

namaste

June 2005

Vol 2, Issue 3



Africa...
The Okavango Delta
The Great Namib Desert
Victoria Falls & the Zambezi
Plus...
Wildlife of SW Africa
Namaste Global Expedition
...and more

Namaste!

Covering a total of 4,461 miles through 5 countries, the expedition explored many of the highlights of South-Western Africa. From the Northern Cape to the awesome Fish River Canyon; through the vast dunes of the Namib Desert to the desolate Skeleton Coast; on to beautiful Damaraland and fascinating ancient rock art before the wildlife wonderland of Etosha National Park.

Then across the Caprivi Strip, and a journey around and over Botswana's Okavango Delta

including elephants in camp and a snapped alternator cable, before reaching the mighty Zambezi at Victoria Falls! After rafting adventures, the expedition crossed back into Botswana to explore Chobe National Park...

Packed full of features as well as the regular updates, feel free to send me an email with your suggestions and ideas for future issues (chris.charlton@namaste.co.uk)

Cheers, Chris

Contents

Wildlife of SW Africa	2
Expedition Update	3
Okavango Delta	7
Victoria Falls & the Zambezi	7
The Namib Desert	8
People, Letters & In the News	8
Expedition Africa Plan	9
What's next...	10

Global Expedition Highlights

2/6/05 Day 424
Tswalu Reserve Mile 44003



4/6/05 Day 426
Fish River Canyon Mile 44461



6/6/05 Day 428
Luderitz Mile 44830



8/6/05 Day 430
Sossusvlei Mile 45160



10/6/05 Day 432
Windhoek Mile 45450



29/6/05 Day 451
Chobe N.P. Mile 48091



12/6/05 Day 434
Tsaobi Mile 45608



27/6/05 Day 449
Victoria Falls Mile 47947



14/6/05 Day 436
Swakopmund Mile 45761



23/6/05 Day 445
Maun Mile 47276



21/6/05 Day 443
Okavango Delta Mile 47161



18/6/05 Day 440
Etosha N.P. Mile 46500



16/6/05 Day 438
Damaraland Mile 46169



14/6/05 Day 436
Skeleton Coast Mile 45867



Expedition Trivia...

# of Days (overall):	30 (452)
Miles in month (overall):	4461 (48381)
Avg miles/day (overall):	149 (107)
Longest day miles (overall):	431 (612)
# countries (overall):	5 (24)
# of police stops (overall):	8 (137)

Top Tips this month...

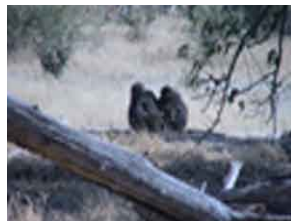
Top Tip:	Etosha N.P., Namibia
Favourite City:	Maun, Botswana
Adventure Spot:	Victoria Falls, Zambia
Place to Stay:	Sesriem Camp, Namibia
Night Spot:	Fairmount, Livingstone
Wilderness:	Namib Desert, Namibia

Features...

Discover the amazing variety of wildlife of SW Africa on page 2. Explore the wonders of the Okavango Delta and Victoria Falls on page 7.

Find out more about the Great Namib Desert on page 8 and read the Expedition Africa Plan on page 9. And find out what is coming next in future issues of Namaste News on page 10...

Wildlife of South-Western Africa...



Global Expedition Update

So, the Africa adventure had begun... with 3 more days to explore Tswalu with Jo and Paul - mixing horse-riding, rhino tracking, lion safaris, cheetah feeding, sunset beers and an awesome bush camp; it was time to head west into Namibia.

On 4 June, Paul and I crossed the border at Nakop, stopping to claim a South African VAT refund (with the compulsory assistance of an agent, based in a hut in the desert) and confirm the requirements of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Having had my vehicle carnet stamped on entry to South Africa, I would not need to have it exit-stamped until reaching the limits of SACU, which includes South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

We made swift progress into the setting sun as we made our way towards southern Namibia's most famous landmark, Fish River Canyon. It is a testament to the power of water and the damage it can do, carving great arcs out of the landscape, even in such an arid climate. The Fish River, which runs south through central Namibia to join the Orange River, is barely a stream for much of the year, and in parts dries up completely. But when it arrives, the short wet season brings torrential rains which run off the rock-hard soils and, within a matter of a few hours, swell the Fish into a raging torrent capable of gouging out a deep canyon such as this.

Our second campsite there, perched on the very edge of canyon; was a dramatic potion of sheer cliffs, jaw-dropping sunlight and wind that buffeted the roof-tent for most of the night. A little weary the following morning as sleep did not come easily, we felt duly rejuvenated with coffee and a fine egg and bacon sandwich! Some habits from home stay with you wherever you are, and this little luxury was no exception.

