



## TOUR INFORMATION FOR NAMIBIA

**These notes are designed to help you prepare for your tour. Please read carefully.**

**ENTERING NAMIBIA:** United Kingdom citizens will need a passport which is valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. A visa is not required. Citizens of other nations should contact the nearest Namibian consulate for entry requirements.

In the past you were required to show a yellow fever vaccination certificate when entering the country. The situation surrounding this is now somewhat confused, but generally they are no longer required if you are entering Namibia from a country where yellow fever is not endemic. However if immediately prior to entering Namibia you have spent time in a country where yellow fever can be found, then it probably wise to have prove of vaccination with you. This does not apply if you have just transited through a country en route.

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

**CURRENCY:** The Namibian currency is the Namibian Dollar which is pegged to the South African rand – and in fact South African rand can be used anywhere in Namibia. As the tour price includes all travel, hotel and main meal costs, you need only bring enough money to cover items of a personal nature. For the small amount of money you are likely to need to change, it is probably easiest to bring sterling notes. All major credit cards are acceptable in some but not all places. There are cash machines or ATM's in most of the towns we pass through.

**LANGUAGE:** English is widely spoken.

**CLIMATE:** Namibia is typical of a semi-desert country with hot days and cool nights and temperatures ranging from 100°F (38°C) to 62°F (17°C). Some days can be very hot. The intense sun makes a sun hat, long-sleeved clothing and a strong sun-screen essential. Humidity is generally low but we can experience some cool conditions near the coast, especially in the early mornings.

**PACE OF TOUR AND DAILY ROUTINE:** This is a fairly relaxed tour although you can expect some early starts on most days to make the most of the cool early mornings. This means starting at about 06.00 or even 05.30 if we need to be somewhere at first light. Our days usually end around 18.00 - 18.30 although we may not reach our accommodation on some days until as late as 19.30. On some days we will have breaks during the middle of the day. Normally we try to allow an hour after reaching our accommodation for showering and changing before dinner, however if we have a later arrival for whatever reason, we may need to go straight to dinner. There are no particularly long walks and anyone with a reasonable degree of fitness will be able to take part fully in the tour. We spend a fair amount of time in the tour vehicle, both travelling from place to place, and also in Etosha National Park where we are not allowed out of the vehicle other than at designated locations.

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**HEALTH:** It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the regions you are visiting. Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

It is recommended that you are up-to-date on routine vaccinations. Up-to-date inoculations against typhoid, polio and yellow fever are recommended. It is also worth checking that you are adequately protected against tetanus. As the situation changes fairly quickly we suggest consulting your doctor for the latest advice shortly before starting your course.

Malaria is mainly restricted to the northwest part of the country. It is not a problem in the southern areas as you are considered to be at low to medium risk in the Etosha region. Your doctor will advise you on the latest situation and what medication should be taken. Useful information on all aspects of malaria, including how to reduce your chances of being bitten can be found at the website <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malaria/prevention>

Biting insects are almost non-existent on this tour other than tiny midges in a couple of places. The strong sunlight at times makes sun glasses and a sun hat essential. Upset stomachs are a rare occurrence. Tap water is generally safe to drink in the towns and villages but should be avoided in the more remote areas. Bottled water is readily available.

It may be difficult to obtain any special medication during the tour, so bring all you are likely to need.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website [www.masta-travel-health.com](http://www.masta-travel-health.com)

**ACCOMMODATION:** Hotels and lodges are generally very good throughout and all places have en suite facilities. In some places, and depending on demand and the number of singles booked, there could be a shortage of single rooms.

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry is only available in locations where we spend two nights.

**ELECTRICITY:** The standard domestic power throughout the trip is 220 volts AC. Sockets are the 3 round pin type as used in South Africa. Most international adapters **do not** work and you will need to obtain a specific round 3 pin adaptor. These are now available at most outdoor shops or online. You may find the following website helpful: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

**FOOD:** Food is excellent, plentiful and usually contains a lot of meat, although vegetarians will manage perfectly well. We will have at least one seafood meal on the coast.

Our tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regrettably, not be accommodated.

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Our tours are carefully scheduled to insure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to bring supplemental food with them.

**DRINKS:** Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer (or wine if appropriate) are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition, we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some rooms where we stay.

**INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS:** Mobile phone access is good throughout the country. Some places we stay have internet access although at some, such as in Etosha, this can be so slow as to be useless.

