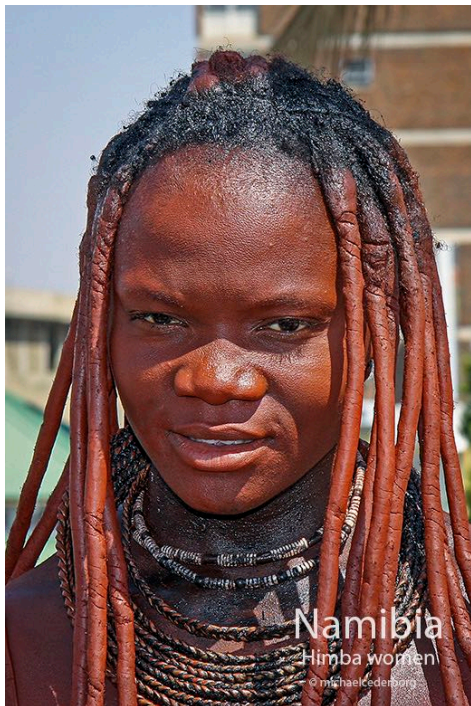


Southern Africa



Namibia, Botswana & South Africa → 2011



Windhoek & Okapuka

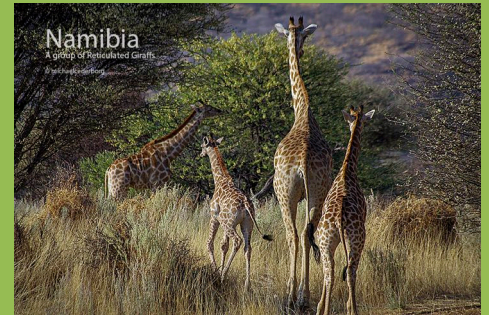
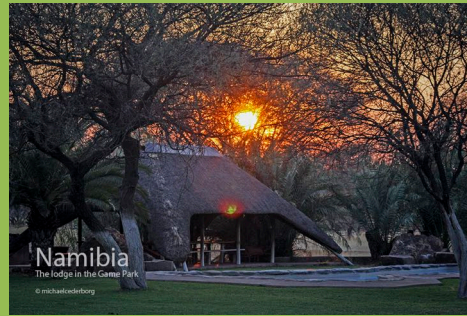
This visit to Namibia was in connection to a conference related to renewable energy projects in the region. I was CEO for a group of companies active in the segment of solar power solutions and photovoltaic panels. The need for electricity is huge and the cost for building out the infrastructure is prohibitive. Solar powered solutions are therefore a sustainable option here.

The capital – Windhoek – is far from what I expected it to be. Albeit a small town in comparisons, it is very modern in all aspects. I had no ideas what to expect when arriving here. You can easily cover the center in 2-3 hours walking around. There are some Dutch colonial buildings mixed with newer constructions. The cafes, restaurants and shops are also more European than expected.

It is Business Sweden who has organized this conference and it is combined with a visit to Cape Town in South Africa where the Swedish Prime Minister is expected to make an appearance also. After the conference and dinners, we set our course out to the world renowned and amazing nature, which Namibia is famous for.

Himba Tribe in Windhoek...

At one of the local markets in Windhoek I ran in to some women from the Himba tribe up north, and got the chance to take some photographs. These people are nomads and live mostly in the rural areas.



Okapuka National Park

Yes, I know, this is not the famous **Etosha National Park** further north, but the much smaller **Okapuka National Park**. We don't have time on this tour which is primarily a business trip to do more extensive touring, but we are still fortunate to see some of all the wild animals in this much smaller gated park. Being gated, means of course the animals are not free to roam about as they want, but on the other hand it makes it much easier to spot some of these otherwise difficult to spot animals.

We see **Giraffes, antelopes, wildebeests, elephants, wild boars, crocodiles and rhinoceros**. The animals are being feed, but you still get the impression that they roam about freely. So, if you are short on time and want to get a whiff of the wild-life near Windhoek, this is a good alternative.

I have separately planned to come back to Namibia wanting to spend a lot more time around to visit the Namibian dessert, the Skeleton coast with its very special flora, fauna and wild animals. I intend to combine this with a visit to THE national park – Etosha – up north. Here you will find "The Big Eight" consisting of: Elephants, blue wildebeests, cheetahs, giraffes, leopards and zebras.... I'd also like to spend time up north to visit a few of the different tribes including the Himbas then.