Skirting the edge of the Kalahari sands, we continued north and west towards the Atlantic Ocean and the start of the great Namib Desert. On route, we stopped to visit the wild feral horses of Aus, which eek out an existence in the harsh desert climate. It was reading about the history of these horses that I learned something of Namibia's colonial past. One theory about their origin is that they're descended from German calvary horses, abandoned after the South African invasion in



Fish River Canyon

Did you know?

"Kokerbooms, or quiver trees, are in fact aloes and grow to a height of 8m. The name is derived from the lightweight branches, which were formerly used as quivers by San hunters: they removed the branches' fibrous heart, leaving a strong, hollow tube."



in town to allow time for a replacement to arrive from Windhoek, paid for by the security company. I must admit, I was quite impressed that it came so quickly, but then this is a common experience in Namibia - it is certainly more developed than you might expect. The roads, for example, including the dirt tracks, are all in first-class condition and regularly maintained. Perhaps this was why I was continuously surprised by the elevated price of everything.

Returning east from Luderitz and then turning north, we roller-coasted our way across the central plateau tracks, which rise abruptly at the Great Escarpment. The plateau divides Namibia's coastal region from the Kalahari in the east and averages about 1,100 metres (3,609 feet) in elevation.

Our next intended destination was one of Namibia's greatest attractions - Sossusvlei, situated in the heart of the great Namib Desert dunes. As we arrived at the gate after sunset, some 60km to the east, we had to camp in a layby. A little surprised at this unwelcome bureaucracy, we duly arrived at the Sesriem gate just after sunrise when it opened. In the early morning light, it was a fantastic drive

continued on page 4...



Tswalu...

1915.

We reached Luderitz, a surreal colonial relic resembling a 19th century Bavarian village, on the barren windswept Namib Desert coast. Here, the icy but clean South Atlantic waters are home to seals and penguins, and the desolate beaches support flamingoes and ostriches. That night, we ate at a local, harbour-side restaurant, and enjoyed a party with the local fishermen who had returned from a long stint at sea.

We stayed at a small and pleasant backpackers' hostel, though at some point overnight, one of the Landie windows was smashed, despite the supposed security guard, who was either asleep or had knocked off work early! This meant a second night

Coming Up...to find out how to join, click below

July 2005

Touring south through eastern Botswana and southern Zimbabwe, through South Africa's legendary Kruger National Park, before exploring Mozambique's Indian Ocean coastline. Then north through Malawi, the national parks of Zambia and along the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika of Tanzania all the way into Burundi...

August 2005

Across the great plains of Tanzania to the Indian Ocean coast for some relaxation and diving on Zanzibar before climbing Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain at 5,895m (19,340 ft). Then a journey across the Serengeti on route to Kenya's incredible game parks, including Tsavo & the Masai Mara. And in both countries, a chance to see much of the Great Rift Valley, one of Africa's most spectacular sights...



To the desert...

Global Expedition Update cont...

through the valley of the dunes. Incredible shapes, perfect wind-hewn sandy ridgelines, glowing bright orange and red, and casting perfect shadows across the rocky floor.

Unlike the ancient Kalahari dunes, those of the Namib are dynamic, shifting with the wind, which sculpts them into a variety of different shapes - parabolic, transverse, self, star and hump dunes to name a few. Though the dunes may appear to be



Desert Cactus

lifeless, they actually support a complex ecosystem capable of extracting moisture from the frequent fogs. [See page 8 for more on the Namib Desert.]

Nearing Sossusvlei, the track turns into a 4*4 sand trail for the final 8km. About half-way along, we were flagged down by two other 4*4's which had become bogged down in the sand, one of which was attempting to rescue the other. Ok, we thought, Landie to the rescue...only to get stuck ourselves! So, with the sand racks off, we freed the Landie and assisted the others to do the same.

Reaching the start of the hiking trail to Dead Vlei, so-named as it home to a dry lake bed amidst the dunes filled with dead and twisted trees, we stopped for breakfast. Loaded with water, we then trekked into and over the dunes. Atop the ridge, we could see for miles across the sea of sand, and you could really appreciate the origins of the term "deserted".

To finish our perfect desert day, we climbed Dune 45 to enjoy the setting sun spread its golden hues across the shifting sands, before returning to the campsite at Sesriem and our site under the branches of a huge tree.

Crossing the mountainous plateau the next day on route to Windhoek, I phoned ahead to find somewhere to help fix the inverter which had stopped working. With this problem solved, we stayed for two nights at the Cardboard Box which was great and enjoyed some of the Windhoek nightlife. On our second night, we were invited to a BBQ and it was fascinating to hear everyone's stories and about Windhoek and Namibian life. One story in particular stood out - Guido, from Switzerland, who is driving around the world on motorbike - used his bike, lashed to a home-made raft, to power the paddle to make his way 1,500km down the Niger River in Mali!

