

ACACIA AFRICA

SOUTH WEST SAFARI – TOUR DOSSIER

Tour Code SWS25

JOHANNESBURG – CAPE TOWN

25 DAYS

Tour Departure – 07:00

Pre-departure Meeting – 18:00 day prior to departure

HIGHLIGHTS

Kruger National Park
Victoria Falls - Livingstone
Chobe National Park
Okavango Delta
Kalahari Bushman Walk
Windhoek
Etosha National Park
Cape Cross Seal Colony
Spitzkoppe
Swakopmund
Namib Naukluft Park
Sossusvlei Sand Dunes
Fish River Canyon
Cape Flats Township Tour



From Africa's premier attraction, Victoria Falls to its most beautiful city – Cape Town – via the world's oldest desert, the Namib-Naukluft, the tranquil wilderness of the Okavango Delta, the dramatic Fish River Canyon and the prime game reserves – Etosha, Chobe and Kruger– this is a superb introduction to southern Africa!

INTENDED ITINERARY

Whilst it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the tour and on occasion it may be necessary or desirable to make alterations to the published itinerary. Please therefore treat the following as a guide only.

The vehicle used for this tour is a fully-equipped safari truck, except for the visits to some of the national parks when we may use smaller more suitable vehicles (typically, 4x4 or safari vans).

Duration: 25 Days

Countries visited: Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa

DAY 1 - 2

Greater Kruger, Kruger National Park

From Johannesburg - South Africa's commercial capital - we travel via the Panoramic region of Mpumalanga with its beautiful scenery and dramatic escarpment views, to South Africa's most famed national park - Kruger. The fences between the park's borders and private game reserves on the fringes of Kruger have been recently taken down to form Greater Kruger and the park's animals are free to roam the whole area. Kruger and Greater Kruger cover over 24,000 sq km are home to an incredible wealth of African animals from the miniscule dwarf mongoose to all of Africa's famed Big 5 mammals. There is also an incredible diversity of birdlife and flora to be discovered. We spend two nights within the Kruger area and take game drives across the savannah to glimpse some of the wildlife that inhabits the park.

DAY 3 - 5

Polokwane, Nata, Kasane, Chobe National Park

Leaving Kruger and travelling north we spend a couple of days crossing from South Africa into the vast grasslands of Botswana via Francistown, Nata and the edge of the formidable Makgadikgadi salt pans to Kasane and the Chobe National Park in Botswana's northern corner. Chobe is a vast reserve of some 12,000 sq km and along the Chobe River-front lush plains and forests support a remarkable variety of wildlife. It is perhaps most famous for its huge elephant populations and is thought to be home to some 40,000 of the 120,000 elephants inhabiting this area of Africa. While in the park we take an afternoon Fish Eagle cruise on the Chobe River, relax and watch for hippo, buffalo, elephant and possibly lion, as well as an amazing display of birds, come to the river to bath and drink in the lowering light.

DAY 6

Livingstone – Victoria Falls (Zambian side)

From Kasane it is a short drive to Livingstone and Victoria Falls (Zambia side) where our tour ends. There are numerous activities and excursions to choose from around Victoria Falls which will amply fill your time here on the tour and any extra time you wish to spend in Livingstone before your onward travel. Feed your hunger for adrenaline with white water rafting, bungee jumping, abseiling, gorge swinging and amazing scenic flights (microlight, helicopter or small plane) or enjoy the surroundings on canoeing safaris, elephant back safaris and horse riding treks. However, don't leave without seeing the thundering Victoria Falls themselves. At over a mile wide and over 100 metres deep, the Falls produce the world's largest curtain of falling water in the world. Up close they are formidable and at times of high water, the spray can be seen from 20 kilometres away, hence their local name Mosi au Tunya – the 'smoke that thunders'.

DAY 7

Livingstone / Waterfront

We have the day at leisure in Livingstone. There is time to do some more adventure activities, or if you've had your fill of 'adrenaline running' then take a time out and relax. Sit with a coffee or a coke and stare out over the Zambezi River for an hour or two, try to spot hippo or croc in the deep grey waters of this massive river. Or go into Livingstone – a small town but worth a wander up and down the street. If you are feeling more adventurous you could organise a day trip across the border into Zimbabwe (but check the visa situation before you go – both Zimbabwe and Zambia require visas and if you only have a single entry visa for Zambia you may have to buy a second visa when you come back from Zimbabwe at the end of the day! If you are interested in this idea, be sure to speak to your tour guide for practical advice).

