

BIG FIVE
TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



Travel Guide

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip. Be sure to check the reading listing included here for more information.



“Everything in Africa bites, but the safari bug is worst of all.”

Brian Jackman,
London *Times*, 15 Oct 83

“The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.”

St. Augustine

WINDHOEK ~ Elevation: 5658 feet Latitude: 22 34S Longitude: 017 06E**Average Temperature**

°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	77	74	72	68	63	57	57	62	69	73	77	78

Average Precipitation

in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	3.1	3.2	3.1	1.5	0.3	---	---	---	0.1	0.5	1.1	1.6

TIME ZONES / TRAVEL TIMES

Summer: From the first Sunday in September to the first Sunday in April, Namibia is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, GMT +2.

Winter: from the first Sunday in April to the first Sunday in September, one hour ahead of GMT, +1.

Approximate flight times: From New York to Johannesburg, South Africa takes about 14 hours, 45 minutes; time from Johannesburg to Windhoek, Namibia is two hours.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

Visas: U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries, consult the nearest Namibia consulate.

Important: Please look at your passport prior to travel to insure that:

- 1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Duty-Free: Visitors may import duty-free 1 liter spirits, 2 liters wine, 300 ml. perfume, and 400 cigarettes/50 cigars/250 g. tobacco. There is no duty-free shopping available at Johannesburg International Airport on a flight to Windhoek. Please make sure any duty-free purchases of film, alcohol, etc. are made before arriving in Southern Africa.

Prohibited Items: Narcotics (hemp, opium, cocaine, morphine, heroin, etc.), firearms, obscene literature, pictures, or articles. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Note: Visitors should avoid purchasing diamonds and other protected resources outside licensed retail establishments. The sentence for illegal dealing in diamonds in Namibia is stiff (up to U.S. \$20,000 in fines or five years in prison) and the courts generally impose the maximum sentence. The purchase and exportation of other protected resources such as elephant ivory and other animal products may also be prohibited by Namibian, international, and / or U.S. law.

U.S. Customs: Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. Regulations frequently change, so check with your nearest customs office for a list of restricted and exempt items. You can also write the U.S. Customs Service, Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044, or visit their web site at www.customs.ustreas.gov.

International Departure tax: None at this time.

CLIMATE

Typical of most deserts, Namibia is semi-arid with hot days and cool nights. The cold Benguela current, however, keeps the coast of the Namib Desert cool, damp, and rain-free for most of the year but it also generates thick coastal fog that may last from late afternoon until mid-morning. Rain falls inland during the summer months -- November to April. Midsummer temperatures may rise to more than 100 degrees F. But the altitude cools the nights. Winter nights can be fairly cold, but days are generally warm and pleasant.

Winters are usually mild to warm although it can become cold at night and in the early morning. Dawn temperatures may drop to freezing. Along the coast, it is cool with low rainfall and fog. Weather conditions along the coast can get quite cold and windy.

The rainy season lasts from October to April. The rest of the year is dry and cloudless with Namibia averaging 300 days of sunshine a year.

CLOTHING

Winters (June, July & August) are usually mild to warm, which call for light clothing in the middle of the day. As it can become cold at night and in the early morning, a warm sweater and jacket should be brought along. Weather conditions at the coast can be quite cold and windy, for which warm clothing, including a windbreaker, are necessary.

As no formal clothes are needed, we recommend that you keep your luggage to the basics. Bright colors and white are NOT advised and **ARMY CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORMS OR ARMY HATS ARE FORBIDDEN** (Khaki is fine). Cotton clothing and natural materials, cooler than synthetics, are recommended for hot Namibian summers. They can be bought at shops in Windhoek that specialize in lightweight safari garments.

Laundry: Laundry can be done at some camps. Skeleton Coast and Damaraland are exceptions as neither have a sufficient water supply. Most camps that do laundry charge a modest and nominal fee for this facility but others do provide this service for free. The camp staff will not, however, wash underwear because of local traditions prevailing in the country.

