

# Sasendle Adventure Tours



## South Africa and Namibia Tours and Safaris

### The Kalahari Red Dune Experience Option 1-2013

15 days / 14 nights

Tour Code **KARDEXP01 (G=Guided)**

The tour starts in Cape Town and ends in Cape Town. Winding our way north, through the free and open spaces of the Kalahari, the Kalahari Red Dune Experience takes you on a journey of the heart, where you are welcomed with open arms by the locals. Let your heart and soul sink into the silence and rugged beauty of this wilderness. It is said that no two visits to the Kalahari are the same. This ancient and beautiful land is not only amazingly rich in diversity but also reflects an endless variety of moods, making each new encounter refreshingly different from the previous ones. The safari is guided and conducted in Sasendle 4x4 vehicles. Accommodation is provided in rustic farm houses, equipped tented camps and comfortable guesthouses. Approximate distance for this tour is 2500 km.

#### Introduction

The Kalahari Desert (Dorsland in Afrikaans) is a large semi-arid sandy savannah in Southern Africa extending 900,000 square kilometres (350,000 sq mi), covering much of Botswana and parts of Namibia and South Africa, as semi-desert, with huge tracts of excellent grazing after good rains. The Kalahari supports more animals and plants than a true desert. There are small amounts of rainfall and the summer temperature is very high. It usually receives 3–7.5 inches (76–190 mm) of rain per year.[4] The surrounding Kalahari Basin covers over 2,500,000 square kilometres (970,000 sq mi) extending farther into Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, and encroaching into parts of Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The only permanent river, the Okavango, flows into a delta in the northwest, forming marshes that are rich in wildlife. Ancient dry riverbeds—called omuramba—traverse the Central Northern reaches of the Kalahari and provide standing pools of water during the rainy season. Previously havens for wild animals from elephant to giraffe, and for predators such as lion and cheetah, the riverbeds are now mostly grazing spots, though leopard or cheetah can still be found.

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The Kalahari Red Dune Experience showcases the Kalahari through a wide range of activities including duneboarding, camel riding and 4x4 trailing for the adventurous, and game drives, guided walks, birding expeditions and other eco-inclined activities for nature-lovers. For visitors attuned to culture and history, the Kalahari Red Dune Experience offers the opportunity to experience regional customs and folklore, sample traditional cuisine, and meet the warm and welcoming people of the Kalahari. Accommodation options are as diverse as the landscape, and vary from camping to homely bed and breakfasts to luxury lodges. The area covered by the route extends north of Upington in the Northern Cape province of South Africa into the toe-shaped protrusion of South Africa to the Namibian border. The route incorporates the first formally declared Transfrontier Conservation Area in Africa, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. This park straddles the South Africa-Botswana border and is one of the largest conservation areas in the world.

#### Red Dunes

The colour of the dunes in the southern Kalahari can be attributed to the high iron oxide content of the sand. In areas of higher rainfall and in shallow areas where water collects, the iron oxide is leached out, causing the sand ultimately to turn white. The gradual effect of the leaching transforms the desert into a wonderful variety of colours. (Hidden from view by the Kalahari dunes are layers of ancient sedimentary bedrocks, formations that are believed to be rich in fossils.) Most of the sand dunes to be seen on the Kalahari Red Dune Route are stabilised by vegetation. They owe their characteristic shape to wind action that exposes the moist sand beneath the dry surface. The damp layer is eroded further and the resultant windborne particles are deposited on the south-west side of the dune, causing a characteristic gentler gradient.

#### Sociable Weavers

Besides the red dunes, some of the most obvious features of the Kalahari landscape are the nests of the sociable weaver birds. Their huge edifices often cover entire telephone poles (much to the vexation of the locals, whose telephone services can be interrupted by retained moisture within the nests). The colonies have up to 50 chambers housing as many as 300 birds. The chambers are affixed to the bottom of the nest

to make them as inaccessible as possible to predators. The structure as a whole has a unique 'air-conditioning system' that ensures the interior temperature never falls below 15°C or rises above 30°C. Pygmy falcons, which cannot survive the harsh winter without a nest, borrow the weavers' chambers for warmth and in exchange offer their hosts protection from lizards and insects. A ring of white droppings around the chamber entrance reveals the presence of the falcon. Both the Cape cobra and the honey badger are enemies of the sociable weavers, preying on the eggs and chicks.

