



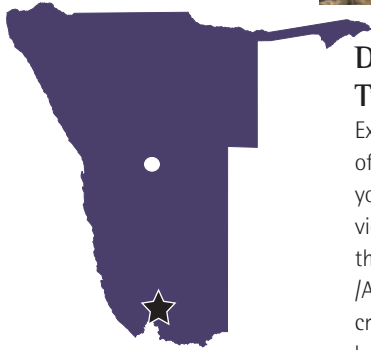
/Ai-//Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

"Since this spectacular area is undeveloped and there is so much to explore, you feel as if no one else has ever been here. That the park is yours alone to discover."

*Wayne Handley, Senior Ranger, /Ai-//Ais Richtersveld
Transfrontier Park, Ministry of Environment and Tourism*



Republic of Namibia
Ministry of Environment and Tourism



Discover the /Ai-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

Experience wilderness on a scale unimaginable. Stand at the edge of the largest natural gorge in Africa, and the second-largest canyon in the world, the Fish River Canyon. Revel in the dramatic views from Hell's Corner where it is almost possible to imagine the dramatic natural forces that shaped the canyon. Today the /Ai-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park protects a vast area that crosses the South African border to encompass one of the richest botanical hot spots in the world, the Succulent Karoo biome.

Strewn with immense boulders, the bed of the Fish River is also home to one of the most exhilarating adventures in Southern Africa, the five-day, 90-kilometre Fish River Canyon hiking trail, for which you need a hiking permit. Begin the slow descent down steep cliffs until you reach the sandy banks of the Fish River, where you will be dwarfed by sheer canyon walls that tower more than

550 metres above. Klipspringer bound up the cliffs and mountain chats drink from pools left behind from when the river last flowed. Ancient rock formations and isolation add to the sense of timelessness and elation that mark this challenging hike.

For 4x4 enthusiasts, drives along the rugged eastern rim of the canyon afford stunning views across the canyon from Hell's Corner and Sulphur Springs vantage points. One hundred kilometres further south, another more leisurely route winds along the edge of the Orange River, where masses of water are framed by towering black mountains.

Everywhere there are rare plants, including 100 endemic succulents and over 1 600 other plant species, illusive rare animals, spectacular scenery and thermal springs that delight the senses, leaving visitors ready to explore the fascinating wilderness that is the /Ai-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park.



Time travel

One hundred and sixty kilometres long, up to 27 kilometres wide, and with a depth of up to 550 metres, the Fish River Canyon is a spectacular natural phenomenon that took over 600 million years to evolve. Underground, eons ago, a major plate moved, a crack ran through the earth, and the first process in the formation of the Fish River Canyon began. With erosion and more faults, canyons within canyons were formed. Fifty million years ago, the mighty Fish River did the rest, gouging out layers of rock and creating the second-largest canyon in the world. Today, the Fish River flows intermittently, leaving behind a chain of long narrow pools on the sandy floor of the chasm, and perennial hot springs that gush out of the earth at /Ai-/Ais, a word in the Nama language that means 'burning water'. Namibia's oldest rock paintings are found at the Apollo 11 caves, while rock engravings, crafted by ancestors of the Khoi people who lived in the area 2 000 years ago, are scattered throughout the park.

Rugged adventure – the Fish River Hiking Trail

Comfortable boots, plenty of water and a thirst for adventure, these are a few of the key ingredients needed to take on one of Southern Africa's major challenges, the 90-km Fish River Canyon hiking trail. There are no guided walks, no shelters and no provisions. But there is adventure galore. Clamber down the side of the canyon into a towering, isolated world. Climb over boulders, hike past gushing hot sulphur springs, and cool down in refreshing pools of river water. Camp under the stars and prepare for an early start in the morning to avoid hiking during the heat of the day. Be prepared for four to five days of rugged adventure.

A five-day hiking permit must be obtained from Namibia Wildlife Resorts prior to arriving at Hobas. Hikers must supply a medical certificate as proof of good physical health. Groups (3–40 persons maximum) can undertake the hike between the months of May and September. Bookings must be made well in advance.



Environmental Care Code

Please adhere to the following:

- Stay on existing roads and tracks.
- Do not remove any plants or animals from the park.
- Make sure that what you take into the park, you take out.
- Follow the rules and regulations listed on your permit.
- Report to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism office at Hobas before beginning the Fish River Canyon Trail.

Enjoy the challenge and be inspired!



Fact file:

Proclamation date: The /Ai-/Ais and Fish River Canyon Park was proclaimed in 1968. Subsequently, the Huns Mountain complex and several farms were added. In 2003, the park was amalgamated with South Africa's Richtersveld National Park to form the /Ai-/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, Namibia's first cross-border park.

Total area: 6 045 km²

Facilities:

Twelve campsites, a field kitchen and ablution facilities are available at Hobas. Camping facilities are also available along the Orange River. Accommodation, a restaurant, spa and a swimming pool are found at the /Ai-/Ais Hot Springs Resort, operated by Namibia Wildlife Resorts (www.nwr.com.na).

How to get there:

From Keetmanshoop take the B4 for 35 km before turning left onto the D435, past the Naute Dam and onto the C12 which leads into the park. Alternatively, stay on the B4 and continue to Seeheim, a distance of 45 km, then turn left onto the C12. The Fish River Canyon is approximately 77 km from the C12 turnoff. The ferry across the Orange River at the Sendelingsdrift Tourist Access Facility in the Richtersveld transports vehicles weighing less than six tons directly between the two sides of the trans-frontier park.

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