

Africa on a Shoestring

Country(ies): Botswana , Namibia , Zimbabwe , South Africa

Tour type: Overland

Transport: Overland expedition vehicle, 4x4 safari vehicles

Group size: Min: 4 | Max: 24

Days: 20 days

Start Location: Cape Town, South Africa

End Location: Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Meals: Breakfasts - 19, Lunches - 11, Dinners - 15

Highlights:

Cape Town, Orange River, Cederberg Region, Fish River Canyon, Namib Desert, Swakopmund, Himba Tribe, Bushmen, Etosha National Park, Okavango Delta, Chobe National Park, Victoria Falls



Itinerary

Day 1: Cape Town to the Cederberg

The tour starts with departure from Cape Town. We leave in the morning, so we recommend that you arrive in Cape Town at least one day before the tour begins. We can assist you with booking additional nights, as well as airport transfers.

We meet up at our truck and are treated to a wonderful departing view of Table Mountain and the surrounding city from across the water. We travel to the Cederberg, a stunningly scenic mountain region, known for its large orange farms, and home to the iconic Rooibos plant.

Rooibos, a fragrant herb, has become known for its nutritional value and healing properties. Its leaves are brewed to make a refreshing tea, and it is also used as an ingredient in skincare products. A visit to a Rooibos tea farm is included in today's schedule and the day is rounded off getting to know fellow travellers over a delicious traditional dinner.

Route: Cape Town to Citrusdal ±270km

Activity package: Rooibos tea farm visit

OVERNIGHT: Marcuskraal Campsite

MEALS: Dinner

EXTRAS: Single room supplement (SAOVSH) Extra day in Cape Town - pre-tour Activity Package 2019 - Africa Shoestring

Day 2: Namaqualand to Gariep (Orange) River

Today we journey through Namaqualand on our way to the Orange River at Gariep. This part of the country is very beautiful, and you will see strange and wonderful desert landscapes as you travel.

If you book the tour during the springtime (July to September), you may have a chance to come across the carpets of wildflowers that bloom here. Today's journey will include a stop at the town of Springbok to purchase anything you may need, before continuing onto the campsite on the banks of the Orange River.

Route: Citrusdal to Vloosdrift

Included Highlight: Spring wild flowers (seasonal July-September)

OVERNIGHT: Fiddlers Creek Campsite

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Gariep (Orange) River to Fish River Canyon

Today is all about the Orange River. 2200km in length, it is the longest river in South Africa. It stretches all the way from the mountains of Lesotho to the Atlantic Ocean on the country's west coast. The river is now more often referred to as "Gariep", its original name, which means "river" in the KhoeKhoe language.

Heading out onto the water on a boat or canoe is one of the best ways to appreciate the beautiful and contrasting desert landscapes through which it flows. An optional half-day canoe trip is therefore on the agenda for today.

After an exciting morning, it is then time to cross the border into Namibia. A dip in the pools at the mineral hot springs is a lovely way to end off the day, before arriving at Hobas Campsite.

Route: Orange/Gariep River to Fish River Canyon ±250km

Optional Activity: Half day canoe trip

OVERNIGHT: Hobas Campsite

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Fish River Canyon, Quiver Tree Forest and Giants Playground

A unique and memorable day in Namibia awaits us today. After an early start, we head to one of Namibia's most awe-inspiring destinations, the Fish River Canyon. At 160km long and 27km wide at its maximum, it is the largest canyon in Africa; the second largest in the world.

Our early start allows us to experience an unforgettable sight: the rays of the morning sun slowly throwing this colossal ravine into relief. A slow walk along the rim of the canyon allows us to fully appreciate the breathtaking views, before we head to Keetmanshoop, where we visit two more remarkable destinations.

You will see the strange-looking quiver trees at the Quiver Tree Forest, so named because the San people would use their branches to make quivers. These weird and wonderful trees are also known for their "upside down" appearance, due to their branches looking eerily similar to roots.

You will also visit the nearby Giants' Playground: huge, imposing dolerite boulders that have been piled up on top of each other to form a network of mazes and rock formations.

Route: Fish River Canyon to Keetmanshoop

Included highlight: Walk the rim of the Fish River Canyon, visit to Quiver Tree Forest and Giants Playground

OVERNIGHT: Seeheim Hotel (camping)

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Namib-Naukluft National Park

Every overland journey has some long travelling days and today is one of those as we venture deeper into the Namib Desert. Our destination is the dune fields that cover the western reaches of the desert.

Long dusty roads and sparsely populated farmlands offer us an insight into the vastness of rural Namibia. From the grasslands in the east to the red dunes of the west, the slowly changing landscapes represents the many faces of this desert country.

Tonight, we camp on the doorstep of the dune fields and fall asleep to the unique calls of the elusive Barking Gecko.

Route: Keetmanshoop to Namib Naukluft NP

Included highlight: Sesriem Canyon

OVERNIGHT: Sesriem campsite

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Sossusvlei Dunes - Namib-Naukluft National Park

The towering red sand dunes of the Sossusvlei are iconic and are truly one of the most unforgettable places in Namibia. We awaken before dawn to watch the sun come up over the dunes - a genuinely breathtaking moment that will stay with you forever.

Dune 45 is the most famous dune of the Sossusvlei, and we climb its soaring slopes in order to get the best possible view of the spectacular sunrise colours. Breakfast awaits us at the bottom of the dune, before we visit two more must-see Namibian desert wonders: the salt and clay pans known as Sossusvlei and Deadvlei. These flat white pans contrast sharply with the twisted forms of dead trees that rise from them, creating a hauntingly beautiful image and making for priceless photo opportunities.

Route: Namib-Naukluft NP – Naukluft Area

Included highlight: Sunrise hike up Dune 45, 4x4 shuttle to Sossusvlei / Deadvlei

OVERNIGHT: Boesman's Camp or similar

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 7: Swakopmund

We mark our last day in the desert with an educational guided walk led by a local expert. Our destination today is the coastal town of Swakopmund, and our journey takes us across the Tropic of Capricorn, where we stop to acknowledge the noteworthy occurrence.

Continuing on our way to Swakopmund, we make a stop at Walvis Bay lagoon, where we hope to see the famous sight of hundreds of flamingos in the shallow waters. We reach Swakopmund, known as the "adventure capital" of Namibia.

Route: Naukluft Area to Swakopmund

Activity Package: Guided desert walk with local expert

OVERNIGHT: Amanpuri Travellers Lodge or Strauss Holiday Accommodation

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Activity Package 2019 - Africa Shoestring

Day 8: Swakopmund

Found on Namibia's Atlantic coastline, Swakopmund is the ultimate tourist destination. The town is rich with colonial history and German architecture, and its location near to both desert and ocean make it the ideal base for experiencing all sorts of adventure activities.

Skydiving, quad biking, sandboarding, dolphin cruises... these and more are on offer. Other attractions include a famous collection of bakeries and coffee shops selling delicious treats inspired by the town's German roots.

