



Canyon Fish Eagle Trail

Imagine exploring the Fish River Canyon from as close as can be, hiking with just a daypack in almost pristine nature, dreaming at the campfire and falling asleep under a dazzling night sky... Adventurously-minded and physically fit hiking enthusiasts who join a Trekking Tour by Mule Trails Namibia can expect a unique and exciting experience in the wilderness area around the northern part of the Fish River Canyon. Since luggage and equipment are carried by mules, participants only need to pack water and snacks for the day's hike - and their cameras. A qualified guide explains geology, flora and fauna, a mule driver takes care of the pack animals and a supply team is in charge of the camps. Meals are cooked on an open fire. Shower and toilet facilities offer something out of the ordinary: a view into the great open wilds.

The Fish River Canyon, the second largest canyon on earth, runs through the transition zone of two desert systems, the Nama Karoo and the Succulent Karoo (the most diverse desert on earth). The landscape is characterized by meandering gorges up to 300 m deep, which twist and turn through ancient layers of rock. The flora includes unique plants like the quiver tree, candelabra euphorbia or tamarisk; game such as mountain zebra, klipspringer, kudu, duiker, springbok and ostrich abounds in the area. Even water birds can be spotted with a little luck, like the African fish eagle, which gave its name to this trail.

Highlights Diverse canyon scenery, high plateau with 360-degree panoramic views, gorges, springs, swimming and fishing in natural pools, the fascinating plant and animal world of the Nama Karoo Desert, three nights in the open under the starry sky or in a tent

Participants	minimum 2 / maximum 14 people, children from 12 years old
Time	15 April to 15 September; other dates on request
Dates	on request
Duration	5 days / 4 nights
Total distance	approx. 45 km
Stages	10 to 18 km / 6 to 8 hours walking per day (incl. breaks)
Start	Cañon Mule Station in Gondwana Cañon Park, approx. 650 km from Windhoek by road (transfer from/to Windhoek on request)
End	Cañon Mule Station (without spending the night)
Languages	English; possibly German



Tour Details

Day 1 - Arrival and Introduction

Participants arrive at the Cañon Mule Station in Gondwana Cañon Park at the Fish River Canyon by their own arrangement. In the evening we discuss everything there is to know about the tour and acquaint ourselves with the equipment (incl. dinner and accommodation at the Cañon Mule Station).

Optional on request - Tour with transfer from and to Windhoek: guests are picked up at their accommodation in Windhoek

Cañon Mule Station:

The Cañon Mule Station offers the charm of an old farmhouse with a large stoep from which to view the rolling hills around it. The Mule Station is the gateway to the northern Fish River Canyon, just 8 km away. This is also where the mules are kept for hikes during the winter months. The Mule Station offers 8 rooms and 24 beds. Equestrian paraphernalia is scattered throughout the station to pay tribute to the four-legged hiking assistants. A self-catering kitchen with refrigeration as well as outside cooking and cleaning facilities are available.

Day 2 – Mule Trekking (approx. 12 km)

After breakfast we load our gear onto the mules and set off at dawn. First we are taken to the view point at the northern Fish River Canyon - with a 360 degree panoramic view across the canyon scenery which extends to the far horizon. Then we hike down a zigzag path to the river and follow the river in a southerly direction. Later we climb a slope up to the rim of the Canyon. In the afternoon we arrive at our first camp. While we enjoy a drink at the campfire, our tour guide prepares dinner; anybody who feels like it is welcome to help. The night is spent at Horse Shoe Camp, in a tent or in the open under the star-studded night sky (incl. breakfast, lunch, and dinner).

Horse Shoe Camp:

A cabin perched on the northern rim of the Fish River Canyon welcomes hikers and campers after the day's adventure. A peek from the cabin's windows provides an unparalleled view of the natural horse-shoe form of the northern Canyon. Hikers pitch their tents outside the cabin and use the facilities inside, which include a toilet and shower with breathtaking views of the Canyon. Cooking facilities are also available in the cabin, while the outside fireplace is ideal for a barbeque.

