

## “My ‘Dry as the Desert’ Adventure”

*Namibia's landscape makes it one of the world's most beautiful desert regions and it combines easily with Botswana, if you want more animals and a watery coastline, or Cape Town, for the beach and some delicious cape cuisine and fine wines.*

Namibia is like nowhere else I've ever been. It has a unique landscape, the kind that stops you in your tracks. The first thing that hits you is its vastness and the ocean of red sand punctuated with dunes, contorted trees and the occasional ostrich. I discovered this incredible country in luxury with Wilderness Safaris.

The first place I landed was Sossusvlei where I stayed at **Little Kulala**. Plunge pools come as standard in each suite and you've a roof terrace too. The staff will set up a mattress and duvet out there and you can literally fall asleep under the stars, which is amazing. The surrounding scenery is very impressive and includes a series of sand dunes. We climbed the largest, 'Big Daddy', which was sometimes tricky as your feet would sink a bit, and the journey down was a part walk part slide! The photo opportunities are fantastic and I came home with lots of pictures of Dead Vlei – an ancient and dried-out lake bed of white clay in which a number of petrified acacia trees have been trapped, which is edged by bright orange sand and was backdropped by a blue, cloudless sky when

I was there. Hot-air balloon trips are available here and if I visit again I'd love to experience one.

During my stay I visited Swakopmund on the coast (where Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt escaped the paparazzi and brought their daughter, Shiloh, into the world) and the large dune behind the town attracts those wanting to try sand surfing. I also saw the engravings of the San bushmen which are carved into the rocks in Damaraland which are thought to date from about 300BC and the rollercoaster dirt roads here are great for mountain-biking.

If you wish to encounter Namibia's animals, one of the best places to do so is **Little Ongava** which is located in a private game reserve bordering Etosha National Park. Here, you can take part in wildlife viewing drives and white rhino tracking on foot, both with an experienced guide.



I then flew north – literally over nothing but desert plains – for a stay at **Serra Cafema**, a contemporary camp, yet with what I'd call 'stately home' touches: think velvet curtains that drop to the floor. It's one of

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Africa's most remote camps, but this makes it all the more magical, set on the green banks of the Kunene River – the first water and greenery I'd seen. My best memories include cruising along the river in search of crocodiles and quad-biking through the pristine terrain, where you might catch sight of an Oryx if you're lucky. But the memory hardest to beat was visiting the nomadic Himba tribe. It's fascinating to see them, covered in henna, going about their real lives, which largely centre on herding their goats. They were equally intrigued by me, yet it was also evident that they were completely fulfilled in their own simple existence – one that is worlds apart from our own – which is very humbling.



**Gill Leonard**  
Senior Travel Consultant



**Namibia Highlights**  
6 nights from **£5,795** per person

This is a guide price based on two people sharing and including flights, transfers, accommodation, meals and game-drives. Your itinerary will be priced according to your preferences, which can be discussed at the time of booking.

### About Gill...

Gill joined Elegant Resorts in 1993 and what she doesn't know about the world, probably isn't worth knowing. She's one of our true adventurers and includes climbing Mount Kilimanjaro as one of her greatest achievements, as well as one of her best travel experiences – to which she adds trekking through the valleys of Bhutan and visiting the lost city of Machu Picchu in Peru.



Gill

