wildlife Sanctuary provides a haven and second chance for countless injured, orphaned and conflict animals. Wherever possible we aim to release animals back into the wild.





Its mission is to conserve the land, cultures and wildlife of Namibia, Africa. They aim to achieve this through encouraging participation, education and scientific research.

There are endless opportunities for anyone to volunteer at this foundation, some of which include; Wildlife volunteers, rhino rangers, medical volunteers and much more. Volunteers would experience wild animal encounters like no other, right here in the Namibian bush, while also helping conservation in the arid country.

## Wakeboarding at Oanob dam resort

The lake, surrounded by mountains and hills, and the welcoming staff represent a place for your body and, more importantly, your soul.

[Lake Oanob Resort](#) is a unique resort with big luxury chalets, pleasant cabins, and attractive campsites located on 6200 hectares in the scenic Hardap Region, about 100 kilometres south of Windhoek.

Lake Oanob Resort is the ideal spot to unwind and be re-energized, with stunning lake views and genuine, heartfelt hospitality. Game drives, hiking, boat tours, canoeing, aqua-cycling, the giraffe pool bar, and swimming in our outdoor pools or the lake are all-year-round activities.

## Twyfelfontein camping

Camp beneath the shade of beautiful Mopane trees. Twyfelfontein's campsite is situated near the Twyfelfontein rock engravings and paintings and has 5 camping sites with sufficient space for bigger groups.

There are braai places at every campsite which are shaded by beautiful Mopane trees. A local heating system, known as a donkey, is used to heat the water for the campsite showers. The bathroom facilities are shared.

