

Photography Travel Planning Guide



Namibia
Endless horizons

WELCOME TO NAMIBIA

Namibia offers wildly diverse landscapes, glorious light and astonishing concentrations of wildlife, including all of the Big Five. Blazing red dunes; blinding white salt pans; cloudless blue skies; and lush "green deserts" following thunderstorms mean that Namibia is truly a dream destination for photographers.

A photography safari in Namibia offers both amateur and professional photographers a once in a lifetime opportunity to improve their portfolio as they travel by car, plane or on foot through *Africa's largest photography studio!*



Where To Go

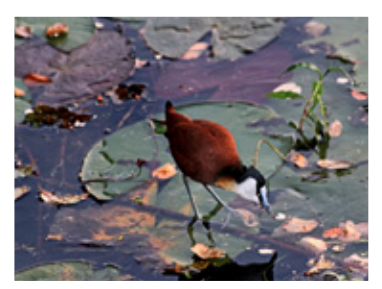
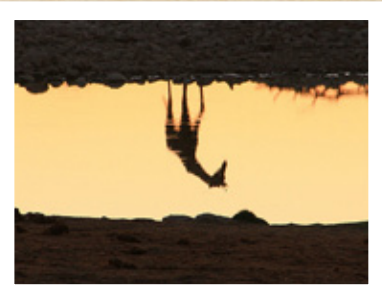
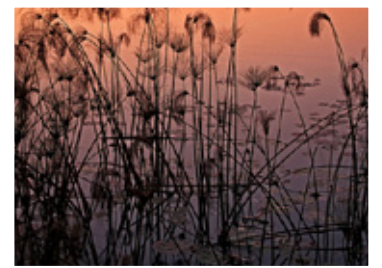
Landscapes

Namibia is a country of “endless horizons”. These areas give an overview of its varied landscapes and ecosystems, from parched, sunbaked dunes to flooded wetlands:

- The dune ‘sea’ of the [Namib Desert](#). [View our photographic Geostory of the Namib-Naukluft National Park here!](#)
- Open **savannahs** of the [south](#)
- Ancient **rock art** of the central and northern regions
- The **mountains** of the [north-west](#)
- The **forests** of the [north-east](#)
- **Riverine environments** of the [extreme north-east](#)

Wildlife

- Bring your zoom lens and snap away! Namibia is home to all of the Big Five, as well as hundreds of photogenic bird species, reptiles and endangered wildlife. Check out the following iconic destinations in Namibia:
- [Etosha National Park](#) for its fantastic concentration of wildlife. The floodlit waterholes at the park’s three main camps act as stages where life on the savannah is played out before you each night. [View our photographic Geostory of Etosha National Park here!](#)
- [Damaraland](#) for its **desert-adapted species**, including elephants, lions and black rhinos.
- The Namib Desert for endemic species of **small animals and reptiles**.
- The [coast](#) for **birds, dolphins, seals and scavengers** who patrol the seas and shores.
- The extreme north-east for an abundance of wetland species, including **450 species of birds**. [View our photographic Birding Geostory here!](#)
- The north-east for **vast populations of elephants and rare antelope** such as roan and sable.
- The south for the **wild horses** at Aus.



Culture

Namibia is home to 12 different cultures and is a treat for culture enthusiasts. Many tours include visits to traditional villages or living museums where local people wear traditional dress and demonstrate hunting, weaving and dancing. Tourism is an important source of income for them and they love to share their vibrant culture – so don't be shy with your camera!

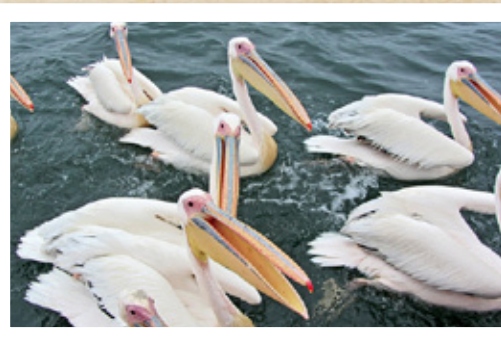
- The **Himba** are said to be one of the world's most photogenic people – the women stain their skin with red ochre and have elaborate hairstyles and jewelry.
- The **San** (also known as the Bushmen) are one of the world's oldest tribes – take a hunting trip with them for some incredible wild shots.
- The **Living Museums**, located around the country, provide visitors with an introduction to Namibia's various cultures, with recreations of villages and reconstructions of traditional practices.
- **Township tours** in Windhoek and Swakopmund offer a chance to photograph modern urban life – you will be invited into the homes of people from different tribes and learn about their clothes, food and lifestyles. Participants sometimes ask that you send photos to them, as they lack the means to take their own.



How To Travel

Namibia's flexible travel options ensure you can be in the right place at the right time!

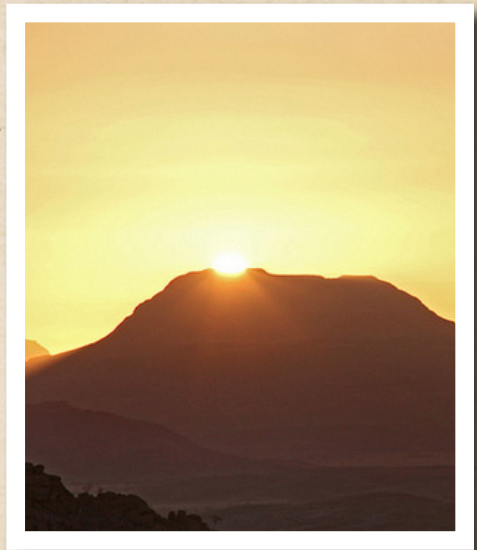
- **Self-drive:** Unlike many safari destinations, Namibia is ideal for a self-drive tour with good roads, a strong safety record, and an abundance of hire cars. Travel at your own pace, avoid tourist hordes and stop when you like to get that perfect shot. [Download our Self-Drive Travel Planning guide for more information.](#)
- **Light aircraft:** A flying safari offers a completely new view of Namibia's vast landscapes, and flying at just a couple of hundred meters over dunes, coast, shipwrecks and lagoons offers the chance for some phenomenal artistic photography. [View our Fly-in Safari photographic Geostory here!](#)
- **Boat:** Get up closer to Namibia's marine life with a boat tour, departing from Walvis Bay or Luderitz. Photograph Cape fur seals, dolphins, pelicans, penguins and even (from June-November) whales!



