



RIDE WORLD WIDE

BOTSWANA

HORIZON HORSEBACK MASHATU 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

Horizon Horseback Mashatu ('Horizon Mashatu' previously known as Limpopo Horse Safaris) operates in eastern Botswana's Mashatu Game Reserve, part of the Tuli block which borders South Africa and the Limpopo River. Horizon Mashatu offer 2 different riding safaris: an adventurous 7 night mobile 'Tuli Safari' following a circular route from Two Mashatus Camp to other camps across the Mashatu Reserve, and a 7 night 'African Explorer Safari', combining a few days riding in South Africa followed by a few days riding from the Two Mashatus base. The information below covers Tuli Safaris - please see our separate African Explorer Information for details of this safari.

The Tuli is a stunning place to ride. Known as the 'Land of Giants' for its large population of elephant and massive Baobab and Mashatu trees and renowned for its striking geography, the terrain varies from thick thorn scrub and tall leadwood, Mashatu and fever trees lining the Limpopo, to vast semi-arid plains with spectacular rocky 'kopjes' and sandstone outcrops that jut into the horizon. Signs of ancient African civilisations are evident and the area was a strategic 'buffer' zone in the Anglo Boer war. Run by a dedicated, enthusiastic and friendly team, who between them have many years of horse, game and hospitality experience, Tuli Safari will tick many boxes on your riding safari 'wish list' – exciting, professionally guided riding on quality horses, thrilling game viewing, generous hospitality and comfortable camps, all in a beautiful and little visited area.



DATES

7 night safaris run pretty much year round - Tuli Safaris are Saturday to Saturday and also Monday to Monday. Please see dates overleaf and for availability contact Ride World Wide.

HORSES

The horses used are owned by Horizon Mashatu, who have about 50 at their Botswana stables. They are mainly native South African breeds and crossbreeds that include Boerperds, South African Warmbloods and Shire / TB crosses. They are between about 14.3hh and 17hh, are tough and sure-footed, ideally suited to the Tuli's harsh environment and varying terrain. They are looked after with great care by a team of grooms, who prepare them for rides, and are regularly schooled to ensure they are an enjoyable, responsive and forward going ride. Used to being ridden in the classic English style, they are also easy to neck rein and go well when ridden with relaxed contact with the mouth.

TACK

Saddles are McClellan style (quite similar to westerns), with a few English and Australian stock saddles sometimes available on request. Saddle-bags are provided where necessary.



RIDING

Safaris normally include about 5 ½ hours riding each day, with a shorter 'trial' ride on the first day and a shorter morning ride on the last. The daily programme depends on weather and game, but you usually start riding at day-break, when it is cool and game is most active, finishing in time for lunch, then riding again or perhaps enjoying another game viewing activity, in the late afternoon until sunset. A maximum of 10 guests are taken at one time, although riding groups are limited to 8 guests (unless a private group particularly wish to ride together) so if there are 9 or 10 riders booked, there will be 2 riding groups. Rides are lead by a qualified professional guide, accompanied by an assistant back-up rider. Head guide, David Cheno, has been leading rides in the area for over 15 years. Born in Botswana, he started working in the Tuli as a groom, progressed to assistant guide and began leading safaris personally in 2009. Since then he has helped to train many of his co-workers and with his love of horses, sense of responsibility and good humour is always a delightful safari companion. All guests are required to wear a hard hat when riding.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is 95kgs (about 15 stone), although with prior notice, experienced heavier riders may sometimes be taken. Please contact us if you are close to 95kgs to check.