Mark's work as a micro-biologist at the Centre for Disease Control in Windhoek was also fascinating and he revealed some scary statistics on AIDS in Africa. The "official" HIV+ infection rate averages some 30% of the population across southern Africa, with unofficial estimates reaching as high as 45% in Botswana. A massive issue, which thankfully is beginning to be accepted as an issue by some southern African governments, which until recently had denied the problem.

Windhoek is Namibia's capital, located at an altitude of about 1,645m and surrounded by hills,

it is the administrative, commercial, and transport centre, and home to an interesting display of meteorites.

During the 19th century, the site of Windhoek was under the domain of a Nama leader who had gained control of the area from the Herero. The settlement, which became the capital of the German dependency of South West Africa in 1892, was captured by South African troops in 1915 during World War I, and was subsequently administered by South Africa under a League of Nations mandate. Many Germans stayed on, however, and the city has retained a German flavour.

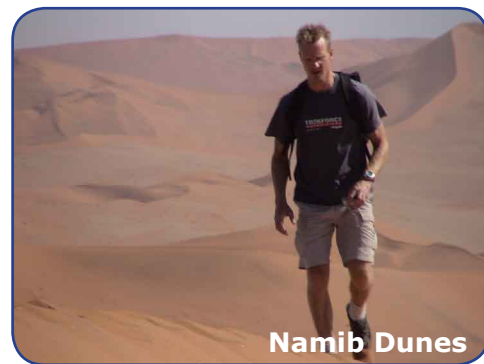
In 1966 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted to revoke the South African mandate to rule South West Africa. The same year that the mandate was revoked, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), a national movement which sought liberation from South Africa and an end to racial discrimination, launched guerrilla warfare against South African rule. The UN and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) both denounced the continuing South African occupation as illegal, and the UN officially redesignated the territory as Namibia.

After years of warfare and troubled negotiations, Namibia was allowed to hold democratic elections in November 1989 for a constituent assembly that would rewrite the constitution. SWAPO won a majority of the votes in the elections and in February 1990 the constituent assembly approved a new constitution and became the National Assembly. Independence from South Africa was officially announced on 21 March 1990; and SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma was inaugurated as the first democratically elected president of the independent republic of Namibia. Namibians are optimistic about the future of their relatively new nation.

Black Africans now constitute the majority of the population of Namibia. The principal ethnic group is the Ovambo, an agricultural people who live

primarily in the north and make up about half of the black African population. The Damara, Herero, Himba, Kavango, Nama, Caprivian, Tswana, and San are other African groups. Whites, mainly of Afrikaner or German heritage, and people of mixed descent also live in Namibia.

Even now, I am often taken aback at the attitudes of some white Afrikaans: "Are you having any trouble with the Blacks?" is a question I've been



Namib Dunes

asked a few times. "No, quite the contrary", is my response, with the thought that perhaps the problem lies in that attitude. Nevertheless, the devastation of apartheid, racial and social hatred have largely been confined to history - perhaps with the current exception of Zimbabwe.

Heading west to the coast again at Swakopmund, we stopped for the night on route at Tsaobis to see leopard, cheetach and caracal. A great spot to camp, and whilst some of these big cats reside in enclosures, there was good reason for their own survival.

After a morning quad-biking on the dunes that follow the ocean, we continued north along the Skeleton Coast, aptly named as it bears the wrecks

continued on page 5...



The Namib Desert on route to Sossusvlei

Global Expedition Update cont...

of many a ship. This unforgiving coastline has seen plenty of shipwrecked sailors reach shore, only to find a vast, barren and waterless desert.

We stopped for lunch at a massive (certainly, the largest I've ever seen) cape fur seal colony at the southern end of the national park to absorb the drama and noise of this huge number of mammals before making camp on the beach. For miles in all directions, the scale of this wilderness was truly



Brandberg Mountain

unbelievable, and it was a feeling that Namibia often provides. Indeed, in this country with a total population of only 1.5 million, it is possible to spend hours, even days, travelling through unspoilt landscapes without seeing a soul.

Turning east and then south, we headed inland through the wonderful mountainous scenery of Damaraland. Our first stop here was the famous cave paintings at Twyfelfontein. These fantastic examples of rock art may be more than 25,000 years old attesting to the presence of hunter-gatherer groups in the country during the late Pleistocene Period. The earliest identifiable inhabitants are the San, otherwise known as the Bushmen, who were in the area by the beginning of the 1st century AD. [The Ovambo and the Herero peoples migrated to the region much later.]