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT LIST

Maximum 26 Lbs In One Soft Sports Bag Including Camera Equipment Within Reason

1. Good-quality sunglasses, UV protected and preferably polarized. Tinted fashion glasses are not much good in harsh light, and can damage your eyes.
2. Bush hat
3. T-shirts and one long sleeved cotton shirt
4. Shorts and skirts
5. Long trousers
6. Track suit
7. Underwear and socks
8. Good walking shoes
9. Thongs / sandals
10. Swimsuit
11. Sweater / parka (important for cold winter mornings in June / July / August and for Swakopmund and the coastal area)
12. A dust-proof camera bag is highly recommended.
13. Extra glasses and contacts. If you usually wear contacts, bring a pair of glasses in case your eyes get irritated from the dust.
14. Lightweight rain gear for Jan. to April as well as scarf and gloves in winter
15. Head scarf for the dust.
16. Basic medical kit (aspirins, Band-Aids, Imodium, antiseptic and antihistamine creams, etc)
17. Binoculars - ESSENTIAL!
18. Malaria tablets
19. Moisturizing cream & suntan lotion
20. Playing cards, chess, etc.
21. Personal toiletries, tissues, insect repellent
22. Visas, air tickets, money, travelers checks and credit cards.
23. Passport. Bring copies of passport and tickets, etc. in case originals are lost
24. A flashlight and spare batteries and a spare bulb as these are hard to find
25. Light rain gear for summer months (late November to April)

CAMERAS & FILM

Before photographing any religious festival or rural homestead, ask permission. Always ask people before taking pictures of people as some, especially villagers, religious people, and women may find it offensive while others will want to be paid.

Equipment: Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out any problems.

Lenses: A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. A zoom lens in the 70 to 200 mm range will help you capture the sights. Although guides get you quite close to the animals, avid photographers will want to bring telephoto lenses in the 300-500mm range. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of

extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean. Also, keep equipment covered when not in use to protect it from dust and dirt.

Film: We recommend that visitors bring plenty of film. You will undoubtedly shoot more pictures than you planned. Film is expensive in Namibia when it can be found. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot one 36 exposure roll of film per day, and enthusiastic shooters will far exceed that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated or, at least, cool. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations. *If you are planning to shoot video, be sure to bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Videotape is not affected by airport x-ray - only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat will damage videotape. Your battery charger should be capable of automatically adjusting to 240 volts, but be prepared with batteries.

Batteries: Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries. Batteries can be difficult to find and expensive.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Johannesburg International Airport introduced baggage limitations (weight and size) to reduce injuries amongst airport handling staff. Scales will be placed in the terminal, to assist passengers with verifying their baggage weight prior to checking-in. From September 1, the following standard, per baggage piece restrictions will apply:

- 900mm length = 36 inches
- 720mm height = 29 inches
- 450mm width = 18 inches
- 32 kg in weight per piece = 70 lbs

The maximum weight limit relates to single items of luggage and does not affect passengers' overall baggage allowance and excess baggage, which individual airlines determine. Should the above parameters be exceeded, baggage should be processed through the 'out of gauge' route or through cargo.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for

charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside. Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

Some companies such as Aurora Luggage (<http://www.auroraluggage.com/>) post the most current luggage requirements for individual airlines on their web sites.

LUGGAGE WHILE ON FLYING SAFARIS

As no formal clothes are needed, we recommend that you keep your luggage to the very basics. For safety and space reasons, 26 pounds is the weight limit on luggage due to specific restrictions for light aircraft that are strictly enforced. That 26-pound limit includes camera bag and equipment. On light aircraft, a soft carryall (instead of a suitcase) is required with the following maximum dimensions: 32 in long by 14 in wide. Please keep in mind that the light aircraft have no baggage compartments, so all bags must be carried inside the aircraft, and space is very limited.

Note: Passengers who bring more than the allotted weight allowance may necessitate the use of an extra charter aircraft, in which case, the clients will be charged for the extra charter costs, which can be considerable. Excess baggage can be stored in Windhoek, but there may be additional charges for transporting the luggage to the airport at the end of the safari.

Additionally, a guest traveling alone who weighs 200 pounds or more, or two guests traveling together whose combined weight is 390 pounds or more, must advise us. All weight limits are due to safety factors involved in the light aircraft transfers. Please note that if these limitations are exceeded, it may be necessary to charge for an additional aircraft.

If you are using only scheduled flight services on your safari, then the weight limit is a maximum of 44 pounds (plus camera equipment within reason). Guests in Namibia are advised to store their excess luggage in Windhoek for the duration of their fly-in safari.

DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness,

fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities.

The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag. The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects. Consider the following for your next scheduled trip.

