

# Namibia 2024 Gear Checklist & Information

This is fairly comprehensive list of items you will need, some essential and some optional, and information relevant to the Namibia study abroad. However, this list is intended to accompany an orientation where all of the items are explained in more detail and questions can be answered. For some items listed, there are perfectly acceptable alternatives that are detailed in the orientation. If in doubt please contact me prior to making a purchase ([dwilson@mesacc.edu](mailto:dwilson@mesacc.edu)).

## Weather

Generally, Namibian temps in May are similar to Phoenix in Feb or March. Beautifully warm sunny days and cool at night. It is unlikely to rain. But like anywhere, the weather can differ to what we normally expect to find. In May 2023 I wore sandals, shorts and a T-shirt (and usually a hat) every day. In the evenings and early mornings, I sometimes put on pants and a fleece top. The only time I felt cold was on a boat excursion (optional activity) out into the ocean in Swakopmund, but they have blankets on the boat. It is sunny so I use sunscreen. FYI - It's not very "buggy" and I seldom, if ever, use insect repellent.

## Luggage & Packing

I never travel with a checked bag anymore (unless it's to bring back souvenirs). I bring everything I need in my carry-on bag and personal item. Although you MUST check with your airline to find out what they allow and what they include in your ticket. I avoid checking a bag because they frequently get lost in transit and it's so nice not to have to lug around a big bag. Someone has had a bag get lost on EVERY study abroad to Africa I have run. If you pack wisely, you won't need a checked bag. But, if you decide you need to bring a checked bag, it MUST be a small one as space in the back of the 4x4s is VERY limited.

- Carry-on. Check with the airline on the weight limit & size. I use a 40L backpack as my carry-on or a smaller bag.
- Personal item. Some airlines ONLY allow a single carry-on bag which means you may need to check your carry-on.
- Luggage straps are a good idea if you check a bag or think you may have to check your carry-on bag.

## Flights

You have lots of flight options. I usually fly the route and airlines below (3 flights).

1. Phoenix or LAX to London (British Airlines).
2. London to Johannesburg (British Airlines).
3. Johannesburg to Windhoek (Airlink).

The BA flight allows 1 carry-on bag and a nice size personal item (which I use as my camera bag). The Airlink flight allows only one carry-on item which means you will need to check your carry-on bag. Flights and airline policies change often, so I'll talk more about this in-person. If you want to travel with me, on my itinerary, you are of course welcome. I will keep you informed and tell you the exact itinerary and when to purchase. It's also fun to fly together. Feel free to book a return flight that returns later or has an interesting stopover for a few days.

## Clothes

Try to make sure most of your clothing is not cotton or is thin cotton or a blend. Synthetic clothing dries quickly when it's wet/washed and is lighter to travel with. Including travel days, you'll be gone for 4 weeks. Rather than pack 4 weeks-worth of clean clothes (which is nuts), pack clothes that can be washed easily

in a sink or clothing that can be worn for extended durations. Laundry facilities are extremely limited or unavailable. The last few days of the program are in Swakopmund. There are some nice restaurants so you may want to pack something nice to wear if you have space.

- Shoes:
  - Cross trainers/running/tennis shoes (I use cross-trainers) or hiking boots (light).
  - Sandals
- Socks x 6pr (ankle socks and 1 or 2 heavier pairs)
- Undies x 6pr
- Pants x 1 (2 is OK)
- Shorts x 2 (3 is OK)
- Shirts x1 long sleeve
- T-shirts x 4
- Fleece x 1
- Hat
- Towel (small or medium size. I don't bring one)
- Bathing suit (Speedos are ideal)
- Jacket/light rain shell (optional, if you feel the cold)

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### Toiletries

Bring only very small amounts of liquid toiletries. If you have a carry-on bag only, you are limited to 100ml x3 bottles of liquids/pastes/gels. You can buy most toiletries in Windhoek after you arrive. Whatever you do, do not bring a big container of something, use some of it, and then bring it all the way back!

- Sunscreen (I usually bring)
- Toothpaste (I usually bring)
- Soap (bar) (I usually buy)
- Shampoo (I usually bring, because I bring about 50ml of Dr. Bronners)
- Toothbrush
- Medications
  - Anti-diarrhea
  - Hydrocortisone cream
  - Anti-itch/insect bite cream
  - Vitamins
  - Prescription meds to last the whole time
  - Anti-malarial (doxycycline is recommended). Talk to your doctor about this.
- Small first aid kit (band-aids, antiseptic, antibiotic)

- Shaving gear (I just bring a razor and use Dr. Bonners or soap)
- Deodorant (although we all stink, get used to it!)
- Insect repellent (FYI – Avoid DEET-based, they will destroy plastics). Your call. It's not usually very buggy.

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### **To Bring or to Buy in Namibia?**

You will have the opportunity to go shopping when we arrive and in some small towns en route. I suggest you bring only small amounts of things in the toiletries list as you can purchase them in Namibia if you run out. For example, don't bring a huge bottle of your favorite shampoo.

