

Your Namibia Travel Guide

Everything you need to know before your self-drive camping adventure – visas, packing, wildlife, weather, and what to do if things don't go to plan.

2026 EDITION

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WELCOME

Namibia Is Big. This Guide Makes It Simple.

Turning photos into memories, one campsite at a time.

Namibia is big. Really big — more than twice the size of Germany, with fewer than 3 million people living in it. The kind of place where the road goes quiet, the sky opens up, and you feel wonderfully small under all those stars.

Planning a trip like this can feel like a lot. Which car do you trust on gravel roads? Where do you sleep when a campsite is booked out? What do you do if you have a flat tyre two hours from anywhere? We know Namibia well, and we built Ecocamp Safaris to take that weight off your shoulders. We sort out the 4x4. We book the camps. We map the route. You just turn the key.

This guide is the next step. It's everything our own guests ask us before they fly — written the plain, honest way we'd explain it over a coffee. Read it once before you pack, then keep it in the car as a handy reference.

What You Get With Ecocamp Safaris

- ✓ A fully-kitted 4x4 with rooftop tent, fridge/freezer and camping gear
- ✓ Hand-picked, eco-friendly campsites booked ahead of time
- ✓ A clear route map and day-by-day travel booklet
- ✓ Real local people on call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

One honest note before you dive in: Namibia rewards travellers who prepare a little. Nothing in this guide is meant to scare you — it's meant to make sure nothing catches you off guard. Most people who self-drive here say the same thing afterwards: it felt far less intimidating once they were actually on the road.



Namibia in a Nutshell



Quick Facts

Fact	Detail
Size	824,292 km ² — bigger than France and Germany combined
People	About 3 million, from 11 different ethnic groups
Capital	Windhoek
Official language	English (Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Damara/Nama and German also spoken)
Currency	Namibian Dollar (NAD / N\$)
Driving side	Left-hand side
Sunshine	About 300 days a year

Two Very Different Seasons

Dry season (May–October): Sunny, clear days, cold nights (sometimes near 0°C), and the best wildlife viewing as animals gather at waterholes. This is peak camping season — book early.

Wet season (November–April): Hot days, dramatic afternoon thunderstorms, greener landscapes and fewer tourists. Some roads and Sossusvlei can be temporarily cut off after heavy rain, and a 4x4 becomes even more useful.

Why It Feels So Different From Anywhere Else

Namibia holds some of the oldest sand dunes on Earth, the second-largest canyon in the world (Fish River Canyon), and the largest meteorite ever found. Along the Skeleton Coast, lions sometimes hunt seals on the beach. In the far north, elephants walk dry riverbeds looking for water. It's a country that makes you feel the age and scale of the natural world — and that's exactly why people fall in love with it.

"What If...?" — Your Biggest Worries, Answered

Every guest asks us some version of these questions before they fly. Here are our honest answers.

“ Is it actually safe to drive myself around Namibia?

Yes. Namibia is one of the most politically stable and safest countries in Africa, with low crime rates outside the cities. The real risks aren't people — they're the environment: gravel roads, animals crossing at dusk, and long distances between fuel stops. That's exactly why this guide exists. Most first-time self-drivers tell us the same thing once they've done it: Namibia felt far less scary once they were actually behind the wheel.

“ What if an elephant, hyena or lion comes near my tent at night?

This is the question we hear most, and it's a fair one. Wild animals do sometimes pass through or near campsites — that's part of camping in Africa. The rules are simple and they work: never keep food or scented items in your tent, keep your rooftop tent zipped up, don't wander around after dark without a torch, and always follow the campsite's own safety guidance. Fenced campsites are fenced for a reason, and unfenced ones are chosen because animal visits there are rare and manageable. Guests almost always describe hearing (or spotting) wildlife near camp as one of the highlights of the trip, not a scare.

“ What if I get a flat tyre or breakdown in the middle of nowhere?

Every EcoCamp vehicle carries two spare tyres, a full tool kit, and clear instructions on how to use them. Namibia's gravel roads do cause the occasional puncture — it's normal, not an emergency. If it happens, you call us. We are reachable 24/7, and for routes with no phone signal (like parts of Kaokoland or the Hoanib River), we can arrange a satellite phone so you're never truly cut off.

