

NCS – 7 Day Desert Explorer

Local Payment

There is no LP on this tour.

Countries Visited

South Africa and Namibia.

Vehicle

Overland Truck

Malaria

Malaria prophylactics are required. Very Low Risk of Malaria in Northern Namibia.

Departure Point

8.00am from Nomad Adventure Tours, 40 Shortmarket Street, 1st Floor, Leadership House, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town, South Africa. Tel: +27 21 426 5445.

www.nomadtours.co.za

End Point

Villa Wiese, Cnr. Theo Gurirab & Windhoek Street, Swakopmund, Namibia, Tel.: + 264 (0) 64 407 105

www.villawiese.com

What's included

Meals as indicated on the itinerary, accommodation, registered guides, transport and selected activities as per itinerary.

What's excluded

All items of a personal nature, alcohol, snacks, souvenirs, tips and optional activities (see list for an indication of prices).

Health

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disability that you may have.

Visas

Please note that these are your responsibility. Some nationalities require visas for Namibia. See Pre Departure Booklet for more information.

Note: All information is subject to change without prior notice. Travel times and campsites can change depending on road or weather conditions, etc. These are used as a guideline only.

Did you receive your Pre Departure Information Booklet?

If not please contact us at nomad@nomadtours.co.za and we will e-mail you the document; alternatively visit us at our office (1st Floor, Leadership House, 40 Shortmarket St, Greenmarket Square, Cape Town) to collect one. You can also download from our website at www.nomadtours.co.za.

Climate

The African sun is very strong, especially in Namibia. Please use a factor 30 sunscreen and wear a hat. You should drink at least 3 litres of water per day to avoid dehydration. It can also get very cold during winter months on this route. Please see Pre Departure Booklet for detailed information.

Currency and Banking

South African Rand is the most widely used currency on this route. US Dollar cash can be used for optional activities. In Botswana, the Pula is the local currency. You can change your Rand or Dollars to Pula when you enter Botswana. ATMs do not always work in Botswana. Travellers Cheques can take a long time to change into cash and often incur unreasonable charges. Credit Cards cannot always be processed – especially in remote areas. USD Notes printed before 2000 (i.e. the old style notes) will not be accepted and many places will not accept USD100 notes, so make sure to bring lots of USD1, USD5 and USD10 notes for tips and craft markets. Please see Pre Departure Booklet for detailed information on each country.

Vaccinations

No vaccinations are prescribed by law by the countries being visited on this tour. Please see the Pre Departure Information booklet for detailed information on vaccinations in Africa.

Onward Travel

This tour can be linked to Desert & Delta tour.

Pre and Post Tour Accommodation

If you require accommodation before or after your tour we can arrange this for you. We can also arrange airport transfers – contact your travel agent to make these bookings.

Arrival

Please be sure to arrive 1 day before your tour is due to depart. This will avoid any problems such as forgotten luggage, misplaced bags or any unpredictable problems such as airline strikes or delayed flight arrival.

Departure

Please book your flight to depart the day after the tour officially ends. This is to account for any delays that we may experience due to unpredictable road conditions.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Country	Area	Activity	Price Range	
South Africa	Gariep/Orange River	1/2 day Canoe Trip	R160	to R180
Namibia	Swakopmund	Sky Diving	R1900	to R2500
Namibia	Swakopmund	Quadbiking	R500	to R650
Namibia	Swakopmund	Sandboarding	R350	to R400
Namibia	Swakopmund	Dinner at local restaurant	R150	to R300
Namibia	Swakopmund	Dolphin Cruise	R450	to R540

Note:

There are more optional activities being created every day – we have listed only the most popular. If there is something specific you would like to do then speak to your guide as they will be able to assist you.

DAY 1 SOUTH AFRICA – CEDERBERG MOUNTAIN REGION

After a short stop to view Table Mountain we drive north to the Cederberg region. In the afternoon (weather permitting) we go on a guided walk to see Bushmen paintings and learn about the native fauna and flora.

