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Skeleton Coast Safari combined with Sossusvlei and Etosha National Park (5 Days & 4 Nights)

A four day safari leaving Windhoek at 07h00 in the morning with a flight to Sossusvlei which is reputed to have the highest sand dunes in the world. From there following the Skeleton Coast via Conception Bay to the Huab Valley during the first day. The second day continues up the coast as far as the Hoarusib Valley and the third day as far as the Kunene river, being the northern border of Namibia. The safari ends in Windhoek on the fourth day, arriving just before sunset.

Day one: We meet at Eros Airport, Windhoek at 07h00 for an early morning flight to Sossusvlei in the Namib Naukluft Park. Sossusvlei is reputed to have the highest dunes in the world, and the view of the shadow-lined dunes from the air is spectacularly breathtaking. We land at Sesriem from where we undertake an excursion by vehicle into the dunes. The dunes reach heights of 300m or more and for those inclined and fit enough to climb them, this might pose a challenge. We return to the aircraft and fly along the coast via Conception Bay towards Swakopmund. The flight includes an aerial view of the famous Eduard Bohlen shipwreck at Conception Bay.

After landing and refuelling at Swakopmund, we continue with a low-level flight north along the Skeleton Coast past the seal colony at Cape Cross for a light picnic lunch near the beach. Thereafter we fly east, over the desert, to the Ugab formations—a nearly lifeless ‘moon landscape’ of numerous black ridges that stand out in stark contrast to the white desert floor—before landing at our Kuidas camp in the Huab River Valley, where we stay for the night. Ancient rock engravings are found amongst the rocks within walking distance of the camp.

Day two: After breakfast we depart by Land Rover to explore the colourful red lava and yellow sandstone of the Huab River environs and to be introduced to the ecological aspects of this area with its wide diversity of flora and fauna. This includes the Welwitschia Mirabilis, a tree that has been dwarfed by the rigours of the encroaching desert climate. We have lunch at Kuidas camp before flying along the coast to Terrace Bay in the Skeleton Coast Park. The most prominent shipwrecks along this part of the coast are the Montrose and Henrietta.

At the coast we access the roaring dunes by Land Rover, which always proves to be a stimulating experience. We also visit the beach with its profusion of multi-coloured pebbles consisting of agate, lava, granite and quartz. Interesting to see are old bleached whale bones scattered along the beach above the high tide mark. We return to the aircraft and continue north to our Leylandsdrift camp in the Hoarusib Valley in the Kunene Region, where we stay for the night.

Day three: After breakfast we embark on a scenic drive along the Hoarusib Valley to visit a settlement of the nomadic Himba people. We might be lucky enough to come across the desert-dwelling elephant who frequent this valley. From here we continue north along the Skeleton Coast by aircraft to the Kunene River acting as a border to Angola. The Kaiu Maru shipwreck and pieces from old sailing vessels lie scattered along this part of the coast. From the airfield we take a scenic drive by Land Rover to our favourite lunch site. After lunch we continue through the mountains and dunes of the Hartmann Valley - which extends to the Kunene River - reaching our Kunene River camp in the late afternoon.

Day four: An early morning boat trip on the Kunene River as it flows through scenic desert landscape, observing bird life and possibly some crocodiles. Birds vary from aquatic species on the perennial waters, to endemic desert varieties and those which inhabit dense riverine vegetation. After lunch at the camp, we fly directly from the Kunene River to the eastern side of the Etosha National Park, where we spend the night at a lodge outside the park.

Day five: After breakfast we drive/fly into the park for a game drive by vehicle. Springs provide numerous drinking places for the animals, which congregate in spectacular numbers especially during the dry season (June to December). Animals such as lion and steenbok may be found in specific home ranges, while others such as springbok, eland, zebra, wildebeest and elephant wander all over browsing or in search of better grazing. Our flight back to Windhoek commences in the afternoon to ensure that we land before dark.

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