Our guide to the paintings was very informative, and explained that rather than purely art, many of the images depicted scenes crucial to the learning of new generations, largely revolving around the animals important to their survival. In one example, the painting also resembled a map, showing the location of important features, including waterholes, which could be used to explain the whereabouts of these features to newcomers and the young.

Our campsite near these paintings also yielded my favourite shower design. Set amongst the trees, with sticks as a curtain, a wood fire created hot water that poured from one of the branches. With the stars sparkling overhead, it was an inspiring moment and another idea for the future stored away...

The next day, we continued south to the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain, and a visit to the famous White Lady rock paintings. We had originally intended to scale the mountain but as we only had the afternoon to trek, we instead climbed over rocks and through dry stream beds to reach a nearby ridge. In the heat of the sun, it was hard work, but the view was definitely worth it in the late afternoon glow.

Leaving Damaraland, we turned north towards Namibia's famous game reserve, Etosha National Park. It covers about 20,700 sq km (8,000 sq mi) and was established in 1958. About a quarter of the park is the Etosha Pan, which was once a lake filled by a river that has changed its course. The pan is now a salt desert, with several waterholes used by animals, and becomes a lake again briefly during

the rainy season. During this time, the pan also glows pink with thousands of flamingos, and geese and ducks are plentiful.

Grassland with scattered shrubs surrounds the pan, and beyond it are various kinds of savannah trees, such as date palms and acacia. The park is home to animals that can survive in savannah and semi-desert conditions. They include antelopes, dik-diks, elands, gemsboks, giraffes, kudus, springboks, and wildebeests, and the leopards, lions, jackals, and hyenas which prey on them. There are large herds of elephants, and black rhinoceroses drink at the waterholes, whilst the smaller mammals include genets, honey badgers, lynxes, and mongooses.

Etosha was extremely well-organised with camps spaced at regular intervals and maps indicating the location of all the waterholes, some natural, and some man-made, often the best place to view the animals. The two camps that we stayed at were also next to a waterhole, floodlit at night to allow visitors to see the animals that only visit under the cover of darkness. On our first night, we sat spellbound as rhinos and elephants came to drink, along with three lions, though at first we could only see one.

Only when a springbok nervously came towards the waterhole did the other two lions, hidden in the rocks, leap into action. In a wild spray of dust, the hunt was on, three lionesses converging on the springbok, now running for its life. Two minutes later, the lionesses returned without their prey, and I often found myself rooting for the underdog, in this case the springbok, and I breathed a sigh of relief knowing that, this time, it got away.

I often find it intriguing to see the interaction between different species; the herbivores, the predators, the ranking amongst beasts. Not all that different from that other well-known species of animal, humans. In many ways, studying the actions and behaviours of animals, otherwise known as ethology, gives us great insight into our own more innate and unconscious behaviours.

Out of Etosha, we continued north towards the Caprivi Strip, named after the German chancellor of the same name in 1890. This narrow piece of land jutting east out of north-east Namibia was acquired by Germany from Great Britain by Caprivi.

We stopped to camp overnight in the "Ulu", the phrase that has for us become synonymous with describing the bush. On route, we also noticed the transition from Namibia's developed self into more



Windhoek

traditional village life. Along the edge of the road as we drove north, there were increasing numbers of small settlements of mud and stick construction, the traditional image of African village life.

Reaching Rundu on the Angola border the next day, we took some time out to use the internet facility in town, though we were later disappointed as our chairs had been stolen from the roof of the Landie. A little more vigilance required perhaps!

Turning east along the Namibia/Angola border, we entered the Caprivi Strip for a short distance before heading south to the Botswana border and the northern gateway to the Okavango Delta. As with previous southern African border crossings, it was a breeze and we took our first steps into this

continued on page 6...



Camp in Etosha National Park

Global Expedition Update cont...

fascinating country.

Botswana takes its name from the Tswana people, who make up the overwhelming majority of the population. They are divided into eight tribal groups. Besides the Tswana, major ethnic groups include the San (Kalahari Bushmen), Kalanga, and Herero.

Since independence in 1966, Botswana has been transformed from a near-subsistence economy into



Botswana Village, Okavango

one of the wealthiest and fastest-growing countries in Africa. GNP in 1997 was US\$5,070 million a year (World Bank estimate), equivalent to US\$3,310 per person. Coupled with sound economic management, this transformation has resulted from the discovery of mineral resources, in particular huge deposits of diamonds that now account for about 80 per cent of export earnings. Botswana is now the world's second-greatest diamond producer.

As we had decided to circumnavigate the delta before returning to the Caprivi, we opted to take the short ferry ride across the Okavango River soon after crossing border and use the road on the return leg. At the river, we were met by UN peacekeepers from Malawi - which we later found out were part of a huge training exercise for troops from all Southern African countries. Such close and military co-operation represented a significant change from the past.

