

Wonders of Namibia Oct 22-31, 2023

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

Oct 21 or 22 - Fly to Windhoek from USA. Air details to come in our AFS trip tips.

Oct 23 - The Weinberg Windhoek, Windhoek

Welcome to Windhoek! We arrive in the picturesque capital of Namibia and make our way to the Am Weinberg Estate's Boutique Hotel for overnight. This estate is in the perfect location to explore some of Windhoek's sights or to just relax and enjoy the spa and its five upmarket restaurants. Known for its exclusivity, the prestigious estate where the Hotel is located provides the pleasures of city life and the serene atmosphere of Africa in style, combining old-world splendor with state-of-the-art amenities. And of course, the Weinburg name itself means vineyards, so choose your favorite wine from an extensive wine list while savoring the hotel's sophisticated atmosphere.

Overnight: Weinberg Estate Boutique Hotel (1 Night)

Overnight: The Weinberg Windhoek

The Am Weinberg Estate's Boutique Hotel provides all of the exclusivity and privacy you might expect from this prestigious Estate. Enjoy the pleasures of city life and the serene atmosphere of Africa in style in The Weinberg Windhoek. Its iconic styling seamlessly blends old-world splendor with modern lines as well as state-of-the-art amenities. The elegant 41-bedroom hotel wraps around a heritage building, creating an inviting courtyard. Aside from the location and spectacular views, hotel guests also have access to facilities including the Estate's Soulstice Day Spa and five upmarket restaurants. The Weinberg (German: vineyard) lives up to its name and invites you to choose your favorite wine from an extensive wine list while savoring the hotel's sophisticated atmosphere.

Overnight: Weinburg Hotel B

Oct 24 - The Desert Grace Gondwana Collection Namibia at Sossusvlei Dunes

Today we depart Windhoek driving around 4 hours in a south-westerly direction towards the great Namib Desert, one of the oldest deserts in the world. The Namib is distinguished as being home to some of the strangest flora and fauna on the continent. The dunes provide a photographer's dream with their incredible contrasting red colors the endless blue skies.

Located in Namib-Naukluft National Park, Sossusvlei is famous for its setting amidst the iconic red dunes of the Namib. The clear blue skies contrasting with the towering dunes make this one of the most scenic natural wonders of Africa. At up to 1200 ft high, some of the 'mountains of sand' are among the highest in the world. In the morning and evening light the dunes come alive with amazing displays of color that draw photography enthusiasts from around the globe. Sossusvlei is home to a variety of desert wildlife including gemsbok, springbok, ostrich and various reptiles. This awe-inspiring destination is the second-most visited attraction in Namibia.

Activities: Climb 'Big Daddy', one of Sossusvlei's tallest dunes; explore neighboring Deadvlei, a dazzling white clay pan dotted with ancient fossilized camel thorn trees; take a scenic flight across the Namib Sand Sea or a hot air balloon trip with champagne breakfast amidst the majestic dunes.

Later it's Dinner in the Desert - we will head out about 2 hours before sunset into the desert to discover the fossilized dunes, the red dunes above the plateau and the many other wonders of the Namib Desert. Enjoy an incredible Sundowner Safari drive with dinner among the dunes. And the most incredible star filled sky you've ever witnessed.

Overnight: The Desert Grace Gondwana Collection Namibia

A bit more special than the norm, with each room having its own plunge pool – ideal for the warmer weather. Opening in 2018, this is the first of Gondwana's lodges to be entirely constructed using sandbags instead of bricks. Not only does this have a positive outcome for the environment, it also makes the 24 rooms on the lodge cooler and very well insulated. As you enter the Reception you are greeted by lavish finishes and quirky character - inspired by Wes Anderson films from

the 60's, this lodge offers a unique experience. The dining room and bar are equally characteristic in their appearance with pink lettering glowing along the wall 'One night in Namibia' - surely this is something not to be missed? Walk through your chalet door to find soft shades of love floating across the canvas - the minibar has that perfect gin and tonic waiting, and your private plunge pool is a sliding door away, Dinner and Breakfast. B,D

Oct 25 - The Desert Wonders of Sossusvlei

Today we depart one hour before sunrise to ensure we don't miss out on the spectacular colors of the sunrise over these dunes. We will enjoy a guided half-day excursion to the highest dunes on Earth at Sossusvlei. They form part of the spectacular Namib Sand Sea, which was declared a World Heritage site in 2013. Including entrance fees to the National Park.

The area itself is a vast depression or clay pan, towered over by sand dunes up to 300m high. In the early morning, the first rays of the sun light up the dunes with a deep orange glow - a photographer's delight. It is a wild, beautiful and romantic spot, with sparse vegetation edging a few water courses which flow in from the Tsauchab river. Here springbok and ostrich are often seen. By jeeps and on foot we'll also explore the cool passageways of the Sesriem Canyon on foot. The canyon is small but very picturesque - many plants grow in the shade and shelter offered by the canyon, and water pools attract several species of birds and animals.

