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## Namibia Cheetah Conservation

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



**Trip Name:** Namibia Cheetah Conservation    **Trip Code:** NAEC    **Duration:**

### Trip Highlights

- Cheetah conservation, leopard & cheetah tracking, living close-up to wildlife and birdlife!
- Assist at this 55,000-acre reserve in the heart of the Namibian bush
- Make a difference
- Sleep out under the stars, totally at one with nature
- Enjoy an open fire braai at the end of awesome days, with an amazing group of people



### Overview

This incredible programme allows you, as a volunteer, to assist at a reserve and foundation dedicated to Cheetah Conservation as well as the conservation of other big cats on the reserve.

Your days will be full as you take part in essential maintenance duties in the mornings and further exciting game drive activities in the afternoons such as tracking leopards and cheetahs, and getting involved at the cheetah welfare programme!

As well as the majestic cats in the reserve there is an abundance of other fascinating wildlife for you to look out for too from warthog to kudu and everything inbetween including dik-dik, eland, giraffe, oryx, duiker, wildebeest, impala, steenbok, red hartebeest, zebra! Did we mention the nocturnal beasts too (aardvarks, honey badgers, porcupines, brown hyena...) and the fact there are over 200 different bird species?

### Destination Info

The project is based on a large reserve, which is located approximately 225km north from the capital Windhoek,

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approx 270km south of the Etosha Pan and approx 50km south of the nearest town of Otjiwarongo.

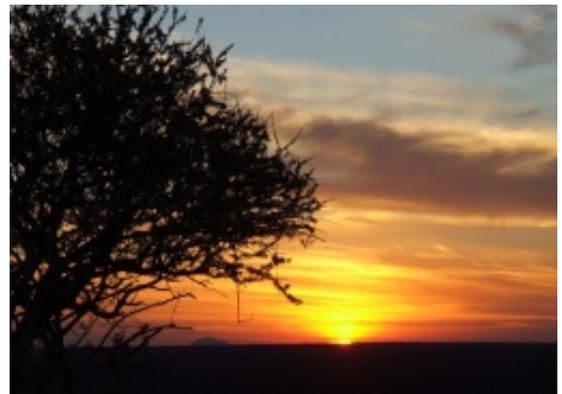
Namibia is a unique country bordering Angola, Botswana, Zambia and South Africa; it is home to so many varying landscapes that are waiting to be explored including the vibrant sand dunes of the Namib Desert, the isolated beaches of the Skeleton Coast, the salt pan in Etosha National Park and of course the huge expanses of wild African Savannah plains.

## Itinerary



As a volunteer on this incredibly worthwhile programme, your day will generally be split into two main sessions, in the morning you will need to be up bright and early as you head out into the reserve to help out with essential maintenance duties. After lunch and a nice break, you'll head back out into the reserve for the exciting afternoon game drive activities which can include Leopard and Cheetah tracking! You'll be working a six-day week during your time on the programme, with Saturdays being your day off to hang around the pool, relax with a good book or head out on walking trails in and around camp.

The mornings will require you to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty as you get involved in essential reserve maintenance including the dismantling of old cattle farming fence lines, bush clearing tasks, repairing waterholes and old water troughs and clearing the land of debris to name but a few. There will also be opportunities to work at the foundation on the reserve which is responsible for rehabilitating the big cats in the area; activities at the foundation will involve bone collecting within the cheetah camps, putting up new fences, repairing existing fences and installing netting to enclosures.



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In the afternoons there are lots of different and exciting game drive activities that you will be involved in, some of which will include the following:

**Leopard tracking and monitoring** - Leopard tracking and monitoring will take place from within a vehicle. You'll learn about using technology such as antennae and telemetry equipment to track these beautiful creatures as well learning how to spot unusual behaviours, signs of injury and other problems and reporting any findings to the foundation project managers.

