

# Namibia Trek

Trek through Damaraland to the Skeleton Coast



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# Damaraland Skeleton Coast Trek, Namibia

## 14 to 23 September 2018

### Trek through Damaraland to the Skeleton Coast

Exposed to the mercy of the elements, Namibia's landscapes are not what you expect to find in Africa; deserts, tortured rock, open plains and a bleak and eerie coastline. The country is dominated by the Namib desert, where the world's highest sand dunes march determinedly towards the sea in a dune field 300km wide. Despite these hostile environments Namibia is abundant with wildlife. It is the only place in the world where you can see desert elephants and where black rhino roam free.

Our trek will take us through Damaraland to the Skeleton Coast. As we gradually enter the oldest desert in the world, the formidable Namib that stretches north to south hugging the Skeleton Coast, it becomes clear that only the hardiest fauna and flora could survive on this harsh but amazingly beautiful landscape. The Namib Desert is a geologist's paradise with many spectacular rock formations clearly exposed after thousands of years of erosion.

As we trek further towards the Skeleton Coast the landscape opens up with more extended views into the vast distance, giving you an idea of the scale of Namibia's vastness. The landscapes in this part are carved and dissected by water erosion when the ground is worn away and gully's and channels are cut ever deeper into the surface, leaving exposed spectacular rock formations and a wonderful jigsaw puzzle built over many millions of years.

Namibia defines the meaning of epic scale. There is nowhere else on the vast African continent that quite compares with its rugged, almost lunar grandeur!



# Detailed itinerary

## 14 September: Depart London to Namibia

Depart London for overnight flight to Windhoek the capital city of Namibia.

## 15 September: Windhoek to Brandberg

**View, Distance: 8kms**

**Trekking hours: 2hrs**

On arrival we board our coach and transfer past Windhoek, and the towns of Okahandja, Omaruru and Uis, to reach our drop off point at the foot of the mighty Brandberg (burning mountain). From here we stretch our legs after the transfer and walk into camp.

## 16 September: Brandberg View to Kalahari Dune Fields

**Distance: 20kms**

**Trekking hours: 7-8hrs**

Heading out in a north-westerly direction we cross a vast grassy plain towards distant hazy blue mountains yonder. After about 12 or so km we drop down rather dramatically into a sandy depression where lunch will be awaiting. We then follow a sometimes rocky course up the other side of the valley on to a Kalahari dune field that will see us to camp. This vast Kalahari-like sand sea is covered in low shrub and Acacia trees that sustain desert elephant as well as animals like kudu, zebra, oryx, springbuck and ostrich.

Various volcanic rock intrusions break up the dunes to present a strong contrast in both the scenery and the flora which becomes more stunted and hardy.

## 17 September: Kalahari Dune Fields to Quantagab

**Distance: 30kms**

**Trekking hours: 7-8hrs**

Starting out on rather soft dune sand we trek west with the sun on our backs, crossing increasingly harsh rocky undulations until we reach lunch after more or less 10km. The terrain changes gradually to expose granite outcrops like uneven cauliflower beds, dropping down into the Quantagab valley where camp appears out of nowhere.

## 18 September: Quantagab to Doros

**Distance: 20kms**

**Trekking hours: 7-8hrs**

Today we tackle the dry slopes and water courses which will lead us in a northerly direction into the very bowl of the caldera of the extinct Doros Crater. Here we will climb to the top of the rim to enjoy the spectacular view of the plains to the north-west below. A trail will lead us out onto the plains again where we will have lunch after not more than 13 km. The afternoon takes us further west and to camp.

## 19 September: Doros to Hyena's Den

**Distance: 20kms**

**Trekking hours: 7-8hrs trekking**

The view as we head out due west is stunning with a collage in blue, pink and purple, fading into distant mesas and ochre ridges lining the horizon under the morning sun. The sheer vastness and awesome desert colours diminish the slight rocky undulations into whisp's of memory as we enjoy lunch in clear view of Mikberg (forked mountain). The afternoon brings us onto gravel plains where time in creation stood still; progress is slowed to short of standstill to take in the minute majesty of rock formations and weirdly coloured pebble arrangements, left undisturbed by man or beast for millennia, shuffling us rather hesitatingly into camp.



# Detailed itinerary

## 20 September: Hyena's Den to Ugab

**Distance: 28kms**

**Trekking hours: 7-8hrs**

Our last full day of trekking leads us due south across the gravel plains that crease gradually into rocky folds running north to south, eventually channelling us back towards the dry Ugab river bed, with Brandberg still maintaining a strong presence beyond. We have lunch in a narrow valley hedged in by rocky ridges, this afternoon we drop down into the Ugab valley and camp.

## 21 September: Ugab to Swakopmund

**Distance: 13km**

**Trekking hours: 3hrs**

Attempting our last bit of the trek we head out along the jeep track that leads us due south up the slope out of the Ugab valley to the point where our coach will pick us up again. From here we transfer across the desert to Swakopmund, an interesting seaside resort, with the general feeling of a small German village, stuck in time. When we approach the turrets, towers and pastel coloured buildings appear like a mirage on the skyline.

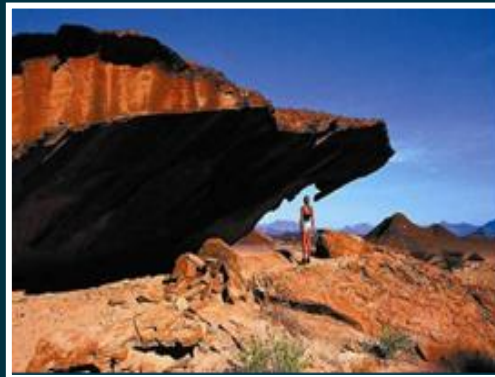
Tonight we celebrate our achievements with a special Gala Dinner.

## 22 September: Depart for London

Free day to enjoy some of Swakopmund's activities. Swakopmund is Namibia's adrenalin capital, and offers a wide range of gut-curdling activities from sand boarding and quad-biking to skydiving and camel riding, plus seal watching and relaxing boat trips. Or you can simply spend some time exploring this fascinating German colonial town.

Late afternoon transfer back to Windhoek for our overnight flight to London.

## 23 September: Arrive London.



## Challenge grade

Moderate/Tough

## Best time of year

February to October

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*This itinerary is complex and subject to change*

