

TONY WHEELER, COFOUNDER – LONELY PLANET

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

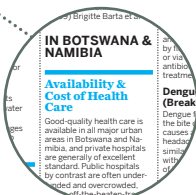
| | |
|--|----|
| Welcome to Botswana & Namibia | 2 |
| Map | 4 |
| 16 Top Experiences | 6 |
| Need to Know | 14 |
| If You Like | 16 |
| Month by Month | 20 |
| Itineraries | 22 |
| Planning a Safari | 28 |
| Regions at a Glance | 38 |



SURVIVAL GUIDE

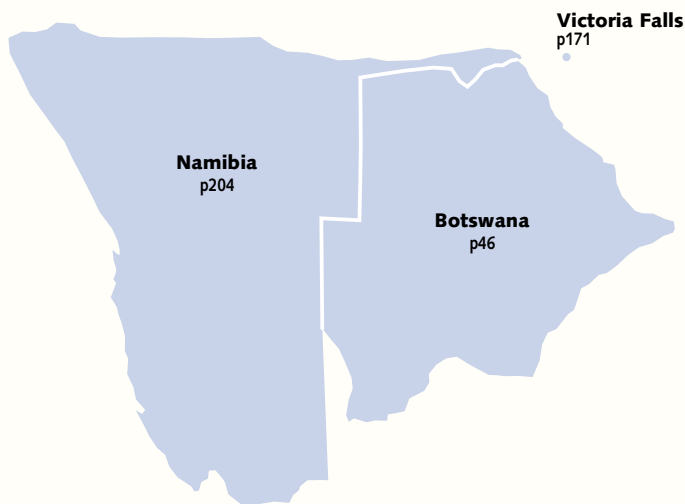
VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO
HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Health | 362 |
| Language | 368 |
| Index | 383 |
| Map Legend | 398 |



5 2 8 9 9





THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Alan Murphy

Anthony Ham, Trent Holden, Kate Morgan

➤ Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first

➤ Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

BOTSWANA.....45

GABORONE..... 47

AROUND GABORONE 57

North of Gaborone..... 57

West of Gaborone 58

South of Gaborone 59

EASTERN BOTSWANA..... 59

Palapye..... 60

Serowe 61

Khama Rhino Sanctuary..... 62

Tswapong Hills 63

Francistown..... 64

Tuli Block 66

NORTHEASTERN
BOTSWANA..... 68

Makgadikgadi &
Nxai Pans..... 68

CHOBE NATIONAL PARK
& KASANE 75

Kasane & Around..... 75

Chobe Riverfront 81

Nogatsaa/Tchinga Area ... 84

Savuti..... 84

Linyanti Marshes 86

OKAVANGO DELTA..... 88

Maun..... 88

Shorobe..... 100

Eastern Delta 100

Inner Delta..... 101

Moremi Game Reserve ... 103

Okavango Panhandle..... 108

NORTHWESTERN
BOTSWANA..... 111

Tsodilo Hills & Around... 111

KALAHARI..... 116

On the Road

| | | | | | |
|--|------------|---|------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| Ghanzi | 117 | Carnivores | 196 | The Namibian Way of Life | 332 |
| D'kar | 119 | Birds of Prey | 198 | Arts | 334 |
| Central Kalahari Game Reserve | 120 | Birds | 200 | Namibian Cuisine | 337 |
| Khutse Game Reserve | 124 | NAMIBIA | 203 | Environment | 338 |
| Kang | 125 | WINDHOEK | 205 | National Parks & Reserves | 342 |
| Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park | 126 | NORTH-CENTRAL NAMIBIA | 223 | SURVIVAL GUIDE | 344 |
| UNDERSTAND BOTSWANA | 130 | East to Botswana | 224 | Directory A-Z | 344 |
| Botswana Today | 130 | North to Etosha | 225 | Getting There & Away ... | 354 |
| History | 130 | Etosha National Park | 237 | Getting Around | 356 |
| People of Botswana | 135 | NORTHERN NAMIBIA ... | 243 | | |
| Religion | 139 | The North | 243 | | |
| Arts & Crafts | 140 | Kavango Region | 246 | | |
| Botswana Cuisine | 144 | The Caprivi Strip | 248 | | |
| Environment | 144 | Otjozondjupa | 254 | | |
| National Parks & Reserves | 151 | NORTHWESTERN NAMIBIA | 258 | | |
| SURVIVAL GUIDE | 153 | Damaraland | 260 | | |
| Directory A-Z | 153 | The Kaokoveld | 265 | | |
| Getting There & Away ... | 164 | The Skeleton Coast | 269 | | |
| Getting Around | 167 | CENTRAL NAMIBIA ... | 273 | | |
| VICTORIA FALLS ... | 171 | Swakopmund | 274 | | |
| ZAMBIA | 176 | Walvis Bay | 286 | | |
| Livingstone & Around ... | 176 | Namib-Naukluft Park & Sossusvlei | 290 | | |
| ZIMBABWE | 182 | SOUTHERN NAMIBIA ... | 300 | | |
| Victoria Falls | 182 | The Central Plateau | 301 | | |
| WILDLIFE | 187 | The South Coast | 305 | | |
| Cats | 188 | The Far South & Fish River Canyon ... | 315 | | |
| Primates | 190 | UNDERSTAND NAMIBIA .. | 321 | | |
| Cud-Chewing Mammals .. | 192 | Namibia Today | 321 | | |
| Hoofed Mammals | 194 | History | 322 | | |
| | | The Namibian People ... | 326 | | |

