



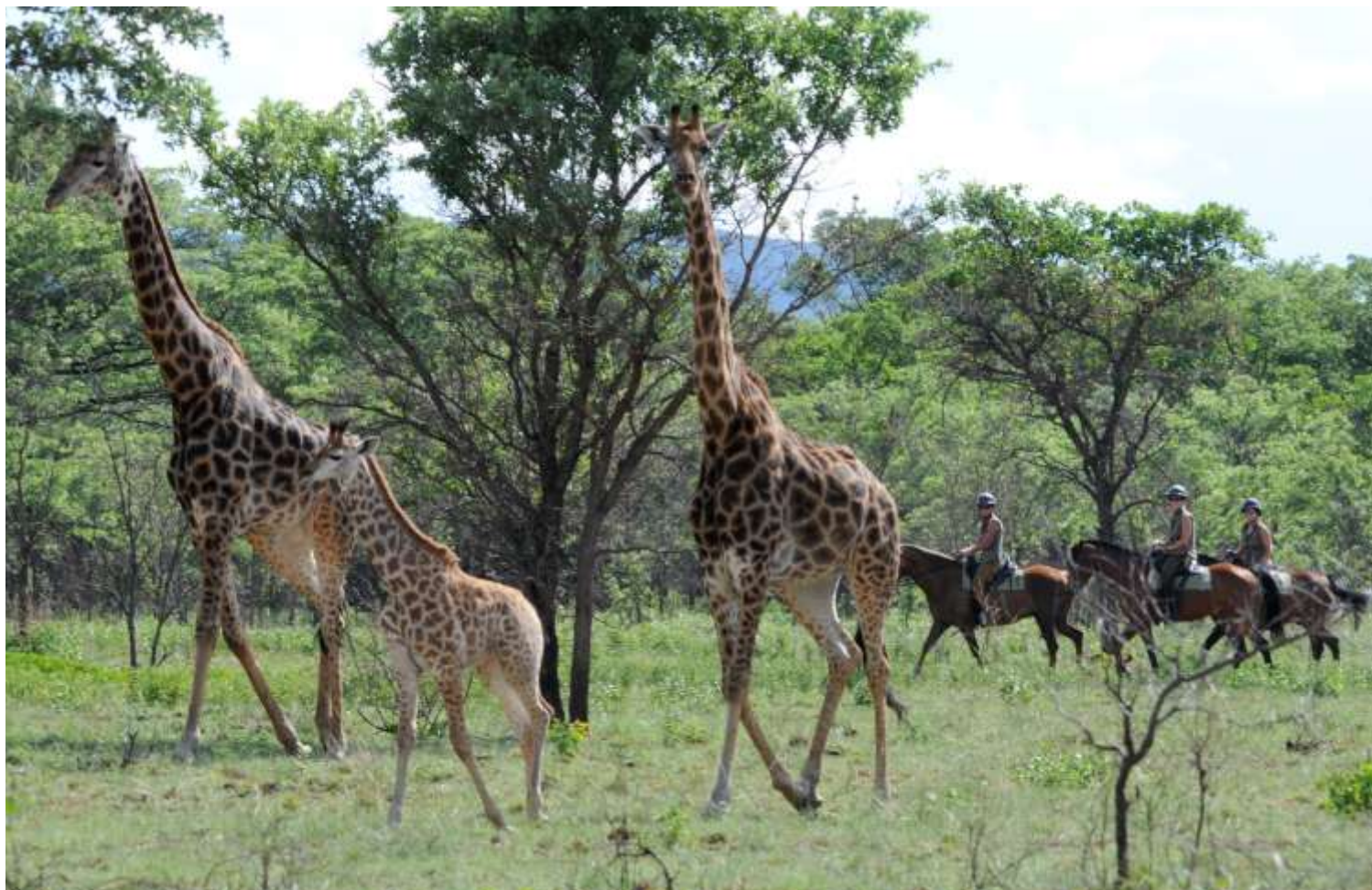
RIDE WORLD WIDE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

AFRICAN EXPLORER SAFARI 2025

RIDE INFORMATION

African Explorer Safaris are run by the team who operate Horizon Horseback in South Africa and Botswana. They are highly personal, small group safaris, combining 3 or 4 days riding in South Africa with 3 or 4 days riding on Mashatu Game Reserve in eastern Botswana and are an excellent, varied and good value first riding safari. A fantastic introduction to riding with game in Southern Africa.