Optional activities: Dolphin cruise, Skydiving, sandboarding, Quad biking, Dinner

OVERNIGHT: Amanpuri Travellers Lodge or Strauss Holiday Accommodation

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Spitzkoppe to Brandberg

Today we travel through the desert again. The highlight is a stop at Spitzkoppe, a collection of enormous granite formations that rise dramatically out of the surrounding desert. Many depictions of San rock art can be found in the region.

A local guide leads a walk around the area, providing the opportunity to marvel at these fascinating paintings and learn about their meaning and significance.

Route: Swakopmund to Brandberg (via Spitzkoppe)

Included Highlight: Visit and explore Spitzkoppe with a local guide

OVERNIGHT: Brandberg White Lady

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Brandberg White Lady

Today's destination is Brandberg Mountain, the highest in Namibia. The name means "Burning Mountain" in Afrikaans, a wonderfully poetic way to describe the effect that the setting sun has on the mountain.

The region is renowned for its collection of rock art paintings, the most famous of which is the White Lady, a 45cm-high depiction of what was thought to be a woman, but which scientists now consider to be a San warrior.

We hike for an hour along the dry Tsisab River gorge in order to reach the White Lady (please note that the hike does pass through rough terrain). We then continue to a place called Kamaniab.

Route: Uis to Kamanjab

Included highlight: Brandberg White Lady hike

OVERNIGHT: Toko Lodge

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 11: Etosha National Park

Today we visit Etosha National Park. This is one of Africa's many wonderful wildlife sanctuaries. It also has a remarkably unique feature- an immense salt pan that is visible from space. This pan attracts high numbers of wildlife to its periphery and neighboring smaller pans.

You can expect to see plains game, numerous bird species, and several predator species. And, of course, the park is home to four members of the famous African Big 5. An afternoon game drive gives you a chance to see if you can spot them all.

Route: Kamanjab to Etosha National Park

Included highlight: Afternoon game drive in Nomad truck

OVERNIGHT: Namibia Wildlife Resorts: Halali

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 12: Etosha National Park

We spend another exciting day on safari in Etosha National Park. Every day is unique in the African bush, with a chance to see something incredible around every corner and behind every tree.

We spend time along the boundaries of the famous Etosha Pan, where the game-viewing opportunities are plentiful.

Route: Etosha National Park

Included highlight: Full day game drive in Nomad truck

OVERNIGHT: Namibia Wildlife Resorts: Okaukuejo

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 13: Windhoek

Today we rise early and set off for Windhoek, Namibia's capital. A guided walk lets us explore the streets and see the landmarks of this historic city.

Clean and attractive, Windhoek has rather a small-town feel to it- but does also feature, in parts, the high-rise, cosmopolitan characteristics of a big city. The country's colonial past can be seen in Windhoek's German-inspired architecture, languages, and cuisine.

Route: Etosha National Park to Windhoek

Included highlight: Walk through Windhoek with your guide

OVERNIGHT: Heja Game Lodge

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 14: Botswana - Ghanzi

Today, we sadly depart from Namibia- but we have so much to look forward to in our next destination, Botswana. Our overnight stop for today is the town of Ghanzi, situated in the middle of the famous Kalahari Desert.

In contrast to the high sand dunes of the Namib Desert that we have just left behind, the Kalahari features low-lying dunes and clumps of grass and bush. It extends over 900000 square kilometres, and is synonymous with the San people, the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa.

The San people have a long and vibrant history, characterised by rich cultural traditions, a close relationship with nature, and a reputation as exceptional hunters and warriors. An educational guided walk with a San community is included today, followed by an enthralling tribal dance performance in the evening, where you will be able to learn more about San traditions of dancing, singing, and storytelling.

Route: Windhoek to Ghanzi

Optional activity: San Tribal dance in evening / San Guided Walk

OVERNIGHT: Ghanzi Trail Blazers

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 15: Okavango Delta

Today's destination is the incredible Okavango Delta. The Okavango is one of Africa's premier wildlife and nature destinations. It is formed at the junction where the Okavango River flows into the Kalahari Desert, creating an enormous inland delta. This comprises a network of swamps, wetlands, grasslands, and riverine habitats that play host to a staggering diversity of flora and fauna.

Today you will have a chance to take an optional scenic flight over the Delta, where you can appreciate the splendour of this amazing place from above. In the evening, your guide will provide you with information on what to expect on the next day's Delta excursion.

Note: Those guests who have pre-purchased the upgrade package – will be transferred into the Delta upon arrival in Maun and will re-join the group on the morning of day 17. Please speak to your consultant for your programme of the Okavango Delta Excursion.

Route: Ghanzi to Maun

Optional Activity: Okavango Delta scenic flight

Upgrade: Okavango Delta Excursion

OVERNIGHT: Sedia Riverside Lodge

MEALS: Breakfast,Dinner

EXTRAS: Okavango Delta upgrade camping

Day 16: Okavango Delta Excursion

Today we embark on a truly unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience in the Delta: a mokoro excursion. A mokoro is a traditional canoe-like craft that is used to navigate through the shallow channels of the Delta.

We explore the intricate network of rivers and streams, propelled by a poler, who stands in the back of the canoe and uses a long pole to steer. Floating through the waterways, as lily pads make way for the mokoro and tall reeds stand sentry on either side, you are able to drink in the pure serenity and tranquility of nature.

Your poler will guide the mokoro through many of the beautiful lagoons, as you keep your eyes peeled for the many wildlife species that call the region home. You also have the chance to go on a nature walk on one of the Delta's many islands. The Okavango mokoro excursion will live long in your memory after you have returned home.

Route: Maun – poling station – Okavango Delta - Maun

Included Highlight: Okavango Delta Day Excursion

Upgrade: Okavango Delta Upgrade

OVERNIGHT: Sedia Riverside Lodge

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS: Okavango Delta upgrade camping

Day 17: Nata

Today we leave the Okavango and make our way across the Makgadigadi Pans towards the Nata Sanctuary. The Makgadigadi Pans are massive white salt pans found in northeastern Botswana and are considered to be one of the largest salt pans in the world.

During the dry months, the region is parched and arid, the glaring white of the salt pans creating an eerily beautiful landscape. When it rains, the pans fill, and wildlife are attracted to the area in their thousands. Herds of wildebeest and zebra migrate towards the pans, and one of nature's most breathtaking spectacles can be seen when enormous flocks of flamingos converge onto the plains, their numbers sometimes reaching tens of thousands.

Today you enjoy a guided game drive at Nata Sanctuary, which forms part of the Pans- you will see a host of wildlife and bird species, and, with luck, flocks of flamingos.

Route: Maun to Nata

Activity Package: Makgadikgadi Salt Pans (Nata Sanctuary)

OVERNIGHT: Nata Lodge

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

EXTRAS: Activity Package 2019 - Africa Shoestring

Day 18: Chobe National Park

Today's adventure takes place in Chobe National Park, another wonderful African wildlife sanctuary. Chobe is renowned for its elephant population, with over 80 000 of these magnificent creatures found here.

A guided game drive allows us to explore the park, where we can also hope to spot lions, zebras, leopards, and African wild dogs, amongst others. A relaxed boat cruise on the Chobe River in the afternoon gives us a chance to encounter elephants frolicking in the water and see the park from a different perspective.