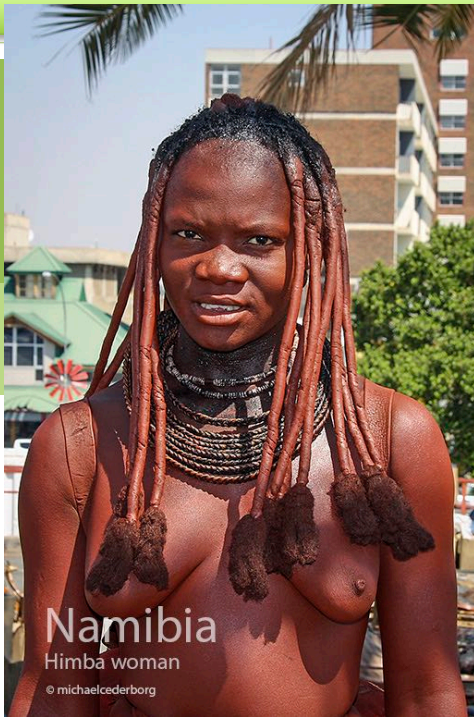
It is possible to visit the San People as well as the Himba tribes, but you do need a permit. This is much easier done through a specialist tour operator.

Namibia is definitely establishing themselves as a serious contender for exclusive and eco certified tourism. This also means the tours are quite expensive compared with South Africa. Many, who have done Kenya, Tanzania and South African parks are now turning towards Namibia and Botswana



Himba women

The Himba people is a rather big ethnic group estimated to be some 50.000 people. The mostly live in the northern parts of the Kunene region and are nomadic.

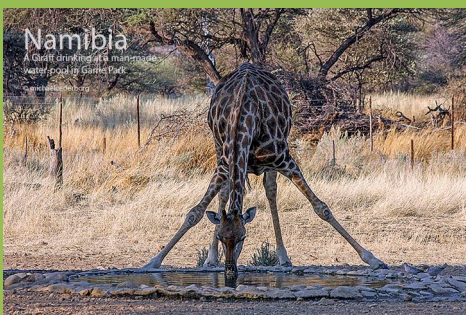
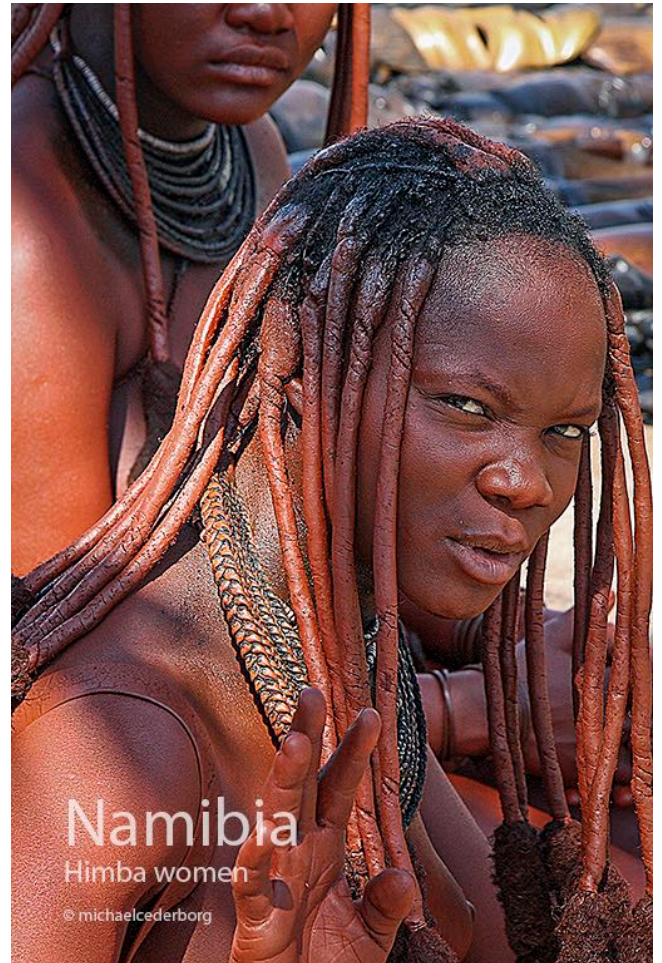


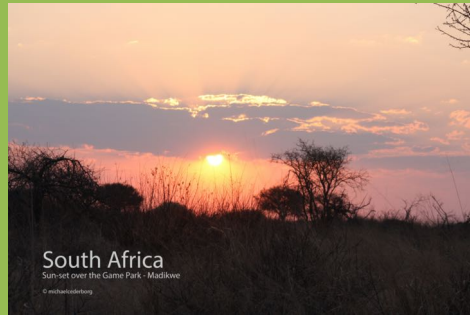
I Could not stop wondering about the red-brown color which the Himba's smear their faces and also their hair with something called Otjize paste. It was explained to me to be a mixture of milk- or butterfat, red ochre pigments and aromatic spices. It is also primarily the women which do this, and they do this to cleanse their skin over long periods due to water scarcity and to protect themselves from the extremely hot and dry climate as well as insect bites.