PACE

The pace depends on the terrain and vegetation but generally riding is at an energetic and well-varied pace with opportunities for long trots and canters, zig-zagging through the scrub or across open plains. There are, of course, also places where you have to ride slowly - where there is thick bush, if it is rocky, up and down steep river banks or if the sand is thick. Riders are encouraged to spread out where terrain and vegetation allows, but where the going or safety with game requires, you'll be expected to stay in line, riding one behind the other.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

Tuli Safaris are aimed at reasonably competent and confident riders. Riding is in an open, wilderness area where there is 'big' game including elephant and lion and to participate you should be a capable English style rider of an intermediate standard or above. Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition (there are sometimes opportunities to jump small logs etc if you wish) you should be comfortable, balanced and in control on a well-schooled horse at all paces (including long fast trots and canters). You should also be used to riding with a group, in open country over varied, sometimes tricky terrain and should be relaxed and secure in the saddle so you are able to stay on your horse if it reacts suddenly, or needs to move quickly out of trouble. You will always enjoy your safari much more if you are fairly riding fit and if you do not ride regularly, we recommend you accustom yourself to the saddle hours with concentrated training before you go. The minimum age for safaris is 12 years (strictly **no** children under 12 years) and children must be strong, competent riders. Acceptance is on a 'case by case' basis at the manager's discretion so please check with us first if you plan to travel with children. **cont.**

RIDING EXPERIENCE cont.

All riders are required to take part in a short, informal riding assessment on the first day to check competency before being allowed on safari.

CYCLING OPTION FOR NON-RIDERS

Any non-riders wishing to join a partner, family or friends on a Tuli Safari can book onto a cycling programme which will be run alongside (non-riders are only able to join if they participate in an activity). The cycling option is tailored to suit each group - either relaxed rides that could cover 15- 25km in a morning, or more advanced, covering up to 40km a day. The pace is generally easy going with regular game sightings, a scenic picnic stop and the option to opt out at a mid-morning break if necessary.

TERRAIN

The terrain in the Tuli includes dry, open sandy plains that are dotted with acacia trees and granite outcrops, dense forests of mopani trees, groves of fever and Mashatu trees and the winding, Limpopo River. In winter, April / May to September / October, the river-bed is often completely dry and the whole region is semi-desert. In summer, after seasonal rains, it can be wet and very green with the Limpopo River running strongly and pronounced vegetation types - riverine forest, acacia woodland, open grassy plains and true savannah - creating a very different environment.



GAME

The Tuli is a well-known habitat for elephant and is also known for its population of eland, the largest of the antelope as well as other African 'giants' - giraffe, lion and the huge kori bustard. There are also many different species of plains game in the area including impala, wildebeest, zebra, kudu and nyala, predators such as hyena, leopard and cheetah and also monkeys, baboons, warthogs and crocodiles. Game is present year round although June to October, the drier months when there is no grass cover and vegetation is thin, are usually the best months for game viewing. Bird life is prolific with about 300 species visiting or breeding in the area and birds of prey often seen hunting over the open plains. During a safari there will sometimes be chances for guided bush walks and for game drives, the latter an ideal opportunity to see predators such as cats close up. There is also usually plenty of time to relax in the late afternoon and for bird watching from camp.

ACCOMMODATION

Tuli Safaris follow a circular route with two or three nights spent at the main safari base, Two Mashatus Camp, a comfortable, semi-permanent base camp at the confluence of the Limpopo and Majale Rivers. The camp has five spacious twin / double 'East African' style guest tents, raised on teak decking, with comfortable beds made up with cotton sheets and duvets and a bathroom, with flush loo and private shower, behind. It also has a dining area built in local style with a palm thatch roof, a fire pit with chairs for pre-dinner relaxation, and a small plunge pool on decking for hot days. Two or three nights are spent at a lovely, newly built tree house camp, where tented rooms are set on a platform built a few metres up in the trees and 2 nights are in a 'fly camp' set up in a traditional leadwood framed enclosure or 'boma', the 'Kgotla'. **cont.**



ACCOMMODATION cont.

Here you sleep out under the stars on beds made up with cotton sheets and duvets, draped with mosquito nets and set around the camp-fire. The fly camp has shared showers (traditional hot 'bucket and pulley' style), 'long drop' loos and tables and chairs for meals - all set up before you arrive by staff who look after all camp chores, cooking meals, heating water for showers and so on. Accommodation on all safaris is based on two sharing a tent and as tent numbers are limited a single supplement will be charged if you are not prepared to share with another guest (of the same sex) if requested (if you book alone, you will only be asked to share if numbers / mix of guests requires).

MEALS

Safari food is fresh, generous and you will be very well fed. Days normally start early with a light breakfast of porridge, toast, muffins, fruit and tea or coffee before you ride. There is often a break out riding for a snack and when you return from your ride or reach your new camp, you can relax over a substantial lunch, usually buffet style with a varied menu of quiches, salads, bread and cold meats followed by fruit or a cooked pudding. Dinner is usually three courses, perhaps roast beef with all the trimmings or a traditional 'braai' (barbecue) served around the camp fire or at a long table under the stars. Menus are carefully chosen and varied and there is always plenty of freshly baked bread, vegetables and salads. Vegetarians can be well catered for with prior notice. Wine, beer, a selection of spirits (on ice) and soft drinks, tea and coffee are all included.



SAFETY

There will be a short introductory talk on the safari when you arrive and all riders will be asked to do a short, informal riding assessment to check ability and ensure horses are well matched. Anyone not of the minimum required level will not be allowed to ride. Rides are lead by a licensed and qualified guide who carries a rifle as well as a radio, mobile phone (although coverage is limited) and first aid kit and is accompanied by a back-up rider or local groom. There is also a comprehensive medical kit at the stables and when riding your guide is in radio contact with the main Mashatu office as well as the stables in case of emergencies.

WEATHER

Summer months in the Tuli are September to April and it is generally hottest between October and February, with temperatures up to about 38 degrees C at midday. It can rain in October although the rainy season is usually November / December to February. The coolest months are May to August (winter) when midday temperatures reach about 28 degrees C and the area is dry and desert-like. During these months and in early September, it can be quite cold in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to about 4 or 5 degrees C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

The daily safari programme always varies a little with movement of game and weather but the following is an example of the itinerary planned for Tuli Safaris starting Saturday (safaris starting Monday will have a slightly different itinerary, please contact us for the itinerary) - please note this is *only* an example and day by day arrangements and routes ridden may be varied in your guide's discretion if weather, movement of game, group ability or other conditions require.

Tuli Safari example itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive Johannesburg ORT International airport (flights should arrive by 09.30) and make your way to the Information Desk in the International Arrivals Hall where you will be met at 10.30. At 11.00 latest you will be transferred to the smaller Lanseria airport (a journey of about 45 minutes) and shown to the private charter that will fly you to the Limpopo Airfield (1 ½ hour flight), due to depart at 12.30. Met on arrival and, after customs and immigration formalities have been completed, a 15 minute drive to the stables. Time to shower and change at the reception area and after a light lunch, meet your horse for the week. Mount up for a short introductory ride to make sure you are well suited to each other. Then set off riding through the bush to Two Mashatus Camp, arriving in time for sundowner drinks. After settling into your tents, meet for supper in the palm covered dining area. Night at Two Mashatus. (L, D)

Day 2 Start the day at sunrise with tea or coffee brought to your tent, followed by a light breakfast. Mount up and head out of the dense woodland riding along the banks of the Limpopo River towards the shallow rocky hills that mark the edges of the river valley. This is the heart of the Mashatu area, game is plentiful and with the Tuli block home to one of the largest herds of free roaming elephant south of the Zambezi, there are bound to be excitements in store. After winding your way through the bush and hills, arrive at Tree Camp for lunch. Horses are untacked and as you have a leisurely lunch on the raised tree platform, watch game coming to drink at the Majale River. After a siesta and tea, a late afternoon ride or a guided bush walk exploring the area west of the Matabole River. Return to Tree camp for hot showers, drinks by the fire and an atmospheric dinner. Night Tree Camp. (B,L,D)



Day 3 An early wake-up call and after tea, coffee and a light breakfast mount up again. Today the route crosses the centre of Mashatu, passing some of the huge rock formations and giant baobab trees for which the Limpopo Valley is known and following elephant trails across flat, sandy plains - great going for canters, winding through the scrub. Stop for a snack and to stretch legs en-route and then finally arrive at the banks of the Motloutse River, where the night will be spent sleeping out in a traditional African enclosure or 'boma' known as the 'Kgotla' after the ancient tribal court that used to be held here. Made of leadwood logs set around an old Mashatu tree, the Kgotla provides perfect security for a night sleeping out under the stars. Lunch when you arrive and a siesta in the hottest part of the day. In the late afternoon a game drive looking out for lion and leopard ends with sundowners at the impressive rock "Amphitheatre". Return to Kgotla camp for dinner and the night under a star-filled sky, listening to the sounds of the African bush orchestra! Night Kgotla Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 4 A morning ride today explores some of the area's wonderful sandstone rock formations, including the famed Solomon's Wall. Archaeological evidence, stone-age tools and rock art has evidenced that some of the oldest civilisations in Africa settled in this valley, which was home to the Mapungubwe Dynasty (meaning 'place of the jackal' in Venda) in around 1220 AD and has an ethereal, timeless quality. After lunch and a siesta, a late afternoon drive through the Mmamagwa hills takes you to a wonderful sundowner spot where you can walk to a look-out point under a solitary baobab that gives a fantastic 360 degree view - South Africa to the south, Zimbabwe to the north and Botswana all around. Dinner and second night at Kgotla camp. (B,L,D)



ITINERARY cont.

Day 5 An early start and hearty breakfast around the fire, before mounting up to ride through mopane bush where there are often good chances to see elephant. Head out to the open plains, perfect for an exhilarating canter, then north towards the upper reaches of the Majale River. Passing baobab trees and exploring a remote part of the Mashatu reserve you finally arrive back at Tree Camp for a late lunch. A siesta after lunch and then a late afternoon ride, bush walk (or optional game drive, extra charge USD75) exploring the northern banks of Majele, Matabole and Jawala rivers in search for leopard, cheetah and lion. Dinner and overnight Tree Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Breakfast at Tree Camp before heading out to explore the Pitsane river valley on a route that usually promises excellent game viewing. Originating from a spring high in the hills, regular drinking holes along the river often draw-in thirsty herds of game and you may see good sized herds of impala, zebra, wildebeest and eland. Open, sandy plains are also perfect for exhilarating canters, if lucky alongside herds of game... Today's route also gives a good idea of the history of this pioneering area - the destruction of Bryce's Store in a battle on the banks of the Pitsane River was one of the major events of the Anglo Boer War and remnants of the store still remain. Arrive back at Two Mashatus camp in time for lunch and a dip in the plunge pool. In the afternoon, a guided walk to a nearby 'kopje' for sundowner drinks. Dinner and night Two Mashatus. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Today's ride explores the plains between the Majale and Pitsane rivers where there is usually plenty of game as well as lovely views into the Limpopo River valley. You may also see the remains of an old Boer war fort on a rocky outcrop and in summer, cooler wetlands with lush grass attract plenty of game. Late lunch at Two Mashatus and in the late afternoon a sundowner ride or last evening walk. Final dinner and night Two Mashatus. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Breakfast and a final ride takes you back through the bush to the stables. Farewell to your horse and time for a shower and lunch before heading off to the Limpopo Airfield for a private charter flight back to Lanseria Johannesburg airport (about 1½ hours flight), departing approximately 14.30. Arrive Lanseria at about 16.15 and you will be driven about 45 minutes to Johannesburg ORT International Airport. **Onward flights should be after 20.00.** (B, L)



2024 DATES & RATES

Tuli Safaris (7 nights) - year round Saturday to Saturday, and also most weeks Monday to Monday.

High Season: April, May, June, July, August, September, October & November

Mid Season: February & March

Low Season: December and January

Rates

High Season - £3682 per person (Single supplement £1289)

Mid Season - £3108 per person (Single supplement £1088)

Low Season - £2625 per person (Single supplement £656)

NOTE - Above rates do **NOT** include transfers to / from Mashatu - return charter transfer from / to Lanseria airport add £720 per person - see below for more details.

Rates INCLUDE all riding, other included safari activities as per itinerary (walks, drives), guiding and equipment, 7 nights twin accommodation, meals (from lunch day 1 to lunch day 8), laundry service and drinks (a selection of soft drinks, beer and house wine)

Rates EXCLUDE International flights to Johannesburg and taxes, transfers to / from Mashatu, any supplements for small group / non-standard air charters, personal medical / travel insurance (which you **must** have), optional game drive on day 5 (USD75), any extra night's accommodation before or after the safari, any visa fees, any tips you may wish to leave staff and Conservation levies of 20 USD per person per night (payable in cash direct).

DATES & RATES cont.

Single accommodation Rates assume twin shared accommodation and if you are booking alone and are not prepared to share a tent with another guest of the same sex if the safari / camp is full, the single supplement will be charged. Supplements are NOT compulsory for single bookings - ONLY charged if not prepared to share and wish to guarantee a single tent / room.



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

International Flights / Travel The meeting place for safaris is either Johannesburg International Airport or, if you make your own way to Botswana, the Pont's Drift Border Post between South Africa and Botswana.

Charter flights from Lanseria airport to Limpopo are arranged at **set times** and booked on a 'whole plane' basis - the current rate for Tuli Safaris is £720 per person return as above (assuming a minimum of 5 travelling on the plane). Charter rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book. If charter flights are not available, overland transfers will be organised (about a 5 ½ hour drive from Johannesburg ORT to Pont's Drift - 315 miles). The current rate for vehicle transfers is £597 each way per car taking 3 passengers (subject to change and to be confirmed when you book). Contact us for more information on charter flights for Best of Botswana Safaris.

To make use of group air charters you need an International flight arriving Johannesburg **before 09.30 on the first day of the safari**. You need to be ready to meet at the information desk in the Arrival hall at 10.30 and must ensure you have **plenty of time to clear immigrations and collect your luggage before this**. On the return your flight out of Johannesburg should **not** depart before **20.00**.

Vehicle transfers can be organised from Johannesburg Airport to Mashatu but the Ponto's Drift border closes at 16.00 so ALL vehicle transfers to Mashatu on the first day must leave Johannesburg before 10.00.

If you prefer to hire a car and drive yourself to Ponto's Drift this is another option. You will be met at the border at about 13.00, your car can be left there safely and you will be driven onto Two Mashatus Camp (about 30 minutes). After the safari you will be driven back to Ponto's Drift.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION cont.

For flights to Johannesburg we recommend a direct overnight flight from London. British Airways usually have 2 direct flights each evening, the earlier of which departs at about 18.25 and arrives JNB between 07.25. Unless you are planning extra time in Johannesburg this is currently the only direct option. **Please note flight arrival information above and call us if you would like more flight information. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213**

It is also possible to arrange private charter flights from Limpopo Valley Airfield to several other locations in Southern Africa: eg the Okavango Delta, Kasane in northern Botswana, Vilanculos in Mozambique and reserves bordering the Kruger National Park. Please contact us to discuss rates and possible add-ons.

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(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 and are visiting Botswana for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance. If you plan to fly via South Africa note that there are special requirements for those travelling with children, requiring provision of birth certificates and other documents. These are very strictly enforced particularly if only one parent is accompanying.

Health No inoculations are legally required for entry to Botswana from Europe but inoculations against Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended and also against Typhoid, Cholera and Yellow Fever in some circumstances. You may also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets. We will send you more information if you confirm your booking but you should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 27/03/2024)

