

ALONG THE WEST COAST (SOUTH TO NORTH)

HONDEKLIP BAY	Population:	Altitude: Rainfall: <50mm p.a.	Namaqualand
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Approximately 104km south west from Springbok over the Messelpad Pass and through the small village of Soebatsfontein, or can also be reached by another gravel road from Garies (110km northwest).

Origin

- Originated as a single trading store opened in 1855.
- It once served as an export harbour for copper ore that was transported by ox-wagon from Springbok, Nababeep and Okiep.
- The copper ore was transported by ox-wagon from Springbok, Nababeep and Okiep.
- Due to the shortage of water and the
- The export port was later supplanted by Port Nolloth.
- Fresh water was in short supply from day one.
- The rainfall in the area is often less than 50 mm a year, and the only supply available in those days was that stored in rainwater tanks.
- When the village outgrew the precarious resources of these tanks, water was shipped in from Cape Town.
- Meanwhile, many of the ore carrying vessels were damaged or wrecked in heavy seas in the thick fog endemic to the west coast.
- All these difficulties prompted the Cape Copper Company, in the 1870, to build a railway to Port Nolloth, which became the new outlet for their exports.
- Currently this little village serves as a popular holiday destination as well as a small harbour for fishing and diamond-mining boats.

Name

- Two theories for the name Hondeklip ('dog rock') Bay.
 - Is linked to the 5 m high rock next to the police station which resembled a sitting dog. Unfortunately its head was struck off by a bolt of lightning some years ago.
 - It is said that a pack of wild dogs, which had done much damage among local flocks were finally cornered and killed near this rock

Mining and industries

Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This area contains very rich marine resources which stretches all along the Namaqua coast as far as Port Nolloth. – The most important catch off these shores is rock lobster, which is processed by a local plant. – The harbour serves fishing vessels.
Diamond Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Diamond Coast Minery – The harbour serves diamond dredgers

HONDEKLIP BAY continue...	Historical sites and monuments	Namaqualand
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Historical sites and monuments

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Ship
Wrecks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Located south of town. - It is the wreck of the Aristeia which wrecked in 1945. |
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Attractions and activities

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|------------------|---|
| Scenic
Drives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hondeklip bay is part of the Diamond Coast. - Offers various scenic drives which include several 4x4 routes as well in the vicinity all along to the N7. - Some of the scenic drive routes however needed to be booked in advance as permits is required to enter the Diamond Fields. |
|------------------|---|

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Cray
Fishing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cray fishing is allowed in season. - Permits however must be obtained from the authorities in Springbok or Garies. |
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Kleinzee, Koningnaas, Grootmis	Population:	Altitude:50m/164ft Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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On route R355 approximately 96km on a gravel road west from Springbok passing the Spektakel mine.

- Located along the ravine of the Buffalo River passing a number of other copper mines along the way to reach the first village Grootmis about 10km from the coast then comes Kleinzee.

Origin

- Legend tells that a teacher called by the name of De Villagers from the local farm school had built a new school.
 - He was looking for lime deposits to whitewash the walls.
 - Accompanied by a builder called Alberts he kicked at a mound in the veld.
 - He then dislodged a diamond with the toe of his shoe.
 - It was then recorded as the **first alluvial diamond** found about a year after the discovery of the deposits at Alexander Bay.
 - Within three weeks De Villagers and Alberts collected diamonds worth £600 which was a small fortune in those days.
 - They then sold their claims to an exploration company which eventually opened up the Kleinsee 'crater', reminiscent of the 'Big Hole' at Kimberley.
- This area has then become known as the Diamond Coast.
- These towns are **high security** area and permits are required for visits.
- **Required permits must be applied for about five days in advance.**

Name

- The name **Grootmis** is derived from the heavy fog that regularly rolls in from the sea in the early morning, especially in spring and summer.

Mining and industries

Various
diamond
and
mineral
mines

Kleinsee, Koningnaas, Grootmis continue...	Attractions and activities	Namaqualand
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Kleinsee
Nature
Reserve

- Host about 100 different species of indigenous plants.

