

NamibRand

The NamibRand Nature Reserve is a gigantic extension of the already gigantic Namib-Naukluft National Park. Together they occupy most of south-western Namibia.

1

Experience landscapes, flora and fauna from another world; from another epoch

2

Self-sustaining conservation model of low impact, high quality tourism

3

Designated Dark Sky Reserve and UNESCO World Heritage Site

4

Staggering scale and beauty of the world's oldest desert

The Namib-Naukluft National Park, of which the pans at Sossusvlei are a disproportionate focal point, is one of the largest nature reserves in the world. The NamibRand is a relatively small annex of the Namib-Naukluft and is one of the largest private nature reserves in the world. This all translates to a lot of space to yourself. To the point you feel like the sole occupants of a distant yet jaw-droppingly beautiful planet.

Within its 200,000ha border, the NamibRand shelters the delicate ecosystem of the world's oldest desert and the transitional area known as the pro-Namib. Framed by the Nubib Mountains in the east, the park features distinct Namib Desert landscapes: endless expanses of gravel, sand and vegetated plains dotted with rocky outcrops with shrubs and trees; photogenic mountain ranges and those distinctive red-ochre dune belts fringed with blonde grass.

With more than 1,000 hectares per bed and a 20-bed limit, the luxury desert lodges in the NamibRand offer, by conscious design, exclusive and authentic desert experiences. Visit the NamibRand to experience the Namib Desert in all its glorious facets minus any hint of humanity. It's one of two Dark Sky Reserves in Africa, supports a surprising diversity of life and is, at every turn, a deeply, soul-achingly beautiful place in which to find (or lose) yourself.



NAMIBRAND INTERESTING FACTS



The endless view from the swimming pool at Wolwedans Boulders Camp (left); The unique landscape of the NamibRand Reserve covered by fairy circles (above)

1. The NamibRand Nature Reserve is a private reserve bigger than Kenya's Maasai Mara and Amboseli Parks combined.
2. Just four concessions operate a handful of safari lodges: Wolwedans, Kwessi, Family Hideout and Tok-Tokkie trails. You don't get much more exclusive than that.
3. The reserve is an amalgam of 17 farms that transitioned from marginal and environmentally damaging commercial livestock to successful non-profit nature reserve in 1992.
4. Since its formation as a conservation project, natural populations of wildlife have rebounded, migration routes have reopened, erosion from overgrazing has stopped and hunting/poaching have been eradicated.
5. The reserve's late founder, Albi Bruckner, bought the first farm for the price of a used motor vehicle.
6. The reserve has many research and conservation initiatives in ever-increasing scale and vision.
7. Official counts cite 249 plant, 50 reptile, 160 bird, 65 mammal and 2 amphibian resident species.
8. Cheetahs and giraffes were successfully reintroduced and a crash of rhinos is on the cards.
9. Springbok, the cheetah's favoured prey, have grown in number from 1,000 to over 11,000 and the reserve supports an increasing number and diversity of wildlife including oryx, zebra, kudu, ostrich, mongoose, pangolin, aardvark, aardwolf, genet, wild cat, badger... the list is long but sightings remain enticingly rare.
10. In addition, leopards, caracals, foxes, jackals, hyenas, whistling rats, barking geckos and golden moles are just some of the more exotic animals to look out for.
11. Early in 2023, the landing strip at Aandstêr was paved, by hand, using an estimated 500,000 bricks to form a 1.2km runway.

NAMIBRAND ATTRACTIONS & LANDMARKS

Full-day desert tours: Your desert lodge in the NamibRand occupies a private concession inside the private reserve. This means exclusive access to thousands of pristine hectares within thousands of pristine hectares. Enjoy a full-day guided exploration of the NamibRand's varied habitats with a sumptuous al fresco lunch and more wonder than you could pack into a lifetime of channel hopping.

Dark sky safaris: The word 'stargazing' does an injustice to the night sky exploration of the NamibRand. Africa's first International Dark Sky Reserve is mesmerising by night. Your resident astronomer and powerful telescopes deeply enhance an already amazing spectacle. The desert lodges offer sleepouts and sky-view beds.

Game viewing and birdwatching desert-style: While you wouldn't visit the NamibRand with game viewing or birding high on your expectations, it's the rarity, or downright bizarreness, of encountering healthy, happy animals traversing the desert and going about their usual business of survival. Enjoy guided game viewing activities in traditional open-sided safari vehicles, on interpretive desert walks and at waterholes with specialised game-viewing hides.

Conservation and community programmes: Such a fascinating and accessible nature reserve attracts the attention of many scientists and researchers in the fields of conservation and community development. The stakeholders of the NamibRand back and run many successful upliftment programmes. From the NaDEET desert educational centre to the macro-management of the greater Namib-Sossusvlei landscape, there is much to admire and more to encourage than you could possibly imagine.

