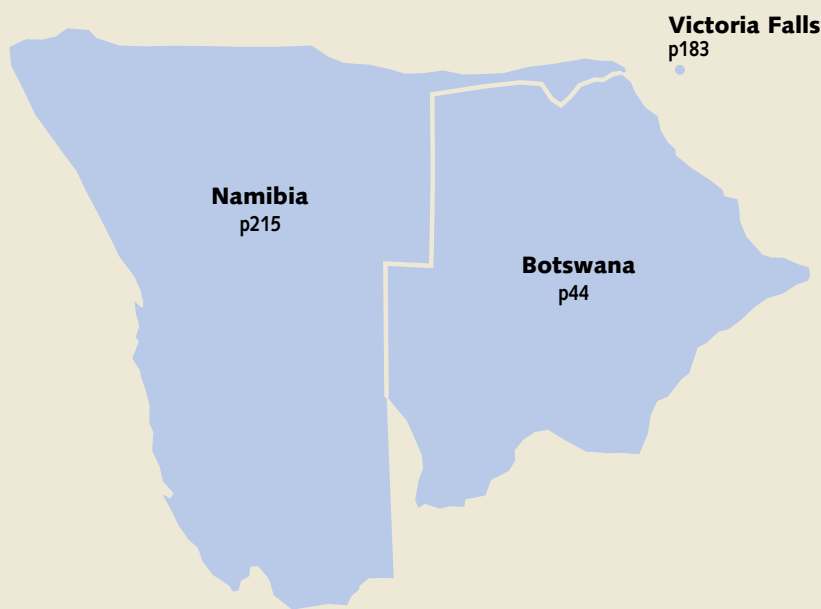




Botswana & Namibia



Anthony Ham, Trent Holden

PLAN YOUR TRIP

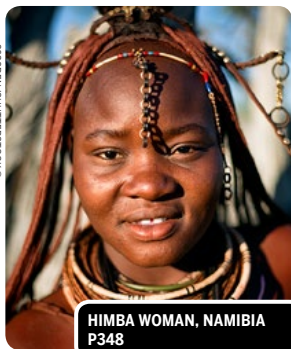
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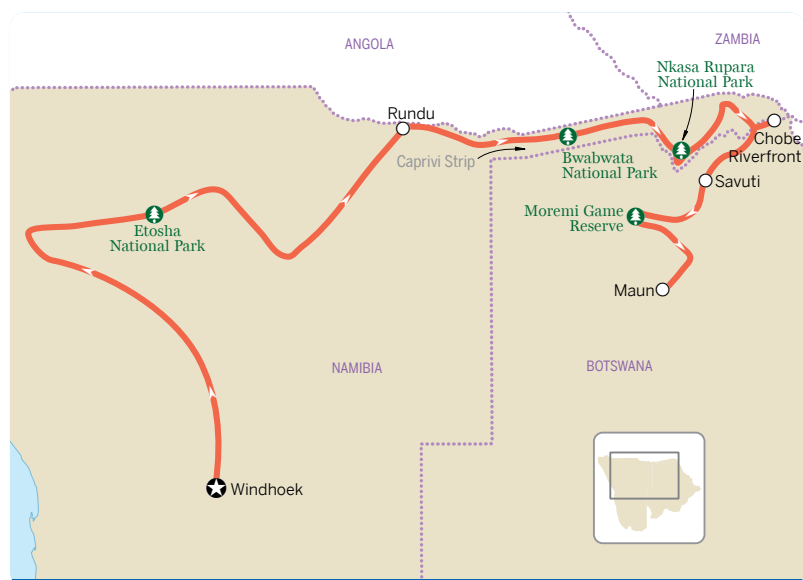


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Itineraries



2
WEEKS

A Taste of the North

Despite the long distances, it is possible to get a taste of Botswana and Namibia's best wildlife areas in a busy two-week itinerary. To make this work, you'll need your own 4WD.

Begin in **Windhoek** and soak up its urban charms before you head out into the wilds. Spend at least three days in **Etosha National Park**, home to some of the best wildlife viewing in Southern Africa, then drive via Grootfontein to sleep on the banks of the Okavango River at steamy **Rundu**; that's Angola across the water. Track east into the Caprivi Strip for a couple of nights in **Bwabwata National Park** and the **Nkasa Rupara National Park**, before crossing into Botswana and staying along the **Chobe Riverfront** for a couple of days among big herds of big elephants. Leaving the paved road behind, make for the lion-and-leopard country of **Savuti** (two nights), then spend three days in **Moremi Game Reserve**. From there, make for **Maun** to continue your onward journey, leaving enough time for a scenic helicopter flight over the Okavango Delta with **Helicopter Horizons**.



