Please note:

There is no restaurant facility available at Sendelingsdrift. Guests need to cater for their own meals.

Introduction

Conjure up a desolate and forbidding landscape, seemingly devoid of life, except for some people dotting along the horizon.

Make a startling discovery upon closer inspection when the mirage dissolves into the human-like half-mens (half person) and the harsh environment prove to be a treasure-chest containing the world’s richest desert flora. Miniature rock gardens, perfectly designed by nature, cling precariously to cliff faces. Tiny succulents, mere pinpoints against a backdrop of surreal rock formations, revel in the moisture brought by the early morning fog rolling in from the cold Atlantic Ocean.

Rugged kloofs, high mountains and dramatic landscapes that sweep away inland from the Orange River divulge the fact that you are now in the vast mountain desert that is the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld National Park, an area managed jointly by the local Nama people and the South African National Parks. This is a harsh and unpredictable land where water is scarce and life-sustaining moisture comes in the form of early morning fog – called ‘Ihuries’ or ‘Malmokkies’ by the local people – which rolls in from the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean, sustaining a remarkable range of small reptiles, birds and mammals. A staggering assortment of plant life, some species occurring nowhere else, is to be found here, with gnarled quiver trees, tall aloes and quaint ‘half-mens’ keeping vigil over this inscrutable landscape.

The park is only accessible by means of a 4x4 vehicle, but vehicles with high clearances such as combi’s and LDV’s do travel in the park. Sedan vehicles are not permitted. There is no specific route that can be booked in advance.

5 Things To Seek

- Rock Hyrax
- Ground Squirrel
- Jackal Buzzard
- Half-men (Half Human)
- Hartmann’s Mountain Zebra

Accommodation

Sendelingsdrif Rest Camp

- A new rest camp has been built which consists of ten chalets (4 x 4 bed units and 6 x 2 bed units).
- All chalets are equipped with air conditioning, fridge and two plate electric stoves.
- All units have showers, front porches with views over the Gariep (Orange River) and there is a swimming pool in the camp.

There is still landscaping work being done and some further construction work is planned.
Potjiespram Rest Camp

- New ablutions have been built and showers (cold water only) are available.
- There are 18 Campsites and an Environmental Education Centre where school groups can stay over in traditional Nama huts.

De Hoop Camp Site

- This remains one of the most popular spots in the park and ablutions (cold showers) have been built to service 12 Campsites.

Richtersburg Camp Site

- As for De Hoop, this camp, which lies on the banks of the river, has been upgraded with ablutions (cold showers) to service 12 Campsites.

Kokerboomkloof Camp Site

- The 8 camp sites are serviced by dry toilets.
- No water is available on site and the nearest water point is at Richtersberg (32km) away.
- Toilets available
- Access through Sendelingsdrift
- No power
- No shower / wash facilities
- Very rustic

Tatasberg and Ganakouriep Wilderness Camps

Each camp consists of:

- 4 x 2-bed self catering units with showers,
- 12 volt lighting system,
- fridges and gas stoves (hot and cold water).
- Should problems occur with the lights, paraffin lanterns are available.
- A caretaker is resident on site.
- The units will be swept out and the area kept clean but the washing of utensils and making of beds will be the responsibility of the guests for the duration of their stay.

*Please note that the water at Ganakoeriep, Tatasberg and Hakkiesdoring is not suitable for drinking and it is recommended that guests should provide their own drinking water.*

Hakkiesdoring Wilderness Camp

No information available at present.

Hiking Trails Base Camp

The Hiking Trails Base Camp, which is situated in the panoramic Ganakouriep Valley and accommodates 9 people opened in mid-July. Gas stoves, fridges and hot showers are available. The hiking trail itself is not open due to a shortage of qualified guides but groups under the control of an appropriately qualified guide may be allowed to hike.
It is strongly recommended that they take a person with extensive knowledge of the area with them to enhance their experience and minimise the risks associated with this terrain and climate.

**Bookings:** This unit will be taken three months in advance until such time as the trails issue has been resolved. It is also an ideal location from which to explore the Park by vehicle. Note that the water is not suitable for drinking and it is recommended that guests should bring their own drinking water.

To view the accommodation prices, refer to [Tariffs](#).

### Activities & Facilities

**Please note:**

There is no restaurant facility available at Sendelingsdrift. Guests need to cater for their own meals.

### Activities

**Adventure and Outdoor Activities**

- Flowering season – experience the springtime floral splendour of the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld area (between June and October, depending on good rains).
- Bird watching – almost 200 species in the park.