Sleepouts and multi-day hiking and horseback trails: For most of us, just the privilege of sleeping out under the stars is enough. Take it to the next level with a luxury version including a candlelit dinner, four-poster bed and 'room' service. Yet another level beyond is a portered two-night hike through the desert with luxurious glamping under the stars - a perennial trip highlight for our clients.

Adventure-filled scenery hunting: All this magnificence need not be boring: for maximum thrill and mega-scenery take a hot-air balloon safari over the Namib for another once-in-a-lifetime memory. More ways to enjoy the spectacular scenery in and around NamibRand include scenic flights and environmentally-conscious quad-bike tours.

Wellness retreats and special occasions: Every lodge in the NamibRand provides first-class wellness and spa treatments in to-die-for settings offering the ultimate health and wellness pampering retreat. And the Namib Desert provides a very special backdrop, foreground, climate and view fit for a very special and intimate celebration.

Photography: From stunning landscapes to stunning macros to stunning night skies, the NamibRand is a unique and rewarding photographic destination. Dedicated photography excursions help you reach those first rays of morning light, avoid the dust haze and reveal the desert's detail in patterns, colours, shapes and contrasts that verge on the abstract.



A green landscape of the NamibRand Reserve after a good rain season (left); The luxury tented suites at Sonop on a private reserve south of the NamibRand (below).



