



Self-Drive Routes



This Self Drive Routes Guide consists of three amazing, tourist friendly self-drive routes through Namibia. The routes and roads have all been tested and is safe to drive on and if you ask me, this is three of the most time efficient and attraction centred route itineraries Namibia has to offer! For your convenience, I have also included the general driving durations from one specific destination to the next in order to give you a better understanding of how you can plan your schedule.

General driving durations

(based on the fastest available route)

Etosha - Damaraland: 4 hours

Windhoek - Swakopmund: 4.5 hours

Windhoek - Sossusvlei: 5.5 hours

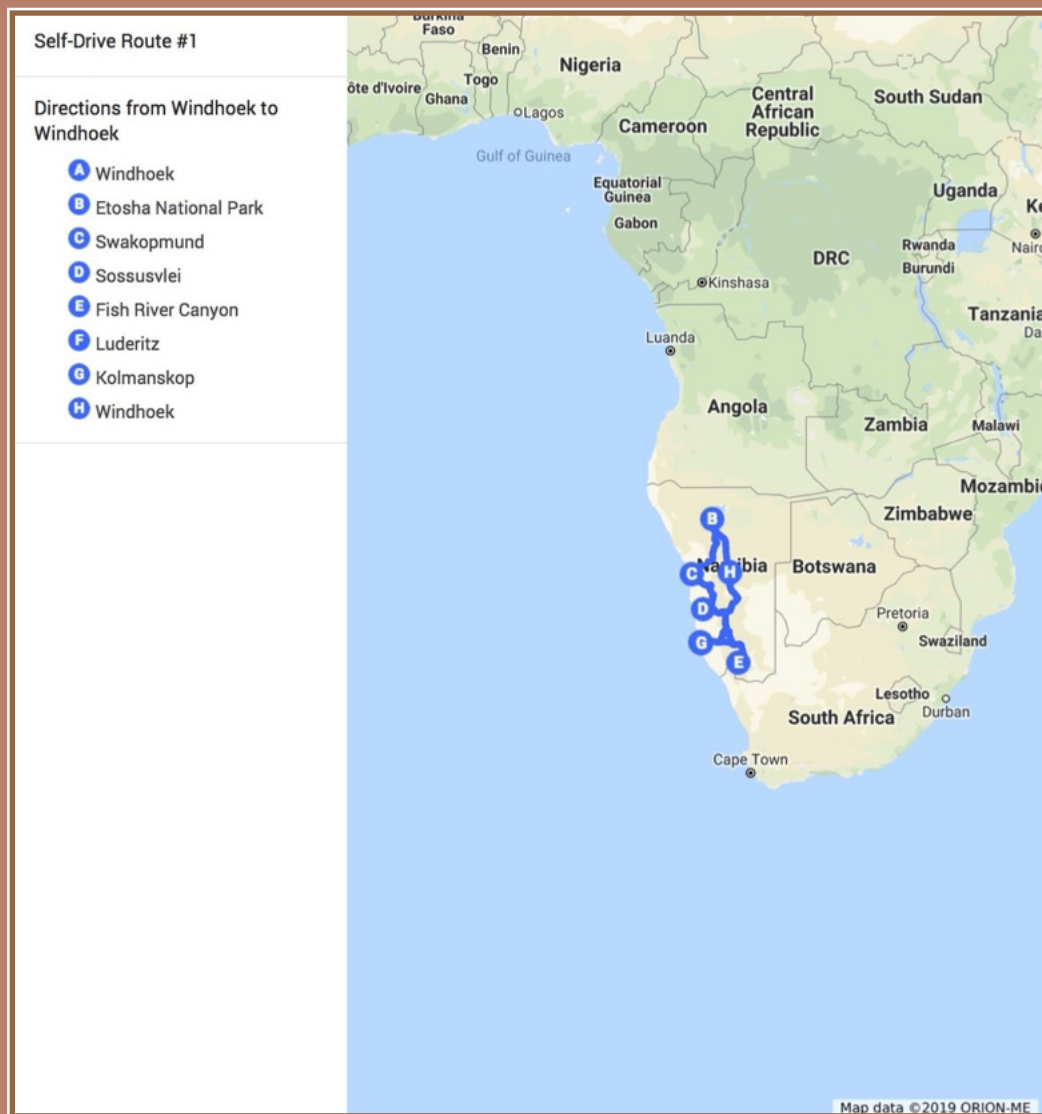
Swakopmund - Sossusvlei: 5 hours

Swakopmund - Damaraland: 6 hours

Windhoek - Etosha: 6 hours

Windhoek - Fish River Canyon: 8 hours

Windhoek - Luderitz: 8.5 hours



Namibia Self-Drive Route #1

Namibia All Over

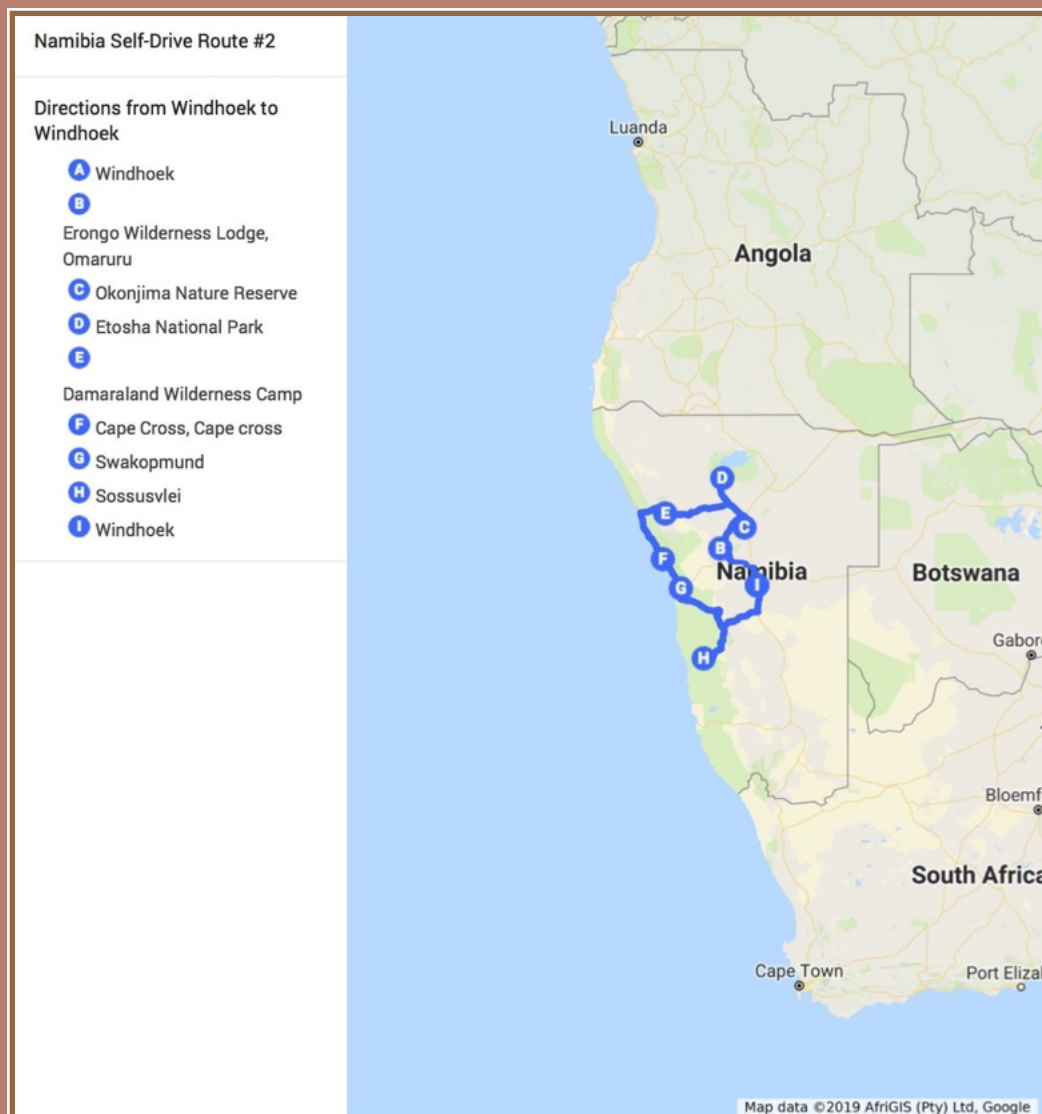
(recommended time: 3 weeks)

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This enormous itinerary meanders more than 2500km, from dusty bushveld to dramatic canyons. It combines a good dose of culture with death-defying activities, and all of it is accessible with a 2WD vehicle. There are also decent, if slow, public-transport links.