- Start your trip well rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure. Getting adequate rest before starting on your journey will help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend that you carry a bottle of drinking water with you and drink eight ounces every hour.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to feeling sluggish.
- Once settled onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.
- As much as possible, create a dark environment during flight. Studies have shown that bright lights strongly affect individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eyeshades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes that will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is key in determining how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. If you have the opportunity, shower. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag after the flight.

HEALTH

Health certificates are not normally required of visitors from Europe and North America. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from those arriving from infected areas. Those countries or parts of countries that were included in the former endemic zone in Sub-Saharan Africa and South America are regarded as infected by the Namibian authorities. You must have a yellow fever vaccination certificate if you are traveling to two or more African countries.

Malaria precautions are recommended due to a risk existing in the northern regions and in Otjozondjupa and Omaheke from November to May / June, and along the Kavango and Kunene rivers throughout the year. The predominant *falciparum* strain is reported to be resistant to chloroquine. The recommended prophylaxis is chloroquine plus proguanil.

Please check the latest regulations with your doctor, local health office, or National Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, GA at 404-332-4559. You can also visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.org>.

Medical Facilities: Medical facilities are relatively modern, especially in the capital city of Windhoek.

Medical Insurance: U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. Uninsured travelers, who require medical care overseas, may face extreme difficulties.

Note: Please be sure to take a sufficient supply of required prescription medicine with you and any over-the-counter items you feel necessary. Medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage.

SAFETY

As with travel to any destination, common sense should be the prevailing guide to avoid problems. In major cities anywhere, it is strongly suggested that visitors not walk alone at night. While violent incidents in Namibia are rare, petty crimes in urban areas are on the rise.

The American Embassy in Windhoek strongly urges U.S. citizens to avoid all travel to the Kavango and Caprivi regions of northeast Namibia due to the uncertain security situation. *Please note that Big Five does not travel to these areas.*

During the day, take only the indispensable in your backpack or fanny pack. Do not take your passport, airline tickets, or all your money on day trips. Leave these and other valuables in hotel safes, and always ask for a receipt. Do not leave cash, travelers' checks, airline tickets, etc. in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase. Carry copies of your documents and only the amount of money you think you will need. Leave your jewelry at home!

Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or at the Bureau of Consular Affairs' home page at <http://travel.state.gov>. You can also contact the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520. (202) 647-4000. Their website is <http://www.state.gov>.

TRAVELER'S ETIQUETTE

You are guaranteed to come up against cultural differences between our modern society and that of Africa. Africans think and do things differently from the way we do them. Traditions

and philosophies, some of which are very old, govern attitudes toward time, business, family, and politics. But this is at the heart of why we travel -- to experience the world through other cultures and other people.

Travel necessitates being a good-natured realist as well as a romantic. Being a genial traveling companion makes for an enjoyable travel experience for everyone and a great safari. Observing simple rules of common courtesy will better assure the success of your travel.

BANKING / CURRENCY

Currency: The Namibian Dollar (NAD) has been introduced in note denominations of NAD200, 100, 50 and 10. Coins were also introduced in 1994 in denominations of NAD5 and 1. It is linked to the South African Rand (R) on a 1:1 basis (South African Rand = 100 cents). The South African Rand is also acceptable as currency in Namibia.

Currency exchange: Available in banks and at bureaux de change. A better rate of exchange can be obtained on travellers cheques than on cash.

Credit & debit cards: American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are accepted. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travelers checks: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take travelers checks in US Dollars or South African Rand.

Currency restrictions: The import and export of local currency is limited to NAD50,000. The import of foreign currency is unlimited, provided declared on arrival. Export of foreign currency is unlimited up to amount imported and declared as long as the departure is within 12 months.

Note: No limits exist for travel between Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland as these countries are members of the same common monetary area.

Tax: Namibia has a VAT tax that is between 15% and 30%.

BANKING & BUSINESS HOURS

Banking Hours: Generally open Monday to Friday 9am-3:30pm, and Saturday 9am-11am.

Shopping hours: 8:30am-5pm Monday to Friday, 8:30am-1pm Saturday. Some larger supermarkets are also open 11am-1pm and 4-9pm Sunday.

Business Hours: Normal business hours are from 8am-1pm and 2-5pm. Most offices take an hour lunch break.

COMMUNICATION

Language: English is the official language. Afrikaans is spoken by most people. German, Herero, Kavango, Nama and Owambo are also spoken.

