

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

Aug 6 – Fly USA to Johannesburg, South Africa

You can arrange your own air on a dozen different airlines to JNB or we may find and present Group Air option later to come in our Trip Tips. I suggest you come a day early to overnight in Jo'Burg to rest up from your travels. We love the Sun Rock B&B. We often use this family-run lodge that makes you feel at home from the moment they pick you up at the airport (\$65 free breakfast & shuttle). <https://www.sunrock.co.za/>

Aug 7 – Welcome to South Africa! (land portion begins)

Arrive Jo'burg, transfer to Kwa Maritane

We gather at 10 AM in Jo'Burg for our coach transfer (2-3 hrs) to Pilanesberg National Park situated between the Kalahari and Lowveld teeming with big game including the Big 5. **Kwa Maritane Private Game Reserve** has rare rock formations for geological phenomena and is bursting with wild game too numerous to include here! 55,000 hectares with over 1000 animals and 300 different bird species.

Check into Kwa Maritane Bush Lodge (meaning Place of the Rocks) for 3 unforgettable nights. Our past groups loved this luxury property for modern comforts, great African cuisines, the outdoor sun showers and the luxury Spa. There's 2 swimming pools, fitness, tennis and most special a unique underground Hide for great pics where you see animals come to the waterhole, but they can't see you!

Animals are most active early morning and late afternoon into the night when predators search for a kill. We'll have our first evening Game Drive to in search of wild game. Don't just look for big game like rhinos, lions, leopards and such. Our expert rangers will educate you on the hundreds of other thrilling animals en route.

Get to know your other AFS African Explorers during dinner this evening.

Overnight: Kwa Maritane (D)

Aug 8 & 9–Get Your Safari On!

Like snowflakes, no two game drives are ever alike thanks to Mother Nature.

We have requested the same exceptional rangers our past groups had - they were outstanding! They provided fabulous animal sightings, well-planned routes for comfort, surprises (sunset from the highest point of the park), lots of laughs and deep knowledge of the park - its plant life, animals and history. These expert rangers keep each other apprised of animals' location and movement. It's a fun-filled competition to discover the most awesome experience between all of us in our jeeps.

Each morning, after coffee service, we depart before sunrise on a morning Game Drive when the park is in its full glory. Then drive back to the lodge for a full breakfast buffet. Relax or enjoy the facilities and activities.

For free time, there's many options like an exciting Bush Walk, an ultimate safari experience so intense and unique with an armed ranger to spot animals large and small (around \$48 in Rand). Or book an early morning hot air balloon-ride for an incredible serene experience over the plains of wildlife. Champagne breakfast included. Sun City is nearby to visit: Valley of the Waves, balloon rides, elephant back safari, Kwena Croc sanctuary, nightclubs with live shows and more.

After lunch, a mid-day rest, a swim, relax and recharge, you depart on your Evening Game Drive prior to dinner. As the sunsets and the light takes on a life of its own, the park prepares for the evening as nocturnal animals begin waking up. Excellent photo ops of this majestic landscape, animals and if lucky a successful hunt. (Our last group was less than 4 feet from 2 Cheetahs and their prize catch!)

One evening we'll enjoy a traditional African Bush Braai experience with a hearty feast under the stars.

Overnight: KWA Maritane (B, D) <http://kwamaritanebookings.co.za/>

Aug 10 – Johannesburg to Windhoek

If time allows, we'll include a morning Game Drive. Transfer to Johannesburg airport and your flight to Windhoek.

Welcome to Namibia! Land of endless horizons of spectacular sand dunes, huge blue skies, and a stunning coastline. It's now one of Africa's most enticing destinations for its culture and unique wildlife.

Transfer to fabulous Na'ankuse for 3 glorious nights. The lodge is nestled in a stone canyon with camel-thorn trees and riverbeds with a backdrop of khomas highlands and Eros mountains. Check into our luxury 5-star villas set in the wilderness. The main lodge offers gourmet meals (all included), swimming pool, bar, resident warthogs and more. Na'ankuse is a winner of many Excellence Awards for its accommodations, service and wildlife conservation. They never refuse an animal in need. From big cats to primates and so many animals in between. This is a last chance haven for wildlife. Angelina Jolie has a long-standing relationship here over 16 years. Her daughter Shiloh was born here. The Jolie-Pitt Foundation just opened the new Rhino and Elephant Sanctuary near here to protect them from the poaching epidemic.

