Avdat Plato Loop

Havarim-Akev, Avdat-Ramalia

An easy to mid difficulty hike with lots of attractions- water, caves, ruins and rock art. Perfect for late starters as the First day is relatively short.

Closest Town **Midreshet Ben Guryon**

Difficulty **Easy - Medium**

Length **35.5 km**

Duration **3 Days**

Recommended season **Nov - Apr**

Recommended time **Morning**

Getting There:

On a bus- Take a bus to Ziporim intersection (Lines 60,65,64,55 from the beer Sheva central bus station or from Mitzpe Ramon). Get off at the intersection and walk South along HW 40 on the east side of the road, for 600 meters, until you see a dirt road and black markers on your left (East). Follow the dirt road for 300 meters until you reach red trail markers.

By car- Drive On HW 40 to the city of Avdat (North from Mitzpe Ramon or South from Beer Sheva). From the entrance to the city and the gas station drive North for 3.3 km until you come to a Right turn to Ein Avdat (upper entrance). Turn right and immediately left onto the entrance road to Han Hashayarot. drive for 1.2 km and turn right to Han Hashayarot. Park at the entrance to the Han. Find the Dirt road on the North side of the compound marked with Red markers. Follow the road North East and then Northwest for a 1.5 km until the Markers along the road turn Black and the Red markers will turn off the dirt road to the North.

Hike Description:

Day 1 -

Starting Point: Han Hashayarot/Ziporim intersection.
Finish Point: Serpentinot CG
Length: 5.5 km
Duration: 2-3 hours.

Pick up the red foot trail headed northeast (away from the dirt road), marked in Red. The trail will cross small gullies until it connects with the main wadi of Havarim. Follow the Wadi, and the Red markers for 2km until a connection to Green markers on your right. You can detour up-canyon, staying on Red markers and switching to Blue, to visit the Havarim cistern- 1.6 km addition. Otherwise- Switch to the green markers for approx. 600 meters, and connect to Blue markers. Continue with the

Blue markers, down canyon, to the southeast, until you reach the bottom of the wadi.

Follow the Blue markers along the wadi as it winds and bends, for about a km and a half. Don't miss the narrow cracks on your left. Once the wadi widens, a Black trail will split off to the Right. Stay on the Blue markers for another 400 m, pass a green trail, connecting from the Left, and then 600 m more along the Blue. You will come to a paved road (this is the entrance road to Ein Avdat Nature reserve).Turn Right on the road and walk for 100 meters to the car-gate (closed after hours) Turn left to the Dirt road and follow it East for another 100 meters until you reach the campground for the night.

Attractions: Clay dunes, Majestic views, Narrow canyons and cracks, Ancient cistern (optional)

Day 2 -

Starting Point: Serpentinot CG
Finish Point: Avdat Ruins CG
Length: 16 km
Duration: 6-7 hours.

Form the campground go back to the paved road and pick up the Green trail leading South up the Divshon ascent. Reach the viewpoint at the top and continue south along the trail down to the flat valley. Pass the Bedouin tent and the trail will turn Left, Southeast into a gulley.

Continue along the green trail for another 2.5 km until you come to a narrow ledge over a dry waterfall (on your left). At the next hill the trail will descend gradually until you reach a signpost and Blue markers that will lead you down a ledge with a metal ladder (two steps), to the canyon of Ein Akev. The pool will be to your right. Jump in and enjoy the cool water. Please follow the signs and the instructions of park rangers.

Once refreshed, climb back up to the sign post and follow the Black trail South, up canyon for 3km. Occasionally you will also see markers of the INT. The wadi will start bare, but as you advance you will start seeing more and more vegetation. Follow the Black markers on the east bank of the Wadi, until you come to a tunnel-shaped opening in the dense vegetation. Cross to the Right- and continue South on the West bank of the Wadi. When you Reach a sign post and Blue Markers, Look for the exposed pool of water at "Upper Ein Akev". The water isn't deep enough to swim, but washing your face ain't bad.

Pick up the Blue Markers (and INT makers) and Head West out of the Canyon. You'll have to climb up some ledges right at the beginning. The trail will climb to an impressive pass and descend into a valley full of ancient agricultural terraces. After 3.5 km you will meet a Green trail branching to the right. If you have time and a

desire to visit the ancient City of Avdat- grab the Green trail up to the ruins of the city. When you are done climb down the other side of the city to HW 40. You can also fill water at the entrance station/gas station on the road. If you choose to skip visiting the city, continue on the Blue trail for another 1.2 km until another Green trail will branch to the right. Follow it Northwest for 1.5 km until it meets the road. This is where the campground is- in an abandoned gravel quarry on the East side of the road.

Attractions: Ibex and Vulture sightings, Spring and a cool dip, Ancient camel trails, Vistas, Possibility for a visit in a Nabatean city

Day 3-

Starting Point: Avdat Ruins CG
Finish Point: Han Hashayarot
Length: 14 km
Duration: 6 hours.

From the Campground head South along the road for 2 km to the Gas station and the entrance to the Avdat national park. You can fill water and buy food here if you wish. Cross the road and follow the Black markers along a dirt road to the Ramalia Cisterns. After 1km you will arrive at meeting with a dirt road with Red markers.

Continue on the black markers into the wadi, and along the gravel. Keep you eyes on the Left bank, and find the small openings in the solid chalk wall. These are 2000 cisterns that collect water from floods in the wadi. Find the Blue markers on your left. Follow the Blue markers to the west and then South as the trail climbs up the rocky slope of mt. Arkov. When you reach the peak look around at the Tumuli- Ancient burial sites from the intermediate Bronze Age. These large round arrangements of rocks are just one example of various cult sites on the mountain top.

Follow the trail for 2km west, passing more stone structures, and start looking for dark exposures of rock. Many of these are covered with rock art that was carved into the rock with simple stone chisels by various nomads and local people throughout centuries of human presence in the "Avdat arch" area.

Continue through the crossing with the Green Markers and for another 0.5km to a Dirt road marked with Black markers. Head North along the dirt road into a wadi for 1.2 km to Red markers. Follow the Red markers as they wind up on the North bank of the wadi and climb the ridge. After 1.5 km You will reach a power line and a dirt road with no markers. Walk along the dirt road downhill, to the Northeast toward the highway for 3km. When you arrive at the road you can cross and arrive at Han Hashayarot, or stop first for a taste of local wine at The Carmey Avdat farm on your Left- North.

Attractions: Ancient Rock art, Desert shrines, Cisterns, Option for local wine tasting.