

Alternative Visions

Photo tour to ANGOLA 2025



**'Tribal Tour' to
Southern
Angola,**
(16 Days/15 nights)
Wednesday 27th
August – 11th
September 2025

Our mission

Our photo tours focus on taking you to places, which have a unique appeal to photographers. We seek the beauty of landscape and seascape, the heritage of cultural diversity and the bustle of street and marketplaces. Effectively, photography through geography. Our tours will seek the best moments, light and opportunities to compose shots, which reflect upon those inimitable moments. We feel it is of value to immerse ourselves in local culture through, not only people and landscapes, but also, where feasible, through culinary experience and accommodation, which is culturally sympathetic. Interaction and understanding and, where feasible, spending time with people, makes moments and images more meaningful.

Our tours will have a 'hands on' approach, which enables clients to avail of sessions in which there are photo critiques and a chance to reflect on images captured whilst on tour. It is recommended that all participants bring laptops or tablets so that we can benefit from interaction and discussion, and ways of editing our images to get a result reflecting your own unique style. We also strive to promote 'Eco Photo Tourism' where we have a sustainable, unintrusive, approach to our photography.

'It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see'.



The photography. With tribal peoples photography is different. A very good local guide is necessary but here the precedent of paying villages and/or individuals is almost universal. This was something the tour companies seem to have instigated decades ago when tourism was in its infancy. We always try to give to the village instead of the 'person' because it is less discriminating.

You do need a sense of adventure for this trip. A good first aid kit with Malaria prophylaxis (probably not necessary) . We will send out a 'things to bring' list later. We will be off the beaten track but will not be doing any arduous 'treks' except to walk around, and to, some of the villages, which are short distances. The camping on this trip is truly very nice with great facilities (Shower and toilet) and great food! In fact, a great team!

We will often have very early starts to catch the best light with the tribes! Where possible we will visit markets throughout the tour.

We are sensitive to the impacts that tourism can cause, hence, we try to make visits sustainable and avoid promoting 'zooification'! It is all a delicate balance and the local guides are often best in deciding which strategy to adopt. In some cases when we visit villages, for example, we wander around the village without a camera just to become a familiar sight. It is interpersonal skills, which make the moment count. And in that moment we want to capture light, colour, emotion, insight, character and spirit. We try to shoot in the golden hours or at least where there is shade from the intense African sun. In the right light, at the right time the ordinary becomes extraordinary and that is something to strive for. Extraordinary portraits, tribal life and street markets. **Ovakuale, Ovankhumbi, Ovahimba, Ovakakaona, Ovamwila, Ovahanda, Ovanguendelengo, Ovadhimba, Ovangambwe** – names of some of the tribes we will encounter.

Villages are sometimes remote and this is what makes the photography rewarding. We travel in comfortable 4X4's (Toyota land cruisers or similar) to get to some of the very best locations. There is always a plan B if plan A has to be abandoned due to the occasional downpour, for example, making unsurfaced tracks impassible. It is also possible that we change the itinerary spontaneously if we hear of a local festival or celebration.

ITINERARY:

Day 1 – Wednesday 27 August

Arriving in Luanda by international flight, private transfer to hotel. Accommodation at Ilha Mar Hotel – B&B (Hotel is at our own cost)

Day 2 – Thursday 28 August

Transfer by the hotel to domestic terminal - Flight from Luanda to. Our guides meet us at the airport and take us to the hotel.

Dinner at a local restaurant. Accommodation at Casper Resort – DBB

Day 3 – Friday 29 August

Morning departure to Cahama, stopping at the small market of Quihita where we might see older **Ovangambwe** ladies. We have lunch when we arrive at camp which will be close to an **Ovadhimba** village which we'll visit in the afternoon.

Accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 4 – Saturday 30 August

Early morning visit to an **Ovadhimba** village close to our camp. Breakfast in camp

We depart to Humbe after lunch, about an hour and 20 minutes drive from Cahama, and visit a village where **Ovankhumbi** girls are near the end of their **Fico** ceremony

After sunset we return back to our base, about an hour and 20 minutes from Humbe

Dinner in camp and accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 5 – Sunday 31 August

Early morning visit to another **Ovadhimba** village. After breakfast we depart to Oncocua and setup camp outside Oncocua close to an **Ovahakaona** village

Lunch in camp and an afternoon visit to an **Ovahakaona** village

Accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 6 – Monday 1 September

Early morning visit to an **Ovangambwe** village. After breakfast we visit Curoca village and the old market. Lunch in camp and an afternoon visit to an **Ovatwa** village

Accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 7 – Tuesday 2 September

Early morning visit to an **Ovahimba** village. Lunch in camp. In the afternoon we visit tan another **Ovahimba** village. Accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 8 – Wednesday 3 September

Early morning visit to an **Ovahakaona** village. After breakfast we depart to Lubango,

Stopping at a market to meet ladies of the **Ovamwila** tribe. Lunch in Lubango and

afternoon at leisure. In the late afternoon we visit Tundavala viewpoint and escarpment.