Reaching the other side of the river, though, we were greeted by local militia firing automatic rifles into the air. Thankfully friendly, I gave away some cigarettes and we were on our way south along the eastern banks of the Okavango Panhandle.

We spent our first night in the delta overlooking the river and for the first time we had a close encounter with elephants walking only 5m past our camp in the darkness. No fences, no game park, this was wild Africa at its best. For Paul, it was a new and slightly nervy experience, particularly as we could hear lions off in the distance. Camping amongst wild animals, like many things, takes a little getting used to!

For two more days, we circled the northern delta on increasingly difficult and sandy tracks, putting the GPS to good use to navigate across often uncertain terrain. Nearing the Moremi Wildlife Reserve on the morning of the third day, I noticed that the car batteries were not charging, perhaps a problem with the alternator. About an hour later, the engine also failed (such is the way with modern Land Rovers governed by engine computers that need power), and we came to a halt about 1 km from the north gate. No life in the battery, and since I had the wrong cable to be able to connect the generator to the batteries to recharge them, we were stuck. Well, I guessed there was a first time for everything, and this was the first enforced stop of the entire expedition.

the UK to get advice on the alternator. Another friend, Paul, also told us of a good Land Rover garage in Maun, about 130km away, and gave me the phone number. Half an hour later, we got a tow from one of the Moremi vehicles to the north gate to await a tow from a truck from Maun.

We sat for 7 hours on the edge of the reserve wondering where the truck had got to, even setting up camp thinking it would not arrive until the following morning. But to our relieved surprise, it arrived just after midnight. A further 7 hours later, across some difficult and bumpy tracks, we finally pulled into the Land Rover workshop in Maun just as the sun was rising. As it turned out, the alternator cable had snapped, either due to corrosion or perhaps a branch on one of the sand tracks.

Whilst we were a little disappointed not to explore the Moremi reserve, we did get the Landie fixed in the workshop with enough time to spare to enjoy an amazing flight over the Delta at 'magic hour'. It was incredible to fly over such a vast tract of land, looking down at the wildlife from only 350 feet. [See page 7 for more on the Okavango Delta.]

After restocking the fridge with food and beer in a town that has more Landies than anywhere else I've ever been, we completed our circuit of the Delta and crossed back into Namibia and turned east to complete the traverse of the Caprivi Strip.

On 25 June, we drove over the Zambezi River into Zambia and headed into Livingstone, our base for an amazing rafting trip on the mighty Zambezi River below the gorgeous Victoria Falls. [See page 7 for more on the Falls.]

Our rafting companions included five great girls from New York - Liz, Natalie, Debbie, Wendy, and Supei, on tour in southern Africa after helping out at an orphanage in Lusaka, and of course, Vinny and the other guides from Safari Par Excellence. We had a fantastic day on the river, one that I had been looking forward to running for some time!

Somewhat apprehensively, we crossed the border the next day into Zimbabwe to find the small town

of Victoria Falls practically deserted of tourists, a sad edict of the current regime and its policies. We headed straight for the airport to pick up Jo from Tswalu, who had flown in from Johannesburg to join the expedition for two weeks in Botswana and Mozambique.

We explored the Falls that afternoon, then had a fantastic dinner and bubbly at the famous and opulent, yet deserted, Victoria Falls Hotel. A fitting



Baobab Tree

end to Paul's month on expedition and Jo's arrival!

After dropping Paul at the airport, Jo and I drove through the Zambezi National Park and crossed into Botswana at Kasane, heading for Chobe National Park, where we spent several days - a real elephant extravaganza along the Chobe River. One night, we were treated to a real close-up, with elephants eating in the dark next to our "Ulu" camp - so close, in fact, we could practically reach out of the roof-tent and touch them - fantastic!

Continuing south, we had to get the GPS ready as our next adventure was to be a crossing of the vast and amazing salt pans on route to the famous Kruger National Park of South Africa...

by Chris Charlton



Elephants in Zambezi National Park

Okavango Delta...

The Okavango Swamp, an area of protected swampland occupying 16,835 sq km (6,500 sq mi) in the delta of the Okavango River, in north-west Botswana, southern Africa, is remarkable for its many species of wildlife.

The swamp is named after the Okavango people of Namibia, and was visited by



David Livingstone in 1849. The immense water resources of the delta have not so far been exploited for industrial purposes by the Botswana government. However, the abundant wildlife of the Moremi Wildlife Reserve, which includes lions, elephants, buffaloes, cheetahs, hippos, crocodiles, and a wide variety of birds, has become a major tourist attraction. The government is

committed to maintaining the tourist potential of the delta operating on the principle of high cost/low density tourism in order to prevent overexploitation.