Route: Nata to Kasane

Activity package: Chobe National Park Game Drive, Chobe National Park boat cruise

OVERNIGHT: Thebe River Safaris

MEALS: Breakfast,Dinner

EXTRAS: Activity Package 2019 - Africa Shoestring

Day 19: Zimbabwe - Victoria Falls

Today we depart for the final country on our itinerary- Zimbabwe. Our destination needs no introduction- Victoria Falls is renowned the world over. This magnificent, awe-inspiring spectacle of nature will take your breath away.

The Victoria Falls are created where the Zambezi River plunges over 100m over basalt cliffs into the yawning ravine below. The Falls are known as "Mosi-oa-Tunya" in the local tongue, which means "The Smoke that Thunders"- an apt name to describe the amount of spray generated by the sheer force of the waterfall.

Besides simply viewing the Falls, which is an experience in itself, you will be able to explore the lively Victoria Falls Town, where you can choose to book one of the many adventure activities on offer. Those less inclined to

adrenaline spikes can browse through the craft markets and coffee shops on offer.

Route: Kasane to Victoria Falls

Optional activities: Vic Falls National Park Entry

OVERNIGHT: Victoria Falls Rainbow Hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 20: Victoria Falls

Today is the last day of your grand African adventure- go out with a bang at Victoria Falls.

Experience one of the many exhilarating adventures on offer here at one of the Wonders of the World: go rafting on the Zambezi, bungee off the Vic Falls bridge, enjoy a sunset cruise, get a new perspective of the Falls from inside a helicopter... what better way is there to round off one of the most memorable experiences of your life?

Note: It is possible to book our 2 day Journey to Johannesburg, either Camping or Accommodated straight after this tour, as this is one of the cheapest ways to get from Victoria Falls to Johannesburg. Please contact us for more information. Our Big 5 Encounters tour from Johannesburg then also fits well after this trip, providing some great safaris in Kruger National Park.

Optional activities: Zambezi Sunset Cruise, Bungee Jump, Helicopter Flights, White Water Rafting

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra nights in Victoria falls post-tour Departure airport transfer in Victoria Falls

Included:

- 15 nights camping and 4 nights in hotels/lodges/guesthouses
- Camping equipment (except sleeping bag & pillow)
- All transport using in custom 25-seat expedition vehicle
- All 'included highlights' as mentioned in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to National Parks
- 2 truck crew (driver/guide plus assistant/cook)
- Local guides for sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Meals: 19 breakfasts, 11 lunches and 15 dinners
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Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Visas
- Local options, Activity Package and Delta upgrade
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for guides & driver
- Entrance fees and activities not mentioned above
- Any other items not mentioned above
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Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Okavango Delta Upgrade (accommodated) - 2020 only

Min numbers: 1

This Okavango Delta Upgrade is designed for travellers who have booked the Accommodated version of this tour would like to experience the Delta and its waterways in a bit more depth, while staying in a deluxe camp. On arrival in Maun you will leave the truck and its crew, and any travellers who have not purchased the upgrade, and take a flight into the Delta. A 4x4 safari vehicle will then take you to the camp which will be your home for the next 2 nights (during very high water levels this transfer may be by boat). You will need to pack a small overnight bag for this excursion (absolute max 10kg) and may leave other luggage and valuables locked inside your locker in the truck.

Accommodation is in deluxe permanent twin bedded en-suite tents. The single supplement option for the main tour does not cover these two nights. We will aim to arrange shared same-sex twin tents but if this is not possible a single supplement will be payable. All meals are included during your stay.

The normal camp used is the **Mopiri Camp** which is a deluxe lodge situated on an island on the North Western edge of the Delta and is a great location for a water based exploration of the area. The main area consists of a large dining room, a separate lounge area, a deck overlooking the lagoon and a fire pit for cosy evenings chatting and looking at the stars. There is also a swimming pool with views over the floodplain. There are long wooden board walks winding around the island to each tent, providing privacy and peace and quiet. As this is a water based camp, you should expect to see hippos, crocodiles, numerous species of birds, and if you're lucky some elephants. Lions and other large land game are rarely sighted in this area though.

On some dates and subject to availability at the time of booking, we may also use **Moremi Crossing** (same pricing) or the **Nguma Lodge** (slightly cheaper - pricing will be provided at the time of booking)

Day 1 - Maun to the Okavango Delta

After arriving in Maun your guide will transfer you to Maun airport where you will board your flight into the Delta. On arrival a representative from the lodge will greet you and transfer you to the camp. After you have checked in, high tea will be served followed by a short island walk and a boat trip. During periods of very high water, the island walk may not be possible and your boat trip will be extended with sundowners on board.

Overnight: [Mopiri Camp](#) or [Moremi Crossing](#) or [Nguma Lodge](#)

Day 2 - Okavango Delta

It's an early start today to make the most of the best wildlife viewing times. After breakfast at the lodge we head out for a full day on the waterways, including a boat safari, nature walk, mokoro trip and a break for lunch on one of the many islands. We'll return to the camp in the afternoon before the evening is free to relax.

Overnight: [Mopiri Camp](#) or [Moremi Crossing](#) or [Nguma Lodge](#)

Day 3 – Okavango Delta to Maun

We have a more relaxed start to the day today, and after breakfast you'll return to the airstrip for the flight back to

Maun where you'll be met and transferred back to the truck and your fellow travellers. The normal tour itinerary then continues.

Please note - if you have booked our **Waterfalls & Wildlife** tour, then by selecting this option you will not be able to participate in the Moremi full day game drive included in the normal tour.

Departure airport transfer in Victoria Falls

Min numbers: 1

This option adds a departure airport transfer in Victoria Falls to your Overland tour with us. You will need to also book at least one night of post-tour hotel accommodation with us in order to book this transfer.

Note: We subcontract our airport transfers, so your transfer representative will not have any information about your tour with us, or be able to assist you beyond the transfer itself.

Options available while on tour (SAOVSH)

Min numbers: 1

These options are available while you are on the tour from local activity providers who your booking will be with. Prices are given as a guide and are subject to change.

South Africa

- **Gariiep/Orange River**
 - Half Day Canoe Trip | R300 to R400

Namibia

- **Swakopmund**
 - Dolphin Cruise (4/5 hours) | R850 to R950
 - Quadbiking (approx. 2 Hours) | R650 to R750
 - Sandboarding | R650 to R750
 - Sky Diving | R2500 to R2800

Botswana

- **Maun**
 - 1hr Scenic Delta Flight (min 4) | \$80 to \$200
- **Okavango**
 - Tips for Polers - Per Day Per Person | \$6 to \$10 (discretion)
- **Chobe NP**
 - Game Drive | BWP400 to BWP600

Zimbabwe

- **Victoria Falls**
 - Bungee Jump | \$150 to \$170
 - Helicopter Flight over the Falls (min 3) | \$160 to \$180
 - Full day White Water Rafting (High water) | \$150 to \$170
 - Zambezi Sunset Cruise (inc transfers) | \$40 to \$70

1. Accommodation

This is a Camping tour with a few lodges or basic hotels included from time to time (Swakopmund, Windhoek, Victoria Falls). We include easily erected tents, all you need to bring is a sleeping bag & towel (and pillow if you need one). Prices are based on 2 sharing so if you are travelling as a single passenger you should expect to share a tent with another traveller of the same sex unless you pay the single room supplement. This will provide you with a single room during any hotel stays and a tent just for yourself. During hotel stays, all couples will be given a private double room. Friends booking together will also share a room. Triple rooms are not generally available.

