

DISCOVER NAMIBIA'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS



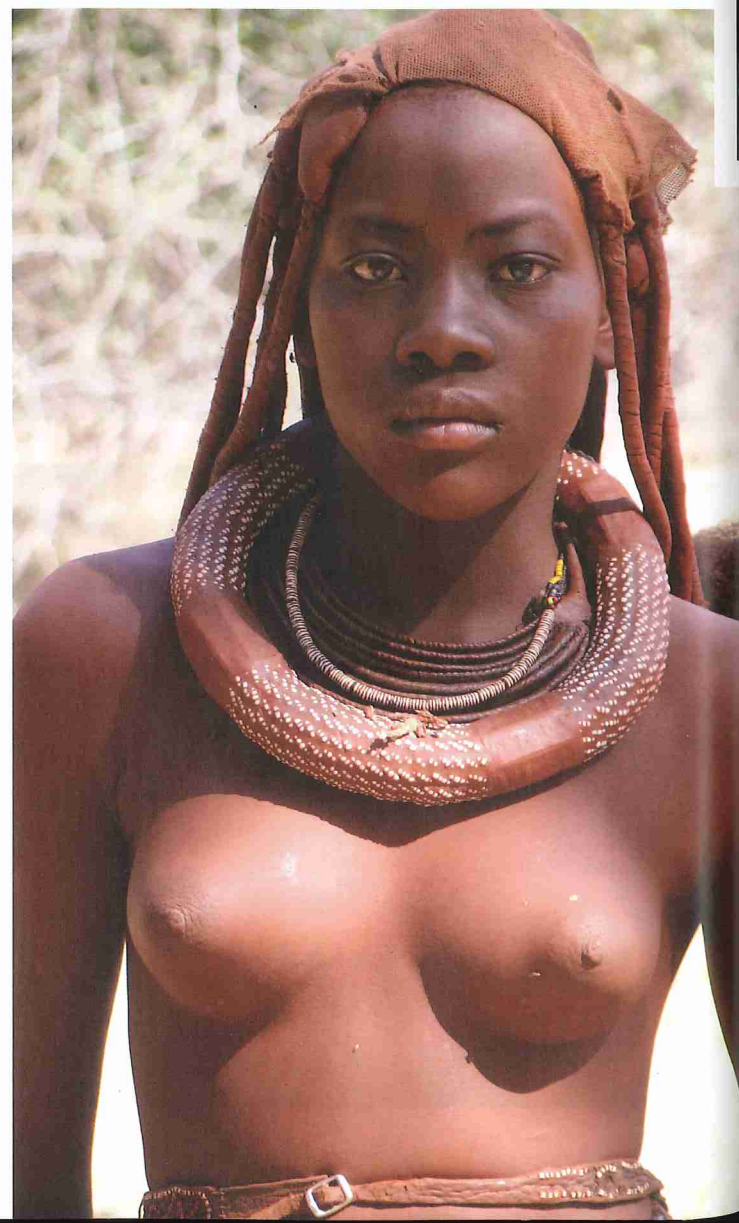
by: Claire Allison

Boasting vast deserts, free-roaming game and some of the world's last remaining wildernesses, Namibia is a utopia for photographers, where cobalt blue skies meet rich, orange sands and the stillness and peace of breath-taking landscapes cleanse the soul.

Namibia is an explorer's paradise and anyone with a taste for adventure can now take advantage of even more ways to explore the barren beauty of this country in a responsible way. The Millennium Challenge Account Namibia (MCA-N) recently funded the development of three new self-drive routes across the lesser-known areas of the country, giving travellers the opportunity to discover some of Namibia's best-kept secrets. The routes were developed to sustain and uplift local communities through tourism activity, meaning that anyone who chooses to visit these routes and supports the businesses along the way is a responsible traveller. There could not be an easier way, to make a difference to local communities when travelling through Namibia.

The largest of the three new routes, the aptly named Arid Eden Route, takes travellers on a journey from the coastal town of Swakopmund to the Angolan border in the north and includes the previously restricted western area of Etosha National Park, which can now be accessed by the public from the Galton Gate.