Day 3 – Mule Trekking (approx. 16 km)

We enjoy our first breakfast out in the open. Then we continue downstream along the Fish River. Patches of river pebbles alternate with slabs of rock and sand dunes. Dramatic chapters of Earth's history can be gleaned from the massive layers of rock. At lunchtime we stop for a picnic in a shaded little spot. Occasionally we come across deep pools of water in which we take a refreshing dip or fish for Fish River carp. In the afternoon we arrive at Echo Pools Camp next to the Fish River. Sipping sundowners we watch in awe as the rock reflects the light of the setting sun in a blaze of colours (incl. breakfast, lunch and dinner).

Echo Pool Camp:

Echo Pool Camp is named after the echo reverberating from the arched rock faces. The camp is right next to the Fish River.



Day 4 – Mule Trekking (approx. 18 km)

After an early breakfast we set off at dawn and follow the Fish River further downstream. Then we walk on zebra paths, leading us up to a plateau, through rugged valleys and across stony and sandy plains. Every now and then we stop to marvel at the vast canyon scenery. At midday we have a picnic in the shade. Finally we reach the gorge of the seasonal Gaap River. Bend by bend it turns greener and greener: Several fountains provide trees and shrubs with water throughout the year. In the early evening we arrive at Cañon Outpost, situated in an oasis-like paradise (incl. breakfast, lunch and dinner).

Cañon Outpost:

The Cañon Outpost is hidden in the Gaap Canyon of the Holoog River, a tributary of the Fish River. It is an old farmhouse next to gushing springs, and one of the most secluded hideouts in Namibia. The Cañon Outpost offers 3 bedrooms, a self-catering kitchen as well as outside cooking facilities. A huge lawn leads to the riverbed where ten tents complete with beds are perched in an Acacia stand out of view of the main house. Facilities include communal showers, toilets and solar power.

Day 5 – Transfer to Cañon Mule Station

After breakfast we pile into the open vehicle which takes us to the final destination of our roundtrip. As we pull up at Cañon Mule Station our tour has come to its end (incl. breakfast).

Rates (from April to September 2011):

N\$ 8745.00 per person (5 days, 4 nights)

Services included:

- Schedule as described above
- Full board (breakfast, light lunch, dinner) as above
- During the tour: an experienced guide, mule driver and supply team
- Mules to carry luggage and equipment
- Equipment in the camps (tent, mattress, table, chairs, crockery, cutlery, shower, toilet, etc.)

Services not included:

- Beverages (other than water, coffee & tea), drinking bottle (about 2 litres)
- Light rucksack (day pack ± 25 litres)
- Sleeping bag (-5 °C)
- Personal insurance
- Tips
- Souvenirs/presents
- It is not possible to ride the mules

Optional on request:

- Transfer from/to Windhoek:
- Vehicle with English speaking driver
- Door-to-door transport within Windhoek
- All transfers (Windhoek – Fish River Canyon - Windhoek)

Cancellation fees:

- 4 weeks before arrival: 10%
- 3 - 4 weeks before arrival: 20%
- 2 - 3 weeks before arrival: 30%
- 1 - 2 weeks before arrival: 50%
- 1 week - 3 days before arrival: 75%
- 1 - 3 days before arrival: 90%

**Special requirements**

- Participants have to be physically fit and sure-footed, and cannot be afraid of heights
- We urgently recommend that comprehensive insurance cover be taken out before embarking on the tour to make provision for cancellation, curtailment, medical expenses, emergency evacuation, repatriation as well as loss or damage of personal baggage and loss of foreign currency.

Force majeure

It goes without saying that we do our utmost to conduct the tour as described in the programme; we cannot vouch for it, however. Unfavourable weather conditions, the Fish River in flood, organizational problems, unforeseen events or other factors may force us to change the course of the tour. We apologize for any inconvenience.