



A guide to the:

Desert Elephants in Namibia - Family Programme



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Focus: Elephants
Location: Namibia

Start Date: Set Dates - Please Enquire
Arrival & Starting Point: Swakopmund

Today, children have more access to the world than ever before, through phone, TV and computer screens, but it is not the same as experiencing it for themselves. The Desert Elephants in Namibia – Family Programme, will open your children's eyes to new experiences beyond their wildest dreams. Whilst feeding children's natural curiosities of their place in the world, this project welcomes families from around the globe to bond, learn from each other, and take part in age-appropriate and cultural activities, that all play a crucial role in the conservation of desert elephants.

Elephants have made an appearance throughout everyone's childhood, whether it has been in cartoons, story books or even soft toys. From Dumbo to Elmer and even the Heffalumps portrayed in Winnie the Pooh, elephants have become an iconic animal that we learn to recognise from a very early age. With that in mind, it is heart-breaking to think of a future without them. Namibia's desert elephants are one of only two populations in the world living in desert territory and sadly, they face threats from not only a harsh living environment, but from human-elephant conflict. After being reduced to a population of just 300 due to rampant poaching in the 1980s, this unique elephant population has increased year after year, but with more elephants comes a greater demand for food and water, leading them into villages who had no previous experience of living with wild elephants.



After the success of the Desert Elephants in Namibia volunteer programme, the project introduced this child-friendly addition in 2013 to inspire young minds both locally and internationally to actively care about conservation. By partnering with a local primary school, the project aims to shape beliefs and attitudes surrounding the elephants and help to decrease the fear that often sparks conflict.

On this project, your family will assist in conservational and educational activities that help both the elephants and local communities peacefully coexist. Whilst safely experiencing a wild Africa on a camping adventure to rival all others, you and your children will track the elephants across the stunning drylands, monitoring and recording their numbers and movement patterns as you go. Working alongside the friendly residents on a challenging yet rewarding build project, you'll help to improve the living standards at a local primary school, presenting your children with the opportunity to experience a different way of life and a chance to make friends, whilst sharing and celebrating their contrasting cultures. So, for a family adventure with an underlying message of wildlife conservation, and one that will broaden your child's horizons, enquire today!

Itinerary

You will need to arrive into Swakopmund the day before the project start date, as your adventure begins with an evening briefing before departing the next day to your first camp. Please note that transfers from the airport and your first night's accommodation in Swakopmund are not included, but the travel team will be happy to assist you with booking suitable options.

Day 1

Swakopmund to School Camp

Today, you and your children venture into the desert! Departing around lunchtime, you will transfer to camp which is roughly a 4-hour drive. Upon arrival, you'll have some time to soak up the incredible location, before unpacking and settling in. The camp is located on the banks of the Ugab River, and is just a short walk from the primary school you'll be helping at over the next few days. In the evening, you'll receive a health and safety briefing about living in the bush and what awaits your family for the week ahead!



Days 2 - 4

Primary School Build Project

On these days, you will fully immerse yourselves in the local culture whilst helping with a build project for the local primary school. You'll arrive early to meet the teachers and pupils and participate in their morning assembly, before moving on to a manageable construction or maintenance task. This could be helping to paint dormitories or classrooms, and whatever the task, you will certainly be helping to improve the living standards for the pupils that board here. Your family will also have the chance to join in a few lessons and take part in an educational and cultural exchange, where the children can learn from each other. As a family and a volunteering team, you'll finish up your task at the school on day 4 and head to base camp to celebrate a job well done!



Itinerary

Day 5

Exploring Base Camp



At base camp (the projects headquarters), you will be able to explore the stunning area which is complete with two elephant drinking dams! You will also have the opportunity to learn more about life in the bush with an adventurous nature walk. Along the way, your very knowledgeable guide will teach you and your children different survival skills, such as which desert plants are edible! The challenge of the day will see all the children making a chocolate cake – cooked over an open fire! Whilst challenging, it's definitely worth the reward and is a real treat for the whole group. In the evening, you'll receive a briefing on the upcoming elephant patrols, including the health and safety precautions of camping in the bush and being in close proximity to the elephant herds!