Overnight at camp in Livingstone.

NB For the sake of practicality, meals in the Livingstone/Victoria Falls area are restricted to breakfasts. This allows you to take on half day or full day activities (some of which include lunch) without having to be back with the group at mealtimes. The Waterfront camp restaurant overlooks the Zambezi River and offers a good selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (we suggest you allow US\$25-\$35/ day).

DAY 8-9

Chobe National Park, Kasane

After breakfast we leave Livingstone and travel the short distance to Botswana and the Chobe National Park. Situated in the extreme northern corner of Botswana, Chobe is home to large populations of elephant as well as lion and abundant birdlife, including the African fish-eagle. In the late afternoon, we take an afternoon cruise on the Chobe River - a delightful way to see hippo or elephant, sometimes buffalo, come to the river for bath and drink. Earlier in the day we take an early morning game drive into the park itself for a glimpse of Botswana's premier game reserve.

DAY 10-12

Maun, Okavango Delta

Further south, we cross the fringes of the Kalahari Desert and make our way to Maun and the Okavango Delta. A natural wetland system spreading over some 1.6m hectares of northern Botswana, the results from rivers that rise in Angola and flow south then divide repeatedly to form an intricate floodplain of channels and islands which spreads out into a broad flat inland delta – the only one of its kind in the world. Our overnight excursion gives us the opportunity to explore some of the area on foot and by dugout canoe (makoro).

This is a very unspoilt wildlife area. We search amongst the giant lily pads, tall grasses and narrow channels for hippo, crocodile and a variety of birds. We camp for a night in the Delta itself on one of the river islands - an unforgettable wilderness experience!

DAY 13-14
Ghanzi - Windhoek

Leaving the Okavango we travel south-west skirting the Kalahari. We stop at Ghanzi and take a guided Bushman Walk to discover some of the secrets of this immense terrain and gain a glimpse of how the indigenous people live in this area. The following day we continue west into Namibia and stop a night in the capital Windhoek, a city steeped in German atmosphere and architecture. Enjoy the contrast from the previous few nights, perhaps with a flagon of ale at one of the local taverns.

DAY 15-19
Etosha National Park – Cape Cross Seal Colony - Swakopmund

We make our way north to Etosha National Park, a vast reserve of over 20,000 square kilometres in area surrounding a central salt depression or 'pan.' The pan is seasonally filled with water but managed year-round waterholes sustain some 114 mammal and 340 bird species. We spend two nights in Etosha, camping near a floodlit waterhole which offers exciting night viewing for those who wish to stay up late.

Turning south again, we pass through the eerie Spitzkoppe area and travel along some of the desolate Atlantic coast, stopping to visit the impressive Cape Cross Seal Colony. Home to some 80,000 seals this is the place where in the year 1486, the Portuguese mariner Diego Cão first set foot on the coast of southwest Africa.

We arrive at the colonial town of Swakopmund, Namibia's main seaside resort. Sandwiched neatly between the desert and the ocean, this delightful coastal oasis has developed into something of an adventure centre. Try 'quad biking, sand boarding, or skydiving (weather permitting) or for those preferring a slower pace, take a coastal walk or indulge in Swakopmund's café culture at your own leisure.

DAY 20-22
Namib Naukluft Park – Fish River Canyon

Continuing south through the barren desert we reach the Namib Naukluft Park. The world's oldest desert and containing some of the highest sand dunes in the world – some of Sesriem and Sossusvlei's dunes are over 300m high – this is an ideal spot to clamber to the top of one and see the sun rise over the empty desert. We continue deeper into the park for a nature walk across the salt pans and flat valley floors. Don't forget your camera - the changing colours of the sand as the sun rises and sets throughout the day offer brilliant photographic opportunities.

Continuing to the very south of Namibia we admire the awesome beauty of the Fish River Canyon. One of the natural wonders of Africa, some 500m deep and over 160km long, this is the second largest canyon in the world after America's Grand Canyon. Again, there are plenty of opportunities for keen photographers as we spend time around this area and visit the canyon's infamous sharp river bend known as 'Hell's Corner.'

DAY 23-25
Gariiep River – Cape Town

On our final leg of the journey we leave Namibia and enter South Africa stopping en route for a night next to the desolate but striking Gariiep (Orange) River.