Meals:	Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation:	Camp: Gekko Backpackers Campsite www.gekko.co.za
Facilities:	Drinkable water, hot showers, shared ablutions, bar.
Included Activities:	Guided nature walk in the mountains, with a local guide.
Route:	Cape Town to Citrusdal. ±200 km
Travel time:	±5 hrs

The Cederberg range, 100km long, is a gigantic mass of sandstone, coloured by iron oxides and eroded into strange shapes. This area has a rich plant life, including rarities such as the snow protea (only flower that grows above the snow line) and the Cederberg or rocket pinchion. The Cedar trees are of the *Widdringtonia cederbergensis* species. They grow at an altitude of 1000m to 1500m. Some species are believed to live up to 1000 years. The highest peak in the range is Sneeuberg (2028m). In 1660 the first European explorers from the cape, led by Jan Danckert came across a great herd of elephants in the Olifants River valley. The source of the river is in the mountains near Ceres. Above Clanwilliam, the Olifants is harnessed by a dam, built in 1935 and expanded in 1968, which irrigates 12140 hectares of farmland.

DAY 2 NAMAQUALAND – GARIEP RIVER

Today we travel to the Gariep/Orange River. We spend the night under the stars and sit at the campfire getting to know each other.

Meals:	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation:	Camp: Fiddlers Creek Campsite www.bushwhacked.co.za
Facilities:	Water not drinkable, bar, hot showers, shared ablutions.
Route:	Citrusdal to Orange/Gariep River. ±570 km
Travel time:	±10 hrs

In 1681 a party of Nama people visited Cape Town Castle to trade. They brought with them pure copper and the then Governor, Simon Van Der Stel, saw this as proof of tales told by Khoi Khoi informants. In 1685 Van Der Stel led a major expedition to the Fables Mountains. No copper was found on the surface, but rocks were stained with the green-blue of Malachite. Van Der Stel sank three shafts, which revealed a vast load of copper. After this find, for 200 years nothing was done about it due to the inhospitable environment. The Scottish explorer, Sir James Alexander investigated Van Der Stel's claims in 1852. He found several other copper outcrops and started mining.

Fortune hunters rushed to the area with many mining companies collapsing due to transport difficulties. One of the two that survived, at Okiep, was ranked as the richest copper mine in the world (Okiep is just north of Springbok).

The Orange River was named after The Dutch Royal Family (Oranje). It's now called the Gariep River. The river runs for about 1200 km. The source is at the Gariep dam near Aliwal North in Eastern Cape. It flows into the sea at Oranjemund on the west coast forming the border between RSA and Namibia and forms a natural boundary of various provinces in RSA.

DAY 3 NAMIBIA – GARIEP RIVER - FISH RIVER CANYON

You can choose between a morning on the riverbank or the half-day canoe on the river. After lunch we travel north to the Fish River Canyon. *Optional Activities: Orange/Gariep River Half Day Canoe Adventure.*

Meals:	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Accommodation:	Camp: Hobas Campsite www.nwr.com.na/fish_river_canyon.php
Facilities:	Drinkable water, small kiosk, with hot showers (sometimes), small swimming pool.

Included Activities: Hike along the rim of the Fish River Canyon
 Route: Gariep/Orange River to Fish River Canyon. ±180 km
 Travel time: ±4-5 hrs and a border crossing

Border post: South Africa: Vioolsdrift, Tel.: +27 (0) 27 761 8760, Open 24 hours
 Namibia: Noordoewer, Tel.: +264 (0) 63 297 122, Open 24 hours

The Fish River Canyon is approx 27km wide at its widest point and 550m deep. It is the oldest canyon in the world. The rocks at the bottom of the canyon are 2600 million years old. It was formed in part by glacial movements (upper section), erosion and movement of tectonic plates. The plateaus are 220m from the base of the canyon. There are catfish at the bottom that survive the dry season by burrowing into the mud until the water returns. It's a very slow moving and shallow river – more like a stream. Water is present in Feb/Mar/Apr. The highest recorded temperature at the base was 58 degrees Celsius and it's usually ten degrees Celsius hotter at the bottom than where you stand on the ridge.

