



CLASSIC ROUTE NAMIBIA

The CLASSIC ROUTE covers the **highlights of Namibia** (area: 825,000 km²), one of the youngest countries in Africa. In addition to a striking diversity of cultures and national origins, Namibia is a **photographer's dream** – it boasts wild seascapes, rugged mountains, huge dunes, stunning wildlife and colonial cities.

Itinerary: Windhoek – Kalahari – Fish River Canyon – Lüderitz – Sossusvlei – Swakopmund – Tyfelfontein – Etosha National Park – Windhoek

Day 1 Arrival in **Windhoek**, Namibia's small, German-influenced capital. It serves as the country's geographical heart and commercial nerve centre. Set among low hills at an elevation of 1660m, the city enjoys dry, clean air and a healthy highland climate. Collect a rental car or meet with your guide. Later explore the city with its unique ethnic mix of Owambo, Kavango, Herero, Damara and Caprivian people, together with Nama, San, coloureds and Europeans.
Overnight in Windhoek

Day 2 Drive south to the **Kalahari Red Dunes Route**. It showcases the Kalahari through a wide range of activities including duneboarding, camel riding and 4WD trailing for the adventurous; also game drives, guided walks, birding expeditions and other eco-friendly activities for nature-lovers. One can also experience regional customs and folklore, sample traditional cuisine, and meet the warm and welcoming people of the Kalahari. Most of the sand dunes to be seen on the Kalahari Red Dune Route are stabilised by vegetation. They owe their characteristic shape to wind action that exposes the moist sand beneath the dry surface. The damp layer is eroded further and the resultant windborne particles are deposited on the south-west side of the dune, causing a characteristic gentler gradient.
Overnight along the Kalahari Red Dune Route



Day 3 Travel further down south via **Keetmanshoop** – it sits at the main crossroads of southern Namibia and has more petrol stations per capita than any other town in Namibia. A visit to the **Quivertree Forest and Giant's Playground** in the area is recommended. The Quivertree Forest is a dense stand of *Aloe dichotoma* tree-aloes and the Giant's Playground consists of some marvellous balancing basalt rocks. Continue even further south to the outskirts of the **Fish River Canyon**.
Overnight at the Fish River Canyon

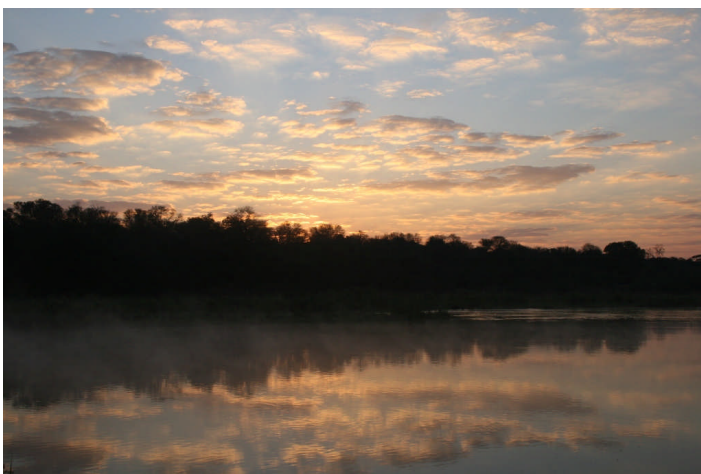
Day 4 Nowhere else in Africa will you find anything like the **Fish River Canyon**. The Fish River, which joins the Orange River 70km south of the canyon, has been gouging out this gorge for aeons. The canyon measures 160km in length and up to 27km in width, and the dramatic inner canyon reaches a depth of 550m. If one hasn't arranged to do "the hike", one day is enough to cover the area. Start the morning by driving past Hobas to the **Main Viewpoint**. Here you find *the classic view*, which features in most photographs. 3km to the right leads to the **Hiker's Viewpoint**, which lends a different perspective and is worth the wander if it is cool (picnic tables, braai pits and toilets available).
Overnight at the Fish River Canyon