Kleinsee
Museum

- It is an informative museum.
- Exhibits the history of mankind in the vicinity, mining activities and some items from the natural environment.

Various
4x4
Mine
Tours

- Includes tours through
 - The Strandveld
 - A shipwreck tour
 - Buffels River Grace's Put route

- A pre-arranged **Group Mining Tour** which displays the operation of a modern alluvial mine.
- Consists of about 450 000 animals.

Protected
Seal
Colony

Mc Dougalsbaai	Population:	Altitude: Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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Situated approximately 8 km south of Port Nolloth.

Origin

- It serves as a holiday resort for not only Port Nolloth, but for the northern Namaqualand.
- The township, "Sizamile", the Xhosa word for "we have tried" and previously known as "Tentedorp" or "Bloukamp" used to house some nomadic Xhosa. It is located on the edge of a large saltpan that is sometimes used as an airstrip.

Name

The origin of the name can only be speculated, but the following explanations are offered:

- Donald Mc Dougal set up a shop in Alexanderbaai after the discovery of diamonds. He sold alcohol, among others, to the Nama Chief who eventually lost his mining place at Kodas and the last of his coats to Mc Dougal in exchange for alcohol and tobacco. Mc Dougal later sold his claim at Kodas to a Port Elizabeth Mining Company and moved away due to his bad reputation.
- It is said that Mc Dougal started a shop here.
- Another story claims the Mc Dougal was on a ship that sank and somehow he made it to shore. He built tunnel with stones where he took shelter. He also devised a plan whereby he 'caught' some harders (type of fish) and traded it with the San who lived in the dunes. Apparently, they later led him to some Europeans to find his way to the Cape.

Attractions and activities

- Holiday chalets and homes
- Angling and crayfish diving
- **Bird island : bird, dolphin, seal and whale watching.**
- Exploring coves along the beach.

Port Nolloth	Population:	Altitude:0m/0ft Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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On route R382 approximately 94km west from Steinkopf and 65km south from Alexander Bay.

Origin

- Originally the area was inhabited by the Khoikoi and the San.
- The earliest arrival of Europeans to the region are contributed to Robert Gordon on his way to the Orange River in 1779.
- In the 1850s, Commander MS Nolloth, the captain of the HMS Frolic Cargo, was surveying the west coast in search of a suitable harbour for the export of copper from Okiep (Close to Springbok). Allegedly, a storm swept the ship into this secluded bay and it was found to be much more suitable than the one at Hondeklipbaai.
- The town was then established as a small export harbour for copper ore in 1855.

Initially, steam locomotives could not be used to transport the ore from the Springbok area due to insufficient water supply. For this reason mules were used instead and the ore wagons were pulled by six animals. On route, there were stations with water, fodder and mules were allowed to rest while others continued the journey. The journey took two days (146km) with one overnight at Klipfontein Hotel at the summit of Anenous Pass. The railway line was completed in the 1870s.

- The price of copper decreased drastically after the end of the First World War and by 1919 the mines were closed.
- The population then resorted to the fishing as a means to survive, and about ten years later the first fishing factory was opened.
- However, fortune smiled again on the town when Jack Carstens and a few friends who was digging 6km south of Port Nolloth, retrieved a had fill of alluvial diamonds. Needless to say, this attracted a whole stream of diamond diggers.

Discovery of off shore diamonds.

Water supply initially came from a spring at MacDougall's Bay. Later, water was transported in barrels from inland boreholes. This was the only water available until October 1990. The water was high in sodium and had health risks such as high blood pressures. The new supply came from the Gariep River via a pipeline.

