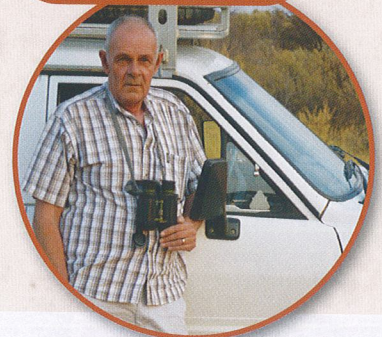


WINDHOEK PASSES

Windhoek through the Khomas Hochland to Walvis Bay and back



Road tripper:
Willie Olivier



*In a nutshell:
A circular ramble from Windhoek across the undulating Khomas Hochland and the Namib plains to the coast and then back to the capital.*

There are no filling stations or shops between Windhoek and Swakopmund (333km) and Walvis Bay and Windhoek on the Khomas Hochland Pass route (438km) unless you detour to Solitaire, 9km from the junction of the C14 and the D1275. So you will need to take a packed lunch, water and other refreshments and ensure that you have sufficient fuel.

Logistics
The Hosea Kutako International Airport is 45km east of Windhoek along a tarred road. The route starts and ends in Windhoek, but you can extend your journey by linking it to the Skeleton Coast Route (see pages 170–181). Air Namibia operates seven flights a week between Hosea Kutako International Airport and Walvis Bay.

Driving conditions
This route can be done in a sedan car, but a high-clearance vehicle is highly recommended. Nearly 85% of the route is on gravel roads that are generally well maintained, although there are the inevitable rutted sections where you should take extra care, especially if you are driving a sedan car. Summer thunderstorms could cause flash floods and washaways, resulting in the roads becoming impassable and temporarily closed. A second spare wheel will give you peace of mind if you have a puncture along the way and you still have a long distance to cover.

Child-friendly rating ★★☆☆☆
1 = least suited 5 = most suited
Except for the tarred stretch between Swakopmund and Walvis Bay, long distances are travelled on dusty gravel roads and there are no facilities between stops.

Low-slung vehicle-friendly rating ★★☆☆☆
1 = high clearance 5 = lowest slung

Don't miss

- Exploring Windhoek on foot
- Stopping at viewpoints to take in the Khomas Hochland scenery
- *Welwitschia mirabilis*
- Flamingos on the Walvis Bay Lagoon

Emergency service numbers
Police 10111
MediClinic, Windhoek +264 (0)61 433 1000
Catholic Hospital, Windhoek +264 (0)61 270 2911
Rhino Park Private Hospital, Windhoek +264 (0)61 375 000
MediClinic, Swakopmund +264 (0)64 412 200
Welwitschia Hospital, Walvis Bay +264 (0)64 218 911
There are long distances along this road trip where you will not have any cellphone connectivity.

Best time
The cooler winter months (May to late August) are generally the best time to explore the area. Daytime temperatures are pleasant, but temperatures can drop to below freezing point overnight and you must ensure that you have packed enough warm clothing.

SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER	SPRING
D	J	F	M
A	M	J	J
A	S	O	N

Background reading
The Sheltering Desert by Henno Martin (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1958) is a classic detailing the experiences of two German geologists who took refuge in the Namib for nearly two years to escape internment during World War II.
The Namib. Natural History of an Ancient Desert by Dr Mary Seely (Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, 2004).

TIP