Note - Accommodation providers are subject to change without notice. The properties listed are our preferred options, but sometimes due to availability or other issues with the property, we may substitute another property of similar standards. En-suite facilities are not always guaranteed.

2. Destination Guides

Cederberg Mountains - Day 1

The Cederberg mountains and nature reserve are located near Clanwilliam and named after the endangered Clanwilliam Cedars (*Widdringtonia cedarbergensis*) which are endemic to the area, growing at an altitude of 1 000 m to 1 500 m. Some species are believed to live up to 1000 years but human activity has led to the destruction of most of the original forests. The mountains extend about 50 km north-south by 20 km east-west, the highest peak in the range is Sneeuwberg (2,028 m). The area is defined by dramatic sandstone rock formations, often reddish in colour. Cederberg Wilderness Area was recently proclaimed one of eight World Heritage Sites within the Cape Floristic Region, South Africa. The area is also known for the San rock art and the discovery of important fossils, particularly in recent years. The fossils are of primitive fish and date back 450 million years to the Ordovician Period.

The Gariep (Orange) River - Day 2

The Orange River was originally called the Nu Gariep ("great river") by the indigenous Nama people. It was named the Orange River by Colonel Robert Gordon, commander of the Dutch East India Company garrison at Cape Town, on a trip to the interior. Gordon named the river in honour of William of Orange, although a popular belief is that it was named for its colour. Nowadays known by its original name Gariep River, it is the longest river in South Africa, covering 1 800 km. It rises in the Drakensberg mountains in Lesotho, where it is known as Senqu, flowing westwards through South Africa to the Atlantic Ocean at Alexander Bay. On its long journey, the Orange offers a variety of vistas: in places it is seamed by rugged mountain chains and in other parts, by endless dune fields. The river forms part of the international border between South Africa and Namibia and between South Africa and Lesotho as well as several provincial borders within South Africa. Although the river does not pass through any major cities, it plays an important role in the South African economy by providing water for irrigation and hydroelectric power. The Orange River is also responsible for the diamond deposits along the Namibian coast. Over millions of years it transported diamonds from the volcanic pipes in Kimberley in South Africa to the sea. From there, the currents took them northward and the surf deposited them into the dune fields of the Namib.

The Orange River is also famous for its white water rapids. Our tours don't include full white water rafting adventures however you will have opportunity to enjoy a gentle paddle down the river in canoes that are provided by the camp site.

Fish River Canyon - Day 3

The Fish River Canyon in the South of Namibia is the second largest in the world and the largest in Africa, in places it is 27kms wide and up to 550m deep while in total it is over 160km long. It is a natural wonder that should not be missed when visiting Southern Africa. Another major attraction of the area found at the Southern end of the Fish River Canyon is Ai-Ais hot springs resort. Ai-Ais meaning 'burning water' in the local Nama language, refers to the sulphurous thermal hot water springs found at the base of the mountains at the southern end of the Fish River Canyon. The Ai-Ais (pronounced "eye-ice") springs originate deep under the riverbed and form an oasis in the extremely arid area. During the Nama uprising of 1903–07, when the local Herero and Nama people rebelled against German colonial rule, the hot springs were used by German military forces as a base camp. In

1915, the area was again used as a base by South African troops who were recovering from wounds during the South-West Africa Campaign. In the 1960s the spring was proclaimed a national monument and became a conservation area and on 16 March 1971, the camp was officially opened. The thermal water, rich in sulphur, chloride and fluoride, has an average temperature of about 60 degrees C and is said to be therapeutic.

Namib-Naukluft National Park - Day 4

The Namib-Naukluft National Park is bigger than Switzerland at 49,768 square km, making it the largest game park in Africa. Being in Namibia this national park is predominantly made up of fiery desert and burnt orange dunes and hills formed by the push and pull of the wind. Unlike most wild African parks that are filled with typical wild and untamed animals, the Namib-Naukluft National Park is filled with animals of a different kind. Snakes, never before seen "weird" insects as well as over 200 species of birds inhabit the area.

The area of Sossusvlei is more notorious and is the main tourist attraction to the area. Namib-Naukluft National Park tours will not only provide visitors with a wonderful and quintessential desert experience that the Namib is so famous for but will allow them to walk in the footsteps of hyenas, gemsbok and jackals.

The Namib is characterized by its Inselbergs and rocky outcrops called Kopjes. These enclaves and outcrops have been completely created by nature and are the tell-tale signs of heavy wind and its ability to form natural art. They're also evidence of Gondwanaland and the time when the two most southern tips of the world separated to form Africa, South America and Australia.

Namib means "open space" and tours to Namib-Naukluft National Park will show you all that this diverse space has to offer.

Sossusvlei - Day 5

Sossusvlei is one of the world's most remote and beautiful places, synonymous with sweeping sand dunes and astonishing sunsets. The salt and clay pan is enclosed by towering, vivid red dunes, which some say are the highest in the world, presenting a breath-taking picture, as their crimson colour clashes with the cobalt sky. The area is located within the Namib-Naukluft National Park of Namibia, in the heart of the exquisitely isolated desert. Having endured arid or semi-arid conditions for at least 55 million years, it is considered to be the second oldest desert in the world, after the Atacama Desert in Chile. It has less than 10 mm of rain annually and is almost completely barren. Despite the harsh conditions, a variety of plant and animal life can be found in the desert. There are some unusual species of plants and animals that are found only in this desert.

Sossus is Nama for 'no return', while vlei is the Afrikaans word for marsh, so effectively the area is known as 'no return marsh,' in reference to the fact that it is the Tsauchab River's natural endorheic drainage basin. The region spans between the Koichab and Kuiseb rivers and is a dream destination for photographers. The dunes have a brilliant red palette and are best viewed at sunrise and sunset, when the sun's crepuscular rays cast them in an incandescent flaming hue, while the wind demonstrates its artistry, painting complex ripples in the sand. The highest of all the dunes is 'Big Daddy' which dominates the landscape, measuring a remarkable 380 metres in height. Although the region is predominantly associated with drought, periodically the rains will fall and the vlei fills with water, attracting many animals and people to its banks. This sight is extremely rare and not one to be missed, as the area teems with life, adorning the undulating dunes. Visit the majestic Sesriem Canyon which starts as a deep cleft in the ground, eventually expanding into a flattened plain. Witness the Naravlei, from the top of 'Big Mama' – an obliging dune which is well worth the climb and explore the haunting desolation of Dead Vlei, which is named for its numerous dead camelthorn trees, some of which are over 800 years old.

Swakopmund - Day 6

Swakopmund is a coastal city on the North Western coast of Namibia, it is known as the adventure capital of Namibia and this is evident in the long list of optional activities that are available on our stop overs on our Swakopmund tours.