Tips From a Pro

Award-winning Namibian photographer Amy Schoeman offers her tips on lenses, and when to unpack your camera equipment:

- **A good zoom** is the key for photographing **wildlife** because then you're prepared for all possibilities.
- **Fixed lenses are ultimately better in terms of sharpness**, so if you're aiming to win competitions or blow your pictures up into massive prints, go for a fixed telephoto lens, as long as you can carry. Fixed lenses also work best when photographing birds.
- As these lenses can be heavy, you will need to **bring a tripod**, or at least a beanbag, especially handy when travelling by car.
- **For landscapes, the best is a short telephoto lens** (110 or 135 for 35mm/150 for medium format), and wide angle for certain shots. Take note that the wide angle has limitations when it comes to landscapes. It's better suited for trees and buildings and the elements like these that are the focus of an image.
- If you're into close-ups, bring a **good micro/macro lens** rather than close-up filters. Extension tubes, although tedious, also do the job. Close-up photography can be very rewarding in Namibia as there are many interesting insects and small reptiles, amazing textures, **plants** with intriguing flowers, seeds and leaves, lichen and so on. Even sand grains look great through a macro lens.
- **The best time of day to shoot is early morning or late afternoon**. Of these two I feel, depending on subject and angle, that late afternoon has the edge. This is when the colors become really deep, the atmosphere has a glow (early morning light can be bleak) and if you're into sunsets, this is the time to shoot, as there's a lot of dust hanging around for strong reds and oranges and silhouettes become spectacular.
- However, this does not mean that you must never take photographs in the middle of the day. If the scene looks good to you, take the picture, because what you see is what you get. Which, incidentally, means **you can take pictures of mirages –although they are optical illusions!** They are at their most striking in the midday heat.

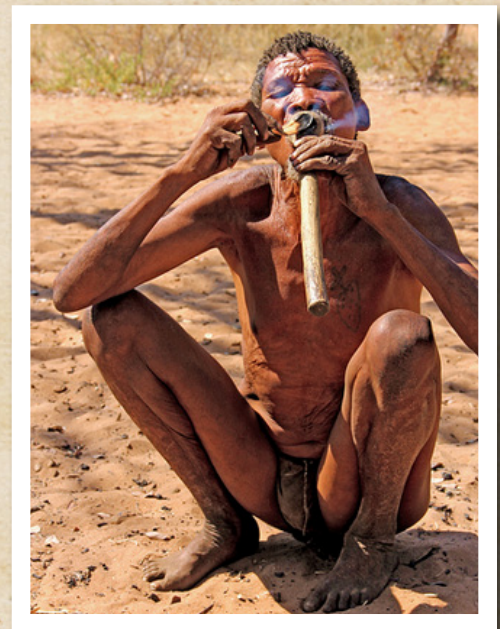


Photographing People

A highlight of any visit to Namibia is meeting the charming people whose cultures are vastly different but whose warmth makes you feel at home.

However, photographing people must always be done respectfully, and here we offer eight quick tips to properly prepare you.

- **It is illegal to take photos of men and women in uniform**, except when they are performing in a public parade or similar. Taking a picture of a police officer on duty is therefore out of the question.
- **Make an effort to get to know local residents**. If you're planning to take photos of people in their private surroundings, it is always best to have a local guide to take you around, converse with the people and overcome the barrier of photographer versus subject.



- Always ask before you take a photo of someone. Not everybody likes to have his or her picture taken so to avoid conflict, ask first. Be respectful of people's privacy.
- **Some people will expect payment for having their photo taken.** This includes the Himba and Herero women, who still dress traditionally. They spend a lot of time and effort on their appearance and if you "steal" their image without payment it is an unfair exchange. It is best to agree on a price before you take the photo.
- Young children are often fond of being photographed, but it's **always best to ask a guardian or parent first** – just as you would expect to do back home.
- If you take a digital photograph of someone, show it to him or her. Many people don't own cameras and will enjoy seeing themselves on screen.
- If possible, **send a printed copy of the photo to the subject**, but don't make empty promises. If you're not sure if you'll ever get to send the photo, it's better not to offer to do so.
- When taking photos at a Living Museum, at a cultural performance, or on a pre-arranged village tour, it is not usually necessary to ask for permission, as photo opportunities have usually been pre-arranged. However, to be on the safe side, **check with your guide or local companion first.**



Get Inspired

Take a look at these incredible portfolios, and get inspired to take your own photos of Namibia's wonderful landscapes, wildlife, plants and people.

- Namibia Tourism Board: www.namibiatourism.com.na/media-gallery
- Paul van Schalkwyk www.paulvans.com
- Hans Rack: www.hansrack.com/home.htm
- Claudia and Wynand Du Plessis: www.claudiawynandduplessis.com
- Michael Poliza <http://images.michaelpoliza.com>

Ready to begin your photography journey?

Click [here](#) to find a Namibia travel specialist near you and book your trip today.

Want to learn more about what Namibia has to offer your keen eye? [Download our Wildlife, Adventure, Self-Drive and Responsible Travel Planning Guides.](#)