We continue south and notice the desert slowly give way to the increasingly fertile Cape Province. On the edge of Cape Town itself lie the Cape Flats, home to Cape Town's townships. We visit some of the local people and community projects in the area. The townships illustrate both South Africa's tumultuous history and its hope for the future. Finally we continue to cosmopolitan Cape Town, without doubt one of the world's most beautiful cities. If time allows we recommend you spend a few days exploring the city and surrounds. Take advantage of the variety of activities normally available here – from abseiling Table Mountain and shopping at the V&A Waterfront, to wine tasting in the nearby winelands of Paarl and Stellenbosch.

TOUR INFORMATION

Travelling overland is great fun, but it can also be challenging! This is a *participation* tour and your help will be needed in setting up the camp each night and assisting (usually on a rota basis) with the various day to day campsite duties, such as shopping, cooking and keeping the truck and camp tidy. But don't worry it's not all hard work and it's a great way to meet the local people and get to know your fellow travellers. Your contribution benefits the success of the tour - most people find the greater their involvement, the greater their enjoyment of the whole trip.

Africa is an adventure destination and travelling here is not always predictable so be prepared to "expect the unexpected" in difficulties or delays which might come our way! However, you'll soon find that the diversity of the African landscape, the wildlife and the communities we pass on our way, make the sometimes rough travel and long driving days worthwhile.

Come with a sense of adventure and a flexible attitude and you will be sure to enjoy your Acacia overland tour across this amazing continent.

TOUR STYLE

Acacia Overland Tour

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Fully equipped safari vehicle, camping and cooking equipment, all road tolls and vehicle taxes, transport, sleeping mattresses, services of driver and tour leader, meals as indicated & Victoria Falls visit.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Local Payment excursions, visas, travel insurance, flights, departure taxes, airport transfers, sleeping bag, optional activities, drinks, tips, meals not mentioned in itinerary, items of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATION

We use 2-person dome tents with fly sheets, built in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and thick foam sleeping mattresses. We mainly use designated campsites, which often have permanent wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop, bar or swimming pool. We bush camp for two nights in the Okavango Delta, where there are little or no facilities, but just us amidst beautiful wild scenery – a real African highlight.

TRANSPORT

24-seater, self contained, custom-built safari truck with onboard tables, plug sockets, freezer, library, i-pod jack, safety features and 70-litre individual lockers.

MEALS

Meals included are - Breakfast (B) x24, Lunch (L) x20, Dinner (D) x19

These meals are prepared in camp by the group and help preparing the meals is invited. Most dietary requirements can be catered for on the road. Please ensure you inform Acacia of any special requirements when you book or at your earliest convenience.

GAME PARK VISITS

In order to maximise the quality of game driving and to comply with local authority rulings, some of our National Park visits and game viewing is carried out using services provided by local African ground handlers. As well as enhancing our experience it also allows us to contribute at a 'grassroots' level to local economies from which local people benefit. These local services are included in the Local Payment.

TOUR PREPARATION

BOOKING INFORMATION

When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent your booking documents and a pre-departure booklet with detailed information to help you prepare for your trip. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving details of your joining hotel. Johannesburg and Cape Town are well served by a variety of airlines and your travel agent can advise on flights to the start of the tour.

JOINING INFORMATION

This tour starts in Livingstone. **The pre-departure meeting is held at 18:00** on the evening prior to departure. **Our tour departs Johannesburg early on Day One. The tour ends in the late afternoon of day 25 on arrival in Cape Town.**

Meeting point in **Johannesburg** :

Address:

Backpackers Ritz

1A North Rd
Dunkeld West
Johannesburg
Tel. +27 11 325 7125/2520
Fax +27 11 325 2521

Contact details:

E-mail:

Website:

ritz@iafrica.com
www.backpackers-ritz.co.za

Pre-dep. meeting:

18:00 day prior to departure day

Tour start time:

Confirmed at pre departure meeting, normally 07h00.

Tour end point in **Cape Town**:

Address:

Ashanti Lodge Green Point

23 Antrim Rd
Three Anchor Bay,
Green Point
Cape Town, 8005,
Tel +27 (0)21 433 1619
Email: ashanti@iafrica.com

Normal end time

Late afternoon/ early evening on day 25

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

If time allows, we suggest you spend a night or two before and after the tour to fully enjoy the site seeing and activities on offer in the Cape Town and Johannesburg areas. Any additional nights can be booked on a direct pay basis. See below for a guide to extra accommodation costs. These prices may be subject to change especially at time of the World Cup (Jun-Jul 2010) so please contact Acacia or your agent to check prices.

