



## WHAT TO DO IN AND AROUND OUR LOVELY LITTLE SETTLEMENT KNOWN AS UIS

### Trip 1: Ethical Cactus Elephant Tour in the Ugab River



Kickstart your morning with a thrilling journey through the Ugab River as we search for the elusive desert-adapted elephants. They're not always up for a meet-and-greet, but when they do show, it's unforgettable! Drive in the comfort of your own vehicle, communicating with the lead vehicle in front of you via 2-way radio. Departing at 08:30, this half-day excursion offers ample time to marvel at the river landscape, with a light lunch pack or braai to keep you fueled. Return by around 13:00, hopefully with some elephant sightings to boast about.

### Self-Drive Trip 2: Marvels Of a Deserted Marble Mine... And The Breathtaking Silence

For those with an eye for unique views and a self exploring adventure, this trip is a gem! Visit the old marble mine, —while you won't spot any elephants here, the sights and silence are priceless.

### Self-Drive Trip 3: White Lady & Bushman Rock Painting Hike

About a 45-minute drive – embark on a journey which starts at the foot of the Brandberg Mountain to explore the famous rock paintings, this trip offers a unique mix of history and physical activity about a 4km hike. Enjoy the breathtaking landscape while hiking to the primitive paintings. Operating hours are between 8am and the last tour goes in at 15:30pm. At the entrance you will find an office where you pay for the permit and a guide who will accompany you on the hike.

### Other Points of Interest:

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- Walk the Fluorite Crystals Labyrinth in the neighbouring Moringa Valley Estate.
- Take a short walk/drive through the neighbouring Moringa Valley Estate to view the life size elephant statue.
- Take a short walk/drive to visit the 26 graves of the soccer team (that died in their sleep at the beginning of the 20th century) at the entrance to Uis.
- Visit the numerous semi-precious stone vendors along the side of the road just outside Uis on the Uis/Henties road.
- Visit the nearby Himba Village on the side of the road just outside Uis on the Uis/Khorixas Road.
- Day guided tour around the Brandberg Mountain (visit the Rock Scorpion), see the beautiful ever-changing terrain, and up the Ugab River to hopefully see the famous Desert Elephant and thereafter what is known as Balancing Rock and Elephant Rock.
- Day guided Geology and Mineral Tour.



# WHAT TO DO IN AND AROUND UIS



## SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT UIS AND “WHAT TO DO”

Uis is a settlement located in Erongo Region, Namibia and is located at the foot of the Brandberg, Namibia's highest mountain. It belongs to the Dâures electoral constituency. The ephemeral Uis River, a tributary to the Ugab River, passes the settlement. Located in the former Damaraland, it is known for the local mineral wealth.

Uis is home to Brandberg Primary School and Petrus Ganeb Secondary School, which were built before Namibian independence.

Uis has a kiln baked brick factory famously known for the “Uis Clay Bricks” (reddish pink in colour), as well as a cement brick making factory for the growing building industry. It has approximately 3600 inhabitants and, before being downgraded from “village” to “settlement” in 2010; , owned 10 square kilometers of land!

However, nowadays, this “settlement” boasts a supermarket, hardware store, liquor store, various types of accommodation, a service station and a landing strip... together with a few other small shops.

Uis still produces rare rocks and minerals. Namibia is well known as a mineral rich country and geologists come from all over the world to study in Namibia because much of the interesting geology and rare rocks are situated at ground level rather than on top of mountains or deep underground. It is possible to find some excellent examples of rock crystals and minerals around Uis. The area is renowned for the famous Brandberg Crystal. These are crystals that were formed around icicles millions of years ago when the area was an ice cap. They are mostly clear crystals and one can often see water encapsulated within. Selling these rocks is part of the local economy of Uis and you can be sure, if you do buy something, that you are purchasing a true Namibian souvenir.

**Desert tragedy in Uis:** A tragic incident involved migrant mine workers who died after using the toxic *Euphorbia damarana* plant (also known as Damara milk bush) as firewood for a barbecue. The smoke from the burning euphorbia is believed to have poisoned the meat, leading to the deaths of at least 27 individuals who were buried at the site.

