

COWABUNGA FLY-CAMP
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COWABUNGA MAIN CAM
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Safaris since 1974.

Attention!

The following itinerary is meant to help your safari planning. Since 1974, we at Cowabunga Safaris have done many, many kinds and variations of safaris to Namibia.

This is only one kind of safari. Do you want something more upscale? Do you want something more rustic and participatory? If you have a different safari in mind, wish to stay longer, or want to travel to other parts of the continent, tell us. We can make it happen.

NAMIBIA and THE CAPE: "Return to Skeleton Coast Safari" (A Special Cowabunga Alumni Safari)

Length: 14 days from the USA; 11 days in Africa

Accommodations: 5 nights in hotels; 3 nights in safari lodges; 3 nights in luxury tented camps. All accommodations have private, hot-water showers and en suite toilets. Pictures of accommodations are available on request.

Luxury Tented Camps: An additional explanation... Our luxury tented camps are not the same as the camps you might find on a weekend camping trip in the USA. The tents are large - they are big enough to walk into and stand in -- with comfortable twin beds complete with linen and duvets. All tents are bug-proof with mesh windows, have nightstands next to the beds, and, as has been mentioned, possess en suite bathroom facilities.

Fitness Level: Although there will be opportunities for optional walks, this safari is primarily a vehicle-based safari (albeit if one opts not to take the cable car to the top of Table Mountain in Cape Town, trekking to the top of mountain can be a challenge for even the most fit!). Only a minimal level of fitness is required.

Group size: Cowabunga keeps groups small, to better share Africa. Unless otherwise stated, this type of safari will have no more than 10 Safarists. A custom-designed itinerary might have fewer still.

Food: You should NOT go on this type of safari to lose weight! All meals cater to western preferences, are first-class, and excellently prepared. Chefs make exquisite cuisine using a wide array of meats, pastas, and fresh vegetables and fruits grown in the area. Desserts are delectable and overwhelming - so much so, we encourage all Safarists to practice the Cowabunga mantra: to "Eat dessert first, because life is so uncertain.")

Water: Treated drinking water is provided in some of the places we stay. Everywhere bottled water is available for purchase.

Stay Longer: Experiencing all Africa has to offer is a once-in-a-lifetime privilege for most. Accordingly, some Safarists like to stay longer. We at Cowabunga Safaris understand! If, after this safari, you wish to do additional activities or to continue on to other parts of the continent, we can help. In fact, given our love of the continent, you can bet we'll beg to join you!

Detailed Briefings: Cowabunga provides in-depth written briefings for all Safarists after they sign-on for any safari. Furthermore, when possible, Cowabunga conducts face-to-face briefings approximately three months before departure. For those who can't make the face-to-face briefings, a detailed transcript of questions and answers is sent to them. Gary, Brian and Nancy always stand ready to brief Safarists at a moment's notice via fax, phone, e-mail or in-person.

-- THE ADVENTURE --

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CAPE TOWN

It has been described as one of the three most beautiful waterfront cities in the world, and rightly so. With Table Mountain and Lion Head Mountain as landmarks, the scenic views in and around Cape Town are spectacular.

During our three nights and two day stay we have a guided tour driving down the peninsula to Cape Point. We take a scenic route south along the highway following the Atlantic Coast with tremendous waves crashing against the rocks. At Cape Point we ride a tram up to a viewing station for a great Kodak moment. The more fit and adventuresome of the group will enjoy climbing even higher on Cape Point to photograph the place where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet. Lunch at a restaurant noted for its seafood is included on our tour. We drive back to Cape Town on the Indian Ocean side of the Peninsula following the road along False Bay. A stop to see the rare African penguin is planned. During the tour we pass through many suburbs of Cape Town with their homes perched on hillsides for the stupendous view. A stop at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden is a must. There have been many changes since we last were there including a sculpture garden, a very nice gift shop and a new Conservatory. Three themed gardens are the Fynbos Walk, Fragrance and Medicinal gardens, and the Water-wise demonstration garden. With over 4500 plant species in cultivation, Kirstenbosch has a lot to offer.

A trip up Table Mountain on the new revolving gondola is another must while in Cape Town. The view is absolutely spectacular with Robben Island visible on the ocean side and the city of Cape Town on the other side. Take plenty of film! Even the indigenous hyrax are worth a shot or two.

