



FAST

Facts



General Facts

Area: Namibia covers 824,292 sq km (318,259 sq mi).

Location: Situated on the southwestern coast of Africa, Namibia borders Angola and Zambia in the north, South Africa in the south and Botswana in the east.

Population: Slightly more than 2.3 million.

Capital City: Windhoek

Official name: Republic of Namibia

Date of Independence: 21 March 1990

System of Government: Multi-party Democracy

Head of State: President Dr Hage Geingob since 2015.

Prime Minister: Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila since 2015.

Language: English, German, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo, Rukwangari, Silozi, Otjiherero, Damara, Nama, Khisan and Setswana

Literacy: The current literacy rate in Namibia is about 83%, one of the highest in Africa.

Religion: Freedom of religion was adopted through Namibia's Bill of Fundamental Rights. About 90% of the population is Christian.

Currency: The Namibia Dollar (N\$); the Namibia Dollar and South African Rand are the only legal tender in Namibia and can be used freely to purchase goods and services.

Interesting Facts

- Namibia is one of the youngest countries in the world, having achieved independence from South Africa on March 21, 1990.
- Celebrities Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie chose to give birth to their daughter Shiloh in Namibia in 2006. The couple also donated US\$2 million to the Namibia Wildlife Sanctuary.
- In 2011, approximately 1,218,234 overseas tourists visited Namibia, mostly from the United Kingdom, United States, and Germany.
- Namibia enjoys 300 days of sunshine every year.
- The San of Namibia are the world's oldest surviving hunter-gatherers. By the age of 12, most San children are able to identify 200 species of plant, while many adults can identify over 300.
- The Namibian people called Basters named themselves, taking the name from the Dutch word for "crossbreed" or "bastard." Descendants of Cape Colony Dutch settlers and native African women, Basters were rejected by both blacks and whites in the Cape. In 1870, they migrated to Namibia and founded the town of Rehoboth.
- Namibia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site, Twyfelfontein, is home to over 2,500 cave paintings and carvings on 212 slabs of rock and 13 panels, some of which are almost 6,000 years old.

Himba People Fact

Himba women and girls usually perform more labor-intensive work than men and boys do.

Himba women of Namibia cover their skin with a mixture of ocher, butter, and resin from omuzumba shrubs for protection from the sun, giving their skin a reddish hue.

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- The Hoba meteorite in Namibia is the world's largest known single meteorite, weighing over 119,050 pounds.
 - The Gibeon meteorite field is the largest ever discovered, covering 9,610 square miles, and consists of the largest known meteor shower in the world. The shower happened over 600 million years ago, dropping over 150 meteorites in Namibia. Currently, 33 of the meteorites are on display at Namibia's Post Street Mall, and the rest are in museums around the world.
 - Fish River Canyon in Namibia is disputably the second largest canyon in the world after the Grand Canyon in Arizona, depending on how the rank is determined. While Fish River Canyon is 1,640 feet deep, 100 miles long, and 17 miles wide, the Blue Nile Gorge in Ethiopia, for example, is 3,200 feet deep and 250 miles long, but only 12 miles wide.
 - Dragon's Breath Cave in Namibia has the largest known underground lake in the world. The lake is 196 feet below ground level and 215,178 square feet in size.

- Namibia's Ombalantu Baobab Tree and Heritage Center is an 800-year-old hollowed out Baobab tree. The tree is large enough to fit 35 people and has been used as a church, post office, and jail throughout history.
- The Namibian Otjihaenamaparero farm is home to fossilized animal tracks made 150 million to 200 million years ago, including a set of dinosaur footprints.
- Namibia's Skeleton Coast was named due to the shipwrecks, whale bones, and human skeletons in the area. The shipwrecks were caused by the dense fog surrounding the coast, but many have disintegrated and washed away.

Skeleton Coast Fact

Portuguese sailors once referred to it as "The Gates of Hell"

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- In terms of freedom of the press, Namibia ranks first in Africa and 17th worldwide. World Press Freedom Day falls on May 3 to commemorate Namibia's Windhoek Declaration on global press freedom, which occurred on May 3, 1991.
 - The Petrified Forest in Namibia consists of about 50 fossilized tree trunks. They most likely washed into the area 260 million years ago, where silica from the sand caused the petrification.
 - After its creation in 1990, Namibia's constitution was considered one of the most democratic in the world, including a Bill of Rights that grants freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, and religion.

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- Namibia is the first country ever to incorporate environmental protection into its constitution. Over 40% of Namibia's land falls under private or state protection, covering a total area of 135,000 square kilometers.
- About 90% of Namibian land remains natural habitat.
- Namibia is the only country in the world that federally protects its entire coastline. The Dorob National Park covers the country's entire 1,570-kilometer coast.
- The African country of Namibia is named for the Namib Desert. Namib means "vast place" in Nama/Damara. The Namib may be the oldest desert in the world
- Etosha National Park in Namibia is one of the largest national parks in the world and is home to 114 mammal species, 110 reptile species, and over 340 bird species. Etosha means "great white place" or "place of emptiness."
- Namibia's AfriCat Foundation is the largest rescue-and-release program in the world, and has rescued over 1,000 big cats in the past 20 years.
- Namibia has about 25% of the world's population of cheetahs, and 40% of Africa's population, making it home to the world's largest cheetah population. About 90% of Namibia's 2,500 to 3,000 cheetahs live on commercial farmland.
- Succulent Karoo in Namibia's Kalahari Desert houses over 5,000 species of succulent plants, making up one-third of the world's succulents.