*The Plant:* *Euphorbia damarana* is a highly toxic plant found in Namibia, particularly in the Uis area. It's known for its milky latex, which is poisonous and can cause severe skin irritation, blindness, and even death if ingested or if contact is made with open wounds.

*The Incident:* In the 1960s, a group of migrant mine workers at Uis Tin Mine used dried branches of *Euphorbia damarana* to make a fire for a barbecue. The smoke from the burning plant is believed to have contaminated the meat, leading to the deaths of at least 27 workers.

*The Aftermath:* The workers were buried at the same location where they cooked the meat, near a dead *Euphorbia damarana* plant.

*Subsequent Research:* Further research has focused on identifying the specific toxins in the smoke and sap of *Euphorbia damarana*, confirming its extreme toxicity.

## THE BRANDBERG (Wikipedia)

The Brandberg is Namibia's highest mountain, located in former Damaraland (now Erongo) in the northwestern Namib Desert, near the coast, covering an area of approximately 650 km<sup>2</sup>. With its highest point, the Königstein (German for ‘King’s Stone’), standing at 2,573 m (8,442 ft) above sea level and located on the flat Namib gravel plains, on a clear day, ‘The Brandberg’ can be seen from a great distance. The nearest settlement is Uis, roughly 30 km from the mountain. The core area of 450 square kilometers (170 sq mi) was declared a National Monument in 1951. The name Brandberg is Afrikaans, Dutch and German for Burning Mountain, which comes from its glowing colour which is sometimes seen in the setting sun. The Damara name for the mountain is Dâures, which means ‘burning mountain’, while the Herero name, Omukuruvaro means ‘mountain of the Gods’.

The Brandberg Massif or Brandberg Intrusion is a granitic intrusion, which forms a dome-shaped massif. It originated during early Cretaceous rifting that led to the opening of the South Atlantic Ocean. The Brandberg is a spiritual site of great significance to the San (Bushman) tribes. The main tourist attraction is The White Lady rock painting, located on a rock face with other artwork, under a small rock overhang, in the Tsisab Ravine at the foot of the mountain. The ravine contains more than 1 000 rock shelters, as well as more than 45 000 rock paintings, said by some to be over 20,000 years old. To reach The White Lady it is necessary to hike for about 40 minutes over rough terrain, along the ancient watercourses threading through the mountain. Damaraland is well known for its grotesque aloes and euphorbias. The area has many plants and trees that have an alien appearance, due in part to the extreme climatic conditions. The area is uninhabited and wild. It is very arid and finding water can be difficult or impossible. In summer temperatures over 40°C are routine. The numbers of animals are small because the environment cannot support large populations, however most of the desert species that are found in Namibia are present and visitors to the area might glimpse a desert dwelling elephant or a rare black rhino. The scorpion fauna of the Brandberg massif is probably the richest in southern Africa.

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## UIS TIN MINE

The Uis Tin Mine is renowned for having some of the world's largest tin reserves. Situated in a small mining town, Uis is accessible via road C35 from the coast towards Khorixas or by C36 from Omaruru. The tiny mining town cannot be missed because of its prominent white mountain, making it an unmistakable landmark. The name "Uis" translates to "bitter water". Ore is produced by drilling and blasting then hand sorted, crushed and refined. The tin-bearing pegmatite at Uis lies in a 32 km wide schist belt stretching from Uis to Cape Cross, over a distance of 130 km. Uis is probably the largest tin-bearing pegmatite in the world. The white mine spoils are visible from afar, known as "The White Mountain".

### A little history about the mine:

**1911** Tin was first discovered in Uis by Dr. Paul Merker of the German Colonial Gesellschaft.

**1923** August Stauch, known for discovering diamonds at Kolmanskop, purchased the tin deposits in the Usakos, Karibib, Omaruru, and Uis districts, which were mined under the name Namib Tin Mines Ltd.