Most of the women are naked apart from of skirt-like clothing made of animal skin. Their hair is braided and also smeared with the same mixture used for their faces. They ware sandals made from cows' skin, whereas men ware sandals often made from old car tires.

The younger women usually have two larger braids often folded forward. After the menstruation has started, the hair is then braided into many more and thinner braids (see pictures). Women who have given birth wear a small backpack of skin attached to their traditional outfit.

Otjize is considered foremost a highly desirable aesthetic beauty cosmetic, symbolizing earth's rich red color and blood the essence of life, and is consistent with the Himba ideal of beauty.



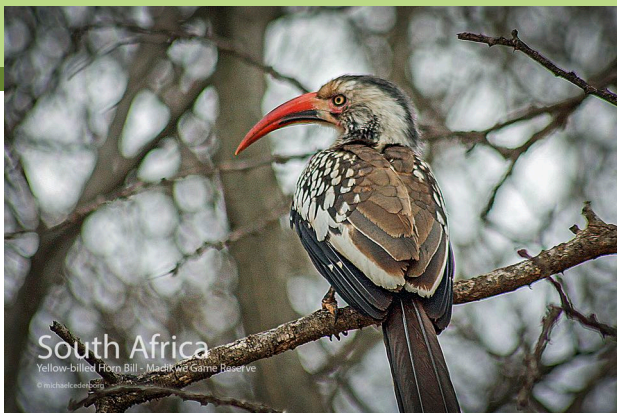
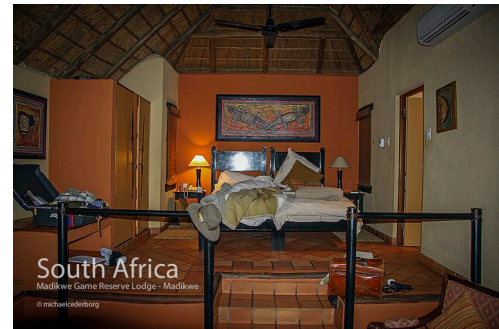


Madikwe Game Reserve Park

A flight from Windhoek directly to Gaborone, Botswana. I spend one night in Gaborone before I embark on the trip to Madikwe Game Reserve. The reason for flying in via Botswana is that it is easier and closer access from Gaborone, than it is from Johannesburg, SAR. We arrive to the gate of the park and have another 30 minute's drive to get to the lodge. It turns out I am the only guest staying at the lodge for a couple of nights.

They upgrade me to the best suite near the river. It feels quite luxurious to be all alone at the lodge. It also means extra attention of course. I invite the Ranger who will look after me on the game drives for dinner at my private lodge. We sit outside and enjoy a good bottle of wine and chat about the animals we might expect to see, while monkeys and other mammals climb the trees around us making all sorts of noise.

We go for a night drive and are quite lucky to catch both a group of lions as well as a group of hippos going to the pool for a drink of water. The area is also well known for a great variety of birds. One of the rarer sights is the African wild cat which we see at night. Not possible however to catch on camera.





South Africa
Two Lionesses resting near Water-hole
© michaelcederborg

The rarest animal we see on this safari must have been the African wild cat.

On both these two safaris, Namibia and SAR, I was fortunate to see; Lions, elephants, blue wildebeests, white rhinos, gray duiks, stone bucks, wild boars, velvet monkeys, baboons, giraffes, zebras, antelopes, impalas, waterbucks red hartebeest, springbucks, kudus, munges, spring hare, scrub hare, squirrels and the rare African wild cat.



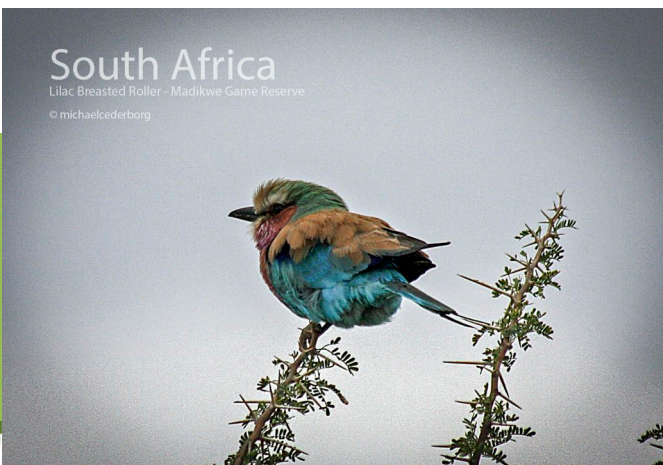
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Impala in Madikwe Game Reserve
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South Africa
Hybridised Giraffes - Madikwe
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South Africa
Lilac Breasted Roller - Madikwe Game Reserve
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South Africa
Two huge Rhinoceroses - Madikwe
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