**Guided Trails**

- Vensterval Trail (4 days, 3 nights)
- Lelieshoek-Oemsberg Trail (3 days, 2 nights)
- Kodaspiek Trail (2 days, 1 night)
- The above mentioned are only available from 1 April to 30 September
- Guided walking trails will be conducted from a base camp called Hakiesdoring hiking camp soon.

### Hiking Trails Base Camp

The Hiking Trails Base Camp, which is situated in the panoramic Ganakouriep Valley and accommodates 9 people opened in mid-July. Gas stoves, fridges and hot showers are available. The hiking trail itself is not open due to a shortage of qualified guides but groups under the control of an appropriately qualified guide may be allowed to hike. It is strongly recommended that they take a person with extensive knowledge of the area with them to enhance their experience and minimize the risks associated with this terrain and climate.

**Bookings**

This unit will be taken three months in advance until such time as the trails issue has been resolved. It is also an ideal location from which to explore the Park by vehicle. Note that the water is not suitable for drinking and it is recommended that guests should bring their own drinking water. The cost of this unit is R600 for the first four people and R100 for each subsequent person.
Facilities

No shops in the park, but fuel and cold drinks can be purchased at a small general store at Sendelingsdrift. The shop is open on weekdays only.

Pontoon at Sendelingsdrift

The old pont, that was last in service in 1988, when South West Africa (now Namibia) was still governed by South Africa, has been restored and offers an unusual and convenient way of crossing the Garib (Orange) River that separates the two countries. Before the opening of this border a very inconvenient 485km detour and about 4 hours drive had to be undertaken to cross from one side of the Park to the other.

Pont Regulations:

Maximum carrying capacity is 6 Metric Tones or:

- 2 standard 4x4 vehicles without trailers
- 1 standard 4x4 vehicle with trailer
- 2 standard light motor vehicles with trailers
- 1 bus with a seating capacity of less than 20

Hours:

Summer and winter: 8:00 – 16:15 (weather permitting)

For further information please phone the the park on 027 831 1506

Fuel

- Unleaded 95 - available at all times
- 50ppm Diesel - available at all times

Please note that there is an ATM available at the Sonskyn Café at Sendelingsdrift.

Natural and Cultural History

An international treaty, signed on 1 August 2003, incorporated the Ai–Ais Hot Springs Game Park in Namibia and Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld National Park in South Africa, resulting in the establishment of the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier National Park.

One of the main features of the combined park is the world’s second largest canyon – the Fish River Canyon. At Sendelingsdrift, on the South African side, a pontoon has been established to ferry people and vehicles across the Orange River. The pontoon has a carrying capacity of a 32-seater bus or two fully loaded double cab 4x4 vehicles.

How to get there

Recommended routes to and from the park

The quickest way to get to the Park from N7 (RSA) and B1 (Namibia) is to turn off at Steinkopf and approach via Port Nolloth and Alexander Bay with only the last 80km being on dirt.
For those wishing to vary their route and get a broader picture of the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld the road from Vioolsdrift, via Kotzehoop, through spectacular scenery to Eksteenfontein and then on to Sendelingsdrift is one well worth traveling. (If you take this route please respect the interests of the Kotzehoop farmers whose crops are affected by the dust from speeding vehicles.)

- The scenic route via Kuboes, Lekkersing and Eksteenfontein provides an additional dimension of what the region has to offer.
- Another spectacular route, recommended for 4x4 vehicles only, is over the mountain pass via Helskloof Reserve between Eksteenfontein and Vioolsdrift.
- Admission and overnight permits must be obtained at the park office at Sendelingsdrift before entering the park.
- Overnight visitors must arrive before 16:00 to reach camping sites before dark.
- Internal roads are ‘farm tracks’, mainly suited to 4x4 vehicles, but vehicles with high clearances such as kombis and LDV’s do travel in the park. Sedan vehicles are not permitted.
- Due to deep-sanded riverbeds and rough mountain passes, driving in convoy is recommended.
- Single vehicles must sign an agreement to report back to park headquarters on departure.
- The old pont, that was last in service in 1988, when South West Africa (now Namibia) was still governed by South Africa, has been restored and offers an unusual and convenient way of crossing the Garib (Orange) River that separates the two countries. Before the opening of this border a very inconvenient 485km detour and about 4 hours drive had to be undertaken to cross from one side of the Park to the other.
- Driving in the park at night is not permitted.