DATES

Safaris are run from set dates throughout the year and there are two slightly different itineraries. Safaris starting Friday will spend 4 nights in South Africa and 3 nights in Botswana, while those starting Tuesday will spend 3 nights in South Africa and 4 nights in Botswana. For availability please contact Ride World Wide.

HORSES

All the horses used are owned by Horizon Horseback Adventures. For the first part, horses are selected from the pool of 90 or so kept at the main Horizon Horseback base in South Africa and for the second part, from the 50 or so kept at the Horizon Mashatu stable in Botswana. They are mainly local South African breeds and cross breeds and include South African Boerperds, TB and Arab crosses, South African Warmbloods and Shire / TB crosses. Most are between about 14.1hh and 16.3hh and all are tough, sensible, sure-footed and ideally suited to the local terrain. They are also well-schooled, responsive and fun to ride. The horses are looked after with great care by a dedicated team of grooms, expertly overseen in by Shane Dowinton who co-owns Horizon, who has a wealth of horse care experience. Horses are prepared for rides, tacked up and untacked for you by your guide and grooms.

TACK

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



RIDING

Safaris include about 4 to 5 hours in the saddle on each riding day, with a shorter trial ride on the first day, a short ride when you transfer from South Africa to Botswana and a shorter morning ride on the last day. Riding is broken up with refreshment stops and for lunch. The daily timetable varies a little with the weather, area you are in and the time of year but riding often starts at day break when it is cool and (particularly for the Botswana section) game is most active. You may set off at about 6 am riding for a couple of hours before stopping for refreshments, then riding on for another hour or so before returning to camp for a late lunch, siesta and perhaps a late afternoon game drive. Or you may set off a little later, stopping en-route for lunch in the shade then riding on in the cooler later afternoon. Safaris are run for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riding guests and are lead by a qualified guide, usually with a groom or helper acting as back up rider. All riders are required to wear a hard hat - you should take your own to ensure a good fit.

WEIGHT LIMIT

95kgs (about 15stone) although occasionally heavier, experienced riders may be taken on request - please contact us to discuss if you are close to this.

PACE

Safaris are generally at a good, varied pace with plenty of places for energetic canters on wide sand tracks and zigzagging through scrub on sandy plains. There are some rocky areas and places where the vegetation is dense and riding necessarily slow but overall there is good variety and plenty of opportunities to move on.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

Safaris are aimed at riders of at least an intermediate standard. The riding terrain is varied and on the last few days in Botswana, you ride in an unfenced, wilderness area where there is 'big' (and potentially dangerous) game such as elephant and lion, so they are only suitable for confident riders who are secure, well-balanced and in control on a well-schooled horse at all paces from walk to fast canter. Participants also need to be riding fit to manage 4 to 5 hours in the saddle a day often at an energetic pace - we recommend regular riding in the months before you go to ensure you can cope with the hours. Children over 12 years (**no** children under 12 years allowed to ride in Botswana) who are strong, confident riders can join these safaris but please check with us first if you plan to travel with children (children under 12yrs may be able to ride in South Africa only).

TERRAIN

Safaris cover a variety of terrain. Camp Davidson, where three nights are spent, is on private ranch land but is hidden away in a secluded area of untouched 'bush' with far reaching views out to the mountains that form the Waterberg escarpment. The bush here is quite dense and close to the camp the ground is rocky so riding is mainly on tracks but as you head away, the going opens out and there are plenty of stretches of open sand and grassy plain with wide tracks that are ideal for energetic canters. You also ride across open farmland and past the large dam (lake) close to the main Horizon base, where there is often a chance to swim with your horse. One night is spent on the Bellevue Reserve, also in the Waterberg, but with some large open plains. On Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana where the last three nights are spent, the terrain includes the vast, often dry, Limpopo river bed, sand plains dotted with scrub, rocky hills ('kopjes') and spectacular sandstone formations for which the Tuli is known, steep river banks and thick woodland. Riding here is both through riverine terrain, on the banks of the Limpopo and in the river bed itself, and through true African 'mopane' bushveld.