**1930-1933** During the Great Depression, no tin was produced.

**1938** Krupp of Germany acquired the mine and the plans were laid down to mine Uis pegmatite deposits on a large scale but the outbreak of World War 2 brought this development to a standstill.

Post-War Period: After the war the custodian of enemy property sold the mine to Mr. Angus Munro, whose death in a plane crash further delayed production.

**1951** Uis Tin Mining Company was established and a settlement was developed in 1958 as a mine workers' residence when ISCOR, a South African mining company, started operations here and increased production. However, the ore grade at Uis was very low, and the mine, at its time the largest open-cast tin mine in the world, was viable only because South Africa, to which the territory was mandated, was economically isolated and could not buy tin on the world market. When apartheid was abolished, and international sanctions were lifted the mine was no longer competitive.

**1958** Imkor Tin (Pty) Ltd acquired Uis and other properties that used to belong to Namib Tin Mines. They installed an extraction plant with a capacity of 35 tons per hour, later expanded to 100 tons per hour by 1966, marking the development of the present town of Uis, including a petrol filling station and a non-profit supermarket for its employees. Imkor built a clinic and arranged a weekly visits by doctors from Omaruru as well as employing a full time nursing sister. The company also made available a weekly visits by Bank Windhoek. Furthermore the company built the school and sports grounds for school competitions. The 25 meter long swimming pool was used for swimming competitions.

**1980** The plant was further enlarged to process 140 tons per hour on a 24 hour basis seven days a week, producing 100-120 tons of cassiterite (tin ore or tin oxide) monthly. During the time of Imkor operation the mine allowed the local Damara people to take ore from the open pits to extract ore by means of skotteling and selling the concentrate to the mine. A lot of ore was produced by local people in numerous small pits in and outside of the mining property. These activities contributed up to 100 tons per year to the mine output.

**1990** The mine closed in November, caused a dramatic fall in local tin production and life of inhabitants.

**1991** The main mining operation closed because the price of tin dropped far enough to make it uneconomical. There was still minimal work progressing on the mine site. Technology had improved enough to make it worthwhile to re-process the already excavated ore that was originally discarded and there is a tiny re-processing plant located near the old mine dumps. This ore is processed to an enriched state and then taken to Walvis Bay for export. *Uis was in danger of becoming a ghost town if mining could not be continued.*

**1994** With aid from the Sweden Raw Materials Group, a small mining project resumed, producing 2-3 kg of tin ore per hour.

*Since the mine closure, the petrol station and supermarket were taken over by private enterprise. The old mine recreation club, single quarters and some of the houses were taken over and turned into a tourist rest camp, restaurant and a bar... Several old mine houses were for sale and many were sold to retired people from other parts of the country (world even). Uis was downgraded to "settlement" status in 2010, slowly investment and work started again at the old mine. Through tourism, Uis started to develop a new life away from mining activities.*

Afritin Mining was established in 2017, and during August 2019, Afritin announced first tin concentrate production at its flagship Uis mine in Namibia, officially bringing the operation back to life. Afritin Mining Limited is the first pure tin company listed in London and its vision is to create a portfolio of globally significant, conflict-free, tin- producing assets.

During January 2023 the Afritin Mining changed its name to Andrada Mining, the name Andrada reflects the company's expanding lithium and tantalum resources alongside its existing tin production.

Many of the old houses have since been bought up by the mine for mine accommodation. The local shop has expanded to include a hardware store and liquor store... which has since exploded into a very self-sufficient little settlement/village/town...

This quaint little mining town is blossoming full of history and character and is fiercely looked after by its locals.