**Cheetah welfare programme** - This is the opportunity to get close to the cheetahs by entering the rehabilitation enclosures. You will be accompanied by a guide who will explain to you about the fantastic work that the foundation does. You'll have the chance to learn the cheetahs' individual stories, giving a good insight into what the foundation is looking to achieve.

**Cheetah tracking and monitoring on foot** - You will head out with a guide and the telemetry equipment to locate cheetahs in the area. You'll walk through the bush for up to 1 hour at a time- every time you venture out is different to the next! The main aim of the walks are to check the cheetahs are in good health and you will have to report your findings.

**Behind the scenes feeding run** - This activity involves joining the staff of the foundation on a 'feeding run', feeding over 90 of the big cats in the welfare programme. You will be required to follow the vehicles for up to 2 hours depending on the cats. You will get to spot all sorts of big cats; cheetahs, leopards and lions. This is another way to get a great insight into all the essential work that is taking place at the programme and how it is helping not only the cats but the locals to. Depending on how long your stay is, you will get to do this feeding run at least once.

**Hyena tracking and monitoring on foot** - You will head out with a guide and the telemetry equipment to locate hyenas in the area. You'll walk through the bush for up to 1 hour at a time - every time you venture out is different to the next! The main aim of the walks are to check the hyenas are in good health and to report your findings.

**Bushman walk** - This activity gives you the chance to learn all about the daily lives, culture and traditions of the disappearing bushman tribes. These people live in harmony with nature so you will be able to master skills such as making rope from plants, lighting a fire with sticks and the innovative man made traps used for hunting.

**Tracking the wild dogs** - There is also the opportunity for you to get within a close range of a pack of hunting dogs in the reserve. The pack were rescued as puppies when they were only a few days old so they have grown up at the foundation and since released into their 16,000h rehabilitation park.

**Sleeping out under the stars!** – A unique and very beautiful way to spend a night sleeping out under the stars in one of the dry riverbeds. Weather permitting, you will get to experience this once every 2 weeks - a great way to feel totally at one with nature and will no doubt leave you with memories that last a life time!

**Newly released cats** - A couple of afternoons a week you will have a great opportunity to get more involved in the tracking of newly collared leopards and cheetahs newly released into the 20K area while they learn the skills needed to become self-sustaining cats. Other important tasks will include working within the cheetah welfare enclosures to ensure that these beautiful and endangered animals are getting the best quality of life possible.

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Based in a reserve of around 55,000 acres, the project area was converted from a cattle farm to a destination for tourists in 1993. There is a fantastic variety of wonderful wildlife in the reserve ranging from leopard to warthog and everything in between – dik-dik, eland, giraffe, oryx, duiker, kudu, wildebeest, impala, steenbok, red hartebeest, zebra and such nocturnal beasts as aardvarks, honey badgers, porcupines and brown hyena.

Shortly after the founding of the reserve, the animal welfare foundation was also launched to become the largest big cat conservation programme in the world. With a long-term objective to preserve the Namibian populations of cheetahs and leopards.

Unfortunately, over the last 150 years cattle farming has been a major cause of degradation to the areas native grasses and plants as well as to the game that are reliant on them. Another of the project's major objectives is to both rehabilitate and develop the environment, with long-term structures that will allow the land to flourish naturally again. The dedication and commitment that you give this programme will be in direct support of the foundation's aim of creating employment opportunities for the local people, which will in term, enable the future success of the project.

## Accommodation

Our camp, which is located in the heart of the Namibian bush, has large two-man dome tents, each containing two single beds, roll mattresses and pillows, as well as lock-up storage trunks; all under A-frame thatched shelters, intended to add to the wild bush feel of the project! The camp also has a central eating and socialising area, hot and cold showers, western style toilets, and limited electricity. There is also a great swimming pool, which is just a five-minute walk away from the camp and can be used during free time to chill out and cool off!

## Programme Services and Facilities

### Internet

Internet access is now available for a small local charge at the camp. As always, due to the rural location of the project, the service is temperamental and will not always be running to the standard you are used to. In the event that there is an emergency one of the project staff can take you to the main lodge to use the Internet there.

### Telephone

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There is not a phone at the camp, however, in the event of an emergency a member of the project staff can take you to the main lodge so that you can use the phone there.

We suggest that you take your mobile phone with you, if you chose to do so please ensure that you have activated roaming on your phone. It is also a good idea to unlock your phone in case you get the opportunity to buy a local Namibian SIM card for about NAD\$150, which will allow you to call and text home cheaply and easily.

Due to the rural location of the project, the mobile phone signal is quite weak and it can be a little temperamental at times.

The international dialling code for Namibia is +264. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap dial +44 1892 516164.

## Laundry

There are not any laundry facilities at the camp and you will therefore have to wash your clothes by hand. You can either take travel wash with you, or you can purchase small boxes of washing powder from the small store at the camp.

## Electricity

There is electricity at the camp, located in the central eating and socialising area. The plugs used in Namibia are three large round pins (same as the South African style) so you will need to bring an adaptor in order to charge electronic items such as phones and camera batteries. Please be sensible when using electricity, as it is much more of a luxury in Africa than it is in your home country. Also please be prepared that power cuts are common and therefore please be understanding and flexible about charging your items and bring spare batteries!

## Meals

Daily rotas will be put in place and everyone gets involved in the day-to-day running of the camp, including wake-up calls and the preparation of all meals.

This includes three meals a day, which will be comprised as follows; cereals for breakfast prepared at the base campsite before work commences, sandwiches and fruit prepared at the camp for lunch, and a hot nutritious meal is prepared each evening back at the campsite. Tea, coffee and squash are available at meal times only but fresh drinking water is available 24/7. If you are vegetarian, or have any other dietary requirements please inform us prior to departure and we will cater for you as required.

## What's Included

- Project Fee
- Airport Transfers
- Arrival Orientation
- All accommodation
- Three meals a day
- Full support and assistance from the on-site staff



## What's Not Included

- Travel insurance
- All flights
- All visas
- E-mail/Internet and telephone calls
- Soft drinks, wines and spirits



## Additional Information

### Visas

Please note that you will be required to obtain a volunteer visa for Namibia to participate in this programme.

## What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

Also, please be aware that the weather can change considerably from winter to summer and you should pack according to when you are travelling to ensure that you have the appropriate clothing. The winter nights can get very cold so if travelling at winter pack extra warm clothing. Please see our Climate Chart for further details.

## Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your doctor about necessary immunisations)
- Secure, waterproof bag for documents and money: sealable plastic bags will do

## General

- Personal hygiene kit, toiletries
- A sleeping bag (2 / 3 season) and Pillowcase
- Silk or Cotton Liner: Ideal for hot nights or as an extra layer to your sleeping bag
- Sunglasses (high UV protection)
- Sun cream (high factor needed)
- Small torch (head torch is highly recommended)
- Alarm clock/watch
- Diary and writing pens
- Camera/batteries/film or memory card
- Water bottle – at least 75cl
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Binoculars
- Mobile phone – set for roaming
- Personal stereo
- Sewing kit and pocket knife for general use
- Plug adaptor
- Travel Guide, such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guide
- The evenings can be quiet so bring books, cards, board games etc to play

## Clothing

- Sets of outdoor loose fitting cotton clothes with full arm and leg cover for cooler mornings and evenings
- Sun hat / Bandana
- Work boots or sturdy trainers (hard soles highly recommended- you don't want thorns in your feet!)
- Heavy duty work gloves to protect your hands
- Work clothes that you don't mind getting worn and dirty
- Casual clothes for your time off
- Flip flops / sandals
- Underwear – enough for at least seven days, possibly more
- Pyjamas/nightwear
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm clothes for winter and early mornings.