Description	Price (ZAR)	Description	Price (ZAR)
Cape Town		Johannesburg	
Pre tour accommodation – Twin pp/pn – B&B	R280	Post tour accommodation – Dorm pp/pn	R110
Pre tour accommodation – Single pp/pn – B&B	R 395	Post tour accommodation – Twin pp/pn	R170
Pre tour accommodation – Dorm pp/pn – B&B	R 170	Post tour accommodation – Single pp/pn	R200

WHAT TO BRING

Please try to keep your luggage to a minimum, bearing in mind that most airlines impose a 20kg limit. It should be brought in a soft holdall or rucksack along with a smaller day bag. You will need to bring a mixture of lightweight clothing and warm clothing for the evenings and early morning game drives. You also need a sleeping bag (and small pillow if preferred). We recommended you pack a small torch or headlamp, mosquito spray and a money pouch/ belt that can be easily hidden. Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use your hotel safe to store the bulk of your money, passport, and airline tickets. A full 'What to Bring' list is included in our **pre-departure booklet (online version)**, issued when you book.

VACCINATIONS/HEALTH

The table below indicates the vaccinations suggested for travel on this tour but **should be treated as a guide only**. You should seek professional medical advice from your GP or clinic at least six weeks prior to departure.

Please be aware that some of the areas visited on this tour are **malarial**. We strongly recommend your seeking professional medical advice for the appropriate anti-malarial tablets.

Country	Tetanus	Diphtheria	Polio	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Typhoid	Meningitis	Rabies	Yellow Fever	Malaria
S. Africa	R	R	R	R	-	R	-	-	*	R
Namibia	R	R	R	R	-	R	-	R	*	R
Botswana	R	R	R	R	-	R	-	R	*	R
Zambia	R	R	R	R	R	R	-	R	*	R

C = Compulsory, **R** = Recommended, * = If travelling from infected countries a certificate of proof may be required.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

The table below indicates the visas required for travel to the countries on this tour but **should be treated as a guide only**. At least one month prior to travel seek confirmation from embassies or a visa specialist, that these requirements are still current. For UK citizens the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) offers free up-to-date travel info: www.fco.gov.uk For other nationalities a number of travel advice websites are listed on the Acacia website.

Nationality	UK	AUS	NZ	USA	CAN	BEL	IRE	NED	DEN	ITA	GER	AUT	SWE	FIN	NOR	MEX	KOR
South Africa	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Namibia	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Botswana	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Zambia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

MONEY MATTERS

PERSONAL EXPENSES

Naturally you will require extra money for your own personal spending on the tour, for snacks, drinks, souvenirs, tips and items of a personal nature. Everybody has different spending habits but as a guideline we suggest you budget US\$15-20 per day. Also keep US\$ cash for relevant airport taxes and visas needed, optional activities and any additional accommodation before or after your tour.

- **Spending money** is best carried as cash in US dollars, Sterling or Euro which can then be transferred into local currency on arrival. Your guide can advise how and when you can change the rest of your money throughout the tour.
- **Currencies** are as follows: South Africa – Rand; Namibia – Namibian Dollar; Botswana – Pula; Zambia – Zambian Kwacha. Please note that Rand is legal tender in Namibia at the same rate of exchange as the Namibian Dollar.
- **ATM machines** are found in Livingstone, Windhoek and Cape Town. Please note they are sometimes unreliable (and therefore should not be relied upon).
- **Credit cards** can be used to pay for optional activities although charges may be may be high by western standards (+/- 5%).
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

We recommend you bring your spending money in several different ways (some cash, some t/cheques, some cards); your guide can best advise on what to use where.

LOCAL PAYMENT

A Local Payment (LP) is to be paid to your tour leader at the pre -departure meeting. The LP fund is administered by the tour leader in conjunction with the group and covers most meals, all game drives using our own vehicle, campsite fees and meals prepared at the truck (usually two or three per day). You can choose to pay either the Basic Local Payment at the beginning, and then pay for your excursions along the way, or else you may pay for everything up front in the Fully Inclusive Local Payment.

