

ACACIA AFRICA

DESERT TRACKER – TOUR DOSSIER

Tour Code DTR25

CAPE TOWN - JOHANNESBURG

25 DAYS

Tour Departure – **08:00**

Pre-departure Meeting – **18:00 day prior to departure**

HIGHLIGHTS

Cape Flats Township Tour
Fish River Canyon
Sossusvlei Sand Dunes
Namib Naukluft Park
Swakopmund
Spitzkoppe
Etosha National Park
Windhoek
Bushman Walk
Okavango Delta
Chobe National Park
Victoria Falls – Livingstone
Greater Kruger



This safari journeys through diverse landscapes – from eerie and barren desert to pounding Atlantic coastline, from lush and prolific game parks to wild savannah and the Victoria Falls. Experience these with a range of exhilarating adventure options which will leave you wanting more!

INTENDED ITINERARY

Whilst it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the tour and on occasion it may be necessary or desirable to make alterations to the published itinerary. Please therefore treat the following as a guide only.

The vehicle used for this tour is a fully-equipped safari truck, except for the visits to some of the national parks when we may use smaller more suitable vehicles (typically, 4x4 or safari vans).

Duration: 25 Days

Countries visited: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia

DAY 1 - 2

Cape Town – Western Cape - Gariep River

Our overland safari begins in cosmopolitan Cape Town, overlooked by Table Mountain and bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, one of the world's most picturesque cities. Before we leave the city we take a tour of the Cape Flats – Cape Town's famous townships, visiting some of the local people and community projects in the area. The townships illustrate both South Africa's tumultuous history and its hope for the future and make a fascinating visit. From here we head north through South Africa's Western Cape and through the fruit growing regions to our first nights stop near the small town of Citrusdal where we familiarise ourselves with our new home. Continuing North the landscape gradually turns drier and rockier as we head north towards the Namibian border. We set up our camp tonight at Gariep (Orange) River before sunset.

DAY 3 - 5
Fish River Canyon – Namib Naukluft Park

We enter Namibia and arrive at the awesome Fish River Canyon. One of the natural wonders of Africa, some 500m deep and over 160km long, this is the second largest canyon in the world (after the Grand Canyon, USA). Again, there are plenty of opportunities for keen photographers as we spend time around this area and visit the canyon's infamous sharp river bend known as 'Hell's Corner.' After a night near the canyon we continue north until we reach the Namib Naukluft Park, containing the world's oldest desert and the highest sand dunes. Some of Sossusvlei's dunes are over 300m high and a popular activity here is to trek to the top of one of them in time to watch the sun rise over the open desert. A spectacular sight but be warned, it's an energy sapping climb to the top! Another well worthwhile option is to continue deeper into the park for a nature walk across the salt pans and valley floor, amidst the dunes – a real glimpse of Namibia's unspoilt natural environment.

DAY 6 - 7
Swakopmund

Continuing on, we drive out of the desert and hit the Atlantic coast at Swakopmund, a small town redolent of Namibia's colonial past but with modern adventure oriented attractions for the visitor. Swakopmund is Namibia's main seaside resort, sandwiched neatly between the desert and the ocean, and is a delightful coastal oasis. Try some adventure desert based activities if you wish –quad biking, sand boarding, skydiving (weather permitting) – or else simply walk along the promenade admiring the ocean and indulge in the town's café culture.

DAY 8
Spitzkoppe

We leave Swakopmund and continue north to the beautiful Damaraland region and stop at Spitzkoppe to admire ancient bushman paintings still visible on the peculiar rock formations.

DAY 9 – 11
Etosha National Park - Windhoek

We continue north to Etosha National Park, a vast reserve of over 20,000 sq km surrounding a central salt depression or 'pan.' The pan is seasonally full of water but specially managed waterholes sustain some 114 mammal and 340 bird species. We spend two nights here, usually making camp near a floodlit waterhole. Observers frequently see a range of night visitors including elephant, giraffe, zebra, even lion and hyena, making it one of the most memorable wildlife encounters in Namibia. After two nights we leave Etosha and turn south to the Windhoek, the capital, a city steeped in German architecture and atmosphere. Take the opportunity to enjoy a night out at one of the local taverns!

