



Oranjemund

Secret town to tourist magnet



OMDIS
Tourism

Welcome to the town built on diamonds

For over 80 years, Oranjemund was closed to tourism. The town existed to mine diamonds in the world's oldest desert.

To attract and retain employees, a raft of leisure activities were developed together with a private hospital and school. An 18-hole golf course, cricket, soccer, rugby and hockey pitches were created, a 4x4 club, a riding club and shooting range were introduced.

In 2017 Oranjemund opened to the world as the town's economy began to be diversified. Agriculture and property are growing sources of employment and revenue, while all contribute to the developing stream of tourism.

Road-trippers from Namibia and South Africa can cross the rugged beauty of the Richersveld, or take the coastal flower route from Port Nolloth, through to a town unlike no other. Oranjemund is a green oasis between the Atlantic and Namib Desert, next to the mouth of the Orange River.

A town where oryx walk the streets, where massive flocks of waterbirds make their home on the river mouth, where buildings are turned into works of art, where statues of people, animals and birds, made from scrap metal and driftwood, are larger than life. Where prime concessions are ready to be claimed.

Where you will be welcome.



Wilderness & Wildlife

Surrounding Oranjemund, towering sand-dunes are sculpted by the wind, their shapes and contours ever-changing. Abandoned mining settlements from a century ago dot the Atlantic coastline.

After a moisture-rich mist drifts in from the Atlantic Ocean, a stunning, usually short-lived carpet of flowers can appear over the desert floor. Rare heavy rains cause a breathtaking array that often lasts for months. Moisture also sustains wildlife like oryx, springbok, brown hyenas, and black-backed jackals. A herd of oryx have made their home in our town, and carnivores search for food at night.

The mouth of the Orange River is populated by 20 000 waterbirds from more than 50 species. The river mouth is a RAMSAR site, signalling a wetland of international importance. These sites are chosen for meeting criteria like supporting biodiversity, having unique wetland features, and providing ecosystem services like flood control and water supply,

There are more places for birding, like the salt pans that attract flocks of flamingos.

You feel you are entering another world.



Art and Culture in the Desert

The town is a magnet for artists and sculptors, with 25 pieces of public art in town, celebrating the wildlife, diamond heritage and spirit of our desert community. Some art covers buildings, all are big and bold. Our art tour map is a walking guide, feeding mind and body.

Creativity is nurtured with special desert retreats for artists. Exhibitions are held here in Oranjemund and Windhoek. We have an Arts Centre, where artists guide young and old to realise their imagination, inspired by this unique location. Local crafts made from wood, leather, scrap from the mines and driftwood are on sale.

New creative experiences are being curated. Soon, photographers can apply to go on a unique journey through the Spergebiet, from Oranjemund where oryx roam, to the port of Luderitz with its desolate bays and Kolmanskop, the globally known ghost mining town, with its German Art Nouveau architecture being reclaimed daily by the wind-blown desert.

These journeys will embrace long deserted mining encampments, ships tossed ashore in turbulent Atlantic storms, isolated bays and explorations into the world's oldest desert.





Explore the history of a diamond town

What really goes on in a closed mining town? A now open Oranjemund allows visitors a peak behind the curtain of the best-kept secret in Namibia.

Located in the first mine manager's house, the modern Jasper House Museum houses over 1000 carefully curated artefacts. The museum traces the history of diamond mining in the Sperrgebiet, more specifically the mining of beach and river deposits close to Oranjemund since 1936. Often described as the world's Greatest Diamond Placer, these alluvial and fluvial deposits have shaped Namibia's economy over many decades.

The museum tells the story of the tools used during mining, rare geological specimens, fauna and flora of this biodiverse region, archaeological and palaeontological finds, art, and a look into everyday life in a town closed to outsiders for over 80 years. It also gives a comprehensive account of the migrant labour system prevalent in the early times and how it shaped the town's development over the years.

The Jasper House Museum now includes artefacts from the Bom Jesus, the oldest shipwreck ever discovered off the sub-Saharan African coast. Almost 500 years ago, the Bom Jesus set sail from Lisbon on a voyage to India and the lucrative spice trade.

The journey ended abruptly in an Atlantic storm off Oranjemund's coast. In 2008 the remains of the ship and cargo were accidentally discovered in the search for diamonds where the ocean meets the desert. 17 tons of copper ingots, 105 elephant tusks and over 2000 gold coins have been recovered, together with cannons, firearms, swords and three of the oldest known mariner's astrolabes. The display gives you a brief glimpse into history and raises more mysteries to be uncovered.

Travel back in time with us to see a scale model of the Bom Jesus, some of the recovered contents, murals that show the route, the storm and the discovery, and a larger than life wooden artwork of the gold coins protruding from the hull of the ship.

We will soon be building a dedicated Bom Jesus Museum in Oranjemund to celebrate and conserve this historically significant find.



Adventure sports on land and water

As concession operators are selected, adventure activities will multiply. Would you like a roller-coaster ride on 4-wheels? Try our dune experience with our 4x4 pro team as they zig-zag up, watch a sunset and slalom down, riding giant dunes on the edge of town.