The town has a permanent inhabitation of 42 000 residents so is by no means massive. It does however have a rich and fascinating history and the influence from the days of German colonization. The architecture is stunning and there are many quaint shops and nooks, you can lose yourself for an entire day in the city centre should you choose not to take part in the optional extras and would rather spend a day exploring.

Our Swakopmund tours offer as optional extras, sky-diving, quad biking and sand boarding to name but a few. If however you feel in the mood for something more gentle we also have a nature walk with a highly qualified local guide who will guide you through the diverse and rich local flora and fauna.

Swakopmund has a rich and fascinating history which is evident in the infrastructure of the town and the culture of the people, Swakopmund travel allows you the opportunity to learn about a part of African colonization that is often left unlearned. The German occupation of Southern Africa has a massive impact on the language and culture to a degree that is still evident today. Founded in 1892 as the main harbour for the imperial German

Colony, it was chosen for its fresh water supply and deep natural harbour.

When the Union of South Africa took over control of German South West Africa after World War 2 it transferred shipping responsibility to Walvis Bay, as such many of the major shipping companies that opened up offices moved out. The phenomenal architecture they left behind though is still visible.

Spitzkoppe - Day 8

Spitzkoppe tours take you to a collection of granite peaks located between Swakopmund and Usakos. The peaks stand out dramatically on the flat desolate landscape. The granite that forms the peaks is over 700 million years old and the highest of them rises 1784 meters above sea level which works out to 700 meters above the desert. One of the major attractions of the region are the rock paintings done by the Khoi San tribes that inhabited the area. The Spitzkoppe tours that we run take advantage of not only the natural wonder of the area but the historic significance of these paintings. Our Spitzkoppe travel package involves setting up an over-night camp at the base of one of the granite peaks and a guided tour of the natural wonders of the area. The peak is known by rock climbers all over the world as one of the most challenging in Southern Africa. Although our Spitzkoppe tours do not offer the chance to climb the peak, there is a guided nature walk of the area and you will have free time to explore the region around the camp and if you are feeling adventurous you can try climbing it for some stunning views.

The Himba People - Day 9

The Himba are descendents of the Herero people and still speak a dialect of the old Herero language. There are about 20,000 – 50,000 Himba people living in the Kunene region, where they have recently built two villages at Kamanjab. The Himba are semi-nomadic pastoralists who breed cattle and goats in this dry, rugged, and mountainous area. They are some of the most photographed people in the world, due to their striking style of dress and their traditional lifestyle. Their appearance is characterised by scanty goat-skin clothing, and they are heavily adorned with jewellery of shells, copper and iron, according to the tribal hierarchy. The distinctive red colour of their skin and hair is a mixture of butter, ash and ochre (otjize) which protects them from the harsh desert climate.

Typically the women take care of the children, do the milking and other work, whilst men take care of the political tasks. The villages are made up of family homesteads – huts built around a central fire and livestock enclosure. Both the livestock and fire are pivotal to the Himba belief in ancestor worship, the fire representing ancestral protection of the living community.

Situated about 20 km outside of town, a guided tour around the village will not only give you an in-depth insight into the life and ways of the last traditional tribe in Namibia, the Ova-Himba, but an amazing photographic opportunity as well. You will find out about the milking ceremony, the smoke bath, be informed on the beliefs around the holy fire, ancestors and herbal medicine. You will also learn about the jewellery and hairstyles to imitate the status of each tribe member and their close relationship with nature, their cattle and children.

Note: The semi-nomadic Himba people are extremely susceptible to Western influence and have lost a large portion of their land to farmers, engineers, miners and many were displaced during the wars that raged in Angola. The dwindling number of pastoralists that still exist in their natural environment are protected as far as possible by creating a “buffer zone”, or an “educational tribe” where tourists who would like to get a better understanding of the way of the Himba, their lifestyle and their traditions, can do so without interfering with those still living in their natural environment. Visiting the Himba tribe can be a controversial topic that gets discussed at the camp fire, however not so much if the reason for visiting this particular tribe is understood beforehand.

The income that this specific tribe generates from the visits goes towards the education of orphaned Himba children and assists the tribe in giving them a chance to learn about their own culture and heritage.

There is a market at the end of your visit, this is a way for the women to establish a small income, used for their own private expenses, and it is up to you whether you'd like to purchase anything or not.

Etosha National Park - Day 10

Etosha Pan National Park is a large endorheic salt pan which forms part of the Kalahari basin. It is a 120 km long dry lake bed, which is protected by the Etosha National Park home to some of the most phenomenal game viewing in the world. One of the elements that make the Etosha National park tours so memorable is that the camps sites within the park are built on the edge of water holes, so you can spend peaceful evenings with good company as the sun goes down watching the animals come down to the waterhole to drink.

On our Etosha National Park tour we will take you on several game drives that utilise an elevated truck to provide the best possible game viewing. There are optional night drives for you to take part in, and although they are not included in the Etosha National Park tours they are highly recommended. The optional game drives are taken

with expert guides who have an abundance of local knowledge and will try to help you see as many as possible of the 114 mammal species, 340 bird species, 110 reptile species, 16 amphibian species and, surprisingly, one species of fish.

However, game viewing can never be offered with guarantees, as you are dealing with wild animals you can never be certain of exactly where they will be or how they will behave.

Windhoek - Day 12

The Nama people originally gave Windhoek the name Ai-Gams, meaning "hot water" due to the hot springs that were once part of the town. The Herero people who lived there called it Otjomuise, "place of steam". Theories vary on how Ai-Gams/Otjomuise got its modern name of Windhoek, most believe the name Windhoek is derived from the Afrikaans word Wind-Hoek, meaning "corner of wind". It is also thought that the Afrikaners named Windhoek after the Winterhoek Mountains, at Tulbagh in South Africa, where the early Afrikaner settlers had lived. In those days Windhoek was the point of contact between the warring Namas, led by Jan Jonker Afrikaner, and the Herero people.

Present-day Windhoek was founded on 18 October 1890, when German settler Von François fixed the foundation stone of the Alte Feste fort. During the next fourteen years Windhoek developed slowly, with only the most essential government and private buildings being erected. After 1907, the town grew quickly as people migrated from the countryside to the city and a large influx of European settlers began arriving from Germany and South Africa. Many beautiful buildings and monuments were erected, including Heinitzburg, one of three castles in Windhoek, the fairy-tale Christuskirche and The Rider statue.

Windhoek is now one of the country's busiest cities – known for its alluring diversity and cosmopolitan feel, the metropolis attracts myriad visitors each year. During your time here you can wander through the town and gaze at an array of stately buildings, including the impressive parliament buildings and Hero's Acre. If you're historically inclined, then ensure that you pop into the plethora of museums on offer, including the National Library and National Art Gallery. If you're in need of some rest and rejuvenation, then visit the serene National Botanical Gardens to immerse yourself in the tranquillity of the gorgeous grounds. Botanists will delight in the numerous plant species on offer which attract plenty of exquisite insects and prolific bird life. Also well worth a visit is the smallest functioning cathedral in Southern Africa – St Georges, and look out for Das Reiterdankmal – a towering bronze sculpture of a horse commemorating those lost in colonial wars. You could also stroll down Robert Mugabe Avenue to admire Alte Feste – one of the city's oldest buildings that was built in 1890. Once military headquarters, today, it serves as an intriguing state museum, housing an array of memorabilia that commemorates Namibia's journey to independence.