#### Farming in the southern Kalahari

Originally the resourceful hunter-gatherers known as the San inhabited the Kalahari. Experience had taught them that, though there was water in the area, it was mostly saline and thus unsuitable for agriculture. In the 1920's and 1930's, farmers from the west sought grazing permits during the winter months when there was plenty of nourishment for their livestock. The sheep could survive on just a little drinking water as they obtained most of their moisture from plants. Shepherds would lead their flocks to areas where rains had recently fallen, and they would gather tsama melons for additional nourishment for their flocks. When spring came, the animals would need more water and the herds would again be moved west. Later the government decided that the land was arable, and had it surveyed and apportioned. Farmers who settled in the region would construct dams that supplied water for about nine months of the year. When the water ran out, the farmers either trucked in extra supplies or simply bought or rented another farm. Most chose to buy additional land, and gradually a nomadic style of farming returned to the Kalahari. Shepherds would move the animals by night and rest during the heat of the day. In the early 1980s, the government laid on a water supply network from the Orange River. Today this scheme serves about 650 000ha, and is controlled by a Water Board and a system of flow-control valves and consumption meters designed to prevent overgrazing.

#### Other Information.

**Climate and weather:** The Kalahari is a desert. Daytime temperatures can be extremely high and sunblock is essential, especially for those with sensitive skins. In winter, night-time temperatures can drop below 0°C (though the days are usually warm and pleasant). Thunderstorms are common during the rainy season between November and April.

**Malaria:** The Kalahari is malaria-free. However, in the event of high seasonal rains it is advisable to take the usual precautions.

**Distances and roads:** The distances that you will travel in the Kalahari are large. Most vehicles are suitable for travel in the area, provided you stay clear of the dunes. Four-wheel drive vehicles are advisable for game drives, thanks to their higher ground clearance. Remember that speeding on dirt roads is particularly dangerous. It also creates a great deal of dust, which can adversely affect people, plants and animals in the vicinity of roads.

**Finances:** Many shops in the smaller towns along the Kalahari Red Dune Route accept only cash. Furthermore, there are few banks and automated teller machines in the area covered by the route. Thus it is advisable to do all banking in Upington and to draw enough cash to cover the entire journey.

**Glossary of terms.**

**Biltong:** Spicy air-dried meat (beef, game or ostrich), preserved with salt and seasoned with pepper, coriander and other spices (recipes differ, and are often handed down from generation to generation).

**Boerekos:** Directly translated from Afrikaans, boerekos means 'farmer's food'. Boerekos is the traditional cuisine, consisting primarily of meat (either lamb or game) and vegetables, potato dishes or home-baked breads.

**Boma:** A large enclosure, often used during game capture. The term is also used to describe an outdoor area used for social gatherings. Usually the walls are made of reeds or bamboo and the roof is thatched.

**Braai:** The South African barbecue. An abbreviation of the Afrikaans word braaivleis or 'grilled meat'. Meat products and accompaniments such as vegetables and garlic bread are cooked over an open fire in a relaxed, sociable environment.

**Koeksisters (also spelt koeksusters):** Twisted plaits of dough, deep-fried in hot oil and soaked in thick syrup until translucent. Koeksisters are originally from the Orient.

**Lapa:** An outdoor braai (barbecue) or meeting area, often with a thatched roof.

**Nabbas:** Truffle-like delicacies that grow naturally in the Kalahari. They taste similar to mushrooms and are delicious on roosterkoek (see below).