Payment must be made in **US\$ cash in clean, post-2001 edition notes**. Travellers' cheques and credit cards **cannot** be accepted as means of payment. The LP amounts set out in the brochure are estimates of local costs at the time of printing. It is subject to inflation, exchange rate changes and local price rises. These may vary from the amounts set out in the brochure or website and on rare occasion where there is a shortfall, passengers will be asked to contribute further. Conversely, where there is a surplus of LP funds at the end of the tour, it will be refunded equally amongst all passengers.

TIPPING

This is always a matter for your own individual discretion but as in many areas where tourism is an important contributor to the economy, it has become customary to give a small gratuity to local staff, including your tour leader and driver, at the end of a tour if services rendered have been to your satisfaction.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities on the tour. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (in US\$ unless otherwise stated. subject to change and availability).

Activity	Price	Activity	Price (USD)
South Africa		Livingstone	
Orange River Canoeing	R200	Vic Falls bungi (single/tandem)	\$110/\$155
Namibia		Game walk	\$70
Quad Biking	N\$500	Croc farm tour	\$25
Sand Boarding	N\$250- N\$350	Gorge Swing	\$55/ 65
Deep Sea Fishing	N\$850	Zambezi Jet Boating & Cable Car	\$95
Scenic flights	N\$2695	Half day/ Full day Canoe Safari	\$95/ \$135
Tandem skydive	N\$1900	Horse Riding	\$80
Dolphin Cruise	N\$480	Elephant Interaction	\$50
Kayaking	N\$600	White Water Rafting/ Riverboarding comb	\$155/ \$175
Botswana		Flight over the Falls (from)	\$130
Okavango scenic flight per 5-seater plane	\$400	Zambezi Sunset Cruise	\$45
Kalahari desert swim excursion	50BP	Lion Encounter	\$125

INSURANCE

It is a booking condition of Acacia that you have full travel insurance valid for the duration of your tour to cover you for medical emergency and repatriation to your home country. Your guide will ask you for a copy of this when you join the tour. It is also important that you leave a copy of your insurance with the person nominated as your emergency contact. We can recommend a respected, specialist travel insurance provider for this tour. Please contact Acacia for more information.

Country Information – SOUTH AFRICA

Facts

Capital:	Pretoria (official), Bloemfontein (judicial), and Cape Town (legislative)
Size:	1 219 090 sq km / 470 693 sq miles
Population:	44,344,136 (Sept. 05)
Groups:	African/Black, White (mainly of Afrikaner and British origin), Coloured, Indian/Asian
Languages:	English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi, Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Venda, Tsonga (all 11 are official languages)
Local time:	GMT + 2
Seasons:	Western Cape: warm (September-April), cold and wet (May-August); East coast: humid all year; Northern provinces: wet (September-April), dry (May-August)
Currency:	1 South African Rand = 100 Cents
Telephone:	Country code 27, international access code 09
Electricity:	220 V / 230 V / 250 V / 50 Hz, the plug fits a 15A socket with three round pins

South Africa is a country rich in minerals, wildlife and scenery; a land of beauty with a complex social and political structure. Having by far the most developed and sophisticated economy on the continent, South Africa is essential to many of the neighbouring countries as an avenue for exports and as provider of electricity and high tech products. An excellent network of roads and an abundance of high quality camp sites makes travelling in and around South Africa an easy and rewarding experience.

Points of Interest

Cape Town

Founded in 1666 as a place where trading ships rounding the Cape of Good Hope could replenish supplies, Cape Town today is South Africa's tourist destination No.1. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world with plenty of sights and outdoor activities. The natural beauty of the place is defined by mountains (especially the famous Table Mountain) and sea (and not only one, it is here the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans meet).

The 'Mother City' has also has one of the most diverse populations in Africa including descendants from Indonesian, Malay, French, Dutch, British & German settlers, the local Khoisan (Bushman & Hottentot) tribes and the Bantu tribes from the north. It is one of the most tolerant and relaxed cities in Africa.
Places of interest in and around Cape Town:

Table Mountain – Cape Town's trade mark towers 1086 metres above sea level and is accessible by cable car or by several trekking routes (Platteklip Gorge being the most commonly used)

The Castle – Cape Town's oldest remaining building

Bo-Kaap – the old Malay quarter is a predominately Muslim area coined by Malay slaves who were brought in by the Dutch.

