

**TRACKS SAFARIS**  
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## **AUTHENTIC HIMBA EXPERIENCE**

**5 Days, 4 Nights including two nights at Etambura Camp and one night camping in a Himba village**

**(Minimum number of guests 2; maximum number of guests 9)**



**Please note that activities in the conservancies described on particular days can vary and are interchangeable as these are not “staged” but depend on the current day to day activities and events of the communities. Our itinerary remains flexible because of environmental, climatic and human factors.**

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1**

We can meet you either at Palmwag Lodge or at Fort Sesfontein at ca 8 'o clock. It is safe to leave your car at either of these two lodges. We travel north through dramatic mountainous terrain, then cross the spectacular Giribis Plains with its mysterious Fairy Circles and, following the course of the Gomatum River, head towards the 3 568 square kilometre Puros Conservancy. This vast area, with a population of less than 300 Himba and Herero herders, is one of the conservancies that own our company and we will be hosted here for the night.

We have a choice of activities which will be tailored to suit your special interests - wildlife or people or both.

Puros community has pioneered harmonious living with elephants since the 1990's. You may want to climb a dune hummock or drive up to sundowner hill, with its spectacular desert views which often include giraffe. Spend the evening around the campfire in the Puros Community Campsite, where elephants may stroll past your tent. This is a good opportunity, if you are interested, to chat to our conservancy hosts and obtain insights into life here. We will learn just what it means to “live with wildlife” – the challenges and the responsibilities. The benefits must always outweigh the costs – and by joining our safari you are helping to create synergy between wildlife and people.

**Overnight: Camping at Puros Community Camp Site**



## Day 2

You may wish to rise early to drive into the river bed, looking for desert adapted elephants and other fascinating wildlife. Then call in at the local shop and perhaps visit the local school. The teacher enjoys talking to visitors and the enthusiasm of the young learners in this remote settlement never fails to impress. See Puros village which has elephants to thank for its water tank and taps. Visit a small cultural business run by Himba women and take advantage of a shopping opportunity.

We then take a scenic drive west and northwards across vast desert plains, passing strange rock formations. We visit a small spring in the middle of the desert, used by wildlife but too salty for people. Our destination for tonight is Etambura Camp, Namibia's first Himba-owned camp, on a hilltop with views that will take your breath away. Relax in comfort in your room with a view, each with an en suite bathroom and private deck area. We are now guests in Orupembe Conservancy, and our conservancy hosts will join us for a meal. Spend an interesting evening at the fire talking to Himba game guards or conservancy staff.

**Overnight: Etambura Camp**



## Day 3

We make an early start with Orupembe Conservancy game guards looking for desert-adapted black rhino and other fascinating animals and plants. This might entail covering some of the terrain on foot; stout walking shoes are essential. Later we might visit a herding settlement. People here don't rise before the sun is up. The Himba are semi-nomadic so depending on the season and the pattern of rain, we may need to drive to a camp in a remote location, or the village may be a short stroll away. The people we will meet are owners of KCS so our cultural exchange is imbued with mutual dignity; you are a guest not just a tourist. It makes quite a difference.

Here we may be able to watch cattle being watered in this dry world where every drop counts or just sit down and talk to people outside a dung-plastered hut. Our translator will be at your side and there is time to ask questions and gain real insights into how people live here. Remember that your lives are as interesting to your hosts as theirs are to you so be prepared to answer their questions.

In the months of December to April, we may be able to take part in the annual harvest of resin from *Commiphora wildii* – the perfume plant or myrrh made famous by the Bible's three wise men. Hear how the local NGO called IRDNC assisted conservancies to earn a regular yearly income by sustainably harvesting and marketing this valuable product to international cosmetic companies.

**Overnight: Etambura Camp**

#### **Day 4**

Today will be an intense cultural experience, culminating in spending a night camping in a Himba Village. We cannot pin down activities in advance as we don't know what will be happening locally but for the adventurous or those especially interested in different ways of life, the next 24 hours could offer an experience of a lifetime. With a skilled translator at your side, village and herding life will come alive. Conversation – real exchanges, not merely watching people watch your camera – are possible for those who wish to walk this route. As Vengape, a Himba woman once put it – “We get two kinds of visitors – with some you only see the eye of the camera; others are our guests and we see their real faces and they see ours.”

At the end of your day, sit around a crackling campfire with your Himba hosts. Reflect on and even share your insights about the differences in your lives. You may be surprised to realise how much you as human beings – city dwellers and semi-nomadic pastoralists – have in common. Immerse yourself in the sounds, scents and flavours of an African night knowing your presence is making conservation sustainable for the people and animals who share this vast region.

**Overnight: Camping in a Himba village**



## Day 5

We bid our hosts farewell and follow a scenic route down the Khumib River, an area reminiscent of the “wild west”, and cross over the water divide at “Karonda Namanga”, a steep mountain whose name means “cannot be climbed with a spear”, descending into the most times dry river bed of the Hoarusib. Our route passes small Himba settlements and we may see goats browsing with springbok nearby or a line of ostrich high-stepping past peacefully grazing cattle. This is again a good opportunity to spot elephant and other desert adapted animals. We pass near Puros village, following the course of the Gomatum River well known for its relaxed giraffe herds, cross the spectacular Giribis Plains and, depending on where you have left your vehicle, continue on towards Sesfontein or Palmwag Lodge.



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