## Medical Kit

- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Anti-malarial tablets (not required at the Sanctuary itself but if you plan to travel afterwards, check with your doctor)
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Personal medication e.g. prescription drugs/inhalers
- Painkillers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Plasters
- Lip Balm with SPF
- Tweezers (not in hand luggage!)
- Scissors (not in hand luggage!)
- Nailbrush, you will get dirty!
- Re-hydration salts and Imodium or similar product
- Sanitary products for women if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (ensure it contains DEET or equivalent)

- Ear Plugs – in case you sleep next to a snorer!

**Please note:** It is essential that you take a 2/3-season sleeping bag, hard soled work boots and heavy-duty work gloves for this project.

## Minimum Age

Minimum age 18 years old, maximum decided on potential participants' health.

## Flights

Your flight to Namibia should arrive before 12pm at Windhoek International airport on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged for after 2pm on your programme end date.

To receive the included transfer from Windhoek airport to the project your flights should be booked as per the information above.

Please note that transfers are only available on your arrival and departure dates, should you be unable to arrange flights for these dates please contact us before booking your flights.

To book your flights, please contact your sales advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

## FAQs

### 1. How long is the transfer from the airport to the project site?

You will be transferred to the project and your accommodation by road which will take around 3.5 hours.

### 2. How remote is the project?

You will be based in the heart of the African bush, this will mean that you will be in a beautiful remote location! You will need to come prepared for your whole trip as venturing to the nearest town won't happen very often.

### 3. What other animals are at the project?

There is a huge range of animals and hopefully you will get to see the majority during your time on the programme. Animals in the reserve other than cheetahs include; leopards, warthog, eland, giraffe, kudu, wildebeest, impala, steenbok, red hartebeest, zebra.

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## 4. What is the accommodation like?

You will be living in a large 2 man dome tent with camp beds. You will share a central eating and socialising area, showers, toilets, and limited electricity. You are also lucky enough to have access to a swimming pool, which is just a five-minute walk from the camp and can be used during your free time.

## 5. I am a first time traveler, and a bit apprehensive about travelling on my own. Do many people do this by themselves?

The majority of our participants are solo travelers, so you will meet like minded people on the programme. We e-mail out a buddy list 2-3 weeks before you start, so you can begin to get to know one another beforehand.

## Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

## Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

## Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

## Money Matters

The Namibian currency is the Namibian Dollar (N\$) and comes in subunits or 100 called cents. Coin denominations come in 5, 10, 20 and 5 cents and N\$1, N\$5. The notes come in denominations of N\$10, N\$20, N\$50, N\$100 and N\$200. The Namibian dollar is pegged to the South African rand which is also legal currency in Namibia. The exchange rate is 1:1.

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There are ATMs in most major towns and cities but it is advised to withdraw enough cash to last a few days or week.

Traveller's cheques in US dollars and South Africa rand are the most commonly used and exchanged and you will receive better exchange rates changing cheques than you will cash.

American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted but not in petrol stations.

Example typical costs are as follows:

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant \$8.00  
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) \$2.00  
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$1.00  
Water (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.50

(Prices quoted in US Dollars)

## Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

**For some programmes in Namibia, a volunteer or work visa is required in order to participate.** Please refer to the specific programme information to see whether a volunteer or work visa is required for your programme.

If your programme does not require a volunteer or work visa, you will need to obtain a tourist visa. Nationals from Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, UK, Ireland and USA are able to obtain a tourist visa for short stay visits of up to 90 days at the port of entry.

## Cultural Considerations

### Religion

The local population is predominantly Christian, around 80%-90%. Two Lutheran Churches cover over half of the total population, with the Roman Catholics covering one-fifth of the populace. Additional denominations e.g. Dutch Reformed, make up the final percentages.

### Smoking and Alcohol

Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact on your volunteer work during the week. While we want you to have fun in your free time, anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated at the project.

