

NAMIBIA



Country Dialing Code (Tel/Fax): ++264

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Capital: Windhoek **Time:** GMT + 2

Background: South Africa occupied the German colony of Sud-West Afrika during World War I and administered it as a mandate until after World War II when it annexed the territory. In 1966 the Marxist South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) guerrilla group launched a war of independence for the area that was soon named Namibia, but it was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to end its administration in accordance with a UN peace plan for the entire region. Independence came in 1990.

Location: Southern Africa, bordering the South Atlantic Ocean, between Angola and South Africa

Map References: Africa

Area: total: 825,418 sq km land: 825,418 sq km water: 0 sq km

Climate: desert; hot, dry; rainfall sparse and erratic

Terrain: mostly high plateau; Namib Desert along coast; Kalahari Desert in east

Natural Resources: diamonds, copper, uranium, gold, lead, tin, lithium, cadmium, zinc, salt, vanadium, natural gas, hydropower, fish note: suspected deposits of oil, coal, and iron ore

Population: 1,771,327

Nationality: noun: Namibian(s) adjective: Namibian

Ethnic Groups: black 87.5%, white 6%, mixed 6.5% note: about 50% of the population belong to the Ovambo tribe and 9% to the Kavangos tribe; other ethnic groups are: Herero 7%, Damara 7%, Nama 5%, Caprivian 4%, Bushmen 3%, Baster 2%, Tswana 0.5%

Religions: Christian 80% to 90% (Lutheran 50% at least), indigenous beliefs 10% to 20%

Languages: English 7% (official), Afrikaans common language of most of the population and about 60% of the white population, German 32%, indigenous languages: Oshivambo, Herero, Nama

Economy: The economy is heavily dependent on the extraction and processing of minerals for export. Mining accounts for 20% of GDP. Namibia is the fourth-largest exporter of nonfuel minerals in Africa and the world's fifth-largest producer of uranium. Rich alluvial diamond deposits make Namibia a primary source for gem-quality diamonds. Namibia also produces large quantities of lead, zinc, tin, silver, and tungsten. Half of the population depends on agriculture (largely subsistence agriculture) for its livelihood. Namibia must import some of its food. Although per capita GDP is four times the per capita GDP of Africa's poorer countries, the majority of Namibia's people live in pronounced poverty because of large-scale unemployment, the great inequality of income distribution, and the large amount of wealth going to foreigners. The Namibian economy has close links to South Africa. GDP growth should improve in 2000-01, because of gains in the diamond and fish sectors. Agreement has been reached on the privatization of several more enterprises in coming years, which should stimulate long-run foreign investment.

Industries: meat packing, fish processing, dairy products; mining (diamond, lead, zinc, tin, silver, tungsten, uranium, copper)

Currency: 1 Namibian dollar (N\$) = 100 cents

Railways: total: 2,382 km narrow gauge; 2,382 km 1.067-m gauge; single track (1995)

Highways: total: 63,258 km paved: 5,250 km unpaved: 58,008 km (1997 est.)

Ports and Harbors: Lüderitz, Walvis Bay

Airports: 135 (1999 est.) Airports - with paved runways: total: 22 over 3,047 m: 2, 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2, 1,524 to 2,437 m: 15, 914 to 1,523 m: 3 (1999 est.) Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 113, 2,438 to 3,047 m: 2, 1,524 to 2,437 m: 21, 914 to 1,523 m: 69, under 914 m: 21 (1999 est.)

Visa: required by all except nationals of the EU, America, Canada, Australia, and Japan

Duty Free: goods permitted: 400 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco, 2 litres of wine and 1 litre of spirits, 50ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette, gifts to the value of NAD50,000

Health: a yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travelers arriving from infected areas. Bilharzias is endemic, avoid swimming or paddling in fresh water. Malaria is present. Mains water is considered safe to drink

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