



Africa Megatour

Zimbabwe, Botswana & Namibia

Inala Nature Tours

OVERVIEW

Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe offer some of the best birding and general wildlife viewing in all of Africa. Starting at the Zambezi River and spectacular Victoria Falls and ending on the Skeleton coast, this new tour covers a range of habitats from miombo woodland in Zimbabwe and lush riparian forest in the Caprivi and Botswana, to dune and red rock landscapes in central Namibia, and the spectacular lagoon at Walvis Bay where the desert meets the Atlantic Ocean. This tour provides an amazing opportunity to visit three of Africa's top wildlife and birding destinations and includes excellent birdwatching opportunities, many of the endemic, special and localised species, and fantastic chances of seeing the Big Five and other rare and special mammals. Join Tonia on this fantastic 19-day three country African megatour with option extensions to Okonjima to take nature drives to track pangolins, rhinos, and leopards and/or visit the iconic giant red sand dunes at Sossusvlei.

TOUR LEADER

Inala tour leader Dr Tonia Cochran with local guide



Flamingos, Walvis Bay. N. Buys.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

MAIN TOUR

- Day 1. Arrive Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
- Day 2. Zambezi River cruise and Victoria Falls.
- Days 3 – 4. Northern Botswana and Kwando River, Namibia.
- Days 5 – 6. Okavango Panhandle, Botswana.
- Days 7 – 8. Divundu, Namibia.
- Days 9 – 10. Etosha East, Namibia.
- Days 11 – 12. Etosha South, Namibia.
- Day 13. Brandberg, Namibia.
- Days 14 – 15. Erongo Mountains, Namibia.
- Days 16 – 17. Swakopmund, Namibia.
- Day 18. Windhoek, Namibia.
- Day 19. Depart Windhoek or join post-tour extension.

OKONJIMA EXTENSION

- Day 19. Transfer from Windhoek to Okonjima Nature Reserve.
- Days 20 – 21. Okonjima Nature Reserve. Transfer to Windhoek or join Sossusvlei extension.