Day 5 You will now drive north and then in westerly direction to the coastal town of **Lüderitz**. On the way, sand is blowing over the tarred road and Lüderitz itself comes across as quite surreal colonial, sandwiched between the barren Namib Desert and the windswept South Atlantic. Just about every view in Lüderitz reveals its German Imperial and Art Nouveau architectural heritage. Prominent buildings include the colonial train station, the Goerke Haus, the Felsenkirche and the Lüderitz Museum.
Overnight in Lüderitz

Day 6 A visit of the **Kolmanskop Ghost Town** is recommended this morning (tours are only conducted during the morning). This ghost town was abandoned over 45 years ago and now gives a fascinating insight into the area's great diamond boom. Most buildings have been left exactly as they were deserted, and now the surrounding dunes are gradually burying them. Later continue to the outskirts of Sossusvlei.
Overnight near the Sossusvlei



- Day 7** Despite being Namibia's number-one attraction, **Sossusvlei** still manages to make you feel isolated. The dunes, which reach as high as 325m, are part of one of the oldest and driest ecosystems on earth. However, the landscape here is forever changing – wind constantly alters the shape of the dunes while colours shift with the changing light. If possible, visit Sossusvlei at sunrise (tomorrow morning), when the colours are at the peak of their brilliance! **Dune 45** is the most accessible of the red dunes along the Sossusvlei road (150m) and it is so called, because it is exactly 45km from Sesriem and 45km from Sossusvlei. You can climb this dune, if you want. From the car park, the last 4km requires 4WD. So visitors with lesser vehicles walk, hitch or take the Sossus 4WD Shuttle Service. Also recommended is a visit of the 2km-long and 30m-deep **Sesriem Canyon**, 4km south of Sesriem headquarters. It was carved by the Tsauchab River through the 15-million-year-old deposits of sand and gravel conglomerate. **Overnight near Sossusvlei**
- Day 8** Morning visit of Sossusvlei to see the colour-drama at sunrise. Later continue in northerly direction through the Kuiseb Canyon and the **Namib Naukluft Park** and Walvis Bay to **Swakopmund**. **Overnight in Swakopmund**
- Day 9** A visit of the **Welwitschia Drive** is best treated as a half-day excursion from Swakopmund. This is a route through the desert along which are 13 numbered stone beacons at points of particular interest. It culminates at one of the country's largest, and hence oldest, welwitschia plants. **Swakopmund** is often described as being more German than Germany. Its population of approx. 25,000 is a quirky mix of German-Namibia residents and German tourists. With its seaside promenades, half-timbered homes and colonial-era buildings, it seems that only the wind-blown sand and the palm trees distinguish Swakopmund from holiday towns along Germany's North Sea and Baltic coasts. **Overnight in Swakopmund**
- Day 10** Travel north via Henties Bay (from here, a quick excursion to the Cape Cross seal colony is possible) inland past the Brandberg Mountain to **Twyfelfontein**. It is one of the most extensive rock art galleries in Africa. The 6000-year-old petroglyphs were executed here by cutting through the hard patina covering the local sandstone. Nearby sites of interest include the volcanic Burnt Mountain and the very worthwhile Organ Pipes dolerite (basalt) columns. **Overnight in Twyfelfontein**
- Day 11** Drive past the **Petrified Forest** (an area of open veld scattered with petrified tree trunks up to 34m long and 6m in circumference, which are estimated to be around 260 million years old) to the **Etosha National Park**. Depending on the time spend on the road, opportunity for a first game drive. **Overnight in/around Etosha**
- Day 12** Full day of game viewing in the **Etosha National Park**, the "Great White Place of Dry Water". It takes in more than 20,000 km² surrounding the vast white- and greenish-coloured **Etosha Pan**. This vast park protects 114 mammal species, as well as 340 bird species, 16 reptiles and amphibians, one fish species and countless insects. **Overnight in/around Etosha**
- Day 13** Return drive south towards Windhoek via Tsumeb. We recommend that you spend your last night in one of the game lodges en route to Windhoek, to feel utterly relaxed before your journey home. **Overnight between Otjiwarongo and Okahandja**
- Day 14** Return to Windhoek for some last minute shopping, before heading for the airport.



Namibian sunrise

