

# Namibia & South Africa August - September 2027

## Flowers & Wild Animals: First Draft: June 2026

**Something new** While we have visited two or three countries on some of our Africa trips, this will be the first time we've started in one and finished in another. **Get in early or miss out.** Some of the walks we want to include can get booked out six to twelve months in advance.

**Price: \$2795** The fee covers only our services. Full cost details are toward the end of this document.

**Summary** This trip combines a mix of wildlife, wild flowers, wild scenery and some local culture. We will use hire cars so we can go where we want, when we want. While it's mostly places I've been before, there will be some new ones. All photos here were taken on our previous trips.



On the trail on top of Table Mountain

**Draft Itinerary** There will be changes depending on what is available when.

Day 1 Arrive Cape Town.

Day 2 Table Mt Walk. Up or down the cable car, starting or finishing in the Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens.

Day 3 Cape Town Sightseeing or Table Mt if previous day weather bad.

Day 4 Collect car(s). Drive to Olifantsbos Cottage, Cape of Good Hope. Short afternoon walk. See [https://www.sanparks.org/parks/table\\_mountain/tourism/accommodation.php](https://www.sanparks.org/parks/table_mountain/tourism/accommodation.php)

Make sure you click the link for Olifantsbos. I've been there several times and never tire of going back.

Day 5 Full day walk from Olifantsbos.

Day 6 Drive to Kogelberg Reserve, See

<https://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/kogelberg-nature-reserve/>

Day 7 Full day botanic walk with local guide at Kogelberg,

Day 8 Drive to Wellington and begin the Wellington Wine Walk.

Day 9-12 Wellington wine walk. <http://winewalk.co.za/walk4.html>

Day 13 Karoo Botanic Garden in Worcester

Day 14 Continue to the Cedarberg

Day 15-16 In the Cedarberg region, short to all day walks depending on what's open.

Day 17 North to Travellers Rest and the Sevilla Rock Art trail. See <https://www.travellersrest.co.za/index.php> and click the activities link. We spend a night there.

Day 18-19 North toward Springbok, flower viewing. If there is a good display, we'll detour to Niuwoudtville where there is a botanic garden with different plants to those we'll see elsewhere. (There is also an excellent all day walk at nearby Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve.) In 2017, we spent two nights at the Van Zijl Guesthouses. I'd happily go

back. See <https://acomsa.co.za/nieuwoudtville/van-zijl-guesthouses/>

Day 20-22 North toward Springbok, flower viewing.



Walking in Kogelberg



Painting on Sevilla Rock Art Trail

- Day 23 North to Richtersveld. Different botanic environment.
- Day 24 Day trip in Richtersveld
- Day 25 Toward Rosh Pinah. There is an interesting camp with hikes I've heard of near there. I hope to finally visit it this time.  
<https://www.namibia-info.com/country/business/32774/namuskluft-camp-rosh-pinah>
- Day 26 To Fish River Lodge overlooking Fish River Canyon, west side  
 See <https://www.fishriverlodge-namibia.com/>
- Day 27 Day walk at Canyon. Choice of walks. We don't all have to do the same one. We stayed at Fish River Lodge in 2016. One of the most spectacular settings for any hotel in the world. An alternative is a two night, two day supported hike. I did it in 2024 and really enjoyed it.
- Day 28 Drive to Betta Camp. We stayed there in 2016 and 2023. Chalets were great value as were their meals. See <https://bettacamp.com/>
- Day 29 Drive to Tok Tokkie & begin walk. Everything provided. All we need to carry is a day pack. See <http://www.toktokkietrails.com/>
- Day 30 On Tok Tokkie walk
- Day 31 Finish walk drive to Sesriem.
- Day 32 Sossuvlei (sand dune) visit. Optional balloon ride. Drive to Swakopmund.
- Day 33 To Omaruru private game park. We stayed there in 2023. Amazing.
- Day 34 Toward Windhoek. Great farm stay not far from the city.
- Day 35 Arrive Windhoek. Trip ends.

Optional extra. Etosha Game Park, two nights. We have good exposure to the African wildlife but Etosha is better than anything we'll see elsewhere in terms of numbers.  
 We could also include a private game park in the Western Cape in South Africa.



[Etosha lions photo from our 2016 trip](#)

Some of the accommodated walks (Wellington Wine Walk, Tok Tokkie, 2-night Fish River) book out early. We will take what we can get, if anything.

## Now for some details

### Why use a Darwin-based firm for a South African tour?

We have been running regular trips to southern Africa since 2001. In all that time, we've never heard of anyone else offering tours like these. Transport during the trip will be primarily by rental cars but may include various forms of public transportation as well and, of course, your own feet while carrying a day pack.

### Cape Town and Table Mountain

I've done the walk from Kirstenbosch to the cable car, or vice versa, at least half a dozen times. It's a definite high point. High winds can close the cable car so it's possible that we'd have to walk both up and down. We'll probably spend a couple of hours at Kirstenbosch – if you are really keen on flowers, you could spend a day. If you are interested in a visit to Robben Island, it might be worth booking in advance. It was booked out on our last two trips.

## Cape of Good Hope and Olifantsbos

Few people outside South Africa know what's on offer here. A wild place with a touch of luxury on the doorstep of one of the largest cities in the country. Everyone on our trips which stayed there thought this was a very special place. The one night isn't enough so we will spend two nights there as we did on some of our trips. You can see photos from the 2010 trip at

[www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.475112561927.259424.205216266927&type=3](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.475112561927.259424.205216266927&type=3)

We will probably visit a suburban the penguin colony on the way.



Olifantsbos sunset, your nearest neighbour is 20 km away

## Kogelberg

This is one of the most botanically rich areas in the world. With luck, we'll do a botanic walk with a local guide. If not, we'll do it on our own. We will probably stay at the self-catering cottages at Kogelberg.



Kogelberg swim stop

## The Cedarberg

This is a must. I've been to different parts of the Cedarberg many times. Each time is different so I'd like to go back. Exactly what we do will be determined by the weather, the interests of the group and the vehicles we have available. In 2016, some of us did a great day walk that was possible only because we had two vehicles and some of those who didn't want to do the really long one were happy to do a shorter walk after dropping us off. We did another through walk, half of the group walking in each direction.

For general park info about the Cedarberg, see

<http://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/cedarberg-wilderness-area/>

and

<http://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/matjiesrivier-nature-reserve/>

The latter has a link to a beautiful, short time-lapse video. See if you can see the baboons.



Approaching the Maltese Cross, Cedarberg day walk

We'll spend two nights in the southern to central Cedarberg before moving on to Travelers Rest and the Sevilla Rock Art Trail.

## Namaqualand Flowers and north to Springbok

Every year is different. In some years the flower display is amazing. In others, there isn't much at all. The photograph at right is somewhere in Namaqualand in a good year.

Niewoudtville is a bit of a detour but many flowers, bulbs and orchid species that are not found anywhere else in South Africa can be seen here. We were there in 2017 – a terrible year for flowers. Not one thing to be seen in the local botanic garden. But the nearby Oorlogskloof Nature Reserve is right at the edge of the escarpment and catches any moisture that might be coming past. We did an all day walk there and had plenty of flowers – as well as some amazing scenery. You can see a small gallery of photos from that walk at

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10155564026996928&type=3>



Click the photos and read the captions to find out more.

## Richtersveld

The flora here is different from everywhere else on this trip. According to Wikipedia, "Approximately 4849 plant species, 40 percent of which are endemic, have been documented in the Richtersveld and comprise mainly succulent and aloe species. The area is home to a number of rather unusual plants, many of which are found nowhere else on earth.[5] Chief among these is the "Halfmensboom" (*Pachypodium namaquanum* Welw.) meaning "half-person tree", the name comes from the plant's resemblance to the human form.

These trees are revered by the indigenous Nama people as the embodiment of their ancestors, half human, half plant, mourning for their ancient Namibian home. Also found here are three endemic species of the tree aloe *Aloidendron*: *A. dichotomum*, *A. pillansii* and *A. ramosissimum*, often referred to as "kokerbooms" or "quiver trees".

For more information, two websites to look at are the Wikipedia Richtersveld page, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richtersveld> And the official South African National Parks Richtersveld page, <http://www.sanparks.org/parks/richtersveld/>



Richtersveld landscape. It's an amazing place.

## Fish River Canyon

The Fish River Canyon is one of the most spectacular places in southern Africa. The main canyon walk is a serious expedition in high temperatures. We plan to stop at the Fish River Lodge on the eastern, less visited side, of the canyon.



Dinner on the 2-night walk



On our half day walk overlooking the Fish River Canyon

In 2017, some of our group chose to do a full day walk all the way down to the river while the others opted for an easier half day walk, having lunch at the view point shown at far right. In 2024, we did the fully supported two-night trek . The photo left above shows where we had dinner one night. Here's a link to a video from our half day walk,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyZTHh4pIr0&t=22s>

## Tok Tokkie

This was one of the best finds I had on any of my trips to Africa, two full days and two nights wandering through the Namibian desert carrying only day packs.

We began with a visit to the NaDEET environmental education centre where they teach the locals how to make the best use of their limited resources.

Solar cookers mean that a lot of trees don't need to get chopped down for firewood. Well worth supporting. You can find out more at

<http://www.nadeet.org/nadeet-centre>



On the Tok Tokkie walk



Gemsbok on Tok Tokkie walk

We saw a variety of game, large and small. Our guide was able to point out many small things which we'd easily have missed on our own. The food was good and the campsites under the stars were wonderful. Here's a note from my diary at the time.



[Tok Tokkie campsite at dawn](#)

“Our wake up call was at 5:30, just as it was getting light. Hot water for a wash and a cup of tea or coffee brought to your bed (swag on a camp stretcher). Followed by breakfast, cereal, juice, cold meat, cheese, fruit. There were a few oryx (gemsbok) very close to the camp in the morning. They are the main large animal in the reserve.”

It's a wonderful experience, not to be missed – assuming it isn't already booked out.

Here's a link to a 3 minute video/slideshow from one of our Tok tokkie walks, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8sGIheh8WU&t=21s>

## Sossuvlei Dunes

The Sossusvlei dunes are probably the best known natural feature in Namibia. The two photos here were taken on our first trip here in 2003. It looked much the same on our last visit in 2024. As you can see, we do more than just look. We climb up and walk for a couple of hours so we can truly appreciate this incredible landscape. See

<http://www.sossusvlei.org/>



[Sossusvlei Dunes](#)



[Climbing the dunes](#)

On the 2016 trip, two of the group opted to do a dawn hot-air balloon ride over the desert instead of the walk at Sossusvlei. It cost close to A\$500 but it was an amazing experience. See <http://balloon-safaris.com/> if you want to find out more. Here's a link to a short video from our 2016 flight. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-QyXNt8Ts0&t=10s>

## Swakopmund

Swakopmund is the second largest town in Namibia, a good place to replenish supplies. We may stay there or we may stop at an interesting camp out of town.

## Omaruru Game Park

We stopped at the Omaruru Private Game Park on our 2023 trip. It was by far the most 'intimate' encounter with African wildlife that I've ever had. It's now wholly natural as there are so many animals that they have to be fed to give them a full diet. Here's a link to a 4 minute video from our visit, [https://youtu.be/YI\\_6BQkmpP8](https://youtu.be/YI_6BQkmpP8)

## Etosha

We can add an extra 3-4 days to the trip and include Namibia's largest park and one of the best places in Africa to see a variety of game. The photo at right was from our 2024 stay at the smallest, most intimate of the reasonably priced camps in the park. The photos at the top of the next page were all taken on our trips. You can't get much closer to a leopard than we were when I took the first photo.



[Olifantsrus camp, Etosha](#)



## Transportation

Our transport will be in 4WD twin cab hire cars, probably automatic transmission, similar to the one shown at right. The trip can't run unless there are at least two drivers for each vehicle. More would be better.

I got a preliminary quote which I thought was great value. With four people sharing, the cross border drop off fee was only A\$175 per person. With four people, the total cost for four weeks would be about A\$1300 each. Extra days would be about A\$40 per person per day. This does not include fuel. The fee covers insurance with an excess of just over A\$1000. If the vehicle was damaged and the excess couldn't be claimed on travel insurance, we'd all share the bill. This short video will give you an idea of what the driving is like, <https://youtu.be/m3GZeb3myaA>



## What does it cost?

South Africa and Namibia are two of the few countries where the Australian dollar still goes a long way. If you want to add it on, Botswana tends to be more expensive. Our fee is \$2795. Our public liability insurance requires you to have your own travel insurance. It may sound like overkill, but I have heard of a case where the Travel Insurer sued a tour operator for something that happened that they had to cover. If you do multiple trips overseas, an annual policy will save you money.

The \$2795 covers the guide, who also acts as organiser and cook (assistance in self-catering locations gratefully accepted). In addition, you will have to pay your share of all the expenses for food, accommodation, transport, etc. The guide will pay the same fees and fares as everyone else and will keep these as low as reasonable comfort, reliability and availability will allow.

If exchange rates stay similar, our town accommodation should cost anywhere from about A\$20 to A\$50 (US\$15 to US\$40) per night. The relatively low cost of restaurant meals and the high quality of our accommodation have been one of the more pleasant aspects of our previous trips. The prices above were twin share in what would be considered three or four star establishments in Australia.