**Gate Hours**

- 1 October to 30 April: 07:00 – 19:00
- 1 May to 30 September: 07:00 – 18:00

**GPS Coordinates**

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R12  S 28 15.253  E 17 13.244
R13  S 28 13.840  E 17 03.307
R14  S 28 17.591  E 17 01.875
R15  S 28 16.770  E 16 59.682
R17  S 28 20.730  E 17 09.890
R18  S 28 23.670  E 17 09.256
R2  S 28 07.407  E 17 00.569
R3  S 28 11.582  E 17 03.211
R4  S 28 12.736  E 17 05.541
R5  S 28 11.115  E 17 07.490
R6  S 28 15.851  E 17 08.199
R7  S 28 18.336  E 17 07.423
R8  S 28 19.480  E 17 11.202
R9  S 28 21.923  E 17 14.082
Richtersberg Camp  S 28 15.056  E 17 12.793
Richtersveld Park Entrance  S 28 17.494  E 16 56.382
Sendelingsdrift  S 28 07.514  E 16 53.496
Springbokvlakte  S 28 19.845  E 17 15.867

Distances to the park (Sendelingsdrif)

From:

Cape Town - 875km Upington - 720km Johannesburg - 1 595km Durban - 1 992km Springbok - 320km Port Nolloth - 180km Alexander Bay - 90km

Distances in the park

- Sendelingsdrif – Helskloof Entry Gate - 22km (25 min)
- Helskloof Gate-Kokerboomkloof - 78.3km
- Helskloof Gate-Richtersberg - 68.5km
- Helskloof Gate- De Hoop - 53.7km
- Richtersberg – De Hoop - 8.1km (Deep sand and sharp rocks)
- Sendelingsdrif-Potjiespram - 9km
- Sendelingsdrif-De Hoop - 38.2kmSendelingsdrif / Richtersberg / Kokerboomkloof / Helskloof / Sendelingsdrif - 203km (9 hrs)

The Sendelingsdrif RSA / Namibia Borderpost and Pont

More information will be available soon.

Park Map
Tariffs

- **General Tariffs Information**

- **Hints & Tips**
  - Insect Repellent is strongly recommended
  - Binoculars and cameras are a must.
  - As outdoor lighting in camps is limited, a torch/headlamp is required when walking outside at night.
  - Cotton sheets will keep insects at bay.
  - Plastic refuse bags are essential as all rubbish must be removed on departure.
  - Firewood and kindling may not be collected in the park.
  - Gas cookers are recommended due to evening winds.
  - Extra spare wheel, tools, spares, enough food and extra water containers are essential.
  - Make sure that you always have a good supply of water. Fresh water is available at Sendelingsdrif.
  - Do not sleep on the bare ground as the park is ideal scorpion habitat.
  - Driving off indicated routes and outside camping sites is a serious offence. It is harmful to the park and dangerous to the visitor.
  - Scarves protect against dust and wet towels from extreme heat. Provide clothing for extreme temperatures.
  - No pets, generators or outboard motors permitted.
  - No quad bikes or motorbikes will be allowed inside the Park.
  - Picking of plants, removal of seeds, rocks, crystals or driftwood is an offence. Please help us to preserve the |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld’s wilderness atmosphere.

**Contact Information**

For enquiries e-mail |Ai-|Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park or phone us on the following numbers:

- Park Tel: +27 (0)27 831 1506 (Reception) Fax: +27 (0)27 831 1175
  - email: louisa.links@sanparks.org or carmen.carstens@sanparks.org
- Park Manager
  - email: nick.degoede@sanparks.org
  - Cell: 072 621 1514
- Duty Manager
Birding

Find more birding information and park bird checklist. You can also look at information for birders.

Mammals

Specie Checklist

Order Insectivora
Family Soricidae
Crocidura cyanea Reddish-grey musk shrew

Family Macroscelidae
Elephantulus rupestris Smith's rock elephant-shrew
Macroscelides proboscideus Round-eared elephant shrew

Order Chiroptera
Family Molossidae
Sauromys petrophilus Flat-headed free-tailed bat
Tadarida aegyptiaca Egyptian free-tailed bat

Family Vespertilionidae
Eptesicus capensis Cape serotine bat
Myotis seabrai Angola hairy bat (indeterminate)

Family Nycteridae
Nycteris thebaica Egyptian slit-faced bat

Family Rhinolophidae
Rhinolophus capensis Cape horseshoe bat
Rhinolophus clivosus Geophroy's horseshoe bat
Rhinolophus darlingi Darling's horseshoe bat
Rhinolophus fumigatus Ruppell's horseshoe bat

Family Hipposideridae
Hipposideros caffer Sundevall's leaf nosed bat

Order Primates
Family Cercopithecidae
Cercopithecus pygerythrus Vervet monkey
Papio ursinus Chacma baboon

Order Lagomorpha
Family Leporidae
Lepus capensis Cape hare
Pronolagus rupestris Smith's red rock hare