› Botswana & Namibia



Top Experiences >



**Kate Morgan**

Victoria Falls Having travelled in East and North Africa, Kate was keen to check out what the southern part of the continent had to offer. She was lucky enough to head off to Victoria Falls to stand in awe of the world's most impressive waterfall from both sides, in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Kate is a freelance writer based in Melbourne and has written for other Lonely Planet titles including *Japan* and *Phuket*. She's also compiled the music/travel anthology, *Song for the Road*.

Contributing Author

David Lukas teaches and writes about the natural world from his home on the edge of Yosemite National Park. He has contributed Environment and Wildlife chapters to more than 25 Lonely Planet guides, including *Tanzania*, *East Africa*, *South Africa*, *Lesotho & Swaziland* and *Botswana & Namibia*.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London, Oakland and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Alan Murphy

Coordinating Author, Namibia Alan remembers falling under Southern Africa's

ambient spell after bouncing around in the rear of a bakkie on the way from Johannesburg airport in 1999. Since then he has been back numerous times for Lonely Planet, including this trip to Namibia. In particular, Alan finds wildlife watching exhilarating and although he can't compete with twitchers spending hours hiding in a bush waiting for a feathered discovery, he has certainly taken years off his life staking out waterholes. This was Alan's third time to Namibia, a country custom-built for road trips with landscapes that never cease to inspire. Alan lives with his wife in the Yarra Valley outside Melbourne, which he wishes was just a touch closer to Melbourne airport.



Anthony Ham

Botswana Anthony has been travelling around Africa for more than a decade, particularly the Sahara, Kenya and Botswana. A writer and photographer, he writes guidebooks about Africa – including *Kenya*, *Africa*, *Libya* and *West Africa* – and elsewhere for Lonely Planet. He also writes and photographs for magazines and newspapers around the world, among them *Travel Africa* and *Africa Geographic*. He counts among his passions conservation, wildlife, indigenous

peoples and the wild places of Africa. He covered more than 8100km on his most recent trip to Botswana. When he's not in Africa, Anthony divides his time between Madrid and Melbourne, where he lives with his wife and two daughters.

Read more about Anthony at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/anthonyham



Trent Holden

Victoria Falls As a regular visitor to Africa, Trent rates the action at Victoria Falls up there with the best adventure destinations he's covered. As well as its thrills and spills, it's also a spot he loves for its good traveller vibes and fun, friendly locals. He currently resides in Melbourne, Australia and has worked on more than 15 books for Lonely Planet – most recently covering Uganda and parts of India. When not travelling he works as a freelance editor for Lonely Planet and

writes about music and food.

OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

3rd edition – Jun 2013

ISBN 978 1 74179 893 7

© Lonely Planet 2013 Photographs © as indicated 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: lonelyplanet.com/ip.

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



10 days

A Taste of the North

From **Etosha National Park**, home to some of the best wildlife viewing in Southern Africa, depart via the Von Lindequist Gate in the east and head northeast to steamy **Rundu** on the Angolan border; via Grootfontein. Spend a day lazing in one of the river side lodges on the banks of the Okavango River and then track east into the Caprivi Strip to **Bwabwata National Park** and the **Mahango Game Reserve**, which attract large groups of elephants and herd animals. Head south through the reserve to the Mahango-Mohembo border post, where formalities are straightforward, and cross into Botswana. From here you can track down the western side of the Okavango Panhandle and down to **Sepupa**. For a taste of the delta to come, you can organise a *mokoro* (dugout canoe) trip here or go fishing – it's a good place for a break before the serious business of wildlife watching starts further into the delta. When you're ready to begin your delta adventure head southeast to **Maun**, the main gateway to the Okavango Delta, with some good accommodation options. The road is sealed all the way.