Based on our recent expenses, a **very rough** estimate of the cost follows. With luck, we'll be able to shave a bit off the total . If the Aussie dollar collapses against the rand, it will cost more. If it gains, it should cost less. We do not expect the whole trip to cost less than \$9500 or more than \$12,000. This does not include any souvenir shopping you may do. We should have a more accurate estimate closer to departure. I suspect it will be higher as I haven't included the cost of any guided game park walks.

Breakfasts & lunches	\$ 300	Wellington Wine Walk	750
Walkabouts fee	2795	Your own travel insurance	500
Hire Car	1800	Restaurant meals	600
Other park & camping fees	400	<u>Accommodation</u>	<u>900</u>
Tok Tokkie	900	Approx Total	\$9000

Flight not included as we have no idea what airfares will be by then.

## What do you get for the fee?

You get expert advice on the things to bring, the probable weather, etc. You get someone who will handle the mundane details of making the travel arrangements, doing the food shopping for the walks, organising accommodation etc. You also get a small, like-minded group of people with whom you can share your experiences and expenses. Hiring a vehicle as part of a group costs far less than hiring it with only two or three.

**Note 1.** Some of what you get for your money is not very visible. Bushwalking in southern Africa is restricted. Permits have to be arranged well in advance all trails have strict limits. Some of our walks are in national parks run by a national authority. Some are in provincial parks. Some are in other areas. In past years, making these bookings took anywhere from ten minutes to three weeks depending on the agency involved. All that paperwork has to be done well in advance or we won't be able to do the walks as planned.

As another example, we will be doing a fair bit of self-catering. You might spend time relaxing or sightseeing while the guide goes out and hits the supermarkets, then spends an hour (or two or three) doing the final organising for the meals on the self-catering section. If you can't see the value in services like these, you are unlikely to feel that you are getting real value for your fee. (You are, of course, welcome to assist with the self-catering.)

**Note 2.** Prices are subject to change.

**Note 3.** A large majority of those who have taken part in our overseas tours are Australian so all prices are quoted in Australian dollars. We have had several people from other countries take part by making their own travel arrangements to and from the start and finish points.

**Note 4.** All bushwalks and 4WD driving routes are subject to change due to weather conditions. If we get really foul weather at the start of a walk, we may wish to abort it, at least temporarily. If we get really foul weather later on, we may have to cut a route short. If a road is impassable, we may have to do a long detour.

## What you don't get?

You do not get a guide who will hold your hand and make every decision for you. **You** must be prepared to take on a much greater degree of responsibility than on most other tours. All members of the group, including the guide, are expected to work together in establishing how the group will function, who will lead on the walks, who will look after the stragglers, etc.

**A trip such as this cannot work unless everyone helps out.**

Accepting the responsibility that goes with a trip like this is part of the experience we offer. It is one of the things that sets our trips apart from the vast majority of "adventure" trips on the market. For those prepared to accept this responsibility, it makes the experience doubly rewarding. Those who are not prepared to accept such responsibility would be better off going on a "normal" tour.

## Is it for you?

**This trip is not for the average tourist.** We can neither control nor predict the weather, only accept it as it comes. If you do not want to take the necessary responsibility and/or you cannot obtain the necessary equipment, it is not for you. Good physical fitness and a good mental attitude are both necessary. If you have never carried a pack on an overnight walk, have never walked off trail, have never camped in cold, windy and wet conditions, it will be harder for you to cope with the likely conditions than for a person who has had the relevant experience. Past experience has shown us that a fit, experienced 70 year old may cope better than a fitter 25 year old who does not have experience in coping with adverse conditions.

## **A Final Caution and a suggestion**

Do not expect everything to run like clockwork. Such things often fail to happen in South Africa and Namibia. If you want to get maximum value for your money, you can go off and go sightseeing or simply relax while the guide does the food shopping or tries to organise or reconfirm hiking permits, etc. Or, if you wish, you are welcome to join him or her while (s)he does these things.

There may be occasional days between sections where you will be left to your own devices while the guide slows down and relaxes a bit and catches up on the organising. Based on past experience, things will run more smoothly if the guide does this.

## **Conditions**

1. A deposit of \$500 is payable on booking. This will be refunded in full if five people have not booked by early June. Final payment is due by 10 May.
2. Our cancellation fees are \$500 before 10 May, \$1000 before 10 June and the full \$2795 after that. The different African authorities with whom we make bookings all have their own cancellation fees. If you cancel after we have made and paid for a booking on your behalf, you will lose whatever is non-refundable as well as our cancellation fee.
3. All participants are responsible for obtaining the necessary passport and visas and must have some form of travel insurance. **We need to see proof of your travel insurance before departure.** We need this because of our own insurance.

*Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.*

Russell Willis