

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**

Hike Description: From North to South

Starting Point: Beer Efee CG

Finish Point: Arad, Central Bus station.

From the Road Head west along the dirt road for 1.5 km following the green markers. Be careful as there are trucks driving along this road. When the green markers branch off to the right (north), switch to the blue markers and continue north-west for another 1km, passing an abandoned quarry on the left, and arriving at a wide left curve in the wadi. Complete the curve and you'll see an impressive lone Acacia tree, at a meeting point of two wadis. Rest in the shade for a bit.

Turn into the canyon on the right (north), staying on the blue markers, and immediately look for a small cave about 5 feet up on the cliff to your left (west). 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.

Continue along the blue markers for another 2km and arrive at another wadi crossing, and find the black markers branching to the right (north-northeast).

Negev Trails

Follow these markers into wadi Kanfan. For the next 7 km you'll be hiking up-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. You'll exit the canyon on wide plateau with Bedouin settlements visible on the Northeast.

Follow the markers for another 1km and meet with red markers. Continue northeast along the jeep track for another 0.5 km and arrive at a dirt road marked in green markers. A pipe is laid along the road.

From this point a pickup can be arranged in advance. If you choose to walk, turn left and follow the dirt road for 3.5km, passing a sharp left turn and a blue trail on your right. Arrive at the old Arad Airstrip.

You can call a cab from the city to take you the rest of the way (less than 50 shekels), or turn north along the paved road and follow it for 4km, through the streets of the Arad industrial area all the way to the center of town.

Attractions: Lone acacia tree, Prehistoric Cave, Narrow canyon, seasonal waterholes, roaming camels, open vistas.