



RIDE WORLD WIDE

BOTSWANA, OKAVANGO DELTA

OKAVANGO HORSE SAFARIS (KUJWANA CAMP) 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

We offer three different horse safari options in Botswana's Okavango Delta region. This information relates to PJ and Barney Bestelink's Okavango Horse Safaris (OHS). Please see separate details of our other trips. OHS was established in 1986 by PJ and Barney who pioneered horse safaris in Southern Africa. Born out of Barney's love of horses and PJ's love of the bush, these two elements, together with unmatched years of experience, still shine through into any safari with OHS. Now based at Kujwana Camp, with access to two other camping sites and a vast private concession area, the safaris focus on exploring the Delta by horse and appreciating the natural environment. The horses are cherished above all else; the riding is run to exacting, professional standards and game drives, guided walks and boat trips are all included, ensuring a truly memorable, all-round experience.



OVERVIEW OF THE DELTA

The Okavango Delta region covers close to 15,000 square kilometres. Roughly one third, the central and eastern side stretching to Chobe National Park, has been designated a protected area, the Moremi Game Reserve. The rest is sub-divided into huge unfenced private wildlife concessions, all very carefully monitored and managed with strict guest quotas to help protect and preserve the natural environment for wildlife. The terrain across the region varies from the permanent water of the Okavango River, which joins the Delta to its northwest, papyrus swamps, reed beds and flat, open floodplain to thickly wooded date palm islands, riverine woodland and forests of mopane trees. Depending on the time of year, on rain that has fallen locally and in the River's main catchment area, the Angolan Highlands, 500 kms to the north, the floodplains (which look rather like the grassy fairway on a golf course when not flooded) may be covered with a layer of surface water ranging from a few inches to several feet deep in places. When rain in Angola falls into the Okavango River as it journeys south, the river gradually swells; then, as it meets the dry Kalahari basin, it divides like fingers on a hand into narrower waterways, spreading, saturating and flooding once-dry grassland to form marshy swamp and water meadow. The floods tend to go in cycles, a number of years of high water followed by a number of years low. Usually the new water arrives in the main Delta region between late March and July each year, and subsides from August to October.

DATES

Safaris with OHS are possible year-round with set dates for 5, 7 or 10 nights between March & November. Between December and February, safari dates are flexible. 7 & 10 night safaris usually start on Saturdays, although this sometimes varies. To check availability please contact us at Ride World Wide.

HORSES

There are over 50 horses at Kujwana, most between 14hh and 17hh. They include TB and TB crosses, American Saddle bred crosses, South African Boerperds, Friesian crosses, Arabs and Anglo Arabs. The majority are geldings, many are naturally bush-wise homebreds, offspring of Barney's beloved American Saddlebred (Lamu). The horses are looked after with immense care, under Barney's exacting and hugely experienced eye. They are used to game, being turned out freely to graze by day, are well schooled and responsive to ride which makes hours in the saddle a real pleasure. Grooms are on hand at all times looking after the horses during all safaris.

TACK

Tack is good quality English style - most horses go in snaffle bridles and saddles are mainly English general purpose (there are a few Maclellans for heavier riders) with 'seat savers' (gel pads) available for those who wish. Pommel pouches and water bottles are provided.



RIDING

Safaris usually involve 4 to 6 hours riding a day, broken up with refreshment stops and occasional walks (approximately 10 minutes walking for every 2 hours in the saddle) to give horses a break and allow riders to stretch muscles. The first couple of days will normally be based out of Kujwana Camp where the daily programme varies; some days you ride for 3 or 4 hours in the morning, setting off at dawn when the game is best and returning to camp for lunch and a long rest, before riding out again in the evening for up to 2 hours before sunset. On other days, there is a longer morning ride of up to 5 hours, you might stop for a picnic breakfast out in the bush, returning to camp for a late lunch, then perhaps a guided walk, mokoro trip (if water levels allow) or game drive in the late afternoon. From March to December, groups may also drive to the beautiful Mokolwane Camp further north to spend a night or two. On 10 night safaris, a night fly camping under the stars sleeping on platform beds or in a temporary mobile fly camp may be an option. Rides are generally limited to a maximum of 6 to 8 guests.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is a strict 90kgs (14 stone 2lbs - all riders will be asked to stand on the scales) although heavier experienced riders can sometimes be taken by prior arrangement. Please contact us if you are over 90kgs - a special programme with shorter rides and other game viewing activities may be arranged (a 50% supplement may be charged for an extra horse; Maclellan style saddles are also normally used for heavier riders).