Order Rodentia
Family Bathyergidae
Cryptomys hottentotus Common molerat

Family Hystricidae
Hystrix africaeaustralis Porcupine

Family Gliridae
Graphiurus platyops Rock dormouse

Family Sciuridae
Xerus inaurus
*Family Petromuridae*
Petromys typicus
*Family Cricetidae*
Desmodillus auricularis
Gerbillurus paeba
Malcothrix typica
Otomys unisicatus
Parotomys brantsii
Parotomys littledalei
Petromyscus collinus
*Family Muridae*
Aethomys namaquensis
Rhabdomys pumilio
Thallomyx paedulcus
*Order Carnivora*
*Family Hyaenidae*
Hyaena brunnea
Proteles cristatus
*Family felidae*
Felis caracal
Felis lybica
Panthera pardus
*Family Canidae*
Canis mesomelas
Otocyon megalotis
Vulpes chama
*Family Mustelidae*
Aonyx capensis
Ictonyx striatus
Mellivora capensis
*Family Viverridae*
Atilax paludinosus
Cynictis penicillata
Galerella pulverulenta
Genetta genetta
Suricata suricatta
*Order Hyracoidea*
*Family Procaviidae*
Procavia capensis
*Order Perissodactyla*
*Family Equidae*
Equus zebra hartmannae
*Order Artiodactyla*
*Family Bovidae*
Oreotragus oreotragus
Pelea capreolus
Raphicerus campestris
Sylvicapra grimmia

Vegetation
The Ai-Ais/Richtersveld National Park is a very good example of one of the most interesting mega-ecosystems of the world, the succulent Karoo.

There is no desert flora on our planet, possessing similar species richness and individuality of flora. On a surface area of one square kilometre more than 360 plant species of flowering plants (angiosperms) are found at a site with an average rainfall of only 68 mm per year.

The Ai-Ais/Richtersveld includes two floristic kingdoms. A magnificent variety of dwarf shrubs with water-storing leaves, belongs to the succulent Karoo region of the Greater Cape Flora, while its western portion forms part of the East Gariep Centre, the most important centre of the Nama Karoo Region. The Ai-Ais/Richtersveld is divided into two portions belonging to two major climatical systems, the temperate winter rainfall region with its high air humidity, and the inland region with higher temperatures and important summer rains and low humidity, respectively. Both units are closely placed against each other, separated by a narrow transition zone of about 10 to 20 km.

One outstanding example of such unique life forms is the psammophorous plants, i.e. plant species that are fixing a layer of sand to their surface in order to build a protective shelter against the force of sand storms and the related sand blasting.

The Ai-Ais/Richtersveld is widely reckoned as one of the world’s richest succulent areas. It is estimated that 50 genera out of a total of 160 from the Mesembryanthemaceae family occur here.

A number of endemic plant species only occur in small colonies on the highest peaks. About 30% of the total floristic composition is endemic to the park.

There are four main landscape units: the Orange River and adjacent floodplains; gentle undulating plains (distributed in the summer/all year round rainfall area); rolling hills; and rugged mountains.

Two trees are particularly associated with the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld: the bastard quiver tree (Kiewiet April 2001) and the half-mens (half-human), Pachypodium namaquanum. The half-mens is a succulent with an unbranched, cylindric stem, 1.5 to 2.5 m, and sometimes up to 4 m, in height. Near the top, it has a tuft of branches, which lean northwards at an angle of 20 – 30 degrees. The Namas revere the human-like trees as the embodiment of their ancestors, half human, half plant, mourning for their ancient Namibian home.

People with disabilities

Wheelchair Access

- There are accessible accommodation units at the park’s two wilderness camps: Tatasberg and Ganakouriep. Both these units have roll-in showers. There is currently no accessible accommodation at the main camp at Sendelingsdrif, but this omission will hopefully be corrected soon.
- View the accessibility features overview for Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, as featured in the Rolling Inspiration magazine.
- Please see additional information on Wheelchair Accessibility

Accommodation

Tatasberg Wilderness Camp:

Reed Cabin (RC2Z)
The unit is accessible to the mobility challenged. The cabin features two single beds and a bathroom with a shower. The unit also includes a braai facility on deck, gas stove (no oven), fridge, ramp and utensils. Guests have to provide their own drinking water and fire wood. The cabin makes use of solar power and there are no plug points.

Ganakouriep Wilderness Camp:

Canvas Cabin (CC2Z)

The unit is accessible to the mobility challenged. The cabin features two single beds and a bathroom with a shower. The unit also includes braai facilities, gas stove (no oven), fridge ramp and utensils. Guests have to provide their own drinking water and fire wood. The cabin makes use of solar power and there are no plug points.
Please note:

Accommodation images may differ from the actual units as refurbishment of various accommodation types occur on an on-going basis.