Here we might also see some young girls of the **Ovamwila** tribe that live in the mountains. Dinner and accommodation at Casper Resort – DBB

Day 9 – Thursday 4 September

After breakfast we depart to Hoque market to see the Ovahanda ladies. From Hoque we drive back to Lubango and continue to the Bibala area where we will visit the Ovanguendelengo tribe and from here we continue to Namibe for lunch.

Afternoon at leisure in Namibe photographing the town and its beautiful architecture and colours.

Dinner at a seaside restaurant and accommodation at Chik Chik Hotel - DBB

Day 10 – Friday 5 September

After breakfast we depart the hotel, and stop briefly at the Cine-Studio before leaving town and into the desert. We setup camp near an **Ovakuvale** village in the heartland of the **Ovakuvale** tribe in the Virei area. Lunch in camp and the late afternoon photographing the **Ovakuvale** people. Dinner in camp and accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 11 – Saturday 6 September

We spend the early morning photographing the **Ovakuvale** people. We depart back to the main Tombua road and continue to Tombua where we have lunch. After lunch we enter Iona National Park and continue onto the beach, which is Angola's Skeleton Coast, towards our first dune camp. Dinner in camp and accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 12 – Sunday 7 September

Early morning coffee and sandwiches before we continue on the beach at low tide. This stretch of coast is where the dunes meet the ocean and we can only do this at Spring-low tide. Watch out for seals, cormorants and flamingos. We arrive at our launch point opposite Tiger island (Ilha dos Tigres) and embark on our boat (sea conditions permitting) to Tiger Island and the ghost town of Sao Martinhao. The trip is 10km over a channel and we will spend about two hours wandering the abandoned town. This island was abandoned in October 1974 by the Algarve fisherman who had formed a small fishing community here since 1860. The runway that was constructed in 1957 is still in good condition and forms the main street of the village. The peninsula (sand spit) was breached on 14 March 1962 with 10m waves from a strong gale, and thereby cutting off the normal piped water supply from the Cunene river. After the trip back to the mainland we have lunch at our new dune camp near the launch point. Afternoon at leisure climbing dunes, walking on the isolated beach. Dinner in camp and accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 13 – Monday 8 September

We return after an early breakfast on the beach at low-tide toward Tombua. We visit a skeleton coast shipwreck Vanessa and exit the National Park near Tombua where we have lunch. We continue on to Arco where we visit sandstone rock formations and the inland lake Arco. We then go to Colinas de Curoca, where we will settle in for the evening in our next camp. Afternoon pictures as the sun go down over this beautiful red sandstone formations and canyons eroded by flash floods.

Dinner in camp and accommodation in our private mobile safari camp – Full-board

Day 14 – Tuesday 9 September

After breakfast we continue to Namibe. On the way we stop at some giant Welwitschia Mirabilis plants in the Flamingo river and then continue onwards through Namibe to Lubango. Enroute we travel up the Leba pass to the top of the Chela mountain range

Lunch in Lubango and a late afternoon visit to an Ovamwila village

We return at sunset back to Casper for dinner and accommodation at Casper Resort – DBB

Day 15 – Wednesday 10 September

Today we can visit one more Ovamwila village. We have lunch in Lubango and can have access to our rooms at Casper to rest and prepare for the flight. Our guide takes us to the airport for the late afternoon flight to Luanda. Private transport to the hotel

Dinner at Café del Mar and accommodation at Hotel Ilha Mar – B&B (dinner and accommodation at our own expense)

Day 16 – Thursday 11 September

After breakfast there is a private half day city tour in Luanda with Lunch included. Private transfer to International terminal

End of photo tour!

The cost of the tour is €8950 per person – based on 6 people participating. The single supplement is €300. Angola is one of the most expensive countries (the most expensive) in Africa. The deposit for the trip is €2000

Your 16 day expedition is inclusive of: –

- All airport transfers in Lubango
- Airport transfers in Luanda
- Transportation in Land-Cruiser 4-wheel drive vehicles with air conditioning and support vehicles according to the amount of guests
- Accommodation at Casper Resort in Lubango
- Accommodation in Moçamedes
- Full board accommodation in our mobile safari camps
- All beverages in the mobile safari camps
- Complimentary bottled water
- Packed meals where required / mentioned in itinerary
- All meals except in Luanda
- Services of English/Portuguese speaking driver/guides
- Services of an Otjiherero speaking guide on the expedition
- Cultural villages entrance fee to all villages
- Food donations to villages
- All photography fees
- Domestic flights

Exclusive of -

- Items of personal nature such as beverages at hotels
- Lunches or dinners in Luanda
- Additional food donations should guests wish to donate to marginalized communities like the Ovatwa

You will also need some extra money for tips for drivers, cooks, guides etc. Approximately **€30 per driver/guide/cook per day**. This shared between all participants.

