FAQ – Iona National Park

1. General Information

1.1 What is Iona National Park?

Iona National Park is the oldest protected landscape in Angola, created to conserve biodiversity and safeguard diverse ecosystems, including desert, savannah, and coastal dunes. Iona has great ecological, historical, and cultural importance.

1.2 Where is Iona National Park located?

Iona National Park is located in Namibe Province, in southwestern Angola, stretching along the Atlantic coastline of the Namib Desert from the border with Namibia, and extending inland. Iona covers an area of 15,150km^2. Its boundaries are formed by the Cunene River to the south, the Curoca River to the north, and the base of the Great Escarpment at the Tchamaline and Cafema mountains to the east.

1.3 What can we see in the Park?

- **Landscapes:** Sand dunes, desert plains, rocky inselberg mountains, unique geological formations, and isolated beaches.
- **Wildlife:** Antelope (oryx, springbok, dik-dik, steenbok and klipspringer), Hartmann's mountain zebra, giraffe, cheetah, brown hyaena, ostrich, jackal, Cape fur seals, and many kinds of small mammal.
- **Birdlife:** Eagles, falcons, large flocks of seabirds, migratory birds, and species endemic to arid regions.
- **Vegetation:** Drought-resistant plants, large numbers of *Welwitschia mirabilis*, euphorbia, cacti, seasonal grasses, trees, and desert shrubs.
- **Seasonal changes:** Rain is inconsistent in Iona, but when it occurs, the landscape is transformed by a sudden green flush and many different flowers.

2. Fees, Payments, and Documentation

2.1 How much are visitor fees?

- Adults and children 12 years old: **5,000.00 Kz per entrance**

- Children from 6 to 12 years old: **2,500.00 Kz per entrance**

Children under 6 years old: **Exempt from payment**

2.2 How much are vehicle fees?

- Authorised vehicles: **4,000 Kz per day per vehicle**
- Includes both entry and exit days, within the established hours (please see below).

2.3 How much are camping fees?

- Authorised vehicles: **4,000 Kz per night per vehicle**
- Camping is permitted only in designated areas. Please note that this is 'wild camping', with no supporting infrastructure (water, electricity, or sanitation).

2.4 Does the Park provide tour guides?

The Park does not provide tour guides, but local tour operators can be hired in Moçâmedes.

2.5 How can I pay the fees?

- **Cash (Kwanza only):** Paid at the Park entrance.
- **Advance bank transfer:** Send request via email to **info.iona@africanparks.org**, providing visitor and vehicle details, entry and exit dates, planned access gate, and the number of days you will be in the Park (including arrival and departure days). We will then send you a quotation. After payment, you must send proof of payment to the same email address, and your official entry pass will be issued.

2.6 What are the entry requirements for the Park?

- Identification documents (passport or national ID).
- Signed **Waiver, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement** (all available at the Park entrance).
- Make payment or present proof of advance payment (see above).
- Please retain your invoice from the Park gate officers for future inspection.

2.7 What is the cancellation policy?

We recommend that you confirm your visit via official email or telephone.

3. Planning Your Visit

3.1 Do I need to book in advance to visit the Park?

There is no booking system in place, and no designated campsite may be used exclusively.

3.2 Where are the Park access gates?

- Ponta Albina (for access to the dunes and coastline)
- Salonjamba and Pediva (for access to the central and eastern parts of Iona)
- Espinheira (for visitors coming from Namibia)

Choose the gate according to the area you wish to explore. Please note that Espinheira is some distance inside the Park.

3.3 How can I reach the Park?

- **From Moçâmedes:** Any gate can be used (Ponta Albina, Salonjamba or Pediva).
- **From Namibia (by land):** Omahene Border Post → Chitado → Hangumbe → Oncocua (this is where you will cross the Iona boundary) → Erola → Iona Village → Espinheira

3.4 Can I enter the Park with my own vehicle?

Yes, as long as it is a **4x4 vehicle weighing not more than 4 tonnes, and designed to carry not more than 20 passengers**.

3.5 Can I rent a vehicle in the Park?

No, this service is not available.

3.6 Can I use public transport?

No. There is no public transport access to the Park.

4. Rules and Safety

4.1 Is it safe to visit the Park?

Most visits to Iona National Park take place without incident. However, it must be remembered that the Park is a remote wilderness area with potentially dangerous wildlife, a challenging climate and terrain, and no mobile phone signal. Visits to the Park are therefore entirely at your own risk.

4.2 Do I need authorisation to enter the Park?

Yes. Prior authorisation and payment of entrance fees are mandatory.

4.4 Can I enter the Park alone?

This is not recommended. Always visit with a well-equipped 4x4 vehicle and an experienced driver, and carry sufficient fuel, water, and food for your entire stay, including additional emergency supplies.

4.5 Can I drive off-road or on secondary tracks?

No, you may only drive on authorised main tracks within the Park. Secondary tracks are reserved for Park vehicles.

