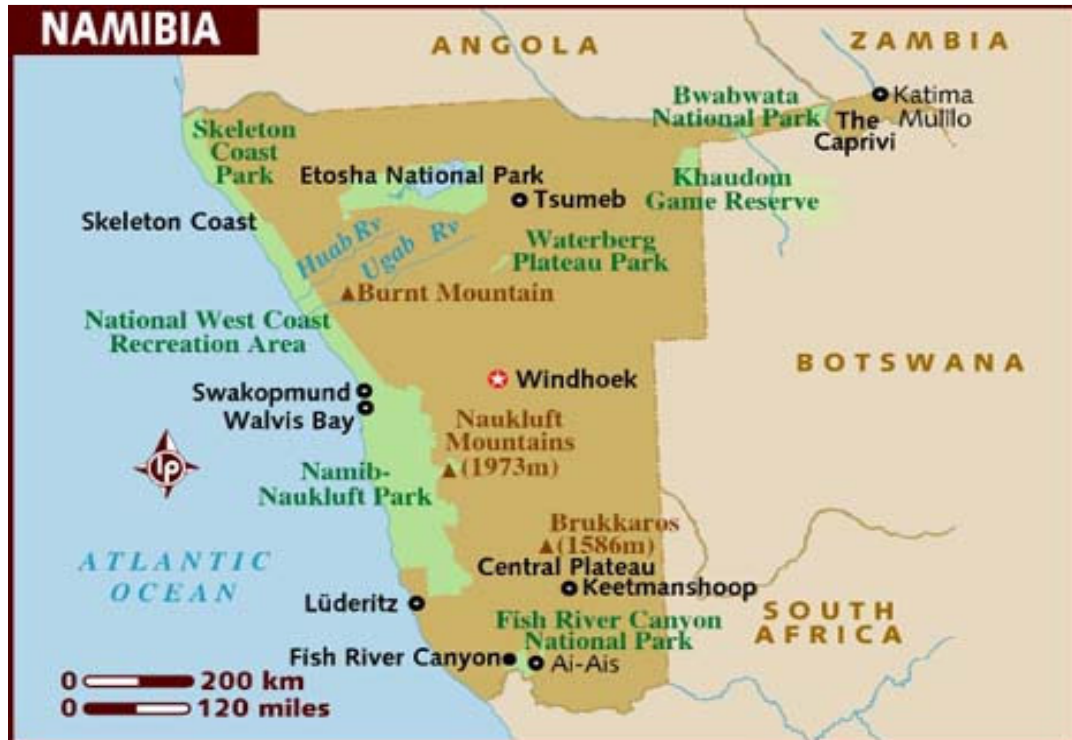


AFRICA AND BEYOND NAMIBIA EDUCATIONAL

02 – 11 November 2014



Namibia is a land of incredible scenery, epic sand dunes, stunning skies, and tribal people. It is still a relatively unknown destination, large but sparsely populated. It has the oldest desert in the world. Namibia gained independence in 1990 after a long struggle against rule by South Africa. It has plenty of landmarks and history. It borders South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, and Angola. The best time to travel is from April to October when the weather is warm and sunny, and the wet season from December to March. There are no direct flights to Namibia, and from the UK, flights are via Frankfurt or Johannesburg. Namibia has some of the best infrastructure in Africa, which makes it a popular self-drive destination. A big plus is the time difference; they are only 2 hours ahead of the UK. Most of the people in Namibia speak English, visas are not required for British Passport Holders.

There is a strong German culture in Namibia as they took control in the 1800s; this was due to the mining of diamonds and throughout the country, the towns, roads, hotels, restaurants, etc. have German names. However, Germany later apologised to the native Namibians, in particular the Herero Tribe, for colonial killings.....but since their independence, inter-racial

reconciliation has encouraged Europeans to stay and they still play a major role in farming and other businesses.

The majority of people in Namibia speak English

My Journey

On arrival in Windhoek most people stay overnight after a long journey, it is a short transfer from the airport to your hotel. We stayed at the Olive Grove Guest house which is boutique hotel it has various room types and also a restaurant. There are a couple of other small hotels that we looked at the Galten Guesthouse and the Elegant Guesthouse, both were charming hotels.

