

Gustafson Photo Safari 2024 - The Wild Namibia & Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

May / June 2024

ITINERARY

BLD = Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 1

Depart United States

Day 2

Upington, South Africa

Protea Hotel by Marriott Upington (D)

On arrival at Upington, you will be met by your guide and transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure to rest and relax before you start your adventure. Welcome dinner is included.

Day 3

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Botswana

Rooiputs Lodge - standard chalet (BLD)

After breakfast depart Upington in a northerly direction, entering Botswana through the Boskopits border. After completing the necessary immigration formalities, continue north on your safari until you reach the southern entrance to the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, called Two Rivers. Once in the park travel along the Nossob River Valley to Rooiputs Lodge, where you will spend the next four nights. Have a picnic lunch en route prepared by your guide. The Rooiputs private concession area is located on the Botswana side, 25 km north of Two Rivers (Twee Rivieren). Situated off the predator-rich Nossob Valley, the lodge is perched along a mature red sand dune, overlooking a busy waterhole. The dry riverbeds show predators and antelopes off at a premium and provide excellent photographic opportunities. Sixty species of mammals have been recorded in the park, including the majestic gemsbok, blue wildebeest, springbok, red hartebeest, eland, and steenbok. Predators are the area's big attraction and include the black-maned Kalahari lion, leopard, brown and spotted hyenas, jackal, and wildcat. The area is one of Africa's best parks for cheetahs, which thrive by hunting in the fossil river valleys and the surrounding Kgalagadi dunes. Eighty well-established waterholes along the Auob and Nossob Rivers attract large numbers of desert plains game and predators, and their proximity to the game drive roads make them an ideal close-up vantage point for photographers.

Day 4,5 & 6

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park

Rooiputs Lodge - standard chalet (BLD)

Explore Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park with game drives

Day 7

Keetmanshoop, Namibia

Quivertree Forest Restcamp - rooms & igloos (BLD)

After breakfast, drive to Rietfontein border to reach the lodge in Namibia. There are strict times involved for border crossings and your guide will be making arrangements to meet these requirements. Have a picnic lunch en route and continue to Keetmanshoop, arriving in the afternoon. The drive will take approximately six hours. After you check into your lodge and have time to rest, this afternoon you'll visit the Quivertree Forest and photograph these unique trees during sunset. Star photography planned for this evening.

Day 8

Keetmanshoop

Quivertree Forest Restcamp - rooms & igloos (BLD)

This morning when it is still dark, travel to Giant's Playground to photograph the rock formations during sunrise. Return to the lodge for a late breakfast, and then enjoy free time until lunch. In the afternoon, you can go back to Giant's Playground or to Quivertree Forest or choose to rest before you travel to Sossusvlei the next day.

Day 9

Sossusvlei

Dead Valley Lodge (BLD)

Early morning guided walk where you will have the opportunity to photograph the resident cheetah. After breakfast depart for Sossusvlei, where you will spend the next three nights. The Sossusvlei, Namibia's famous scenic highlight in the heart of the Namib Desert, is a huge clay pan enclosed by giant sand dunes. Some of the spectacular dunes reach a height of 300 meters,

and dry forest in the northeast. About 2 million years ago, this area was an enormous lake, fed by the Kunene River. However, the lake slowly dried up when the river changed its course. The pan is almost always dry. However, in the southern parts there are numerous waterholes scattered throughout this area and supporting the life for countless game. Almost all African game species are represented in Etosha, including the Big Five: elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion, and leopard. Based on an animal count done in 2005, there are about 250 lions, 300 rhinos, 3,000 giraffes, 12,000 zebras, 4,000 wildebeests, 5,500 oryx antelopes, and more than 2,500 elephants. Springboks are especially numerous; at least 20,000 of them roam the reserve. Often they can be seen in enormous herds of several hundred animals.

Day 18 **Etosha National Park** **Okaukuejo - Waterhole Chalet (BLD)**
Explore Etosha National park with game drives.

Day 19 **Etosha National Park** **Halali Camp - bush chalet (BLD)**
Explore Etosha National park with game drives.

Day 20 **Etosha National Park** **Namutoni Bush Chalet (BLD)**
Explore Etosha National park with game drives.

Day 21 **Etosha National Park** **Namutoni Bush Chalet (BLD)**
Explore Etosha National park with game drives.

Day 22 **Okonjima Nature Reserve** **Okonjima Plains Camp, AfriCat Foundation (BLD)**

Leave behind the plains of Etosha today and travel south towards the bushveld richness of the Okonjima Nature Reserve, arriving in time for a late lunch. Set out this afternoon with one of Okonjima's guides in search of one of their elusive collared but free roaming leopards while on a game drive. Return to the lodge after a sundowner drink to celebrate the day. This evening go in search of the rare and endangered pangolins as you trek on foot with a spotlight through the bushveld. Sightings of these incredible animals are rare in nature but some of them are fitted with radio trackers on Okonjima to not only allow sightings but also to assist with research and education purposes. Your guide will also give you insight into the conservation of these nocturnal mammals.

Day 23 **Okonjima Nature Reserve** **Okonjima Plains Camp, AfriCat Foundation (BLD)**

Spend the day exploring Okonjima Nature Reserve in search of the endangered species. This activity allows more time to enjoy, understand and photograph the Okonjima Nature Reserve as a natural island bound ecosystem. As the Nature Reserve was established primarily to conserve some of the more threatened mammal species, it provides an increased chance to encounter these relatively rare animals. This is once again assisted by the AfriCat Foundation's research projects on the shy brown hyaena, aardvark, aardwolf, bat-eared fox and rhino. There are more than 40 mammal species within the Okonjima Nature Reserve, both large and small as well as a good representation of the typical flora. This evening continue the search for the pangolins on foot.

Day 24 **Windhoek** **Avani Hotel (BLD)**

This morning you will have a chance to visit the world famous AfriCat Foundation where you will be taken on an educational tour to explore the beginnings and current projects that the Foundation runs that are dedicated towards the conservation of large carnivores in Namibia. AfriCat Foundation: Okonjima is home to the AfriCat Foundation, a wildlife sanctuary founded in 1991 that is dedicated to creating conservation awareness, preserving habitat, promoting environmental educational research and supporting animal welfare. Their main focus is Africa's big cats, especially injured or captured leopard and cheetah. AfriCat runs the largest cheetah and leopard rescue and release program in the world. In the last 17 years over 1 000 of these predators have been rescued with over 85% being released back into the wild. Close encounters with leopard and cheetah are an unforgettable highlight. Afterwards you will transfer to Windhoek. Lunch will be at a local restaurant en route. Have the afternoon to rest and get ready for departure. Attend a farewell dinner at a local restaurant in Windhoek.

Day 25 **Windhoek** **(B)**
After a hearty breakfast, you have time to sort out all your camera equipment before your transfer to the Windhoek International Airport.

Day 26
Arrive back in the United States.