



Windhoek International School

Living in Windhoek December 2018

The currency in Namibia is the Namibian Dollar (N\$ or sometimes NAM \$). It is pegged to the South African Rand 1:1. In fact, you can use Rand in Namibia (but not N\$ in South Africa). The South African economy is volatile and the exchange rate rises and falls. In 2018 alone, it varied between 11.5 and 15.5 to the US Dollar.



Making predictions is always hard (especially about the future) but the average exchange rates over the past couple of years have been US\$1: **N\$13.5** and €1: **N\$15.5**. The following comparisons will be made on this basis. All prices are as of December 2018.

	N\$	US\$	€
1Kg fresh tomatoes	25.00	1.85	1.60
1Kg onions	13.50	1.00	0.85
1Kg potatoes	15.00	1.10	0.95
1Kg apples	22.00	1.60	1.40
1Kg sirloin steak	170.00	12.60	11.00
A whole chicken	80.00	6.00	5.15
6 eggs	16.00	1.20	1.05
500g butter	71.00	5.25	4.60
250g Cheddar cheese	45.00	3.35	2.90
A loaf of brown bread	26.00	1.90	1.60
500g pasta	15.00	1.10	0.95
1Kg rice	30.00	2.20	1.95
1Kg flour	17.50	1.30	1.10
1 litre olive oil	130.00	9.60	8.40
A Mars Bar (51g)	10.95	0.80	0.70

	N\$	US\$	€
A 2 litre bottle of still water	12.65	0.95	0.80
A litre of milk	16.00	1.20	1.05
A bottle of decent wine	60.00	4.50	3.90
A six-pack of Windhoek Lager	61.00	4.50	3.90
A cinema ticket	55.00	4.00	3.50
Having a pair of trousers dry-cleaned	57.00	4.20	3.70
A litre of petrol	14.40	1.05	0.90
A return flight Windhoek-Johannesburg	3,500.00	260.00	225.00

Namibians (like “locals” everywhere) only see prices going up and complain about how expensive everything is. But for those coming from many other parts of the world, life here is quite affordable.

Windhoek has a population of around a third of a million but it feels much smaller. Roads are excellent, the traffic lights work, and traffic jams are largely unknown. There is some public transport and there are taxis everywhere (though not everyone cares to trust them) but you will probably need a car to get around.

The city is some 1,700m (5,600ft.) above sea level and enjoys a mostly mild climate. It is dry, not humid. Day-time temperatures will reach the mid-30s °C (mid-90s °F) in the summer months (which, remember, are October to March). In winter (May to August) you’ll be leaving the house to come to work in 6°C to 10°C (mid-40s in °F) but by midday it will be pleasantly warm again. Every day.

In winter you will go for weeks without seeing a cloud and even in summer rainy days are few (and welcomed!). Most hours of most days throughout the year, the skies above Windhoek are blue.

There is very little industry and only light traffic (whatever the locals may think!) and air quality is excellent. You can even drink the water from the taps.

Health care – from routine visits to the dentist up to and including being in an operating theatre if necessary – is first class.

There are two or three large and modern shopping malls and the supermarket shelves are full. Shortages are unknown.

Namibia is sometimes referred to as “Africa Lite” or “Africa for Beginners”. Such terms are used affectionately and appreciatively. Life here is not hard.