



RIDE WORLD WIDE

NAMIBIA

THE NAMIBIA HORSE SAFARI COMPANY 2024

RIDE INFORMATION

Namibia's desert landscape is extraordinary. Varied, sometimes harsh but always hauntingly beautiful, it's a landscape you can not only see, but can 'immerse yourself in' on a horse. The riding safaris we offer are operated by The Namibia Horse Safari Company, co-owned by Andrew Gillies who is fast becoming one of Africa's most sought-after riding guides, and provide a remarkable, adventurous way to explore Namibia. There are several safari routes, each crossing the Namib Desert at a different location and each aiming to focus on a different highlight. The iconic Namib Desert Ride is a 300 mile journey to the coast; the Damaraland Elephant Ride tracks elusive desert elephant and endangered desert rhino; the Wild Horses Ride searches for wild horses in the area south of the spectacular Sossusvlei sand dunes, and early and late in the season, you can start by exploring the enigmatic Skeleton Coast before heading inland across the desert. Each year riders who have been before are also invited to join Andrew exploring a new part of Namibia. All safaris will test and stretch you but for a switch-off from everyday life, an exhilarating and incredibly rewarding challenge in a tough but wonderfully awe-inspiring country, they provide an adventure you will not forget!



DATES

10, 9 and 6 night safaris are run from set dates between March and November, with other dates possible on request for private groups. Please see dates overleaf and contact Ride World Wide to discuss plans and availability.

HORSES

The Namibia Horse Safari Company owns around 100 safari horses. They are mainly crossbreeds, including Arab, Hanoverian, Haflinger and South African Boerperd crosses, with a few crosses of the rare "wild horse" of the Namib Desert. Most are between about 14hh and 16hh and all are sure-footed, tough and athletic. They are also kind, reliable, fit and responsive to ride, being used to endurance-type riding and the rough terrain and conditions of the desert.

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HORSES cont.

The horses are carefully selected and schooled by Andrew, who is a skilful, natural horseman who inspires confidence in both horse and rider. Riders are asked to help groom and tack up/untack their horse each day on safari and help with feeding and watering is also appreciated (although voluntary!)

TACK

Saddles are a Maclellan style (based on a military saddle) and specially designed with several adaptations to ensure comfort over long hours for horse and rider. They have small saddle bags for carrying water bottles. Bridles are a simple English style usually with a snaffle bit.



RIDING

Safaris generally include between 4 and 7 hours in the saddle each riding day, covering an average of 30km, although this varies with the route (the longest day on the Namib Desert Ride is nearly 60kms / 8 to 9 hours in the saddle; it is 50 kms on the Damaraland Elephant Ride). Riding is usually broken up with a leisurely lunch and short siesta as well as other breaks to lead horses over rough stony ground, visit sites of interest or just stretch legs. Riding groups are usually limited to 12 riding guests (plus guides) but sometimes, because Namibia has such wide-open spaces, a maximum of 14 or 15 riders (plus guides) may be taken. Andrew, who is a professionally qualified, charismatic guide and has been leading riding safaris in Namibia for over 20 years, leads most rides personally, accompanied by a back-up rider. As well as his years of experience, he has a natural unassuming authority that inspires confidence and this, along with his sense of humour and dedicated team of experienced local staff, mean you are in the best possible hands.

PACE

The riding pace depends very much on the day's terrain and temperatures, as well as riders' fitness, but rides are generally all at a good, energetic pace with plenty of opportunities for long canters over open, undulating ground and across sandy desert flats. Some days on all rides are slow, with areas where horses pick their way across rock-strewn plains, through boulder fields and up or down rocky zebra paths; others are fast, crossing vast desert plains with sandy going that stretches for miles and large distances to cover before nightfall.