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 264. Outgoing international code: 00.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900 network in use.

Fax: Most hotels have facilities.

Internet: There are Internet cafes in Walvis Bay and Windhoek.

Post: Good postal service. Airmail to Europe takes from approximately 4 days to 2 weeks.

DRIVING CONDITIONS

African roads are frequently rough and bumpy, and occasionally we will travel "off road" and it is possible that injuries may occur if, for example, a hidden pothole or other obstruction surfaces. This also means that much of the traveling is done on dirt roads, so conditions do become dusty.

ELECTRICITY

Electrical current is 220/240 volts, and outlets are round 3-pin, 15-amp type.

Power in the Camps: Camps are situated in remote areas and must generate their own electricity. Generally, each camp has a generator that runs for about 6 hours per day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon when guests are out on activities. These generators then charge batteries located at each tented room, which, in turn, provide good 12v lights all night if used sensibly. There are not any 220v or 110v power points in camp. If you need to have your video battery re-charged, we can do so while you are out on an activity, so bring a spare to use while the other is being charged. These systems are simple but perfectly functional.

FOOD & DRINK

Drinking Water: Water from hotel taps is purified and relatively safe, but may cause mild abdominal upsets. Bottled water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of the stay. Water from boreholes in the camps is drinkable but, may be brackish. Drinking water outside main cities and towns may be contaminated and sterilization is advisable. Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat. It is always advisable to eat carefully when away from home. To be safe, eat only well-cooked meat and fish, preferably freshly prepared and served hot. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Cuisine: Meat is basic to the Namibian diet, and is often served with a porridge-type dish that goes by several regional names, including *mahango* and *pap*. In restaurants, steak and chips is the dish favored by locals. Restaurants and cafés in major cities reflect the German influence, and offer a reasonable selection of local and continental cuisine. Game in all variations is a specialty of Namibia.

Vegetables are not very popular among the majority of Namibians, and, in fact, are viewed by many as the poison of the cultural imperialists. This view is changing, however, and many restaurants are offering a wider variety of foods. Only a few cater for vegetarians. Vegetarians should be prepared for a lot of questioning about their particular eating disorder and can also expect little pieces of bacon or ham in their salad. We hope you will remember this is only your chef trying to be kind. *Braai*, barbecue, is the preferred way of cooking meat, and is done in the majority of households on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, when the braai becomes a social occasion.

Note: If you have food allergies or are on a special / restricted diet, please notify your travel agent or our office in advance, so that we may try to comply with your needs. Also, please advise your travel agent or our office if you have any mobility restrictions, so that we may inform our representatives accordingly. They will always strive to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

CUSTOMS OF NAMIBIA

Namibia has a strong cultural character of its own and the people have retained their distinctive identities even though most of their original traditions now only survive in remote rural areas. Western customs prevail in most situations such as wearing suits for business, and making prior appointments. English is widely spoken in business circles. Normal courtesies should be observed when visiting someone's home.

Tipping: Tipping is at the sole discretion of the guests and is not compulsory. Tipping should only be done if you have received good service and you want to tip. Guests, however, often want to know what is appropriate, so we have included a brief guideline to assist you.

- **Guides:** If he / she has done a good job, we recommend US\$5 or more per person per day.
- **Camp Staff:** At camps such as Damaraland Camp, Ongava Tented Camp and Sossusvlei Wilderness Camp staff should be tipped communally, and we recommend US\$3 per person per day to be distributed amongst the staff. The camps usually have a communal tip box.
- **Pilot:** If your pilot has done a good job - again we recommend about US\$5 or more per person per day.
- **Others:** 10% is customary.

NOTES ABOUT WILDLIFE

Numerous national park regulations govern the behavior of visitors. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the animals. Be considerate of the habitat was well. Many heavily visited parks prohibit driving off-road, but this is seldom a problem in getting up close to the animals, as there is an intricate pattern of roads throughout the parks.

Keep your head and arms in the vehicle area, don't make sudden moves or wave to try to attract attention. The less you impact environment of the animals you want to see, the longer they will stay in your presence, and the better you'll be able to observe their natural behavior.

