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Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteers

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteers **Trip Code:** NAWR **Duration:** From 2 weeks

Trip Highlights

- Take the resident Baboons and Caracals for walks
- Hands on experience at a working farm in Namibia
- Work with others to care for Namibia's precious wildlife
- Experience a carnivore feed with Lions, Cheetahs, Leopards and Wild Dogs
- Play your part in helping rehabilitate animals in need

Overview

This is your chance to make a difference to the lives of some of Namibia's fascinating Wildlife including Baboons, Cheetahs, Meerkats, Lions, Caracals and Leopards. The Namibian Wildlife Sanctuary is set in a wonderful private reserve offering views of the distant mountain ranges, grass planes and rugged natural Savannah.

Destination Info

If you're into photography, Namibia's the gap year destination for you. Wild, parched, spectacular, Namibia's dry conditions have breath-taking grandeur. And the wildlife completes the picture.

This is desert country. The Kalahari and the Namib dominate the country, with rugged South Atlantic coastlines in the west and veldt in the east. It's a young and undeveloped country so it's ideal for adventurous student travel – it's the place for you if you want to feel that special magic that accompanies the heat of the desert.

Here's a really extraordinary experience – sleep in the desert under a sky so huge that it will take your breath away. Are there really that many stars? You'll go home wondering if you were really there and you'll never ever

forget it.

The Namibia wildlife sanctuary is a 45-minute drive east of Windhoek and just 40k from the airport. Despite which there's a definite sense of remoteness. It's located in a natural savannah paradise with river vegetation, lush grass plains and magnificent mountain views.

Itinerary

This programme gives you the fantastic opportunity to help out on a working farm in Namibia; from preparing food for the resident animals including Meerkats and Lions, to taking the mischievous Baboons out on their daily walk to helping out with the general maintenance and upkeep of this fascinating farm; there will be plenty for you to do!

You will normally be working in groups of approximately 6 people, starting bright and early at 8:00am and usually finishing at 5:30pm (although there may be animals that need additional care in the evenings), you'll also have a break mid-morning and a lunch break for you to recharge your batteries. In the evenings you'll have free time to do as you please, chill out with cold beer in hand, take a dip in the pool and once or twice a week there may be the opportunity for you to babysit the cheeky little baby Baboons when there are some at the project, taking them into your room to sleep for the night! Depending on the weather there may even be the opportunity to sleep out under the stars and marvel at the beautiful starry skies that Africa is so famous for!

On Saturday afternoons, you'll have some free time to relax or take advantage of one of the activities on offer such as game count, bush trekking or paintballing that may be available to you (some of these activities will be at an additional cost); in the evening there may be a traditional Braai where you can catch up with your fellow volunteers and new found friends!

On Sundays there may be an opportunity for you visit Namibia's capital city Windhoek to buy some souvenirs or go for a nice meal somewhere! Alternatively, if you don't feel like venturing into town, you can always head over to the luxurious guest lodge on the farm for a very relaxing and tasty lunch!

Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteers

The Namibian Wildlife Sanctuary is set in a natural savannah with lush grass plains and stunning mountain views for you to enjoy. It is set on a 3,200 hectare reserve which is home a wide variety of animals including Zebra, Giraffe, Kudu, Springbok, Warthogs and Hartebeests!

As a volunteer on this fascinating programme you will be playing a part in helping the sanctuary achieve its aim of providing a safe refuge for injured, orphaned or abandoned wildlife including Baboons, Wild Dogs, Cheetahs, Leopards, Meerkats, Caracals and Leopards as well as a number of domestic farm animals such as goats, sheep, pigs, chickens and horses to name but a few! It is important to keep an open mind though as the animals at the sanctuary can change and the team will always endeavor to help those animals in need, no matter the shape or size.

You'll be working hands-on to help develop and maintain the sanctuary and its surrounding area so that the rehabilitation work can continue to grow. A lot of your daily activity will revolve around food (theirs, not yours) and all the routine of looking out for their well being – so feeding, grooming, cleaning out enclosures. There are also wider responsibilities – maintaining and building new enclosures, checking and maintaining the sanctuary fences, cleaning and digging new water-holes.

When guests come to the sanctuary, you'll be on the inside, part of the gang – and you might well be assisting the guides.

The orphaned baboons play a large part in the Namibia wildlife sanctuary project. You'll be able to take them for walkies so they can forage naturally and exercise. You may also be able to bottle feed them (cue for photos!) and if there are any baby baboons around – who are too young to live in the camp with the others – you might even be looking after them overnight. In charge of a sleeping baby baboon – seriously cool!

It's not all work at the sanctuary, you will also have a bit of free time to use as you please. Our in-country team help arrange a number of activities at the sanctuary which you are more than welcome to join in with. This could include anything from a sleep out, traditional Braai (african BBQ), chill out at the pool, or possibly even pop into

Windhoek city to do a bit of shopping, check your emails or visit a local restaurant.

There is a lovely laid back atmosphere at the sanctuary and you are bound to feel right at home. It's a great escape from the busy world you will be used to back home and gives you the chance to chill out and enjoy these wonderful surroundings.

Accommodation

There are two different types of accommodation for this programme, rooms in the volunteer house and large tents. Accommodation will be allocated by the in-country team.

