



NAMIBIA

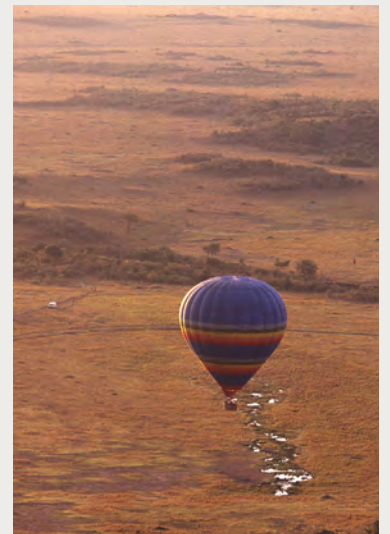
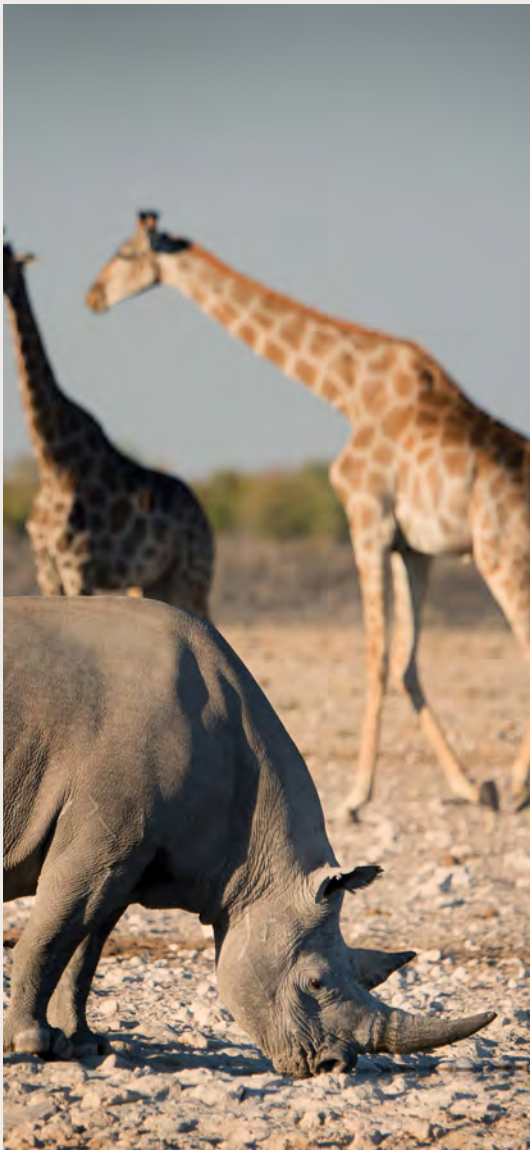
FLYING SAFARI

MAY 21 -31, 2022



Embark on a journey to one of Africa's most unique destinations. Namibia is a land of stunning landscapes, endless skies, barren deserts, rugged mountains, and spectacular wildlife. This Namibia safari explores some of the most remote areas of this fascinating land —areas rarely explored by others, making this a true journey of discovery. From the dunes of Sossusvlei to the dramatic coastline of the Skeleton Coast, littered with historic remnants of shipwrecks, and remote Etosha National Park, home to white and black rhinos and more than 340 species of birds, this Namibia safari offers a range of experiences. This safari is ideal for the experienced safari-goer, though it is open to any and all who have adventure at heart.

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© Billy Dodson (top left and right, center left), © Craig R. Sholley (center right), © AWF (bottom right), © Billy Dodson (bottom right)

NAMIBIA FLYING SAFARI

DATES

May 21 - 31, 2022

GROUP SIZE

Between 6 and 10

PRICE

AWF exclusive price:

\$11,889/ £8,560 per person sharing

 **exodustravels**

Namibia is a land of stunning landscapes, endless skies, barren deserts, rugged mountains, and spectacular wildlife. This Namibia safari explores some of the remotest areas of this fascinating land — areas rarely explored by others, making this a true journey of discovery. From the dunes of Sossusvlei to the dramatic coastline of the Skeleton Coast, littered with historic remnants of shipwrecks, to the remote Etosha National Park, home to white and black rhinos and more than 340 species of birds, our Namibia safari offers a range of experiences. You'll also have the chance to learn about AWF's important conservation work throughout Africa. Enjoy the luxury of private reserves and wildlife viewing without the crowds.

DAY
1

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

Arrive in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, and transfer to the Am Weinberg Boutique Hotel. Meet your safari leader and fellow travelers for a briefing on your journey ahead. **Meals included: dinner**

DAYS
2-3

SOSSUSVLEI / KULALA WILDERNESS RESERVE

After breakfast, depart on a scenic flight to the private Kulala Wilderness Reserve, nestled in the heart of Sossusvlei. Situated in the Namib Desert, this landscape is famous for its huge, orange dunes, which you'll explore and photograph during your stay. Enjoy game drives and walking safaris with the option to go hot-air ballooning. Desert-adapted wildlife like the ostrich, springbok, oryx, spotted and brown hyena, Bat-eared fox, and the dune lark abound in this area. Your thatched canvas "kulala" directly overlooks the majestic red dunes. Each room has a rooftop "skybed" for stargazing.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS
4-5

PALMWAG/DAMARALAND

Embark on another scenic flight as you head north over Damaraland. Your classic Meru tent at Desert Rhino Camp is set in a remote valley of the Palmwag Concession, a conservation partnership between our local partner, Save the Rhino Trust, and the Namibian government. The red-rock-strewn valleys, interspersed with tiny springs, are home to numbers of Hartmann's Mountain zebra, giraffe, oryx, springbok, and Spotted hyena. The real highlight of your time here will be tracking the local population of endangered black rhinos! **Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner**



