



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Namibia

Wolwedans to Wild Horses Ride with Richard Dunwoody

10th to 20th May 2019

This adventurous ride in Namibia takes you from the great dune sea of the central Namib to the edge of the Sperrgebiet National Park. Covering some strikingly diverse desert terrain and exploring some of Namibia's breath-taking and little visited desert landscapes - immense grassy plains, 'inselbergs' (Island Mountains) that are so typical of Namibia and the rugged Tiras Mountain Reserve, the route ends at Klein Aus Vista near the home of the Wild Horses of the Namib.



The ride is organised with the Namibia Horse Safari Company which is co-owned by Andrew Gillies, fast becoming one of Africa's most sought after riding guides, and will be accompanied by one of racing's greatest names, Richard Dunwoody. Champion jockey from 1992 to 1995, long-term record-holder of jump winners, as well as an accomplished Equestrian photographer and increasingly an adventurer in his own right, Richard's love of photography and travel has taken him far and wide. Approachable, fun and always full of interesting stories, he is an experienced trip leader who has accompanied numerous riding groups. Riding through this elemental, tough but wonderfully awe-inspiring environment, learning about its history, geography and unique flora and fauna in the company of both Richard and Andrew, make this a safari not to be missed!



The Horses The horses used are a selection of crossbreeds, including Arab, Hanoverian, Haflinger and South African Boerperd crosses and also a few crosses of the rare “wild horse” of the Namib Desert. They are generally between about 14hh and 16hh, are sure-footed, athletic and responsive to ride. They are also kind, reliable, tough and fit, being used to endurance-type riding and the rough terrain and conditions of the desert. Saddles are Maclellan style (based on a military saddle and specially designed to ensure comfort over long hours for horse and rider) with English (usually snaffle) bridles. Riders are asked to help groom and tack up/untack their horse each day and help with feeding and watering is also appreciated - although this is entirely voluntary! As the harsh desert conditions can take their toll on horses and swapping horses half way through a ride is problematic, there is a strict rider weight limit of 85kgs (about 13 stone 5lbs) in riding clothes (all riders may be asked to step on scales) although fit, experienced riders of up to 92kg (14 ½ stone) can be accommodated by prior arrangement and payment of a supplement for use of a second or possibly third horse. If you are close to the 85kgs weight limit, please contact us well before booking to discuss.



Riding There will usually be around 6 hours riding each day, covering 25 to 40 kms, broken up with a leisurely lunch and short siesta as well as other breaks to lead horses over rough stony ground, visit sights of interest or just stretch legs. The ride will be lead by Andrew, as extremely experienced guide and horseman who has been leading safaris in Namibia for over 15 years. Telané Grayling, an equally experienced guide and known authority on the Wild Horses of Namibia, will be also part of the safari team and both will be assisted by a team of grooms and camp staff.

Terrain Although Namibia has a largely desert landscape, the terrain and going underfoot will vary from day to day, ranging from stretches of boulder-strewn plains, rocky hills and dry riverbeds with mixed vegetation, to deep gorges and of course never-ending sandy plains and spectacular sand dunes. The Wolvedans private reserve where the ride starts, is in the heart of the NamibRand Nature Reserve, and is one of the most pristine and scenic regions in the whole of Namibia. The peace, tranquillity and variation in the Wolvedans landscape, its red Kalahari sand, shifting dunes, huge granite boulders, grassy plains and blue tinged mountains, will take your breath away.

Pace The riding pace will depend very much on the day’s terrain and temperatures, as well as riders’ fitness, but there will be plenty of opportunities to move on at a good, energetic pace with long canters over open, undulating ground and across sandy desert flats. Some days will be slower, with areas where horses pick their way across rock-strewn plains, through boulder fields and up or down rocky zebra paths, or negotiate areas of deep sand and dunes; others will be fast, crossing vast desert plains with firm sandy going that stretches for miles and large distances to cover before nightfall.

Riding Experience Although you don't have to be an accomplished dressage rider or expert over jumps to participate, all participants should be at least of an intermediate riding standard and completely comfortable and in control on a well-schooled horse at all paces including long fast trots and canters when riding with a group in open country. You should also be confident, adaptable and used to riding over varied, sometimes tricky, uneven or rocky ground. Riding fitness is equally important - both for you and your horse - and you will always enjoy your ride much more if you are riding fit. If you do not ride regularly at home, we strongly recommend concentrated training before you go. You will also be asked to help look after your horse during the ride and (although help is nearly always available and extra groom(s) can sometimes be arranged for an additional charge) you should be confident and comfortable tacking-up, un-tacking and handling a horse from the ground. As well as riding experience, good health and general fitness are vitally important. These will help you cope with Namibia's high temperatures, conditions that can be harsh, and occasions when you'll be asked to get off and on unassisted and to lead your horse over rough, rocky ground. Other important requisites are flexibility, an ability to manage for yourself and a sense of humour to deal with the unexpected! Anyone not able to keep up with the group will be asked to travel in the back up vehicle.