### **Computer & Internet**

You will need an internet enabled laptop or tablet for classwork. Some of the places we'll stay have wi-fi. Most of the time it's free, but sometimes there is a small cost or it's only available in specific locations.

- Small laptop or tablet with charger and cables
- Plug adapter (you can purchase these in Namibia)

### **Phone**

If your phone can use a SIM card from another carrier, you can easily purchase a physical SIM card and airtime in Namibia. That's the cheapest option for cell/data service which is quite good. However, I once had a problem with getting my phone to work with a Nam SIM card. You can also enable your phone for international roaming. That's expensive BTW. You can also purchase a cheap phone when you arrive in Namibia. You will be able to charge USB devices from the vehicles.

- Phone and charger (brick and cable)
- Battery bank to charge your phone.

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### **Lights:**

- Headlamp LED w/spare batteries
- Handheld LED w/spare batteries

### **Photography**

The photography gear you bring will depend on your interest level and budget. I bring a large camera with multiple lenses, usually a monopod, GoPro, and accessories. However, I usually take most pictures with

my cell phone. A point and shoot digital camera also works GREAT. I can talk about camera specifics in-person.

### Books

I will bring a selection of guide books. But feel free to purchase your own.

### Miscellaneous

- Sunglasses (a must)
- Water bottle or water bladder or an old small soda bottle (a must)
- Ziplock bags (a must)
- Notebook (a must for class notes)
- Pens/pencils (a must for class notes)
- Travel cup (a must if you like hot drinks)
- Wallet (a must or something to safely keep money and credits cards in)
- Duct tape (optional)
- Sewing kit (optional)
- Super glue (optional)
- Carabiner (optional)
- Knife (optional only in a checked bag or purchase once there)
- Journal (optional)
- Day pack - maybe also use this as the carry-on/personal item.
- Small laser pointer (optional)

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### VACCINATIONS

Talk to your doctor and consult the [Center for Disease Control](#) website or the [Maricopa County Adult Immunizations clinic](#). The following are a list of shots I have gotten to travel to Namibia. I can't give medical advice, however, I can tell you what I usually do.

- Tetanus/polio/diphtheria (be up-to-date)
- Hepatitis A (Hep B?)
- Typhoid
- Meningitis

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### **Money Related.**

You can use the ATMs to get money in the local currency. However, there are only ATM's in cities/towns and we don't spend much time in cities/towns. Make sure you call your bank before you leave and let them know, or your card may be declined after its first use. Be sure to have at least 2 cards. Also bring US\$s (small new bills). Remember however, you may NOT be able to change US\$s outside of the cities where there is a bank or the exchange rate may be steep.

- 1) Bring spending money. Its tough to know how much to suggest. Here are some things you may/will want to use it for: meals NOT included as group meals, drinks, snacks, junk food, optional activities (there is a HUGE range of these), souvenirs, to pay for photographs, to pay for events.
- 2) Have emergency funds in case medical care is needed. Remote clinics will only take cash.
- 3) Have at least 2 cards that you can use in an ATM, e.g., debit card and credit card. Be sure you have a PIN for both.

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### **Food**

*Group Food:* We will purchase food at supermarkets for times when we are at campsites, reserves, and in the bush. This is most meals. We will cook and eat as a group on most occasions. Namibians eat lots of meat! We will too. We will BBQ a lot and eat a variety of meats including game meats and "boerwors", as well as food that is easy to cook in large amounts like pasta and stews. Breakfast will be simple such as cereal and lunch things like sandwiches. We should have fresh fruits and vegetables available as well as hot drinks, but the fresh fruit and veggies will be subject to availability. The food is very basic camp food. Availability and choice is often very limited, we can't carry large amounts of food, and our ability to store food and keep fresh food fresh is very limited. You are welcome to purchase your own foods at your own cost, BUT, storage of the group food takes priority and cooking of the group food takes priority over personal foods. The degree to which I can accommodate special food requests is extremely limited. The budget will dictate what kinds of food we purchase and to keep the cost down, we eat simply. If you wish to drink sodas, or other soft drinks, you will need to purchase these yourself. You will also need to purchase snacks and junk food yourself. We will have limited storage space, however. We will designate cooking and chore duties and share those responsibilities.

*Restaurants & Cafes:* When we have the time and when convenient, you will have access to local restaurants and cafes. There will be times when we will not be cooking group meals so you will be need to eat at restaurants or you may cook your own meals at the vehicle. Be prepared to have sufficient cash to purchase food.

### **Vehicle Etiquette**

*Organization:* You will be responsible for keeping your vehicle clean and organized at the direction of your driver. This includes the interior, the back section, boxes of equipment and the freezer. It is difficult to dispose of trash in very rural areas, so we must try to make as little as possible. Your purchasing decisions can affect this. Your driver will coordinate keeping the vehicle organized and clean.

*Rotations:* We will rotate which vehicle you occupy to give you an opportunity to get to know the different drivers, and to take turns who is the front vehicle. We'll also rotate seating positions.

*Music & Smoking:* You can haggle, fight, and argue over music choice! However, please be respectful of the volume of the music. I generally do not like music in the vehicles as it takes away from the

