

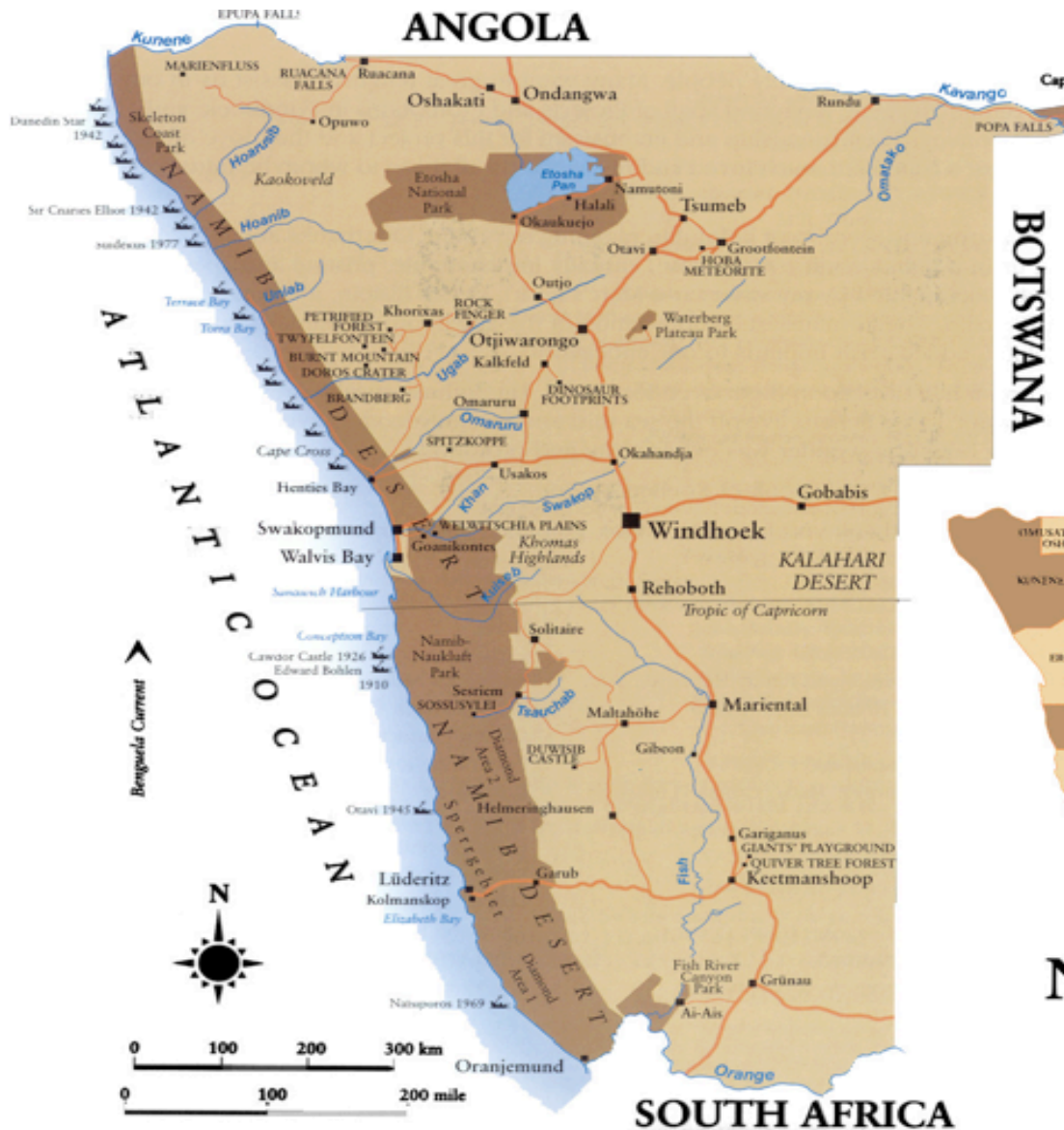
# African Sojourns

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## NAMIBIA COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your Namibian Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about the country. For further information you can visit the official Namibia Tourism Authority's website <http://www.namibiaturism.com.na>.