- In 1927, the transport of ore and blister copper was finally diverted to the new railhead at Bitterfontein
- When the Port Nolloth railway was eventually uprooted during 1944, a short (8 km) stretch was retained in order to carry water from a local freshwater spring to Port Nolloth.
- In 1949 this arrangement was replaced by boreholes.
- The weight of the copper ore cargo caused many a tragic end for ships and boats. This treacherous coast are still responsible for an average of three ship wrecks a year. Currently most of the cargo handled in the port consists of supplies for the land-based and offshore diamond-mining operations.
- The town serves mainly as a centre for small scale diamond recoveries, a trading centre for some crayfish industries and it is also the only holiday resort on the Diamond Coast.

- "Nollothville", south of the business area is home to the 'coloured' community.

The town's first newspaper, *The Busy Bee*, distribution was stopped by the mine management to the somewhat obscure information. The '*Port Nolloth Times*' was a more conservative and privately owned, but criticism of the mine management it followed the same road. The '*North Western Courier*' followed and had a wide circulation.

Name

- Initially called **Aukotowa**, 'where the water took the old man away' during the time of Khoi and San habitats.
- It became known as "Robbebaai" (the Afrikaans for Seal Bay) in the 1840s, referring to the abundance of seals found along the coast. These were hunted and the meat dried to be traded with the fortune seekers streaming to Namaqualand after the discovery of Copper in the area.
- In 1855, it was renamed (1855) after Commander M.S. Nolloth, the captain of **HMS Frolic**.

Claims to fame

- The first steam locomotive was introduced in 1886 on the line's Port Nolloth section, and it took another seven years before a steam-hauled train covered the distance.
- On the outward journey from Okiep the track was downhill for about 88 km and the trains moved without traction.
- The last steam train ran in 1942.

Mining and industries

- The main economy of the town is based on the tourist trade.
- Many fish factories which processing rock lobsters, crayfish, linefish in season
- Various offshore diamond-mining operations

Port Nolloth
Continue...

Historical sites and monuments

Namaqualand

Historical sites and monuments

Klipfontein
Railway
Station
and
Narrow-
gauge
Railway
(760mm)

- The early railway track follows roughly the course of what are currently the N7 and R382 roads.
- In 1870 the Cape Copper Company built a narrow-gauge (760 mm) railway from the mines at Okiep and Nababeep via Steinkopf to Port Nolloth in order to overcome the difficulties experienced in transporting copper ore to a harbour so that it may be exported.
- About 10 km from west from Steinkopf the road passes the derelict station of Klipfontein, which lies on the abandoned narrow-gauge railway.
- A few forlorn quiver trees grow on the old platform, faithfully producing their yellow candle-like flowers each winter.

Various
Ruins,
Graves
and
Forti-

- Located nearby the Railway station and in the vicinity along the Anenous Pass
- Includes
 - o Ruins of the Old Klipfontein Hotel
 - o Graves of three British soldiers who died during the Anglo-Boer War.

Fortifications

- o Ruins of fortifications erected to protect one of the railway viaducts against Boer raiders during the war.
- o The old fort was besieged in April 1902 but however never taken.

Graveyards

Behind the police station and further east, provides interesting information of the earlier inhabitants.

The Nama burial ceremony

Salt was sprinkled on the chest and then the deceased was sewn up in a kaross (). The grave was dug with sticks tipped with gemsbok horns. Before lowering it into the grave, the woman placed buchu on the corpse. The body was placed in a sitting position and covered with stones to prevent sand falling on it. One of the gemsbok stick and a long stone (upright) was placed on the heap of ground. As customary (also that of many Africans) every one passing by paid homage by throwing a stone on the grave. The importance of the dead person was depicted by the amount of stone.

Attractions and activities

Scenic Drive

- On route R382 to Port Nolloth.
- It reaches the edge of the Namaqualand plateau at Klipfontein ('rocky spring') mountain (1 124 m) before descending to the coastal plains through Anenous Pass.
- The name of the pass is derived from the Khoe expression "**nani/nus**" ('side of the mountain').
- The landscape becomes progressively more arid as the road negotiates each of the successive terraces of the descent.

McDougall's Bay

- Located a few kilometres south of Port Nolloth.
- Serves as a residential seaside resort

Lighthouse 18-m

- Located north of Port Nolloth in the other side of Beach Road.
- It is 18m high and covers a range of 20km.