Three Weeks

Essential Botswana & Victoria Falls

For most of this trip, you will have to be completely self-sufficient and fully confident in your navigation and survival skills. For the less adventurous, tour operators in Maun are happy to help you organise a custom safari.

Starting in **Maun**, the classic staging point for all Botswanan safaris, you can stock up on supplies before heading out to the **Okavango Delta**, either by *mokoro* or charter plane. If you're pinching your pennies, there's no shortage of budget camping trips to choose from, though it's certainly worth stretching your budget to allow for a few nights in one of the safari-chic tented camps in the wildlife-rich **Moremi Game Reserve** (try Chief's Island if you can afford it). Containing some of the densest concentrations of wildlife on the continent, Moremi is also the only protected area of the delta.

The next stage of your bush travel is a 4WD expedition through **Chobe National Park** (known for its huge populations of massive elephants). Stop at **Savuti**, where most mega-fauna are resident, and which is particularly well known for sightings of predators; **Linyanti Marshes**, an extensive wetland with opportunities to see elephants, lions, wild dogs, cheetahs and leopards; and the **Chobe Riverfront**, which is the most accessible part of Chobe and has the largest wildlife concentration in the park. Whether you travel by private vehicle or tour bus, the overland route through Chobe is one of the country's most spectacular and wildlife-rich journeys.

Make another supply stop in the border town of **Kasane**, at the meeting point of four countries – Botswana, Zambia, Namibia and Zimbabwe – and it's time to cross the border to visit the world-famous **Victoria Falls**. The falls are the seventh natural wonder of the world and a visit reveals nature at its most inspiring. Whether you base yourself in **Livingstone**, Zambia or **Victoria Falls**, Zimbabwe, it's worth exploring life on both sides of the Zambezi River. And of course, if you've got a bit of cash burning a hole in your pocket, there's no shortage of pulse-raising activities to help you get a quick adrenaline fix. Try a micro flight over the falls for a unique perspective of this watery wonder.



Three Weeks Essential Namibia

This enormous itinerary meanders more than 2500km, from dusty bushveld to dramatic canyons. It combines a good dose of culture with death-defying activities, and all of it is accessible with a 2WD vehicle. There are also decent, if slow, public-transport links.

Before striking off into the desert, spend a couple of days getting your bearings in the lovely capital of **Windhoek**, which still bears architectural traces of its German colonial history. Ideally with a rental car loaded with plenty of supplies and a few friends, make a beeline north for **Etosha National Park**, one of the finest safari parks on the continent. It is possible to actually drive out onto the pan with its white saline floor stretching as far as you can see into the horizon.

Although you're going to have to backtrack, you can quickly bypass Windhoek en route to seaside **Swakopmund**, where you can take your holiday up a notch in a flurry of exciting activities, including dune boarding and quad biking. Back on the main road south, keep the heart beating during a scramble up the massive barchan dune fields of **Sossusvlei** and/or a trek through **Sesriem Canyon**. The ever-shifting dunes of the Namib Desert are particularly worth gazing upon at sunrise when their colourful hues dance over the landscape.

Continuing the canyon theme, head south for **Fish River Canyon**, a geological wonder of monumental proportions that is one of Africa's hidden highlights. If you've packed sturdy hiking boots you could embark on a multi-day hike along the canyon floor. From Fish River Canyon, detour west to marvel at the German anachronism that is **Lüderitz**. Sausages washed down with German beer are a prerequisite before embarking on your explorations. Nearby, you can stop off at the diamond-mining ghost town of **Kolmanskop** and explore the overwhelming emptiness of the **Sperrgebiet**.

Finish things off in **Noordoeuer**, which sits astride the Orange River and is the starting point for white-water rafting through some wild canyon country. Alternatively, head across the South African border to cosmopolitan Cape Town, which you can enjoy for a week or a weekend before setting off on the next adventure.



- » (above) Christuskirche, Windhoek's best-recognised landmark (p205)
- » (left) Rafts on the banks of the Orange River (p346)