In the evening we ate at the locally renowned “Joe’s Beerhouse” where zebra, oryx, crocodile were on the menu. A lively place for tourists and locals with a great atmosphere and good prices. Early next morning we set off to Sossusvlei.



To get to Kulala you can fly from Eros Airport or Windhoek this is generally on a scheduled, light aircraft flight and takes just over 1.5 hours.

Accommodation Kulala Desert Lodge, Sossusvlei – 2 nights – full board – All Inclusive



The camp comprises of 23 thatched and canvas “Kulalas” which have verandas overlooking great scenery. On warm evenings you can actually have your bed made up on the rooftop of your room. At the property from the wrap-around veranda that overlooks the waterhole we were lucky enough to see springbok, ostrich and oryx, there are no real predators in Soussusvlie.

Activities at Kulala Desert Lodge revolve around early morning guided nature drives to the spectacular dunes of Sossusvlei. The dunes have developed over millions of years, the wind continuously transforming the contours of this red sand sea, they are bigger than pyramids. Namibia has the highest sand dunes in the world. Some of the group actually climbed the “Big Mama” which was pretty difficult in the heat, which on this particular day was 47 degrees.

We were lucky enough to go on a spectacular hot air balloon ride over the dunes. It was amazing, I must admit up until then I kept asking myself if I were a paying customer would I travel all this way to see the dunes, and after this yes I would!!! Our balloonist who happened to be the boss was a cross between crocodile Dundee and Indiana Jones... and he was passionate about Namibia particularly the sexy sand dunes!!!



Next up a short flight from Sossusvlei to Swakopmund. From the light aircraft the flight takes you along the rugged, barren coastline, you can see 100 year old shipwrecks, seal colonies and deserted beaches.

Accommodation – 1 night at the Swakopmund Guest House.

Swakopmund is a coastal town, but with not a lot of beach. A lot of activities are featured around the water, boat/catamaran trips, fishing, dune and quad biking. It reminded me of a Dorset seaside town lots of small hotels and guest houses lots of restaurants etc. It does have a few German colonial buildings.

Other properties visited Zum Kaiser, Hansa Hotel , Cornerstone and Desert Breezes.



We did have a free night so with our driver we went to another town called Walvis Bay which has a huge natural lagoon, it is about 30 minutes from Swakopmund and went to visit an old friend of mine who owns a restaurant called The Raft, this restaurant is built over the water, and it is a wonderful sight, brilliant sunset with the flamingos in the background, fantastic bird life. A wonderful end to the day..

Swakopmund to Damaraland – extremely long drivewould not recommend you can fly and to be honest you do not see a lot by road . You can drive for hours and not seek another car, along this route there is a shipwreck and a seal colony, nothing too spectacular.

Properties visited Kpwee Camp, Mowana Lodge

Stayed at Damaraland Camp – 2 nights All Inclusive



What can I say, from afar and on the approach I was actually a bit nervous just because it looked a bit sparse and unwelcoming.... Never judge a book by its cover.. it was an amazing place, the staff were sensational, fantastic Maggie and her brilliant team ... I am getting quite emotional even thinking about it. Accommodation was luxurious and we even had a resident tiger!!!! A little tabby cat....Damaraland is owned and mainly run by the local community. On our game drive we saw the Desert Elephants which are smaller than the average elephant this is because of the habitat. We visited some of Arica's best known rock engravings including the Twyfelfontein etchings.

Our first evening we had a short walk and had a fantastic dinner called a "boma" by candlelight really amazing food and stunning stars, very popular for star gazing. Oh and the resident scorpion was in attendance!!