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- Visit the nearby Himba Village on the side of the road just outside Uis on the Uis/Khorixas Road.
- Visit the nearby Deserted Marble Mine and enjoy the wide open spaces and silence.
- Take a short drive to the foot of the Brandberg Mountain and hike to the nearby White Lady Rock and Bushman paintings.
- Half day guided tour to search for the elusive Desert-Adapted Elephant.
- Day guided tour around the Brandberg (visit the Rock Scorpion), see the beautiful everchanging terrain, and up the Ugab River to hopefully see the famous Desert Elephant and thereafter what is known as Balancing Rock and Elephant Rock.
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## ABOUT THE WORLD-REOWNED CACTUS AND COFFEE TEAGARDEN AND DAUREB ISIB CAMPSITE AND B&B:

Way back in 2015... Pam van der Meer, having a love for food and plants, was instrumental in creating “Cactus and Coffee Teagarden”. Her husband, Mike van der Meer, then complimented this with a lovely campsite with some cosy bungalows known as Daureb Isib Campsite and B&B. The theme throughout being that of beautiful, landscaped gardens where one of the largest selection of Succulents and Cacti’s can be found.

In early 2020, at the start of Covid, where life - as we all knew it - changed forever, John & Penny Jones acquired this establishment and while we ‘survived’ for the next few years of Covid, are taking this lovely oasis to new levels of peace and tranquility, while we try mesh our footprint in with the gentle hum of the ever present mine ;-)

Namibia towns (especially coastal) are well known for Palm Trees they grow easily and seem to be able to withstand the harsh desert conditions. Just a fun fact: Walvis Bay has the longest row of palm trees in the world – more than 1600 palm trees planted on either side of the road – the leaves are regularly cut, and often used for shade or wind shelter. They brown quickly in the harsh sun but offer that very much needed shade!

The small challenges we face in Uis...

Supplies (we find out that we are out of stock on our weekly delivery from suppliers literally when they do not deliver as they in turn are out of stock)... our one and only local supermarket becomes our next best friend! Alternatively we bring in supplies from Omaruru, Henties or Swakop making use of our local taxi drivers! The settlement of Uis has grown tenfold with the increase in mining activity over the very recent 3 - 4 years since Covid. This in turn puts a strain on our water and electricity supply. One can only but say Uis is having to play “catchup” on all service delivery due to the sudden influx of feet that were simply not here in the past!

Showers and Uis and the natural environment... we make use of gas geysers, but they can be annoyingly temperamental. So you open your hot water tap to the max, the flow ignites the gas to the burners and ‘violá’ you should have hot water... which is 9 times out of ten the case... where the temperamental comes in to play is when Uis has low water pressure... or serious winds which blow out the burner... on a positive note that is more the exception than the rule!

As you enjoy your stay with us, we’d like to remind you that our desert landscape is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including the intriguing horned adder, which is quite common to our establishment. While exploring our grounds, please remain vigilant as you may encounter various natural inhabitants, including insects, snakes, scorpions, geckos and birds.

Geckos play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance by controlling insect populations, such as mosquitoes. These shy creatures are harmless to humans, preferring to avoid interaction unless threatened. They do not bite unless provoked, and they are not venomous.

Similarly, while Namibia hosts various species of snakes and scorpions, most are non-confrontational unless disturbed. However, it’s essential to exercise caution and respect their presence. Among these species is the horned adder, a master of camouflage with its sand-coloured scales and distinctive horn-like projections above its eyes. Though venomous, horned adders are typically docile and avoid confrontation when left undisturbed.

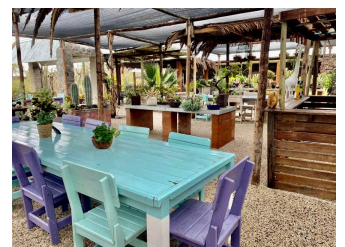
To ensure your safety and the preservation of our local wildlife, we kindly request that guests refrain from handling or disturbing any wildlife they encounter during their stay. It’s crucial to admire these creatures from a safe distance and avoid any actions that may agitate or harm them.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we strive to maintain harmony with our natural surroundings.



If Covid has taught us one thing though it is not to complain.  
We are so grateful and thankful to welcome you  
to our establishment and really wish you a pleasant  
stay and EMBRACE OUR SPACE with peace, love  
and happiness.

*John, Penny, Anna-Zeta and Luke Jones  
and our wonderful Team*



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