Alexander Bay	Population:	Altitude:8m/26ft Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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On route R382 approximately 65km north from Port Nolloth and on an alternative gravelroad approximately 100km west from the Richtersveld National Park.

- Located about 5km south of the Orange River Mouth which forms the border between Namibia and South Africa and includes Kuboes and Sanddrif.

Origin

- Alluvial diamonds were discovered along the northern Namaqualand coast in 1925.
- A restricted securely fenced diamond-mining centre was erected east of the Orange River Estuary.
- The 'inner camp' comprises mining operations and accommodation for miners and their families.
- Some other employees were housed in the 'outside camp'.
- In 1928 the diamond rush led to the Diamond Coast Rebellion.
- The town is no longer a high security area and does not need entry permits.
- It serves as a commercial import / export harbour.

Name

- Named after Sir James Alexander, who transported the copper ore he mined at Kodas, in the Richtersveld, to the Orange River by ox-wagon from where the ore was shipped in barges down the river to be exported from Alexander Bay.

Claims to fame

Good Gem Quality Diamonds

- In 1927 some 6 890 diamonds with a total weight of about 12 549 carats were found in only one month of operating.
- On another occasion 12 000 carats were discovered in only one days work.

Lichen-Field 'Biblical manna'

- Located on a hill to the right when entering the town from the east.
- The hill is covered with by orange lichens (*Telschistes capensis*) lichens, as well as another 28 species and is the largest desert lichen field in the world.
- Lichens are a symbiotic relationship between algae and fungi. The later acts as the body and absorp moisture, while the algae produce food through photosynthesis.
- The reproduce through subdivision or spores.

Agriculture

- Pineapple plantations, vegetables and cut flowers under irrigation from the Orange River. The pineapples are processed at the pineapple refineries.
- Ostrich ranching aslo along the River.

Alexander Bay Continue...	Mining and industries	Namaqualand
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Mining and industries

Various mines – Diamonds and copper ore

Various Fruit Factories – Pineapple refineries

Attractions and activities

Various Attractions And Activities – Forms part of the annual Namaqua Wild Flower scenic drive route
 – Various 4x4 trails leads through to the Richtersveld Nature Reserve.
 – One of the various entrance points to Namibia and the Fishriver Canyon with its hiking trails.

Orange River Estuary – Proclaimed a RAMSAR site.
 – Renowned for its birdlife.
 – Boasts more than 75 species of waterbirds.

Alluvial Diamond Mine Museum – Alexkor Ltd offers tours only on Thursdays from 08h00.
 – Bookings are essential.

Nama Cultures – Four communities are situated around the Richtersveld:
 ○ Eksteenfontein
 ■ Inhabitants are known as the “Bo-Sluis Basters”
 ■ They settled down here in 1940 as a result of the apartheid's separatism policies.
 ○ Sanddrift, located on the banks of the Orange River
 ○ Kuboes
 ○ Lekkersing
 – They all offer various activities to tourists to experience their traditional way of living.

Richtersveld

This region is the northern extremity of Namaqualand bounded by the Orange (Gariep) river, the Atlantic ocean, the road between Steinkopf and Port Nolloth (R382) and the N7 highway.

Various gravel roads along the **R382** between Steinkopf to Port Nolloth provides access to the region. Sanddrif, Sendelingsdrif, Kuboes and the /Ais /Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park are within easy reach from Alexander Bay.