Our free day in Cape Town offers opportunities galore. Our accommodation at the Victoria and Alfred Hotel place us right in the middle of the V&A Waterfront. This is a working harbour with freighters loading and leaving for distant ports. In addition there are very nice shops, restaurants and the Two Oceans Aquarium with its impressive exhibits. It is safe to walk around the Waterfront, and we recommend speaking to the concierge about places to visit and how to get there. Between the hotel and the aquarium is a large market with souvenirs of all types for sale.

A visit to Cape Town is a wonderful, relaxing way to catch our breath before we head inland for the start of our desert Safari.

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HUAB NATURE RESERVE

Jan and Suzi van de Reep, long time friends of Cowabunga and our hosts for three nights, have been instrumental in establishing the Huab Conservation Trust. The purpose of the Trust is to turn the overgrazed farmland into a private Nature Reserve as a buffer zone for the desert elephants in particular, and wild animals in general. The ephemeral Huab River, which runs through the 20 thousand acre nature reserve, has water which attracts wildlife. The land is returning to its pristine condition at a remarkable rate, assisted by some anti-erosion measures. The indigenous

flora now has a chance to proliferate and provide food for wild animals and refuge for birds, insects and reptiles.

Species such as kudu, oryx and mountain zebra have been able to survive the shooting parties of the past and are gradually forgetting that danger. Their numbers are building and the new generation is approachable. However, in order to re-establish the natural balance of fauna, it is necessary to reintroduce indigenous animals such as giraffe, springbok and ostrich, as these species succumbed to the hunters. As the vegetation is no longer over-utilized by excessive domestic stock numbers, the wild animals are drawn to the prolific grazing and can drink peacefully from waterholes which have been made "game friendly": saucers enabling animals to watch for predators.

Apart from its fascinating animal and plant life the Huab Nature Reserve is characterized particularly by its unique rock formations. The manifold landscape is the outcome of a history of geological development which took place during the last two billion years. As such this area, which is geologically known as the Huab Complex, is amongst the oldest formations on earth. The most ancient section of the Huab Complex consists mainly of gneiss, and belongs to the lowest bedrock on the African continent.

At Huab Lodge eight spacious bungalows blend into their spectacular setting on the banks of the Huab River. Solar energy is harnessed to provide clean, silent power for the Lodge. Each bungalow has two double beds, a verandah, double basins, shower with a view, separate toilet, ceiling fan and mosquito nets (though this is not malaria country). In addition to a swimming pool, there is a thermal springs wallow which contains soothing and healing minerals. Salads and herbs come fresh from the kitchen garden. A small shop offers indigenous craft items and a nice selection of books. In Huab Lodge tradition, guests have the opportunity of tasting some wines of the smaller, less well-known estates of South Africa. This much enjoyed custom is carried out ceremoniously each evening.

Activities include expertly guided early morning walks and scenic drives in an open vehicle. There are unusual rock paintings and old tools and shards. (Don't even think it, Marshall.) The area boasts over 175 species of birds, 11 of which are endemic, and many mammals and reptiles. For those who enjoy game viewing from horse back, rides are on option.

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SKELETON COAST

From the rugged wind-swept Atlantic Coast with fog every morning to the vast desolate desert terrain with singing dunes, the Skeleton Coast is one of the most unique habitats on the earth's surface. During our four days and three nights (each at a different camp site), we alternate between nature walks and sightseeing drives in Land Rovers and flights in small chartered aircraft. Weather permitting, we often fly low over shipwrecks, seal colonies, flocks of flamingo, "moonscapes", and miles and miles of sand.

From our vehicle we can investigate the ancient (and remarkable) Welwitschia tree, drive up and

down the sand dunes (better than Worlds of Fun), explore the beaches with their multi-colored pebbles consisting of agates, lavas, granites, as well as whale bones!

In the Kaokoveld area we visit the Himba people, who still pursue a seminomadic lifestyle. Anthropologists say they are among the most successful subsistence farmers in Africa. Most men and women still dress in the traditional fashion, smearing their bodies with red ochre and fat to protect them from the heat and sun. The women are naked from the waist up and wear animal-skin kilts with intricate leather, copper, and shell ornaments.