DAY 4 NAMIB-NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK

From the Fish River Canyon we continue into the remote hinterland. We arrive at camp in the afternoon and enjoy a short hike at Sesriem Canyon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Accommodation: Camp: Sesriem campsite www.nwr.com.na/sesriem.php
 Facilities: Drinkable water, bar, swimming pool, hot showers, good ablutions, public phone & shop.
 Route: Fish River Canyon to Namib-Naukluft Park. ±560 km
 Travel time: ±10 hrs

At the entry to Sossusvlei is Sesriem Canyon. As a result of erosion over many centuries, a narrow gorge of about one kilometre in length was formed about 30 to 40 meters deep. Early explorers had to tie six lengths of thongs (long reins for cart horse) together to draw water from the pools in the canyon, hence the name "Sesriem".

The Namib is the oldest and most unique desert in the world. The central Namib stretches over 2000km along the coast from the Olifant's River in the south to San Nicolau in Southern Angola. Much of the desert is linear dunes, which are parallel to the sea and stretch from the coast to the inland gravel plains. These dunes may seem lifeless, but support a complex ecosystem capable of extracting moisture from the frequent fogs. The Desert was formed by a combination of activities. The Orange River combined with the Fish River deposit a great deal of silt into the ocean. Long shore currents push this silt northwards along the coast and onshore winds and wave action deposit this silt on to the shoreline. Over millions of years this belt of sand has pushed further inland and upwards forming the Namib Desert. The sand is very orange in some places because of the iron ore in the sand, which has simply rusted.

DAY 5 SOSSUSVLEI DUNES - NAMIB-NAUKLUFT NATIONAL PARK

We wake before dawn so we can hike up Dune 45 and watch the sun rise. After breakfast we join a local expert on a guided tour explaining the desert ecosystem.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
 Accommodation: Camp: Solitaire Guest Farm www.solitairequestfarm.com
 Facilities: Drinkable water, hot showers, shared ablutions, swimming pool.
 Included Activities: Sunrise hike up Dune 45. +/-3hr Desert Walk in Sossusvlei area, with Local Guide.
 Route: Sesriem to Solitaire. ±100 km (excludes drive to and from desert walk)
 Travel time: ±3 hrs (round trip into Sesriem), (plus drive to Solitaire)

Sossusvlei is a depression lined by some of the highest dunes in the world. Although a very rare occurrence, during periods of good rains the pan or "vlei" fills up with water from the Tsauchab River. This water wonder in the middle of the desert is a spectacular sight. The mean or average rainfall is used to class areas as either extremely arid (hyper-arid) with a mean rainfall of less than 100mm of rain per year; arid, with a mean rainfall between 100-250mm per year; semi-arid with 250-500mm of rain a year. About 16% of Namibia's land surface is hyper-arid. The Namib is hyper-arid with a rainfall of less than 100mm a year. In its driest areas the annual potential evaporation is 3500mm whereas the annual rainfall is 20mm.

The name Namib, is of Nama origin with the modern spelling referring to a desert, but a particular part of the desert, specifically a large plain. The dune sands are primarily derived from sediments washed down the Orange River and then moved northwards by the long shore drift plus the dominant southerly quadrant winds. The winds move the sand northwards and inland, trapping it by wave action in coastal embayment. Dune sand consists of 90-95% Quartz (Silica) grains and 10-15% Mica, feldspar and heavy minerals such as garnet, ilmenite and magnetite. The sand tends to be redder towards the east as a result of increasing quantities of an iron (ferric) oxide incrustation on the sand grains. This is a form of rusting of the quartz grains and is related to age, temperature and moisture.