“ What if there's no phone signal?

Namibia's main mobile network (MTC) covers most towns and major routes well, but signal does drop out in remote areas such as Kaokoland and parts of the Skeleton Coast. We give every self-drive guest a printed route booklet and paper map so you're never relying on a signal to know where you're going, and we can rent you a satellite phone for extra peace of mind on the more remote routes.

“ What if I get sick or hurt far from a hospital?

Namibia has good hospitals in the bigger towns, and many doctors trained in South Africa or Europe. Private healthcare can be expensive, so travel insurance with medical evacuation cover is essential (see Chapter 3). Every EcoCamp vehicle carries a first-aid kit, and we can talk you through what to do and connect you with help, day or night.



A Few More Honest Answers

“What if I run out of fuel or water in a remote area?”

This is very avoidable. Fuel stations in Namibia are far apart, so the rule of thumb is simple: fill up whenever you're below half a tank, and never skip a fuel stop "because you'll catch the next one." We equip every vehicle with extra drinking water and a cooler box, and your route booklet marks every fuel stop along the way.

“Is it safe for a solo traveller, or for women travelling alone?”

Solo travel, including solo female travel, is common and generally very safe in Namibia. Ordinary common sense applies, just as it would anywhere: keep vehicles locked, choose campsites and guesthouses with secure parking, and avoid walking alone at night in towns. Many of our solo guests say Namibia felt more relaxing than they expected.

“What if I'm not a confident enough driver for gravel roads?”

You don't need off-road experience — you need a cautious pace. Most of Namibia's gravel roads are well maintained. The advice we give every guest: slow down (80 km/h max on gravel), keep extra distance from other cars because of dust and loose stones, and never drive after dark outside of towns, since that's when animals are most active near the road. If self-driving still feels like too much on your first trip, we can also build you a guided or semi-guided itinerary — you can always come back and self-drive next time.

“What if I can't find an ATM or my card doesn't work?”

Banks and ATMs exist in the bigger towns (Otjiwarongo, Tsumeb, Swakopmund, Lüderitz, Keetmanshoop, Mariental) but not in national parks or small villages. Bring some euros or US dollars in small notes as a backup, and know that most lodges, campsites and shops accept Visa and Mastercard. We cover this in full in Chapter 3.

“Will I get lost?”

It's unlikely. Namibia's roads are well signposted, and every EcoCamp self-drive guest receives a full travel booklet with maps, directions, and a clear day-by-day plan. A GPS unit can also be rented if you'd like the extra reassurance. And of course — if you do take a wrong turn, we're a phone call away.

The Honest Summary

Namibia's dangers are practical, not personal — dust, distance, and dehydration, not crime. Every one of those is manageable with a bit of preparation, which is exactly what the rest of this guide (and our 24/7 support) is here for.

Before You Fly: Visa, Passport & Money

Passport & Visa

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date, with at least 2–3 blank pages side by side.

Since April 2025, most travellers from Europe, the UK, the US, Canada and Australia need a visa to enter Namibia. This is still the rule in 2026. The good news: it's simple to arrange.

Item	Detail
Visa fee	N\$1,600 (about €85 / \$90 USD)
Where to get it	On arrival at Hosea Kutako Airport, Walvis Bay Airport, or major land borders — or online in advance
eVisa portal	eservices.mhaiss.gov.na
Processing time (eVisa)	Instant on arrival, or 5–10 working days online
Children under 6	Exempt from the fee

Rules do change, so always check the official Namibian immigration website close to your travel date. Ecocamp Safaris cannot be held responsible for travel disruptions caused by missing or invalid travel documents.

Travelling With Children

Minors under 18 must carry a full birth certificate (in English) when travelling to Namibia. If a child is travelling with only one parent, or with someone who isn't a parent or legal guardian, extra consent letters and ID copies are required. Please ask us early — we're happy to check your paperwork is airport-ready before you fly.

