

# AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

—AFRICAN—  
AERIAL SAFARIS



A FANTASTIC E-BOOK FILLED WITH MANY TIPS TO HELP YOU REACH NEW HEIGHTS





An Oryx walking down a massive dune in the Namib Desert

Willem and Riaan, the co-founders of **African Aerial Safaris**, are both keen aerial photographers. We look forward to welcoming you onboard in the near future on one of our life-changing journeys.

Having your own private aeroplane adds a very personal touch to an African safari, turning it into an intimate experience. It gives you the flexibility to explore off the beaten path as you fly between the destinations. We design our flight routes to give you as photographers maximum exposure to all the incredible scenery along the way. We also fly lower than your normal air shuttles, to give you the opportunity to take the most amazing photographs.

Our Cessna Caravans are fantastic platforms for creative aerial photography.



Okavango Delta, Botswana

### 1. Shooting mode

I prefer to shoot in RAW to obtain the highest quality images. RAW images give you more latitude to make image adjustments afterwards.

### 2. Battery and memory cards

Ensure that your fully-charged batteries are sufficient for the entire flight. You need to ensure you have enough storage capacity, and that your memory cards are capable of handling a large amount of information during the preferred burst photo shooting.





Fisherman in their Mokoro's. Okavango Delta, Botswana

#### 4. Lenses

An all-in-one telephoto zoom lens is recommended, so that you can cover multiple focal lengths quickly.

Examples: 24-105mm, 70-200mm, or 70-300mm.

Image stabilization helps a lot.

#### 5. Camera body

You require a camera that gives you the flexibility to shoot with higher ISO settings while maintaining low noise and allowing you to still obtain high-quality images. The most important requirement is a fast shutter speed. This will control blurring due to the movement and vibration of the aircraft.

The latest high-end, full-frame cameras have incredible capabilities when it comes to using a high ISO setting.

Test your camera at home by shooting with various ISO settings and then look at the amount of noise generated on the images. This will give you a good idea of what ISO settings are acceptable for onboard use.



## 6. Optimal settings

As previously mentioned, a fast shutter speed is critical. Select TV or S mode, depending on your camera type. A good rule of thumb is that you require at least two times your focal length in shutter speed.

For example:

Focal length 100mm:  $100 \times 2 = 200$ , add a zero. Requires a minimum shutter speed of 1/2000.

Focal length 75mm:  $75 \times 2 = 150$ , add a zero. Requires a minimum shutter speed of 1/1500.

Higher shutter speeds might be required during bumpy rides.

Light metering is how your camera determines what the correct aperture should be, based on the amount of light that enters the camera. This will depend on your selected shutter speed and ISO value.

"Evaluative" is the best light metering mode for aerial photography, especially if the earth is unevenly lit (Like the photo on this page). "Pattern" and "Matrix" are Canon and Nikon's terms, respectively. Please consult your camera manual if you are unsure how to select this metering mode.

Depth of field is normally not a problem with aerial photography, as you are far away from your subject. Make use of the extra shutter speed enabled by using the lowest possible f-stop. For example, f/2.8 - f/5.6.

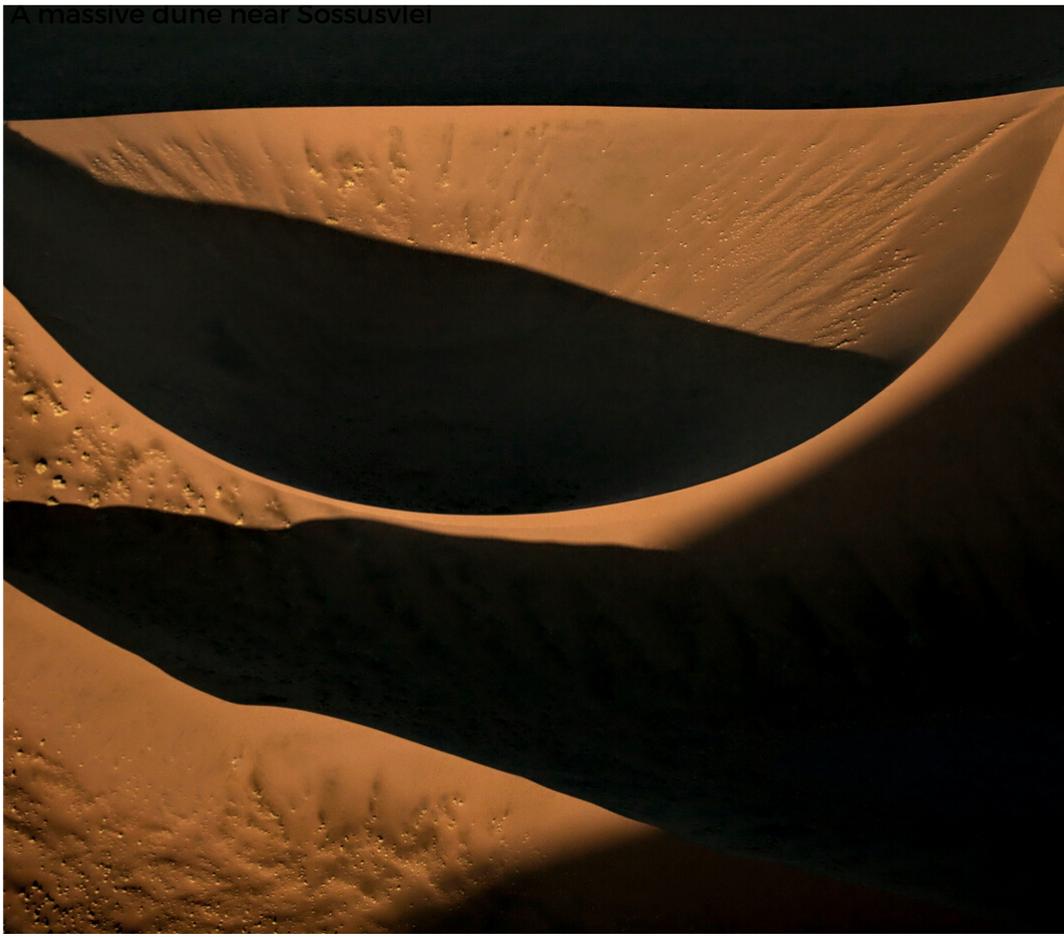
You will control the f-stop by changing your ISO setting when you have a fixed shutter speed set in TV or S mode. I suggest you get comfortable with this feature by playing with it at home.

Focus mode. I normally use Continuous AI Servo (Canon) or Continuous/AF-C (Nikon). I also often use manual focus and then set Infinity.

Select continuous shooting/burst mode, as you will have limited time when you fly past a subject. You can then select the best frame afterwards.

You can pre-set most of these settings and save them under custom settings for quick use onboard.

A massive dune near Sossusvlei



### 7. Technique

It is critical to always hand-hold your camera due to the vibration of the aircraft. Your image quality will be affected if you lean or rest any part of the camera or your arms on any part of the plane.

### 8. Anti-Reflective Silicone Lens Hood

The black silicone cone is retractable, suitable for any lens and is a must-have for aerial photography. The cone blocks unnecessary glare and reflections when shooting through the aircraft's window. The silicon cone also protects the aircraft window from any scratches.

We hope to have you and your camera on board in the near future. We trust you enjoyed your read.

Riaan & Willem