WEIGHT LIMIT

Harsh desert conditions take their toll on horses - and swapping horses half-way through a ride is problematic - so there is a **strict** weight limit of 85 kgs (about 13stone 5lbs) in riding clothes. Riders may be asked to step on scales at the start of the safari if there is any doubt and will not be allowed to ride if over this limit. Be honest when you book! If you are close to the weight limit **contact us before** booking as occasionally fit, experienced riders of up to 93kg (14 ½ stone) *may* be taken by prior arrangement and on payment of a supplement for use (and transport) of a second or possibly third horse. This **has to** be by prior arrangement.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition to join one of these safaris, you must be completely comfortable and in control on a horse at all paces including long fast trots and canters when riding with a group in open country. You should also be confident, adaptable, able to get on and off unassisted and used to riding over varied, sometimes tricky, uneven or rocky ground. Riding fitness is equally important - both for you and your horse - and if you do not ride regularly at home, we strongly recommend concentrated training before you go. Slightly less experienced or less fit riders can be taken on private rides by arrangement but as the riding is in areas that are remote, with varied terrain and plenty of places for long canters, all participants should be at least of an intermediate riding standard. Riders are asked to help look after their horse on safari and (although some help may be available and extra groom(s) can sometimes be arranged for an additional charge) you should be confident tacking-up, un-tacking and handling a horse from the ground. As well as riding fitness, good health and general fitness are vitally important and help you cope with Namibia's high temperatures, some harsh conditions and occasions when you'll be asked to get off and on unassisted and to lead your horse over rocky ground. Other important requisites are flexibility, an ability to manage for yourself and a sense of humour to deal with the unexpected! Strong child riders of 12 yrs and over are accepted with parents but as the rides are strenuous and areas remote, it is important to consider carefully if they are suitable. You will be asked to acknowledge the riding policy and sign Namibia Horse Safari's waiver of liability before you ride, and anyone not able to keep up will be asked to travel in the back up vehicle.

TERRAIN

The terrain covered varies from day to day, depending on the itinerary. Although Namibia has a largely desert landscape, the going underfoot varies from boulder-strewn plains, rocky hills and dry riverbeds with mixed vegetation, to deep gorges, vast sandy plains and spectacular sand dunes. At times it is difficult for horses with boulders to scabble over and rocks to negotiate but there are also many wide-open sandy plains with good going that stretches for miles. The 'high' plateau receives a fair amount of rain annually and has plenty of scrubby vegetation and varied topography; the gravel desert is flat as far as the eye can see, broken only by an occasional "inselberg" or island mountain. On the approach to the coast there is 'dune desert'; this is wind-driven and constantly on the move with dunes that are amongst the highest on earth and in some places, run right up to the sea.



GAME, FLORA & FAUNA

These are not game oriented rides, however Namibia's central highlands are home to antelope such as oryx, kudu, gemsbok, springbok and klipspringer as well as Hartmann's Mountain Zebra, ostrich, dassie rats and baboon. Cheetah and leopard also thrive here, although are elusive and unlikely to be seen. Namibia is the one place where you *may* see desert adapted elephant and endangered desert rhino - both a highlight (although again extremely elusive!) of the Damaraland Elephant Ride. 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

Most nights on the rides are spent camping in simple mobile camps set up for you along the riding route, with the first and last nights in a lodge, guesthouse or hotel (rooms with own bath / shower room). In mobile camps, 2 man dome tents are provided for sleeping although most guests choose to sleep out under the stars setting up their comfortable camp bed with its cosy canvas bedroll (which includes a warm, built-in duvet and pillow) under the desert sky - a wonderful experience. All luggage and camp equipment is moved ahead by back-up vehicle and camps have folding camp chairs, tables, shared long drop loos and hot showers - either a traditional 'bucket & pulley' shower set up against the support truck or in some cases, if camp is at an existing site, access to purpose built hot showers and flush loos. Where existing camp sites are used, there may be a kitchen / dining 'hut' for meals - otherwise all food and cooking equipment is brought with the back-up truck and meals are eaten around the campfire.

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ACCOMMODATION cont.

On most days the back-up vehicle meets the riding group at lunchtime although occasionally, when distances are large, riders may take the most direct route across the desert, just meeting the back-up team in the evening. Rates assume twin share accommodation but single rooms at guesthouses / lodges can be requested when you book - a supplement is charged if these are available. Single tents are provided as far as possible on request for single travellers (numbers allowing).



MEALS

Three good meals a day are included on all safaris and you will be well fed! Breakfast is normally porridge or cereal and toast, with eggs or a selection of cold meats and cheese sometimes on offer. Lunch is a picnic, either sandwiches you make in the morning, cake, biscuits and fruit carried in saddle-bags or, if the day's itinerary allows, a picnic brought to meet you by the back-up - perhaps warm rolls or fruit bread, 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 campfire, sometimes a typically Namibian stew, a casserole ('potjie') or a traditional 'braai' (BBQ) - followed by a hot pudding. Tea, coffee, local spirits, house wine and beer (in reasonable quantities) are all included when camping and wine is included with dinner at lodges.