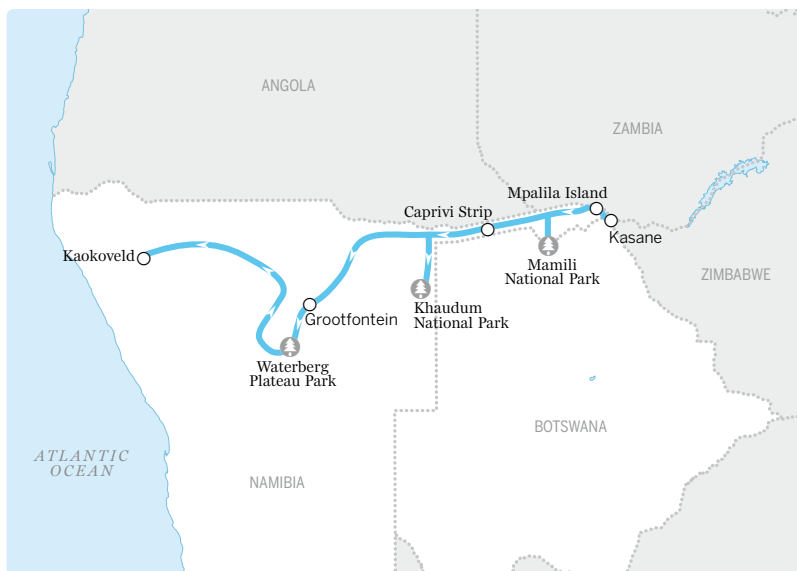
Two Weeks

Secrets of the Kalahari

If you're looking to leave the khaki-clad tourist crowds behind, this off-the-beaten-track option in Botswana takes you straight through the heart of the Kalahari. If you're starting in Johannesburg, head west for the border, where you can cross at Bokspits to enter the enormous **Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park**. The park is one of the only spots in the Kalahari where you can see shifting sand dunes, though the undisputed highlight is its pristine wilderness and low tourist volume. The Kalahari of your imagination, it's noted for its wildlife watching, being home to large numbers of springboks, gemsboks, eland and wildebeest as well as predators, including lions, cheetahs, leopards, wild dogs, jackals and hyenas. If you like birdwatching then you're in for a treat here too.

From here, head east towards Gaborone and then loop back to enter the southern gates of the utterly wild **Khutse Game Reserve**. Here are well-maintained trails and around 60 pans that once made up the largest inland lake on the continent. Leopard and lion sightings are possible wildlife highlights. From here, traverse north through some exciting 4WD territory into the adjoining **Central Kalahari Game Reserve**, where you can navigate one of the continent's most prominent topographical features. It's about the size of Denmark, so there's plenty of scope for losing yourself in Africa's raw heart. Before leaving, spend a night or two in **Deception (Letiaha) Valley**, renowned for its rare brown hyenas. Although wildlife densities are significantly lower than in Chobe or the Okavango Delta, so are the numbers of safari vehicles.

Heading north, you'll pass through **D'kar**, where you can pick up some beautiful San crafts. If you're here in August immerse yourself in traditional bushman culture at the Kuru Dance Festival. Then press on for the remote **Gewihaba (Drotsky's) Cave**, renowned for its 10m-long stalagmites and stalactites, as well as Commerson's leaf-nosed bats. Finally, at the furthestmost tip of the country, you'll come to the mystical **Tsodilo Hills**, which are a treasure chest of painted rock art that continue to be revered by local communities. The beautiful colours of these remote hills are striking but it's the 4000-plus prehistoric rock paintings throughout the hills that most people are here to see.



Two Weeks Caprivi to Kaokoveld

This is not an itinerary for the faint-hearted. Many places in Namibia give you a vague sense that you've reached the end of the earth, but some of the destinations in this itinerary really are otherworldly. Getting to them, too, presents a major challenge that definitely requires determination as well as a fair bit of cash.

To do this trip as a continuous journey, you're best off starting from **Kasane** in Botswana. From here, you can charter a plane or boat to **Mpalila Island**, a luxuriously remote retreat stranded in the middle of the Zambezi. It's where Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia intersect. From here, head into Namibia's Caprivi Strip and visit the mini-Okavango of the **Mamili National Park** where the rains bring a delta-like feel to the forested islands that contain some of Namibia's best birdwatching. Drive from here to the untamed wilderness that is **Khudum National Park**, a serious adventure destination. Here, wandering sandy tracks lure visitors through bushlands and across valleys where African wild dogs can be seen – the only place in Namibia with that particular boast. There are also large numbers of herd animals, including roan antelopes and a bird diversity that will thrill twitchers.

From Khudum the road will take you south through **Grootfontein**, from where it's worth making a short detour to the **Waterberg Plateau Park**. The park is famous as a haven of endangered species like sable, roan and white and black rhinos, some of which you may be lucky enough to spot along one of the well-marked hiking trails. It's an unusual place in that it feels a little like a lost world on top of the plateau with its pristine bushy landscapes – take advantage of the hides at the waterholes for your best chance to spot wildlife.

North of Grootfontein the road takes you into Namibia's cultural heartland, the Owambo region, from where you can access the remote and mysterious **Kaokoveld**, homeland to the Himba – a culturally rich tribal group that has retained its striking appearance and dress – and one of the most inaccessible areas of the country.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'