Please keep in mind that Africa is not a giant theme park. The animals you will encounter here live and die in this land, and many of them are potentially dangerous to humans. Attacks by wild animals are exceedingly rare, but no one in Africa can guarantee that such incidents will not occur. Please follow all rules and regulations established by the camps and your guides and drivers. This will help insure a satisfying and safe safari. A safari is a very spiritually and emotionally stimulating experience. Although many of the roads are rough and dusty, you will end each day tired but very content.

Flashlights: As the grounds of all lodges / camps in Namibia are unfenced, it is essential that you bring a small flashlight as you may encounter *wild animals* in camp at night. You should also bring a spare bulb as well as batteries as they will be difficult to obtain outside the cities. Most camps can supply a flashlight, but it is good to have your own backup.

Walking: On safari, we walk where possible, but local area and national regulations will determine the extent to which we can do this. Walking is not allowed in Etosha National Park, but is permitted in other areas. Please note that walking is at your own risk as these walks can take you close to dangerous wild animals.

The following year, the United Kingdom recognized the hinterland up to 20 degrees East Longitude as a German sphere of influence. A region, Caprivi Strip, became a part of South West Africa after an agreement on July 1, 1890, between the United Kingdom and Germany. The British recognized that the strip would fall under German administration to provide access to the Zambezi River and German colonies in East Africa. In exchange, the British received the islands of Zanzibar and Heligoland.

German colonial power was consolidated, and prime grazing land passed to white control as a result of the Herero and Nama wars of 1904-08. German administration ended during World War I, followed by South African occupation in 1915. On December 17, 1920, South Africa undertook administration of South West Africa under the terms of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and a mandate agreement by the League Council. The mandate agreement gave South Africa full power of administration and legislation over the territory. It required that South Africa promote the material and moral well being and social progress of the people.

When the League of Nations was dissolved in 1946, the newly formed United Nations inherited its supervisory authority for the territory. South Africa refused UN requests place the territory under a trusteeship agreement.

During the 1960s, as European powers granted independence to their colonies and trust territories in Africa, pressure mounted on South Africa to do so in Namibia, which was then called South West Africa. In 1966, the UN General Assembly revoked South Africa's mandate. Also in 1966, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) began guerrilla attacks on Namibia, infiltrating the territory from bases in Zambia.

After Angola became independent in 1975, SWAPO established bases in the southern part of the country. Hostilities intensified over the years, especially in Ovamboland. In a 1971 advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice upheld UN authority over Namibia, determining that the South African presence in Namibia was illegal and that South Africa therefore was obligated to withdraw its administration from Namibia immediately. The Court also advised UN member states to refrain from implying legal recognition or assistance to the South African presence.

International Pressure for Independence: In 1977, Western members of the UN Security Council, including Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States (known as the Western Contact Group), launched a joint diplomatic effort to bring an internationally acceptable transition to independence for Namibia. Their efforts led to the presentation in April 1978 of Security Council Resolution 435 for settling the Namibian problem. The proposal, known as the UN Plan, was worked out after lengthy consultations with South Africa, the front-line states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe), SWAPO, UN officials, and the Western Contact Group. It called for elections in Namibia under UN supervision and control, the cessation of all hostile acts by all parties, and restrictions on the activities of South African and Namibian military, paramilitary, and police. South Africa agreed to cooperate in achieving the implementation of Resolution 435.

Nonetheless, in December 1978, in defiance of the UN proposal, South Africa unilaterally held elections in Namibia, which were boycotted by SWAPO and a few other political parties. South Africa continued to administer Namibia through its installed multi-racial coalitions. Negotiations after

1978 focused on issues such as supervision of elections connected with the implementation of the UN Plan.

Negotiations and transition discussions between the concerned parties continued from 1978 to 1988 period, with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari, playing a key role. The 1982 Constitutional Principles, agreed upon by the front-line states, SWAPO, and the Western Contact Group created the framework for Namibia's democratic constitution.

The U.S. Government's role as mediator was critical throughout the period, one example being the intense efforts in 1984 to obtain withdrawal of South African defense forces from Southern Angola. In May 1988, a U.S. mediation team, headed by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A. Crocker, brought negotiators from Angola, Cuba, and South Africa, and observers from the Soviet Union together in London. Intense diplomatic maneuvering characterized the next seven months, as the parties worked out agreements to bring peace to the region and make implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 possible.