Money & Currency

Namibia uses the Namibian Dollar (NAD / N\$). The South African Rand is also accepted at the same value, but you cannot exchange Namibian Dollars once you leave the country, so spend or convert leftover cash before crossing the border.

Currency	Approx. rate (July 2026)
1 Euro (€)	≈ N\$18.90
1 US Dollar (\$)	≈ N\$16.40

Exchange rates move daily — treat these as a guide, not a guarantee, and check a live converter a few days before you travel.

Smart Money Tips

- ✓ Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted; American Express is not
- ✓ Bring some euros or US dollars in small notes as backup cash
- ✓ ATMs exist in bigger towns only — not in national parks
- ✓ Keep your currency exchange receipt to convert leftover NAD at the end

CHAPTER 3 · CONTINUED

Travel Insurance — Please Don't Skip This



Travel insurance is not included in any of our tour prices, and it is one thing we ask every guest to arrange without exception.

Namibia's hospitals in bigger towns are good, but private healthcare is not cheap, and if something serious happens far from a town, you may need to be flown out for treatment. Good travel insurance should cover:

- ✓ Emergency medical treatment and hospital stays
- ✓ Medical evacuation and repatriation (being flown home if needed)
- ✓ Trip cancellation or interruption
- ✓ Lost, stolen or damaged luggage
- ✓ Activities you plan to do — like hot air ballooning, quad biking, or hiking

If your visa application requires proof of medical insurance (many now do), your policy documents will normally satisfy this too.

Vaccinations & Health Prep

No vaccinations are compulsory for most European, UK, US, Canadian or Australian travellers. A yellow fever certificate is only required if you're arriving from a country where yellow fever is present. Always double-check current advice with your doctor, a travel clinic, or the World Health Organisation (who.int) close to your departure date, since recommendations can change.

Malaria — What You Actually Need to Know

Malaria risk in Namibia is low across most of the country — including Windhoek, the coast, and the central and southern regions where many self-drive routes run. Risk is higher in the far north — Etosha, the Zambezi Region (formerly Caprivi), Kavango, and Kaokoland — especially during and just after the rainy season (November to June).

If your route includes these areas, talk to your doctor or a travel clinic about antimalarial tablets before you go. Whether or not you take tablets, always:

- ✓ Use mosquito repellent, especially from dusk onwards
- ✓ Wear long sleeves and trousers in the evening
- ✓ Sleep under a net if one is provided, or use the tent's insect screen

If you develop a fever during or after your trip, tell your doctor you've been in a malaria area — even weeks later.



CHAPTER 4

What to Pack

Pack light. Our vehicles include a fridge/freezer, and most campsites and towns can wash clothes for you — so you really don't need it all.

Clothing

- ✓ Neutral colours (beige, khaki, green) — bright colours stand out to animals and attract insects
- ✓ Lightweight trousers (also protect against mosquito bites in the evening)
- ✓ Shorts and t-shirts for hot days
- ✓ A warm fleece or jumper — desert nights get cold, even in summer
- ✓ A windbreaker or light rain jacket
- ✓ Comfortable closed walking shoes
- ✓ A hat and sunglasses
- ✓ Swimwear

Health & Sun

- ✓ High-SPF sunscreen and lip balm
- ✓ Mosquito repellent
- ✓ Personal medication (enough for the whole trip, in carry-on luggage with prescriptions)
- ✓ Basic first-aid items: painkillers, plasters, rehydration salts, anti-diarrhoea tablets

Camping & Gear

- ✓ A small daypack for game drives and walks
- ✓ A head torch or flashlight (essential after dark at camp)
- ✓ Binoculars for wildlife viewing
- ✓ A reusable water bottle
- ✓ Camera plus spare memory cards and batteries — these are pricey and hard to find locally
- ✓ A power adaptor: Namibia uses large, round, 3-pin plugs (220/240V) — standard "universal" adaptors often don't fit
- ✓ Freezer bags to protect electronics from dust

Already Included in Your EcoCamp Vehicle

Rooftop tent, mattress, bedding, camping chairs and table, cooking gear, fridge/freezer, and a basic first-aid kit — so you can genuinely pack light.



