



K A R O O C A L M

There is a stretch of the N1 that feels like driving through a living painting. As you climb the Hex River Pass, the lush, green vineyards of De Doorns – which famously produce over half of our country's table grape exports – begin to give way to the rugged, sun-kissed majesty of the Great Karoo.

Words Nicky McArthur



The Huguenot tunnel runs through the mountain range as part of the unique landscape, stretching 3.9 kilometres and cutting through the Du Toitskloof Mountains between Paarl and Worcester. As you transition from the awe-inspiring landscape outside, it is here, tucked away on the Karoo 1 Farm Estate, that AfriCamps at Karoo 1 invites you to experience glamping that is as wild as it is comfortable.

Myth & mountain

The Hex River Valley is steeped in more than just agriculture; it is a place of myth and mystery. While the name originally stems from the crisscrossing Exe (X) of river trails and ox-wagons, local legend tells a different story. Since 1768, tales of the Heks (witch) of the Matroosberg have haunted the peaks. It is said she wanders the mountains under a full moon, searching for a long-lost love. Whether you believe the folklore or not, the landscape is undeniably spellbound as the sun sets over the

Matroosberg – the region's highest peak – casting long, dramatic shadows over the fynbos. This magical time is ideal for wine on the verandah and watching the Karoo stars begin to pop from the hot tub, which we patiently loaded up with wood all day until it was suitably hot.

The days are long in summer

They stretch lazily from sunrise, and we spent most of our mornings at the incomparable rock pool unique to Karoo 1. With cool waters, sun loungers, and epic scenery, it's not hard to while away the time. And when the kids needed movement, we met up with Chris, the king of adventure.

From quad biking and Segways to archery and pellet gun target shooting, there is a lot to do. And, as the games room is filled with Foosball, ping pong, and a pool table, you may not see your kids at all. You can also hike through the rugged shrublands, lunch at the on-site restaurant and delightful bistro, where the lovely bartender



Bike rides, walks, target shooting, hot tubbing and swimming in the Karoo 1 rock pool is all just part of your daily experience.





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Shakes is adept at cocktail making or drink coffee at the on-site Bootleggers, which is close to the hotel pool (below), available to glampers. In the evenings, there are stargazing chats, a boma for chill-out time and outdoor cinema, weather permitting.

What makes AfriCamps at Karoo 1 the ultimate family destination is that it's completely dog friendly. The whole family truly means everyone – no more sad eyes in the rearview mirror as you drive away from home.

Dining or self-catering – you have options, and AfriCamps is also very well known for its breakfast and braai baskets. We tried both. Think wors, steak and kebabs, green salad, potato salad, and the most unbelievable rosemary-toasted ciabatta, and even marshmallows for dessert. Breakfast is equally scrumptious, with choices of eggs, sausage and bacon, yoghurt, homemade granola and honey, as well as freshly baked breads and preserves. The little shop onsite is called

Veldskoen Padstal, and is best for ice, extra firewood and ice cream.

You can't stay at AfriCamps without admiring the tents. Would you call them tents? Seriously comfortable living quarters, two bedrooms, each with extra-length beds, queen-size and one single bunk in the second room plus a proper bathroom with a rain shower. There is even an air conditioner, a fireplace and electric blankets. The kitchen is fully equipped for 5 people, and we happily munched at the kitchen table while playing Scrabble every evening. And when it rains, it's glorious; we zipped up the canvas sides and cosily listened to the Karoo downpour.

From the majestic views of the Hex River Pass to the boutique comforts of your tent, AfriCamps at Karoo 1 isn't just a place to sleep – it's a place to reconnect with the wild heart of South Africa, with family, friends and a dassie or two. 

| africamps.com

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Western Cape: Wellington, Stanford, Robertson, Cederberg, Swellendam, Hex Valley, Oudtshoorn, Wilderness, Plett

Eastern Cape: Addo

Kwa-Zulu Natal: Midlands, Drakensberg, Hluhluwe, Pongola Game Reserve

North West: Magaliesberg

Limpopo: Hoedspruit, Magoebaskloof, Waterberg

Mpumalanga: Hazyview