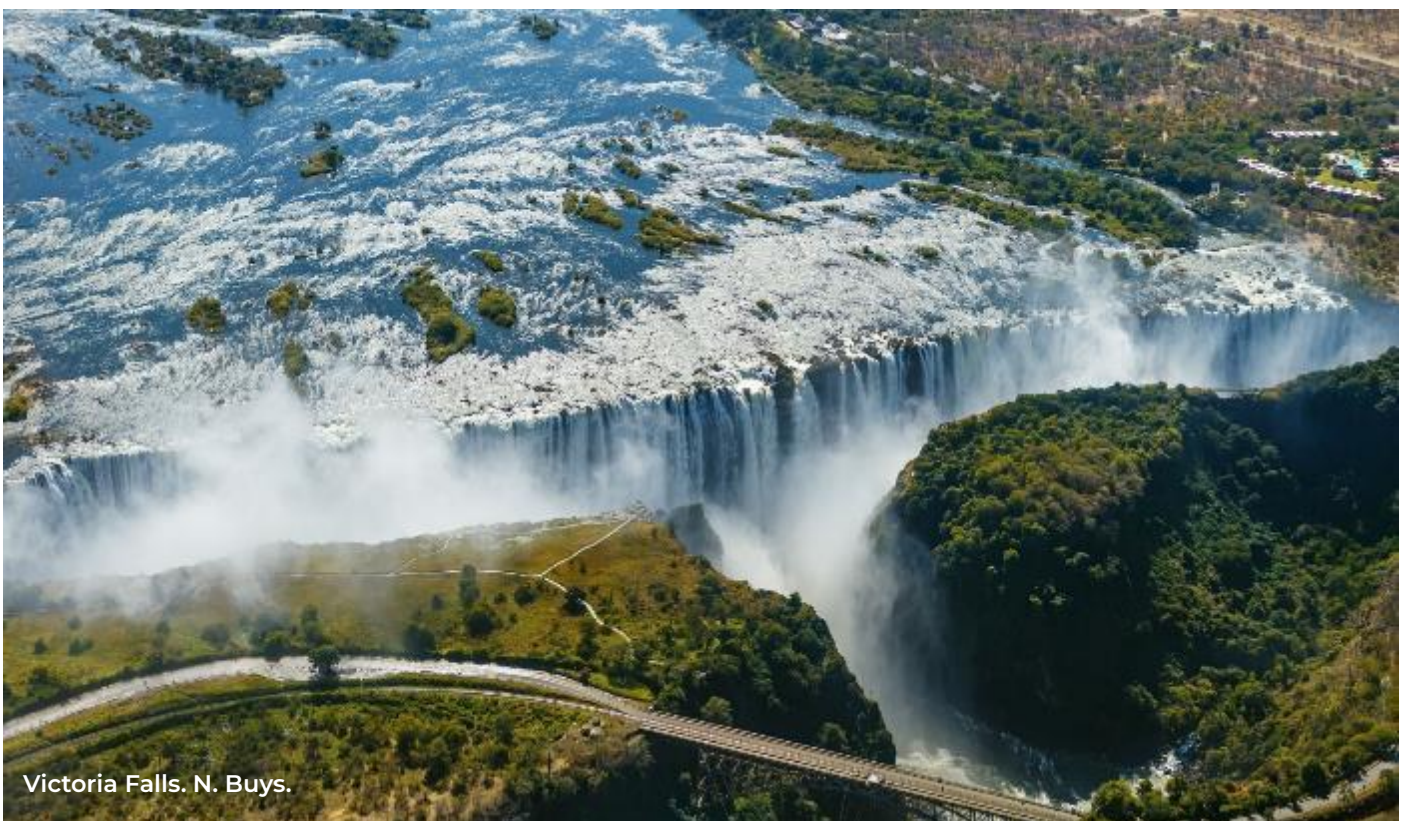
SOSSUSVLEI EXTENSION

- Day 21. Transfer from Okonjima to Sossusvlei.
- Days 22 – 23. Sossusvlei. Transfer to Windhoek.

ZIMBABWE

Day 1. Arrive Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. On arrival at Victoria Falls Airport, you will be transferred to your hotel situated on a plateau just a few kilometres from the majestic Victoria Falls. Our lodge overlooks a waterhole where African Elephant, African Buffalo, and antelope visit in late afternoon. On our first night in Zimbabwe, we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant that offers a drumming show and storytelling in a spectacular introduction to the country and its people.

Accommodation: Safari lodge near Victoria Falls (ensuite rooms). **Meals:** D



Victoria Falls. N. Buys.

Day 2. Zambezi River cruise and Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. We start the day with sunrise cruise on the Zambezi River which is particularly rewarding for its birdlife. Afterwards, we will make our way to the breathtaking Victoria Falls or Mosi-oa-Tunya, the ‘Smoke that Thunders’. This is the largest waterfall in the world by volume, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. Here we will search for Schalow’s Turaco, Trumpeter Hornbill, White-browed Robin-chat, Red-winged Starling, Terrestrial Brownbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Rock Martin, Rock Pratincole, Northern Grey-headed Sparrow, and a variety of water birds. If time allows, we will visit the local water treatment works where species like African Rail, African Swamphen, Orange-breasted and Blue Waxbill, and several raptors including Augur Buzzard and Verreaux’s Eagle might be seen. After a late lunch, the rest of our day will be spent exploring the town and birding in the gardens of our hotel. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge (en suite rooms) near Victoria Falls as for last night. **Meals:** B, L, D.

BOTSWANA

Days 3 & 4. Northern Botswana and the Kwando River, Namibia. Today we cross the northern part of Botswana, where we will spend the morning exploring Chobe National Park, Botswana’s first and most biodiverse national park. Then we will make our way to our lodge on the banks of the beautiful Kwando River, which rises in Angola and runs into the Linyanti swamp before flowing into the mighty Zambezi River. From our base on the river, we will visit Bwabwata National Park. With a mix of game drives and cruises, we will look for African Elephants, African Buffalo, Lion, Leopard, African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Spotted Hyaena, Hippopotamus, Giraffe, Sable and Roan Antelope, Lechwe, Sitatunga, Tsessebe, and many other mammals. Among the birds we will be searching for are Rufous-bellied Heron, Black-faced Babbler, Swamp Boubou, Collared Palm Thrush, Meves’ Starling, Southern Ground Hornbill, Bennett’s Woodpecker, and African Wood Owl. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge near Kwando River (en suite rooms) for two nights. **Meals:** B, L, D each day.



African Elephants at Bwabwata NP. N. Buys.

