

- **Stay on tracks.** Off-road driving kills small organisms such as lichen, ground-nesting birds and chameleons, and can scar the landscape for hundreds of years.
- **Offset your carbon emissions** through TOSCO's Clean Travel initiative if your travel agency hasn't done so already.
- **Select lodges which are making an effort to reduce their carbon emissions.** Look for the EcoAwards certification and Clean Travel accreditation.
- **Take your waste back to towns.** Proper waste management facilities are not always available in remote areas, where waste is either burned or buried.
- **Do not dispose of food waste in nature** where it may be eaten by wildlife and cause health disorders and/or encourage scavenging.
- **Avoid buying single-use plastic bottles.** Instead, purchase reusable water bottles which can be refilled.
- **Use water wisely.** Take short showers, reuse towels in accommodations, do not leave taps open unnecessarily, and report all leaks to management.
- **Do not collect firewood in nature.** Resources are scarce in arid areas and some local plants can produce toxic fumes when burned. Use firewood sparingly: one single camp fire can ravage 50 years of tree growth.
- **Avoid motorised activities** fueled by fossil fuels. Slow down and explore the environment on foot, horse-back or (e-)bike.
- **Switch off** all non-essential electrical appliances.

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide and in Namibia in particular. Many visitors to Namibia seek to experience its pristine nature, but travelling can be harmful and have an adverse effect on the environment. Travel responsibly the Namibian way, by following our travel guidelines.



TOSCO (Tourism Supporting Conservation Trust) is a Namibian non-profit organisation that turns travel into a positive impact for nature and the communities that look after it, for the sustainability of tourism.

Find out which tourism businesses are member of TOSCO at [www.tosco.org](http://www.tosco.org), or sign up as a member yourself!



EcoAwards Namibia is an accreditation used to rate Namibian tourism establishments, following specific eco-friendly principles. Responsible businesses are awarded with the Desert Flower certificate.

Visit [www.ecoawards-namibia.org](http://www.ecoawards-namibia.org) to see which tourism businesses are accredited with the Eco Awards stamp.

#### Partners:



# TRAVEL ENJOY RESPECT

The ultimate guide to exploring Namibia ethically and responsibly





## Plan your responsible journey

Travelling responsibly starts with making the right choices before and during your trip. Namibia offers various opportunities to help ensure your journey will leave a positive impact on nature and local communities.

- Select your tour operators, car rentals, accommodations and excursions based on their social and environmental practices. Look for the **EcoAwards certification and TOSCO membership and the Wildlife Credits accreditation** when making your choice.
- **Choose community-owned establishments** whenever possible. Visit [www.conservationtourism.com.na](http://www.conservationtourism.com.na) or [www.visitnamibia.com.na](http://www.visitnamibia.com.na) for a list of such establishments.
- **Use local guides** for all your nature activities. This choice stimulates employment and enriches your travel experience, whilst adding value to living with wildlife for the local communities. Visit [www.tosco.org](http://www.tosco.org) to find your local guide.
- **Purchase local products** and buy locally-made souvenirs and crafts. Look for the Proudly Namibian logos.



## Engage in meaningful cultural experiences

Intercultural understanding promotes international peace and security. When meeting Namibians, the key is to leave it up to them how and to what extent they wish to share their culture with visitors.

- **Visit cultural villages** (e.g. Living Museums) instead of arriving unannounced at someone's home, or inadvertently entering sacred places or private lands. Cultural villages are run by local community members who are enabled by their communities to present their culture.
- **Ask your guide about customs to respect**, greetings in the host's language and if there are any rules you should be aware of.

- **Always ask for permission before taking and publishing photographs of anyone**, even if you have paid an entry fee.
- **Do not hand out money, sweets, or other gifts to children.** It creates dependency and encourages begging. Instead, try to find ways to assist in a meaningful way, e.g. by asking the director of a school if they are in need of any stationery.
- **Do not acquire souvenirs by exchanging them for objects or food.** Everyone deserves to be paid in a currency that can be used to contribute towards their living expenses.

## Keep Namibia's wildlife wild

Most of the scenic areas you will travel through are on communal land which rural communities share with wild animals. Support rural communities in their conservation endeavours in the following ways:

- If you plan to travel through communal land, **pay your voluntary Conservation Contribution fee via TOSCO** if your travel agency has not done so already. This fee symbolises an entree fee and will be used to support various community conservation projects in the specific conservancies you visited.
- **Watch out for animals crossing the roads** and be aware that where there is one animal crossing there may be others following it.
- **Avoid driving at night** when your reaction distance is reduced. If you must travel at night, reduce your speed and look for eye reflections on the side of the road which may indicate crossing animals.
- Any disrespectful behaviour towards elephants can trigger their aggression towards local people. **Refer to EHRA (Elephant Human Relations Aid)'s safety brochure** to ensure your own safety as well as that of local residents and elephants.



- **Do not set up camps in riverbeds** and set your camp a minimum distance of 2 km from waterholes. Wild animals travel long distances, often at night, to reach vegetated riverbeds and waterholes, your presence may affect their feeding and drinking patterns and cause unnecessary stress.
- **Avoid establishments where wild animals are kept in captivity** without a clear recognised conservation programme supporting this- particularly those that allow visitors to come into contact with animals (e.g. cheetah walks, lion petting or elephant rides).
- **Do not feed wildlife** and ensure that no human food or food waste can be accessed by wildlife. Processed food may cause health disorders and habituating wild animals to humans can make them dangerous or a nuisance which may result in their having to be destroyed.
- **When passing wildlife alongside roads, reduce your speed and give the animal as much space as possible.** Animals may run along fences for long distances and exhaust themselves, or may panic and react unpredictably.
- **Do not attempt to approach, harass, follow or touch any wild animal**, always keep a safe distance (approx. 70-100m). Look for the MARIWISE certificate to make a responsible choice when selecting your coastal activity provider.
- **Remember that wild animals can be dangerous**, while diseases can influence the behaviour of infected animals and make them less predictable. Keep your distance from any wild animal that moves towards you or seems tame (this is not natural behaviour and may be a sign of rabies).

## Minimise your ecological footprint

Tourism is closely connected to nature: it can negatively affect the natural environment while at the same time, tourism depends on healthy ecosystems. The following actions will reduce your impact on the environment while travelling:

- **Pay attention to restrictions and regulations** when entering national parks, conservancies and private land.
- **Reduce your speed on dirt roads** to prevent corrugation which leads other road users to create new tracks.