This means that the cost of staying at one of the many lodges in the delta is expensive, often including a flight as the only means of access. For the independent traveller, though, it is quite possible to camp outside the boundaries of the parks for free, and as the wildlife roams freely, sightings from a bush camp are common.

The 1430km Okavango River rises in central Angola, then flows southeast across Namibia's Caprivi Strip before entering Botswana east of Shakawe. At first in the Okavango Panhandle, the river's waters spread across the valley on either side to form vast reed beds and papyrus-choked lagoons. Here, a cosmopolitan mix of people occupy clusters of fishing villages and extract their livelihoods from the rich waters.

At the end of the Panhandle, approx 18.5 billion cubic metres of water sprawl like an open palm across the flat landscape as they're consumed by the thirsty air and swallowed by the Kalahari sands. Eventually, the river loses itself in a vast maze of lagoons, channels and islands, often best appreciated from the air (and a must-do for visitors to this region).

From above, it is also possible to look in awe at the vast herds of buffalo, or hippos swimming in the clear waters, whilst absorbing the sheer scale of this inland delta.

The best months to visit are from July to September, when the weather is dry and



the water is high. This is also a good time to take a Mokoro trip along one of the many channels, including game viewing on one or more islands. These shallow-draught dugout canoes hewn from ebony or sausage tree log, offer a great opportunity to witness the timeless lifestyle of the several groups of people that have fished and hunted in the delta for thousands of years.

Victoria Falls and the Zambezi...

When David Livingstone first saw the Victoria Falls in 1855 he wrote in his journal 'on sights as beautiful as this, angels in their flight must have gazed'. He named the falls after the queen of England, but they are known locally as *Mosi Oa Tunya* ("The Smoke That Thunders"), as the spray from the falls can be seen from miles around.



Straddling the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, the falls themselves are 1.6 km (1 mi) wide and the distance from their top to the base of the gorge, which contains a whirlpool known as the Boiling Point, ranges from 61 m (200 ft) and 128 m (420 ft).

To fully appreciate the falls, it is best to visit both the Zim and the Zam sides. Catering well to the traveller, Livingstone, on the Zambia

side, is a fun place to hang out and enjoy the adventure sports mecca that it has become. The town of Victoria Falls, on the Zim side, is a wholly different place than it used to be. For sad and obvious political reasons if you read the news, it feels more like a ghost town as far as tourists are concerned, though the up side is that you can relax over a fantastic dinner at the timeless Victoria Falls Hotel with the place all to yourself.

The surrounding national parks in both countries also contain a rich variety of flora, including ilala palms, fig trees, ebonies, mahoganies, and blood lilies, and fauna, such as baboons, elephants, monkeys, leopards, crocodiles, and warthogs.

Aside from soaking up one of the largest and most beautiful waterfalls in the world, the other reason to be there is to embark on adventures on the mighty Zambezi River as it enters a gorge below the falls and flows south and eastwards in a turbulent froth of fantastic white water.

If you're a rafting fan, this is arguably one of the best rivers you can run anywhere in the world, though you should pick your time of year depending upon what kind of trip you want to have. High water in June, for example, restricts you to the lower portion of the canyon and some of the wildest rapids, such as 'Oblivion', are a little calmer (if that's possible) than later in the year.

Most companies operating on the Zambezi offer quality guides, though I can particularly recommend Safari Par Excellence, which offer a first class day out with a great team. Find Vinny and his team and you're sure to have a great day out!

Aside from rafting, kayaking, and river-boarding, there are loads of other activities



on offer from bungee-jumping, abseiling, gorge-swinging, skydiving, helicopter and tiger moth flights, wildlife game drives, microlights, hiking and horse-riding. It's not difficult to see why Victoria Falls has become one of the top destinations for independent and adventurous travellers...fun, fantastic and adrenaline-filled in the midst of amazing natural beauty. My kind of place for sure!

People

Fellow Adventurers...



Paul Wilkinson, 34, from London, finished his month-long journey on expedition through South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 28 June.



Jo Shaw, 30, from Tswalu Kalahari Reserve, joined the expedition on 27 June for a 2-week tour through eastern Botswana, Zimbabwe, the Kruger Park of South Africa, and along Mozambique's southern coast.

Along the way...

A big thank you to all those people who we've met along the way in June, including:

Tuso, Val (Luderitz), Anna, Saskia, Gwen, Mark, David, Jeanette, Guido, Sean & friends (Windhoek), Camping girls (Swakopmund), Dion (Twylfelfontein), Johnny (Brandberg), German couple (Etosha), Tim & Pauline (Rundu), Dean, Caphus, Bonani and the staff at LR (Maun) and all the friendly villagers of the Okavango, Jo & Margaret (Kongola), Linda, David, Petronella, Kris, Miriam (Livingstone), Itay, Amos, Natalie, Liz, Wendy, Debbie, Supei, Vinny and guides and staff of Safari Par Excellence on the Zambezi, Natasha and staff (Vic Falls), and the security lads at Chobe Safari Lodge...