Before striking off into the desert, spend a couple of days getting your bearings in the lovely capital of Windhoek, which still bears architectural traces of its German colonial history. Ideally with a rental car loaded with plenty of supplies and a few friends, make a beeline north for Etosha National Park, one of the finest safari parks on the continent. It is possible to actually drive out onto the pan with its white saline floor stretching as far as you can see to the horizon.

Although you're going to have to backtrack, you can quickly bypass Windhoek en route to seaside Swakopmund, where you can take your holiday up a notch in a flurry of exciting activities, including dune boarding and quad biking. Back on the main road south, keep the heart beating during a scramble up the massive barchan dune fields of Sossusvlei and/or a trek through Sesriem Canyon. The ever-shifting dunes of the Namib Desert are particularly worth gazing upon at sunrise, when their colourful hues dance over the landscape.



Continuing the canyon theme, head south for Fish River Canyon, a geological wonder of monumental proportions that is one of Africa's hidden highlights. If you've packed sturdy hiking boots you could embark on a multiday hike along the canyon floor. From Fish River Canyon, detour west to marvel at the German anachronism that is Lüderitz. Sausages washed down with German beer are a prerequisite before embarking on your explorations. Nearby, you can stop off at the diamond-mining ghost town of Kolmanskop and explore the overwhelming emptiness of the Sperrgebiet.

Finish things off by heading back to Windhoek and enjoying your last day(s) in the wonderful company that is Namibia.