DAYS
6-7

DAMARALAND

Take a short flight to Damaraland Camp. Each adobe and canvas thatched tent is en suite and built on a raised deck, with valley-facing views offering endless vistas highlighted by an ochre-purple mountain backdrop. Near a World Heritage Site, view fascinating petroglyphs — prehistoric rock engravings — and San rock art. Drives in search of desert-adapted wildlife and into local communities complete your exploration of this area.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAYS
8-10

ETOSHA NATIONAL PARK/ONGAVA GAME RESERVE

End your safari with three days in the wilderness haven of Etosha. You can expect unrivaled game-viewing afforded by the tranquility of the private Ongava Game Reserve along the southern boundary of Etosha National Park. The national park and the neighboring game reserve are full of wildlife, including Black-faced impalas, large populations of lions, white and black rhinos, and more than 340 species of birds.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY
11

WINDHOEK/DEPART

On your final day, fly back to Windhoek and connect to your independent homeward flight or independent overnight. **Meals included: breakfast**



Rare Desert Elephants Survive Namibia's Harshest Drylands

BY CARTER SMITH, AWF SAFARI PROGRAM MANAGER

The world's largest terrestrial mammal is also famed for being notoriously water-dependent. African savannah elephants in temperate rangelands drink water almost daily and love a mudbath to stay cool. Yet, in northern Mali's Gourma region and the vast Namib Desert, this fascinating pachyderm survives despite the low rainfall and intense heat.

These herds, aptly named desert elephants, traverse long distances in brutal arid environments with only seasonal rivers and scant vegetation for sustenance. For years, ecologists thought desert-dwelling elephants were a separate species of *Loxodonta africana*, like the forest elephant found in the Congo River Basin's dense tropical rainforests. But the distinctive characteristics and unique social structure of desert-dwelling elephants are simply adaptations to the extreme temperatures and the rocky plains of northwest Namibia's Kunene region.

Desert elephants have big feet

There are no genetic or physiological differences between elephants found across Namibia's wilderness — or the African savanna elephant's continental rangeland — but the desert variety seems to look taller. Scientists attribute this long-legged illusion to its smaller body mass, the result of a lean diet of scattered grasses and shrubs. Desert-

adapted elephants also appear to have bigger feet than those in more temperate landscapes because of their extended footpads.

The greater surface area stops the elephant from sinking into the landscape's iconic burnt orange sandy plains, crossing over dunes in search of food and water. Like their black rhino counterparts also found in the Kunene region, desert elephants walk for hundreds of kilometers at a time.

Adapting to water scarcity

Studies have shown that Namibia's desert elephants have a remarkably strained water intake. Female adult elephants and infants need water every three days; males can go up to five days without water. Researchers describe desert elephants as opportunistic drinkers and have also observed that they use their trunks and legs to dig wells in dry riverbeds — even when they have access to surface water or man-made drinking pools. Signaling their ancient memory of water sources, even if they are below the ground, this unique habit also tells of their need to purify water before they can drink.

Smaller elephant herds travel further

Preferring to make their arduous journeys for food and water at night, desert elephants have also adjusted their feeding habits to make the most

of the scarce resources. They will forage continuously for a few days before resuming the trek across the rugged Kunene region totaling over 115,000 sq. kilometers. Although elephant families are typically led by a matriarch and other female elephants, those dwelling in the harsh northwest exhibit a looser social structure. While scientists continue to investigate why, they have noted that desert elephant family units are generally smaller than other continental populations. With fewer elephants per family, the herd is easier to feed — a much-needed survival tactic when food and water are days away in the harsh Namib Desert.



© Billy Dodson (top), © Theo Allofs (bottom)

Meet Your Guides



Craig Sholley

AWF's Senior Vice-President Craig R. Sholley's experience with wildlife and conservation began in 1973 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Zaire. As an L.S.B. Leakey grant researcher in the late 1970s, Craig studied mountain gorillas with Dian Fossey and, in 1987, became director of Rwanda's Mountain Gorilla Project, of which African Wildlife Foundation was a sponsor. Craig has acted as Scientific Advisor for the award-winning IMAX film, *Mountain Gorilla*, with National Geographic. He surveyed the conservation status of mountain gorillas in the aftermath of Rwanda's civil war. Craig's direct involvement with AWF began as a Senior Associate and member of AWF's Board of Trustees. He became a full-time employee of AWF in 2001.



Carter Smith

AWF's Safari Program Manager, Carter Smith, moved to Kenya in 1994 to pursue her dream of a life of wildlife conservation in Africa, and she never looked back. She spent her early years in the bush rehabilitating birds of prey while completing her graduate degree in Ecology on the Martial Eagle. She later joined Sir Iain Douglas-Hamilton at Save the Elephants, while also becoming one of the first female licensed safari guides with the Kenya Safari Guide Association. In 2005, she founded her own safari venture and spent the next 15 years leading private safaris in East Africa. Carter joined AWF in 2019 to lead the Safari Program and looks forward to every trip when she can take guests on the adventure of a lifetime. Carter is also the author of the children's book *African Tea*.

**Note: While Craig and Carter are scheduled to lead this trip, AWF is equipped with a range of highly dedicated staff members that may lead your trip. A second leader will accompany Craig and Carter if trip attendance permits.*

To learn more or to reserve your spot, contact:

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