Victoria & Albert (V&A) Waterfront – this complex of shops, restaurants and bars attracts over 20 million visitors every year; it also has a oceanarium where you can dive with sharks; there is also the adjacent (and still working) port of Cape Town.

Robben Island – 11 kilometres from the coast, this World Heritage Site features a former prison of Nelson Mandela.

Company Gardens – the remains of the original fruit and veg gardens to provide the ships, these gardens now host many interesting museums.

Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens – situated at the eastern side of Table Mountain, these gardens contain a wide variety of mostly indigenous flora with the mountain as a backdrop; in summer concerts are held here every Sunday afternoon.

Beaches – Cape Town has a great many beaches on both Atlantic and Indian Oceans: the 4 beaches at Clifton, Camps Bay and Bloubergstrand on the Atlantic and Muizenberg, Kalk Bay and Fishhoek on the Indian Ocean, to mention just a few. However the sea-water here is generally cold.

Townships – the townships of Guguleu, Langa and Kayelitsha offer great insights into Cape Town's black communities.

Cape Peninsula – a day tour around the Cape Peninsula will lead you to Hout Bay Harbour with its Cape Fur Seal colony on Duiker Island, Boulders Beach with its jackass penguins and to the Cape Point Nature Reserve where the south-western most point of Africa is to be found.

Winelands – the world-renowned wine region around Stellenbosch has some of the oldest and most beautiful wineries in South Africa. Visit the beautiful buildings and sample some excellent wines.

Country Information - NAMIBIA

Facts

Capital:	Windhoek
Size:	824 292 sq km / 318 261 sq miles
Population:	2,030,692 (Sept. 05)
Groups:	Owambo, Kavango, Herero, Damara, Nama, Caprivian, San (Bushmen), Baster, Tswana (80%), Mixed + European (20%)
Languages:	English, Afrikaans, German, Ovambo, Herero, Kwangali, Nama/Damara, Lozi, Tswana
Local time:	GMT + 2
Seasons:	Dry (April-October), short rains (October-December), long rains (January-March)
Currency:	1 Namibian Dollar = 100 Cents also South African Rand
Telephone:	Country code 264 , international access code 00
Electricity:	220 V / 50 Hz, round pins with ground plug

Having the world's oldest desert, the highest sand dunes, and one of the most notorious coasts to shippers (the 'Skeleton Coast'), Namibia is one of the world's newest independent republics. Previously known as South West Africa, Namibia was a German protectorate up until WW1, when it came under the administration of South Africa. The German heritage is still evident in the architecture and place names (Luderitz, Swakopmund) and in the dress of the Herero tribe womenfolk, who still copy the dress of the 19th century German missionary wives.

The country has large stocks of diamonds, copper, uranium, tin, silver and other minerals, and these, plus the more traditional stock raising and fishing underpin the economy. Namibia appears to the visitor huge and empty. The largely desert-like landscape offers some stunning scenery. The Fish River Canyon in the south, Etosha National Park in the north and the dunes of the Namib-Naukluft desert in the middle are the main points of interest.

Points of Interest

Fish River Canyon

Fish River Canyon is the largest canyon in Africa and the second largest in the world (161 kilometres in length, 27 kilometres wide, with a drop from the rim of over 500 metres). The views from the many view points are spectacular. The Fish River itself does not flow every year but when it does, it appears suddenly and with force. During the winter months it is reduced to a few pools. There is a hiking trail along the bottom – some 86 kilometres long, it takes about 5 days to complete and ends in Ai-Ais (hot springs) but it is only accessible at certain times of the year.

Etosha National Park

Etosha is one of the largest game parks in Africa, at some 22,270 sq kilometres in area surrounding a central salt pan. The local Ovambo people named Etosha – as 'huge white area' or 'place of dry water'. In the dry season the Pan is an inhospitable lifeless place where salt crystals reflect the sun to form mirages. During the rains however, the Pan changes completely: birds, especially flamingos, flock to it and the land blooms. There are 144 mammal species in the park including the 'Big 5' and game viewing can be both relaxing and enjoyable.

Namib-Naukluft Park

Namibia's largest National Park - at 23000 sq kilometres, the fourth largest nature conservation area in the world - lies within the Namib Desert which stretches from the Orange River in the south to the Kunene River in the north (border of Angola). The Nama people call it, appropriately : 'Namib' – meaning 'vast'. Within its borders, the landscape varies from mountain, canyon and gorges to desert plains, lagoons and sand dunes. The main areas are Sossusvlei, the lagoon at Sandwich harbour, and the Naukluft Park.