On December 13, Cuba, South Africa, and the People's Republic of Angola agreed to a total Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. The protocol also established a Joint Commission, consisting of the parties with the United States and the Soviet Union as observers, to oversee implementation of the accords. A bilateral agreement between Cuba and the People's Republic of Angola was signed in New York on December 22, 1988. On the same day, a tripartite agreement, in which the parties recommended initiation of the UN Plan on April 1, was signed, and the Republic of South Africa agreed to withdraw its troops.

The transition got off to a shaky start on April 1. In contravention to SWAPO President Sam Nujoma's written assurances to the UN Secretary General to abide by a cease-fire and repatriate only unarmed insurgents, approximately 2,000 armed members of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's military wing, crossed the border from Angola in an apparent attempt to establish a military presence in northern Namibia. The special representative authorized a limited contingent of South African troops to aid the South West African police in restoring order. A period of intense fighting followed, during which 375 PLAN fighters were killed.

At Mt. Etjo, a game park outside Windhoek, in a special meeting of the Joint Commission on April 9, a plan was put in place to confine the South African forces to base and return PLAN elements to Angola. While the problem was solved, minor disturbances in the north continued throughout the transition period. In October, under order of the UN Security Council, Pretoria demobilized members of the disbanded counterinsurgency unit, Koevoet (Afrikaans for crowbar), who had been incorporated into the South West African police.

The 11-month transition period went relatively smoothly. Political prisoners were granted amnesty, discriminatory legislation was repealed, South Africa withdrew all its forces from Namibia, and some 42,000 refugees returned safely and voluntarily under the auspices of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Almost 98% of registered voters turned out to elect members of the constituent assembly. The elections were held in November 1989 and were certified as free and fair by the special representative, with SWAPO taking 57% of the vote, just short of the two-thirds necessary to have a free

hand in drafting the constitution. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, the opposition party, received 29% of the vote. The Constituent Assembly held its first meeting on November 21 and its first act unanimously resolved to use the 1982 Constitutional Principles as the framework for Namibia's new constitution.

By February 9, 1990, the Constituent Assembly had drafted and adopted a constitution. March 21 was declared Independence Day.

On March 1, 1994, South Africa transferred the coastal enclave of Walvis Bay and 12 offshore islands to Namibia.

GEOGRAPHY

Namibia is in southwest Africa. It is a large and mainly arid country sharing borders with Angola to the north, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and, in the Caprivi Strip, a narrow panhandle of Namibian territory jutting from the northeast corner of the country, with Zambia and Zimbabwe. To the west is 1280km (795 miles) of some of the most desolate and lonely coastline in the world. The port of Walvis Bay, situated roughly halfway down Namibia's coast, was returned by South Africa to Namibian jurisdiction in February 1994. Along its entire length, the vast shifting sand dunes of the Namib Desert spread inland for 80 to 130km (50 to 80 miles). In the interior, the escarpment of a north-south plateau slopes away to the east and north into the vast interior sand basin of the Kalahari. In the far northwest, the 66,000 sq km (25,500 sq miles) of the Kaokoland mountains run along the coast, while further inland lies the Etosha Pan (a dried-out saline lake), surrounded by grasslands and bush which support a large and varied wildlife. The Etosha National Park & Game Reserve is one of the finest in Africa, in that it remains, to a large extent, free of human influence.

National Parks: Namibia has ten national parks, under the control of Namibian Wildlife Resorts. The country has ample opportunities for the self-drive tourist and many local tour operators and travel consultants offer interesting packages or arrange tailor-made tours covering a variety of areas. More information on tours and excursions can be obtained from Namibia Tourism.

The Northern Region: The Etosha National Park is one of the most famous game sanctuaries in the world and remains largely free of human influence. Its 22,270 sq km (8599 sq miles) are located in the north around the Etosha Pan. This depression is 1065m (3494ft) above sea level, forming a huge, salty hollow which is only occasionally filled with water and surrounded by grasslands and bush. There are vast stocks of wildlife, particularly elephants, lions, zebras, giraffes, wildebeest, springboks, kudus, gemsboks or oryxes, hyenas, jackals, leopards and cheetahs. It is open throughout the year. There are well-equipped camps with comfortable rondavel accommodation and camping facilities. Waterberg Plateau Park, Namibia's only mountain resort, has striking red sandstone cliffs and is home to many rare and endangered species of game. It is a popular stopover for visitors on their way to Etosha National Park. There are good facilities here for game viewing and a number of hiking trails. Also en route to Etosha is Lake Otjikoto, 24km (15 miles) northeast of the mining town of Tsumeb. Once fabled to be bottomless, it is now known to be 55m (140ft) deep and contains some rare fish. Northeast of here is Kaudom Game Reserve in Kavango, where there are two camping areas and where blue wildebeest, elephant, lion, cheetah, leopard and various