DAY 6/7 SWAKOPMUND

Today we cross the Tropic of Capricorn (where we stop for a photo) on our way to Namibia's Atlantic coast. In Swakopmund you will be briefed on the optional activities available here. Day 8 is free for you to explore the town or try one of the many adventure activities. *Optional Activities: Quadbiking, Sandboarding, Sky Diving, Dolphin Cruise, Scenic Flights, Fishing, Dinner out etc.*

Day 6:

Meals:	Breakfast, Lunch
Accommodation:	Hostel (Dorm room): Villa Wiese www.villawiese.com
Facilities:	Shared Ablutions, Bar, drinkable water.
Included Activities:	Stop off in Walvis Bay to view Flamingos
Route:	Solitaire to Swakopmund. ±300 km
Travel time:	±4-5 hrs (including Walvis Bay)

Day 7:

Meals:	Breakfast
Accommodation:	Own Arrangements / Post tour accommodation can be booked through Nomad

Swakopmund was founded two years later than Windhoek, in 1892, by Captain Curt von Francois as the main harbour of German South West Africa. Increased traffic between Germany and its colony necessitated establishing of own port as Walvis Bay, located 33 kilometres south, was already in British possession. The choice fell on Swakopmund where water could be found and because other sites checked (including Cape Cross) were unsuitable.

The majority of towns and villages in Namibia have grown out of indigenous settlements and very often were located close to sources of water. Names of places given by original inhabitants were very descriptive and in many cases those names were retained by European settlers who sometimes simplified pronunciations of the names. Nama word "Tsoakhaub" can be translated as "excrement opening" which was offensive but accurate description of the waters of Swakop river at the time of coming down in floods carrying masses of mud, sand, pieces of vegetation and animal corpses. The masses of dirty and muddy water were emptied into the ocean and the indigenous name described it very well.

The Nama name was changed to "Swachaub" and with proclamation of Swakopmund as independent district in 1896 the present way of writing came into use.

Surrounded by the Namib Desert on three sides and the cold Atlantic waters to the west, Swakopmund enjoys a temperate climate. The average temperature ranges between 15°C (59°F) to 25°C (77°F). Rainfall is less than 15 mm per year, making gutters and drainpipes on buildings a rarity. The cold Benguela current supplies moisture for the area in the form of fog that can reach as deep as 140 km (87 mi) inland. The fauna and flora of the area has adapted to this phenomenon and now relies upon the fog as a source of moisture.

Swakopmund is well known for adventure sports including: Skydiving, Sandboarding and Quadbiking. Your guides will be able to assist you in deciding on a suitable activity, alternatively spend the day exploring the town and enjoying the various coffee shops and souvenir shops.

Tour Ends

This tour ends today at Villa Wiese www.villawiese.com, you can book an additional night here. You need to pre book this accommodation through your travel agent or Nomad.

TIPPING ON TOUR

Southern Africa: In general tipping in restaurants is generally expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides.

Our guides do work hard, but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty.

The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. We recommend USD1 (or about R5) per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 3-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 3 envelopes are used and each crew members name written on one. Place what you feel is fair in to each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

THE NOMAD AFRICAN TRUST www.nomadafricantrust.co.za

At Nomad we are passionate about the people, places and wildlife of Africa that make our tours so special. In order to give back we have set up the Nomad African Trust.

By the end of your tour you may have left-over local currency that you will not be able to change outside of its country of origin. Any assistance you could provide to the trust by donating this left over currency by depositing it in the secure box provided on the truck is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your help and please join our newsletter at the website above to receive regular updates on what we are doing to support our beneficiaries.



THANK YOU FOR TRAVELLING WITH NOMAD

At the end of your tour you will be provided with feedback forms. These forms are confidential and should be given to your crew in a sealed envelope. If you are not sure of the confidentiality of the feedback form please feel free to email us as well on ops@nomadtours.co.za Please make sure to also complete the feedback form as we use the answers on these forms to improve and maintain our service levels.

Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice, the accommodation listed in this dossier is our preferred supplier, but sometimes due to availability, we are unable to make use of the property listed in this dossier. If we cannot use the accommodation provider as listed we will substitute another property of similar standards, however, en-suite facilities are not always guaranteed.