Game, Flora & Fauna Although definitely not a game oriented ride, there may be chances to see some game as you ride. Namibia's central highlands are home to antelope such as oryx, kudu, gemsbok, springbok and klipspringer as well as Hartmann's Mountain Zebra, ostrich, rock hyrax and baboon. Cheetah and leopard also thrive here, although they are elusive and unlikely to be seen. Desert vegetation includes a variety of acacia and other thorn trees as well as the ancient Aloe Dichotoma, Kokerboom or Quiver Tree, so called because the San bushman used its tubular branches as quivers for arrows.

Accommodation The first night of the ride is in a comfortable lodge, usually River Crossing Lodge, in the hills on the outskirts of Windhoek, Namibia's capital. The last night will also be spent at a comfortable lodge and at both, twin or double bedded rooms all have en-suite bathroom. Other nights along the route are spent camping out in mobile camps, moved and set up ahead by a back-up team. Here you sleep on camp beds with cosy canvas bedrolls (which include very warm, built-in duvet and pillow).

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Accommodation cont. Two man dome tents may be set up in bad weather or on request - although most riders choose to sleep outside, setting up camp bed and bed-roll under the desert sky - a wonderful experience. Camps also have folding camp chairs and tables, a shared hot shower(s) - either a traditional 'bucket & pulley' shower set up against the support truck or in some cases, if camp is at an existing site, purpose built hot showers and flush loos. All food and cooking equipment is brought with the back-up truck, which also transports luggage, and meals are eaten around the campfire. On most days the vehicle will meet the riding group at lunchtime, although sometimes the riding route might mean this is not possible. The ride rate assumes twin shared rooms at lodges but a single can be requested when you book - a supplement is charged if these are available.



Meals Three good meals a day will be included and you will be well fed! Breakfast will normally be porridge, cereal and toast, with eggs or a selection of cold meats and cheese sometimes on offer. Lunch may be a picnic, either sandwiches you make in the morning, cake, biscuits and fruit carried in saddle-bags or, if the day's itinerary allows, you might meet the kitchen truck at lunchtime for a simple pasta dish, stew – or perhaps warm rolls, salads of avocado, tomato, potato or pasta, cold meats or fish. When you arrive at your night's lodging there will be tea, coffee and other drinks and supper is generally two or three courses cooked over the camp fire, sometimes a typically Namibian stew, a casserole ('potjie') or traditional 'braai' (BBQ) - followed by a hot pudding. Tea, coffee, house wine and beer (in reasonable quantities) will be included with meals.



Weather May is one of Namibia's cooler months, the beginning of winter and just after the main rainy period which is from January to April (although Namibia receives an average of just 106 mm of rain a year and gets most of its moisture through fog rather than rain!). Maximum midday temperatures in May are usually about 28 C; it can be cold at night, in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to 4 or 5 C), but days are normally sunny and warm (although there can be a brisk wind). Rain is not expected – but as with any weather pattern, a shower is possible!

Safety The ride will be lead by Andrew, accompanied by a second back up rider, as well as Richard. The guides will carry a first aid kit, mobile and satellite 'phone for emergencies and there will be a more comprehensive first aid kit with the back-up team. As riding is in a remote area, you will be asked to carry insurance details with you just in case of an emergency.

What to bring We will send you a clothing list with suggestions of what to bring when you book.

Itinerary planned - Please note that this is only an example of the itinerary **provisionally** planned. Riding route, camp locations and day-by- day arrangements are subject to confirmation and may be varied by your guide in his / her absolute discretion at any time if the weather or other local conditions require.



[Thursday 9th May - [eg South African Airways flight SA0074 departing London Heathrow 19.00 arriving Johannesburg the next morning at 07.05 (or British Airways flight BA55 departing London Heathrow 19.05 arriving Johannesburg the next morning at 07.05)]

Friday 10th May - [Arrive Johannesburg and connect with South Africa Airways flight SA74, departing 09.30 and arriving Windhoek at 11.25 (or with Com Air flight BA6275 departing at 12.00 and arriving Windhoek 14.00)] You will be met and transferred to the first nights accommodation. Meet your guide along with the rest of the group for dinner and an introductory talk on the safari. Dinner and night River Crossing Lodge or similar. (D)