**Pans:** Pans are usually areas of hard, bare clay in a natural depression, round or oval in shape. Pans vary in size from roughly 100m to several square kilometres. Though pans sometimes are swollen during the rainy season, it is wrong to believe the water draws the game. It is too saline. However, fertile soils and the greater variety of vegetation near pans provide food for game and a habitat for many bird species.

**Rondawel:** A round, hut-like dwelling.

**Rooi:** The Afrikaans word for red.

**Roosterkoek:** Bread kneaded and then cooked over open coals.

**San:** The original residents of the Kalahari, often called Bushmen or hunter-gatherers.

**Tsama melons:** Among the quintessential plants of the Kalahari. In dry spells they are the principal source of water for many antelope, particularly the gemsbok, as their content is over 90% water. Tsama melons are annuals that ripen in midwinter on a long trailing stem. They grow copiously after rains. Twenty-two tsama melons yield the equivalent energy of 1kg of fresh meat.

#### **Day 1: Western Cape - Northern Cape - Calvinia**

Departing from **Cape Town** late morning via the Great Karoo, we arrive at the historic village of Calvinia. Surrounded by two prominent landmarks, the Hantam Reunite Mountains, Calvinia boasts the world's largest 'post box' and a

museum filled with oddities and memorabilia from time gone by. During the Namaqualand Flower Season (Aug & Sep) the seemingly barren and dry countryside transforms itself into a flower-wonderland.

#### **Overnight Hantam House or similar (DBB)**

#### **Day 2/3: KALAHARI**

In the midst of the "Green Desert" on the farm this farm is a holiday destination that seems to have evolved from a movie makers imagination, offering the visitor a firsthand embrace of nature, with all the luxuries of modern life.

There is something to please each weary traveler, such as the warm and stylishly rustic guesthouse offering its patrons a cozy dining room, vibrant bedrooms and an authentic Kalahari Farm stall where one can purchase true South African gifts and fresh products. The farm known as the "Uitsig" meaning the view consists of two individual bush camps, which are designed from interwoven wooden poles and branches and creates a feeling of being one with nature. All the units have fully equipped and private bathrooms and comfortable bedrooms with a truly African theme. The farm stall curio shop offers a wide range of bushman products and curios from the region.

#### **Overnight Kalahari Guest House (DBB)**

#### **Day 4/5: KALAHARI**

Rooipan Guesthouse is located on the sheep farm Rooipan, named after the striking red colour of the main pan on the farm near where the original farmhouse was built. Home-cooked local food is served in the farmhouse. True Kalahari lamb, nabbas, roosterkoek and tsama melons are well worth trying, and milk tart is a speciality. Guests are welcome to wander around the farm. A two-hour walking trail is a recent addition. The trail passes a former Bushmen dwelling. Ostrich eggs used to store water and presumed to be some 100 years old, were found in the area and are now on display in the farmhouse.

Stargazing is a must in the Kalahari. Other nocturnal activities include mini-expeditions led by Lizette Knoetze in search of the amazing barking gecko. Birding is a favorite pastime in the Kalahari, but at Rooipan you won't even have to walk very far. 'Paul', the tame Kori Bustard, will be pleased if you offer him some tsamma melons. Kori Bustards are the largest flying birds in Southern Africa, weighing up to 19kg. Paul prefers walking sedately through the gardens at Rooipan though, so you are sure to see him.

#### **Overnight Rooipan Guest House (DBB)**

#### **Day 6/7: KALAHARI**

Enjoy the open space where nature and modern lodging form unity. Be at home but still enjoy your privacy. Explore this 1000 ha game reserve where you can see gemsbok, springbok, blue wildebeest, red hartebeest, eland, white blesbok, giraffe and zebras and be surprised by a huge salt pan amongst the Kalahari dunes.

Game drives can be given on request where you will learn about the bushveld, its game, reptiles, insects and exquisite birdlife.