We have thrilling daily activities planned for you. We'll split into small groups each day and rotate ensuring all experience the same marvelous activities here.

Carnivore Feeding Tour: A popular activity that provides great photos. Join your naturalist guide for an informative tour as you visit lions, leopards, caracals, wild dogs, and cheetahs. Watch them eat, hear stories how each animal came here and learn so much about their behaviors.

Fresh organic gourmet meals from award-winning chefs are included in your stay. Tonight gather for dinner at the main lodge restaurant. Great local wines in the bar.

Overnight: Na'ankuse (B, L, D) <http://www.naankuselodge.com/>

Aug 11 – Behind the Scenes Tour

During this special activity with Na'ankuse Foundation Founder Marlice, we depart for a walk with frisky caracals. Then visit the animal food prep kitchen and learn about the research here. You'll have the chance to socialize with baby baboons, meet their famous 3-legged cheetah Lucky, hartebeest, meerkats, monkeys, baby warthogs, Gomez the vulture and many other creatures great and small.

Cheetah Walk! Get close-up with three tame cheetahs; Kiko, Aiko and Aisha. Walk or run with the cheetahs into the grasslands with a chance to see kudu, jackals, antelope, zebra and more.

Evening tour '**Bushmen Stories Under the Stars**' – the nature guide takes us to an Ancient Sans Skills Academy where we join the Bushmen around a fire to listen to stories, history, their beliefs on animals, stars, the galaxy, and universe. They may entertain you with traditional song and dance.

Overnight: Na'ankuse (B, L, D)

Aug 12 – Baboon Bush Walk! (My fave)

We head out into the bush with around 43 bouncing baby baboons for a delightful experience you'll never forget. You'll have 2 hours to play with these toddlers and observe their human-like behaviors. Best Kodak moment ever!

Afternoon lunch and free time. At 4:00 pm, you can book a guided Nature Hike for unique Africa bird sightings or you can do a 2-hour horse ride into the veldt among the giraffes. (Must be intermediate level)

Tonight after dinner, enjoy a **Sunset Bush Drive**. We stop for sundowners (cocktails & snacks) and just listen to nature's sounds, perhaps hyenas and lions, all under twinkling star-filled Namibia skies!

Overnight: Na'ankuse (B, L, D)

Aug 13 – Na'ankuse to Windhoek with City Tour

Everyone loves Windhoek and these locals love visitors.

We are met and transferred to Avani Hotel, beautiful 4-star property in the heart of town. Relax by the pool or revel in spa treatments. Great restaurant and casino.

This capital city of Windhoek harmoniously blends European and African cultures with a strong German influence. Population only 370,000. This 'slice of green in the desert' is well groomed and walkable. Visitors marvel at how friendly and clean it is here. The throbbing heart is **Post Street Mall** where you can find anything. Shop at Namibia Craft Center. Peruse House of Gems, Safari Den or the National Museum.

Enjoy a city tour City Tour to witness the blend of modern and traditional cultures. See Victorian buildings from the era of German colonization which lends to the charm of the city. You'll learn about the fascinating apartheid history in the township of Katutura. See Christ Church, Old Fort, Parliament gardens and then up the hills for a stunning view of Windhoek from famous Schwerinsberg castle. The highlight is a visit to Tukulendji Market, a busy place that serves local communities. Here you can try some local delicacies like seafood, dried meats, and yummy mopane worms. Everyone loves Windhoek.

There's a great food scene now with such variety. At night, visit the wine bars or the legendary **Joe's Beerhouse** where you can indulge on grilled mopane worms, game that you'll see on safari like zebra tenderloin, croc hotpot, ostrich skewers and more. Go to www.mynamibia.com .

Overnight: Avani Hotel (B)

Aug 14 – Day Free – Depart for USA in Evening

So much to do in this walking city: Namibia craft center, botanical gardens, heroes square, Penduka Women's Village, city market and more. This evening, transfer to Windhoek airport for Jo'Burg flight to connect with USA bound flights. Note, some may arrive home early morning Aug 15!

You may choose to add a few extra days here. There are scenic flights over the **Dunes** and the **Skeleton Coast** or flights to **Etosha National Park**. I have an excellent local friend who can arrange anything for you. louise@newafricanfrontiers.com.