GAME

In South Africa most of the riding is on private ranch land that has historically been used for rearing cattle and crops but for the last decade or so has been returned to and is being reserved for, game. Although the emphasis of this first few days is not particularly on game - it's more of an all-round African bush experience including a chance to see some of the local culture - you will see some game during these first few days. There are warthog, baboon and vervet monkeys, a few antelope such as kudu, waterbuck and impala in the bush around the camp and you should also see zebra, wildebeest and perhaps giraffe which are present (in small numbers, not big herds) in the fenced reserve you ride through close to camp; you may also spot the pod of hippo that occasionally takes up residence in the local dam. One night of the South African section of the safari is spent at Bellevue Lodge, on a neighbouring private game reserve which is home to more wildlife and there is a good chance of seeing wildebeest, giraffe, ostrich, eland and other antelope on the ride to and from the lodge. With the Waterberg area boasting a very diverse range of vegetation, these few days are also a good time for varied birdlife and you may see flocks of carmine breasted bee-eaters, lilac breasted rollers, waterbirds such as jacana and bigger birds such as the striking hadada or hammerkop. The second part of the safari is much more of a game experience with Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana a wonderful game area. Known as home to the African 'giants' it has a large population of elephant, you may see eland - the largest of the antelope - giraffe, lion and the huge kori bustard. There are also many different species of plains game including wildebeest and zebra, antelope such as impala, kudu and nyala, predators such as hyena, leopard, cheetah, bat eared fox, jackal and wild dog, and also monkeys, large troops of baboons, warthogs and crocodiles. Generally game viewing in the Tuli is best between June and October, the drier months when trees shed their leaves and there is no grass cover, but you should see some good game here year round. Bird life is prolific with about 300 species visiting or breeding in the area and spectacular birds of prey are often seen hunting over the open plains.

ACCOMMODATION

The first 2 or 3 nights of the safari are at Horizon's Camp Davidson, which is an intimate camp sleeping up to 8 guests in 4 large, walk-in East African style safari tents, each set in a secluded spot on teak decking. Tents have proper beds made up with sheets and duvets, a decking veranda with chairs and a bathroom, with traditional 'bucket & pulley' shower, basin and flush loo, attached. The camp also has a spacious and comfortable dining tent with a large table for meals, sofas and chairs, a small plunge pool set into the decking for hot days and a 'braai' area for outside dining. The 3rd or 4th night of the safari is spent at one of the Bellevue Lodges (Savannah or Seringa) where accommodation is either in thatched "rondavels", or rooms in the main house, all with their own private bathroom. The main houses have a sitting room, dining room and a terrace overlooking the swimming pool. The last 3 or 4 nights of the safari are spent on Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana. Friday start safaris spend two nights at Two Mashatus Camp and one night at Tree Camp - both fixed camps. Accommodation at Two Mashatus in large walk-in East African style tents and Tree Camp is on a platform built a few metres up in the trees. Both have comfortable beds, made up with sheets and duvets.



At Two Mashatus all tents have their own bathroom at the back, with long drop compostable loo, basin and hot running shower. Two Mashatus has two separate sitting and dining areas, built in local style with palm thatched roofs and again there is a small plunge pool which is wonderful for a dip after riding on hot days. There is a shared shower / bathroom block at Tree Camp. On Tuesday start safaris 2 nights are spent at Tree Camp and 2 nights are in a 'fly camp' set up in a traditional leadwood framed enclosure or 'boma', the 'Kgotla'. 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 safari is based on two sharing and if you are booking along you may be asked to share with another guest (of the same sex). If you are not prepared to share a single supplement will be charged.

MEALS

Safaris include all meals and you will be very well fed with three home cooked meals a day, all produced from fresh local ingredients. Days start with your choice of cereal, toast, fruit and yoghurt or perhaps eggs, sausages or bacon. Lunch might be a selection of salads, pasta and quiche, with home-made bread and in the evening, there are sundowner drinks and a 3 course dinner. There is a good varied bar, with a selection of local spirits, house wine, beer, tea, coffee and soft drinks all included. Vegetarians can be well catered for - although please let us know of any special dietary requirements in advance.