Days 5 & 6. Okavango Panhandle, Botswana. After breakfast we will drive across the Caprivi Strip to the Shakawe (Botswana) border. The Caprivi strip (about 450 km long and 32 km wide) was named after German Chancellor Leo von Caprivi, who negotiated the acquisition of the land in an 1890 exchange with the United Kingdom. Intending to give Germany access to the Zambezi River and a direct route to Africa's east coast, where the colony of German East Africa (now part of Tanzania) was situated, the plan failed because Victoria Falls made the river unnavigable. We will settle into our lodge on the Okavango River. While here, we will take several boat trips along the river to look for wildlife. Resident birds in the lodge's grounds include Hartlaub's Babbler, Southern Brown-throated Weaver, Green Woodhoopoe, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, and Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird. African Wood Owl and African Barred Owllet are often seen and heard here too. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge in the Okavango Panhandle (en suite rooms) for 2 nights. **Meals:** B, L, D.

NAMIBIA

Days 7 & 8. Divundu, Namibia. Today we return to Namibia, but before we leave Botswana, we will take morning walk in the riverine forest where we will try to find Narina Trogon, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Grey-headed Bushshrike, Bradfield's Hornbill, Swamp Boubou, Brubru, Black-backed Puffback, and Bennett's, Golden-tailed, Cardinal and Bearded Woodpecker. After breakfast we will depart for a cruise on the Okavango River. Our main targets here will be the elusive Pel's Fishing Owl, even more elusive White-backed Night Heron, Luapula and Chirping Cisticola, Greater Swamp Warbler, Little Rush Warbler, Little Bittern, Allen's Gallinule, and Purple Heron, with the more common birds being Squacco and Grey Heron, Tawny-flanked Prinia, White-winged Tern, Hamerkop, African Openbill, African Fish Eagle, African Marsh Harrier, and Village Weaver. In the late afternoon, we will check in to our lodge situated on the banks of the Okavango River near the town of Divundu. Our full day here will be dedicated to exploring Mahango Game Park which boasts a bird list of over 400 species, including some key Okavango specials. It has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International. During our time here we hope to see Wattled Crane, Long-toed Lapwing, Slaty Egret, Collared Pratincole, Crimson-breasted Shrike (Gonolek), Violet-eared Waxbill, Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Crested Francolin, Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Greater and Lesser Honeyguide, Long-billed Crombec, Grey Tit-flycatcher, Broad-billed Roller, African Fish Eagle, Western Osprey, Brown-necked Parrot, African Cuckoo-hawk, Ayres's Hawk-eagle, and smaller raptors like Lizard Buzzard, Little and Ovambo Sparrowhawk, and Shikra. Mahango offers excellent game viewing as well and we hope to see the rare and beautiful Sable and Roan Antelope, as well as Tsessebe, African Elephant, African Buffalo, Hippopotamus, Red Lechwe, Greater Kudu, Impala and even Lion, Cheetah, African Wild Dog or Leopard if we are very lucky. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge at Divundu for two nights (en suite rooms). **Meals:** B, L, D each day.



Days 9 & 10. Etosha East, Namibia. After breakfast we will leave the Okavango behind and make our way southwest to Etosha National Park where we will spend the next two nights. Over the 7-hour drive we will see the landscape change dramatically. The name Etosha means ‘great white place’ referring to the vast dry lakebed in the middle of the park, believed to have been formed over 100 million years ago. Etosha is home to a staggering amount of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species. More than 110 mammal species have been recorded from the area. Etosha also has a bird list of more than 350 species. Our two nights will be in the eastern section of the park where we hope to find Blue Crane, Black-faced Babbler, Swainson’s Spurfowl, Blue Waxbill, Chestnut Weaver, White-browed Robin-chat, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Cape Starling, Double-banded Courser, and Chat Flycatcher along the way. We will also look for Monotonous and Rufous-naped Lark, Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, Burnt-necked Eremomela and Violet-eared Waxbill, and keep an eye out for Etosha’s raptors, which include Martial and Tawny Eagle, Black-chested and Brown Snake Eagle, Lanner, Peregrine and Red-necked Falcon, Bateleur, and Pale Chanting and Gabar Goshawk. Etosha is also well known for vultures, and we might see Lappet-faced, White-backed, White-headed and Hooded Vulture. If Etosha pan is full of water it is transformed into a water bird spectacle with huge numbers of pelicans, Lesser and Greater Flamingo, Caspian and Chestnut-banded Plover, Red-billed and Cape Teal, Pied Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, and Black-necked and Great Crested Grebe. This area is good for finding the endemic Kirk’s Dik-dik (Namibian subspecies). We could also see African Elephant, Lion, Black Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Cheetah, Spotted Hyaena, Leopard, Black-backed Jackal, Black-faced Impala (another endemic subspecies), Hartebeest (Red subspecies), Gemsbok (Namibia’s national animal), Greater Kudu, Springbok, and many smaller mammals during our stay in the park. Our accommodation for the next two nights is in a 4,000-hectare private nature reserve that borders the national park. Expect to see birds and other wildlife over breakfast! **Accommodation:** Safari lodge at Etosha East (en suite rooms) for two nights. **Meals:** B, L, D each day.