CHAPTER 5

Self-Drive Smart: Roads, Fuel & Your 4x4



The Golden Rules of Namibian Roads

- ✓ Drive on the left. Speed limit is 120 km/h on tar and 80 km/h on gravel.
- ✓ Never drive after dark outside of towns — this is when animals like kudu and warthog cross roads, and they're very hard to see in time.
- ✓ Slow right down on gravel, especially around corners and on corrugated ("washboard") sections.
- ✓ Keep extra distance from the car in front — dust clouds make it hard to see oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Fill up whenever your tank drops below half — fuel stations can be 200 km apart.
- ✓ Carry more drinking water than you think you'll need (2–3 litres per person, per day, minimum).

If You Get a Flat Tyre

Pull well off the road. Every vehicle carries two spare tyres and full tools. Changing a tyre yourself in a national park is not recommended — call us or the park office, and we'll talk you through it or send help.

If You Break Down

Stay with the vehicle. It's easier for help to find you, and it gives you shade and shelter. Call our 24/7 support line — that's exactly what it's there for.

Wildlife on the Road

You will likely see animals crossing or standing near the road, especially in and around national parks. Slow down well in advance, never hoot aggressively, and never get out of your vehicle near large animals — even at a distance, elephants and big cats are unpredictable.

Fuel Planning in Etosha

Fuel is available at Okaukuejo, Halali and Namutoni camps inside Etosha, but stock can occasionally run low — so fill up whenever you pass a pump with less than two-thirds of a tank left.

Staying Connected on the Road

Namibia's main network, MTC, covers most towns and main routes reasonably well, though coverage drops out in remote regions like Kaokoland. We provide a printed map and route booklet with every self-drive booking so you're never solely reliant on signal, and a satellite phone is available to rent for the more remote legs of your trip — just ask us.



CHAPTER 6

Camping Safely Under the Stars



This is the heart of an EcoCamp trip — and it's genuinely one of the safest, most special ways to experience Namibia when you follow a few simple habits.

Around Camp After Dark

- ✓ Never keep food, drinks or scented toiletries in your tent — the smell can attract hyenas, jackals and other wildlife. Store it in the vehicle fridge or a sealed container.
- ✓ Zip your rooftop tent fully closed at night, even if the campsite feels quiet.
- ✓ Always carry a torch if you leave the tent after dark, and check your surroundings before climbing down.
- ✓ Don't walk around camp alone at night in unfenced bush campsites — go with someone else and stay close to the vehicle.
- ✓ Keep a safe, respectful distance from any animal you see near camp — do not approach, and never feed wildlife.

Elephants and Other Big Visitors

Some of Namibia's most memorable campsites sit near elephant paths and dry riverbeds — that's part of the magic of the Kunene and Hoanib regions. Camp staff and your route notes will tell you what's normal for that specific site. If elephants do pass through camp, stay calm, remain quiet, and let them move on in their own time. They are usually just passing to reach water and rarely linger.

Fires & Leave No Trace

Only light fires in designated fire pits, and always make sure they are fully out before leaving or sleeping. As an eco-conscious operator, we ask every guest to follow a simple Leave No Trace ethos: pack out everything you bring in, use water sparingly (it's precious in the desert), and leave each campsite exactly as you found it — or better.

Choosing Where You Sleep

Every campsite on your EcoCamp itinerary is hand-picked for safety, cleanliness, and low environmental impact. Fenced sites give extra peace of mind for families or first-time campers; unfenced, wilder sites offer a closer connection to nature for guests who want it. Tell us your comfort level when we plan your route, and we'll match it.



CHAPTER 7

Everyday Life in Namibia

Time & Electricity

Time zone: Same as Central Europe in summer (Apr–Aug); one hour ahead of Central Europe from September to March.

Electricity: 220/240V, using large round 3-pin plugs. Some remote lodges and campsites run on generators rather than 24-hour power, so pack a torch or headlamp regardless.