Saturday 11th May - After breakfast, driven to the quaint town of Maltahoe, where there is a stop for lunch (drive of approximately 4 hours). Then after lunch the journey continues down the Zaris Pass to the Wolwedans Private Reserve (approximately 2.5 hours) where the first night's camp is set up. Settle into camp and time to explore your surroundings, meeting the back-up team and horses before sundowners in the fading evening light with the spectacular Milky Way arching overhead. Dinner & night in camp. (B,L,D)

Sunday 12th to Saturday 18th May - Breakfast in camp and after tacking up, mount up & set off riding into the wilderness of the NamibRand Nature Reserve, one of the largest nature reserves in Southern Africa. The route takes you across vast unblemished plains with superb views and inselberg silhouettes. There are good chances to see the different species of game that are acclimatised to the harsh desert conditions, perhaps oryx, springbok, zebra, bat eared fox and jackal, as you enjoy some fast riding across the open plains and climb the vivid red dunes. Each day stop for lunch and a siesta under a shady tree or at a picturesque view point, before continuing on in the afternoon, to the next campsite, arriving in time for sundowners with astonishing landscapes that stretch as far as the eye can see.

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Sunday 12th to Saturday 18th May cont. Nights camping out in simple fly camps under the magical starry sky - always an awe inspiring sight - with dinner around the camp fire. The route will vary according to weather, game and other conditions but each day is sure to be filled with unforgettable memories. On 18th May you will reach Geister Schlucht (Ghost Valley) camp and the end of your journey. If time allows, you might celebrate with an evening drive to the area where the Wild Horses are found in time to enjoy a sundowner. Dinner & nights in mobile camps. (B,L,D)



Sunday 19th May - Exact plans for the last day are a little flexible but from the last night's camp in Geister Schlucht you might set off by vehicle in search of the Wild Horses of the Namib, perhaps visiting a popular waterhole to watch horses come down to drink - the natural behaviour of these wild horses always holds an irresistible fascination. Leaving mid-morning, set off driving back towards Windhoek. Stop for lunch at Helmeringhausen, then continue driving to a comfortable lodge where the night will be spent. Dinner and night. (B,L,D)



Monday 20th May - Breakfast, and then about an hour or so's drive to Windhoek airport in time for your flight home [eg South African Airways flight SA0074 departing Windhoek at 12.15 (or Com Air flight BA6275 departing at 14.55) connecting with South African airways flight SA234, departing Johannesburg 20.00 arriving London the next morning at 06.25 (or British Airways flight BA56 departing Johannesburg 19.20 arriving London the next morning at 05.30)

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PRICE - £4650 per person

Single supplement - £180

NOTE: For Riders over the 85kgs weight limit (dressed in riding gear), a supplement of £750 is charged for a second horse.

The Rate INCLUDES 10 nights accommodation (twin share in lodges), all riding and equipment, guiding services, meals as indicated, house wine, beer and other soft drinks when camping (excludes drinks at lodges and restaurants), and overland transfers as a group from / to Windhoek.

Rate EXCLUDES International flights to Namibia and taxes, drinks at restaurants & lodges and any premium wines / spirits, personal travel / medical insurance (which you **must** have), any visa fees, transfers other than at set times with the group, personal extras at lodges (telephone calls, laundry etc) and any tips you wish to leave staff.



International Flights / Travel - The meeting point is Windhoek and arrival can be any time on 10th May. In most case the best option from the UK is to fly to Windhoek via Johannesburg overnight from London. British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all fly direct to Johannesburg every day, usually departing Heathrow between 19.00 and 21.00 and arriving JNB between 07.00 and 09.00 the next day. There are connecting onward flights from Johannesburg to Windhoek with South African Airways, Com Air (BA) and Air Namibia.

Flights out of Windhoek on Monday 20th May should **not be before 12.00**.

At the time of writing (August 2018) flights are approximately £900 economy return with British Airways but fares can vary greatly, with date of booking, availability and route.

Please contact us if you would like more flight information, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or if you would like us to book flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213.

Visas and Health - (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas If you hold a full British Passport (valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of intended stay) and are visiting Namibia for a holiday of less than 90 days, you do not need to arrange a visa in advance of travel.

Health The Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London (via the travel health pro website www.travelhealthpro.org.uk) recommends that for visits to Namibia you ensure you are up to date with inoculations against Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Typhoid. You should also take further advice about other vaccine preventable health risks. There is no Yellow Fever risk but you may need a valid Yellow Fever certificate if entering Namibia from another tropical country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. There is very little risk from Malaria in the area the ride takes place but you will be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets for certain parts of Namibia. Please consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 24/08/18)

Photos: Teagan Cuniffe

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NAMIBIA

