

19 Day South West Safari

Tour overview

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

Highlights

Victoria Falls

Chobe National Park, Botswana

Okavango Delta, Botswana

Fish River Canyon, Namibia

Swakopmund, Namibia

Namib Naukluft Park, Namibia

Windhoek, Namibia

Etosha National Park, Namibia

Meals

19 Breakfasts, 15 Lunches, 14 Dinners

Accommodation

Camping in 2-person dome tents

Day 1 Livingstone

This safari starts and spends the first day in Livingstone, allowing time to enjoy one or two activities and excursions typically available in the Victoria Falls area. If you have time to spare we would certainly recommend allowing a few extra days here to make the most of the area. Activities include white water rafting, bungee jumping, abseiling, gorge swinging, canoeing, elephant and horse riding, scenic flights (by microlight, helicopter or small plane), and – a definite 'must!' - visit to the thunderous Victoria Falls themselves. At times of high river levels the spray can be seen from 20 kilometres away, hence the local name Mosi au Tunya – the 'smoke that thunders'. 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 per day).

Day 2 – 3 Chobe National Park

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.



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Day 4 – 5 **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 7 – 8 **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 9 – 13 **Etosha National Park, 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.

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 14 – 16 **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 17 – 19 **Gariep 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 Gariep (Orange) River.



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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, where the tour ends. 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.

Includes

- * Fully equipped safari vehicle
- * Camping and cooking equipment
- * All road tolls and vehicle taxes
- * All ground transportation
- * Services of two crew
- * Sleeping mattress
- * Meals as indicated
- * Bushmen paintings visit.

Excludes

- * Local Payment excursions
- * Visas
- * Travel insurance
- * Flights
- * Departure taxes
- * Airport transfers
- * Sleeping bag
- * Optional activities
- * Tips, drinks and items of a personal nature.