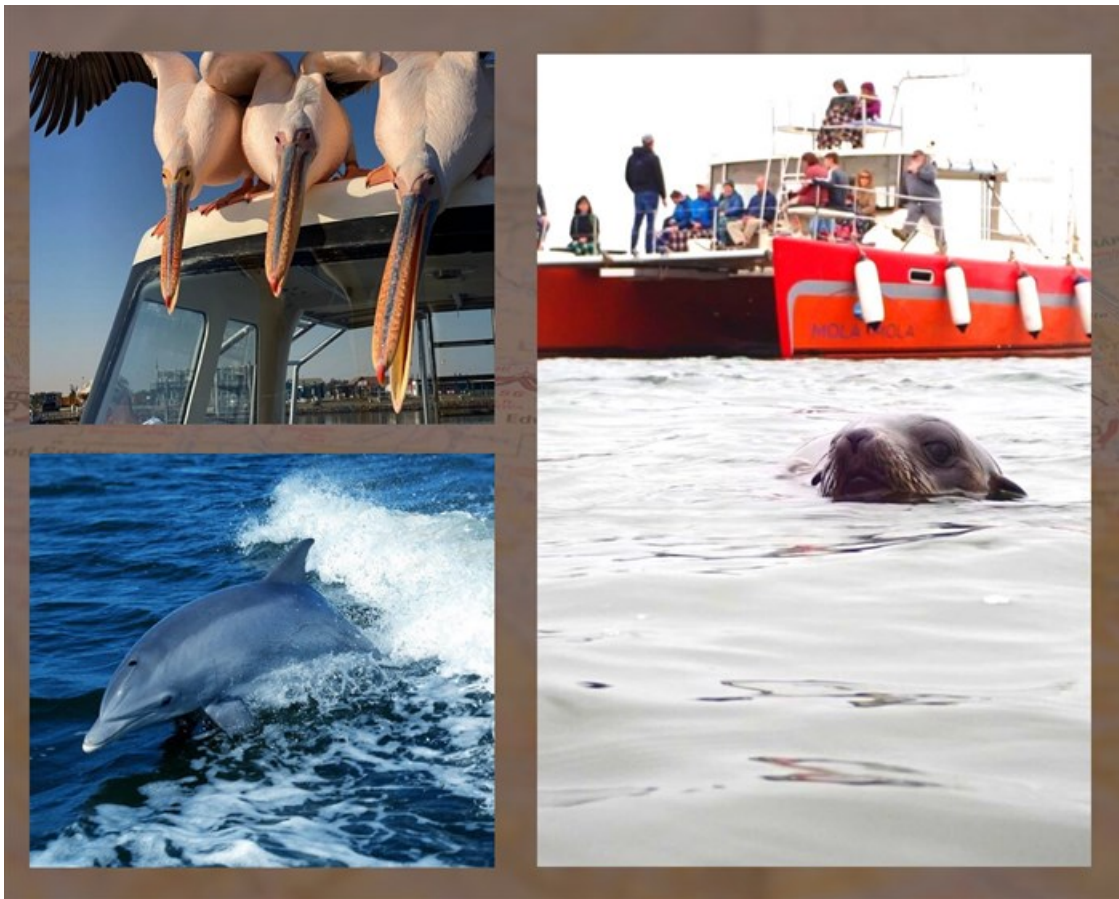


[Twyfelfontein camping](#) offers some of the most authentic activities Namibia has to offer, such as; Desert Elephant and Nature Drive, Rock engravings and painting excursions, Visit the Petrified forest and much more. You will need a 4x4 for this adventure camping excursion.

### **Go on a boat cruise from Walvis Bay.**

[Mola Mola](#) has been bringing thousands of people up close and personal with seals, dolphins, pelicans, and whales for two decades, as well as sharing the welcoming hospitality that Namibia is known for.





Mola Mola is located near Walvis Bay, about a 30-minute drive from Swakopmund on a well-paved road. Mola Mola is a part of your Namibian experience that should not be missed. Whether it's a morning boat ride with beverages, food, and the greatest Walvis Bay oysters, or a full Marine experience.

## Enjoy some local music at Soundgarden

One of the newer hotspots in Swakopmund is known as "[Soundgarden](#)". The reason they call it Soundgarden is that they always have live performances for their audiences. The music, the food, the people and the cocktails are amazing. Soundgarden even has a constant "braai going", customers can order their meat and watch their meat being flame-grilled while listening to some of Swakopmund's best talent.





There's a pizzeria right next to Soundgarden called Gabriella's pizzeria and it has the absolute best pizza I have ever tasted. Soundgarden even serves this pizza on their menu too.

Soundgarden also has super laid back backpackers that gives off a relaxing atmosphere as soon as you step in. The artwork surrounding the backpackers is bound to give any tourist a unique experience to remember.

## Hike to the highest peak in Namibia

[The Brandberg in Namibia](#) is an amazing and challenging hike. Hiking the Brandberg and the peak at Konigstein peak is an experience that exceeds expectations. Few guidebooks make much mention of hiking the Brandberg and it is very difficult to find information on the hike. So it is advisable to hire a tour guide to take you on this strenuous 2 or 3-day adventure.



Obtaining a permit and a guide - Permission from Namibia's National Heritage Council is required to hike Brandberg. Make sure your permit mentions that you'll be climbing Konigstein's peak. It will set you back N\$150. The guide will cost you N\$300.

If you meet the guide the day before the trip, he can purchase food for your group for N\$300 (for a party of 2). You can buy the food yourself if you can't meet him, but you must also bring food and water for the guide. Overall, this is a pretty reasonable vacation that is not difficult to organize assuming you have transportation to and from the trailhead.

## **Go on a Game Drive at Erindi Private Game Reserve**

[Erindi Private Game Reserve](#) is an idyllic retreat with two camps, a rich cultural heritage, knowledgeable guides and unmatched hospitality – ensuring all visitors have the kind of safari that lives in memory for a lifetime. Erindi Game Reserve offers some of the best game drives in the country with world-class informative game drives.



Going on a game drive in Erindi ensures that you will see some or other magnificent Wildlife. Other than being known for their game drives, Erindi also is home to Old Traders Lodge which consists of spacious suites that exude the classic safari aesthetic you'd expect from a five-star resort. The colonial-style restaurant and viewing deck boasts magnificent views across a busy waterhole.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Johnieka Holtzhausen is a Junior Search Marketer at Discover Africa Safaris. Johnieka has a love for travelling and has extensively travelled through several parts of the world. She has also lived in Namibia for most of her life which has lead to her being a true "Namibia Expert".

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