#### **Overnight Loch Maree Guest Farm (DBB)**

#### **Day 8/9: KALAHARI**

The russet sand dunes of this farm will captivate your heart to return - time after time. The big house large and spacious where twelve people comfortably can relax. Koppieskraal is a unique holiday farm where one can stay over on the way to the Rietfontein border post with Namibia, or you may decide to spend a day or two to try the activities. These activities include the camel rides, camping on the Pan, camping between the rocks at the "Lost City" or wild camping on a kopje overlooking the pan. Each of these choices can be unique experience! These camps are ideal for a family get-together or a larger adventurous group who wants to spend a very enjoyable time in the wild.

#### **ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:**

Camel Ride

#### **Overnight Koppieskraal Guestfarm. (DBB)**

#### **Day 10: KALAHARI**

Not only information is provided but this Centre is involved in supporting the local community and conservation initiatives. Watch Bushmen artists busy with their daily crafts on the premises. Support these people and take home some beautiful mementoes.

#### **Overnight Kalahari Info and Tented Camp. (DBB)**

#### **Day 11/12: KALAHARI**

Rea's Bush Camp and Guesthouse, situated in a lovingly restored farmhouse, perched on one of the highest calcrete banks of the dry Molopo riverbed, has retained the elegance of a bygone era. Transformed into a sanctuary of relaxation and luxury, this establishment offers guests an experience in great hospitality.

Spacious, individually decorated bedrooms reflect the character of the farmhouse, inviting the visitor to linger and unwind in comfort. At sunset, enjoy a glass of wine from the jacuzzi that overlooks a Camelthorn forest down the Molopo River or sit down for a candle lit dinner with Kalahari lamb and venison, prepared to perfection.

Enjoy the remoteness and silence of the Kalahari. This is a bird-watchers paradise with a prolific birdlife, from tiny finches to huge vultures and eagles. This is where the desert comes alive. The russet red sand dunes of this farm will captivate your heart.

#### **Overnight Rea Guest House. (DBB)**

#### **Day 13: Augrabies Falls**

Returning south, our Route takes us South Africa's largest waterfall, the Augrabies Falls. Here the Gariiep River drops 191 meters into the ravine at the Augrabies Falls. The thundering cascade of water led the original Hottentot residents to believe that evil spirits were active here, and so they named the waterfall Ankoerebis, "place of big noises", from which the Trek Boers, who settled here later on, derived the name Augrabies. We take a walk along wooden pathways and also enjoy great bird life and rock hyrax basking in the sun.

**ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:**

Visit Augrabies Falls

**Overnight Vergelegen Guest House. (DBB)**

**Day 14: Northern Cape - Calvinia**

Departing from Augrabies we travel to Calvinia.

**Overnight Hantam House or similar (DBB)**

**Day 15: RETURN TO CAPE TOWN**

**NETT Tour Cost per Person sharing (ZAR/N\$)**

<b>COST PP</b>	<b>30000</b>	<b>19995</b>	<b>16700</b>	<b>14990</b>
<b>Persons</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>

**Subject to Fuel Price, Exchange Rate and availability**

**Cost Valid until 31 October 2013**

**Single Supplement on request**

**Inclusions & Exclusions**

**Included:**

- SAT transport in 4x4 vehicle; Public Liability & Passenger Liability Insurance
- Services of a licensed English speaking driver-guide per vehicle
- 14 nights accommodation in comfortable guesthouses/guest farms and tourist class lodges. Meals as stated in program.
- Fees for nature conservation areas, sightseeing & activities as per itinerary (unless stipulated as "OPTIONAL")
- Portage in overnight facilities
- Non-alcoholic beverages on tour vehicle during overland drives (in limited quantities)

**Excluded:**

- Flights / Visa & Permits / Travel Insurances of any kind
- Cost related to the personal use of 3G internet access & GSM cell phone provided by SAT on tour
- Tips & gratuities to hotel/restaurant personnel and guides
- Alcoholic and any other beverages in addition to those included above
- Any optional services/meals/activities/excursions not included/not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any expense of a personal nature such as for phone calls, laundry services, souvenirs, and similar

**For more information about this safari please contact:**

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