In the News

In the News

See www.namaste.co.uk/news for details...

Previous Newsletters

Previous issues of Namaste News are also available at www.namaste.co.uk/news, most recently:

May 2005	Apr 2005	Mar 2005
Feb 2005	Jan 2005	Dec 2004

Letters & Emails

Thank you for all your letters, emails, text messages, and faxes. Each month, a few excerpts will be printed here...

"Hi Chris, Back on the trail after a trip home, eh? Very good. I hope all is well! I'm in Reno, Nevada for the summer at a workshop for newspaper designers / editors. It's very intense, but worth the work. This is a gambling-crazy town with slot machines inside every imaginable establishment: Wal-Mart, convenience stores, coffee shops... Quite funny. I enjoy reading your updates! Take care!", Tarah, Nevada, USA

"Chris, Just a note to mention that my quest for the summit of Denali was completed last week. It was a fantastic trip, physically exhausting and mentally challenging...Two climbers dropped out early in the course, while the rest sucked it up and endured the punishment. Hope your global trip is continuing with expected success", Mich, California, USA

"Gotten outta Cape Town yet? What's it like there? Guess you'll be letting us all know in your next Newsletter... I've been keeping busy with my event co-ordinations, our latest one being "Yukon Idol"...a cross between American Idol & the Gong show...it was a gas! One of our contestants came up & sang Johnny Cash's "Burning Ring Of Fire", & later that evening headed over to the cop shop & burned down their evidence building!!!", Heidi, Dawson City, Canada

"NAMASTE and CIAO!! You are finally in africa.. must be amazing!! Well I'm here in sardinia...very beautiful island..amazing water (crystal clear, celesteverde colour..mmm) and beaches (white silky sand) etc.. and i love italy..food is great and people..i just love it.. Well Chris..have an amazing time there and be aware..lions like fresh meat!! Have good fun!!..", Lotta, Sardinia, Italy

"GOOD DAY CHRIS!!!!...HOW R THINGS AND HOW FAR R U NOW I BET U WILL HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF TALES TO TELL WHEN U RETURN U I HOPE THAT U R WRITING A BOOK AFTER THIS CAUSE I WOULD WANT TO BE THE V FIRST ONE TO BUY IT..", MELANIE, Cape Town, South Africa

And many congratulations to Tom Torkelson, who summited Everest on 6 June; and to Mich Etchebarne, who summited Denali on 15 June.

Website Update

Stage 1 Development

Namaste Management Case Studies are in production. Available from April 2005.

Stage 2 Development

The first Namaste Management Guides (Project Management Series; Leadership & Management Series) and Namaste Fun Films (Climbing Denali; A Taste of North America) are now in production; and should become available from September 2005.

May 2005 Stats

Hits: 34,346
Countries: 52
Downloads: 2,689 Mb

May 2005 Stats

Hits: 43,024
Countries: 42
Downloads: 2,835 Mb

Namib Desert...

The Namib Desert in south-western Africa, stretches alongside the Atlantic coast of Namibia for 1,930 km (1,200 mi) and joins the Kalahari Desert in the south. Apart from the two main settlements of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund, the mineral-rich Namib is very thinly populated.

Weathering breaks down the rocks of deserts to provide sediment that can be transported by wind and water, and fashioned into distinctive



landforms. Chemical weathering involves the decay and breakdown of the constituent minerals of the rock. It occurs primarily when there is a chemical reaction between the minerals and water, but it can also happen when the minerals react with air or with an invasive solution of some sort. The results can range from colour changes in the rock to its complete chemical decomposition. Mechanical weathering, by contrast, involves the breakdown of rock without any substantial chemical change in its constituent minerals. In deserts it is commonly, but far from solely, associated with the extreme temperature changes that can be experienced in these regions. In practice, both types of weathering tend to operate in tandem, although their relative importance will differ depending upon particular local circumstances, such as water availability, rock type, and temperature regimes.

Despite the desert aridity, water is sometimes available from precipitation but more commonly from dew, related to high night-time humidities; in western littoral (coastal) deserts, such as the Atacama in Chile and the Namib, fog can also be



a source of water.

For all desert fans out there, Sossusvlei in Namibia is a must-see. Simply astounding!

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GLOBAL EXPEDITION

Join the expedition in Africa

for an adventure of a lifetime...

Namaste!

