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## Medical Elective in Namibia

**Trip Name:** Medical Elective in Namibia    **Trip Code:** NAMI    **Duration:** From 8 weeks

### Key Facts

- Make a difference to the lives of Namibia's San Bushman community
- Gain valuable medical work experience
- Meet the local people and become part of the community
- Take time out and enhance your CV
- And....spend some time helping out as a volunteer at a Wildlife Sanctuary!



### Overview

This medical internship in Namibia is perfect for those looking to gain valuable and rewarding experience, working in a remote rural health clinic that has been set up to provide healthcare and support to Namibia's San Bushman community.

Work alongside the resident doctor and nurse at the clinic and learn all about the challenges faced by the San Bushman community. Whether you are studying for a career in the medical field, are a qualified medical professional or simply thinking about starting a career in health care and medicine; this medical internship will give you valuable work experience in the field, immersing you in the health and development programme that the clinic offers while also providing vital care and treatment to patients in the San Bushman Community, many of whom live in extreme poverty and for years have been victimised and are still treated as third class citizens.

You will also have a wonderful opportunity to get involved in caring for orphaned, abused or injured animals at the Namibian Wildlife Sanctuary near the country's capital, Windhoek upon your arrival and departure from the programme.

### Destination Info

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



By choosing to join this Namibia Medical Internship you will have a once in a life time opportunity to assist at a small rural healthcare clinic and build a close relationship with the San Bushman Community, one of the oldest cultures in the world. They are traditionally hunter gatherers, but due to increased cattle grazing over recent years they have been forced away from their home lands.

You'll be working alongside the dedicated doctor and nurse who are based at the clinic full time, during your time at the clinic you will learn a great deal about the common diseases and ailments that are affecting the local community on a regular basis and the most effective ways of treating them. You will be able to assist in giving care to the patients who visit the clinic and learn more about the challenges that they are faced with. The doctor and nurse at the clinic will also be giving you lessons during your placement which will be tailored to your level of experience and background.

The content of the lessons will vary but prospective medical students can expect to have lessons in basic clinical skills, taking of patient history and patient examinations. Whereas qualified professionals will be asked to run consultations with the patients who visit the clinic and help out with the outreach work in the community; this is a fantastic opportunity to have the greatest impact on the local community that you are working with during your medical internship.

No matter what your level of experience though, some of the activities and duties that you could be involved in may include:

- Blood pressure recordings
- Cleaning and dressing of wounds
- Assisting in the pharmacy with new order, packing of medicines and stock control
- Weighing babies and recording their growth
- Glucose testing and recording
- Primary healthcare including treatments, observations, emergency referrals and offering reassurance to patients
- Observations including pregnancy tests, urine tests and recording findings

If you have any special skills that you feel could be useful to the programme and the clinic, please let the local team know and feel free to suggest any new activities that you feel could benefit the clinic and the local community.

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In addition to the day to day work that you will be involved in, you will also have the opportunity undertake a research project focused on something that will benefit the clinic and help to further improve the services provided to the local community that it serves; for example local patterns for disease, studies of clean water supplies, mapping the distances that patients travel in order to visit the clinic, TB rates and the patients knowledge of diseases such as HIV/Aids etc.

This internship is an extremely rewarding option for anyone looking for a career in the medical field where you can really help to make a difference to the lives of local people, whilst improving and developing your own skills and knowledge.



The clinic is located in a rural village in Eastern Namibia, which is home to approximately 500 people from both the San Bushman and Herero communities; the clinic plays an extremely important part in the lives of the local people.

The main priority and focus of the clinic is to provide basic healthcare and support to the San Bushman community, which is thought to be one of the oldest cultures in the world. By providing them with basic healthcare and support it is hoped that they will have what they need to build a better future.

There is a full time doctor and nurse at the clinic throughout the year who you will be assisting during your medical internship. The clinic treats around 3000 patients each year with the help of San Translators; approximately 40% of all patients treated at the clinic are children, of which 70% are under 5 years of age. Some of the most common diseases and complaints that are diagnosed amongst the child patients at the clinic include intestinal worms, malnutrition, fungal infections, dehydration mouth infections and diarrhoea; you may not think that these illnesses are particularly severe but if left untreated they can get much worse and lead to complications which could potentially result in a tragic death. Additionally TB, HIV and alcoholism are prevalent in the community, as are everyday problems including aches and pains.

