

CRYSTAL POOLS

N E A R G O R D O N ' S B A Y

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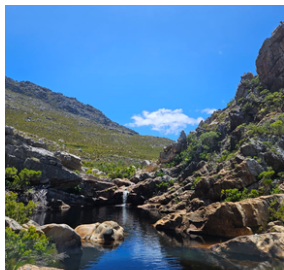
This was written on December 23rd, 2024. Please note that information may become outdated over time.



GETTING A PERMIT

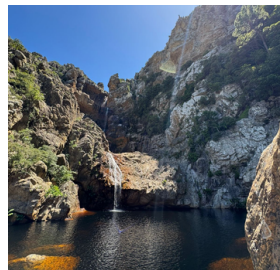
To protect this natural treasure, a permit is required for the Crystal Pools hike. Here's how to obtain one

1.



Check availability

Call Steenbras Nature Reserve at +27(0)21 444 6927 to confirm your desired date.



2.

Request a permit

Email

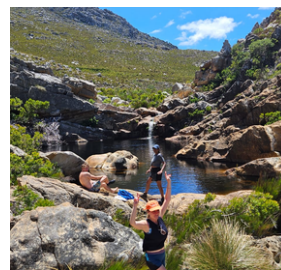
steenbras.naturereserve@capetown.gov.za with your group size and desired date at least 2 working days in advance.

3.



Complete the booking form

Complete the Steenbras Booking form provided by the nature reserve, attach a copy of your ID/passport, and return it to them.



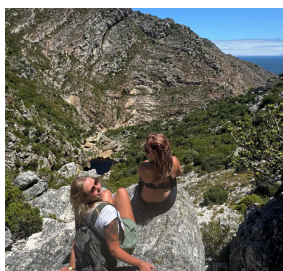
4.

Make payment

You'll receive an invoice with payment details. Pay the R85 per person fee online or at your nearest Nedbank, Pep, Checkers, Woolworths, Shoprite, pick n Pay, or Spar. Remember to send a photo of your payment slip to

steenbras.naturereserve@capetown.gov.za

5.



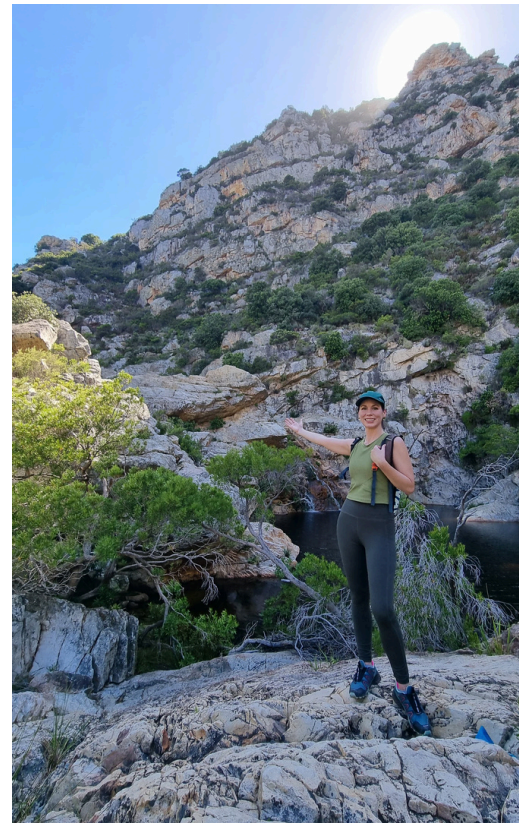
Receive and print your permit

Once payment is processed, your permit will be emailed. Bring a printed or electronic copy of your permit on the hike for validation by a ranger.



HIKING RESPONSIBLY

- Wear good hiking shoes, a sun hat, and sunscreen.
- Do not feed or intentionally disturb any animals. Respect wildlife and the natural environment.
- Firearms or Pets are not allowed.
- No fires or gas appliances are allowed.



No overnighting is permitted.

- Pack enough water and snacks (but be mindful of baboons).
- Do not litter. This area is a NO BinZone, please take all your waste home with you.
- Stick to the designated foot path and walk single file to prevent soil erosion.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Permits are only issued from 1st of November to 30 April each year (closed during winter months).

Maximum group size is 10 people.

Only 50 people are allowed in the reserve per day.



Finding the Crystal Pools Trailhead

THE CRYSTAL POOLS

The pools are truly inviting for swimming and relaxing—you could easily spend a whole day here! However, be mindful of the baboons in the area. While we didn't encounter any on our hike, they are known to be quite common. To avoid any unwanted encounters, it's best to minimize the amount of food you bring. We opted to leave the picnic lunch behind and instead enjoyed a delicious meal at PitStop Lodge, a lovely diner near Crystal Pools, after our hike.