Before venturing into this remote area please take note of the following:

- Some roads are only accessible by 4x4
- Alexander Bay, Port Nolloth, Sanddrif and Steinkopf offer all the basic services including petrol stations, ATM and coffee shops/restaurants.
- Eksteenfontein, Lekkersing and Kuboes : No Petrol stations, cell phone reception, banks (Eksteenfontein has an ATM), restaurants/coffee shops and pharmacies.
- Shops are closed on Sundays.
- Take sufficient water supply

It includes the /Ais-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park and the following settlements:

- Sendelingsdrif
- Sanddrif
- Kuboes
- Eksteenfontein
- Lekkersing

The early inhabitants

- Early and Middle Stone Age implements that have been found close to river sources provide evidence of pre-historic peoples that have occupied the region for hundreds of thousands of years.
- The majority of petroglyphs (rock carvings) found in the area, date to the last 10 000 years. These were done by the ancestors of the San and are mainly geometric shapes believed to be the shapes seen by the San as they enter into a trance.
- Microliths (small stone tools) have also been left behind by San ancestors at Kokerboomkloof ('Quiver tree's ravine') approximately 3000-4000 years ago.
- About 2000 years ago, the Khoikhoi/Khoekhoen arrived with their fat-tailed sheep and the earliest sheep remains were found just south of Kuboes (64 A.D). These people also brought with them distinctive clay pots with a pointed base and small handles. Their descendents, known as the Nama, still herd their livestock in the park.
- James Alexander was one of the earliest explorers to the region in the 1830s when he was prospecting for copper around Koda.

Kodas Mine Ruins

- Located about 10 km from Sendelingsdrif entrance to the Richtersveld National Park on the Alexander Bay gravel road.
- It was opened in 1854 by Sir James Alexander.
- The shaft was once recorded as the deepest in all Namaqualand with a dept of 40m.

- The controversial Mission Stations and the 1909-Communal Reserves Act reduced the land of the Nama considerably.
- Europeans settled in the area in the early 1900s and in 1949 a group known as 'the Bosluis Basters' were removed from Crown Lands in Bushmanland and settled at Lekkersing and Eksteenfontein.

In 2006, 84 000 ha of diamond-bearing land was returned to the community in a land claim. They were compensated with R190 million for diamonds that have been removed by Alexkor. In addition, R50 million were granted for development.

Name

- Named after Reverend W. Richter of the Rhenish Missionary Society, who first began to evangelise the isolated community of northern Namaqualand

Agriculture

- The main source of water for plants in the region is the mist that regularly rolls in from the Atlantic Ocean.
- Main activities are farming with small stock on communal grazing lands.

Mining

- Quartzite is mined at the Lekkersing ('joyous singing') and the village can be reached from the R382.
- Copper was once mined in the 'copper belt' of the far north western corner of the Richtersveld

Kuboes	Population:	Altitude: Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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Situated approximately 25km east of Sanddrif.

It is surrounded by the Kuboes-, Van der Stel – and Ploegberg mountains. A 23 km pipeline from the Orange River used to supply water to the settlement, but was damaged and a new pipeline is now being built (approximately 25km right from Sanddrift). Boreholes is a source for brakish water.

Origin

- The origin of this town can be traced back to the establishment of the Rhenish Missionary Church in 1840/1844 by Rev. Johan Frederick Hein.
- The nomads of the Richtersveld would commute for miles in order to attend church services and to enable their children to be educated, until more missionaries came, and the itinerant population decided to settle in !Khubus/Kuboes itself and commute between stock posts.
- Historically, !Khubus church became one of the Richtersveld's first permanent settlements, in a time when people still had a nomadic lifestyle.
- Reverend Johan Frederick Hein, teacher and evangelist, began his work here in 1844 and established the landmark Rhenish Church in 1893.
- The local school, once situated under trees, still bears his name (Johan Hein Primary School). Most of the locals spoke the Nama language, a wonderrously soft tongue of clicks and clacks (that may sound like the language of the San to the untrained ear), Reverend Hein relied on an interpreter, Andries Domrogh, whose family still lives in !Khubus/Kuboes.
- Today, this school still teaches the Nama Language and does valuable work in preserving the Nama culture. The young students have exhibited their Nama Stap dances on international stages, and their taught beautiful Nama poems and stories. Performer in !KHUBUS/Kuboes are both old and young. The village boasts choirs and dancers, who perform both traditional and contemporary scenes, many highly spiritual in nature (Links, 2008).

