

Witjira National Park 769,000ha



A true oasis in the desert, Witjira National Park features more than 120 springs surrounded by lush greenery and abundant wildlife. The park sits on the western edge of the Simpson Desert in the far north of South Australia amid endless sand dunes and stark gibber plains.

The park includes the National Heritage-listed Dalhousie Springs, used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years as a source of food, shelter and medicine. You can swim in the spring's warm waters. The springs are home to unique species of fish such as the Dalhousie hardyhead and other rare aquatic life found nowhere else in the world.

The attraction of the springs, combined with some delightful camping spots and quality visitor facilities, make Witjira one of the most popular parks in the outback.

When to visit

The best time of year to visit is between May and September. If you're lucky enough to visit the park a few weeks after a soaking rain, you'll be rewarded with the ephemeral wildflowers bursting into bloom in the sand dune country.

Opening hours

The park is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Fees

Fees apply to enter and camp in Witjira National Park. Failure to display a valid permit on the designated vehicle may result in a fine. Buy camping permits at the self-registration station at the Dalhousie office. A Desert Parks Pass is required to travel east of Dalhousie Springs.

Desert Parks Pass

A Desert Parks Pass is a 12-month permit that allows camping and entry to Witjira National Park, as well as a number of other parks. The Desert Parks Pass is issued on a per vehicle basis. It includes the maps required to visit the area, information on the park, and requirements for safe travel through the South Australian outback.

Buy a Desert Parks Pass at Mount Dare or online at parks.sa.gov.au.

Opening hours

The park is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Getting there

Witjira National Park is located 887km north-west of Port Augusta. Access is via Stuart Highway, Oodnadatta.

Contact

Emergency: 000

Witjira National Park
(+61 08) 8648 5328

General park enquiries: (+61 8) 8204 1910
DEWNR.CustomerServiceCentre@sa.gov.au
parks.sa.gov.au | facebook.com/parkssa

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Things to see

As well as hot springs and historic ruins in the remote desert, you'll enjoy spectacular sunsets and see dingoes, lizards, and rare species of fish.

Rangers recommend:

- Relaxing in the warm waters at Dalhousie Springs.
- Exploring the historical, heritage-listed Dalhousie Ruins.
- Admiring the red mulga, gidgee, coolibah and whitewood trees along the many creeks.
- Watching out for the unusual Dalhousie goby fish, and rare bird species, such as the Australian bustard, the flock bronzewing, and the plains wanderer.
- Observing dingoes, the central bearded dragon, Gould's sand goanna and, if you're lucky, red kangaroos in their natural habitat.

Traditional owners

Witjira National Park is part of the traditional country of the Lower Southern Arrernte and Wangkangurru people and is of special cultural significance to members of these groups. The ancient springs have a strong mythological significance for Aboriginal people and are featured in many tribal stories and songs, and there are many Aboriginal cultural and heritage sites within the park. A co-management board manages the park. It comprises members of the two groups and members of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

Camping

Dalhousie Springs

This well-established campground has a number of designated campsites. There are toilets, cold showers and a day visitor parking area. The picturesque Dalhousie Homestead ruins are a short drive away and there are two walks around the springs and surrounding country. Generators are allowed but must be turned off between 10pm and 7am. No wood fires are permitted.

Mount Dare Hotel

The Mount Dare campground has a pub nearby with food and drinks, hot showers, fuel, water and mechanical assistance. Mount Dare is a handy supply stop for travellers. If there are no fire restrictions in place, you can have a campfire, however you will need to bring your own firewood.

3 O'clock Creek

The bush camping area at 3 O'clock Creek has shady camping spots and water. This bore water is the last place to fill up on drinking water before you cross the desert. Please be self-sufficient and carry adequate supplies of drinking water with you. No wood fires are permitted.

Purni Bore

Purni Bore is a pleasant camping spot with abundant birdlife; however, you will need to take your own drinking water and a gas/fuel stove. There is a hot shower, toilets and shelter. Generators are allowed but must be turned off between 10pm and 7am. A Desert Parks Pass is required to gain access east of Dalhousie and camp at Purni Bore. No wood fires are permitted.

Park maps on your mobile

Download free maps of this park for your mobile device from [Avenza PDF Maps](#) while you have mobile phone coverage. Used within the app, the maps allow you to calculate distances and locate yourself within the park (GPS coverage required).



Mobile phone coverage

There is no mobile phone coverage in the park.

**No internet?
No worries.**



Our maps are geo-enabled meaning you will always have your location dot no matter where you are*

*when used in conjunction with the FREE Avenza app and smart phone

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Know before you go

Every national park is different. Each has its own challenging environment and it is important to understand how to stay safe while enjoying all the park has to offer.

Witjira National Park is a harsh, desert environment. The summer heat can be dangerous, and rain can quickly change the environment making the terrain difficult to navigate. While the park is ideally suited for 4WD vehicles, it is not suitable for caravans. Please:

- leave your pets at home
- respect the springs, and the Indigenous cultural and heritage sites
- do not enter Aboriginal sites or living areas
- do not hunt or use firearms
- do not feed or disturb animals (especially the dingoes) or remove native plants
- do not leave the designated tracks in your vehicle
- maintain the 40km/h speed limit in the park
- take your rubbish with you, including tyres, tubes and car batteries (alternatively, general rubbish can be dropped at designated bins 3 km east and west of Dalhousie Springs – not tyres, tubes and batteries)
- avoid washing close to water supplies, even a small amount of soap or detergent will cause pollution
- do not use soap or detergent while bathing in the springs
- use toilet facilities where they are available. Bury toilet waste well away from water and burn toilet paper.

Fire safety

This park may be closed on days of extreme fire danger. Solid fuel fires are prohibited from mid-November to mid-April. Wood fires are not permitted at any time, except in the Mount Dare campground.

- Gas fires and stoves are permitted except on days of total fire ban (fire ban information: cfs.sa.gov.au).
- Small cooking fires are permitted at the Mount Dare campground if fire restrictions are not in force. More information at parks.sa.gov.au.
- Gathering firewood in the park is prohibited.

Driving safety

You are responsible for your own safety. Notify a responsible person of your itinerary and expected date and time of return.

Most roads in this park are 4WD accessible only. Up-to-date road conditions can be checked via the far northern and western road report, phone 1300 361 033. Alternatively, call the Desert Parks administration officer on (+61 8) 8648 5328.

- Before you leave home ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy and that you are carrying appropriate spare parts for most contingencies – including a strong jack, and if possible, two spare wheels.
- Carry adequate supplies of fuel, food and water in case of stranding.
- Use only public access routes and designated camping areas.
- Carry a satellite phone or an HF radio. Normal mobile phones do not work in most outback areas. It is also a good idea to carry an EPIRB.
- Do not leave your vehicle in the event of a breakdown.
- Check the conditions of outback roads before leaving the nearest major town.
- Take note of where petrol stations are en route and their hours of operation.
- Take frequent rest breaks and change drivers regularly.
- Obey road closure signs and remain on main roads. Substantial fines apply for travelling off track. Deviating from the roads can create tyre marks that last for decades.

Dingo safety

To remain safe and to keep dingoes wild, please:

- store rubbish, food, shoes and leather items securely and never feed dingoes – they are naturally lean animals
- always stay close to your children
- never encourage, excite, or run away from dingoes and if attacked, aggressively defend yourself.

Friends of the Simpson Desert Parks

The Friends of Simpson Desert Parks is a community-based group of volunteers who work to protect and develop the natural and cultural heritage in the park. Find out more about volunteering in parks at parks.sa.gov.au.