Of course, you can still bring snacks to keep you energized on the trail and be sure to pack at least 2 Liters of water to stay hydrated.

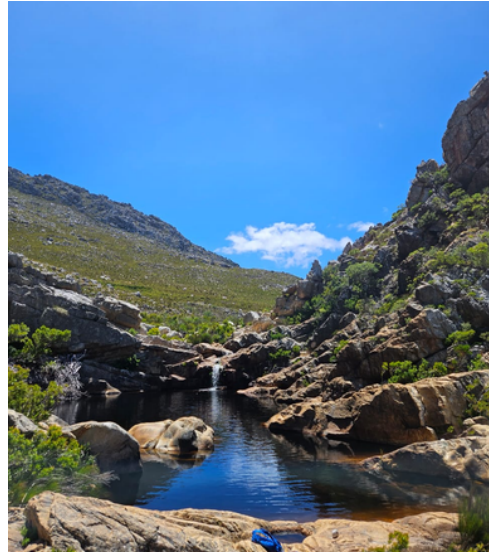
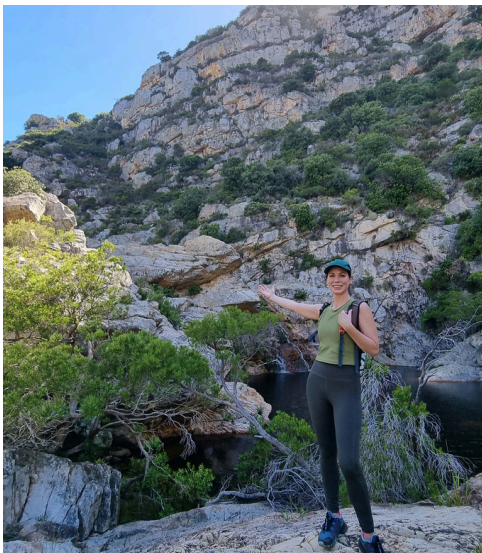
The trail winds through lush fynbos, with large boulders adding to the scenic landscape.

Important Note

Cell phone signal can be unreliable in the mountains. If you're hiking with a larger group, consider bringing walkie-talkies. We used the Baofeng 16 Channel UHF Walkie Talkie 2 Way Radio (available on Takealot for around R400), which worked perfectly when our group split into different paces. It allowed us to stay connected and coordinate easily.

FINDING THE CRYSTAL POOLS TRAILHEAD

- The Crystal Pools Hiking Trail begins on the R44, heading towards Rooi-Els. Here's how to find the trailhead:
- Cross the Steenbras River bridge: Look for the first white bridge after Gordon's Bay.
- Find parking: A couple hundred meters past the bridge, you'll find parking on the right-hand side of the road.
- Look for the wooden hut: The trailhead is marked by a small wooden hut.



- First pool: About 45 – 1-hour minutes from the start, this pool offers a great spot for a break.
- Second pool: Another 10-15 minutes further, this is the largest pool, perfect for swimming. There is also a waterfall to enjoy a natural "shower."
- Third pool: For those seeking more adventure, a steep climb leads to a smaller pool with a more secluded feel. "The third pool is up a steep rocky section of path and has a much smaller waterfall on the far bank. The entry into the water was a little trickier with not much in the way of a seating area. Only a few members of our hiking group went all the way up to the top as the rest of us were very happy with everything the second pool had to offer.
- Fourth & Fifth pool: These pools are located along the same path as the first and second pools, about 10-15 minutes apart. While they're worth a quick visit, if you're short on time, we recommend focusing on the upper pools (second, third, or fourth) for a longer stay.

Important Note

While jumping from the rocks is exhilarating, please prioritize safety. Diving is strictly prohibited. It's recommended to hike with a registered guide, or someone experienced with the trail.

This hike is a great option for those with a moderate level of fitness. While the terrain is generally flat, the 6.5-hour duration (including breaks) requires some stamina. Be sure to pack plenty of snacks and water and start early to beat the heat! Don't forget to wear comfortable shoes with good grip and ankle support—trail shoes or hiking boots are ideal.

This was one of my favourite hikes I've done combining beautiful ocean views, with gorgeous fynbos and cool mountain swimming spots. I'd highly recommend it! And while getting the permit can be a bit of a mission, I promise it's well worth it!"

This is a truly special hike that combines stunning scenery, refreshing swims, and a sense of adventure. While getting a permit requires some planning, it's well worth the effort to experience the beauty of Crystal Pools.