Botswana - Day 13

As we cross the Botswana border we'll start to see villagers, cattle, donkeys and sheep along the side of the highway. Sometimes the donkeys and cows sit in the middle of the road and any amount of horn blowing won't get them out of the road. Independent since 1966, Botswana (formally a British protectorate) has three of the world's richest diamond mines and this has made Botswana quite a wealthy nation. Now 40 years old, it is known as the African success story. Politically stable and with the foresight to invest in education, healthcare, high economic standards and without the racial issues that have plagued other countries, Botswana has the best economy in sub-Saharan Africa. The government has employed a strategy of high income - low impact tourism. This is where they reduce the number of tourists entering any area of the country by charging a lot more than neighbouring countries, thereby making it more restrictive for the budget traveller.

Bushman (San) people - Day 13

The Bushmen of Southern Africa are the oldest indigenous inhabitants of Southern Africa and have lived off the land in symbiosis for hundreds of years. It is said that the word 'San' meant 'wild people who can't farm', however historically they didn't have a collective word for themselves. They now call themselves Ncoakhoe meaning 'red people' but the term 'San' is still predominant. They were nomadic people – primarily hunter gatherers, moving to where the food and water could be found. It is estimated that there are only 5,000 San people left, with 60% of them living in Botswana and the rest in Namibia and northern South Africa. Many examples of their expressive and remarkable cave paintings can be found dotted around Southern Africa, tracking their historical movements. They have much to offer our modern way of living in terms of a sustainable existence with nature. Bushmen tours give you the opportunity to interact with this fascinating culture and get a true understanding of how they have survived in the harsh environment through an understanding of nature. Many of our Botswana overland tours offer the opportunity to interact with a traditional village of San people that still live very much the way that they did many generations ago. It is not included in the tours and needs to be decided on before-hand. Some people feel it is unethical to treat the villagers as a spectacle however it provides an education for the visitors and much

needed funding for the conservation of the area and their way of life.

Okavango Delta - Day 15

Every year, more than 11 cubic kilometres of water flow from the Okavango River into the Delta, irrigating more than 15 000 square kilometres of the Kalahari Desert, making it the largest inland delta in the world, a labyrinth of lagoons, lakes and hidden channels. It originates in Angola - numerous tributaries join to form the Cubango River, which then flows through Namibia, becoming the Kavango River and finally enter Botswana, where it is becomes the Okavango. Millions of years ago the Okavango River used to flow into a large inland lake called Lake Makgadikgadi (now Makgadikgadi Pans). Tectonic activity and faulting interrupted the flow of the river causing it to back up and form what is now the Okavango Delta. This has created a unique system of waterways that supports a vast array of animal and plant life that would have otherwise been a dry Kalahari savannah.

There are an estimated 200,000 large mammals in and around the Okavango Delta. On the mainland and among the islands in the delta, lions, elephants, hyenas, wild dog, buffalo, hippo and crocodiles congregate with a teeming variety of antelope and other smaller animals - warthog, mongoose, spotted genets, monkeys, bush babies and tree squirrels. Notably the endangered African Wild Dog is present within the Okavango Delta, exhibiting one of the richest pack densities in Africa. The delta also includes over 400 species of birds, including the African Fish Eagle.

Many of these animals live in the Delta but the majority pass through, migrating with the summer rains to find renewed fields for grazing. With the onset of winter the countryside dries up and they make their way back to the floodplains. This leads to some of the most incredible sightings as large numbers of prey and predators are pushed together. Certain areas of the Delta provide some of the best predator action seen anywhere in the world. Boat trips, canoeing and fly-overs are among the most popular activities, however you can also go fishing and walking safaris depending on the time of year. As the Okavango is a seasonal delta, you'll find yourself facing a different environment during the summer and winter months. The rain falls at the beginning of the year.

Chobe National Park - Day 18

Chobe National Park, the second largest park in Botswana, covers 10,566 square km of northern Botswana and is undoubtedly the country's most beautiful and popular nature and game reserve. The Park forms part of the mosaic of lakes, islands and floodplains formed from the Kwando, Linyanti and Chobe River systems. The area has one of the largest concentrations of wildlife in Africa, being particularly renowned for its vast herds of elephant and buffalo, making it an ideal location for African safaris. The elephant population is currently about 120 000. The Chobe elephants are migratory, moving up to 200 km from the Chobe and Linyanti rivers, where they concentrate in the dry season, to the pans in the southeast of the park in the rainy season. They are Kalahari elephants, characterized by rather brittle ivory and short tusks, perhaps because of calcium deficiency in the soil. Due to their high concentration, there is a lot of damage to the vegetation in some areas. Culls have been considered but are too controversial and have thus far been rejected. Wherever you go in the park, you'll be able to observe a variety of wild animals and bird life, and can even explore an area in search of a specific animals or bird.

Victoria Falls - Day 19

Victoria Falls is undoubtedly one of Africa's most beautiful treasures. They border Zimbabwe and Zambia and are the region's most visited tourist hotspot. The falls are by no means the world's biggest waterfall, however ,at 1700 m wide and 108 m high their length and the vast volume of water which find its way to the falls via the Zambezi river makes them one of the most spectacular. David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer, is believed to have been the first European to view the Victoria Falls and wrote: "It has never been seen before by European eyes, but scenes so wonderful must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight". The older, indigenous name of Mosi-oa-Tunya ('the Smoke that Thunders') is the name in official use in Zambia, and the falls spray water into the air which can be seen for miles, including in the surrounding game reserves and national parks. Due to its immense power and size, the waterfall is surrounded by a rich mythology. The local Tonga people of the Zambezi believe that a river god, Nyaminyami, resides in the water in the form of an immense snake. When the Kariba Dam was built in the 1950s, the Zambezi River flooded three times, causing many deaths and much destruction. The local people believe Nyaminyami caused the terrible floods in his anger at the construction.

The unusual form of Victoria Falls enables virtually the whole width of the falls to be viewed face-on, at the same level as the top, from as close as 60 metres, because the whole Zambezi River drops into a deep, narrow slot like chasm, connected to a long series of gorges. Few other waterfalls allow such a close approach on foot.

The falls are formed as the full width of the river plummets in a single vertical drop into a chasm 60–120 m wide, carved by its waters along a fracture zone in the basalt plateau. The depth of the chasm, called the First Gorge, varies from 80 m at its western end to 108 m in the centre. The only outlet to the First Gorge is a 110 m-wide gap about two-thirds of the way across the width of the falls from the western end, through which the whole volume of

the river pours into the Victoria Falls gorges.

There are two islands on the crest of the falls that are large enough to divide the curtain of water even at full flood: Boaruka Island (or Cataract Island) near the western bank and Livingstone Island near the middle. At less than full flood, additional islets divide the curtain of water into separate parallel streams. The main streams are named, in order from Zimbabwe (west) to Zambia (east): Leaping Water (called Devil's Cataract by some), Main Falls, Rainbow Falls (the highest) and the Eastern Cataract.