**The country:**

*The Republic of Namibia is a country in southern Africa whose western border is the Atlantic Ocean. It shares land borders with Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east and South Africa to the south and east. Although it does not border with Zimbabwe, less than 200 metres of riverbed (essentially the Zambia/Botswana border) separates them at their closest points. Its capital and largest city is Windhoek.*

*The dry lands of Namibia were inhabited since early times by Bushmen, Damara, and Namaqua, and since about the 14th century AD by immigrating Bantu who came with the Bantu expansion. It became a German Imperial protectorate in 1884 and remained a German colony until the end of World War I. In 1920, the League of Nations mandated the country to South Africa, which imposed its laws and, from 1948, its apartheid policy. It gained independence from South Africa on 21 March 1990, following the Namibian War of Independence.*

*Namibia has a population of 2.1 million people (the second-lowest population density of any sovereign country, after Mongolia) and a stable multi-party parliamentary democracy. Agriculture, herding, tourism and the mining industry – including mining for gem diamonds, uranium, gold, silver, and base metals – form the backbone of Namibia's economy. The majority of the Namibian population is of Bantu-speaking origin, mostly of the Ovambo ethnicity, which forms about half of the population, residing mainly in the north of the country, although many are now resident in towns throughout Namibia. Other ethnic groups are the Herero and Himba people, who speak a similar language, and the Damara, who speak the same "click" language as the Nama.*

**Currency:**

*In Namibia the currency is the Namibian Dollar, which is fixed to and equals the South African Rand on a one-to-one basis. The Namibian Dollar and South African Rand are the only legal tender in Namibia and can be used freely to purchase goods and services in the country. The Namibian Dollar, however, is not legal tender in South Africa.*

- *Banks are open Mondays to Fridays 09h00-15h30 and Saturdays 09h00-11h00*
- *Namibia banks will only accept US Dollars, Pound Sterling, Euro and South African Rand cash, which are then exchanged into Namibian dollars.*
- *You can change cash at the airport and any of the commercial banks, which are well represented throughout the country.*
- *You can draw money from the ATM at the airport on arrival and in major towns and some fuel stations. Cash amounts that can be withdrawn are normally restricted from N\$1, 500 to N\$2000 at any time.*
- *Most safari camps keep a limited supply of cash so don't rely on changing much cash at the camps.*
- *Visa or MasterCard credit card (Diners or Amex are not always accepted) are accepted almost everywhere.*

***You will need money for the following:***

- *Tips.*
- *Road tolls and fuel if you are renting a car.*
- *Souvenirs and personal items.*
- *Other items not included in your pre-paid trip.*

***Tipping:***

*Tipping is not compulsory, if, however, you want to tip because you have received good service our general recommendation is to tip moderately - in accordance with the level and quality of service provided. Please check the separate gratuities guideline document for details.*

***Visas:***

*Most European and USA passport holders do not require a visa to enter Namibia. However, if you are unsure if you require a visa please check with your nearest embassy.*

***Power:***

*Most camps in Namibia are situated in remote areas and have to generate their own electricity. This is done in a number of ways. Each camp has a generator that runs for about 6 hours per day, normally when guests are out on activities. These generators then charge batteries located at each tented room, which provide good 12v lights all night (if used sensibly). In camps that run on generators there are no plug points in the rooms so camera batteries are charged in the public areas when you are out on game drives, so bring a spare battery. There are also no hair dryers or electric shaving points. Most camps do provide international adapters. In major cities all electrical appliances run on 220/240 volts. Outlets are round 3-pin, 15 amp plugs.*