Leopard at Etosha. N. Buys.

Days 11 & 12. Etosha South, Namibia. In the morning, we will make our way westwards, stopping at waterholes during our drive. We will have lunch at Halali camp, known for sightings of Violet Woodhoopoe, Carp's Tit, Bare-cheeked and Southern Pied Babbler, White-crested Helmetshrike, Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Greater Blue-eared Starling, African Scops Owl, and Southern White-faced Owl. If there is time, we will take a short stroll to the local waterhole to see what mammals are visiting. On our way to our next lodge at Okaukuejo camp, we may see Dusky and Scarlet-chested Sunbird, Crimson-breasted Shrike (Gonolek), Acacia Pied Barbet, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, Southern White-crowned Shrike, Marico and Chat Flycatcher, Rattling Cisticola, Double-banded and Namaqua Sandgrouse, Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, Common Ostrich, Kori Bustard, Northern Black and Red-crested Korhaan, and Great Sparrow. We will scan on top of all the huge Sociable Weaver nests for Pygmy Falcon and snakes. If there is time in the late afternoon, we will visit the Okondeka plains north of the camp to look for a range of larks that thrive in this open landscape including Spike-heeled, Pink-billed, Eastern Clapper, Red-capped and Sabota Lark, as well as Grey-backed and Chestnut-backed Sparrow-lark, Capped Wheatear, Double-banded Courser, Ant-eating Chat, Desert Cisticola, and Rufous-eared Warbler. The waterhole in this area is also famous as being the best place in the Etosha National Park to see Lions. Okaukuejo campgrounds are very productive, and here we can look for Crimson-breasted Shrike (Gonolek), the handsome and well-camouflaged Groundscraper Thrush, Pririt Batis, Chestnut-vented Warbler, Red-headed Finch, Acacia Pied Barbet, and South African Ground Squirrel. After dinner, we will walk to the famous floodlit waterhole in the camp, where we can relax and look out for the huge Verreaux's Eagle-owl, Western Barn Owl, and Rufous-cheeked Nightjar when they come for a drink. There might also be Black Rhinoceros, African Elephant, Giraffe, Gemsbok, Greater Kudu, Springbok, and Common Warthog. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge (en suite rooms) at Etosha South for 2 nights. **Meals:** B, L, D each day.



Black Rhinos at Etosha. N. Buys.



Bare-cheeked Babbler. N. Buys.

Day 13. Brandberg, Namibia. Leaving Etosha, we will make our way south to Damaraland. Damaraland is a diverse and spectacular area, with rugged rocks, prehistoric water courses, open plains and grassland, massive granite koppies (hills) and deep gorges. The rocky outcrops of Twyfelfontein are one of Namibia's two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, featuring exceptional San (Bushman) engravings, which are considered to be some of the best-preserved etchings in Africa. This beautiful mountainous region is home to an assortment of scientifically important desert-adapted wildlife such as elephant, rhino, zebra and lion, which somehow survive and thrive in this near-barren landscape. We will stop at the Himba village on our way to Brandberg, where we will learn about the Himba people, a matriarchal society known for their intricate jewellery, their complex hair styles, and their use of otjize, a paste made from butterfat, ochre and aromatic resins. Brandberg (literally "fire mountain" in Afrikaans) is Namibia's highest mountain (2,573 m). A round granite massif, Brandberg formed during the opening of the Atlantic Ocean, when seafloor spreading separated Africa and South America. It is a site of great spiritual significance to the San (Bushman) tribes. The White Lady rock painting (one of over 45,000 paintings) is located on a rock face with other artwork, under a small overhang, in the Tsisab ravine at the foot of the mountain. It is believed to be 2,000 years old. We will scan the plains north of Brandberg for Rüppell's Korhaan, Burchell's Courser, Bokmakierie and Benguela Long-billed Lark. The hills will hopefully produce Herero Chat, arguably the toughest of the desert endemics to find. Yellow-bellied Eremomela, Cape Penduline Tit and Grey-backed Cisticola can also be seen here. Our tranquil lodge is situated close to the Ugab River where we hope to see Violet Woodhoopoe and Bare-cheeked Babbler. Rüppell's Parrot and Augur Buzzard can be found here as well. Sometimes the desert-adapted wildlife come right up to the lodge! We will enjoy a traditional Namibian dinner and then head off to bed. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge at Brandberg (en suite rooms). **Meals:** B, L, D.