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You may also have the opportunity to help out as a wildlife volunteer on the fantastic Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary, depending on your arrival and departure days.

The sanctuary provides vital care and shelter to animals that have been orphaned, injured or abused; the team at the sanctuary will never turn away an animal in need, as a result the variety of animals is diverse and constantly changing but usually includes leopards, cheetahs, lions, wild dogs, baboons, caracals, adorable and mischievous meerkats, along with a number of domestic animals to name but a few.

As a volunteer, you will be helping out with the day to day running of the sanctuary including the preparation of food for the animals, carrying out essential maintenance and providing care to the animals.

Participants are asked to remain flexible with the logistics of the medical programme, it is important to note that volunteering time at the sanctuary is not guaranteed and will be dependent on resources and timetables of other volunteers.



The rural clinic is based in the eastern region of Namibia, approximately 350km from the capital city of Windhoek.

At the beginning and end of your programme, you will be taken to the Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary approximately 50km from Windhoek city centre.

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If you arrive on the scheduled start date, you will normally spend 1 night at the sanctuary before being transferred from the sanctuary to the clinic the day after arrival. At the end of your programme, you will be transferred from the clinic back to the wildlife sanctuary where you will spend your final two nights before your return transfer to the airport

## Accommodation

During your time at the clinic you will be staying in a volunteer house with the resident doctor and nurse from the clinic.

You will either have your own room at the volunteer house or be sharing with another volunteer of the same gender. The house is a modern bungalow with a kitchen, bathroom and living room (with TV); both electricity and hot water are freely available.

At the beginning and end of your programme, you may also spend some time volunteering at the Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary; during your time at the sanctuary you will either be staying in shared volunteer accommodation with up to 3 volunteers sharing a room or in own of the twin-share tents. There are shared toilet and showers available for all volunteers to use.

## Meals

During your time at the clinic you will receive three meals per day which you and your housemates will prepare for yourselves together, using local produce and ingredients.

Whilst at the sanctuary, 3 meals per day will be prepared and provided for you; again using local produce and ingredients.

## What's Included

- Accommodation
- Meals
- Airport transfers
- Transfers to and from the clinic
- Internship placement
- Orientation



## What's Not Included

- All flights
- Travel Insurance
- Working/business visa required to participate in this programme
- Items of a personal nature



## Is This Trip For You?

The internship is the perfect opportunity for prospective medical students, people studying for a career in the medical field or trained medical professionals looking to get hands on experience in a remote health clinic in Namibia.

It is important to note that the amount of work you will be able to get involved in will vary depending on your level of experience; so it would be beneficial for you have some medical experience or basic training when you join the programme so that you can get the most out of your placement.

You will be working alongside a local doctor and nurse at the clinic so no matter what your level of experience is, you are sure to learn a lot from them both about the local community and the people you are working with and the challenges they face from working in such a remote location.

## Additional Information

Places on this Namibia medical internship programme are extremely limited due to the nature of the project work, so book early to avoid disappointment.

### Visas

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

## Minimum Age

Minimum age 18 years.

## Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, each of our Namibia volunteer projects share the same accommodation. Therefore, if there are volunteers on our other programmes you will be able to spend your spare time and evenings with them. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

## FAQs

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1. **Do I need to take a sleeping bag?**

We recommend that you take a sleeping bag with you especially in winter time as it can get very chilly!

2. **Do I need to take a mosquito net?**

No, this isn't necessary.

3. **Is there a safety deposit box/safe?**

Yes, there are safes available and a deposit of N\$500 is required which will be returned once the key has been given back.

## Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

## 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.

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 visa is required in order to participate.** Please refer to the specific programme information to see whether a volunteer visa is required for your programme.

If your programme does not require a volunteer 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.



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, 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.

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.

**Phone:** 1-800-985-4852



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