

TOP 7 NATURAL SITES TO VISIT IN NAMIBIA



country has on offer.

Namibia is a popular destination among hikers and other adventurous souls. Besides the Namib Desert and safari, visitors can enjoy scenic landscapes and stunning wildlife. The thinly inhabited African country is home to a number of fascinating natural sites including mountains, dunes, and mud pans.

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Etosha

Etosha National Park, 400 kilometers north of Windhoek is Namibia's principal game reserve and a popular natural site. It's ecosystem is unique: a salt pan – a geological depression – which every year is transformed into a lagoon during the rainy season. The particularity of Etosha, apart from its landscape, is its water holes at which animals gather all day long. While it is not possible to see all of the Big 5 animals since this national park does not have buffaloes, it is nevertheless possible to observe the other four (leopards, lions, elephants, black rhinoceros). The oryx, the emblematic antelope of Namibia, as well as the springbok can be easily observed here as well.

Sossusvlei Dunes

The Sossusvlei Dunes and Etosha are the most visited natural sites in Namibia. Rightly so, because this part of the Namib Desert – which includes the Namib Naukluft National Park – is magnificent. It is here that one can find the oldest desert in the world (some speak of 80 million years, but it is more likely 30 million years old). The high dunes of orange sand mingle with the saline depressions along the Tsauchab river which is drained for much of the year, but it still has trees. This is truly one of Namibia's most picturesque postcard landscapes!

Waterberg

Less well-known and much less frequented, the Waterberg National Park, between Windhoek and Etosha, is a sandstone plateau 50 km long and 16 wide. The site of the massacre of 80% of the Herero population by the Germans in 1904, the national park is renowned for its hiking trails and its rare wildlife, such as white and black rhinoceros, roan antelope and the sable antelope – which are hard to find due to the density of the forest.

Cape Cross

Situated on the Skeleton Coast, the Cape Cross Reserve is home to the largest fur seal colony in Namibia and one of the popular natural sites in the country. Up to 200,000 seals gather on this small portion of coast because of the cold Benguela current which brings a sufficient source of food. Observing the colony is delightful despite the nauseating smell emanating from the spot. The fur seals are constantly fighting with each other over territory.

Namib Rand Nature Reserve

The Namib Rand Nature Reserve, a private reserve south of the dunes of Sossusvlei, protects 200,000 dunes and mountains inhabited by oryx, giraffes, springboks, spotted hyenas, zebras and black backed jackals. A program for the reintroduction of cheetahs was also carried out here. One can stay in a luxurious lodge or follow the Tok Tokkie Trail - a 3 day hiking itinerary where nights are spent on a camp bed under the stars.

Fish River Canyon

The Fish River Canyon is the second largest canyon in the world - after the Grand Canyon - and a highly popular natural site among tourists. Its length reaches about 100 miles (160 km) long, it is up to 27 km wide and in places almost 550 meters deep. The Fish River cuts deep into the plateau which is dry, stony and sparsely covered with hardy drought-resistant plants. At the end of the canyon, visitors find the hot springs resort of Ai-Ais. The canyon becomes dangerous for the visitors during the time of floods and also thanks to extremely high temperatures. Therefore, a hiking permit is necessary.

The Naukluft Mountains

Located in the Namib Naukluft National Park, the mountains contrast with the rest of the park's desert landscape and are composed of dolomites, schists, and quartz. Mountain zebras, kudus, klipspringers and leopards frequent the massif which is perfect for day-long hikes or hikes of several days duration. The landscape offers beautiful views of a number of streams and waterfalls.

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