WEATHER

October to February (summer), is often hot with daytime temperatures up to the mid to high 30s C, but you will normally ride early in the morning and / or late afternoon when it is cooler, spending the hottest part of the day relaxing in the shade. Summer is also rainy season and thunderstorms / showers are possible although rain is generally in short sharp bursts so seldom interferes with riding. Autumn is March to April, when it is usually pleasantly warm (mid to high 20s C) in the day and leaves change colour. It begins to cool down, particularly at night, in May. June to September is winter, the dry season when it is usually still bright and warm with cloudless skies during the day. When the sun goes in temperatures drop, sometimes to just above zero at night.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

The following is an example of the itinerary planned for each safari, although please note that it is only an example and day by day arrangements may be varied by your guides at their discretion if the weather, movement of game or other local conditions require.

Example itinerary - African Explorer Safari (Friday start)

Day 1 (Friday) Arrive Johannesburg airport (you need to arrive **before** 09.30 to use included transfers) where you will be met and transferred (usually departing the airport at 11.00) to Camp Davidson (about a 3 hour drive), arriving in time for a late lunch. Settle into your tents and after a cup of tea, meet the horses. After you have been matched, set off on a relaxed first ride to try them and for your first view of the area. Crossing the plains you might have your first close encounter with wildlife: ostrich, impala, zebra, kudu, eland, giraffe, warthog and jackal are all often seen. Stop for sundowner drinks at a look-out point at sunset, then ride back to Camp Davidson for hot showers, drinks around the camp fire and a delicious dinner in camp. (L,D)



Day 2 (Saturday) Tea or coffee brought to your tent then meet for breakfast in the main dining tent. Today's ride sets off from the high country overlooking a beautiful wilderness area to the east, and heads south, winding along the banks of Sunset Lake with its resident pod of hippos and the odd sly crocodile. Visit to one of the Horizon dams for a swim with the horses before riding back to camp in time for lunch. After lunch time to relax by the pool, before a shorter afternoon ride. Dinner and night at Camp Davidson. (B,L,D)



Day 3 (Sunday) - Breakfast and then a full day ride west of camp takes you around the southern end of the Triple B Ranch, across agricultural land and on to the historic Baber homestead for lunch by the pool. In the afternoon there may be a visit to the local Sotho village and tour some of the traditional houses. Tea with some wonderful local characters, Martha Mosima and the group of village ladies, accompanied by traditional singing and dancing. After a long day of riding, culture and history, return to the peace of the Camp Davidson. Dinner under the stars and night in camp. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 4 (Monday) - Breakfast and set off riding southwards to the Game Conservancy which is home to the Bellevue Lodges. The ride traverses a wide wetland, inhabited by reedbuck and grass owls, before entering dense woodland dotted with wild fig trees and large fruited bushwillows. Here you cross the watershed and descend through open grasslands with sweeping views to the upper reaches of the Conservancy's main water system. The route passes the favoured habitat of waterbuck and Cape buffalo. The open plains that follow are aptly known as "Little Serengeti"; large herds of blesbuck, eland, wildebeest and kudu are often all on view, as are groups of elegant sable, swift red hartebeest, impressive journeys of giraffe and Cape buffalo. After a lunch at the lodge and a rest by the pool, the afternoon ride continues to explore this game rich area, closing with sundowners overlooking the African plains. Dinner and night Bellevue. (B,L,D)



Day 5 (Tuesday) - An early start, riding back to Horizon base. Here you say goodbye to your horses and transfer by vehicle to Horizon Mashatu. The drive takes about 5 to 6 hours, plus border control time. After about 2 hours you cross the Limpopo River, which forms the border between Botswana and South Africa, at Groblersgrub. Continue driving through Botswana to the Mashatu reserve and to the stables. Lunch when you arrive and a chance to change and shower, before meeting the horses and an introductory afternoon ride to Two Mashatus Camp, arriving at camp in the late afternoon. Settle in then dinner and night Two Mashatus Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 6 (Wednesday) - Wake to the dawn chorus and a delicious breakfast prepared over the fire. Another super day to explore, setting off early and riding for about 4 hours in the morning to wherever the game takes you. Rides are always varied with wonderful chances to enjoy the fitness and enthusiasm of the horses, perhaps weaving through the scattered scrub alongside erratic wildbeest and zebra, jumping some of the fallen trees pushed over by elephant or scrambling up and down the river bank. Return to camp for a late lunch and rest. After tea there will be a choice of an evening ride or a bush walk. Dinner and night at Two Mashatus camp. (B,L,D)