Days 6 - 8

Elephant Patrols and Tracking

Packing up the patrol vehicles, you'll head out early in search of the desert elephants! These next few days will surely be a wild African adventure, sleeping under a sky full of stars by night and seeing a multitude of animals by day. Alongside elephants, you may spot springboks, oryx, kudu, giraffes, zebras and whilst rare, there are a small population of critically endangered black rhinos in the area! During patrols, your guide will explain how to track the herds and give your group the chance to put your tracking skills to the test. It's an incredibly humbling experience to see elephants in the wild and one that your family will share for a lifetime!



Itinerary



Day 9

Back to Base Camp

Your last day of patrol will see you waving goodbye to the herd and heading back to base camp for lunch. Enjoy a refreshing shower and take some time to relax and unwind around the fire - this is your last day in the desert after all! Your final night will see you sleeping in the base camp treehouse before heading back to Swakopmund the following day.

Day 10

Return to Swakopmund

Sadly, your time with the desert elephants has come to an end and after a leisurely breakfast, you'll travel along the Skeleton Coast and back to Swakopmund for your return journey home or to commence your onward travel plans. If you have spare time in Swakopmund, the project team are happy to recommend and help book various exciting activities in the area such as sandboarding, quad biking, dolphin cruises and more!



Accommodation

This project offers the camping trip of a lifetime as you and your family will be truly immersed in the Namibian wilderness. The camping experience will depend on each location, for which there are 3 different types during your time here: school camp, base camp and wild camping.

Nights 1-3



School Camp

From Swakopmund you will transfer to the school camp which is located on the banks of the Ugab river, and just a short walk away from the primary school. Here, you will stay in tents shaded by a beautiful Ana tree. There is a long drop style toilet and a bucket shower, and dinner on each night will be cooked over the open campfire!

Nights 4, 5 & 9



Base Camp

After your time at the school, you'll head to the project base camp, known as the headquarters for all volunteers. Whilst here, you'll sleep on a big tree platform under the stars, listening to the elephants walk past that frequently visit the two drinking dams onsite! At base camp, there are also long drop toilets and you'll be able to enjoy warm showers after nature walks and cake making! You will also return to base camp for your final night in the desert.

Nights 6-8



Wild Camping

Elephant patrols will take you into the wilds of the Namib Desert where you will set up a new camp each night – wherever the elephants have led you that day! On these days, families usually sleep wild on bed rolls laid out on a large tarpaulin, drifting off whilst looking at a sky full of stars above! If you would feel more comfortable in a tent this is also an available option. Whilst tracking the elephants, showers will not be available, but a private long drop toilet will be set up each night.

Food & Drink

You will have three meals provided each day, which will all be cooked over the open campfire. In line with the project's ethos of community, all families follow a rota of 'kitchen duty', taking it in turns to cook for the whole group using the recipes provided. This will include providing 'coffee-in-bed' in the mornings, breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can expect some local cuisine as well as a variety of western meals, such as roast chicken, spaghetti bolognese, lamb tagine, Thai curry, and of course a slice of chocolate cake!

What's Included

- Accommodation
- Three meals per day
- Tea and coffee
- English-speaking project coordinator
- A donation to the project

Not Included

- Flights
- Airport transfers
- Accommodation in Swakopmund
- Visas
- Travel insurance



What Next?

Becoming a volunteer on the Desert Elephants in Namibia - Family Programme is simple, and you can help make a difference to elephant conservation efforts in just a few simple steps...

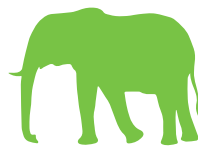


thegreatprojects.com

Visit the website to select your start date and how long you would like to volunteer for.



Secure your place online by paying a deposit of £195 pp. You'll have up to 60 days before your start date to pay your remaining balance.



Prepare for your trip and ask your dedicated travel expert any questions before packing your bags and heading off to Namibia!



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Finally, have an incredible time and don't forget to send in or tag us in your photos!