- About 90% of South African flamingos spend the winter in Namibia's Walvis Bay Lagoon.
- Namibia's desert black rhino is the only free-ranging black rhino population in the world with no formal conservation status.
- Namibia is home to one of the two populations of desert-adapted elephants in the world. The elephants have larger feet, longer legs, and are capable of going without water for longer than regular elephants.
- At about 55 million to 80 million years old, the Namib Desert in Namibia is the oldest — and one of the driest — deserts in the world. The desert covers one-fifth of the country.
- The Namib Sand Sea is named for the ever-changing sand dunes. It is the only coastal desert in the world with dune fields influenced by a coastal fog that gives life to endemic plants and animals.

Namibia Night Sky

Namibia is one of the best places in the world to stargaze.

After Chile and Hawaii, Namibia is considered the third best stargazing destination in the world due to a relatively cloudless sky and its lack of artificial light and air pollution.

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- Namibia's Goreangab Water Reclamation Plant was the first plant in the world to reclaim domestic sewage for drinking water purposes.

- English is Namibia's official language, even though less than 10% of the population speaks it. The government chose English to promote relations with other countries and to avoid conflict caused by picking one endemic language over another. In contrast, about one-third of Namibians speak German.
- Namibia has 10 indigenous languages and 3 Indo-European languages. Almost all Namibians speak 2 or more languages.
- During colonial wars of resistance (1904 - 1910), an estimated three-fourths or 60,000 to 80,000 of Namibia's Herero died in fighting or concentration camps. The massacre, executed by German colonists, was listed in the UN Whitaker Report on Genocide as one of the earliest examples of genocide in the 20th century.
- The wild horses of the Namib Desert are the world's last desert-dwelling horses. The exact origin of the animals is still unknown and a matter of debate, but they are thought to be the descendants of either escaped farm animals, those abandoned by German cavalry, or a 1909 herd at Duwisib Castle. Recent research shows they are most likely a mix of all of these sources, as well as lost South African army horses.
- In addition to a large portion of the Herero population, it is believed that German colonists caused the deaths of 35% to 50% of Namibia's Nama people during an early 20th-century colonial war. However, accurate numbers are difficult to obtain as no real records were kept of the total for natives' deaths.
- About 14.3% of Namibia's adult population has HIV or AIDS. In 2013, AIDS was responsible for 6,600 Namibian deaths and 96,000 orphans.
- Namibia has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. Half of Namibia's population lives off of US\$2 per day, with 28.7% living under the poverty line.
- About 13.2% of Namibia's children under age 5 are underweight.
- Over one-third of Namibia's population is under the age of 15.
- The Herero are polygamous, although the first wife is allowed to choose the other wives.
- In the 1800s, European missionaries arriving in Namibia were scandalized by Herero women's scanty clothing and urged them to cover up. Today, many Herero women still wear distinct, layered Victorian gowns and headdresses in the style introduced by the missionaries.
- Namibia is 318,696 square miles, making it half the size of the state of Alaska or twice the size of California.
- In 2005, the Namibian government introduced a land reform program that encourages predominately white landowners to voluntarily sell land to newly aspiring independent farmers and ranchers. The program was established in hopes of spreading land across a broader section of the population, both economically and ethnically.
- Namibia's population stands at 2.2 million people. At only 2.7 people per square kilometer, Namibia is the second most sparsely populated country in the world after Mongolia.

- In 2001, the Herero People's Reparation Corporation sued the German government for US\$4 billion for descendants of thousands of Herero people killed during German colonial rule. The case was dismissed, but the German government issued a formal apology in 2004.
- In 1923 the ruling South African government created Bantustans, which were black homelands fundamentally designed to remove black Namibians and create white-designated lands. The Native Reserves Commission moved the black population — 90% of Namibia's total population — into just over 7,700 square miles of land.
- Today, one million people, or just under half of Namibia's population, live in Owambaland, which makes up less than 10% of Namibia's total land area.
- Stone Age tools found in Namibia dating back to 200,000 years ago are the earliest remains of humans yet identified in Africa. The tools are believed to have belonged to a Homo sapiens predecessor, Homo erectus.
- The discovery of diamonds along Namibia's coast in 1908 led the German government of the time to establish Sperrgebiet, the "forbidden zone." Today the 10,000-square-mile area is known as the National Diamond Area, and it is monitored by armed patrols to prevent illegal trespassing.
- Diogo Cão was one of the most notable navigators of the Age of Discovery.
- Portuguese explorer Diego Cão was the first European to visit Namibia in 1485. Upon arrival, he erected a large limestone cross on the Skeleton Coast. The original cross was taken by German colonists to a museum in Berlin in the 1890s, but it was replaced by a replica cross in 1974.
- While European missionaries of the 1800s brought new and better agricultural techniques to the native Namibian people, they were also largely responsible for the large amounts of weapons and alcohol that would create problems in the country later.
- Beer in Namibia is still made in accordance with a 1516 German traditional purity law issued in Bavaria.
- Kolmanskop is Namibia's ghost town near the Skeleton Coast, once used for mining diamonds before being abandoned in 1956. The town is gradually being swallowed by sand dunes.
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- Namibia's Rössing Uranium Mine is the largest uranium mine in the world. Namibia is also the fourth largest producer of uranium in the world, producing 8% of global output.

Namibian National Anthem Lyrics

Namibia
land of the brave
Freedom fight
we have won
Glory to their bravery
Whose blood waters
our freedom

We give our love
and loyalty
Together in unity
Contrasting beautiful
Namibia
our country

Beloved land
of savannahs
Hold high the banner
of liberty

Chorus:
Namibia
our Country
Namibia
Motherland
we love thee