***Communications:***

*Most camps are located in remote areas so internet connections are almost non-existent but cell phone coverage is surprisingly good throughout most of the country, other than in parts of the Skeleton Coast and Etosha National Park.*

***Access:***

*Most camps are accessed by light aircraft flights. There are luggage restrictions on these flights, which vary between 10kgs (22lbs) to 20kgs (44lbs) per person. Please check with us on the exact limit for your trip. All luggage must be in soft-sided bags (no hard framed suitcases) on these light aircraft flights. If an individual weighs over 100kgs (220lbs) please ensure you have advised us.*

***Driving in Namibia:***

*See the separate information on Driving Tips for Namibia if you are on a self-drive holiday. Payment for fuel and road tolls must be in cash. A tank of fuel will cost approximately ZAR 1,000 (USD65 approx) and this should take you about 600km. Service at petrol stations is provided by a petrol attendant. Tipping is at your discretion. Ask the attendant to check the oil, water and tyre pressure. Leaded and unleaded fuel is available throughout.*

*There is a very high accident rate in Namibia with the main reason being from people driving too fast on the roads. Please take special care and do not speed!*

**Shopping**

*Namibia sells a wide range of locally made wooden carvings and baskets in the markets and along the roadside. Remember to always bargain at the markets and start at half the asking price! The main markets are in Windhoek and in the town of Okahandja in the north. In the major centres, such as Windhoek and Swakopmund, you will find diamonds, semi-precious stones, curios of all types including dolls dressed in the traditional Herero style (these are made by Herero woman), hand-carved wooden objects, beautifully fashioned jewellery, shoes made of Kudu leather, karosses (rugs made from the pelts of wild animals), and popular SWAKARA garments.*

**Language:**

*While the official language is English, most of the white population speaks either German or Afrikaans. The northern majority of Namibians speak Oshiwambo as their first language, but the most widely understood and spoken language is Afrikaans.*

**Time:**

*Namibia operates on daylight savings time as follows:*

*Summer: From the first Sunday in September to the first Sunday in April - two hours ahead of GMT*

*Winter: From the first Sunday in April to the first Sunday in September - one hour ahead GMT. During this time Namibia is 1 hour behind that of its eastern neighbours (South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe).*

**Economy:**

*Namibia's economy is tied closely to South Africa's due to their shared history. The largest economic sectors are mining, providing 25% of Namibia's revenue. Agriculture manufacturing and tourism are also important sectors. Namibia is the fourth largest exporter of non-fuel minerals in Africa and the world's fourth largest producer of uranium. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds.*

**Public Holidays:**

*The dates of certain public holidays change from year to year.*

<i>01 January</i>	<i>New Years Day</i>
<i>21 March</i>	<i>Independence Day</i>
<i>Varies</i>	<i>Good Friday</i>
<i>Varies</i>	<i>Easter Monday</i>
<i>18 April</i>	<i>Independence Day</i>
<i>01 May</i>	<i>Workers' Day</i>
<i>4 May</i>	<i>Cassinga Day</i>
<i>9 May</i>	<i>Ascension Day</i>
<i>25 May</i>	<i>Africa Day</i>
<i>26 August</i>	<i>Heroes' Day</i>
<i>10 December</i>	<i>Namibian woman's day</i>
<i>25 December</i>	<i>Christmas Day</i>
<i>26 December</i>	<i>Family Day</i>

***The Namibian flag:***

*The flag of Namibia was adopted on March 21, 1990 upon independence from South Africa. The main colours were taken from the flag of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the most important liberation movement in Namibia. Red represents Namibia's most important resource, its people. It refers to their heroism and their determination to build a future of equal opportunity for all. White refers to peace and unity. Green symbolises vegetation and agricultural resources. Blue represents the clear Namibian sky and the Atlantic Ocean, the country's precious water resources and rain.*

