

# Welcome to Botswana & Namibia

*Ever wanted to experience the raw, wild heart of Africa? Teeming with wildlife and lush with extraordinary landscapes, Botswana and Namibia unfurl so many African dreams.*

## Wildlife Watching

Botswana is one of Africa's great safari destinations. There are more elephants here than in any other country on the planet. But whether it's elephants, lions, leopards, hyenas, rhinos, buffaloes, antelope or myriad other species, their numbers and variety in Botswana will quickly overwhelm your digital camera. In Namibia the series of waterholes around Etosha Pan attract astounding numbers of animals (especially in the dry season), making wildlife watching as simple as parking your car and letting the animals come to you. And if that's not up-close-and-personal enough, what about tracking highly endangered black rhinos...on foot?

## Landscape

The landscapes of Namibia and Botswana will sometimes leave you wondering if you have arrived on another planet. That mighty gash hacked out of the earth's surface at Fish River Canyon is one of the great natural sights on the continent. Lonely desert roads expose you to a wilderness that will clear your mind and work its way into your soul. Humongous slabs of flat-topped granite rise out of mists of windblown sand and swirling dust – the effect is ethereal. As the road snakes into the distant horizon you may just feel as though you're driving through a coffee-table book of landscapes.

## Ancient Culture

The ancestors of the San, an ancient people who have direct links back to the Stone Age, left behind extraordinary records in the form of rock paintings throughout the region. The Tsodilo Hills, Botswana's only Unesco World Heritage Site, showcase the pictorial record of this prehistoric culture, as do extensive galleries of rock art in Namibia. Also in Namibia, opportunities to interact with local cultures in the north include meeting the Himba of the Kaokoveld (a Herero subgroup who were a part of the early Bantu migrations). Himba women are famous for smearing themselves with a fragrant mixture of ochre, butter and bush herbs, which dyes their skin a burnt-orange hue.

## Adventure Activities

Namibia is Southern Africa's headquarters for adrenaline-pumping fun. Fling yourself out of a plane and float back to earth, hurl yourself down a sand dune, surf the breakers on the Atlantic coast or head off into a desert sunset atop a camel. There are many ways to ensure that a visit to this region lives with you long after the desert sands recede into the distance. Swakopmund is where most of adventure activities happen, and it's worth spending a few days here if they have even the remotest appeal.



## Why I Love Botswana & Namibia

By Anthony Ham, Writer

I long ago lost my heart in the waterways of the Okavango Delta, in the sands of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, upon the hot stones of Damaraland, atop a sand dune at Deadvlei and by a waterhole in Etosha... Fabulous wildlife, soul-stirring landscapes, a true feeling of immersion in wild lands and wilderness – Botswana and Namibia have all these in abundance, and the sense of beautiful, wild places animated by just about every species of charismatic African megafauna calls me back time and again.

**For more about our writers, see p408**