Overnight: The Desert Grace Gondwana Collection Namibia. B, D

Oct 26 - Swakopmund Optional Hot Air Ballooning – at sunrise in the world's oldest desert, witness a flight of a lifetime over the stunning landscapes of oceans, sand, mountains and endless vistas of shadows and light. At landing, return back to earth with an "Out of Africa" champagne breakfast set up in the middle of nowhere in the bush. Your pilot will present you a flight certificate before a leisurely nature drive back to our resort. \$395 choose at booking.

This morning, we travel back through the Namib Naukluft National Park through the Kuiseb Canyon, passing awe-inspiring landscapes as we head across the Namib gravel flats to Walvis Bay. Here a large spit forms a natural deep-sea harbor that attracted the first navigators in the late 1400's. The shallows, located where the spit joins the mainland, are home to a diverse collection of birds, the most spectacular being flamingos and pelicans that feed here seasonally.

It is a short drive from here to the charming coastal town of Swakopmund. The mix of Namibian influences with picturesque buildings from the colonial era, palm-lined streets and seaside promenades, the laid-back holiday atmosphere plus the cool sea breeze makes Swakopmund one of the most attractive places in Namibia. Our hotel is appropriately called The Delight Swakopmund and is only a short stroll to loads of restaurants and attractions. Your evening is free to enjoy the galleries, shops, and cafes.

Overnight: The Delight Swakopmund Gondwana Collection Namibia - B

Perfectly centrally located, The Delight Swakopmund is only a short stroll to loads of restaurants and attractions. Among the town's captivating contrasts and old traditions, Gondwana's Delight is a fresh breeze in the desert. A refreshing, relaxing, modern, light and airy establishment to uplift and inspire. Effortless and comfortable, with the distinctively warm and welcoming Gondwana service and charm, your stay is always a memorable experience.

Oct 27 - Sailing in Walvis Bay and Harbor Tour

It's a day of exploration of this unique coastal area. We check in for a half-day sailing adventure at 8:30am and head out around 9 am on four catamarans from the Walvis Bay Waterfront. Our sailing excursion takes us in search of the Marine Big 5: whales, dolphins, mola, leatherback turtle and seals. We'll sail past oyster farms as we approach Pelican Point with its landmark lighthouse and 60,000 resident Cape Fur Seals. Southern Right Whale and Humpback Whales are often spotted, while other whale species, such as the Gray whale and the Pygmy Right whale couple also make appearances. Bottlenose, Heaviside and Dusky dolphins are regularly seen, as are Sunfish and Leatherback Turtles. A variety of seabirds will trail our vessels, including Kelp Gull, Hartlaub's Gull, Pelicans, Skua and Cape Cormorant. If you want, you can even help in putting up the sails and rigging the ropes. We'll enjoy fresh oysters with sparkling wine, savory snacks and desserts together with light drinks, cooldrinks and water as we make our way back from Pelican Point.

Once back at the Waterfront, we'll climb aboard 4x4s Jeeps for an afternoon excursion around Sandwich Harbor. In Walvis Bay Lagoon, we'll see masses of flamingos before heading to an exclusive region of the Kuiseb River delta, a dry riverbed where the odd springbok may still be seen. Our group is the only activity operator allowed to access this area. If weather and tides allow, we will drive right to the Sandwich Harbor Lagoon, one of Southern Africa's richest and unique wetlands and one of five RAMSAR sites in Namibia.

We have lots of time to stop along the way for photography. This is the land of oysters so we'll take a break atop a dune to enjoy a selection of oysters and snacks with sparkling wine, beers and cool drinks. We return to the waterfront in late afternoon, and you will have your evening free.

Overnight: Swakopmund Gondwana (3 nights) B,L

Oct 28 - Cape Cross

Today, we travel north up the Atlantic coast to visit the memorable Cape Cross Seal Colony where between 80,000 and 100,000 Cape fur seals bask in the sun or swim playfully in the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The historic area was landed on by the Portuguese in 1486, and they erected a stone cross here in honor of the Portuguese King, however, this cross was replaced by the German settlers in the 1800's. With the abundance of fish swimming in the cold Benguela current, the seals have plenty to snack on. From a 200-metre-long walkway, watch the seals at play and learn about them through the area's information points. The seals are quite big, an average male weighing in at anything up to 500 lbs.

We'll be back in Swakopmund early afternoon, and the rest of the day is ours to explore or take advantage of the numerous activities available in the region. Those up for adventure can enjoy sandboarding, sand skiing, quad biking, dune carting, beach angling and deep sea fishing, to name but a few, and not to forget parachuting and hot air ballooning.

