

Heimar Canyon

Nahal Hemar

The Israel National trail Day 1 in the Negev

Closest Town **Arad**

Difficulty **Medium**

Length **20 km**

Duration **7-8 hours**

Recommended season **Oct - Apr**

Recommended time **Early morning**

Getting There:

By bus- Take a bus to Arad and get off at the Central Bus station. You can start walking from here along the streets of the industrial area of Arad, but we highly recommend getting a cab to drive you the first part of the hike to the old airstrip (less than 50 shekels).

*Through-hikers of the Israel trail will arrive on foot.

Hike Description: From North to South

Starting Point: Arad, Central Bus station

Finish Point: Beer Efee CG.

The first part of your hike is a walk along the streets of the Arad industrial zone to the old Arad Airstrip. We recommend catching a cab to save this stretch (less than 50 shekels).

If you choose to walk head to the traffic circle at the entrance to town and walk south along Hataasiya street, all the way to the corner of Derech Hagaz street. Make a left turn onto Derech Hagaz and follow the paved road out of the industrial zone and all the way onto the old airstrip.

Find the dirt road with the Green Markers and follow it for 3.5 km south east at first and southwest, until it is joined by red markers. make a right turn onto the red marked trail and follow it for half a kilometer to Black markers. Turn left to the black trail and it will shortly drop into the canyon of Nahal Kanfan. For the next 7 km you'll be hiking down-canyon, with the same black markers, mostly along the canyon floor and occasionally on ledges above it. Impressive boulders and hidden ledges are shelter to the birds and reptiles of this area. Be mindful about the weather, this canyon can be extremely dangerous during times of flash floods in the winter.

Negev Trails

At the meeting of Nahal Kanfan and Nahal Heimar switch to Blue markers and turn left (southeast). Walk for two km and when you see a large acacia in the place where two wadis meet- look on the canyon wall to your right to find a cave about 5 feet from the ground. Climbing into the cave might be a little hairy, but this is one of the most important archeological sites in the Negev. The Hemar canyon cave was home to prehistoric dwellers who left behind stone tools and carved masks. These were early nomadic farmers and shepherds who found shelter in the cave where two major ancient roads meet- The Edom road, leading from Beer Sheva and Arad to the southern part of the dead sea and onward into Jordan, and the Atarim road, (the way of the sites), mentioned in the bible and leading from Arad to central Sinai.

Head to the tree and rest in the shade. Continue east along the blue markers and into a wide right-curve in the wadi. Follow the wadi for another 1.5 km, passing an abandoned quarry on the right and arrive at green markers along a dirt road. Continue southeast along the road for 1km. Be careful of the trucks that use this road as well. You'll arrive at road 258, and your campsite.

This campsite is messy and noisy and occasionally used as a temporary parking site for heavy machinery. You might prefer to camp further back at the blue-green trail meet, 1km northwest.

Attractions: Narrow Canyon, Seasonal water holes, Acacia Tree, Occasional camel, Prehistoric cave.