Name

The Nama name *!Kubus* means "Given by God", but can equally mean "Brakish". It is often called the "heartland of the Nama culture".

Claims to fame

It is the oldest village in the Richtersveld and most attractive.

Historical sites

Church	Bears evidence of the origin of the town as a mission station.
Fortuin residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the first official office of the then Advisory council under the leadership of Gert Joël Links. • He was the official successor of his late brother, the last Nama

	Captain afterwards also used as a school classroom and accommodation for Mr.A.A.Fortuin.
J.F. Hein Primary school	Exclusively built by the parents contribution and became the first official education centre under the jurisdiction of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church.
Ploegberg	'castle kran' or 'watch kran' a place adapted from the elders using its shadows to read time; the site on the mountain our ancestors has used to grew wheat for survival. This mountains was named after Governor Simon van der Stee

Attractions and activities

Cultural groups	Traditional meals, Namastap, dancing, singing and music.
Cornellsberg	A 1377m-mountain located a few kilometres from Kuboes and is situated in the core area of the Richtersveld World Heritage Site. It was named after the explorer Fred Cornell who prospected for copper in the early 1900s. The peak is a national heritage site and hosts the largest number of the endangered local quiver tree (<i>Aloe Pylansii</i>) which distribution is confined to this mountain and the Richtersveld National Park.
Wondergat "Mystery Hole"	<p>The Wondergat is situated at Cornellskop, 40km south of Sendelingsdrift and 15km west of Kuboes.</p> <p>It is a 44m- deep limestone sinkhole and some 4.5 m (15 feet) in diameter (almost perfectly circular).</p> <p>One informant said that long ago men went down the hole and came out on the banks of the Orange River many miles away. Others believe it to be the work of man. According to the legend the Wondergat hosts an ancestral spirit of the Nama people, Heitsi Eibib. In his absence, the Great Snake with the diamond on its forehead lives there. This giant river snake killed a lot of people who dared to go near the hole.</p> <p>On 14 March 1925, Fred Cornell described his descent into the Wondergat in the Cape Argus. He then wrote – "I christened the koppie Cornells Koppie".</p> <p>In 1947, a constable of the Diamand detective department in Namaqualand, in search of smugglers, explored the sinkhole with a torch. However, he only found bats, and no diamonds.</p> <p><i>It is known by the Nama as Heitsi Eibib, meaning 'spirit' or 'emptiness'. Many connect the Wondergat to the 'Big Snake' and so it has inspired many stories. Some say the Big Snake can transform itself into a young maiden who lures men to the river to drown them, while the San believed the snake could kill with its breath alone. In the 19th century, the renowned prospector Fred Cornell had so much bother with a large snake like creature scaring his pack mules, that he attempted to</i></p>

	<i>destroy it with dynamite.</i>
The 'Plantasie'	Located at the Mountain Valley Guesthouse near the village. The campsite, which is known as the 'Plantasie', has recently been upgraded (2008) and optional accommodation in a traditional hut (matjieshuis) is available.

A. pillansii is a succulent tree that often exists as single plants growing in a water-stressed environment. Their distribution is confined to Cornellskop and the Richtersveld National Park (/Ais /Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park).

Eksteensfontein	Population:	Altitude: Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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- Situated on the southern border of the Richtersveld.
- Water is obtained from boreholes in the town.

Origin

- In the 1940s, a group of 'Bosluis-Basters', so-called after the name of the farm (in the Pofadder district) they were evicted from under the apartheid policies.
- They were from Khoikhoi and Dutch descent and at the time were rejected by both groups.
- 68 families moved over a distance of about 300 kilometres with their livestock and belongings.
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The name "Bosluis Basters" do not refer to the rusty coloured desert insects, but to the farm Bo-Sluis that they came from.

Name

The original name of the village was "Stinkfontein" ("stink fountain") due to the terrible smell of decaying bodies after fights between the San and Nama.

The Reverend Peter Eksteen was commissioned to start a Dutch Reformed mission church for these people.