Days 14 & 15. Erongo Mountains, Namibia. We will spend the morning birding around the Brandberg, making sure we pick up all the species we still need. Then we will make our way south to the Erongo mountains. The Erongo mountains and surrounds are a real endemic hotspot and we will focus on finding any of the endemics that we might have missed. We will have lunch on the way to Erongo and arrive in the afternoon with enough time to enjoy this spectacular area. The granite hills surrounding our lodge are famous for Hartlaub's Spurfowl and Rockrunner. Besides these two specials we can look for Rüppell's Parrot, Carp's Tit, White-tailed Shrike, Monteiro's and Damara Red-billed Hornbill, Violet Woodhoopoe, Pale-winged Starling, Red-billed Spurfowl, Augur Buzzard, Peregrine Falcon, African Hawk-eagle, Booted Eagle, vultures, and Cinnamon-breasted, Golden-breasted, Cape and Lark-like Bunting. Rosy-faced Lovebirds are present in massive numbers and we will also wrap up on the general scrub savannah birds like White-throated, Yellow and Black-throated Canary, Green-winged Pytilia, Short-toed Rock Thrush, Violet-eared, Black-cheeked and Blue Waxbill, Barred Wren-warbler, Rattling Cisticola, Marico Flycatcher, Pirit Batis, Shaft-tailed Whydah, African Red-eyed Bulbul, White-backed Mousebird, Cape Starling, and Mountain Wheatear. **Accommodation:** Safari lodge (en suite rooms) in the Erongo Mountains for two nights. **Meals:** B, L, D each day.



Dune Lark. N. Buys.

Days 16 & 17. Swakopmund, Namibia. Today we travel to Swakopmund on the Atlantic coast, stopping to look for the near-endemic Gray's Lark along the way. After settling into our accommodation, where Orange-river White-eye, Cape Sparrow and Common Waxbill are all present in the garden, we will spend the afternoon at the Walvis Bay lagoon which has been declared a Ramsar site of global importance for the thousands of waders that are found here. One of our main targets today will be the Damara Tern, a small seabird restricted to the southern and western coasts of Africa. Other birds we hope to find include Ruff, Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, Black-necked Grebe, Red-necked Phalarope, Bar-tailed Godwit, Spotted Redshank, Whimbrel, Eurasian Curlew, Common, Sandwich and Caspian Terns, Eurasian and African Black Oystercatchers, Common Ringed, Chestnut-banded, Grey and Three-banded Plovers, and Greater and Lesser Flamingos. Cape Cormorants are usually spotted in huge flocks, and we will also look for Crowned and White-breasted Cormorants, and if we are lucky Bank Cormorant, an uncommon sighting among the kelp of the cold-water Benguela Current. Pomarine Jaeger and

Subantarctic Skua are sometimes seen from the shoreline. On our full day in the area, we will be up early to enjoy our Living Desert Tour, a memorable trip into the dune belt just south of Swakopmund. We will be taken through a scenic and apparently barren landscape to find the hidden treasures, including chameleons, snakes, skinks, scorpions, lizards, geckos, and other small creatures, and to learn more about the area's desert ecology. There will also be the opportunity to see *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a bizarre, long-lived (400 – 1500-year-old) gymnosperm plant that is adapted to extreme aridity and only ever produces two leaves. We will also visit a 'petrified forest' of 280-million-year-old petrified (fossilised) tree trunks that were washed down an ancient river when Africa was part of the Gondwanan supercontinent. This amazing tour ends on a dune overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. **Accommodation:** Hotel in Swakopmund (en suite rooms) for two nights. **Meals:** B, L, D each day.

