

The risks of NOT KNOWING.. Travelling in Kaokoland/Damaraland.

For members of [www.tracks4africa.com](http://www.tracks4africa.com)

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1. NOT KNOWING and this is Malaria area and say no more. There are only three rules on malaria:
  - Don't let the little beasts bite you
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2. NOT KNOWING that daytime temperatures in these parts of Namibia can exceed 60 degrees Celsius.. and something goes wrong with the car or not enough drinking water. To carry enough water is far more important than to carry enough fuel.
3. NOT KNOWING the roads/tracks and getting lost, running out of fuel and death by starvation (May 2003).
4. NOT KNOWING that driving on soft sand (riverbeds) requires lowering tyre pressure to 50% normal pressure... and when the day goes hotter driving goes slower.
5. NOT KNOWING that driving terrain with sharp rocks and stones requires increasing tyre pressure to 150% normal pressure.. and it is always better to drive slowly (dead slow) over these rocks instead of trying to avoid them.. because damage happens on the sidewalls (8mm) and not on the sole (40mm) of a tyre.

**So.. what is the optimum tyre pressure then ?.. Go and find out yourself.. but DO NOT go without a good MANUAL AIR PUMP !!!!!!! .. and DO NOT go without the tools and the know-how to fix a tyre rupture on the spot... and DO NOT go with at least two spare wheels.**
6. NOT KNOWING.. and travelling this area with TRAILER.. it will end up as yet another trailer wreck at Fort Sesfontein because you do NOT travel Kaokoland/Damaraland with trailer.. not even the latest expensive 'off road' designs.
7. NOT KNOWING why SMOKING near the Welwitschia plants is a NO-NO.. because a cigarette but thrown on or near these plants will burn down 10,000 years of growth.
8. NOT KNOWING why TOUCHING the Welwitschia plants is a NO-NO.. because there is a fungus disease attacking these plants and by touching you will spread it.
9. NOT KNOWING.. and badly corrugated roads and let's drive on the skirt of the roads.. making it wider and ever so wider == VEHICLE TRACK POLLUTION. The desert roads of Namibia are the worst case scenario for this form of pollution. Don't make it worse.
10. NOT KNOWING the desert elephant (riverbeds) is NOT the same as their easy going, used to cars and people cousins in Chobe and Kruger. These guys have killed tourists and they will do so again.

The desert elephant of Namibia has a comfort zone of 500m (some even more) and the dry riverbeds belong to them and they don't like to be disturbed not by rhino and least of all by the smell of diesel fume. Drive slowly and be alert. They can hear you coming but you must see them first and well in advance. An elephant encounter requires patience more than skill because these lords of the desert may take a long time to make way and often they don't. Elephants have killed people in the riverbeds of Namibia and they will kill more and experience is no guarantee for safety. There is legislation on the table to prohibit driving in the dry riverbeds.

and when shit strikes.. DO NOT get out the car.. rather take care of the things inside that can break when the car goes upside down.. the digital, the music CD's, the laptop, the coolbox, the beers !!!.. and DO NOT travel here without 5lt of engine oil.

11. NOT KNOWING and nice camping at Ovivero Dam (S17.59499 E12.89767).. drinking place for Himba cattle.. BUT here Himba cattle have adopted to feed as far as 35km away from water. Returning to drink every second day.. sometimes 3 days. This return to water happens at night fall, sometimes much later.. the last 5km and the smell of water it becomes a stampede.. all over and through unsuspected campers. R 40,000 damage to brand new 4WD (June 2003) and very (VERY) lucky travellers.
12. NOT KNOWING.. and nice camping on the soft riverbed sand.. It seldom or never rains here.. BUT thunder showers 120km inland.. and sometimes it is a wall of water.. Washing away the car, the trailer, the tents and the children. (Check the flow of these rivers on the T4A map and check for rain clouds on the distant horizon in these catchments areas)
13. NOT KNOWING.. and nice camping at the only shade tree and water at "Gai-As Fountains" S20.78188 E14.07544 and S20.76742 E14.01982 This is the only drinking place in many kilometres for mother Rhino and baby. If you camp here.. you kill the Rhino calves.. end of story.
14. NOT KNOWING .. and camping near or on Holy places of the Himba people. See Mt Ondua at S17.52381 E12.46149 and Mt Otjise at S18.76542 E13.74495 .. and making a nuisance of yourself.
15. NOT KNOWING .. and driving through villages and seeing children and throwing sweets at the children.. and one generation later they tell the children to throw stones at the cars.
16. NOT KNOWING .. and driving through long grass and grass collection underneath the car and your vehicle will burn out. Where the grass is long stop to check for grass collection near or on the exhaust. This risk is high when you drive a petrol driven car because exhaust temperatures are much higher.
17. NOT KNOWING .. and driving off-track.. Koakoland/Damaraland is the worst case example of 'VEHICLE TRACK POLLUTION'. Making new vehicle tracks that will be visible for the next 600 years (because that is the time required for the desert winds to wipe out these tracks). PLEASE STAY ON THE BEATEN TRACKS/ROADS.
18. NOT KNOWING.. and let's cool down a bit in the Cunene river.. and crocodile will do what he does best (Nov 2002 at White Sands S17.31068 E13.79421)
19. NOT KNOWING.. and driving normal speeds on the main tar roads of Northern Namibia, which are NOT fenced and donkeys, goats and cattle everywhere on these roads. Cattle strikes is a common phenomena. If it happens and your car can still go.. then go.. because the rules of Africa are different.. Here you will pay for losses of the farmer.. and you will pay on the spot.
20. NOT KNOWING.. and let's do some shopping at the main centre Oshakati at S17.78545 E15.70738 . Petty crime or 'botstotsos' as the locals call them .. have perfected the art of stealing. These guys are not criminals.. they are magicians.. and true masters of the art.. and they have written contracts with your insurance broker. They will not break into your un-attended car.. they take your things while you sit in the car watching them doing it.

PROBLEM = NOT KNOWING

SOLUTION = INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION

21. Obtain and study as much as possible INFORMATION on this area relating to issues of SAFETY, LEGISLATION, COMMERCIAL TOURISM and ENVIRONMENT.
  22. Stop at the local Police station or shop and enquire about safety and other issues. Get your self INFORMED !
  23. A SATELLITE PHONE IS A MUST.. especially travelling here alone.
  24. You may want to, use sat-phone and email your daily position coordinate to <mailto:newdata@tracks4africa.co.za>
  25. Please arrange for vehicle recovery with:
    - Braam Ellis (T4A member) Northern Auto Repairs, Oshakati S17.77107 E15.69142). <mailto:nar@iway.na>
- Or
- Lars Falkenberg. Kamanjab S19.62330 E14.84302, Tel (067) 330104 or (081) 283 2420 (email unknown)
26. Get the latest T4A Map Pro Namibia (GPS map for Garmin receivers or PDA's)
  27. Get the T4A paper maps.. Enquire at [info@tracks4africa.co.za](mailto:info@tracks4africa.co.za)
- Take note these are DRAFT maps and for use by this T4A community

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