WEATHER

Summer months in Namibia are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, with midday temperatures up to about 38 C. The coolest months are May to August (winter) when midday temperatures reach about 28 C and it is dry and desert-like. During these months and in early September, it can be cold at night, in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to 4 or 5 C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm, although there can also be a brisk wind. Sandstorms are possible in June and July - if there is one when you are in the desert, plans will be made to leave for Swakopmund or your lodge. If you dislike heat, avoid early and late season rides and choose one in the middle of the year. Namibia has two rainy seasons, the 'little rains' from October to December and the main rainy period from January to April - however more moisture comes into the desert as fog off the Atlantic than falls as rain, with Namibia receiving an average of just 106 mm of rain a year, usually concentrated in the months of February and April. Any rain usually falls as brief showers or thunderstorms to clear the air. There is little chance of rain during the riding season - although, as with any weather pattern, a shower is possible!



SAFETY

Rides are generally accompanied by 2 guides and a back-up crew. Guides carry a first aid kit and also a satellite 'phone for emergencies. 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 list when you book.



ITINERARIES

The following are summaries of the main ride itineraries - please contact us for more details. As well as set rides, each year a new or "exploratory" ride is also run (usually for previous guest only). Please note that itineraries are always flexible and the below are only examples of what is planned. Routes and daily arrangements depend on weather and local conditions and may be varied by your guides in their absolute discretion.

Namib Desert Ride (11 days, 10 nights with 7½ days riding)

About 300 kms across the world's oldest desert - a journey of a lifetime. Tough, not for the faint hearted, but tremendously rewarding. The route across Central Namibia's canyons, mountains, plains and coast, offers immense contrasts. After visiting the spectacular Sossesvlei dunes, you will ride from the Khomas Hochland mountains, through the rocky Kuiseb Canyon, across open Tinkas, Tumas and Welwitschia plains to the seasonal Swakop River, finally reaching the coastal dunes and sandy beach of the Atlantic Ocean's Skeleton Coast. 11 days, with 7 ½ days riding, covering 20 to nearly 60 kms a day. 8 nights camping, 2 in lodges. The terrain is varied, can be difficult and uneven and this ride is suitable for fit, adventurous and experienced riders only. Meeting / start and end point Windhoek.

Damaraland Elephant Ride (11 days, 10 nights with 7 ½ days riding)

Largely inaccessible, Damaraland is a spectacular part of Namibia with amazing colours and vast open spaces. Ancient craters, remnants of prehistoric times, not to mention the forbidding Skeleton Coast with its sun-bleached whale bones and numerous ship wrecks - and where else can you see elephant and rhino in a desert habitat? You will be surprised at how they have adapted to the harsh environment. Highlights on this ride might include encounters with elephant, a glimpse of rare desert rhino, cheetah and plains game; you may be caught by a river in flood, see Namibia's highest mountain in its purple hued glory - all unforgettable. 11 days, 10 nights with 7 ½ days riding covering 20 to 50 kms a day. 8 nights camping, 2 in lodges. For fit, experienced riders only. Meeting / start and end point Windhoek.





Skeleton Damara Safari (10 days, 9 nights with 7 days riding)

Little Skeleton Damara (7 days, 6 nights with 4 days riding)

With breezes from the Atlantic keeping temperatures down, this route is ideal for the southern hemisphere spring months of October and November. After visiting Swakopmund, the riding route starts about 3 hours north exploring the Skeleton Coast and the river valleys of Damaraland inland before heading back to the coast at Henties Bay where you end with a night in a beach house. 4 or 7 days riding covering 20 to 50 kms a day. 4 or 7 nights camping, 2 nights in lodges (1 in Windhoek, 1 on the Skeleton Coast). For fit, experienced riders. Meeting / end point Windhoek.