**CLOTHING:** Lightweight and loose clothing is recommended for the hot days we are bound to experience. However also bring a jacket and a lightweight sweater for potentially cool early mornings. Lightweight walking shoes or boots should be adequate for all the places we visit. Long-sleeved shirts and a good hat will be useful for protection against the sun.

**MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:** Please bring the following.

|                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Notebook and pencil         | Alarm clock                |
| Small rucksack/shoulder bag | Insect repellent           |
| Torch with extra batteries  | Sun screen and sun glasses |
| Swimwear                    | Personal medication        |

**Optional:** Telescope & tripod (very useful on the coast but less so elsewhere. However telescopes can also be used from the open-top vehicles in places such as Etosha), spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide.

**Note:** The most effective insect repellents are those containing at least 35% of the active ingredient diethyltoluamide (DEET). The higher the percentage, the greater the effectiveness. However, care must be taken to avoid getting the repellent on to optical equipment as it dissolves rubber and plastic and can damage coated lenses. A reasonably effective alternative, which isn't corrosive, is Mosi-guard, produced by MASTA, and we recommend this. It is available in most high street chemist (including those at the airport). Camping supply stores sell a product containing permethrin 0.5%, which must be applied directly to clothing in advance of wearing and allowed to dry. This non-staining, odourless chemical is non-toxic to humans and protective on clothing through several launderings. Please make sure you never to spray insect repellent inside the vehicle or when you are standing close to other participants – it may drift on to their optical equipment.

**LEADER'S EQUIPMENT:** The leader will provide the following:

|                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Telescope & tripod             | Basic first-aid kit |
| Field guides & reference books | Play-back equipment |
| Spot light                     |                     |

**LUGGAGE:** Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

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Please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Photographic opportunities will be endless in the varied and diverse habitats we will be visiting. Namibia is extremely scenic and the wildlife is fairly approachable. This is especially true in Etosha where we get close to a wide variety of mammals and birds. Many of the roads will be dusty so it is advisable to keep camera equipment in dust proof bags. You may find it useful to bring a bean bag for taking photos from the vehicle. If you wish to digiscope please ensure that you bring your own telescope – **the leader's telescope cannot be used for digiscoping**.

If you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

**TRANSPORT:** Transportation will be in a safari-type long wheel-base Landcruiser. This has the advantage over normal minibuses of having large opening windows and roof hatches which allow excellent game viewing when in the National Parks. However, these vehicles may not have air-conditioning. The leader will arrange a seating rotation and participants must be able to ride in any seat in the tour vehicle.

**SMOKING:** Smoking or vaping is not allowed in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

**TIPPING:** All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

## **NAMIBIA: Tour Information...5**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Most of the books on the birds and wildlife of South Africa also cover Namibia.

Sinclair, I., Hockey, P. and Tarboton, W. 2012. *Sasol Illustrated Guide to Birds of Southern Africa*. New Holland Press, London. Struik, Cape Town. The newest and best field guide of the region's birds. This book has some excellent plates and will be the main guide for the tour. **This is the recommended guide for this tour – please try to obtain the latest edition.**

Sinclair, I. *Southern African Birds: A Photographic Guide*. New Holland. *Collins Illustrated Checklist: Birds of South Africa*. 1999. Collins. Although not a true field guide, this concise book is worth considering as a handy reference.

Stuart C. & M. *Field Guide to the Mammals of Southern Africa*. 2015. Struik. ISBN-13: 9781775841111. A very good comprehensive book on the mammals packed with photos and lots of useful text. Also available in a smaller edited version. **Recommended**

Kingdon, J. *The Kingdon Pocket Guide to African Mammals*. 2004. A&C Black, London. ISBN 0-7136-6981-0. A pocket-sized version of the popular field guide which is much more 'user-friendly'. It contains the same illustrations and maps, but with less text. Also available as an E-book.

PAR Hockey, WRJ Dean and PG Ryan. 2005. *Roberts Birds of Southern Africa*. Russell Friedman Books. ISBN: 0620340533. This latest version of the long-standing classic is now the benchmark reference work for birds in the region. Expensive but a very useful reference.

**AFRICAN BIRD CLUB:** Please support this charity which aims to raise money to support conservation projects, encourages an interest in the conservation of birds, and liaises with and promotes the work of existing societies within the region. You will find their contact details and further information about the Club at [www.africanbirdclub.org](http://www.africanbirdclub.org)

**FINAL INFORMATION:** Final information with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses etc., and your air tickets will be sent out about three weeks before the start of the tour. If you have any questions about the trip, please contact us.