Public Holidays

Date	Holiday
1 Jan	New Year's Day
21 Mar	Independence Day
Mar/Apr	Good Friday & Easter Monday
1 May	Workers' Day
4 May	Cassinga Day
25 May	Africa Day
26 Aug	Heroes' Day
10 Dec	Human Rights Day
25–26 Dec	Christmas & Family Day

Shops (and some fuel stations) run limited hours on public holidays and Saturday/Sunday afternoons — plan food and fuel stops around this.

A Few Useful Words

English	Afrikaans
Hello	Goeie môre / Dag
Thank you	Dankie
Yes / No	Ja / Nee
Please	Asseblief
How are you?	Hoe gaan dit?
Nice to meet you	Aangename kennis

English is the official language everywhere, so you'll get by easily — locals just love it when visitors try a word or two of Afrikaans, Oshiwambo or Otjiherero.

CHAPTER 8

Money on the Road & Tipping

Tipping Guide

Tipping is appreciated in Namibia when service is good, but it is never expected or demanded. These are guidelines, not rules — tip what feels right for the service you received.

Who	Suggested tip
Guide (if driving too)	€3–€5 per person, per day
Driver only	€1–€2 per person, per day
Pilot (scenic flight/balloon)	€2–€4 per person, per flight
Lodge/campsite staff	€1–€3 per person, per stay

Bringing Gifts for Locals?

It's a kind instinct, but please avoid handing out sweets or pens directly to children along the road — it can encourage begging. Instead, notebooks, pens or clothing can be dropped at a school, orphanage, or community organisation, where they're shared fairly. Just ask us — we can point you to trusted local projects, and visits to community areas like Katutura (Windhoek) or Mondesa (Swakopmund) are a great way to directly support local people when arranged through a resident-led tour.

Shopping & Souvenirs

Namibia is known for wood carving, basketry, karakul wool weaving, pottery, ostrich-eggshell jewellery, and semi-precious stones and diamonds (always buy these from a licensed dealer with a certificate).

Souvenirs to Avoid

It's illegal to buy, sell or export items made from protected species or heritage materials, including:

- ✓ Ivory, rhino horn, or any big cat parts (skins, teeth, claws)
- ✓ Reptile skins, bird feathers/eggs from protected species
- ✓ Items made from protected trees, like African ebony or the quiver tree
- ✓ Rock art, fossils, or other protected historical artefacts
- ✓ Shells, coral or turtle-shell products

If you're ever unsure whether something is legal to buy, ask the seller for proof, or simply ask us.

CHAPTER 9

Culture, Respect & Staying Safe in Town



A Few Notes on Etiquette

- ✓ Always ask permission before photographing people — most are happy to say yes if you simply ask.
- ✓ Casual clothing is fine everywhere, including shorts and beachwear in Swakopmund, though light long sleeves are your best defence against the strong sun.
- ✓ Namibia is a warm, polite culture — a friendly greeting goes a long way.

Common-Sense Safety in Towns

Namibia is one of the safer countries in Africa for visitors, and violent crime targeting tourists is rare. Basic precautions are still worth following, just as they would be in any city:

- ✓ Keep valuables in the vehicle or hotel safe, not on display
- ✓ Never leave your passport in checked luggage — carry a photocopy separately
- ✓ Keep bags zipped and close to your body in busy areas
- ✓ Be cautious at ATMs, and decline help from strangers there
- ✓ Avoid walking alone at night — use a hotel-recommended radio taxi
- ✓ Only visit townships with a trusted, resident-led guide

These precautions aren't about fear — they're the same habits that make sense in any unfamiliar city, and following them lets you relax and enjoy the rest of your trip.

We Can't Wait to Welcome You to Namibia

Namibia is an awesome place for an adventure! You can see giant red sand dunes that stretch as far as you can see, and wild animals like lions and elephants hanging out at waterholes in Etosha. Plus, there is a giant rocky canyon and a spooky coast with old ship wrecks.

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24/7 support for peace of mind - day or night, we're a call away

NTB Registration: BOO01358

Information in this guide is accurate as of July 2026. Visa fees, exchange rates and health advice can change - always confirm details close to your travel date.