Overnight: Swakopmund Gondwana B

Oct 29 - Na'an ku se Lodge!

After breakfast, we head inland back via Windhoek to the incomparable Na'an ku se Lodge and reserve. The drive will take the full morning, but we'll arrive in time for lunch followed by a Sunset Game Drive on the pristine 9,000-hectare reserve.

The only not for profit eco-tourism destination lodge in Namibia, Na'an ku se Lodge is crafted from ecologically clean material including solid logs and glass to complement Na'an ku se's beautiful wilderness setting. All money goes directly back to protecting the animals and environment.

Our homes for the next two nights are beautiful villas located near to the main lodge, each with their own luxury fitted kitchen and lounge area. It is a short walk to the main lodge with a tranquil dining area with stunning views, bar and swimming pool. This evening, experienced guides will take us on open game drive vehicles around the reserve, showcasing some of the most incredible wildlife in Africa and revealing the elusive beauty of the nocturnal savannah beneath a star-filled sky in an experience that you will never forget.

Conservation through innovation

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 organization. The Naankuse Foundation Wildlife Sanctuary provides a safe haven and second chance for countless injured, orphaned and conflict animals. Wherever possible our aim is to release animals back into the wild. Our mission is to conserve the land, cultures and wildlife of Namibia, Africa. We aim to achieve this through encouraging participation, education and scientific research. How we use your donations; Lifeline Clinic 37%, Animal Camps, Food and Medicine 29%, Research 18%, Admin 11%, San Housing, Education and Welfare 5%,

Overnight: Na'an ku se Lodge B,L,D

Located just thirty minutes from Windhoek airport and nestled in stunning African bush fields, our Lodge is perfectly situated to start or finish your trip to Namibia. With a range of enjoyable activities available, including Carnivore Feeding Tours, Stories with the Bushmen and Cheetahs Up Close you are sure to enjoy an unforgettable African holiday with us. The only charity lodge in Namibia, N/a'an ku sê Lodge is crafted from ecologically clean material including solid logs and glass to complement N/a'an ku sê's beautiful wilderness setting. Guests will be accommodated in beautiful villas located near to the main lodge each with its own luxury fitted kitchen and lounge area. It is a short walk to the main lodge with a tranquil dining area with stunning views, bar and swimming pool. Our Lodge is a not-for-profit eco-tourism destination, where all profits are directed straight back into supporting our charitable projects.

Oct 30 - Na'an ku se Lodge Activities

Behind the Scenes with Marlice van Vuuren (including the baboon and cheetah experiences)

After breakfast, we get a real insight into what it takes to run a sanctuary as we follow in the footsteps of owner Marlice van Vuuren for an intimate view of the workings of a wildlife reserve. On this in-depth activity we will gain insight into the real Na'an ku sê world and the inner workings of life here as well as the myriad of animal species currently being cared for. Enter the riveting world of research carried out at Na'an ku sê and gain intimate knowledge into the field of human-carnivore conflict mitigation. You'll become smitten with their gorgeous sanctuary orphans and bond with the baby baboons (there's nothing like it). Become fully immersed in Marlice's magical world! During free time later, you may want to take part in some of the unique activities available at Na'an ku sê, including Carnivore Feeding Tours and Cheetahs Up.

Baboon experience

Meet our playful primates and experience the joys of monkey fun on a not-to-be-missed baboon walk. All of our baboons came to N/a'an ku sê either after losing their mums (Namibia's Chacma baboons are tragically persecuted on an almost daily basis), or having been rescued from situations of abuse. Our baboon buddies adore the interaction and bounding through the bush on their daily walks. Why not join in and get to know firsthand just how incredible these animals are?

Cheetah experience

Habituated cheetahs have lost their fear of humans – a fear that is crucial in elevating their survival chances in the wild. For this reason, some of the magnificent spotted sprinters at N/a'an ku sê need to remain in captivity, having come to the sanctuary from various conflict situations at very young ages, requiring dedicated care to ensure their survival. At N/a'an ku sê we fully nurture and encourage their natural behavior, captivity resembling the life of their wild counterparts as closely as possible. Enjoy time with our habituated big cats, in the hands of an experienced and knowledgeable guide. Simply not to be missed!

After lunch, you will enjoy a wildlife tracking experience on the reserve.

Overnight: Na'an ku se Lodge. Full board B,L,D

Oct 31 - Transfer to airport for flights home

Today, we bid farewell to Namibia as we transfer from Na'an ku sê Lodge to Hosea Kutako International Airport for our international flights back home.

Our partner Nicki there will present an optional 3-day extension to Okongima Lodge, home to the world-renowned AFRICAT FOUNDATION. Details to come soon.