DAY 12 – 17
Ghanzi – Okavango Delta – Chobe National Park

Leaving Windhoek we travel west into the Kalahari region and cross into Botswana. Our first stop is at the town of Ghanzi. Here, in this midst of (seemingly) barren terrain we meet the Bushman and have a guided bush walk for a glimpse of this ancient people's way of life. We stay the night nearby before continuing north to Maun for our next national park - the Okavango Delta. The Okavango is a natural wetland spreading over some 1,600,000ha of northern Botswana. The Okavango River rises in Angola (farther to the north) and flows south dividing repeatedly after crossing into Botswana to form an intricate floodplain of channels and which spreads out into a broad flat inland delta – the only one of its kind. Here we explore amongst the giant lily pads, tall grasses and labyrinthine channels in search of hippo, crocodile and a variety of birds. We travel on foot and by mokoro (dugout canoe) and camp for a night on one of the river islands. The Okavango is a very unspoilt area and camping out amidst the bush and the rivers listening to sounds of the African night is an unforgettable experience!

After our return to Maun we make our way to the northern corner of Botswana to Chobe National Park, home to elephant, lion, buffalo, hippo and abundant birdlife, including the famous African fish eagle. Rising early we take a game drive, we rest during in the heat of the day and then in the late afternoon, we take a cruise on the Chobe River – a great opportunity to see hippo and perhaps elephant or buffalo coming to the river to bathe and drink.

DAY 18 – 19
Livingstone – Victoria Falls

Moving on from Chobe we take the ferry across the Zambezi River to Zambia and drive the short distance to the small town of Livingstone. We set up camp at the Waterfront campsite on the banks of the Zambezi, just a few kilometres from the Victoria Falls. The campsite reception will give advice and information about the various optional activities available in the area (typically these include rafting, canoeing, bungee, abseiling, gorge swinging, elephant and horse riding, scenic flights, river cruises), allowing you to plan your time accordingly. But whatever you do, don't forget a visit to the Victoria Falls themselves. At various times of year the spray from the Falls can be seen from up to 20 or 30 kilometres away, hence the local name 'Mosi au Tunya' – the 'smoke that thunders'.

NB For the sake of practicality, meals in the Livingstone/Victoria Falls area are restricted to breakfasts. This allows you to take on half day or full day activities (some of which include lunch) without having to be back with the group at mealtimes. The Waterfront camp restaurant overlooks the Zambezi River and offers a good selection of reasonably priced meals and snacks throughout the day (allow US\$15 -\$30 per meal). Relax and enjoy these few days at your own leisure. Alternatively, take a taxi into Livingstone to try local fare.

DAY 20 – 24
Chobe National Park – Kruger National Park

From Livingstone, we return to Botswana and spend the night back beside the beautiful Chobe River before we head south, crossing the vast grasslands of southern Botswana on the edge of the Kalahari. We travel via Nata and Francistown, desert frontier towns, before re-entering South Africa. We continue for the county's premier game reserve, the Kruger National Park. The fences between the private game reserves around the fringes of the national park and the park itself have been taken down resulting in the massive Greater Kruger - an area of over 24,000 sq km. This is home to an enormous range of wildlife. We spend two nights within the Kruger area and hope to catch sight of some of Africa's marvellously diverse wildlife: lion, elephant, buffalo, leopard, giraffe, and some of the 500 species of bird that inhabit the park. The landscape is mainly flat bush and savannah but there is a good road network within the park and time we have available, whilst limited given the area involved allows us to glimpse the diversity. In addition to morning game drives there may also be the option of a cultural evening at one of the local villages to round off our tour.

DAY 25
Johannesburg

We leave the Kruger behind and make our way to South Africa's commercial capital, Johannesburg, where our tour ends in the late afternoon/early evening of day 25.

TOUR INFORMATION

Travelling overland is great fun, but it can also be challenging! This is a *participation* tour and your help will be needed in setting up the camp each night and assisting (usually on a rota basis) with the various day to day campsite duties, such as shopping, cooking and keeping the truck and camp tidy. But don't worry it's not all hard work and it's a great way to meet the local people and get to know your fellow travellers. Your contribution benefits the success of the tour - most people find the greater their involvement, the greater their enjoyment of the whole trip.

Africa is an adventure destination and travelling here is not always predictable so be prepared to "expect the unexpected" in difficulties or delays which might come our way! However, you'll soon find that the diversity of the African landscape, the wildlife and the communities we pass on our way, make the sometimes rough travel and long driving days worthwhile.