Once again our Operator is Skeleton Coast Safaris owned by the Schoeman family of Namibia. They probably know this area better than anyone. Amy Schoeman has published a book of her beautiful photographs on the Skeleton Coast. To quote from their brochure: "Although several game species occur in these regions, it must be borne in mind that the PRIME PURPOSE OF THESE SAFARIS IS NOT TO VIEW GAME, BUT TO EXPERIENCE THE FREEDOM, BEAUTY AND STRANGE SOLITUDE OF THE AREA. Seeing game should therefore be considered a bonus."

Accommodations for these three nights are not in upscale Lodges — we'll be in small igloo tents or wooden huts. Each tent or hut has a chemical toilet. The showers are outdoors. Basically the tents and huts are used for sleeping only; we'll spend the rest of the days outside and evenings in the dining tent. It will be rare if see another vehicle of Safarists — we're truly in remote Africa!

The climate will vary considerably due to the fog belt along the coast. A windbreaker and scarf are recommended because of the near-constant wind. Nights are chilly, both in the interior and along the coast. Days along the coast are cool until the fog disperses (late morning) but warmer in the interior.

Since we'll be using light aircraft we are requested to travel as lightly and compactly as possible. Our bags must be flexible, soft-sided and weigh no more than 22 lbs. (not including camera gear).

It is exciting to think about and prepare for a return to the Skeleton Coast. As Gary says, "*The anticipation is soooooo delicious.*"

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Day 1 En route

FINALLY! It's departure day for the Skeleton Coast Crew. We fly from Kansas City to Atlanta where we catch our flight to Cape Town, South Africa. (D)

Day 2 Cape Town

After crossing the Atlantic we land in Cape Town where we pass through Customs and Immigration and transfer to the Victoria & Alfred Hotel, located in the V&A Waterfront district. Dinner tonight is at the Waterfront Cafe. (B)/D

Day 3 Cape Town

After breakfast at the Hotel we have a full day tour driving to Cape Point where the

Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet. Lunch is included on our tour. Dinner is on our own. There are several excellent restaurants within walking distance of the hotel. B/L

Day 4 Cape Town

Today we're on our own. Arrangements for transportation can be made at Reception. B

Day 5 Huab Nature Reserve

We're off to the bush today. Our route takes us from Cape Town to Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. From there we have a charter flight to Huab Nature Reserve, where we stay at Huab Lodge. B/L/D

Day 6 Huab Nature Reserve

Game drives and nature walks in the Reserve. B/L/D

Day 7 Huab Nature Reserve

Try the bird hide today and the thermal pool. Star gazing and identification tonight. B/L/D

Day 8 Windhoek

We leave Huab on a charter flight to Windhoek where we overnight. B/L/D

Day 9 Skeleton Coast

It's *deja vu* all over again as we fly from Windhoek to Swapokmund to refuel, then on to our first night's accommodation for overnight at Camp Kuidas in the Huab Valley. Within walking distance of the Camp are ancient rock Bushmen engravings. B/L/D

Day 10 Skeleton Coast

This morning we explore landscapes of haunting beauty by Land Rover. After lunch at the Camp we fly along the Atlantic coast to Terrace Bay, where we land and explore this new area by Land Rover. Later we're back in the air for the short flight to Camp Purros in the Hoarusib Valley where we spend the night. B/L/D

Day 11 Skeleton Coast

We start off today in Land Rovers and a visit to the Himba people. Then we're back in the air, flying along the coastline looking for shipwrecks. We land and once again climb into the LAND Rovers to a favorite lunch spot. After lunch we continue through Hartmann Valley, arriving at our camp next to the Kunene River in the late afternoon. B/L/D

Day 12 Windhoek

After days in the desert this morning we have a boat trip! (Don't worry: it's not along the rugged Atlantic coast — it's on the Kunene River.) Then it's back to the Land Rovers through the mountains of the Hartmann Valley to a shady lunch site. After lunch we

charter back to Windhoek, arriving in late afternoon. B/L/D

Day 13 Windhoek/Cape Town/Atlanta

If there's time before our South Africa Airways flight, Naomi can attend her favorite church in all of Africa — the Lutheran Church in Windhoek. From there we fly to Cape Town, change planes and head off over the Atlantic Ocean as the sun sets. B/(L)/(D)

Day 14 Kansas City and Home

After US Immigration formalities at the Atlanta airport we transfer to our flight for Kansas City and home. Don't be surprised if you find grains of Skeleton Coast sand in the pockets of your clothes or your toiletry case when you start unpacking -- a small reminder that you have visited one of the most rugged, remote deserts of the world! (B)



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