I will send out medical forms, gear lists, additional information on the tribes, travel liability forms at a later stage.

If you have any questions please contact me by email or telephone trevcole1@me.com
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A few excerpts from my trip notes on the 2023 tour.

'The tribal groups you will see on an amazing photo tour to Angola. They live predominantly in the arid south, Namibe and Cunene. Their relative isolation and remoteness has ensured that their culture is enduring. In some cases we went villages which had rarely, if ever, been visited.'

'Ovakuvale tribe (Omukuvale - singular). Formerly Mucubal, these people are colourful and traditionally wear an Ompota, a square or rectangular head piece made out of colourful fabric. We visited a small village and were again in awe of the beauty of the tribe. Tourism is in its infancy in Angola and photo tourism is rare so the tribes see very few people or cameras. We gave something to each village to enable them to buy maize or tobacco. Close to this village we stopped at a small gathering of Ovakuvale by a well and the children danced as if no one was watching. They grow up with music and rhythm is in their blood. They had so much fun and loved to perform even though they rarely see 'outsiders'!

'The Geology en route was remarkable with granite kopjes and boulders delicately balanced on these inselbergs. Closer to Elola the rocks were serrated slate and vertical creating sharp ridges along which weathering had fractured the rocks. We stopped to look at two polished rocks which were ostensibly polished by black Rhino who polished them by rubbing against them'.

'There are more OvaHimba in Angola than Namibia and they are much less contacted. One lady from the OvaHakaona (Mucaona) who speak the same language and also live in the area, joined the Himba with her baby. The singular for all the tribes is Omu (so OmuHimba, OmuKuvale, OmuHakaona, OmuNguendelengo...')

'Close to Oncocua we visited the OvaTwa (formerly Mutua) - one of the oldest tribes in Africa. They have been persecuted over time and emulate the OvaHimba. As a result of this they lost their language and adopted OtjiHerero which is spoken by the OvaHimba and OvaHakaona. This adaption was to protect themselves. Nonetheless they are still the most discriminated against of the tribes. A marginalised minority. The village was incredible with so many candid moments in sight'.

'We travel north today towards Lubango to visit the OvaMwila in the province of Huila. The Portuguese called the people Huila after the provincial name. We stopped at Chibia market to photograph OvaMwila tribes women. We found a few older ladies who were fully beaded and with braids veneered with clay. Their adornment is extraordinary.

We went to a OvaMwila village in the afternoon. Their huts were thatched and the walls comprised of roughly hewn wooden planks. There were a few old ladies around with their magnificent necklaces which are stacked from shoulders to chin. Weighty indeed!!'

Our visit to Ilha dos Tigres 2024

After a cold night due to the effects of a wind passing over the cold Benguela current we continued along a narrow and challenging part of the coast. The driving was arduous due to soft sand and the close proximity of lagoons to the towering desert dunes. We were in a convoy but our vehicle got bogged down a couple of times and had to be towed out.

At the start of the journey a black backed jackal was drawn to our presence and clearly had no fear of humans. The Benguela current and warmer Angola current meet in this area and this create a very rich marine ecosystem where fish, seals and whales proliferate. The lagoons are feeding grounds for cormorants, flamingoes and pelicans. We saw them in abundance. We were probably the only humans on Angola's Skeleton coast. Few people make this journey. It is only possible when there is a large tidal range.

A boat was arranged to take us to the Ilha dos Tigres which is a low lying island about 10 kilometres from the coast. The Ilha dos Tigres was formerly a sand spit which connected to the mainland near the Foz do Cunene. It was supplied by fresh water from a pumping station which was piped to the island. A huge storm severed the pipeline and breached the spit in 1962. The island had a small town called Sao Martinho dos Tigres which came into existence in the late 1800's. It had a fish meal plant and octopus canning. Ultimately it had a population of in excess of 1000 people. After the breach they built a desalination plant but this failed. In 1975, deprived of water, existence on the island became untenable. hence it was abandoned.

It is now a ghost town with an air strip dissecting it. It was surreal and reminded me of a visit to Chernobyl a few years ago. The church, houses, school and derelict processing plants are still there despite being in a state of decay. The feeling of abandonment was palpable. Dead birds and trees added to a somewhat macabre but fascinating scene. Fading paint, cracked buildings being invaded by the inexorable advance of sand. I believe we were the first organised group of photographers to visit it? Wandering the streets we could imagine how it must have been. A thriving community based on the rich sea life. Some of the buildings were impressive even in their derelict state. A place which exudes despair, the end of a small thriving community and a loss of hope. The buildings date from the late 1800's and were abandoned about 90 years later. We walked around in awe.

In both directions we saw whales and seals from our boat. I truly hope that this area, including the marine biodiversity, remains protected by Iona national park and is preserved as a memorial to a bygone existence.

If anyone is interested I have all my trip notes which can, of course, be read!