Come with a sense of adventure and a flexible attitude and you will be sure to enjoy your Acacia overland tour across this amazing continent.

TOUR STYLE

Acacia Overland Tour.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Fully equipped safari vehicle, camping and cooking equipment, all road tolls and vehicle taxes, transport, sleeping mattresses, services of driver and tour leader, meals as indicated & Victoria Falls visit.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Local Payment excursions, visas, travel insurance, flights, departure taxes, airport transfers, sleeping bag, optional activities, drinks, tips, meals not mentioned in itinerary, items of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATION

We use 2-person dome tents with fly sheets, built in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and thick foam sleeping mattresses. We mainly use designated campsites, with reasonable wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop, bar or swimming pool. However please note that some camps are of a very 'basic' standard with few facilities. We bush camp for one night in the Okavango Delta, where there are no facilities.

TRANSPORT

24-seater, self contained, custom-built safari truck with onboard tables, plug sockets, freezer, library, i-pod jack, safety features and 70-litre individual lockers.

MEALS

Meals included are - Breakfast (B) x23, Lunch (L) x19, Dinner (D) x19

These meals are prepared in camp by the group and help preparing the meals is invited. Most dietary requirements can be catered for on the road. Please ensure you inform Acacia of any special requirements when you book or at your earliest convenience.

GAME PARK VISITS

In order to maximise the quality of game driving and to comply with local authority rulings, some of our National Park visits and game viewing is carried out using services provided by local African ground handlers. As well as enhancing our experience it also allows us to contribute at a 'grassroots' level to local economies from which local people benefit. These local services are included in the Local Payment.

TOUR PREPARATION

BOOKING INFORMATION

When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent your booking documents and a pre-departure booklet with detailed information to help you prepare for your trip. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving details of your joining hotel. Cape Town and Johannesburg are well served by a number of airlines and your travel agent can advise on flights to the start of the tour.

JOINING INFORMATION

This tour starts in Cape Town. **The pre-departure meeting is held at 18:00 on the evening prior to departure. The tour departs at 08:00 on day 1 and ends in Johannesburg on day 25.**

Meeting point in **Cape Town:**
Address:

Ashanti Lodge Green Point
23 Antrim Rd
Three Anchor Bay,
Green Point
Cape Town, 8005,
Tel +27 (0)21 433 1619
Email: info@ashanti.co.za
www.ashanti.co.za

Pre-dep. meeting:
Tour start time:

18:00 prior to departure day
08:00 on day 1

Tour end point in **Johannesburg:**
Address:

Backpackers Ritz
1A North Rd
Dunkeld West
Johannesburg
Tel. +27 11 325 7125/2520
Fax +27 11 325 2521
E-mail: ritz@iafrica.com
www.backpackers-ritz.co.za

Contact details:

Tour end time:

Late afternoon/ early evening on day 25

MONEY MATTERS

PERSONAL EXPENSES

Naturally you will require extra money for your own personal spending on the tour, for snacks, drinks, souvenirs, tips and items of a personal nature. Everybody has different spending habits but as a guideline we suggest you budget US\$15-20 per day. Also keep US\$ cash for relevant airport taxes and visas needed, optional activities and any additional accommodation before or after your tour.

- **Spending money** is best carried as cash in US dollars, Sterling or Euro which you then exchange into local currency on arrival and as you go. Your guide can advise how and when you can change the rest of your money throughout the tour.
- **Currencies** are as follows: South Africa – Rand; Namibia – Namibian Dollar; Botswana – Pula; Zambia – Zambian Kwacha. Please note that South African Rand is legal tender in Namibia at the same exchange rate
- **ATM machines** are available throughout South Africa and Namibia and in major centres in Botswana and Zambia however are not always reliable. Please remember that cash will only be dispensed in local currency and do not provide you with US Dollars (and therefore cannot be used to draw your Local Payment)
- **Credit cards** can be used to pay for optional activities although charges may be may be high by western standards (+/- 5%).
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.
- **Pre Loaded Cash Cards** are available in various countries and will enable you to load funds onto your card which you can then either draw from an ATM or use like a credit/debit card refer to www.cashpassport.com for more details and local availability.

We recommend you bring your spending money in several different ways (some cash, some t/cheques, some cards); your guide can best advise on what to use where.

