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RAW
**REAL AFRICAN
WILDERNESS**

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026

PERSONALISED, UNIQUE SAFARI ADVENTURES ACROSS SOUTHERN AFRICA

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Welcome to the RAW Newsletter – JUNE 2026

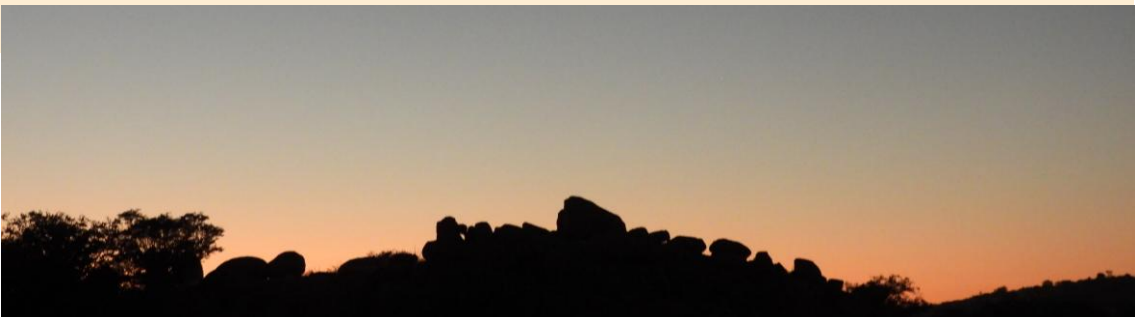
Having recently completed a safari in Namibia, the RAW team can confidently say that the country's landscapes are more spectacular than ever. Recent rains have refreshed the scenery, revitalised the vegetation, and transformed the countryside into a vibrant wilderness. Wildlife populations are also thriving, with many young animals spotted among springbok, impala, zebra, and other herbivores. These abundant wildlife sightings promise exceptional photographic opportunities for safari guests in the coming years.

Tourist numbers are currently lower than last year. This is thought to be due to a combination of factors, including ongoing conflict in the Middle East, rising fuel costs, and, according to local tour operators, the FIFA World Cup being held in the United States. While fewer visitors present challenges for the tourism industry, they also create a more enjoyable experience for travellers, with less crowded wildlife sightings and greater availability at restaurants, lodges, and other accommodation.

There are several other positives for visitors in 2026. The visa process on arrival has improved, although there is still room for further refinement. Namibia also continues to offer excellent value as a safari destination, despite a gradual increase in travel costs. Much of this increase is driven by food prices, as many products are imported.

Another welcome development is the significant investment in road infrastructure within Etosha National Park. Severe storm damage over the past two years left sections of the park's road network in urgent need of repair. These upgrades are now well underway and will greatly enhance the overall visitor experience while improving access to some of the park's best wildlife-viewing areas.

RAW offers both a dedicated Namibia safari experience and a Namibia–Botswana combination safari, allowing guests to explore two of Africa's premier wildlife destinations in one unforgettable journey. Visit our website to learn more.



Namibia's national parks just got a major upgrade

If you have ever driven through Namibia, you will know the rhythm. Long stretches of open road, dust in the rearview mirror, and then suddenly, a national park gate that marks the start of something unforgettable.

Now, that first moment just got a lot smoother. According to travelnews.africa, Namibia has wrapped up a wide-ranging N\$166 million upgrade across three of its most important national parks: Etosha, Hardap, and Bwabwata. On paper, it sounds like infrastructure work. In reality, it reshapes how travellers experience one of Africa's most unique safari destinations.

For most travellers, Etosha National Park is Namibia's headline act. It is where wildlife sightings feel cinematic and self-drive safaris turn into stories you tell for years. The latest upgrades focus exactly where visitors feel it most. Entrance gates at Ombika, Namutoni, and King Nehale have been improved to ease congestion, especially during peak dry season months from June to October.

Inside the park, the changes continue. New and upgraded ablution facilities, refreshed picnic areas, clearer signage, and expanded parking all make a difference on long driving days. Viewing platforms at rest stops add small but meaningful moments, giving travellers better vantage points without needing to leave their vehicles for long.

For regular Namibia visitors, this is the kind of upgrade you notice immediately. For first-timers, it simply feels like a seamless safari.



An ancient people faced with modern realities

The San, often called Bushmen, are among the world's oldest continuous hunter-gatherer communities, with ancestry stretching back tens of thousands of years. Traditionally living in small, mobile bands across present-day Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Angola, they developed exceptional skills in tracking, foraging, and adapting to arid environments. Their egalitarian societies emphasized sharing, cooperation, and communal decision-making. Spiritual life centered on healing rituals, trance dances, and beliefs connecting people with animals and ancestors. Rock art across southern Africa preserves stories, myths, and hunting scenes that reflect their cultural heritage. Colonialism, land dispossession, and modern borders disrupted traditional lifestyles, forcing many San into marginal lands or wage labor. Despite these challenges, they continue to preserve their languages, customs, and identity.

San languages, including !Kung, Naro, and Nama, are known for their distinctive click consonants and rich linguistic diversity. These languages encode detailed ecological knowledge essential for survival and were traditionally passed down through storytelling, songs, and oral history. However, education policies, economic pressures, and social change have contributed to language loss. In response, San-led language revitalization programs, bilingual education, and ethical research partnerships aim to preserve these languages while ensuring community ownership of cultural knowledge.



Today, the San balance cultural preservation with modern economic realities. Many rely on tourism, crafts, seasonal work, and community enterprises while advocating for secure land rights and political recognition. Although some legal victories have restored limited land access, implementation remains uneven. San organizations continue to campaign for the protection of sacred sites, greater representation, and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in conservation and development. Their resilience is reflected in ongoing efforts to safeguard their language, culture, and ancestral lands for future generations. RAW offers its Namibian guests an opportunity to experience the San people's culture.

Safari News Headlines

- **Namibia is investing heavily in national parks.** A recent N\$166 million upgrade to Etosha National Park, Bwabwata National Park, and Hardap National Park has improved roads, visitor facilities, and conservation infrastructure, making these parks more accessible while supporting wildlife management.
- **The dry season is beginning, and shoulder-season travel is gaining popularity.** Travel experts are highlighting May and early winter as ideal safari periods, with fewer vehicles, lower accommodation pressure, and excellent wildlife viewing as animals congregate around waterholes—particularly in Etosha.
- **Remote, conservation-focused safaris are increasingly in demand.** Rather than simply offering "Big Five" experiences, private reserves are promoting low-impact tourism, wilderness experiences, walking safaris, stargazing, and conservation. Namibia's Sandfontein Nature Reserve has attracted attention as an example of this trend.
- **Luxury travel continues to evolve.** Operators report growing demand for longer stays, private-use villas, family travel, cultural experiences with local communities, and itineraries combining destinations such as Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, and Victoria Falls rather than single-country safaris. Sustainability is becoming a key selling point.
- **Access to remote wilderness is improving.** New airstrips and scheduled flight circuits are making isolated regions such as Namibia's Skeleton Coast and Hoanib Valley easier to include in high-end itineraries.