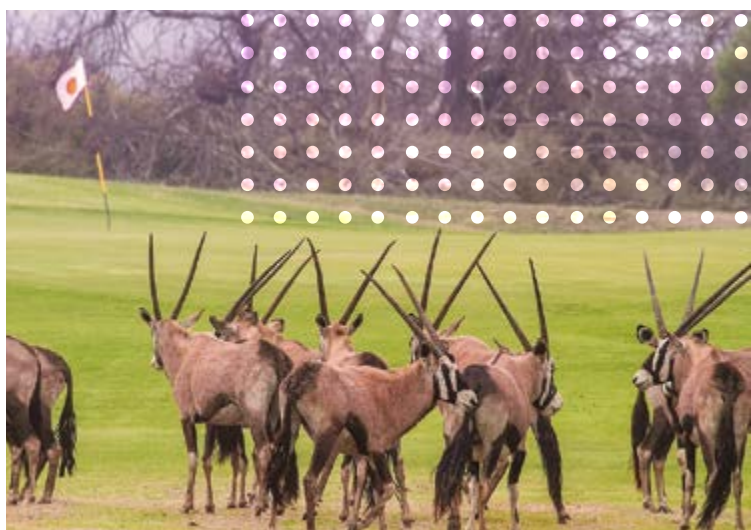
Try out a quad bike and test your skills at dune racing. In the old days, local youth would “borrow” trays from home to sandboard for a few hours. Today, there’s more sophisticated equipment, and the high speed fun can be enjoyed by all ages.

Share our 18-hole golf course with Oryx, ostriches, jackals and springbok, all regular visitors to this green oasis in the desert.

There are plans to introduce horse-riding along the dunes and Orange River Mouth. For more accomplished riders we are investigating long trails through the unexplored Sperrgebiet.

Roadtrippers add in kayaking and hiking along the Orange River, through the spectacular rock formations of the Richtersveld, enjoying great food under the stars.

Oranjemund is a town of art and adventure.



Discovering Oranjemund with annual events

The annual Diamond Festival has grown to embrace live music, fashion shows, a cook-out contest and Gala Dinner. Held at the end of October/early November, the Festival attracts guests and stall-holders from across the country. It is a celebration of the past and gateway to the future.

Annual sporting events include the half-marathon, five and ten kilometres runs, with plans to include a full marathon that would be recognised as a qualifying opportunity for the Comrades and Two Oceans marathons.

On the motorsport calendar is the Oranjemund Desert 300, a challenging off-road race across sand and gravel. The Oranjemund Off-Road Club also organises regular events like Family Fun Days and Dunerides.

The Oranjemund Golf Club has a number of local and regional tournaments each year. It's a challenging course with variable wind and obstinate oryx.

More events are being planned. The new 100 km road hugging the river between Rosh Pinah and Oranjemund is ideal for a cycle sprint or ultra-marathon. Our soccer, cricket, rugby and hockey fields await their own tournaments. There'll be something happening in Oranjemund every month.



Take the Diamond Road-Trip

Once the road between Oranjemund and Rosh Pinah was known as the tyre-shredder. Rough and rock-lined, taken at slow speeds. Now the new, smooth road curves like a racetrack, following the Orange River from its mouth. Then Aus, home of the wild horses where you can stay perched up the mountains in rock chalets.

The Aus road leads to Lüderitz, the once bustling port for diamond hunters, arriving on steamships from Hamburg. At the height of the diamond boom, they built German art nouveau grand homes and a Victorian Gothic church in this remote fishing community. A few kilometres inland you'll find Kolmanskop. Founded in 1908, it was once a wealthy settlement featuring a casino, a music-hall with perfect acoustics and an ice-making factory. Now one of the world's most famous ghost towns, as sand regains its rightful kingdom.

Then back to Aus and onwards to the walking dunes of Sossusvlei. Or enjoy the sinuous curves following the Orange River back to the mouth.

Oranjemund is more than a town. It's a gateway to adventure.



Farm to Fork by the Orange River

Hohenfels on the banks of the Orange River, a 20 minute drive from Oranjemund, was once a picnic playground for local mine officials and their families. Today this forest is a blank canvas for a sensitive development of family-friendly chalets.

It is next to 34 hectares of prime agricultural land, an opportunity for a farm-to-fork restaurant, with willing take-up of fresh produce that is locally sourced. Agriculture here and on the other side of the river once sustained Oranjemund. It can again.

There is room for a multi-use centre here, a perfect venue for weddings, parties, large meetings and conferences.

On the opposite side of the road is the old police station, where the South-West German constabulary on camels raced into the desert dunes, apprehending illegal miners.

There is a treasure-trove of old stories here, awaiting the arrival of a new narrative.



Concessions and Marketing Oranjemund

OMDis been awarded the Orange River concession in the Tsau //Khaeb National Park. The concession consists of two areas, the Guided Adventure Zone and River Adventure Zone. The Guided Adventure Zone is an area within arid Succulent Karoo shrub-veld in the west to sand dunes in the east and south.

The River Adventure Zone covers the abandoned agricultural land and narrow belt of riverine forest, where the Hohenfels development awaits.

This once secret town is now gaining international exposure. The photogenic allure, hidden history, the Sperrgebiet, art and adventure have given rise to several documentaries. “Diamonds in the Sand”, the “Oranjemund ChangeMaker” series, a Wanderlust three episode series highlighting Oranjemund as part of the Windhoek to Fish River route, and a dedicated episode on the Discovery channel all contribute to awareness and interest.

The OMDis team is your route into these tourism opportunities.

Call us and let’s make Oranjemund a new tourism hub of Southern Africa.





OMDiS

Building Futures

19-7th Avenue, Oranjemund, Namibia | PO Box 903

+264 63 234 344

info@omdis.co | www.omdis.co