PACE

Riding on safari is at a medium and well varied pace overall, with plenty of long trots and long exhilarating canters where the ground allows. When the flood is highest, you may find your horse has to wade shoulder high, or perhaps swim, to get from island to island, but even at high water the going around the edge of the islands is normally good to firm so there are usually plenty of chances for long trots and canters. Riders are able to spread out and take their own line where terrain allows but as riding is in a 'big' game area, you are always expected to stay behind the guide and take careful note of instructions. Riders may also be asked to get off and walk their horse from time to time, leading for about 10 minutes every 2 hours to rest horses' backs and stretch muscles.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

To ride with OHS you must be a reasonably competent, confident rider as you will be riding in an open wilderness area where there is big (and potentially dangerous) game including elephant and lion. Although you don't need to be an expert over jumps or in competition, you should be comfortable, confident and in control on a horse at all paces (walk to fast canter) and used to riding in open country, over varied terrain with a group of horses. There is a good selection of responsive and well schooled horses for different riders - ranging from clever, reliable Boerperds to long striding eager-to-please Warmbloods and TBs - but all riders must be balanced, relaxed and secure in the saddle, able to stay on if their horse reacts suddenly or needs to move quickly out of trouble. Children are accepted (usually only over 12 years unless special arrangement is made) but they must be strong, competent riders and to ensure this, a Pony Club or instructor's certificate may be required. All riders should also be riding fit and if you are not already used to long riding days, we strongly recommend accustoming yourself to the hours in the saddle before you go.

TERRAIN

Kujwana is in the southwest Delta, in a huge private concession with a good variety of terrain, ranging from big expanses of open floodplain to thickly wooded palm islands, dense forests of mopane and bigger shady trees. The Camp itself is on a narrow island on the Delta's Xudum river system, to the southwest of Chief's Island. The flood in this area is reliable and, although it varies every single year, for several years recently (up until 2019) very high -water levels have meant horses often have to wade and sometimes swim out of camp during peak water months (usually May, June and July) or to move from island to island. 2019 was, in complete contrast, a year in which the whole of the Delta experienced exceptional draught conditions and there was very little flood water everywhere even in June and July. When the flood recedes (usually late August into September) there is plenty of open grassland making it a lovely area for horses. The second permanent camp used by OHS, Mokolwane is further north, on the Delta's Matsebe River system, situated on open floodplain and amongst smaller palm islands. This region usually gets its flood about 3 weeks earlier than Kujwana. On longer safaris you may also be able to spend a night sleeping out on platforms or fly-camping with a comfy bedroll and mosquito net set up under the stars, either on an island, or if the water is high possibly on Kujwana's barge 'Noah' on the Qwaapo river.



GAME

The Delta has huge numbers of game year round and is a gloriously wild, unfenced and unspoiled game-rich environment. A large population of elephant roam through the area, along with large herds (sometimes several thousand head) of buffalo. Some game species are permanent residents (the characteristic water antelope - red lechwe - also sable, roan, shy sitatunga), whilst water lovers such as hippo and crocodile (and many of the larger predators) move around locally as water levels rise and fall. Unlike in East Africa, there is no single mass-herd migration and game such as giraffe, zebra, implala and wildebeest, migrate year-round in mid-sized herds, social or family groups to and from the drier Kalahari borders as water levels change. Warthog, tsessebe and kudu travel widely through the area as do lion, spotted hyena, leopard and wild dog. During any safari with OHS you can usually expect to see zebra, wildebeest, many species of antelope such as impala, perhaps kudu, roan, reedbuck, lechwe and tsessebe, giraffe and also crocodiles, monkeys, baboons and warthogs. Elephant and buffalo are often seen, frequently in large breeding herds, and if lucky you may see sitatunga, hyena, lion, leopard, cheetah and perhaps the endangered wild dog. A small number of white rhino have been successfully reintroduced in the last few years, sightings are rare but definitely possible! The Delta is famous for birds with over 400 recorded species. Keen birders are often rewarded with excellent viewing of fish eagles, cranes, storks, vultures, kingfishers, ostrich, jacanas, bee eaters and many more. Generally it is considered one of the world's finest game viewing areas in any season both because of the density and variety of game but also because it is such an unspoilt pristine environment for wildlife - however it is important to remember that animals are free to roam across a vast, unfenced area, there may be more of one species than another in a particular place at a particular time and environmental factors

GAME cont.

such as long grass or high water can (and do) effect game viewing. If game takes cover in long grass, mopane scrub or amongst date palms on the islands, it can be hard to spot or follow safely - although with access to a vast area, several different habitats and three different camp locations, as well as the option of vehicles, boats and horses, guests on safari with OHS usually have fantastic game viewing. Also as the area you ride through is private, game viewing is always a wonderfully exclusive experience, uninterrupted by other visitors or game viewing vehicles.

GUIDES & STAFF

PJ and Barney are both extremely experienced, professionally licensed guides who pioneered horse safaris in the Delta and have been leading rides there for over 35 years. They are two of the industries most experienced riding guides and Kujwana is their permanent home. Riding is almost always now lead by their local guides, who are all excellent game spotters and trackers. Lead guide Rodgers has been at OHS for 30 years. He joined as a groom in 1993 and having qualified as a guide in 2006, has many years' experience leading riding as well as mokoro and walking safaris. Safari logistics are smoothly managed by Person (Percy) who has worked with PJ& Barney since 1988 and is a hugely experienced, integral part of the OHS team, as is OB who works tirelessly to ensure the camps are maintained and everything runs smoothly during your stay.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation on safari is in a combination of the base camp, Kujwana, Mokolwane Tree House camp and on 10 night safaris, sometimes also in a temporary 'fly' camp. Kujwana is an authentic, comfortable yet unpretentious camp that is continually being upgraded by PJ and his team. It can sleep up to 14 guests in 4 'suites' (2 large riverside suites and 2 mini suites) and 3 large walk-in twin / double Meru safari tents, each set on a raised wooden platform, with its own bathroom with shower and flush loo. Suites and tents are linked by a teak walkway to the camp's main social area, which is under a canopy of trees and has sitting, dining, library and bar areas set with comfortable sofas & chairs as well as a campfire area, a tree house with lovely view and a small plunge pool with sun beds - perfect for a dip after riding on hot Delta days. Mokolwane (owned and run by a separate company) is a lovely little camp with 5 spacious tree house rooms, each with its own bathroom with shower and flush loo, built 2 metres up in the trees. On 10 night safaris you may also stay at a simple 'fly' camp (the name comes from the days explorers headed off with just a fly sheet to make a temporary camp), or on platforms in the trees, in the area around the Quaapo River. The fly camp is set up ahead by staff - there are tables & chairs, a shared long drop loo, dinner is eaten al-fresco by the campfire and nights are on platform beds or bedrolls under mosquito nets - a thrilling way to experience the bush under a canopy of Southern Hemisphere stars. Beds at all camps (and bedrolls at fly camp) are made up with cotton sheets, pillows and duvets and towels are provided. Safari rates are per person with no single supplement charged. Overall the OHS camp atmosphere is low key and laid back; dress is relaxed, when not riding you are welcome to spend time by yourself, enjoying the peace, quietly reading, relaxing by the pool or watching birds and game or you can be more social, joining others for a drink and chat in the sitting and bar area, exactly as you wish.



MEALS

You will be extremely well fed on safari with three meals a day and snacks in between. Food is locally sourced, bread is baked every day and there is an emphasis on fresh vegetables and salads (but please let us know in advance if you are a vegetarian or have special dietary requirements). Lunches are al fresco, out in the bush or in camp after riding, dinner is three courses, accompanied by house wine and served by candlelight at a long table under the stars or in the dining tent. Beer, a selection of cold drinks and a choice of spirits (please let us know if you have a particular favourite), tea and coffee are also all included.

SAFETY

Rides are lead by an experienced, qualified and licensed guide, accompanied by a second back-up rider who is on hand to support and spot game. A .375 rifle is carried on all rides and both lead and backup guides also carry a 'bear-banger' (a small explosive device to scare off any troublesome game). When you arrive, there will be an introductory talk on the routine and safety when riding and a hand-held radio and first aid kit are taken out riding (with a more comprehensive medical kit in camp). The camp is in radio contact with Maun and has a satellite 'phone, for emergencies. Okavango Air Rescue emergency helicopter evacuation is included as standard for all guests (riders and non-riders - you must also have your own personal medial and travel insurance).

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM & ENVIRONMENT

Upholding the principles of sustainability and responsible eco-tourism, OHS promotes low-impact tourism. The camp is solar powered, manure is recycled into Biogas which fuels gas stoves for cooking and a Bio Rock solar powered sewage system cleans the waste water. With safaris primarily by horse or on foot, the camp's overall impact on the environment remains low.



WEATHER

Summer months in the Delta are September to April and the hottest months are generally October, November & February, with midday temperatures up to about 38 or 40 degrees C. The area experiences summer rain and the rainy season is usually December to February although it can rain in October and November. The coolest winter months, when it is also dry (no rain) are May to August when midday temperatures reach about 28 degrees C. 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. Confusing to many guests, the dry winter months are when the Delta has its seasonal flood - caused when rain that has fallen a few months before in the Angolan Highlands, flows down the Okavango River causing the river to flood out over the Delta region.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

Safaris are very individualized and the structure of each day depends on the movement of game, weather, water levels and guest preferences. Proposals for the next day are often discussed at dinner the night before. On a 10 night safari, so you can explore the three river systems of Xudum, Kiri and Matsibi, you will generally stay in three different camps. Safaris normally starting at Kujwana, perhaps riding or driving to Mokolwane and then possibly overnighing at fly camp, although fly camps are subject to a minimum of 4 guests (for safety as well as logistical reasons) and weather conditions. If fly camping is not possible, these nights are spent at Kujwana. On 5 and 7 night safaris, 2 camps may be used - Kujwana and Mokolwane. Each is located in a 'big' game area, its situation chosen for the variety of terrain and game that favours that location. Below is an example 7 night safari itinerary - 5 night safaris would generally follow the first part of this - **but please note** that itineraries are examples only and daily arrangements, routes and camps used may be varied by your guides in their absolute discretion according to water levels, weather, game and other local conditions.

cont. over

ITINERARY cont.

Day 1 Met on arrival at Maun airport and shown to the helicopter that will take you on a short but spectacular flight over the Delta to Kujwana camp, a wonderful opportunity to see the entire Delta and game from the air. Meet your hosts, PJ & Barney Bestelink, and the safari team at camp and an introductory talk over tea. Then perhaps a rest before meeting the horses and a short late afternoon ride to try them and for your first view of the area. Dinner & night Kujwana camp. (D)

Day 2 Woken early at about 5.30 am (an hour before dawn) for breakfast and to be ready for an early morning game ride at sunrise, about 6.30 am, when game viewing is best. Mount up and once everyone is settled, head off riding out across the lush green floodplain that leads from island to island, perhaps surprising a timid bushbuck out of dense cover on a heavily wooded island, or watching zebra and other antelope move through the open spaces. Stop for a snack out riding before making your way back to camp. A shower or a dip in the plunge pool if you wish before lunch in camp and then time to relax or siesta in the afternoon until tea at about 4pm. After tea, a late afternoon game drive stopping for a drink and to watch the sunset before returning to camp after dark using a spotlight to spot game such as hyena, civet and leopard. Candlelit dinner & night in Kujwana Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 3 Early wake-up call and a full morning ride, perhaps exploring the western Baobab area where small islands linked by numerous hippo channels eventually lead to 'Baobab Island', a good habitat for cheetah and breeding ground for the gorgeous carmine bee-eater, a summer visitor to the Delta. Baobab Island has thick riverine forest and is a good area for elephant (as well as the unexpected!) Lunch back in camp and after a siesta and tea, perhaps a peaceful makoro (canoe) expedition on the river or a game drive. Dinner and night Kujwana camp. (B,L,D)

Day 4 A long ride today, approximately 30km northwest and usually about 6 hours riding. The route moves through a variety of terrain, crossing open floodplain and scattered islands as you head towards the Matsebe river system, detouring to follow and watch game along the way. Stop for a picnic lunch en-route, resting on a shady island, perhaps next to a swimming hole. The about a 2 hour ride back to camp to arrive at sunset. Dinner and night Kujwana camp. (B,L,D)



Day 5 A morning ride exploring the open plains to the south of Kujwana. Then return to camp for lunch and a siesta. In the afternoon you will head off in safari vehicles, driving northwest ward to the beautiful Mokolwane on the Matsebe river system. The area around camp one of wide open floodplain interspersed with Mokolwane palms - favourite food of elephant and baboon. There is also usually lots of plains game here and during an afternoon game drive, you might see zebra, giraffe, wildebeest and quite possibly some big cats too. Drinks, dinner & night Mokolwane tree house camp. (B,L,D)

Day 6 An early start, setting off at dawn in the game drive vehicle to look for lions and leopard. After the thrill of watching predators in the wild head back to Mokolwane for lunch overlooking the floodplains. After lunch return to Kujwana Camp, with time for a short siesta before getting back in the saddle for an evening ride. Dinner and night Kujwana camp. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Another exceptional full day ride, perhaps heading east to the Xudum area, stopping for a picnic lunch on the way. The ride covers 35km, with 4 hours in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. Thick riverine forest often hides a breeding herd of elephant and you will move through varied game areas, fording the Xudum river using numerous hippo channels. Back to camp for sundowners, dinner and final night in Kujwana camp. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 8 - Depending on departure times there may be time for a last early morning game ride out of Kujwana, returning to camp for breakfast. Pack up and then you will be taken to board a helicopter for the short flight back into Maun for your onward journey. (B)



DATES & RATES 2024

SAFARI DATES

March to November (inclusive):

7 night safaris - Saturday to Saturday

10 night safaris - Saturday to Tuesday

5 night safaris - Sunday to Friday (or any day for one base)

NB If dates do not suit exactly, please check with us as there is often some flexibility.

Fly camping on 10 night safaris is subject to a minimum of 4 people. If there are less, the final 3 nights of a 10 night safari will be based in Kujwana (or possibly Mokolwane) camp

January, February & December:

Kujwana camp remains open, and dates are flexible although safaris will be based throughout at Kujwana.

SAFARI PRICES

Rates are per person per night and depend on the season.

Rates below **INCLUDE** riding and other safari activities offered, guiding and equipment, twin accommodation, Land Board concession fees, taxes, all house drinks and meals but **EXCLUDE** helicopter / air charters between Maun and the camp (see below):

High Season: 1st June to 30th September - £1030 per night

5 night safari: £5150; 7 night safari: £7210; 10 night safari: £10300

Mid Season: 1st April to 31st May & 1st October to 1st December - £840 per night

5 night safari: £4200; 7 night safari: £5880; 10 night safari: £8400

Low Season: January, February, March & December - flexible dates - £700 per night

February & March, 5 night safari: £3500; 7 night safari: £4900; 10 night safari: £7000

Riverside Suites The spacious Riverside Suites (there are two) which have spectacular views and are built on the river can be reserved on request for a supplement of **£150 per suite, per night.** **cont. over**



DATES & RATES cont.

Single supplements The first three single guests to book on any date will be guaranteed single accommodation (tent) without any supplement. After this guests will be requested to share OR pay a supplement to guarantee single accommodation. Please contact us to check

Air charters The safari meeting point is Maun in Botswana and transfers between Maun and the camp are either by helicopter charter (about 25 minutes) or with fixed wing plane & 1 hour drive usually possible (about 1 ½ hrs). Rates above **EXCLUDE** air charter / transfer costs.

2024 transfer rates are currently:

Kujwana / Maun by helicopter - £650 per person return;

Fixed wing air-charter Maun to Xaranna airstrip then 1 hours drive to Kujwana - £480 per person return (NB riding/activity unlikely to be possible on first and last day).

NOTES: These transfer rates assume at least 2 people travelling together - there will be a supplement if only one person and the helicopter section may not be possible.

If joining a 5 night safari, helicopter transfer on the return may be from Mokolwane and incurs a small supplement - please contact us for details for your dates.

Fixed wing flights with onward game drive do NOT usually allow time for riding / game viewing activities on the arrival or departure day. Fixed wing air charters to Kasane on the Botswana / Zimbabwe border (which is ideal for travel on to Chobe or Victoria Falls) are also usually possible. Please contact us for details.

ALL helicopter / fixed wing rates are subject to variation with increases in fuel costs and may vary between now and the time you book so rates must be confirmed with us on booking.



****Example INCLUSIVE safari rates 2024****

INCLUDING return helicopter transfers Maun / Kujwana (at least 2 travelling)

High Season - 7 night safari, £7860 per person; 10 night safari £10950 per person.

Mid Season - 7 night safari £6530 per person; 10 night safari £9050 per person.

These rates **INCLUDE** all riding and other available activities (walks, mokoro trips etc), guiding (shared basis) and equipment, 7 or 10 nights twin accommodation (based on two sharing), meals, all house drinks, Land board concession fees, local government taxes and return helicopter transfer Maun to the camp and back (based on at least 2 travelling and at current rates).

They **EXCLUDE** International flights to Maun and tax, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave the staff.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS & TRAVEL

Maun is the meeting place for the safaris. The best way to fly from London is generally via Johannesburg in South Africa - there are no direct flights from London to Maun. You can also fly via Cape Town, Windhoek in Namibia, via Harare in Zimbabwe and via Gaborone in Botswana but Johannesburg is usually best with the most frequent / best connections.

Travelling from London, you should plan to take an overnight flight to Johannesburg (British Airways and Virgin fly direct London to Johannesburg every day, leaving London at about 19.00 / 21.00 and arriving JHB at about 07.00 / 09.00). Once in Johannesburg, you need to change planes and take an Air Botswana or South African Airlink flight to Maun. These are daily with one (occasionally two) morning departures Johannesburg to Maun taking around 1 hr 40 mins. Due to connection times, to avoid an overnight stay in Johannesburg, British Airways are usually the best international carrier to use with the earlier flight recommended on the outward journey. On the return, daily flights from Maun to Johannesburg will connect with overnight return flights to London. **Please call us for more flight information, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or if you would like us to book your flights. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213**

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 30 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance. If you plan to fly via South Africa please note that there are special requirements for those travelling with children, requiring provision of birth certificates and other documents, which are strictly enforced, particularly if only one parent is accompanying.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Botswana but Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A are recommended, and you will also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets. You should consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 16/10/23)