While staying here, guests can also embark on bush safaris – on foot, horseback or in a vehicle, embark on a Zambezi cruise along the waters before the falls, or try some exciting white water rafting. While on these Victoria Falls safaris guests will have the chance to see crocodiles, hippos and other African wildlife.

3. Transport

This tour is run in conjunction with our local partners in South Africa. You will travel in one of their specially designed overland trucks throughout this tour, giving you a great vantage point from which to enjoy the scenery and incredible wildlife. Our professional and knowledgeable local guides will help to make your experience unforgettable and fun. The maximum number of people on this camping tour is 24 (the trucks have 25 seats)

The vehicles we use are amongst some of the finest on the road. However, do not forget the nature of an adventure tour. This is not a bus trip. Nor do we provide up-market tours. These are still tours aimed at the adventurous traveller. Though the vehicles are comfortable with large windows and great visibility, there are no onboard toilets or air-conditioning.

Each expedition vehicle is fitted with the following:

- Freezers to keep food fresh in the African heat.
- Individual seats with seat belts and ample leg-room
- Overhead luggage racks.
- Lockers for your backpacks (~35 cm square, 80cm deep)
- A safe for your valuables.
- A well-stocked first aid kit is on hand for emergencies.
- Reading material (fiction & field guides), games and recreational gear to keep you well entertained.
- I-pod/MP3 points
- Charging facilities for cameras, batteries etc
- PA System
- Kitchen and stove
- Water tank
- Cooler boxes
- Table for food preparation
- Hand-dishwashing facilities

Partaking in an adventure tour in Africa involves covering hundreds if not thousands of kilometres in a truck, and our tours are as much about this journey as they are about the destinations we visit. Use your time in the truck to talk to your fellow travellers, play card games, have a drink, walk around, take note of the world passing by your window and make the most of this unique opportunity to step out of your comfort zone.

Some roads you travel on will be smooth and easy while others could take up to an hour to cover 1 kilometre. There is just no telling what could happen with road, weather, traffic and other conditions that may exist that will either increase or decrease the amount of time you spend on the road so take your watch off, put your iPad away, turn off your phone and just relax. An average driving day could take anything from 5 to 14 hours in the truck, it all depends on the day.

The tour itinerary shows an indication of the distance to be covered on a particular day. Please don't assume that your travel time will be equal to that which you can travel in your car on the autobahn... no, it will be much, much slower! We will stop for shopping, bathroom breaks, photo stops, activities and a whole lot more. If you are looking to only experience specific destinations and are not interested in the journey, perhaps overland adventures are not for you.

Some game safaris are carried out using 4x4 jeeps/safari vehicles - see your tour itinerary for details. These may be open-roofed or enclosed. You must not leave the vehicle or lean out through windows without express permission from the guide.

4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. So, the expedition vehicles we use on our South & East Africa overland adventure tours have a maximum of 25 seats and on this tour will carry a maximum of 24 travellers.

In South & East Africa we provide fully trained, local English-speaking tour leaders, drivers and crew for all our tours. This tour will feature 2 crew – a driver, and assistant/cook who will help with washing up, clearing away, cleaning of the truck etc. You may assist with this if you wish, and a limited amount of help is expected and appreciated (eg. Washing your own plates & cutlery) but you are not obliged to do any more than that unless you wish to. During the tour we may also use a variety of local specialist guides for activities and tours included in the itinerary.

5. Okavango Delta Upgrade and Local Options

On all our Overland tours we strive to strike a balance between including plenty of meals, tours and activities and being accessible and affordable.

The main tour price covers all your accommodation, transport, most meals and a range of tours and activities.

For those who want to have a more in depth lodge experience of the Okavango Delta in Botswana, then we also offer a **Delta Upgrade** option. This leaves the main tour on the day you arrive in Maun, heads into the Delta, and then spends 2 nights there with a package of safari activities included. You then return to Maun to rejoin the main group. This upgrade requires booking in advance to secure availability on the flights and in the lodge.

In addition, there are further **Locally Available Options** on this tour. These have been chosen to give you more of a taste of what is available in the region and sometimes to offer an adrenaline rush during a relatively sedate tour. All these local options are offered and operated by professional local activity providers and Encounters Travel is not responsible for your booking or time while taking any of these options. Prices for these options may be given on our website, but please bear in mind that are given as a guide only and may vary seasonally and can change from time to time. Availability is subject to seasonal daylight hours and our time-keeping that day.

Please check the Options section for more information and prices.

6. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

7. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000

partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

8. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

9. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

10. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not

provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

11. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



12. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

13. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

14. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

South Africa: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Namibia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Botswana: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted or travelled through an infected area.

Zimbabwe: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Zambia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Malawi: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Tanzania: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Kenya: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Poliomyelitis, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Uganda: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Sudan: Additional vaccinations: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid, Yellow Fever. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area. A certificate may also be required for those departing Sudan.

Morocco: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

Tunisia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria not normally present. Yellow Fever certificate not required.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination is often required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information

detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate organised in advance and with you and to hand during the trip.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have. If you are travelling on an Overland tour or your trip includes wildlife safaris then please bear in mind that you may be travelling on bumpy roads and/or rough ground for several hours at a time. This can be very uncomfortable or painful if you have a bad back, and make such conditions worse. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

Health Declaration: As many of our Africa tours travel through very remote regions, where medical facilities are limited, we are asking all of our travellers 65 years and over who are joining one of our Africa Overland Adventures to complete the attached medical questionnaire. The information provided to Encounters Travel and our local operational partners will be held to the strictest confidence and will be used only to the extent to provide necessary emergency medical care and/or evaluate physical health and fitness for travel.

We will request this from you approximately 30 days before your trip starts, so that your GP can sign your form based on your current health conditions. Please don't submit this several months in advance, as it is important for us to know you are fit for travel just before the trip departs.

15. Passports and Visas

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities. Encounters Travel will not be held responsible if travellers are denied entry because they are not in possession of the relevant visas. We therefore recommend you re-check requirements with the relevant embassy/consulate around 4 weeks before travel.

You should also be in possession of a valid onward or return flight ticket, or proof of other means of transport enabling you to leave the country that your tour passes through or finishes in. In addition you should carry proof of sufficient funds to cover you during your time in the country (eg. credit card).

Should your tour be re-entering a country, please ensure that you have a multiple entry visa that allows this. Some countries have a visa on arrival service which can be more convenient and cheaper. However, for peace of mind and to speed up the border crossing process, Encounters Travel advises that you to get your visas prior to your trip if possible.

16. Tipping

In general tipping in restaurants is expected and is around 10% for good service, more if you have received exceptional service, and, feel free not to tip at all if you received poor service. Tipping taxi drivers etc is really at your own discretion and not always expected. If in doubt please ask your guides. It is expected to tip porters and car guards etc. Ask your guides how much is appropriate in local currency. The recommended amount for Serengeti and Masai Mara guides is around USD5-7 per client per day.

