NAMIBIA

AFRICA



Travel & Possession Not Permitted Under Any Circumstance

Summary

- Cannabis remains illegal in Namibia for both medical and recreational use.
- The Abuse of Dependence-Producing Substances and Rehabilitation Centres Act of 1971 criminalizes the cultivation, production, sale, and consumption of cannabis.
- The only exception is for synthetic THC (dronabinol), which can be prescribed by a doctor under very strict conditions.
- There is no legal framework for medical cannabis.
- Travelers cannot bring any cannabis products (including CBD), as these are treated as controlled substances.

Background

Cannabis is prohibited under the Abuse of Dependence-Producing Substances and Rehabilitation Centres Act of 1971, as strengthened by the Combating of the Abuse of Drugs Bill, 2006. The law imposes some of the harshest cannabis penalties in Africa, with fines up to NAD 500,000 ($28,500) and prison sentences up to 40 years for certain offenses.

The 2006 Bill, however, contains two narrow legal exceptions:

a. Prescription of Synthetic THC (Dronabinol): A doctor may legally prescribe dronabinol for certain medical conditions. It is highly restricted.
b. Research Exemption: Authorized researchers may import, possess, or use cannabis for scientific purposes if approved by the Namibian Ministry of Health.

Despite these strict laws, cannabis use remains common in Namibia, and advocacy groups such as the Cannabis and Hemp Association of Namibia (CHAN), Ganja Users of Namibia (GUN), and the Rastafari United Front (RUF) have campaigned for reform. In 2020, they petitioned Parliament for legalization, citing medicinal benefits and economic potential. However, these efforts have not yet changed the law.

Non-Medical Cannabis

- Consumption: Illegal; use can result in criminal charges and imprisonment.
- Possession: Illegal; penalties vary by quantity, with severe sentences for larger amounts.
- Sale & Distribution: Illegal; trafficking and unlicensed distribution are treated as serious offenses.

Traveling to Namibia with Medical Cannabis

Namibia does not recognize medical cannabis prescriptions from abroad. Bringing cannabis in any form, including CBD, hemp oil, or edibles, is illegal and punishable under Namibian law.

While the law technically allows for synthetic THC (dronabinol) by prescription, there is no domestic supply or dispensary network. It must be specially imported with prior government approval, which involves a lengthy bureaucratic process.

Tourists cannot realistically obtain dronabinol during a short visit, even if they visit a local doctor.

Steps to Take Before Departure:

1. Do not carry any cannabis product.
2. Carry only non-cannabis medications that are legal.
3. Obtain pharmacy-labeled packaging with valid prescription for all legal medications.
4. Do not rely on foreign prescriptions for cannabis. The authorities of Namibia do not acknowledge them.

Practical Tips

- If you are taking other medications, carry them in original packaging with prescriptions and clinic letters, best to verify legality via embassy.
- Speak to your embassy or consulate regarding your medical needs before planning travel.
- Use alternative, legal permitted medicines during your stay in Namibia.

The information provided reflects the most current data available; however, as cannabis laws are continually evolving, this content should not be interpreted as legal advice.

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