Wild Horses Ride (11 days, 10 nights with 7 days riding)

An adventurous ride that 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 - immense grassy plains, inselbergs (Island Mountains) that are so typical of Namibia and the rugged Tiras Mountain Reserve. Ending at Klein Aus Vista near the home of the Wild Horses, where streaks of Namib sand merge with the bleached grasses of the Pro-Namib, it is a wonderful chance to explore some breath-taking desert landscapes. 11 days and 10 nights, 1 night Windhoek guesthouse, 9 nights in temporary desert camps, the ride follows a progressive route covering 25 to 40 kms a day for 7 days, finishing with one sightseeing day in search of the wild horses. You may also visit the coastal town of Luderitz and possibly the historic mining town of Kolmanskop. Meeting / start and end point Windhoek.



DATES & RATES 2024

Namib Desert Ride - £5800 per person

10th to 20th April

22nd May to 1st June

3rd to 13th July

14th to 24th August

25th September to 5th October

Damaraland Elephant Ride - £5800 per person

24th July to 3rd August

4th to 14th September

Skeleton Damara Ride - £5800 per person

16th to 25th October

6th to 15th November

Little Skeleton Damara - £5500 per person

1st to 7th March

17th to 23rd March

Wild Horses Ride - £5800 per person

1st to 11th May

Exploratory Ride - £6350 per person

12th to 22nd June (for returning guests only)

Single accommodation - Please note that rates quoted above assume shared accommodation. If you would like single accommodation **the supplement on all rides is £200**. If you are travelling alone and are happy to share with another guest of the same sex, the supplement is not charged.

NOTE: Riders over the 85kgs weight limit (dressed in riding gear) and up to a maximum of 93kg **may** be accepted by arrangement and on payment of a supplement of **£850** for a second horse. This applied for all 9 & 10 night safaris. Please contact us for supplements for shorter rides.

Rates INCLUDE 6, 9 or 10 nights twin share accommodation (single if paying a supplement), all riding and equipment, guiding services, meals, house drinks when camping and with meals (excludes extra drinks at lodges / restaurants), set time overland transfers as a group from / to Windhoek on first and last day and sightseeing as per the itinerary.

Rates EXCLUDE International flights to Namibia and taxes, additional drinks at restaurants / lodges and any premium wines / spirits, extra nights' accommodation before / after ride itinerary, excursions or extra activities you may wish to book, any internal flights / extra or non-standard transfers, personal travel / medical insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, personal extras at lodges (telephone calls, laundry etc) and any tips you wish to leave staff (optional but suggested amount for ride crew / staff £8-10 per guest per day).



INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS & TRAVEL

The meeting point for most rides is Windhoek. Lufthansa fly to Windhoek overnight from London Heathrow (via Frankfurt) with departures most days. You can also fly to Windhoek via Johannesburg, usually overnight from London to Johannesburg - **British Airways and Virgin fly direct daily** (usually departing Heathrow between 19.00 and 21.00 and arriving JNB between 07.00 and 09.00 the next day) - then on a connecting onward flight from Johannesburg to Windhoek with South African Airlink and Air Namibia.

For most safaris transfers will be arranged back to Windhoek on the last day, either to Windhoek central or direct to Windhoek airport. Transfers are generally by private transfer or scheduled bus from Swakopmund (or Luderitz for Wild Horses). As the transfers takes up to 7 hours, flights out of Windhoek should **not be before 15.00** on the last day for most safaris (Wild Horses may require later flights, not before 19.00). Charter flights from Swakopmund to Windhoek Eros Airport (NB not the international airport, which is a further 45 minutes or so by taxi) can sometimes be arranged at extra cost, as can special road transfers from the last night's accommodation to Walvis Bay International Airport, from where you can fly direct to Johannesburg. On the Wild Horses Ride, a domestic flight from Luderitz to Windhoek might be possible depending on flight schedules. Contact us for rates and further details.



Please contact us for 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.



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 (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. If you are flying via South Africa please note there are currently special requirements for those travelling with children, requiring provision of birth certificates and (if both parents are not present) other documents.

Health The TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends most travellers are vaccinated against **Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Typhoid**. You should also take further advice about other vaccine preventable health risks. There is no Yellow Fever risk in Namibia but you may need a valid Yellow Fever certificate if entering Namibia from another tropical country with a risk of yellow fever transmission. You will be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets for certain areas. Please consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 15/09/23)