5. Vehicle Restrictions and Emergencies

5.5 Are there restrictions for large vehicles?

- Vehicles over 4 tonnes or with more than 20 seats are prohibited.
- Transporting people in the back of open vehicles is prohibited.
- Unauthorised motorcycles and quad bikes may not be used in the Park.
- Maximum speed: **50 km/h.**
- Towing trailers along the coast is prohibited.
- A minimum of **two vehicles** is required to drive along the coast.

5.6 What happens if my vehicle breaks down?

There are no workshops or fuel stations within Iona, so you are responsible for organising your own assistance. Park patrol vehicles may assist with recovering your vehicle and bringing it to a suitable location for possible repairs. Please note that there is a charge for this service, and it may not always be available.

5.7 What are the Park entry and exit hours?

April to September	October to March
06:00 – 18:00	06:00 – 19:00

- Entry or exit outside these hours is prohibited without authorisation.
- Additional Park entry and exit points (Erola and Monte Negro) require prior authorisation and payment at Espinheira.

5.8 Can I walk in the Park?

Yes, but this is entirely at your own risk, keeping a safe distance from wildlife and staying close to your vehicle or campsite (we recommend that you do not walk more than 100 metres from your vehicle or campsite).

5.9 Can I swim in Iona?

This is absolutely not recommended due to the presence of crocodiles in the rivers and at the Cunene river mouth, and strong ocean currents along the coast.

5.10 What activities or items are prohibited?

- Off-road driving
- Removal of flora, fauna, rocks or bones
- Interaction with, disturbing, following, attracting or feeding wildlife
- Introduction of domestic or exotic animals or plants
- Hunting of any kind, weapons, or fireworks
- Commercial filming without authorisation
- Crossing flooded rivers
- Fishing in unauthorised areas

5.11 Are there any health risks I should be aware of?

Yes. Malaria and potentially dangerous wildlife (including snakes, scorpions and crocodiles). Temperature variations during the course of a day can be extreme. Bring appropriate clothing and equipment, including sun and insect protection.

5.12 What are my responsibilities as a visitor to Iona?

You are fully responsible for your safety and conduct at all times, and must cooperate with and follow instructions from Park staff and your guide.

6. Activities

6.1 Can I do game drives?

Yes, but only with authorised 4x4 vehicles and experienced drivers.

6.2 Can I take boat trips?

Yes, but only in designated areas, with an authorised guide and sufficient life jackets.

6.3 Is fishing permitted?

Yes, but only on the beach north of “The Pole” and with a licence from the fishing authorities (MINPESCMAR) in Tômbwa.

6.4 Can I do night drives?

No, night driving is prohibited.

6.5 Can I go hiking?

Yes, with a knowledgeable guide and in designated areas, maintaining safe distances from wildlife and staying close to the group or vehicle. There is a small risk of legacy land mines in the Park.

6.6 Can I meet local communities?

Yes, but please always respect local traditions and be sure to ask for permission before photographing people or interacting with them.

7. Accommodation

7.1 What types of accommodation are available?

Wild Camping is the only accommodation option at present.

7.2 Where can I camp?

- Community areas: Etamba, Mukutu, Cambeno, Tchinhungua
- Additional areas: Ponta Albina, Vanessa, Oasis, Cunene River Mouth, Epupa

Camping outside designated areas is prohibited. No supporting infrastructure is available, so you will need to bring all your own water, food, and equipment.

7.3 What are the camping rules?

- Camp only in designated campsites
- Fires may be lit only in designated campsites
- Bring your own supplies
- Do not move more than 100 metres from your campsite without a knowledgeable guide

7.4 Can I use combustion-powered generators?

No, as this adds to noise pollution and the risk of starting wildfires.

7.5 How can I ensure safety at the campsite?

- Keep a safe distance from wildlife.

- Domestic animals are not allowed in the Park.
- Cooperate with guides and Park staff at all times.

8. Food and Waste

8.1 Are there restaurants or cafés in the Park?

No, you will need to bring all your own supplies with you.

8.2 Can I have a picnic?

Yes.

8.3 How should I manage waste?

- Take all waste and litter out of the Park when you leave.
- Leaving waste or litter on the ground, in rivers, or at campsites is prohibited.

8.5 Food safety precautions

- Bring sufficient drinking water.
- Store food out of reach of wildlife.
- Avoid bringing perishable foods.

9. Final Information

9.1 How can I be a responsible visitor to Iona National Park?

You must take full responsibility for your safety, conduct, and environmental impact. Respecting Park rules, wildlife, communities and the environment will ensure a safe, enjoyable and sustainable visit.

9.2 How do my entrance fees benefit the Park?

The entrance fees that you pay as a visitor to Iona National Park help to support biodiversity conservation and community development projects, including the management and maintenance of the Park and campsites.

9.3 Can I provide feedback about my visit?

Yes – we would love to hear your impressions of Iona, and your suggestions as to how we can make the visitor experience even more enjoyable. Please email any comments or suggestions to info.iona@africanparks.org