Attractions

Museum	Supply information about the "Bosluis Basters" and Namas and their resettlement in Eksteenfontein.
Textile and needlework group	A needle ('lappies') group produces hand-made garments with Richtersveld motives.
Traditional Namastap Dances	This is still danced by children in the town.
Donkey-Cart rides	
Rooiberg	The Red Mountain offers fresh air and open skies, as well as abundant Halfmens and Giant Quiver trees. An old mining office has been converted into a guesthouse and traditionally meals are served.

Lekkersing	Population:	Altitude: Rainfall:	Namaqualand
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- The most southern village in the Richtersveld.
- It is surrounded by rugged mountains and plains.
- Water is obtained from boreholes in the town.

Origin

- Some of the "Bosluis basters" also settled here alongside the Nama.
- In 1928 a school was established and built with traditional 'matjies'

Name

Originates from the Nama name *Kaingneisgaas* describing the beautiful, "Joyous singing" of the women and children at the church that was built close to a fountain. It is also said, that the wind at the fountain makes a beautiful sound.

Attractions

Lekkersing Stone Mine	A historical quartzite mine where amazing dendrite formations are sometimes visible on natural slates. Flagstones and tombstones are cut out of the quartzite. Jan Fieland 027 851 7053
Horse riding and donkey-cart trips.	Visit the Skurweboog Caves (30km north of town on route to Kuboes) close to town where small settlements were found thousands of years ago.
Hiking and 4 x 4 Routes	
Protea Elderly Club Food Garden	Since 1999, this garden has been supplying vegetables, fruit and herbs to the community. Koos Stoffel 027 851 7450
Namastap	Local Nama dance Lena Joseph 027 851 8642

/Ais-/Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

In August 1991, in consultation with the locals, the northern portion of the Richtersveld was declared as national park. The park is owned by the Richtersveld communities and managed jointly by South African National Parks (SANParks). The approach seeks to incorporate the scientific expertise of SANParks, as well as the community's local indigenous skills in order to preserve the local culture and traditional lifestyle. The latest addition to South Africa's World Heritage Sites (2007).

Claims to fame

- The first park in South Africa to incorporate traditional semi-nomadic pastoral utilisation as part of its concept of conservation. The Nama still herd their goats and sheep in the park, and migrate according to the summer and winter rainfalls.
- It is the only mountain desert Park in Southern Africa.
- It is also home to about one third of all known mesembryanthemum species and to a number of rare plants, which includes several species of quiver tree and the halfmens ('half human') or elephant's trunk.
- Richtersveld canoe trail is reckoned to be among South Africa's 25 best hikes

Why fences in the Park?

A number of different scientific equipment and facilities such as weather stations are visible in the park. The visitor will also see simple fences. Certain areas are fenced in for research purposes and closed for grazing (to more accurately measure the influence of grazing pressure on the vegetation).

Other scientific research includes the migratory routes of herds and grazing habits of animals, as well as the changes in the vegetation with respect to climatic influences.

Logistics

Gate hours	07:00-18:00
Gates	Sendelingsdrift from Alexander Bay Helskloof from Kuboes and Lekkersing.
Crossing the border	Visitors no longer need to travel long distances (a 485km detour!) to visit both sections of the park. An old pont that was last in service in 1988 has been restored. It was wrecked by floods just before South West Africa (now Namibia) became independent. Once the country was no longer under South African governance and the border closed, the pont was left in disrepair.

Land surface	6 045 km ² 27% in South Africa (1 625 km ²) 73% in Namibia (4 420km ²)
Two main rivers	!ariiep (Gariep or Orange) on the border with Namibia. The Fish River (Namibian side)
Mountains	The highest point (1652m) is in the Huns mountains on the Namibian side Vandersterr mountain (1337) is the highest on the South African side.
Climate	Arid with an average of 82 mm rain (measured between 1995-2001) The eastern part is subjected to extremely high temperatures with occasional summer rains. In the west, fogs, sandstorms and light winter rains occurs. "Malmokkie" is the local term for the western fogs from the cold Atlantic that also brings much needed moisture for plant growth. Summer temperatures of above 50°C and freezing Winter nights can occur.