***Climate:***

*As most of Namibia is covered by desert it is unsurprising that the climate is exactly what you would expect from a desert country. Daytime temperatures are hot (extremely hot in summer) and nights are cold, some areas frequently go below freezing in winter. Rainfall is sparse; with the north-eastern areas of Namibia getting the most rain (this area is tropical) and rainfall decreasing as you travel south and westwards.*

*On the Skeleton Coast the cold Benguela Current along the Namibian coast ensures prevailing moderate weather at the coast and adjacent desert, which enables safaris to be undertaken all year round. Due to the fog belt, which is often present, the climate at the coast tends to vary considerably. Temperatures are very variable but never drop below freezing point but it is essential to pack clothing adaptable to both warm and cold temperatures.*

*Here's what you can expect on a month-by-month basis:*

*January: Hot and humid with a good chance of rain, meaning that on most trips it is advisable to have a 4x4.*

*February: A hot and humid month which traditionally has the highest rainfall. The plus side is that there are very few tourists and low season rates are in operation. Game may have dispersed due to larger amounts of surface water and also becomes more difficult to spot due to the increase in vegetation.*

*March: This month is hot and humid with a good chance of rain. Depending on the timing of Easter this can be a popular month for tourists. Game will still be dispersed due to larger amounts of surface water. In terms of landscapes, this is when Namibia looks the greenest and can be very pretty. For most trips it is advisable to have a 4x4. Generally low season rates.*

*April: Day temperatures are starting to cool off, evenings are cooler but still pleasant. The Namibian landscape is looking at its best. If Easter rush can be avoided then this is one of our favourite months. However, game viewing still can be less impressive than drier months. Enter daylight saving so days seem shorter than before (sunset at c. 17.30)*

*May: The onset of winter - warm but shorter days and cold nights. Rain is very unusual. As the country begins to dry out the game viewing becomes better. The veld becomes very pretty particularly after seasons with good rainfall with plains of golden grass.*

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*June: Warm days and cold nights and almost no chance of rain. Everything starts getting much drier and so good game viewing is assured. If game viewing (in Etosha Park) is the main emphasis but you don't like crowds or hot weather, this is a good month to travel.*

*July: Warm days and very cold nights. No rain. As it is several months since the last rain everywhere is very dry and so the parks offer good game viewing as the wildlife is forced to visit waterholes to drink. This is high tourist season and rates are often adjusted accordingly.*

*August: Warm days and cold nights with no rain. Very dry so good game viewing is on offer but the country looks stark. August is frequently windy, and the dry dusty conditions and wind are not a pleasant combination (although they do make for some awesome sunsets)! This is peak tourist season.*

*September: The first weeks see a brief period that might be termed spring but normally by the end of the month summer is in full swing with hot days and pleasant night-time temperatures. Rain very unlikely but it can be windy. The good game viewing persists until the start of the rains (normally at the end of October or November in northern Namibia). Change clocks back to Namibian summer time so longer days.*

*October: Hot days with a small chance of rain, in Windhoek this is often called suicide month, as residents get depressed by large build up of thunder clouds only to be let down as they blow over without delivering any rain.*

*November: Very hot days with a small chance of rain. The quality of game viewing depends on the start of the rains. Fewer tourists around the country than during the preceding four months.*

*December: Very hot days with some chance of rain. During the first half of the month there are few tourists, during the second half bookings become more difficult as locals and tourists flock to the coastal towns of Swakopmund, Walvis Bay and Luderitz.*

**Temperature (°F) - These are the average lows and highs**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	63/56	63/84	59/81	55/77	48/72	45/68	45/68	46/73	54/79	57/84	61/84	63/88
SWP	54/77	54/73	54/73	59/77	59/77	64/82	59/82	59/82	54/77	54/77	54/77	54/77