species of antelope wander. Further northeast, the Popa Falls Rest Camp, where crocodiles and hippos bask in the water, is a popular haven on the banks of the Okavango River. About 12km (7 miles) to the south is Mahango Game Reserve, catering to day visitors only, with elephants, buffalo and lechwe. Heading still further northeast is East Caprivi, bordered by the Kwando, Linyanti, Chobe and Zambezi rivers. This region of swamps and flood plains has several safari lodges and offers boat trips, fishing, hiking and game viewing, particularly in the Mudumu and Mamilili National Parks. The town of Katima Mulilo, on the banks of the Zambezi River, has an Arts Center where visitors may purchase various handicrafts such as baskets, bracelets, malachite and soapstone carvings. There are also game-viewing cruises down the Zambezi River on the Zambezi Queen, a 56m (142ft) riverboat which departs from Zambezi Lodge. Flights to Victoria Falls, less than an hour's flight away, are available from Katima Mulilo.

The Southern Region: Fish River Canyon is in the south of the country and only second in dimensions to the Grand Canyon. Situated between Seeheim and Ai-Ais (a hot spring resort), the gigantic cleft stretches for 150km (93 miles) and is up to 27km (17 miles) wide and up to 550m (1804ft) deep in parts. Trips are best arranged from Keetsmanshoop. Situated on the Fish River is Hardap Dam. The Kokerboom (Quiver Tree) Forest, located 14km (9 miles) northeast of Keetsmanshoop on Gariganus Farm, features kokerbooms which belong to the aloe family and grow up to 8m (26ft) and were often used by the San people to make quivers for their arrows (thus 'quiver trees'). The trees create a bizarrely elegant effect and are now a protected plant in Namibia.

Lüderitz is a small port in the southern Namib region, with much charm and atmosphere from bygone days of diamond prospecting.

The Namib Region: The Namib Desert appears more like the surface of the moon with its towering sand dunes (some of them 300m/1000ft high), and is believed to be the oldest desert in the world. Namib Naukluft Park, at 49,768 sq km (19,215 sq miles), is the fourth-largest conservation area in the world. There are campsites in the Namib Desert at Sesriem, where the Tsauchab River disappears down a deep gorge in the plain (leaving pools of water where many animals feed) and in the Naukluft. The nearby Sossusvlei area is an ocean of sand dunes up to 300m (762ft) high, stretching as far as the eye can see and is home to countless water birds in the rainy season and oryx, springbok and ostriches during the dry season.

The delightful little seaside resort of Swakopmund is situated in the middle of Namibia's coastline, surrounded by desert and sea. Further north, the Skeleton Coast is a strange desert shoreline with massive dunes and treacherous rocks, the name relating to the number of ships wrecked and lost in the vicinity. The cold Benguela current keeps the coastline cool, damp and rain-free for most of the year, with a thick coastal fog.

Inland, the Brandberg / Twyfelfontein area has some very ancient rock engravings and paintings, of which the White Lady of the Brandberg is the best known. The Petrified Forest and the Welwitschia mirabilis plant are other attractions.

SELECTED READING LIST

In addition to the many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, and others, here are a few other titles that might interest you. These books may be obtained through most bookstores or on the World Wide Web.

THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE

Andre' Brink

Publishers Weekly: Acclaimed South African novelist Brink (The Rights of Desire; Devil's Valley; etc.) paints a harrowing picture of German South-West Africa (modern-day Namibia) in his latest novel, focusing on a German initiative to import hundreds of women to Africa for the colonists at the turn of the last century. Hanna X is an orphan who spends her early years in Germany trying to catch on as a domestic with a number of families, only to have the sexual advances of various libidinous husbands ruin her efforts to find a stable situation. Hanna thinks she has escaped the world of male domination when she receives permission to emigrate to South Africa, but her escape backfires. Raped and mutilated by brutal German officer Hauptmann Buhlke, she is taken to a horrific outpost known as the Frauenstein, where the abuse continues. The book's surreal, fragmentary first half, in which the events of Hanna's childhood are interspersed with the harrowing details of her arrival in Africa, is followed by a riveting second half, in which Hanna escapes the Frauenstein and tracks down Buhlke with the help of another abused woman, Katja, and a Herero tribesman, Kahapa, whom the two women rescue from a savage German farmer. The trio becomes a small vigilante posse as they journey to Windhoek to find Buhlke, and their efforts to turn the tables on the Germans succeed when they murder a small troop of soldiers and then wipe out a larger group at a garrison. The relentless violence occasionally turns Hanna into a one-dimensional character, but the imagery from this haunting novel will stay with readers, as will the frightening allure of all-consuming hatred.