Sossusvlei + Sesriem canyon

Sossusvlei is a dusty clay pan overlooked by hundreds of towering sand dunes up to 300 metres high. The dunes vary from pale apricot to vivid reds and bright orange. The most famous one is undoubtedly Dune 45. It is best to climb it in the early hours and watch the sunrise from the top.

Sesriem canyon is a small canyon which used to be an important water source for the early explorers and settlers. They used to lower buckets into the Tsauchab River with six thongs from where the Afrikaans name 'Ses Riem' derives. You can take a walk in the canyon where you will find a variety of bird, insects and lizards.

Swakopmund

Namibia's second largest town looks like as if it had been 'cut and pasted' from Germany into Namibia. The architecture of the town, wedged between the desert and the ocean is redolent of its German colonial past. But Swakopmund has a relaxed atmosphere with pleasant promenades, palm trees and gardens and there is plenty to do here. Walk around town – see the pier, lighthouse, the former train station, the Hansa brewery or the Ethnology and Natural History Museum. At night, head to one of the many bars and restaurants or the casino.

Swakopmund has also become Namibia's adventure capital and there is an array of activities on offer: sand boarding, quadbiking, camel rides, offroad driving, sky diving and desert horse riding.

Windhoek

Namibia's capital Windhoek (meaning 'windy corner' in Afrikaans) is an interesting mix of modern city and colonial past. It sits at 1650 metres above sea level and is Namibia's largest city with 15,000 inhabitants. The German influence is still visible and German widely spoken. Local highlights are Christuskirche (German Lutheran church), the Alte Feste (old fort) and State Museum, and the Tintenpalast (ink palace) the parliament. If you happen to be there in October or April, you may experience German culture in form of the Oktoberfest (beer festival) or the Windhoek Carnival.

Country Information – BOTSWANA

Facts

Capital:	Gaborone
Size:	585 370 sq km / 363 809 sq miles
Population:	1,815,508 (Sept. 07)
Groups:	Tswana, Kalanga, Basarwa, Kgalagadi, European
Languages:	English, Setswana, Kalanga, Sekgalagadi
Local time:	GMT + 2
Seasons:	Dry (April-August), rainy (November-March)
Currency:	1 Pula (BWP) = 100 Thebe (pula = rain; thebe = raindrops)
Telephone:	Country code 267, international access code 00
Electricity:	230 V / 50 Hz, round pins with ground or rectangular blade plug

Although vast, semi arid and empty, Botswana has prospered since independence and is comparatively well off in relation to its neighbours - especially those to the north. The economy relies on mining (Botswana supplies much of the world diamond supply), cattle ranching and tourism. Botswana is heavily reliant on South Africa for rail, air and sea links. The Okavango Delta in the north west of the country is a major attraction, the water levels rising and falling annually with the rivers originating in the Angolan highlands. Perennially short of water, the word for Botswana's currency unit (one of the strongest currencies in Africa) is the same word for rain.

Points of Interest

Okavango Delta Reserve

Some 1.6m hectares in area the Okavango Delta is the largest inland delta in the world and known to the locals as 'the river which never finds the sea'. Arising as a result of rivers rising in Angola (to the north) and flowing south and then dividing to form a natural wetland consisting of natural reed filled water channels, lagoons and islands. The Okavango consists of 4 parts: the Inner Delta, the Eastern Delta, Moremi Game Reserve and the Okavango Panhandle.

The Okavango is best explored on foot and by mokoro (dug-out canoe) where 'polers' guide you through the labyrinth of channels, standing like gondoliers at the rear of the boat. An alternative is to fly over the reserve for a bird's eye view. The Okavango is also very good for birders as huge numbers of waterfowl and raptors reside there, but you also find elephant, zebra, buffalo, wildebeest, giraffe, hippo, crocodile, lion and kudu here.

Chobe National Park

This park, 11,000 sq kilometres in size is located in the northern corner of Botswana near where the borders of Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe come together. One of Chobe's main attractions is the 25000 strong elephant population – part of a huge 'superpopulation' that exists across the northern belt of Botswana and Zimbabwe in which elephant numbers are thought to total some 120000. The Chobe River, its floodplain and nearby teak forest marks the heart of the park and it is there that animals come to drink and bathe. Besides elephant, you may also see antelope, buffalo, crocodile, lion, hippo and a number of birds including the African fish eagle.

