



## About Namibia



WITH ITS LONG-TIME DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, tolerance for diversity and free press state, Namibia—which until 1990 was known simply by its geographic location, South West Africa—has earned a reputation as one of the African continent’s most stable nations. It is also a burgeoning destination for visitors. Combining luxury and rugged beauty, utter remoteness and accessibility, Namibia is quickly emerging as Africa’s next great place for experience seekers.

### History

The outside world knew relatively little of South West Africa until the middle of the nineteenth century, when explorers, ivory hunters, prospectors and missionaries began to journey into its interior. In 1884, Otto von Bismarck declared the territory a German colony, to protect its investments against encroaching British interests—though a 1920 under League of Nations mandate, written after World War I, ultimately transferred the protectorate of South West Africa to England. For much of Britain’s rule, South Africa actually administered the territory, officially annexing it in the 1960s. Namibia’s SWAPO (South West Africa People’s Organization) began waging a liberation battle against its neighbor’s occupying forces in 1966. In 1989, United Nations Resolution 435 called for free and fair elections, and the newly dubbed Namibia was born. On March 21, 1990, Dr. Sam Nujoma came to power as the country’s first president.

Today the Namibian republic is ruled by a multiparty parliament under a democratic constitution that is highly regarded by the international community. The Government's policy of national reconciliation and unity embraces the concepts of tolerance, respect for differing political views, freedom of press and racial and ethnic harmony. To date, Namibia boasts a proud record of uninterrupted peace and stability.

## Capital City

Early settlements of missionaries and educators sprung up in mid-19th-century Windhoek around the area's many hot springs, but wars between local tribes had destroyed the small settlement by 1870. Present-day Windhoek was founded on October, 18, 1890, when Major Curt Von François—who was sent by Germany with his corps of soldiers to maintain order—constructed a stone fort (now known as the Alte Feste, or Old Fortress). The city's development accelerated after 1907, as Namibians migrated there from the countryside and increasing numbers of Europeans and South Africans came to live. When the League of Nations

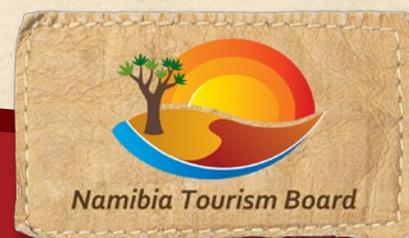
stripped Germany of its colonies after World War I, South African troops moved to occupied Windhoek in May 1915 on behalf of the British Empire. After World War II, and especially post-1955, Windhoek's development gradually gained momentum, as more financial capital became available to improve the area's economic climate and build large-scale public works. Today the city is Namibia's economic, cultural, and social heart, as well as by far its largest city, with some 300,000 residents.



## Landscape And Climate

Namibia's landscape is as vast and varied as its weather: the country's 17 national parks and game reserves are located in 14 wholly distinct vegetation zones (including desert, semi-desert, mopane, mountain, thorn bush, highland, dwarf shrub, camel-thorn and mixed-tree, shrub- and forest-savannas, and woodlands). Regional climates are similarly

diverse, ranging from the cool and arid Namib Desert to the wooded, temperate northeast interior; on the coast, the cold Benguela current keeps it rain-free and covered in a thick coastal fog for most of the year, while, inland, rain falls in the summer. In the summer, days can be hot; in the winter, nights can be cold. The Tropic of Capricorn slices the county in half.



## ABOUT THE NAMIBIA TOURISM BOARD

With the mandate of promoting tourism both nationally and internationally, ensuring the quality of accommodations and other tourist facilities, and developing environmentally sustainable travel practices, the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) was formed by an act of Parliament in April, 2001. It brings together both the private and public sectors and is the only national body devoted entirely to implementing the national policy on tourism. The NTB's domestic and international offices provide custom-tailored services to the members of the travel trade. <http://www.namibiatourism.com.na/>

## NORTH AMERICA PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTACTS

Media Liaison: Malcolm Griffiths – [malcolm.griffiths@aboutdci.com](mailto:malcolm.griffiths@aboutdci.com); 212-444-7112

Media Liaison: Gaye Jacobs – [gaye.jacobs@aboutdci.com](mailto:gaye.jacobs@aboutdci.com); 310-541-5661