The volunteer rooms are basic but comfortable. Each room contains three single beds, bed linen including duvets and pillows will be provided; there will be up to three volunteers sharing each room.

In addition to the volunteer house accommodation, there are also a number of large twin-share tents on wooden platforms available. Inside the tents you'll find two single beds (bed linen including duvets and pillows will be provided) as well as a seperate living area.

Communal toilet and shower facilities are located at each of the volunteer houses for all volunteers to use. Towels are included.

Programme Services and Facilities

There is a small shop on the project which offers beers, cider, wine, soft drinks, snacks and cigarettes, The shop opens twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays (cash only in Namibian Dollar or South African Rand). Please only use bio-degradable products while at the sanctuary.

ATM Machines are present in the Windhoek and withdrawals may have a small surplus charge although this is likely to be similar to travellers cheque commission rates. Credit and debit cards (Mastercard and Visa) are accepted for cash withdrawal at most banks but rarely for general payments. However a credit card will come in useful in the event of an emergency. If you are planning to travel afterwards, you may want to bring enough travellers cheques to cover this.

Internet

Internet or telephone services are only available at the project unless it is an emergency. If you get the chance to take a trip to Windhoek, you will be able to visit an internet cafe there.

Telephone

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, although there are a few spots around camp where you can get reception, but you will need to walk around a bit to find these!

The international dialling code for Namibia is +264. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK, +49 for Germany, followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap Experience dial +44 1892 516164 / +49 69 222226 475.

Laundry

There is a daily laundry service at the project included in the cost of the programme. During the rainy season be prepared to wait longer for your clothes to dry. It is better to hand in your clothes on a regular basis. If you wish to handwash certain items like underwear, please take handwash powder or liquid with you.

Electricity

There is electricity at the camp, however there are only power sockets in the original volunteer accommodation, available for use by all volunteers. The new accommodation is solar powered (only for lighting and heating water). The plugs used in Namibia are 3 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

During your stay at the sanctuary, you will receive three basic but tasty meals a day. Breakfast is on a help-yourself basis, normally consisting of toast and cereals etc. Lunch is typically sandwiches, salads or hot snacks, whilst dinner includes a hot meal or barbecue.

There is a communal kitchen, dining area and a small shop where you can buy a few snacks. We can make allowances for most dietary requirements including vegetarians, vegans and common food allergies. In these cases, please speak to us and the camp manager or cook if you have specific requirements. However, you must take responsibility for your own allergies and carefully monitor the food that you consume. It is important that you let us and your project manager know of any dietary requirements that you may have.

Please let us know if you have any dietry requirements.

What's Included

- Airport Transfers
- Arrival Orientation
- All accommodation
- Three meals a day
- Work Placement
- Full support from your co-ordinator

What's Not Included

- All flights
- Travel insurance
- Work visa

Additional Information

Visas

Please note that you will be required to obtain a volunteer visa for Namibia to participate in this programme unless you are volunteering for 4 weeks or less, then you are able to get a tourist visa on arrival.

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 GP about necessary immunisations)
- Secure, waterproof bag for documents and money: sealable plastic bags will do

General

- Personal hygiene kit, toiletries
- Sleeping bag is useful for winter months, possible overnight sleep outs in the field or if you plan to travel outside of your project
- 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)
- Torches and batteries (preferably a head torch)
- Alarm clock/watch
- Diary and writing pens
- Camera/batteries/film or memory card
- Water bottle – at least 75cl
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Mobile phone – set for roaming
- Personal stereo
- Swimming towel
- Sewing kit and pocket knife for general use (do not pack in your hand luggage)
- Plug adaptor (3 large round pins)
- 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
- Boots or sturdy trainers for project work
- Gardening gloves to protect your hands
- Work clothes that you don't mind getting worn and dirty
- Casual clothes for day trips to Windhoek and for evenings at the Guest Lodge
- 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.

Note on clothing: We ask that you dress respectfully during your time in Namibia, therefore please refrain from wearing short shorts or skirts during your time away and ensure that your midriff is covered.

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, bandages, decent tape, cotton wool and an adequate supply of Betadine and Cicatrin powder and talc
- 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!

Minimum Age

The minimum age on this project is 18 years with parental consent; the maximum depends on the health of the potential participant.

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

Flights

Your flight to Namibia should arrive at Windhoek International airport on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged on your programme end date.

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. **I'm only 17, can I join the project?**
   Yes! We do actually accept mature 17 year olds with parental consent.

2. **How hands-on will I be able to get with the animals?**
   Very much so where possible, the volunteer duties will allow you hands-on opportunites.

3. **How remote is the project?**
   There is a sense of remoteness even though Windhoek is around a 35 min drive but also a very peaceful location!

4. **What animals are at the sanctuary?**
   A variety at any one time of Lions, Leopards, Cheetahs, Wild Dogs, lots of Baboons and farm animals.

5. **Will I be able to check my emails?**
   There will be opportunities for groups of volunteers to go into Windhoek on some Sundays but this can't be guaranteed.

6. **Do I need to take a sleeping bag?**
   Yes, we recommend that you take one with you especially in winter as it can be get really chilly!

7. **Do I need to take a mosquito net?**
   No, this isn't necessary.

8. **Is there a safe/safety deposit box?**
   Yes, there will be safes available and a deposit of N$500 is required which will be returned once the key is given back.

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 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 reommended 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.

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