Welcome to the Africa Plan of the Namaste Global Expedition, an amazing around the world adventure. Join me on the expedition for a weekend, a week, a month or longer, and it is up to us to decide what we want to do.

Click here to download the full Africa Plan PDF (to be updated monthly), which should give you some idea of the expedition plan for Africa, though this is subject to variation depending upon conditions, politics and what you would like to do. You will also

find other info documents for more detail, including how to join the expedition.

If you need anything more, please don't hesitate to contact me, by email, fax or phone. I look forward to your suggestions and ideas; and travelling with you soon...

Cheers, Chris



Africa Route Plan

Africa. This vast and diverse continent of 53 countries stretches from the Cape of Good Hope to the shores of the Mediterranean. Encompassing the world's largest desert and one of its most extensive rainforests, it is the adventurer's last frontier. Whether it's the stunning wastes of the Sahara Desert with its barren mountains, the inspiring beauty of snow-capped Kilimanjaro rising sheer from the East African plateau, the lush, mist-covered volcanoes and lakes of Kenya's Rift Valley, colourful tribal peoples, or the lure of ancient Egypt, this continent has them all. And of course, the large numbers of big game that still roam the plains of this fascinating land make Africa the king of safari...



This route plan is a guide only. The exact routing will be determined on the ground depending upon conditions, politics, and accessibility...

CLICK HERE TO
DOWNLOAD THE FULL
NAMASTE GLOBAL
EXPEDITION AFRICA
PLAN

Highlights...

Perhaps nowhere in the world will you find such a variety of cultures, vistas, contrasts and contradictions, cities ancient and modern as in Africa. From the snow-capped peaks of Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya, to the scorching heat of the desert; from the impenetrable jungles of the Congo, to the silver-sanded beaches bordering the Indian Ocean.

A key theme of the Namaste Africa Expedition will be to explore many of the continent's game reserves, whilst touring through this continent full of culture and design, of music and dancing, with a wealth of wildlife, flora and fauna. Some of the planned highlights include:

May 2005

Time to explore gorgeous Cape Town, built on the peninsula of the Cape of Good Hope with Table Mountain as a backdrop before heading north through the western Cape to the Tswalu Kalahari Reserve & rhino sanctuary...

June 2005

Exploring Namibia's incredible landscapes from the Fish River Canyon in the south to the Skeleton Coast in the north; from the Namib Desert in the west to the Caprivi Strip in the northeast. Touring the Okavango Delta, Makgadikgadi pan & diamond mines of Botswana on route to Victoria Falls...

July 2005

Touring south through eastern Botswana and southern Zimbabwe, through South Africa's legendary Kruger National Park, before exploring Mozambique's Indian Ocean coastline. Then north through Malawi, often known as 'little Switzerland' owing to its beauty, Zambia and into Tanzania via Lake Tanganyiki...

August 2005

Across the great plains of Tanzania to the Indian Ocean coast for some relaxation and diving on Zanzibar before climbing Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain at 5,895m (19,340 ft). Then a journey across the Serengeti on route to Kenya's incredible game parks, including Tsavo & the Masai Mara. And in both countries, a chance to see much of the Great Rift Valley, one of Africa's most spectacular sights...

September 2005

Through the Kabalega and Ruwenzori national parks of Uganda; and unforgettable river journeys on Africa's second biggest river in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Discovering the equatorial jungle, exotic butterflies and the pygmies of the Central African Republic before crossing to the Waza National Park of northern Cameroon...

October 2005

A visit to the capital of Burkina Faso, Ouagadougou, once the centre of one of the ancient Mossi kingdoms; and the famous red, white and black Volta rivers. Onto historic Mopti, the 'Venice of Mali' founded in the 13th century and the legendary Timbuktoo before experiencing the unique lifestyle of the nomads of Niger...

November 2005

From the mountains of Guinea to the Adrar plateau of Mauritania; the Atlantic coast of the Gambia and Senegal, before turning north through Mauritania along the western Sahara before a tour of the length of the Atlas Mountains and ancient cities of Morocco...

December 2005

Exploring Roman ruins of coastal Libya; and the scenic and pre-historic wonders of its Fezzan region. Then into Egypt to explore the the Gifl Kebir plateau, the Nile river region, Cairo and the pyramids, the Great Desert Road and of course some Red Sea diving off the coast of the Sinai Peninsular...

www.namaste.co.uk/africa.htm

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What's next...

**July
2005**

Kruger...

**Scuba-diving in
Mozambique**

Malawi Magic

**August
2005**

Zanzibar

**Serengeti of
Tanzania**

**Climbin'
Kilimanjaro**

**September
2005**

Kenya Masai

**Ethiopia &
Uganda**

**Gorillas of
the Congo**

Plus the usual Global Expedition Update...

www.namaste.co.uk/news