

SAMPLE REVIEW · DEMONSTRATION ONLY

Anna & Tom — 12-Day Self-Drive, Late June

An anonymised, lightly edited example of what we send back when you submit a plan for review. Same structure, depth, and tone as every real review — so you can judge the level of detail before you pay.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| TRAVELLERS | 2 adults, no kids, first time in Namibia |
| DATES | 21 June – 2 July (12 days on the ground) |
| VEHICLE | 4x4 double cab, no rooftop tent |
| STYLE | Mid-range lodges, one camping night planned |
| THEIR PRIORITY | Sossusvlei, Etosha, “not too rushed” |

TOP-LINE VERDICT

A solid first draft with three things worth changing

The shape of the trip is right: clockwise from Windhoek, dunes early, Etosha at the end. What needs work is one accommodation choice that will cost you the photograph you came for, one lodge that doesn't fit your stated style, and one Etosha day planned at the wrong pace. None of this is fatal — all of it is fixable inside the route you already have, without adding nights or cost.

WHAT WOULD'VE GONE WRONG

Three things worth changing

01 Sossusvlei lodge choice — outside the Sesriem gate

Their plan

3 nights at an outer-gate lodge, 40 minutes from Sesriem. Day 5 marked as “early start for Deadvlei sunrise.” The outer Sesriem gate doesn't open until sunrise — so by the time you reach Deadvlei, 60 km of dune road inside the park, the long shadows are gone, the light is flat, and the tour groups are already on the dunes. The single photograph you came for is the one you don't get.

What we'd do instead

Swap one of the three nights to a property *inside* the Sesriem perimeter — NWR Sesriem Camp, Dead Valley Lodge, Sossus Dune Lodge or Little Kulala. Inside-gate guests leave an hour before the outer gate opens, so you drive the dune road in the dark and arrive at Deadvlei before first light. Same number of nights, same region, often the same price band. Completely different photograph.

02 Day 7: Damaraland lodge fit**Their plan**

The lodge you've picked is well-rated, but it's a working bush camp 40 km off the main road on a track that requires low-range. You wrote "mid-range, comfortable." It's neither — and it's fully self-catered, so you'd be cooking after six hours of driving.

What we'd do instead

Mowani Mountain Camp or Camp Kipwe — both 15 minutes off the tar, both serve dinner, both have rock-pool views you'll talk about for a year. Same price band, no compromise on the region you came for.

03 Day 10: Etosha east-to-west in one day**Their plan**

Enter at Von Lindequist, exit at Galton, all in a single day. Technically possible. What you'll actually do is rush past the best waterholes (Chudop, Klein Namutoni, Halali) chasing the gate closing time. Etosha rewards staying still, not driving through.

What we'd do instead

Two nights inside the park: Namutoni first, Okaukuejo second. You see twice the wildlife, drive half the kilometres, and get the floodlit waterhole at Okaukuejo after dark — the single best wildlife moment most guests bring home.

DAY-BY-DAY NOTES**What we flagged on every other day**

Short notes on the days that don't need restructuring — small adjustments, context Google won't give you, and the things experienced guests notice.

| DAY | THEIR PLAN | OUR NOTE |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Day 1 - WDH arrival | Pick up car, drive 4 h to Sesriem same day. | Don't. Sleep one night near Windhoek (Olive Grove or Hilltop). Long flights plus left-hand-drive gravel is a bad combination on day one. |
| Day 2 - Sesriem | Sesriem → afternoon at Sesriem Canyon. | Good. Skip the canyon if it's past 4 pm — light is harsh, no shadow. Better to rest for a 5 am Sossusvlei start tomorrow. |
| Day 4–5 - Swakopmund | Two nights, no activities booked. | Book Sandwich Harbour 4x4 day for one of these — the single most photographed thing most guests do here. Sells out 10 days ahead in June. |
| Day 6 - Swakop → Twyfelfontein | 5 h via the salt road. | Right route — but stop at Cape Cross seal colony (45 min detour, opens 10 am, closes 5 pm). Wind direction matters; check the forecast that morning. |
| Day 8 - Damaraland | Self-drive elephant tracking. | Don't. The desert-adapted elephants move 30+ km a day; without a guide you'll spend six hours seeing nothing. Book a half-day with the lodge. |

| DAY | THEIR PLAN | OUR NOTE |
|--------------------------|----------------|--|
| Day 11 · Etosha → WDH | Direct, 5.5 h. | Allow 6.5 h. Stop at Otjiwarongo for fuel and the Cheetah Conservation Fund (1 h, donation entry, genuinely worth it). |

QUICK WINS

Small changes that pay off disproportionately

- Pre-book your Sesriem gate permit online — saves 40 min queueing at 5 am.
- Carry 20 L of water in the car at all times north of Sesriem. Petrol-station 5 L bottles are 4x the price.
- Download maps.me offline maps for the whole country. Google Maps is wrong about three of your road segments.
- Phone signal is reliable on the B1 and around Etosha. Plan to be unreachable in Damaraland — tell people in advance.
- If you do one organised activity, make it the Sandwich Harbour 4x4. If you do two, add the Skeleton Coast scenic flight.

Ready to send us your draft?

A written review of this depth is what we deliver in 48 hours for a flat fee. If we don't find at least three things worth changing in your plan, you get a full refund — the fix-it-free guarantee.

Send us your plan →

inside-namibia.travel/advisory#review