Our guides do work hard but they are also paid at (and often above) industry levels for this work. Our Crew can be tipped if you feel that they have done a good job and/or gone above and beyond the call of duty. The best way to arrange tips is to elect one person in the group to collect the money. On Small Group & Shoestring tours we recommend around USD 3-5 per person per day per guide as a fair tip. On longer Overland tours we recommend USD1-2 per day per person, per guide as a fair tip. So if you have 2-crew on a tour, we would recommend that 2 envelopes are used and each crew member's name written on one. Place what you feel is fair into each envelope and the elected person can give these to the crew at the end of the tour. If you do not feel that the crew deserve a tip, please, do not tip them. You must remember that tipping is only for exceptional service and is not at all compulsory or expected.

17. International Flights and Airport Transfers

International Flights: We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people living in different places and with varying travel plans, except on some Escorted Tours and package promotions, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

The vast majority of our tours are designed such that you can arrive and depart at any time on the first and last days of the set tour itinerary, with your arrival and departure airport transfers included in the tour price. However, on our **Overland tours**, you should not arrange your onward international flights or other travel for the day the tour is due to end (unless the final day does not involve any travelling and finishes after breakfast). Similarly, many of our Overland tours depart their first port of call on the first morning, and you will therefore need to plan for any flights to arrive at least one day beforehand.

Airport Transfers:

Arrival and departure airport transfers are included on most of our Small Group, Shoestring (excluding the 5 & 6-day Garden Route tours where Airport Transfers are not included, however a pickup from a Central Cape Town location is included on day 1 of the tour) and Tailor-made tours but available as extra options on all our African Overland tours, as long as you have accommodation booked with us on that day. If you add extra accommodation before and/or after the tour that you do not book with us, then you will also need to arrange your own airport transfers.

On our **Sebatana Package**, airport transfers for arrival and departure are included, however these transfers operate on a schedule, so a short wait may be required after landing before the transfer departs to the accommodation. To coincide with the transfer departures, your arrival flight should land in Johannesburg before 11am on day 1 and depart after 6pm on day 8. If your flights arrive/depart outside of these times, we would recommend adding an additional night to your trip.

Departure Taxes: Various countries may require that you pay an Airport Departure Tax when departing on an international flight. Please note that all departure taxes must be paid in hard cash currency and US Dollars are normally the best currency to use for this. Departure taxes can vary from US\$10 - US\$60 depending on the departure point.

Flight inclusive packages: We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

18. What to take

LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES: Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

OVERLAND AND SAFARI TOURS: Please keep in mind that these are adventure tours in an adventure vehicle (truck or 4x4) and luggage should not include any solid Samsonite style suitcases. On our accommodated overland tours most of our trucks have lockers for the luggage (locker sizes: 37,5 cm high, 32 cm wide, 80 cm deep). Only a soft bag will fit in these lockers. A suitcase is far more difficult to store and make secure in our vehicle and this is part of the reason we ask for a backpack or tote bag to be used as your luggage. The other reason is that you need to walk from the truck to the accommodation and often over sand or uneven terrain. Your luggage on our Overland tours is limited to ONE backpack and ONE daypack weighing no more than 20kg. As a general rule, if you cannot lift your own luggage - you've got too much stuff! Most people make the mistake of bringing too many clothes. A quick reminder - **suitcases are not suitable on our overland tours** – especially huge Samsonite-style cases! **Small** wheeled cases are OK for safari tours.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST: Kit for all weather conditions including: • 2/3 shorts/skirts • 1 jacket/anorak • Tracksuit/pullover • 2 pairs of long pants/jeans • 2 pairs of walking shoes/boots/trainers • 1 pair of sandals • 3 or 4 T-shirts/short sleeve shirts or sundresses • 2/3 Long Sleeve Shirts • Smart casual change of clothes • Swimwear • Underwear & socks • Sun Hat – preferably that covers the back of your neck. • Raincoat • Kikoi/sarong

Your clothing should be easy to wash and dry and should preferably not need ironing. Avoid synthetics, which can be very uncomfortable in hot weather. Many people underestimate how cold Africa can be – remember that jersey/jacket! There are also nights that are warm but you must still wear clothes that cover arms and legs from mosquitoes. Take a set of casual but smart clothes for the occasional evening out in a restaurant or club. If you wear glasses (or contacts) it is also advisable to bring a spare pair.

While on wildlife safaris it is important to wear dull coloured clothing - olive, mushroom, brown, khaki, stone are ideal.

You should avoid white (stands out too much), black or blue (attracts tsetse flies), and camouflage (illegal in many countries for civilians)

Additional Items: • Towel & facecloth • Baby wipes/ Wet Wipes • Personal toiletries • Sleeping bag • Torch & enough spare batteries • Camera & spare batteries and memory cards • Water bottle. (A 2-litre Coke bottle works well...) • Penknife • Insect and Mosquito repellent • Suntan lotion, sun block & after sun lotion • Sunglasses • Watch • Biodegradable laundry detergent • Passport (plus a copy of your passport & visas) • Extra passport photos • Vaccination certificate • Money • Travel plug • Neck pillow • Small sewing kit • Plastic bags • Clothes line and pegs • Small scrubbing brush • a small padlock for your luggage locker in the truck • Small basic First Aid kit (painkillers, band aids, after-sun lotion, eye drops, anti-diarrhoea tablets etc.)

DAY PACKS: Please check the itinerary for your specific tour if you will need a little daypack. For example on our Cape Town to Vic Falls overland tour you will need a smaller bag, big enough to bring basic equipment (toiletries and clothes) for 2 nights. The daypack is for your Okavango Delta Excursion, where you cannot bring your entire luggage.

19. Meals on Overland tours

Due to the nature of the overland trip, the majority of your meals will be cooked by our crew and eaten beside the vehicle. Meals will not normally be eaten within the accommodation. The reason we run our trips in this way is that we feel it fits in better with this type of trip and it also helps to keep our prices competitive with other companies offering similar tours.

Breakfast: As breakfast is served very early in the morning (if there is driving or activities to be done) it is a simple but filling breakfast: Tea and coffee, breads and spreads, cereals, yoghurts, fruits and on occasion, when

there is time for a later breakfast, we'll will serve a hot breakfast of scrambled eggs, porridge, bacon or beans.

Lunch: Lunch is generally served at a picnic spot next to the road en route to a destination. As the tour leaders only have approximately 45 minutes to get everyone off the truck, prepare lunch and then get everyone back on the truck again, lunches consist of sandwiches and salads (rice salad, pasta salad, tuna salad and green salad) which are quick and easy to prepare but which are quite filling. They do have meal plans which they should stick to, to ensure that there is variety on a day to day basis.

Dinner: This is when your crew get time to prepare a delicious meal and they focus on a substantial protein, vegetable and carbohydrate dinner. We serve traditional cuisine consisting of braais (BBQ), potjie (stew), bobotie (mince), spaghetti and fish and chicken dishes. All meals (on both accommodated and camping tours) that are included in the itinerary are prepared at the full service adventure truck. This is a unique adventure in itself where you get to dine under the stars with your new found friends and experience the real sights and sounds of Africa!

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
