

# The Trail Hopper

## *The Real Canyon Hike - 7 day (from/to Windhoek)*

The five-day Fish River Canyon Hike is one of the most popular hikes in Namibia. The 85km route starts at Main Viewpoint and ends at the hot springs of Ai-Ais. The hike is open between 01st May and 15th September due to high temperatures in summer and the possibility of high water levels in the rainy season.

### *Itinerary:*

*[meals: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner]*

#### *Day 01:*

Pick up time at about 8h00 in Windhoek. Heading southwards we will reach one of the lodges of the "Gondwana Canon Park" late afternoon. The spectacular sunset compensates for the long drive.

*Overnight at one of the Gondwana Canon Park Lodges;[LD]*

#### *Day 02:*

After a short drive we reach the Main Viewpoint, which marks the start of the hike. We will be on the move for about 8 hours each day. The 500m descent into the Canyon takes us about 2 hours due to the steep route and loose rocks. However the view into the canyon landscape is spectacular. Finally we reach the bottom and our route continues for 13 km through boulders and rough sand. The water in the canyon is drinkable (Micropur or similar purifying tablets can be used as an additional precaution). Exhausted we reach "Palm Springs" with its thermal sulphur pools, an enjoyment for our tired muscles.

*Walking time: 7 - 8 hrs*

*Overnight under a thousand stars; [BLD] ↓500m*

#### *Day 03:*

Today our route takes us along the riverbed, which we cross several times, depending on the water level. It is advisable to take trekking sandals along for the river crossings. The ground consists mostly of gravel, pebbles and deep sand. About 15 km from Palm Springs we will pass the "Table Mountain" named appropriately after its "mother"

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near Cape Town. We will sleep close to the “Three Sisters rock towers”, which are illuminated blood red by the setting sun.

*Walking time: 7 - 8 hrs*  
*Overnight under a thousand stars; [BLD]*

## Day 04:

After breakfast we climb a hill from which we have a beautiful view of a rock formation consisting of four thick pinnacles, known as the “Four Finger Rock”. Another highlight along today's trail is the “Von Trotha's grave”. Second Lieutenant Thilo von Trotha, a nephew of the well-known Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha, died here in 1905 during a confrontation between German soldiers and native Namas. As a reliable source of water the Fish River has always been considered as an oasis of life. We spent another night under the overwhelming African sky.

*Walking time: 7 - 8 hrs*  
*Overnight under a thousand stars; [BLD]*

## Day 05:

As we carry on along the riverbed walking gets easier, but remains sandy and rocky. The canyon widens out. Legend has it that a fleeing dragon left behind him the 160 km long and 450m deep furrow, which is now the second largest canyon of the world. Another adventures day slowly comes to an end.

*Walking time: 7 - 8 hrs*  
*Overnight under a thousand stars; [BLD]*

## Day 06:

After 10km we reach Ai-Ais (Nama word for "hot hot"). The hot water from the natural spring is pumped into a swimming pool, which we take advantage of. With a cold beer and a swim in the pool we wash off the dust of the previous days, before we get picked up and transferred to the “Gondwana Canon Park” where we highly appreciate the feeling of stretching out on a soft bed with fresh linen.

*Walking time: 4 - 5 hrs*  
*Overnight at one of the Gondwana Canon Park Lodges; [BLD]*



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## Day 07:

After a hearty breakfast we are back on the road for the long drive back to Windhoek, where an unforgettable journey comes to an end.

[BL-]

## MIN. / MAX PER GROUP:

- 4-7 pax

## MIN. AGE:

- 12 years

## INCLUSIVE IN THE PACKAGE:

- One English speaking experienced nature guide/driver per group
- Free door-to-door courtesy transport in Windhoek City area only
- All transfers Windhoek - start/endpoint of hikes - Windhoek
- Program as stated above (incl. two nights lodge accommodation - double room basis, single room on request)
- All meals as stated above; during the hike (B= cereals, coffee/tea, L= bread, cheese, salami, D= light cooked meal by our guide incl. coffee/tea,
- All crockery and cutlery
- Hiking permits

## NOT INCLUSIVE:

- sleeping bags, light iso mattress and back packs (recommended 55 litre plus), 1.5 ltr water bottle,
- Personal insurance (important: medical evacuation)
- Tips
- Alcoholic drinks and beverages

## CLIMATE:

The seasons in Namibia are reversed compared to those in Europe. During the European winter months we have summer in Namibia and vice versa. Winter and summer in Namibia differ from what we are used to in Europe, though. The winter in Namibia is the cooler dry

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season which is characterised by high temperature changes and hardly any rainfall. It can get very cold at night in the desert (June to August down to -5°C). During the day temperatures may rise up to 25°C. The Namibian summer (January to end of March) is the rainy season and it seldom rains during the other months. November and December are very hot with temperatures over 30°C, so it is essential to pack the suitable clothes. Rest assured that you will not encounter a grey sky that will linger for weeks! So bring some Sandals, walking shoes, light cotton clothes (Shorts and shirts), a jacket or fleece pullover and long trousers. We have seen everything: from beanies and gloves to bikinis!!

## **CHARACTER OF AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE TRAILS:**

The trails are not difficult, but challenging. Fitness and good condition is essential as the trails entail 7 to 8 hours walking and you have to carry your luggage every day, including food and water (all together approx. 12 - 15 kg per person). As some of the routes lead through rough terrain and over large boulders it requires well balanced and secure walking. Please be aware of high temperature fluctuations, which can reach a high of 35°C during the day whilst sometimes plummeting down to -5°C at night, which can cause additional stress to your heart and circulation. We recommend you to prepare yourself for the trail with some fitness training. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism requires a medical report by your doctor not older than 40 days.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

We urgently recommend that comprehensive insurance cover be taken out before embarking on the tour to

- make provision for cancellation and curtailment
- medical expenses, emergency evacuation, repatriation
- loss or damage of personal baggage

Safaris Unlimited will not be held responsible for any costs arising from any of the above events. Restriction of liability also applies if clients were unaware of this policy.

## **FORCE MAJEURE:**

It goes without saying that we do our utmost to conduct the tour as described in the program; we cannot vouch for it, however. Unfavorable weather conditions, organizational problems,

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unforeseen events or other factors may force us to change the course of the tour. We apologies for any inconvenience caused.

The opening and the closing periods for the Fish River Canyon Hike are regulated by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and can change due to external influences (heat, water availability, flooding). Safaris Unlimited cannot be held responsible for tours being cancelled on those grounds and we reserve the right to changes according to circumstances at the time of booking.

## Scheduled departures 2009 for Real Canyon Hike (or on request):

- 13.05.-19.05.09
- 10.06.-16.06.09
- 08.07.-14.07.09
- 12.08.-18.08.09
- 09.09.-15.09.09

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