



**PRESS RELEASE**

**14 MARCH 2007**

## **Cape to Namibia Route** A self-drive feast for the soul

THEY say life is a journey, so one should make the trip worthwhile. And what makes the trip really extraordinary is when the journey becomes the destination. This is what will happen when self-drive tourists decide to explore the new Cape to Namibia Route, linking Cape Town in South Africa with Windhoek in Namibia and everything in-between – from nature reserves on the Cape West Coast, to the wild flowers of Namaqualand in the Northern Cape and all that Southern Namibia enchants visitors with.

The Cape to Namibia Route, internationally launched at this year's International Tourism Exchange (ITB) trade show in Berlin, Germany (7 – 11 March 2007), is an ambitious cross border initiative promoting the unique tourism experiences of the three regions. It follows the development of a strategic alliance between the Namibia Tourism Board, Cape Town Routes Unlimited and the Northern Cape Tourism Authority.

Following extensive research, the alliance, a first for regional African tourism development, has crafted a brand identity and a wide-ranging marketing strategy to promote the new route. The aim is to stimulate further growth in the estimated 250 000 European and South African visitors that travel between Namibia and the Northern and Western Cape regions of South Africa by road.

The three tourism organisations believe that the initiative will have significant spin-off benefits for international tourists that combine South Africa and Namibia on their itineraries. The Cape to Namibia Route is expected to entice more international tourists to visit these regions.

The route addresses seasonality imbalances and presents opportunities for joint marketing initiatives, therefore encouraging and facilitating an easy and pleasant traveling experience.

The Cape to Namibia Route covers highlights throughout the Western and Northern Cape, and the full variety of desert, adventure, cultural, historical and eco-tourism initiatives that serve as the backbone of Namibia's tourism offering.

Namibia's strong and decades-long association with Germany, and the fact that the popular Western Cape was visited by more than two thirds of the German tourists that came to South Africa in 2005 (SA Tourism), made the Cape to Namibia Route an ideal tourism experience to launch at ITB in Berlin. The aim of the launch was to obtain tour operator support for the route, and to encourage tour operators to build self-drive programmes into their product brochures.

A brand new full-colour brochure, highlighting the splendour, diversity and experiences found only in regional Southern Africa, was distributed at the trade show. A dedicated website for the route, [www.capenamibia.com](http://www.capenamibia.com), also went live last week.

The Cape to Namibia Route is further expected to open doors and create tourism-related opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises and previously marginalised communities in areas along the route.

The Namibia Tourism Board, Cape Town Routes Unlimited and the Northern Cape Tourism Authority are actively encouraging tourism providers and stakeholders to further develop their product offering to strengthen the overall experience. They believe that this in turn will lead to job creation opportunities, and a further boost to the overall value of tourism to the countries' economies.

An audit of attractions was undertaken to ensure that all regions along the route are in a position to benefit from the expected appeal and usage, and contribute product and sightseeing options along the route.

Maureen Posthuma, General Manager of the Namibia Tourism Board in Frankfurt said, 'This initiative is aimed at addressing the estimated 150 000 German and European travellers that visit Namibia, and the sizeable international market that combines regional Southern African destinations in their holidays. The opportunities for our local tour operator partners to package self drive holidays within Namibia will become easier following the addition of a new range of motivators when driving through the Southern region of the country. We are confident that the variety of experiences will open up greater exploration of this beautiful and diverse region, and benefit many smaller emerging entrepreneurial tourism providers.

She added, 'The cross border, and multi-stakeholder research and consultation process has ensured that the development is an all inclusive project, involving border control, accommodation providers and product suppliers within Namibia and South Africa, and when implemented, is sure to be a positive addition to the greater tourism market to Namibia'.

David Frandsen, Executive Manager: Integrated Marketing Services of Cape Town Routes Unlimited said, 'The Cape to Namibia Route is important as it opens up the tourism potential of the West Coast of South Africa as a unique and desirable tourism destination for both domestic and international markets. This area of the Western Cape is the least developed from a tourism perspective, yet the area has a vast range of exceptional and exciting tourism attractions that deserve greater recognition. These include the Cederberg Mountains and Wilderness areas, the wine producing region around Klawer and Clanwilliam, the historic village of Wupperthal, Langebaan Lagoon, West Coast National Park, the magnificent San Rock Art heritage in the area and almost year-round sunshine on white sandy beaches stretching from Cape Town to Namaqualand. Greater awareness will encourage more people to visit and lead to an increase in tourism and economic activity, establishment of new tourism enterprises, and greater success for existing tourism enterprises.

Sharron Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Cape Tourism Authority commented, 'The N7 along the West Coast of South Africa up to Namibia is one of the hidden gems of South Africa. The product offering along this route includes authentic and diverse fauna and flora that are found only in this region. As you travel this route you will experience different landscapes, from mountainous, luscious green to desert and semi desert. As you meander off the main route the experience embraces safari, unique cultures, cuisine, and adventure from mountain biking, hiking, extreme 4 x 4, horse riding, canoeing and abseiling.'

She added, "The Cape to Namibia Route is more than just a route. It is journey of discovery and unique experiences."

Cape Town Routes Unlimited will be distributing copies of the new Cape to Namibia Route brochure to tourism offices in Cape Town and the Western Cape.



***Issued jointly by the Namibia Tourism Board, Cape Town Routes Unlimited and the Northern Cape Tourism Authority***

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