LOCAL PAYMENT

A Local Payment (LP) is to be paid to your tour leader at the group meeting on the first evening.

The LP fund is administered by the tour leader in conjunction with the group and covers most meals, all game drives using our own vehicle, campsite fees and meals prepared at the truck (usually two or three per day). You can choose to pay either the Basic Local Payment at the beginning, and then pay for your excursions along the way, or else you may pay for everything up front in the Fully Inclusive Local Payment.

For the DESERT TRACKER 25 DAY tour:

The Basic Local Payment is: USD 675 per person

The Inclusive Local Payment is: USD 950 per person

Payment must be made in **US\$ cash in clean, post-2005 edition notes**. Traveller's cheques and credit cards **cannot** be accepted as means of payment. The LP amounts set out in the brochure are estimates of local costs at the time of printing. It is subject to inflation, exchange rate changes and local price rises. These may vary from the amounts set out in the brochure or website and on rare occasion where there is a shortfall, passengers may be asked to contribute further.

TIPPING

This is always a matter for your own individual discretion but as in many areas where tourism is an important contributor to the economy, it has become customary to give a small gratuity to local staff, including your tour leader and driver, at the end of a tour if services rendered have been to your satisfaction.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities on the tour. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (in US\$ unless otherwise stated. All prices subject to change and availability).

Activity	Price	Activity	Price (USD)
South Africa		Livingstone	
Orange River Canoeing	R200	Vic Falls bungi (single/tandem)	\$120
Namibia		Game walk	\$75
Quad Biking	N\$500	Croc farm tour	\$30
Sand Boarding	N\$250- N\$350	Gorge Swing	\$60
Deep Sea Fishing	N\$850	Zambezi Jet Boating & Cable Car	\$95
Scenic flights	N\$2695	Half day/ Full day Canoe Safari	\$95/ \$130
Tandem skydive	N\$1900	Zambezi Sunset Cruise	\$60
Dolphin Cruise	N\$480	Lion Encounter	\$130
Kayaking	N\$600	White Water Rafting/ Riverboarding comb	\$145/ \$175
Botswana		Flight over the Falls (from)	\$130
Okavango scenic flight per 5-seater plane	\$400		
Kalahari desert swim excursion	50BP		

INSURANCE

It is a booking condition of Acacia that you have full travel insurance valid for the duration of your tour to cover you for medical emergency and repatriation to your home country. Your guide will ask you for a copy of this when you join the tour. It is also important that you leave a copy of your insurance with the person nominated as your emergency contact. We can recommend a respected, specialist travel insurance provider for this tour. Please refer to http://www.acacia-africa.com/travel_info/travel_documents.php for more details

ACACIA ON THE ROAD



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We strongly believe that you get the most out of a journey by respecting the culture and people of the places you visit. On our tours we try to travel in a way that benefits the communities we pass through and minimises negative impact on the environment. This can be from ensuring the campsites we use are clean when we leave and dressing respectfully in conservative areas to getting involved with local charity projects. We ask that you are open to this when you travel with us. Being proactive in responsible travel helps develop cross-cultural understanding and friendships with the local people, and will greatly enhance your experience in Africa.

GET CONNECTED

Join our facebook group www.facebook.com/AcaciaAfrica and get connected with other Acacia travelers, check out the pictures, videos and feedback from their tours and meet up with other people booked on your tour

Follow us on twitter @AcaciaAfrica and get the latest buzz. Got a question? Ask us on twitter!

Follow our blogs from the road <http://acaciaontheroad.blogspot.com/> and <http://africastuckonyou.blogspot.com/> get regular updates from our crew on the road as well as other Acacia Travellers

Don't forget to sign up to our newsletter to get regular updates and special offers www.acacia-africa.com

For information on our Premium Overlanding, Acacia Small Group Safaris, Short Safari's & Treks, Short Breaks & City Stays, Voluntours and Dive Tours please visit www.acacia-africa.com



Acacia Adventure Holidays Ltd

London

23A Craven Terrace
London
W2 3QH
Tel: +44 (0)20 7706 4700
Fax: +44 (0)20 7706 4686
Email: info@acacia-africa.com

Cape Town

PO Box 27632
Rhine Road
Cape Town 8005
Fax: +27 (0)21 557 5983
Tel: +27 (0)21 556 1157
Email: info@acacia-africa.com