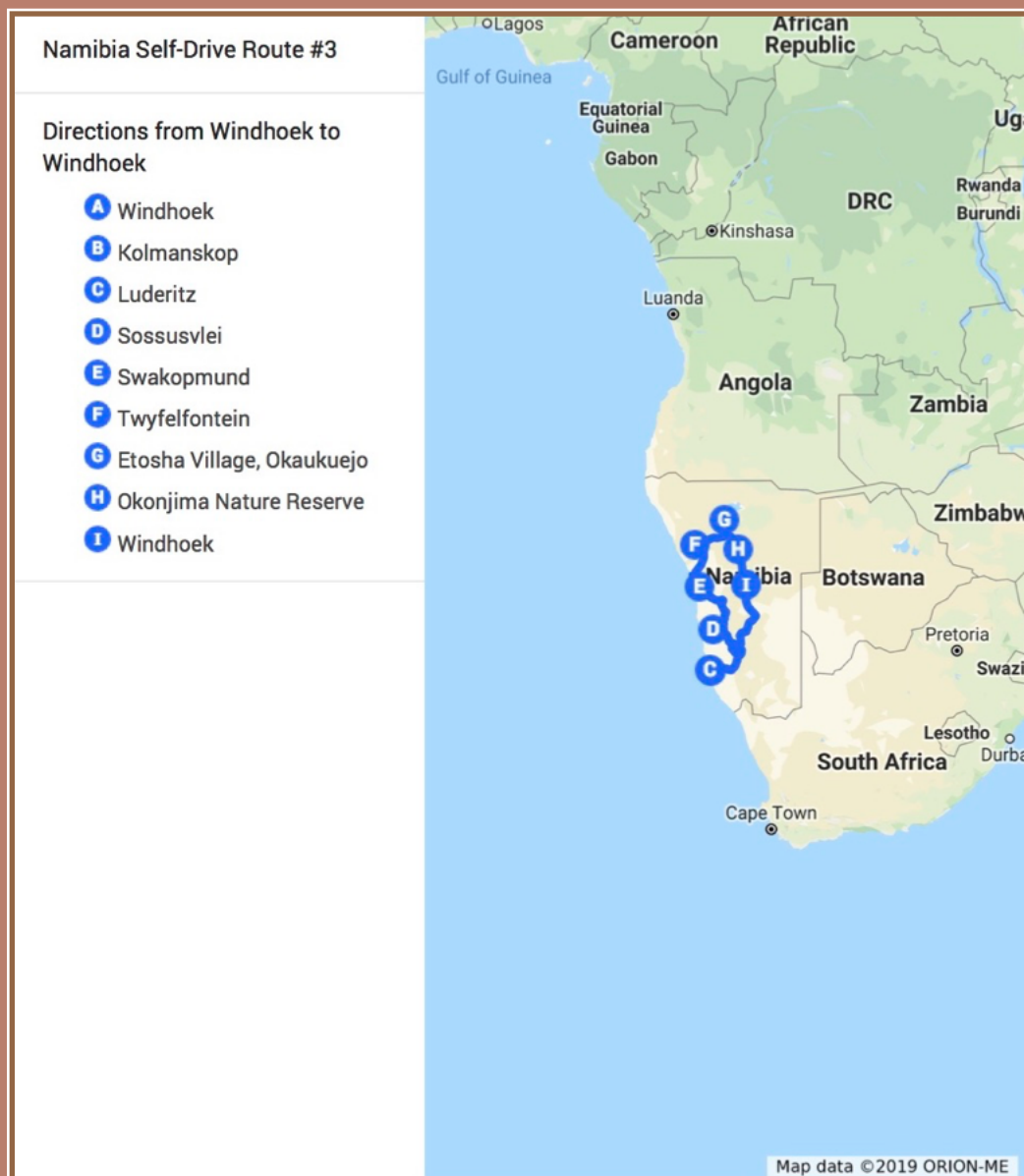
Namibia Self-Drive Route #2

Essential Namibia

(recommended time: 2 weeks)

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Two weeks in Namibia is never enough, but this itinerary takes in the best the country has to offer, while keeping distances realistic. Having your own vehicle, preferably a 4WD, is a prerequisite for covering these places in two weeks.



Begin in Windhoek, one of Southern Africa's more agreeable capitals. From here, head north to Erongo with a night or two at the lovely Erongo Wilderness Lodge. Follow it up with two nights in the Okonjima Nature Reserve, with its excellent program run by AfriCats. Then it's on to Etosha National Park, one of Africa's truly great parks, with fabulous wildlife-watching opportunities – three nights here is a bare minimum. Tracking southwest, head down into Damaraland, home to some of the most dramatic scenery anywhere in the country – Twyfelfontein, Brandberg and Spitzkoppe are all highlights; plan on at least three days. Take in the seals at Cape Cross (one day), sandboard down a dune near Swakopmund then head via Sesriem Canyon for the glorious sand dunes of Sossusvlei (two nights) on your way back to Windhoek.

Namibia Self-Drive Route #3

Exploring Namibia

(recommended time: 2-3 weeks)

Click [here](#) to view the interactive map

Surrounded by mountains, Windhoek is the perfect place to start your self-drive adventure. Enjoy its Germanic influence in its cuisine, architecture and crafts. Then head on out to the Fish River Canyon. The largest canyon in Africa and second largest on earth after America's Grand Canyon – Fish River Canyon is an impressive gorge which meanders for 160km. Next up, the Namib Desert. Settlements sprung up in the desert courtesy of the diamond rush in the early 1900s, now these are ghost towns, slowly being covered by sand.



Enjoy a tour of the deserted Kolmanskuppe with its grand mansions before heading to the seaside town of Luderitz. Journey to Sossusvlei. Drive to one of Namibia's most spectacular landscapes, a place of massive sand dunes (the biggest in the world) with dramatic streaks of black and red. Keep an eye out for the wild horses of the Namib who have conquered the inhospitable desert before heading to Swakopmund.

Back on the Atlantic coast, enjoy a catamaran cruise to see dolphins, seals and pelicans in the bay while enjoying fresh Walvis Bay oysters and sparkling wine. There are plenty of other activities on offer, from sand boarding to quad biking to deep sea fishing. After enjoying the coast, make your way to Twyfelfontein. Drive to Damaraland where you will see ancient rock paintings, petrified forests and the indigenous Welwitschia plants which only grow in a remote place in the desert. It is also home to open plains filled with elephant, rhino, ostrich and springbok. Next up, the famous Etosha National Park.

One of the largest and best game viewing parks in Africa, Etosha has dozens of waterholes which attract a huge number of game including the endangered Black Rhino and huge herds of elephants. Start making your way back to the capital, but first, visit Okonjima Nature Reserve. Explore this national park, home to unrivalled cheetah and leopard safaris and nestled in the Omboroko Mountains. After this, return to Windhoek.

Return your rental car and enjoy the last couple of moments in the Namibian sun.