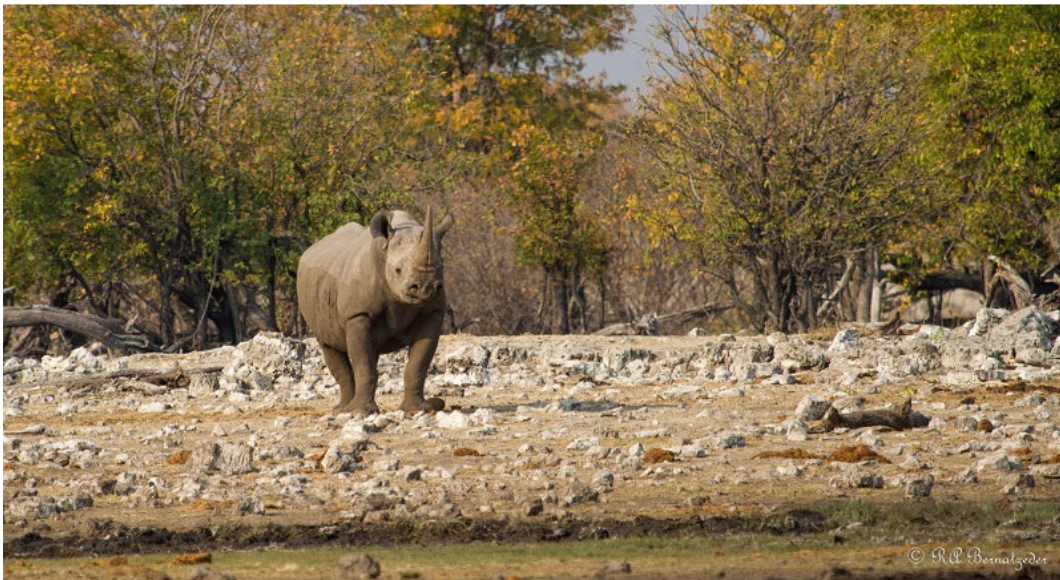
After a fantastic bush breakfast we headed off to

Etosha National Park

Accommodation Ongava Game Reserve – All Inclusive – 2 nights

Other accommodation visited Ongava Lodge, Little Ongava and Anderson Camp

Ongava was formed in 1991 from for unproductive cattle ranches and is now a hugely successful game reserve with large concentrations of wildlife. The property consists of 8 large Meru style tents and there is a bar/dining area which overlooks a waterhole. We were lucky enough to see a white rhino and giraffes at the waterhole on our first night.



From Ongava we headed off for a full day game drive to Etosha National Park, which happens to be one of the world's great game reserves... we were not disappointed . The

highlight was watching a large male lion fend off jackals for over an hour, whilst trying to drag lunch (a Zebra) to his waiting family, which consisted of a female and several cubs.



I was not aware, as the last safari I did was almost 30 years ago, that in some of the game reserves you are not allowed to venture out from your accommodation either early morning or late evening....gone are they days where there used to be an electric circuit keeping the animals out, they do not deter them from coming in!!!!.

Our final day we had a long drive back to Windhoek airport but we stopped en route and did a brilliant tour of Okonjima, this is the home of "AfriCat" which is a non-profit organisation committed to the long-term conservation of cheetahs and leopards. They do fantastic work and have a local community of people that live and work there, even a school. They have some fantastic accommodation as well, loved it..definitely worth a visit.

In my opinion Namibia is a country well worth seeing, to be honest did not see a lot of English tourists, mostly I think due to lack of knowledge of the country, it was certainly put on the map when Angelina Jolie had her baby there, and she gave the baby a Namibian name, which the locals are extremely proud of!!!

For me it was refreshing going to the lodges, the people that work there are passionate about their country and it really shows, tourism is very important to them.

My recommendation for a perfect holiday in Namibia would be a luxury flying safari, for the more adventurous some of you may want to do self- drive holiday, all of the road signs are in English and there are not many cars on the road!!!

So the bucket list would be the iconic sights of Sossusvlei for the famous dunes, surrounding mountains and vast open plains, a big must is the hot air balloon. I would suggest 3 nights, including the first night in Windhoek

Swakopmund a popular seaside town with lots of restaurants and tourist attractions, Walvis Bay for the natural lagoon and an abundance of seabirds, 3 nights would be sufficient.

Damaraland for the open wild and natural beautiful landscape and the animals and the best lodge (in my opinion) in Namibia a minimum stay of 2 nights, would even do 3.

Etosha National Park for the wildlife and big game animals, I would suggest a minimum of 2 nights would recommend 3

Okanjima, the home of AfriCat, I would recommend a one night stay here.



If you require any further information please contact me Allison Bruce, Cranham office
01708251510