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The lager in Namibia is excellent due its German heritage. The German beer Becks has been brewed in Namibia since 2000. Unfortunately alcohol abuse and drink driving is a major problem in Namibia.

## Drugs

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into Namibia. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, Namibia has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including 'soft' drugs like marijuana, are illegal. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling – it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

## Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

## Safety

As in most countries there are people who try to take advantage of tourists. The following advice is intended to help you keep safe:

- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you and in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your day sack without your permission.
- Always walk around in groups
- Never go out alone after dark
- Stick with the escorted trips. If you do go out in the evening unescorted, you do so at your own risk. Please tell the co-ordinators where you are going and what time you will be back.
- This information is not intended to scare you. Unfortunately, bad things can happen, as they can do in any country and we want you to be prepared. We want you to stay safe and have a good time.
- Namibians are generally very friendly, warm and hospitable people. Please be friendly, respectful and stay aware and you will have a great time.

## ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

## Language Guide

The official national language of Namibia is English, however only 7% of the country speaks it. The most common dialect is Afrikaans with over 60% of the population and 32% speak German, whilst further indigenous languages make up the remaining percentages. We suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

### English - Afrikaans

Hello - *Hallo*

How are you? - *Hoe gaan dit?*

Pardon - *Ekskuus*

Thank you very much - *Baie dankie*

Please - *Asseblief*

Yes / No - *Ja / Nee*

How much? - *Hoeveel?*

## Food & Drink

Traditional German dishes and South African pricing have heavily influenced Namibian food. Game dishes are common and meat dishes are plentiful and exceptionally cheap compared to European standards German meats and sausages are very popular. Kudu and Springbok are the most popular game dishes. Fish is also evident on Namibian menus, especially around the ports. Traditional South African braai (barbecue) is extremely popular outside of restaurants.

The traditional staple diet in Africa is meat and carbohydrates. If you are a vegetarian you will be catered for with lots of fresh root vegetables such as yams and potatoes and fruits. However, please be aware that your meals towards the end of your programme may become a little repetitive so perhaps it may be worth buying a few of your favourite snacks whilst you are in Africa.

There is a lot of fresh fruit in Africa, which is extremely cheap to buy for a quick snack or nutritional lunch so it may be worth picking some up from the market quite cheaply for your daily vitamin fix. However, please be aware that fresh items for salads etc. are hard to come by in Africa, although the project leaders will try to get this as often as possible for you.

Drinking water from the tap is not generally considered to be safe (best to check with your project coordinator to find out about the water at your project), so choices include plastic bottled water and boiled or filtered tap water. Bottled water is extremely accessible. In addition sodas are sold everywhere.

## Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Namibian's who use long weekends to get away from the big cities.

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To view a list of the public holidays for Namibia, please see the link below:

<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/namibia/public-holidays>

## Weather

Namibia has 300 days of sunshine on average per year. The climate is an archetypal semi desert climate, with extremely hot days and cool nights. Temperatures are lower in the central areas of the country where the land plateaus. Rain occurs in the summer months in the form of thunderstorms, consequently the riverbeds fill extremely fast with large quantities of muddy water. Temperatures can reach up to 40°C during the day, however it is significantly cooler during the evening. During the winter months, temperatures during the evening can often drop below freezing, so remember to pack your clothes accordingly!

## Time

Namibia is one hour ahead of GMT.

In Africa, time is not a priority like it is in much of the western world – there is a saying that Africa works to ‘Africa Time’, which basically means you must exercise a lot of patience! If a boat is due to leave at 12pm, don’t be surprised if it still hasn’t a couple of hours later... keep an open mind, and arrive in Africa ‘Expecting the unexpected’.

## Electricity

Electricity in Namibia runs on 220 volts, 50Hz. If your device does not run on these rates, you’ll need a voltage converter.

Outlets across Namibia generally accept the following plug type:



Three round pins arranged in a triangle

## Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers’ comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

## Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we’ll be happy to answer them.



# Namibia Cheetah Conservation

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