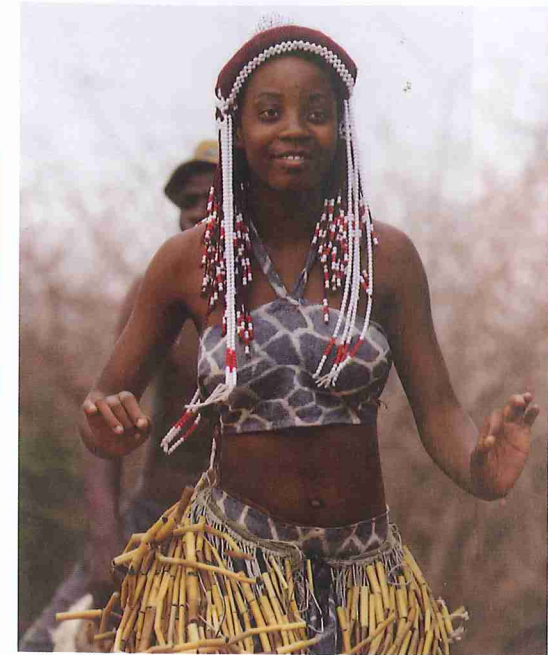
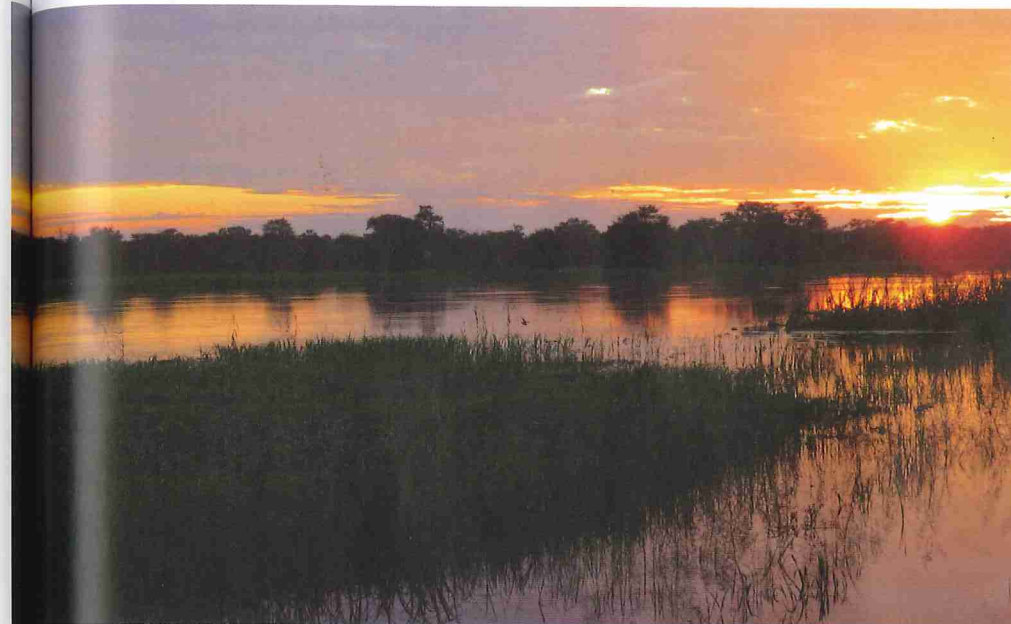
Along the route, visitors can check out well-known tourist attractions such as Spitzkoppe, Brandberg, Twyfelfontein, Epupa Falls and, of course, Etosha National Park with its majesty of free-roaming animals, extreme landscapes and breath-taking geological formations.



The second of the new routes, the Four Rivers Route, stretches from Nkurenkuru in the north-east through the lush Zambezi region to the famous Victoria Falls and features an unusual water ecosystem that gives life to rich and rare wildlife, birds and culture. This wetland paradise was named after the river systems that flow through the area - the Zambezi, Okavango, Kwando and Chobe Rivers - and attracts visitors from far and wide each year. Birders will enjoy spotting over 430 bird species, while other highlights include wildlife and numerous culturally rich villages and attractions such as the

Mbunza and Mafwe Living Museums. These facilities help to sustain the livelihoods of local people while acting as traditional schools, preserving local culture and traditions. Those looking for a little bit more adventure can enjoy activities such as fishing, birding, hiking, game viewing and canoeing.

The third and final route marries the Arid Eden Route to



the lush water ecosystem of the Four Rivers Route. Stretching from Ruacana in the north-west to Nkurenkuru in the east, The Omulunga Palm Route is named after the distinctive palms known as Omulunga in the local Ovambo language. With vibrant colours,

sights and sounds, travellers will enjoy lapping up the traditional and contemporary Ovambo culture and get a glimpse of local tribal royalty. The area's strong liberation history will fascinate history buffs, while nature lovers can enjoy the abundant wildlife and wilderness in the world-famous Etosha National Park.

With a plethora of ways to explore these new routes, Namibia's endless horizons will take you on a journey of a lifetime.

The three new self-drive travel routes were developed by the Namibia Tourism Board and Open Africa in a project funded by the Millennium Challenge Account Namibia, which aims to diversify tourism in Namibia.

For more information on these and other self-drive travel routes in Namibia visit www.mcanamibia.org www.openafrica.org or www.namibiatourism.com.na.