3
WEEKS

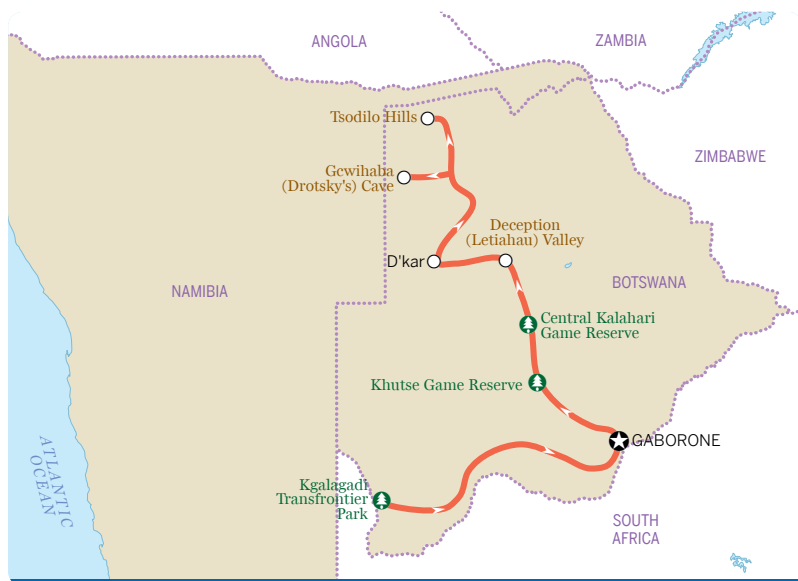
Essential Botswana & Victoria Falls

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* (dugout canoe) 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 Camp 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 megafauna 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 park's largest wildlife concentration. 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 one of the seven natural wonders 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. 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 microlight flight over the falls for a unique perspective of this watery wonder.



2
WEEKS

Secrets of the Kalahari

If you're looking to leave the khaki-clad tourist crowds behind, this off-the-beaten-track option 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 highlights are its pristine wilderness and low tourist volume. It's the Kalahari of your imagination, noted for its wildlife watching, including large numbers of springboks, gemsboks, elands and wildebeest as well as predators such as lions, cheetahs, leopards, wild dogs, jackals and hyenas. If you like birdwatching, you're in for a treat here too.

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 Valley**, renowned for its rare brown hyenas. Although wildlife densities are significantly lower than in Chobe or the **Okavango Delta**, so are the number 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. Press on for the remote **Gwihaba (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 is a treasure chest of painted rock art that continues 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.



3
WEEKS

Namibia All Over

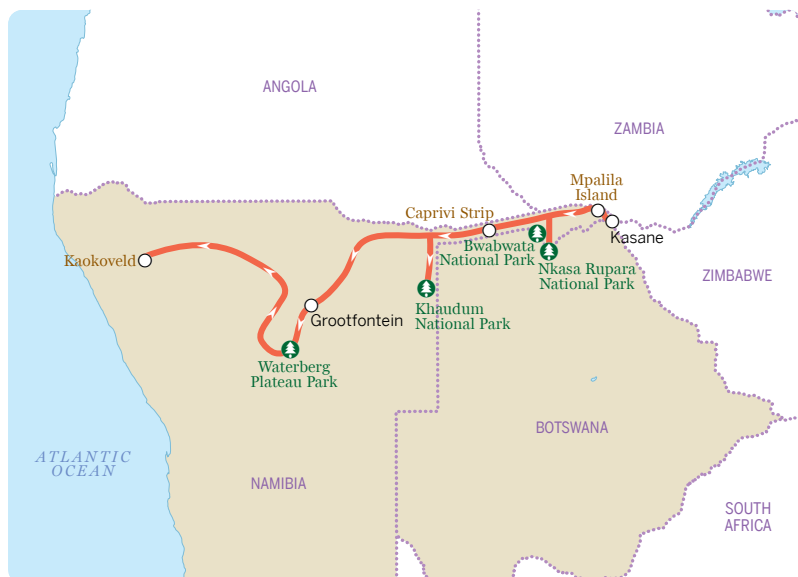
This enormous itinerary meanders more than 2500km, from dusty bushveld to dramatic canyons. It combines a good dose of culture with death-defying activities, and all of it is accessible with a 2WD vehicle. There are also decent, if slow, public-transport links.

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 to 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 multiday 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 **Noordoewer**, which sits astride the Orange River and is the jumping-off 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.



2
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 other-worldly. 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 River. It's where Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia intersect. From here, head into Namibia's Caprivi Strip and visit the mini-Okavango of the **Nkasa Rupara National Park**, where the rains bring a delta-like feel to the forested islands that contain some of Namibia's best birdwatching. **Bwabwata National Park** is another park on the rebound with lions, wild dogs and sable antelope. Drive from here to the untamed wilderness that is **Khaudum National Park**, a serious adventure destination. Here, wandering sandy tracks lure visitors through bushland and across valleys where lions and African wild dogs can be seen.

From Khaudum 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 for endangered species such as sable and roan antelopes 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.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing 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



Anthony Ham

Curator Anthony is a freelance writer and photographer who specialises in Spain, East and Southern Africa, the Arctic and the Middle East. When he's not writing for Lonely Planet, Anthony writes about and photographs Spain, Africa and the Middle East for newspapers and magazines in Australia, the UK and US.

In 2001, after years of wandering the world, Anthony finally found his spiritual home when he fell irretrievably in love with Madrid on his first visit to the city. Less than a year later, he arrived there on a one-way ticket, with not a word of Spanish and not knowing a single person in the city. When he finally left Madrid ten years later, Anthony spoke Spanish with a Madrid accent, was married to a local and Madrid had become his second home. Now back in Australia, Anthony continues to travel the world in search of stories.

Read more about Anthony at:
lonelyplanet.com/profiles/anthony_ham



Trent Holden

Victoria Falls A Geelong-based writer, located just outside Melbourne, Trent has worked for Lonely Planet since 2005. He's covered 30 plus guidebooks across Asia, Africa and Australia.

With a penchant for megacities, Trent's in his element when assigned to cover a nation's capital – the more chaotic the better – to unearth cool bars, art, street food and underground subculture. On the flipside he also writes books to idyllic tropical islands across Asia, in between going on safari to national parks in Africa and the subcontinent. When not travelling, Trent works as a freelance editor, reviewer and spends all his money catching live gigs. You can catch him on Twitter @hombreholden

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