Day 7 (Thursday) - An early wake-up call with tea or coffee as you listen to the dawn chorus. A morning ride explores the center of the reserve and the game rich Pitsane river area, before arriving at Tree Camp for lunch. A siesta after lunch and then a late afternoon ride, bush walk (or a game drive for additional charge of USD 90) 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 8 (Friday) - A final morning ride back to the stables, with a long winding canter through the bush and perhaps a last view of the magnificent Mashatu elephant before its time to say farewell to your horse. Time for a hot shower and lunch before meeting the vehicle that will take you to the Mashatu airstrip for a private charter flight back to Lanseria Johannesburg airport (about 1½ hours flight), departing approximately 13.30. Arrive Lanseria at about 15.15 and you will be driven about 45 minutes to Johannesburg ORT International Airport. Onward flights should be after 20.00. (B, L)



Safaris run year round, starting each Friday, and some Tuesdays.

Safaris starting Fridays; 4 nights South Africa & 3 nights Botswana

3 nights Camp Davidson, 1 night Bellevue Lodge, 2 nights Two Mashatus Camp & 1 night Tree Camp

Low Season (3-30 January & 5 December- 4 January 2026) - £3073 per person

(Single supplement if requested is £1257)

High Season (1 February-6 December) - £3766 per person

(Single supplement if requested is £1603)

Safaris starting Tuesdays; 3 nights South Africa & 4 nights Botswana

2 nights Camp Davidson, 1 night Bellevue Lodge, 2 nights Tree Camp & 2 nights Kgotla

Low Season (1-31 January & 3-31 December) - £3234 per person

(Single supplement if requested is £1337)

Mid Season (1 February-28 March) - £3836 per person

(Single supplement if requested is £1638)

High Season (29 March-2 December) - £3994 per person

(Single supplement if requested is £1714)

Rates **INCLUDE** all riding, 7 nights accommodation shared accommodation, meals (lunch Day 1 to lunch Day 8), drinks (soft drinks, local beer, local spirits and house wines), vehicle transfers Johannesburg / Camp Davidson / Mashatu and charter transfer Mashatu / Johannesburg airport.

Rates **EXCLUDE** International flights to Johannesburg and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), Mashatu USD\$20 per person per night conservancy fee (payable locally), supplements for single occupancy, any extra night's accommodation before or after the safari, premium drinks, any visa fees & tourism levies and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Single rooms Safari rates are based on two people sharing a twin tent and if you are travelling alone and are not prepared to share a room with another guest of the same sex if asked (e.g. if the safari is fully booked and / or numbers or the mix of guests requires) to guarantee single occupancy, a supplement is charged (see prices above).

Please note that supplements are not compulsory for single bookings but are charged if you are not prepared to share a room if necessary. There are limited singles available.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The nearest international airport to Camp Davidson / Horizon is Johannesburg.

Set transfers from / to Johannesburg International airport are organised to coincide with safaris. On the 1st day, transfers usually depart Johannesburg International at 11.00 (you will need a flight arriving ***before*** 09.30 to use this) to arrive Camp Davidson approx. 14.30. On the 4th or 5th day, a transfer leaves Horizon at about 09.30 to arrive Limpopo at about 13.00. On the final day, the charter flight leaves Mashatu airstrip at around 13.30 and arrives Lanseria airport at about 15.15.

Departing flights should not be before 20.00 to be on the safe side. If you need to arrive late or depart early private transfers can be arranged outside set times at an additional cost. Please note that transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book.

British Airways and Virgin have direct daily flights from London to Johannesburg, normally departing London in the evening (around 20.00) and arriving Johannesburg early the next morning (around 08.00), with return flights at similar times (although note that some of these flights arrive after 09.30 so too late for the standard transfer; take care which flight you book!) You can also fly via Europe (eg with Air France, KLM, Iberia) although we ***strongly*** recommend a direct flight to minimize the risk of delays etc.

Airfares vary depending on the airline you choose and the season, but expect to pay around £700 to £950 per person for a London / Johannesburg economy return. We would be very happy to advise further on and 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 and are visiting South Africa and Botswana for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance. 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 entry to South Africa or Botswana from Europe but inoculations against Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended and also against Typhoid, Cholera and Yellow Fever in some circumstances. The Waterberg is a Malaria free area but to visit Botswana, you will also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets. You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 21/01/2025)

