Namibia

Location

Namibia, formally The Republic of Namibia, is located in the southwestern region of the continent of Africa. Its western boarder is Atlantic coastline. Namibia borders The Republic of South Africa to the south, Botswana to the east, and Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to the north.

Geography

The Namibian landscape is mainly made up of central highlands. Of these the highest point is the Brandberg at 2,606 meters above sea level. There is a central plateau running from north to south. This is bordered by the Namib Desert’s coastal plains to the west, the Orange River at its south, and the Kalahari Desert to its east.

Climate

The climate of Namibia ranges from desert to subtropical. Generally it is hot and dry. There is not much precipitation and it cannot be counted on as it comes at somewhat random times during the year. This low precipitation is somewhat accounted for by a cold, current that flows northward known as the Benguela Current. The temperature can range from well above 100 degrees Fahrenheit to below freezing in some places.

History

The lands that are today known as Namibia have been inhabited by Bushmen, Damara, and Namaqua people since very early times. Since right around the fourteenth century, the lands have also been inhabited by immigrating Bantu who immigrated during the Bantu Expansion. When the land came under German control in the 1800’s,
it was first thoroughly explored by Europeans. It was then called South-West Africa.

South Africa governed Namibia for the duration of World War I. It was administered as the League of Nations mandate territory of South Africa’s until after World War II. That is when South Africa annexed the territory, though it still lacked international recognition.

In 1966 the South-West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), a Marxist guerrilla group waged a war of independence. It was not until 1988 that South Africa agreed to stop administering Namibia, because of the United Nations’ peace plan for the region. Namibia became independent in 1990, and Walvis Bay (a former British colony) was annexed to Namibia in 1994.

**Important Dates**

Namibia’s only national holiday is Independence Day; the 21st of March, which was initiated in originally in 1990.

**Population**

The estimated population of Namibia is 2,030,692 people. Thirty eight of those people are between 0 and 14 years of age. Fifty eight percent are between 15 and 64 years of age, and only 3.6% of them are over 65 years old. The median age is 19.79 years (19.63 for males, 19.94 for females). The population growth is .73%. There are 48.98 deaths per 1000 live births. The life expectancy at birth for the whole population is 43.93 years. The HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate is 21.3%. Blacks make up 87.5% of the population, whites 6%, and mixed 6.5%. About 50% of the population are in the Ovambo tribe and 9% are in the Kavangos tribe. Other ethnic groups include but are not limited to the Herero (7%), Damara (7%), Nama (5%), Caprivian (4%), Bushmen (3%), Baster (2%), and Tswana (.5%).
Currency

The primary currency is the Namibian dollar abbreviated NAD, but also used often is the South African rand abbreviated ZAR.

Education

Roughly 84% of the population that is 15 years of age and older can read and write. More specifically 84.4% of the males can read and write and 83.7% of the females can read and write. Schools of higher learning exist in Namibia, as well as grade schools and the like. However, the school system is just starting to grow and mature since Namibia only recently gained its independence. It was a colony until 16 years ago so it has a lot of growing and learning to do. There are a few organizations of teachers from all over the world and also from Namibia that are organized to tackle this issue of providing education to the people of Namibia so that one day they can collectively be well educated.

Language

In Namibia, 7% of the people speak English which is the official language. Most of the people speak Afrikaans including 60% of the white people. While 32% of the people speak German. This is because of the influence of Germany in early Namibian history. Some indigenous languages that are spoken include Oshivambo, Herero, and Nama.

Religion

Between 80% and 90% of the people of Namibia are Christian. At least 50% of these people practice the Lutheran faith. Ten to twenty percent of the people practice some indigenous belief system.
Agriculture

Arable land makes up .99% of the land of Namibia. There are no significant permanent crops. There are 70 square kilometers of irrigated land. A major natural hazard that regards agriculture is the danger of prolonged periods of drought. Some current issues with the environment in Namibia include that hardly any to no natural fresh water sources, desertification, poaching of animals, and land degradation has led to few conservation areas. Some of the agricultural products of Namibia include millet, sorghum, peanuts, livestock, and fish.

Trade

The Namibian GDP is $5.076 billion. Namibia exports 55million kWh of electricity every year. They import 1,065 billion kWh form South Africa though. They produce no oil and they use 16,000 bbl’s per day. Namibia exports mainly to Europe (79%) and secondly to the USA (4%). They export $2.04 billion annually, while they import $2.35 billion. Their imports come form the USA mainly (50%) and secondly from Europe (31%). In 2005, 6.35 Namibian dollars would buy one U.S. dollar.

Food

Food in Namibia reflects its German ancestry to a great extent. It also heavily reflects what is available which is game. There are many variations of game food; specifically biltong (air-dried meat) and rauchfleisch (smoked meat) can be made from almost any animal hunted and killed.

Landmarks

The coastline of Namibia is very beautiful and with mountains in the background, it is a must see. The mountain ranges just inland are magnificent and interesting. The
most popular landmark in Namibia are the grasslands which are home to many wild
animals and many safari tours. Elephants, lions, gazelle, and many more amazing
animals call Namibia home and are worth looking for.

Tim Ruffing