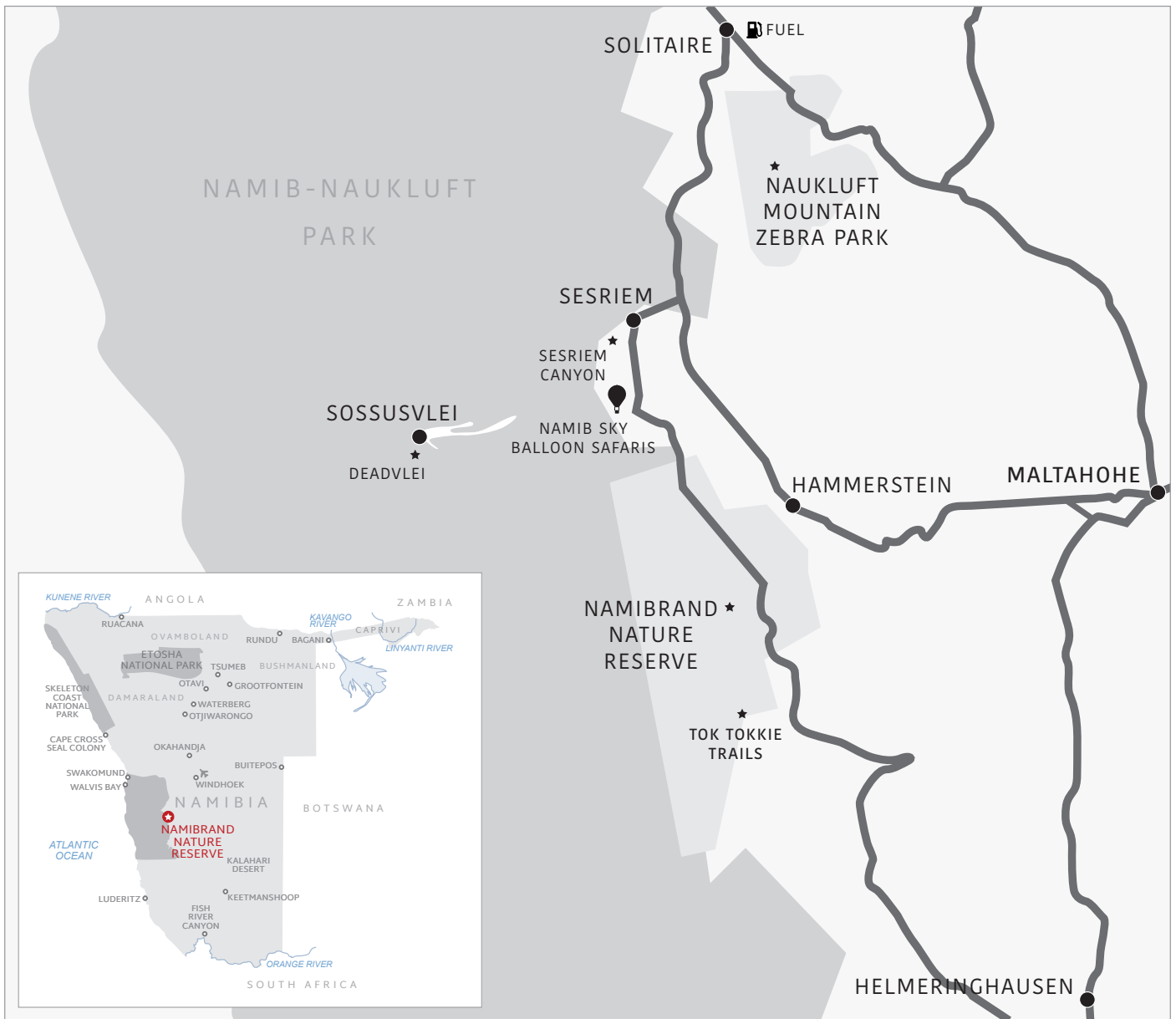
TIPS AND THINGS TO NOTE WHEN VISITING

- Adjacent to the Namib-Naukluft National Park, you can take a day-trip to the famous dunes and pans of Sossusvlei. It's a long drive there and back so put aside a full day and plenty of energy for this outing.
- The drive to NamibRand (from anywhere it must be said) is long, bumpy and dusty. Be sure to book at least two nights here to enjoy a full day of activities and a full night of stargazing.
- Accommodation is in private concessions within the reserve and options range from self-catered camping to the kind of five-star luxury that visiting celebs favour.
- The reserve is run as a non-profit conservation and community development project. Your visit contributes directly to the restoration and preservation of the world's oldest desert and by definition the world's oldest habitat.
- Wildlife sightings are rare in this impossibly large reserve where animals need a large area to thrive on the limited resources. Enjoy the desert for what it is and consider any sightings an amazing bonus.
- You can fly to the NamibRand and enjoy day trips and guided excursions from your desert lodge.
- The NamibRand borders the Namib-Naukluft National Park for 100km (rand means edge in Afrikaans and German) and includes a variety of transitional habitats leading up to the Nubib Mountains.
- Plans are well underway to double the size of the NamibRand by expanding further eastwards as neighbouring commercial farms come up for sale. Keep an eye out for news of the ProNamib Nature Reserve.
- The vision, scale and extent of many conservation and community initiatives provide a strong sense of giving back and of tourism doing good. Examples include the NamibRand Conservation Foundation, the Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape Association, Dark Sky, Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust, The Arid Eden Project, Namib Sky Community Trust, RuralRevive and the list goes on. In addition, research and conservation projects include work with mountain zebras, giraffes, scorpions, moles, fairy circles, migration routes, de-fencing, waterhole maintenance and this list, too, goes on and on.

Stargazing at its finest in the Namibrand – an International Dark Sky Reserve (below).



NAMIBRAND MAP



NAMIBRAND DISTANCES

Windhoek - NamibRand	370km	5-6 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Swakopmund - NamibRand	420km	6-7 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Sesriem - NamibRand	75km	1-2 hours	Gravel road
Kalahari - NamibRand	260km	4-5 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Luderitz - NamibRand	404km	5-6 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road
Fish River (Hobas) - NamibRand	480km	7-8 hours	Partly tarred but mostly gravel road

NAMIBRAND WEATHER

If the NamibRand had perfect weather the place would be overrun and would cease to be the NamibRand. Make no mistake: this is a true desert where it's dry and hot pretty much all year round. That said, it's never so hot you can't visit and a dip in the swimming pool, a snooze in your air-conditioned or fan-cooled room, a wafting desert breeze and a cold drink can fix all that.

And true to desert form, winter nights drop below freezing in a place that is built to withstand heat not endure cold. That said, again, there's a cozy fire, a full-bodied red, a fluffy hand-woven blanket and a hot chocolate to warm the soul on those chilly star-filled nights.

If rain decides to fall in the NamibRand it usually does so between January and March and it's a truly stupendous transformation from every shade of brown to every shade of brown plus green. Showers are short-lived and we've yet to hear of rain ruining a trip to the desert.

As a rough guide, the hottest time of year in the NamibRand is from October to March with aforementioned rains cooling things off a little in the latter half of the season. April to September feature less heat by day, perfectly clear skies and cool to cold pre-dawn mornings. Most activities run all year so ultimately the best time to visit the NamibRand depends on what else you're doing in-country and not so much on local variations in wildlife, landscape or weather conditions.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
AVERAGE HIGH °C (°F)	33.2 (91.8)	34.5 (94.1)	34.2 (93.6)	31.4 (88.5)	29.1 (84.4)	25.7 (78.3)	25.3 (77.5)	28.1 (82.6)	30.7 (87.3)	32.9 (91.2)	33.5 (92.3)	34.1 (93.4)
AVERAGE LOW °C (°F)	17.2 (63.0)	19.1 (66.4)	20.2 (68.4)	15.3 (59.5)	12.3 (54.1)	7.9 (46.2)	8.4 (47.1)	8.6 (47.5)	12.0 (53.6)	13.6 (56.5)	15.5 (59.9)	15.8 (60.4)
DAILY MEAN °C (°F)	25.4 (77.7)	26.7 (80.1)	26.7 (80.1)	23.4 (74.1)	20.7 (69.3)	16.5 (61.7)	16.9 (62.4)	18.4 (65.1)	21.8 (71.2)	23.9 (75.0)	25.2 (77.4)	25.5 (77.9)
AVERAGE RAINFALL MM (INCHES)	14.9 (0.59)	16.1 (0.63)	39.6 (1.56)	8.9 (0.35)	13.2 (0.52)	0.8 (0.03)	0.1 (0.00)	1.2 (0.05)	2.6 (0.10)	1.4 (0.06)	0.8 (0.03)	4.1 (0.16)