Vegetation

- Very sparse vegetation including mostly scrub veld, many succulents, hardy herbs and the 'eight-day grass' that germinates, grows and produces seed within little more than a week after rain.

Halfmens (<i>Pachypodium namaquanum</i>)	Also known as lady's leg and elephant trunk. The halfmens succulents are known to shed their leaves to survive years of drought. The stem tops are inclined to the north, resembling that of humans staring northwards to the plains of Namibia. According to Nama legend, they were driven southwards across the Orange (Gariep) River into the Richtersveld and some of them looked back to where they came from and were immediately turned into trees similar to the Bible story of Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt.
Pearson's Aloe (<i>Aloe pearsonii</i>)	Helshoogte is the only place in the world where this aloe grows in such density. The flowers are yellow or red (December to January).
Quiver Trees	These are aloes and can live up to 400 years. Three varieties occur in the park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aloe dichotoma</i> • <i>Aloe pillansii</i> (basterkokerboom) • <i>Aloe ramosissima</i> (nouienskokerboom)
Shepard's tree <i>Boscia albitrunca</i>	The stem of the tree is twisted and whitish in colour with a compact rounded crown. Although it can grow up to 7m, it is much smaller in the rocky and extremely dry conditions of the region with more fascinating shapes
Botterboom <i>Tylecodon paniculatus</i>	A dwarf, succulent tree and can grow up to 2m tall.

Butterflies	The Richtersveld hosts some of the most unique South African butterflies such as the Namaqua Arrowhead and Warrior Silverspotted Copper.
Silverfish or fishmoths	The one found in houses and considered to be a pest is not indigenous to Southern Africa. However, the indigenous fishmoth seldom enters houses and the Namaqualand-Namib area is home to the largest diversity of silverfish in the world.
Spiders and Scorpions	Well adapted to survive in the desert, Most of the spiders live in burrows (trapdoor spiders and buckspoor spiders). The button spider in turn spins its web in bushes. The park has four endemic sun spiders (roman spiders) All three of South Africa's scorpion families occur in the park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buthidae (thick-tailed) – the more venomous Parabuthus genus is the largest of the scorpions found in the country. • Scorpionidae (ground scorpions) • Ischnuridae (rock scorpions)
Reptiles and amphibians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 60 known reptiles occur. • Two thirds are lizards of which nearly half of these are geckos. • Taken its size, the area has one of the richest gecko faunas in the world. • There are only eight species of frogs due to extreme dry conditions. The paradise frog (<i>Bufo robinsoni</i>) has mastered survival in the desert. • Snakes are rare in the park – only a number of small adders and sand snakes. • Tortoises are few but more common to the sandy flats in the west.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 907 species have been notated to date • The large variety in this arid region can be contributed to the presence of the Orange River and Orange River Wetlands, as well as the regions close proximity to the sea. There is a large number of raptors
Mammals	38 species on checklist The larger mammals are mostly on the Namibian side including Gemsbok, Kudu and the rare Hartmann's Mountain Zebra. Common species include : Steenbok, grey rhebuck, klipspringer, black-backed jackal Interesting species such as porcupine, zorilla (striped polecat), aardwolf, brown hyena, caracal and leopard are nocturnal.

Resources and further reading

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Maps

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Websites

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www.openafrica.org

www.richtersveld-conservancy.org

www.richtersveld.net

www.southafrica.info

www.south-north.co.za

Oral Resources

Jannie & Retha de Beer. (Soebatsfontein).

Volenti van der Westhuizen (Information Officer Eksteenfontein). Email: tic@lantic.net / eksteenfontein@south-north.co.za Tel. 027 – 851 7108.

Gert Links Email: gertlinks@richtersveld-conservancy.org

Information centers

Kubus Tourism Information Center 0278312013

Photos and explorations

ML Kruger – Makiti Guides & Tours (Pty) Ltd. August 2008.

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