Country Information - ZAMBIA

Facts

Capital:	Lusaka
Size:	752 614 sq km / 290 586 sq miles
Population:	11,261,795 (Sept. 05)
Groups:	Native African, European
Languages:	English, Bemba, Kaonda, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Mambwe, Nyanja, Ngoni, Tonga, Tumbuka
Local time:	GMT + 2
Seasons:	Warm and rainy (November-April), cool and dry (May-August), hot and dry (September/October)
Currency:	1 Zambian Kwacha = 100 Ngwee
Telephone:	Country code 260, international access code 00
Electricity:	220 V / 230 V / 50 Hz, round pin plug, round pins with ground or rectangular blade plug

Formerly Northern Rhodesia, Zambia is made up of a highland plateau (approximately 1000 metres above sea level) which rises toward the east and which - in the north, along the border of DR Congo- houses enormous reserves of copper, cobalt, coal, zinc and lead, the mining of which is of extreme importance to the economy. Tourism is of increasing importance with the magnificent Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River marking the border with Zimbabwe. The game parks of Zambia, although not so well known as those of Kenya and Tanzania, are large and well stocked with wildlife of all types. Zambia is one of Africa's newest democracies with its first multi party elections in 1991.

Points of Interest

Victoria Falls

'Mosi-oa-Tunya' – (the smoke that thunders) is the local name for Victoria Falls. At most times of year the Falls is an inspiring sight: 1708 metres wide and drop between 90 and 107 metres into the Batoka Gorge. An average of 550,000 cubic metres water /minute plunge over the gorge and at high water times the spray can be seen from 20-30 kilometres away. The Batoka Gorge forms the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. David Livingstone, the first European to see Falls in 1855 (and who named them after Queen Victoria) reported 'Scenes so lovely, they must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight'.

Today, visitors come here not only to look at the Falls themselves but also to try the various adventure activities available in the area -white water rafting, river boarding, jet boating, bungi, microlighting, helicopter flights, sunset cruises and elephant back safaris to name a few. Most tours spend several days in the area, just outside Livingstone, the nearest town, giving opportunity to view the Falls themselves and to try some of the adventure activities available. If your tour starts or finishes here though we do recommend you planning on having another day or so if time allows.

ACACIA ON THE ROAD

FOOTBALL'S COMING TO AFRICA

In line with the 2010 Football World Cup, in Cape Town, Acacia's keeping its eye on the ball. We've got together with the charity Footballs for Fun to spread some goodwill and love for the beautiful game across the continent. In 2008 all our trucks will carry footballs which can be bought and donated to children in the local towns along our route. The footballs are a perfect ice breaker and playing a game with locals is a great way to make friendships despite language differences. And all the profit (at least £2 from each ball) goes straight back into Africa, helping support a selection of AIDS charities and children's homes. Make a difference, get kicking and buy a ball when you're next on one of our trucks.



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We strongly believe that you get the most out of a journey by respecting the culture and people of the places you visit. On our tours we try to travel in a way that benefits the communities we pass through and minimises negative impact on the environment. This can be from ensuring the campsites we use are clean when we leave and dressing respectfully in conservative areas to getting involved with local charity projects. We ask that you are open to this when you travel with us. Being proactive in responsible travel helps develop cross-cultural understanding and friendships with the local people, and will greatly enhance your experience in Africa.

PHOTOS & STORIES SEARCH

If you've ever thought you can take better pictures than the brochures or have a great travel story and want to see yourself in print, then we're looking for you. If you've captured a great moment on tour, whether it's of the wildlife, local people, landscape or life on the road why not enter our monthly photographic competition starting in 2009. Not only do we give away a monthly prize, you may also see your photos published in a future brochure or on our website. We are also on the lookout for stories of life on the road, the funny, exhilarating, moving or simply unforgettable things you did on tour. We publish the best stories on the Tales from the Road section of our website.

Send your photos or stories to acaciaontheroad@googlemail.com

Photos should be in digital format & good resolution (max 6 pics per person) and labelled with the location of where the photos were taken. Meanwhile if you have a story or anecdote about your tour (up to 400 words) it needn't be word perfect, we'd love to hear about it.

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