Day 18. Windhoek. This morning, we will focus on finding Dune Lark, Namibia's only true endemic. We will spend time in the scenic Kuiseb Riverbed searching for this special bird against a backdrop of impressive desert dunes. Other interesting birds we might see here include Bokmakierie, White-backed Mousebird, Cape Sparrow, Jackal Buzzard, Pale Chanting Goshawk and the desert form of the Trac-trac Chat. We will then make our way to the Namibian capital Windhoek for our final night of the tour. **Accommodation:** Hotel in Windhoek (en suite rooms). **Meals:** B, L, D.

Day 19. Depart Windhoek or join post-tour extension. Today we depart for our onward travels or join the Okonjima and/or Sossusvlei post-tour extensions.



Welwitschia. N. Buys.



African Skimmers. N. Buys.

OKONJIMA EXTENSION

Days 19 – 21. Endangered species wildlife tracking – Okonjima Extension (3 days/2 nights)

We will spend two nights at Okonjima Nature Reserve, a 22,000ha private reserve and home of the AfriCat Foundation. Here we have the opportunity to experience activities like Leopard or Rhino Tracking or take an endangered species drive to search for pangolins (subject to availability). We will return to Windhoek for our departure flights home (or to continue on our second post-tour extension to visit the giant red dunes of Sossusvlei).

SOSSUSVLEI EXTENSION

Days 21 – 23. Giant Red dunes – Sossusvlei Extension (3 days/2 nights).

This area is one of the most highly visited and iconic in Namibia. Roughly translated to 'dead-end marsh' because it is a drainage basin without outflows, this area is comprised of a salt and clay pan surrounded by high red dunes and is part of a larger 32,000km² area located in the southern Namib desert. The dunes are amongst the highest in the world and many are over 200m high and some around 350m high! The clear blue skies contrast with the giant red sand dunes to make this one of the natural wonders of Africa and a photographer's heaven. The fauna in this area is surprisingly rich and is comprised mostly of smaller animals that can survive very arid conditions. One of the most well-known is the Namib Desert Beetle which has developed a technique for collecting water from the early morning fog by standing on its long spindly legs with its body angled at 45 degrees and collecting water with the help of specially developed bumps on its back which rolls down its back and into its mouth! We will explore this area over this two-day period and return to Windhoek for our departure flights home. This extension has been designed to adjoin the Okonjima extension so that participants can choose to do both. But please contact us if you just wish to join the red dunes extension immediately after the main tour and we will explore possibilities for you.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AFRICAN MEGATOUR

Group Size: 6 – 8 participants + Inala tour leader Dr Tonia Cochran + local guide

Tour Price

Main tour: AUD\$15,850 per person twin share. Single supplement AU \$1,150

Extension 1 Okonjima: AUD\$3,000 per person twin share. Single supplement: AU \$315.

Extension 2 Sossusvlei: AUD\$2,650 per person twin share. Single supplement: AU \$295.

Based on a group size of 6-8 participants + Inala leader Dr Tonia Cochran + local guide.

Inclusions: Accommodation for each night of the tour, specialist guiding and transport for day and night tours in a private air-conditioned vehicle with specialist licensed local guide as outlined in the itinerary, all meals (B, L, D snacks and bottled water), entry fees to National Parks, boat cruises and guided walks as outlined in the itinerary and all internal taxes and charges.

Exclusions: any international and domestic airfares, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and expenses of a personal nature (travel and medical insurance, phone calls, laundry, tips etc), personal & incidental expenses and any additional activities not mentioned in the above itinerary.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is a requirement for participation in all our international tours.

Please note:

- The above rates are based upon a group size of 6-8 people. If the tour does not achieve minimum numbers, we will offer you the option of continuing with a smaller group size at a small supplement (we would always discuss options with you beforehand).
- Meals and drinks: Breakfast generally consists of an American style breakfast, which includes eggs to order, as well as cereal, toast, fruit, and tea/coffee. Lunch will generally be a picnic style to be eaten in the field. Dinner is usually two course (starter and main or main and dessert). Drinks (soft and alcoholic) are generally not included.
- Whilst we aim to follow the itinerary as planned, please note that the itinerary provided should only be used as a guideline. Depending on individual trip circumstances, weather, and local information, the exact itinerary may not be strictly adhered to. The guides reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary as they see fit.
- For much of this tour we will be in a wonderful yet remote part of the world. Most of the roads are unsealed and rough. If you have medical conditions or health concerns, it is important you make us aware of these in advance of this tour.



MAP OF AREAS COVERED ON THIS TOUR

