



Waterberg Plateau Park

Hiking trails and wildlife wonders

Take a hike!

The best way to experience the top of the plateau is to take a game drive or preferably a hike. There is no fixed trail for the three-day guided hike. The warden or ranger will adjust the route based on recent game movements and environmental conditions. The four-day self-guided hike takes you along the rim of the plateau and into the interior. All rubbish must be removed and food must be stored safely to prevent raids from baboons and honey badgers.

- **Guided trails** – from Thursday to Sunday
What to bring along – sleeping bag, torch, sun cream, drinking water, hat, and boots
What the park offers – water for cooking and washing, wood, utensils, cold shower, toilet, cooking at the fire
Maximum of eight people allowed
- **Unguided trails** – from Wednesday to Saturday
What to bring along – sleeping bag, torch, sun cream, drinking water, hat, boots, and gas cylinders for cooking. What the park offers – shelters, water for cooking and washing, toilet
Please note that on unguided trails, hikers are not permitted to make fires at the shelters or elsewhere

along the trail. Bookings for both trails can be made through the Namibia Wildlife Resorts (www.nwr.com.na).

Wildlife wonders

While hiking or taking the game drive on the plateau you may encounter the following wildlife wonders.

The white rhino, identified not by its colour, but by its wide upper lip, is the second-largest mammal and the largest grazing animal in the world. Grass forms 99% of its diet, and considering males can achieve weights of over two tonnes, they must consume a lot of grass! Unlike Waterberg's resident black rhino, which are irritable and prone to charging if provoked or startled, white rhinos are more even-tempered (although cows with calves are less predictable). They are active during day and night. You are most likely to encounter them at waterholes.

Immediately recognisable by their magnificent sweeping horns and startlingly black-and-white colouration, sable antelope are both big and aggressive and will drive other animals (even sometimes buffalo) away from waterholes. Sable can be encountered singly or in herds of 20 or so animals. They prefer to drink daily.



Eland are Africa's largest species of antelope. While cow-like in appearance, do not be deceived – eland are extremely agile and can jump considerable heights. They have been known to clear three-metre game fences! Large herds congregate at the waterholes. The park was initially proclaimed specifically to protect them.

Roan are placed second in the African large-antelope stakes. Measuring 1.4 metres at the shoulder, adults weigh roughly 250 kilograms and have a dun colouration. They have smaller, stubbier horns than sable. When males fight they frequently drop to their knees and use their horns to 'neck wrestle' their opponents into submission.

Foot and mouth and bovine tuberculosis are diseases that plague Cape buffalo. The population on the plateau is both foot and mouth and TB-free. Waterberg Plateau Park is one of just a few places in Namibia where disease-free buffalo occur. These heavily built animals are generally gregarious, although some bulls are solitary. As a member of The Big Five they are a species traditionally considered most dangerous by hunters in Africa but if unmolested they are placid.

Kudu are widespread in Namibia and occur in large numbers on the plateau, favouring forest or dense bush cover. Alarm calls are loud barks and often indicate the presence of a leopard or cheetah. Other species on the plateau include gemsbok, red hartebeest, steenbok, common duiker and warthog. Agile klipspringer and baboon inhabit cliffs and rocks.

The best places for wildlife viewing are at the hides overlooking waterholes. Raptors favour the cliffs.

Wildlife wisdom

Every large wild animal needs to be treated with respect, caution and common sense, particularly if you are on foot. Like people, even normally inoffensive animals can have 'bad days' and need their space! The only predator potentially dangerous to man is the leopard, but these animals are secretive and rarely seen. Black rhino are extremely short-sighted and when startled will become aggressive. Lone buffalo are potentially dangerous.

The Waterberg is home to more than 45 snake species. Most, including the extremely large pythons, are harmless and mainly nocturnal. Some species, however, such as the black mamba (so named because the inside of its mouth is black, not because of its skin colour, which is faded olive), the striped zebra snake (which is capable of spitting its venom), the puff adder (which inflates and hisses like a kettle as a warning sign) and the Egyptian cobra are poisonous. These snakes are sometimes active by day. When hiking, wear boots and watch where you put your feet. At night carry a torch. Snakes are as anxious to avoid humans, as most humans are anxious to avoid snakes! If you meet a snake, stay still or move away. It will do the same.

www.met.gov.na



Environmental Care Code

Please adhere to the following:

- Do not feed the animals.
- Keep your belongings in a safe place away from inquisitive baboons.
- Do not litter.
- Please follow the rules and regulations listed on your park permit.

Have fun!

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