**Rainfall (inches). This varies according to the year and where you are.**

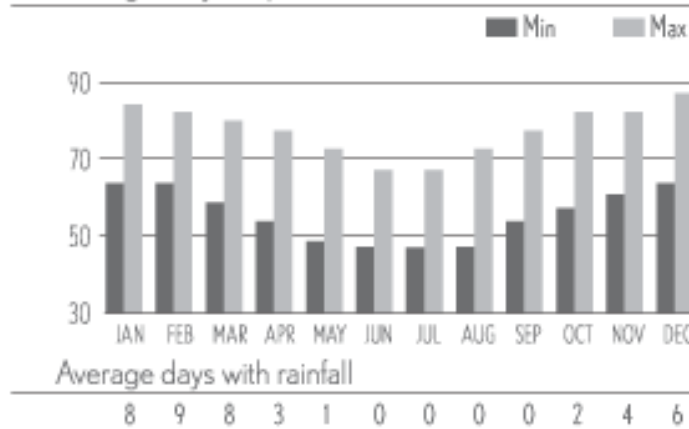
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
WDH	1.69	2.08	2.20	1.10	0.19	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.39	0.90	3.75
SWP	0.47	0.59	0.47	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.27	0.35	0.43	0.59	0.63	0.43

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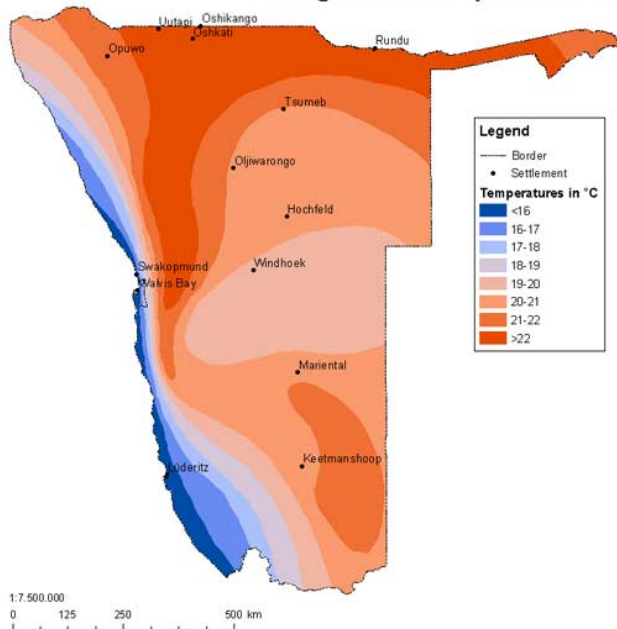
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## NAMIBIA

Average daily temperature in F°



## Average annual temperatures in Namibia



Map produced by  
**SFB 389 'ACACIA', subproject E1**  
 University of Cologne   
Data source:  
 Atlas of Namibia Project, 2002, Directorate of Environmental Affairs,  
 Ministry of Environment and Tourism. <http://www.idea.met.gov.na> (2003)

***Recommended Reading***

- *This is Namibia; Gerald Cubitt & Peter Joyce*
- *Namibia: The Beautiful Land; David Bristow*
- *Namibia: African Adventurers Guide; Olivier and Olivier*
- *Etosha Visual Souvenir; Darryl Balfour*
- *Skeleton Coast; Ami Schoeman*
- *Waterberg, Namib & Damaraland Flora; Craven*
- *Desert Adventure: In Search of Wilderness in Namibia and Botswana; Paul Augustinus*
- *This is Namibia; Gerald Cubitt*
- *Soul of a Lion: One Woman's Quest to Rescue Africa's Wildlife Refugees; Barbara Bennett and Mariete van der Merwe*
- *East Wind: a True Story; Jacqueline Richards, Lessil Richards*
- *The Last Train to Zona Verde: My Ultimate African Safari; Paul Theroux*
- *The Sheltering Desert; Henno Martin*
- *Drawn from the Plains: Life in the Wilds of Namibia and Mozambique; Lynne Tinley*
- *Himba: Nomads of Namibia; Margaret Jacobsohn*

***African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful and exciting holiday!***