THE PLACE OF STUNTED IRONWOOD TREES: A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE CATTLE-HERDING HIMBA OF NAMIBIA

David P. Crandall

From the Publisher: This is an account of the lives of a small band of cattle herders, the Himba, who live in and around the settlement of Otutati in northwestern Namibia. The narrative chronicles the events of a single year, though within that year are found the events of a lifetime: birth, maturation, aging, death; generosity, meanness, accomplishment, failure. The author draws the reader into a human world that appears so utterly different from our own in the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, as the leading characters' lives and personal qualities, their joys, hopes, and anxieties unfold, the exoticism of their world fades and the experience of life rings strangely familiar.

SANDS OF SILENCE: ON SAFARI IN NAMIBIA

Peter Hathaway Capstick

Kirkus Reviews: Another vintage safari adventure from Capstick (Death in a Lonely Land, 1990, etc.)--for those who yearn for the simpler days of life in the pristine bush, trophies on the wall, and good old male-bonding. In the spring of

1989, with cameramen--including noted African-wildlife photographer M. Philip Kahl--along for the record, Capstick went to Namibia to hunt elephant to round out his video series on hunting. There, he joined a professional safari outfit and headed for Bushmanland, an arid area sparsely settled by the last remnants of Bushmen tribes. These Bushmen, with independence for Namibia imminent, were rapidly losing their old customs as rival political parties, and bought their votes with T-shirts and whiskey. Caught between "a hunting-and-gathering culture and the modern world", their future is not promising--the ease of civilization is too tempting, and they have not yet taken to agriculture. On their present journey, as they pursue the perfect elephant, Capstick and his companions have the obligatory encounters with dangerous wild animals and snakes; spend many futile hours in the hot sun watching animals; and, as expected, are finally rewarded with an old tusker worthy of trophydom. Along the way, the author throws in a lot of hunting lore, opinions on game- management, the history of Bushmen, and the role of conservation in the current elephant crisis. For Capstick, the ideal solution would be no "appreciable" poaching; some cropping by responsible governments; education of rural Africans on the worth of elephants as "value on the ground"; and carefully controlled hunting by licensed sportsmen, whose expenditures would fund these other efforts. Chatty, discursive, and splendidly forthright in his opinions, Capstick writes of a way of life quickly disappearing but still immensely attractive, especially to those dreamers tethered by domestic reality.

LOST WHITE TRIBES: THE END OF PRIVILEGE AND THE LAST COLONIALS IN SRI LANKA, JAMAICA, BRAZIL, HAITI, NAMIBIA, AND GUADELOUPE

Riccardo Orizio, Avril Bardoni (Translator)

From the Publisher: Over 300 hundred years ago, the first European colonists landed in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to found permanent outposts of the great empires. This epic migration continued until after World War II, when some of these tropical colonies became independent black nations and the white colonials were forced - or chose - to return to the mother country. Among the descendants of the colonizing powers however, were some who had become outcasts in the poorest strata of society and, unable to afford the long journey home, were left behind, ignored by both the former oppressed indigenous population and the modern privileged white immigrants.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century these lost white tribes still hold out, tucked away in remote valleys and hills or in the midst of burgeoning metropolises, living in poverty while tending the myths of their colonial ancestors. Forced to marry within their own group if they hope to retain their fair-skinned "purity," they are torn between the memory of past privileges and the extraordinary pressure to integrate. All are decreasing in number; some are on the verge of extinction and fighting to survive in countries that ostracize them because of the color of their skin and the traditions they represent. Though resident for generations, these people are permanently out of place, an awkward and embarrassing reminder of things past in newly redefined countries that are eager to forget both them and their historical homelands

Notes: