



RIDE WORLD WIDE

BOTSWANA

RIDE BOTSWANA, KALAHARI 2023

RIDE INFORMATION

Ride Botswana, is owned and run by Robyn & David Foot, who have been operating horse safaris in southern Africa for more than 25 years. Initially based in Malawi, they moved to Botswana in 2008 and now operate highly personalised small group riding safaris in both the Kalahari Desert and Okavango Delta. Kalahari Safaris explore the Makgadikgadi Salt pans, part of the infamous Kalahari Desert. Ride Botswana also offer safaris in the Okavango Delta itself, and also 8 night 'Desert & Delta' safaris combining the Kalahari and the Okavango - please see our separate Information Sheet for details.



DATES

5 night Kalahari Safaris and 8 night Desert & Delta Safaris are run from set dates (listed overleaf). Other dates and slightly different itineraries also available for private groups (min 2 riders) on request for 3 nights or more. David is also available to lead tailor-made private safaris that can combine his riding itineraries with walking and boating in the Okavango Delta and / or with canoeing along Botswana's Selinda spillway. Please contact us at Ride World Wide to discuss your plans and availability.

HORSES

Ride Botswana own about 40 horses, which are based in stables in the Kalahari and at Royal Tree Lodge near Maun. Most are crossbreeds, between about 14.1hh and 16.2hh and they include South African Boerperd / TB crosses, Shire / TB crosses, Arab crosses, Quarterhorse crosses and some Appaloosa crosses. All are well-schooled, well cared for and responsive and enjoyable to ride. They are also sensible to handle, used to game and at home in the bush.

TACK

Saddles are comfortable Maclellans (a 'cavalry type' saddle that is a cross between an English and Western style) or English Wintecs, with saddle bags provided for personal belongings where necessary.



RIDING

Kalahari Safaris take place in the Kalahari's Makgadikgadi Salt pans. Standard 5 night itineraries include riding on 5 days, usually an introductory ride on the first day, followed by 4 consecutive days riding, with 4 to 7 hours in the saddle each day. Days are normally broken up into a long morning ride with a late lunch eaten in camp and the afternoon for a guided walk or game drive; or a full day ride moving to a new camp, stopping for lunch and refreshments en-route. Shorter 3 night itineraries are also possible, staying at Camp Kalahari and riding out to explore a different area each day. Riding groups are normally limited to a maximum of 8 riders but groups of 10 may be possible by arrangement.

WEIGHT LIMIT

95 kgs (15 stone) but please contact us if you are close to this so we can check suitable horses are available.

PACE

The riding pace on the safaris varies with the terrain and riders' ability and wishes, but the Makgadikgadi particularly offers masses of scope for fun, fast riding - it is a fantastic, flat and open riding environment. In the dry season, the sandy going underfoot is firm and ideal for exhilarating trots and long, long canters spreading out to enjoy the never-ending space. In the 'green' (wet) season, when the Pans themselves may be full of water, game paths through adjacent grasslands are perfect for long, relaxed canters. At any time of year, riding is also through the islands of palm trees and mopane woodland where horses pick their way quite slowly and carefully.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

Kalahari Safaris are aimed at reasonably competent, confident riders. Riding is in a very remote, open area with no fences or other boundaries to restrict you and where game wanders freely. To join these safaris you should be comfortable, balanced and in control on a well schooled horse at all paces (including long trots and long fast canters) and used to riding in open country with a group of horses. You also need to be relaxed and secure in the saddle in case your horse reacts suddenly. Participants are expected to have some riding experience and ideally should be comfortable and secure at a walk, trot and for short periods of canter, but with flexible hours and flat, quite easy terrain, these are ideal for a first experience of riding in the African bush as well as for more experienced riders who want to fit a couple of days riding into a trip to Botswana. Accompanied children are accepted on safaris at Ride Botswana's discretion; generally the minimum age is 12 yrs although younger riders, who are confident and strong, may be taken by arrangement. In all cases, riding fitness is important and if you do not ride regularly at home, you should accustom yourself to the time you will spend in the saddle with concentrated riding before you go. Non-riders are welcome to join any safari, meeting riders for lunch and in the evenings, with days filled with other game viewing activities (game drives, walks etc).



TERRAIN

The Makgadikgadi Pans are quite unlike anywhere in Africa! In the centre of the Pans, limitless flatness stretches in every direction. There are no visual landmarks and all around is a vast moonscape, making it easy to lose your sense of perspective. In the dry season, the flat sand is firm and bare; when the Pans fill with water, they draw in thousands of zebra and wildebeest and provide a wonderful watery environment for big herds of game and also large flocks of flamingos. Grassland bordering the salt-pans is criss-crossed with a network of sandy wildlife paths and palm-covered sand dunes form a chain of islands on the ancient lake-bed. Away from the Pans, the vegetation thickens to mopane and acacia woodland interspersed with grassland, a good habitat for smaller game and birds of prey.



GAME

The Kalahari and Makgadikgadi Salt Pans are a harsh environment for game but between January and April, the Kalahari's green (wet) season, the amount of game in the area increases dramatically as it sees Southern Africa's biggest (and last surviving) zebra and wildebeest migration. The highlight of a Kalahari Safari during these months, is the chance to ride with the huge herds of wildebeest, hartebeest and zebra that migrate to the water filled Pans and see the islands and grasslands that adjoin the desert awash with zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest and ostrich with hopeful predators following in their wake, a spectacular sight in the open desert environment. The water also attracts wonderful birdlife including flocks of pink-tinged flamingos. During the dry season, when the migrating game disperses, there is still a chance to see antelope such as springbok, gemsbok and red hartebeest that survive well in the desert year round despite scarce food and water. You may also see monkeys and baboons year round, desert-adapted species such as meerkats at close quarters, nocturnal game such as brown hyena, bat eared fox, aardvark, aardwolf, porcupine and honey badgers as well as birds that include rare koorhans, huge bustards and other birds of prey as well as numerous smaller birds. The famous black maned Kalahari lions, some of the biggest in Africa, are also occasionally seen and often heard at night.



GUIDES & SAFETY

David is a professionally qualified guide with over 25 years' experience and either he or one of his carefully chosen assistant guides normally leads all Kalahari Safaris, accompanied by a back-up rider or groom. David is always a great safari companion. He is an extremely knowledgeable guide and birder (his enthusiasm for the area's birdlife is infectious), always fun and enthusiastic but relaxed and easy going company. All guides are first aid trained and carry a satellite 'phone and / or hand held radio for communication. A basic first aid kit is carried in saddle-bags, with more comprehensive kits kept at the camp / lodge.



ACCOMMODATION



Accommodation for 3 nights on Kalahari Rides is in Camp Kalahari, a tented camp nestled amongst acacias and Mokolwane palms on the edge of the salt Pans. The camp (which sleeps a maximum of 22 guests) is owned by Kalahari specialists Uncharted Africa and has recently been refurbished. It is refreshingly simple yet also comfortable with a large, traditionally built thatch living and dining area and a swimming pool for those hot Kalahari days. It also has 9 spacious twin or double walk-in safari (Meru) tents and a family tent consisting of 2 adjoining tents (2 people in each) with bathroom in between. All tents have attached bathroom with flush loo, shower and hot and cold running water. They also have comfy 4 poster beds, made up with cotton sheets, striped African blankets and hot water bottles if it is cold.



For 5 night programs the remaining 2 nights in the Kalahari are normally spent in a simpler 'fly' camp. In the green season, both nights are in Xau Xai fly camp, where you sleep on stretcher beds in 2 man dome tents set up around a central mess tent, with shared 'bucket and pulley' showers and short drop bush loos. In the dry season, Xau Xai is used for one night and the second night is usually spent sleeping out on bedrolls under the starry Kalahari sky. Lighting in all camps is by kerosene lamps and extras such as torches, soap, towels and ice for drinks, are all provided. Rates for Kalahari Rides assume two sharing and a single supplement is payable to guarantee a single tent.



MEALS

You will be extremely well fed on these safaris with three delicious meals a day and snacks to keep you going when out riding. Fresh bread is baked every day, breakfasts include a choice of fruit, perhaps porridge, toast and a full cooked breakfast for those who wish or you may be woken with tea, coffee and biscuits brought to your tent before an early morning ride then stop for a cooked breakfast served at tables set up out in the bush. Picnic lunches out riding or served in camp have plenty of freshly prepared salads and vegetables, perhaps quiches, cold meat, fresh fruit as well as tea, coffee and other drinks. There are always snacks to accompany drinks around the fire, and three-course candlelit dinners in the dining tent, or outside under the stars if the weather is fine, make evenings sociable and relaxing. A varied bar with a selection of spirits, wine, beer and soft drinks (with plenty of ice) will all be included.



WEATHER & SEASONS

Summer months in Botswana are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, with temperatures up to about 38 degrees C at midday. The wet season is November to April, although most rain usually falls December to February. The coolest months are June to August when midday temperatures reach around 28 degrees C. During these months and in May and September, it can be quite cold in the early mornings and evenings (sometimes dropping below 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.

ITINERARIES

The following is an example of the standard 5 night Kalahari itinerary, although please note it is only an example and day-by-day arrangements vary with the season and may also be varied by your guides in their discretion according to game movements, weather and other local conditions. In the green (wet) season Kalahari Safaris focus on the game that migrates to the Pans; in the dry season, when game is very sparse, the highlight (not to be missed!) is exploring the extraordinary, eerie desert landscape. Please enquire for Desert & Delta combination itinerary.

Kalahari Safari (5 nights)

Day 1 Arrive Camp Kalahari by private charter plane or road transfer. Meet David your host and guide, shown to your tents and after tea in camp, meet the horses and an introductory ride to try them and for a first view of the area. Return to camp at sunset, watch the sun go down behind the palms and then hot showers, a lovely dinner and night in camp. (D)

Day 2 Up with the dawn and a light breakfast before a long morning ride through the 'land of a thousand islands' a chain of palm-covered sand dunes on the ancient lake-bed. The white encrusted pans between the islands provide fantastic going for horses and this is a fun and exhilarating first days ride returning to camp for lunch and a rest whilst it is hot. After lunch, time to relax under the shady thatch or sweeping camel thorns, cooling off in the camp swimming pool. Tea, then head off by vehicle to look for desert game such as springbok, gemsbok and red hartebeest before returning after dark with a spotlight that picks out brown hyena, bat eared fox, aardvark, porcupine, honey badger or perhaps even Kalahari lion. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 3 An early departure for a long ride east to Xau Xai fly camp. Pack up essentials for two days in a bag that is loaded on to vehicles, mount up and set off riding through mopane and acacia woodland interspersed with grass that is perfect for long, relaxed canters. This area is rich in birds of prey and you should see Bustards and Korhaans as well as numerous other unusual dry woodland bird species. David is an extremely knowledgeable birder whose enthusiasm is infectious. You may also spot kudu and perhaps the odd bull elephant enjoying fruit of the date palms. Reach the famous Greens Baobab by lunchtime, proudly positioned along the well-travelled Missionary Road, traversed by David Livingstone on his journeys north. The vast trunk of this ancient tree is scarred with the initials of early travellers some dating back over 150 years - a living testimony to the area's history. Lunch is set up close to the adjacent Gutsa Pan, under a stand of palm trees where you may spot Stone Age artefacts and see the hunting blinds used over the millennia by the Kalahari Bushmen. A welcome siesta through the midday heat, a cup of tea to wake you and then ride on to arrive at Xau Xai fly camp for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)



Day 4 Woken with a steaming cup of tea or coffee and a light breakfast, before mounting up to head off in search of some of the Kalahari's most fascinating inhabitants, the meerkats. Stop close to a colony of meerkats where you can tether the horses and walk into the middle of the group - an ongoing habituation program run by Uncharted Africa, which owns Camp Kalahari, means you can get up close and personal with these captivating creatures. Although not tame, they are used to a human presence and if the morning is chilly, you might find a meerkat snuggling up to you for warmth or, in the absence of a termite mound or tree, using your head as a sentry lookout post... As the day warms up, leave the meerkats to their foraging, mount up and follow well-worn game tracks that lead to resident herds of zebra and congregations of ostrich attracted by the permanent freshwater in hidden waterholes. At around midday ride back to Xau Xai for lunch, a shower and siesta in the shade. In the late afternoon there may be a walk to a nearby waterhole to look for some of the Kalahari's unusual bird species, perhaps watching hundreds of sand grouse fly in or game coming to drink, before returning to camp at sunset or, in the dry season, a wonderful late afternoon ride heading out into the middle of the ancient lakebed where, eventually, all you can see is vast flatness stretching in every direction. Not one visual landmark, you will swiftly lose your sense of perspective - 16,000 square kilometres of baking soda void, inhabited only by you and a few gazillion invisible brine shrimp! Watch the sun-set, the stars come out and settle for a night under the blanketing silence of a star studded sky. (B,L,D)

Day 5 As the dawn greets this extraordinary landscape and the last of the stars fade, wake for breakfast, then mount up to ride out. In the green season head out from camp cantering along the edge of the Pans and along paths through the grasslands where masses of zebra and wildebeest graze. In the dry season, this ride takes you back towards camp after your unforgettable night on the Pans. Arrive back at Camp Kalahari for showers, **cont. over**



ITINERARY cont.

Day 5 cont. a late lunch and afternoon to relax, swim or just read by the pool. After tea, a last evening ride to a water-filled Pan to watch flamingos diving for brine shrimp or for a final view of wildebeest and zebra contentedly grazing or for a final gallop in the eeriness of the desert as the sun sets behind swaying palms. Dinner and final night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Today a leisurely wake up and breakfast in camp before a drive through the bush to a traditionally built Bushmen village where elders of the Zu/'hoasi Bushmen community will welcome you. A chance to walk out into the bush with the men, women and children of this community is a fascinating experience, an opportunity to learn how these extraordinary people have survived in this harshest of environments. Unchartered Africa passionately support cultural tourism in Botswana and have been working closely with this Zu/'hoasi tribe of the Western Kalahari for many years. They are privileged to have a small group to act as guides and able to offer a window into the past. Return to camp for lunch and pack up for the journey to Maun by private charter or vehicle. (B, L) END



DATES & RATES 2023

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, safari rates are now quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

5 night Kalahari Safari

2nd to 7th January (USD 6325)

1st to 6th February (USD 5875)

21st to 26th March (USD 5875)

12th to 17th April (USD 6325)

11th to 15th May (USD 6325)

Single supplement - Low season - none; Mid season USD 2000; High season USD 2200

25th to 30th June (USD 6325)

19th to 24th July (USD 6900)

2nd to 7th August (USD 6900)

20th to 25th September (USD 6325)

26th to 31st December (USD 6325)

8 night Desert & Delta Safaris

January to March - 5 nights Kalahari, 3 nights Okavango;

April to November - 5 nights Okavango, 3 nights Kalahari

23rd to 31st January (USD 6920)

20th to 28th February (USD 6920)

13th to 21st March (USD 6920)

29th March to 6th April (USD 7790)

1st to 9th June (USD 7790)

14th to 22nd June (USD 7790)

1st to 9th July (USD 8635)

Single supplement - depends on season, from USD 575 to USD 1895

25th July to 2nd August (USD 8635)

8th to 16th August (USD 8635)

22nd to 30th August (USD 8635)

5th to 13th September (USD 8635)

23rd to 31st October (USD 8635)

12th to 20th November (USD 7790)

11th to 19th December (USD 7190)

Kalahari Safaris are also possible on request for 2 or more riders, minimum 3 nights - pricing per night as follows:

High Season (July & August) - USD 1380 per person per night; Single supplement USD 440

Mid Season (April to June & September to 9th January - USD 1265 per person per night;

Single supplement USD 400

Low Season (10th January to March) - USD 1175 per person per night; No single supplement

DATES & RATES cont.

Rates INCLUDE all riding, walking and game drives included in the safari itinerary, guiding and equipment, twin accommodation (single tent only if paying supplement or if otherwise available), National Park entrance fees, meals, drinks (except champagne, premium spirits and wines) and laundry service.

Rates EXCLUDE International flights to Maun and taxes, charter flights / transfers between Maun and the Makgadikgadi, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, personal items such as telephone calls, shopping etc and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Single accommodation - All rates quoted above assume twin shared accommodation. If you are booking alone and are NOT prepared to share a twin bedded tent with another guest of the same sex, a single supplement is charged to guarantee a single room (if you are happy to share then no supplement is charged).

Air charters / transfers - The meeting point for safaris is Maun but the above rates **EXCLUDE** charter transfers between Maun and Camp Kalahari. You will need to budget extra for these. Fixed wing light aircraft charters take about 30 minutes; rates are currently USD 790 per person return. It is also possible to travel by road between Maun and Kamp Kalahari. The drive takes 3 hours and the rate is USD 450 per person return. All transfer prices are subject to increase in fuel costs and can change at short notice so please confirm when you book. **Please note** for single travellers' there is a 100% surcharge on the road transfer price, this will be waived if there are other travellers on the transfer. On the flights there is a 50% single supplement surcharge which is placed on single travellers regardless of other travellers.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

Maun is the safari meeting place. The best way to travel there from London is generally via Johannesburg in South Africa - there are no direct flights from London to Maun. You can also fly to Maun via Windhoek in Namibia, via Harare in Zimbabwe and via Gaborone in Botswana, but Johannesburg is usually the most convenient connection point.

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. 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 in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice

(DRAFT 06/12/2022)

