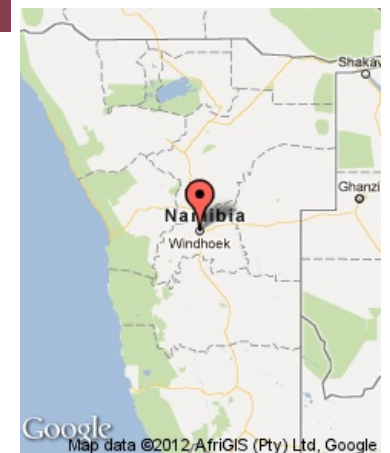


Hike Namibia's Fishriver Canyon



Highlights

Fishriver Canyon, in Namibia, is the largest canyon in Africa, and the second-largest in the world, stretching for 160km, and up to 500 meters deep in places. The only way to experience it firsthand is on foot -which involves some serious hiking, boulder-hopping and clambering, but for those who enjoy a real challenge, the rewards are immense.

Fish River, longest river in Namibia, runs for 160 km of its length along a gorge initiated by a collapse caused by a shift in the Earth's crust during Namibia's violent prehistory, hence the canyon's astonishingly abrupt interruption of the surrounding desert plains. The river, once far greater than it is now, then deepened this rift into a truly awesome ravine that winds its way through the southern desert acting as an invaluable oasis, a haven for some of the region's spectacular plant and animal life. The combination of geological magnificence and the presence of such a wide range of wildlife makes this place one of the most fascinating hiking trails there is.

Of course, the canyon itself is the star of this trip; the environment through which this walk takes you will challenge your credulity as much as your legs! At every turn, a new vista will open up before you, continually revealing new rock formations unique to this place, due to its unusual history. At Palm Springs (so-called because of the date palms that grow there) where the gorge runs along a fault line, there are thermal sulphur springs, you'll get a glimpse -and a smell- of the subterranean forces that helped to create the canyon. The whole trip will give you many opportunities to see the wild animals that have made this place their home, including wild horses, baboons, and springbok, as well as many types of bird and insect life.

Is it for me?

This walk is famously demanding; even to reach the riverbed inside the canyon can take up to two hours of careful scrambling over loose scree, and then there's rocks, and more rocks, and sand, and water, all to be traversed in consistently high temperatures, for a total of eighty kilometers. It should go without saying that those who aren't serious hikers shouldn't even think about going on this expedition. You'll have to carry all necessary supplies, except for water, which will come from the river pools along the way. This is a tough trek for those who want a real challenge, but the rewards are tremendous. Please note that children under 12 years of age are not permitted on this tour.

Accommodation

Accommodation is split on this tour: for four nights, while hiking, you'll be camping out in the wild near the riverbed in the canyon itself. These four days are bracketed by more luxurious nights at the farmhouse in Grunau, where you'll be able to sit back and relax after a warm bath and soothe those aching legs. On camping days you'll make yourself as comfortable as you can; high-quality camping mats are most essential to ensure a comfortable night's sleep, but to be honest, if you had to you'd happily sleep on the bare rock after each day's hiking! Food during the hike is all expedition fare, high energy and filling, but obviously not cordon bleu. You'll be carrying it yourself, too- keep that in mind if you feel like packing extra snacks. The farmhouse offers good, tasty food Namibian style: for those that don't already know, that means you could go all day on one breakfast

Itinerary

Day 1: Windhoek-Grunau Farmhouse (755 Km)

Prices from

953 GBP (7 days) per person

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From your starting point at Hosea Kutako International Airport, your journey will start with a long drive as you travel through the rugged hills surrounding the city of Windhoek. You'll head towards the southern parts of Namibia, where the land speaks of vast open spaces and magical vistas. You'll spend your first night in Namibia wisely, preparing for the second largest Canyon in the world and checking everything for the millionth time - after all, it is better to be safe than sorry. You'll stay over on a typical Namibian farm with pure Namibian hospitality.

Day 2 - Day 6: Fishriver Canyon walk (80 Km hike)

The starting point of your epic adventure is near Hobas. Here you'll view the magnificent canyon before even descending into it. This first descent is relatively steep so you must move with caution. Once in the riverbed, the walking starts in earnest. The first two days will consist more of boulder-hopping than walking, but by the end of day two, you should have reached the Palm Springs. Date trees grow around these sulphurous springs, hence the name. Camp is about one hour's walk from this landmark. After the third day, you'll reach the so-called "walking" area. The canyon starts to widen at this point and there are many more sandy stretches to negotiate. If you are starting to worry about water issues, don't: you'll get all your drinking water, as well as cooking water, from the river itself; many pools as such accompany us along most of the way. You'll return to your Namibian farmhouse for a bath and a proper meal on the last day.

Day 7: Grunau - Windhoek (750 Km)

A good hearty breakfast of toast, bacon and eggs will see you through this day. You'll leave the farm shortly after breakfast and drive back to Windhoek. This drive will most probably feel quite luxurious after having walked 80 kilometres through both sand and water - a feat anyone can be proud of!

Details

Getting there

You need to get to Hosea Kutako International Airport, Windhoek. Flights depart from most major UK airports.

Price includes

Transport, food, camping supplies, guide, accommodation.

Price details

Price quoted above is based on a group of three people. Single supplement of NAD2000

Typical Duration

1 week

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed