



RIDE WORLD WIDE

South Africa

Bhangazi Horse Safaris 2011

Ride Information Sheet

Bhangazi Safaris is owned by South African Richard Daugherty and his Australian wife Sarah Burrows and operates on South Africa's east coast, in the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Area. Safaris are run from a mobile base-camp set up before you arrive in a carefully chosen position that varies according to the weather, game movements and other local conditions. Situated on the Indian Ocean, about a 3 hour drive north of Durban, this corner of South Africa is very unspoilt and holds many surprises. It is home to the world's tallest forested sand dunes, boasts a stretch of 220 kilometres of pristine beach and has the highest bird count in the whole of Africa. Turtles nest on the sea-shore, dolphins play in the surf and whales are regularly seen breaching off-shore on their way a little further north to breed – a wonderful sight as you ride along the tops of the dunes. The Park is home to a large variety of 'big game' including both white and black rhino, elephant, leopard, cheetah, wild dog and Cape buffalo as well as a number of antelope species, zebra and a great number of hippo. It is an exciting and unusual part of Africa to explore, perfect for those wanting to combine bush and beach.

Dates Safaris at Bhangazi are run year round and dates are extremely flexible. We generally suggest 6 night safari so you have time to settle in and explore the area properly but shorter 3, 4 or 5 night stays are possible and longer safaris can also be organised. Dates are arranged to suit. Safaris are run for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 riders (plus guides). Please contact us to discuss dates, your plans and availability.



The Horses There are over 30 horses at the Bhangazi base, mainly mixed South African breeds and cross breeds such as Boerperds and Boerperd crosses with some Thoroughbred and Thoroughbred crosses. Most are between about 14.2hh and 16hh and all are experienced safari horses, responsive to ride, good-natured, well schooled and well mannered. They are also used to game and the bush, are calm and sure-footed. Grooms and helpers are on hand at the stables and at camps to look after, tack up and un-tack the horses for you, although some help with horses is expected on the 'Adventure Safari'.

Riding There are usually between 4 and 6 hours riding a day on these safaris, although this is flexible and depends on the weather as well as guest ability and wishes. Horses are usually taken by truck from the stables at Richard and Sarah's house to the spot chosen for base camp at the start of the safari and you then ride out from camp on morning, afternoon or full day rides, stopping for refreshments and lunch. **cont over**

Riding cont. On some days, so you can ride further afield, horses are trucked on from the base camp to the start point of the day's ride, and / or are trucked back to base afterwards. Rides are generally limited to a maximum of 6 guests and are lead by Richard, assisted by a back up rider / groom. Richard is a very experienced safari guide. He was brought up in South Africa's Kwazulu Natal and after pursuing a business career in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg, decided to give in to his life-long passion for the bush. He spent 7 years advising and operating safari camps and working as a professional guide in Botswana's Okavango Delta before moving back to this part of South Africa. He is friendly and easy going, very good company as well as a very knowledgeable guide. Saddles used are Maclellan style, which are comfortable for long hours of riding, with some English saddles also available. Saddle-bags and water bottles are provided as well as sheepskin 'seat savers' for those who wish. There is a rider weight limit of 95 kgs / about 15 stone but occasionally heavier riders can be taken by prior arrangement - please contact us to discuss.



Pace The riding pace on the safaris is varied and depends on the terrain, but overall it is moderate and well balanced. There is plenty of good going in the Park with areas of open grassland, sandy plain around lake-shores and long stretches of sandy beach and there are often opportunities for long trots and canters. There are also areas where the vegetation is thick or sand deep and where a slow pace is necessary but overall the pace is well balanced.

Riding Experience To participate in a safari you must be a competent rider as you are riding in an open area where there is big game including elephant, black rhino and buffalo. You should be comfortable and in control on a horse at all paces (including long canters), used to riding in open country over varied terrain and relaxed and secure enough in the saddle to stay on your horse if it reacts suddenly, or needs to move quickly away from trouble. You will also enjoy your safari much more if you are fairly riding fit and we recommend regular riding in the months before you go to accustom yourself to the time you will spend in the saddle. Children over 12 years old are sometimes accepted on these safaris but only at the operator's discretion. They must be strong, competent riders and to ensure this, a Pony Club test certificate might be required.

Terrain The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park was chosen as South Africa's first World Heritage site in 1999. It boasts the biodiversity of 5 separate ecosystems and has 220 kilometres of pristine coastline, 25,000 year old coastal dunes which are the world's tallest forested dunes and the only major swamp forest left in the Southern Hemisphere. It also houses three major lake systems and vast wetlands including a 45,000 year old peat wetland. The terrain is varied but generally excellent for riding with plenty of wide open and gently sloping grasslands, long stretches of sandy beach and lake shore, as well as thick forest.



Game Game viewing is good year round and you can expect to see a good variety of game on safari. Nelson Mandela once remarked that The St Lucia Wetland Park must be the only place on earth where the world's oldest land mammal (the rhino) and the world biggest terrestrial mammal (the elephant) share an ecosystem with the world's oldest fish (the coelacanth) and the world's biggest marine mammal (the whale). The reserve has the largest black rhino population in the world and other game includes leopard, Cape buffalo, cheetah, wild dog, crocodile, hippo and herbivores such as wildebeest, zebra, impala, kudu, oribi, bushbuck, waterbuck and red and blue duiker. There are five marine turtle species in the area, more than 2000 species of flowering plants and it is world re-known for birding.

Non-Riding Activities A variety of other activities are available in the local area and although these are not included in the safari rate, they can be organised at an extra cost. Whale watching (June to November) and Turtle tours (November to March) are an exciting possibility. Other options include kayaking trips, deep-sea fishing, snorkelling, boat cruises along the St Lucia estuary to see hippo and crocodile, cultural tours, guided walking or cycling. The well-known game reserves of Umfolozi and Hluhluwe are a short drive away and guided game drives can be arranged here too.

Accommodation Camping accommodation is used on all safaris with two levels of comfort offered. Adventure Safaris, which are semi-participation safaris, use simple but fairly comfortable camps (the participation required is usually help with the horses and in handing around food) with large (3m x 3m) walk-in dome tents with beds with duvets, bed linen and towels provided. There is a dining tent with long table for meals and also shared 'long drop' / chemical loo and a traditional bucket and pulley shower shared between tents. True Safaris are completely luxurious safaris. Accommodation on these is in East Africa style walk-in safari tents each with attached private en-suite bathroom with chemical loo and bucket and pulley shower (water heated by staff and available whenever required). Tents have kelims on the floor and proper beds made up with cotton sheets, pillows and soft duvets. There are also canvas chairs on your veranda in which to relax and watch the bush. There is a dining tent with chairs and long table that is candlelit and beautifully dressed for meals, which may also be eaten under the stars. Safari rates are based on twin accommodation and a single supplement is charged if you are not prepared to share with another (same sex) guest if the safari is full.



Meals You will be extremely well fed on safari with three delicious home cooked meals a day. True Safaris include a full cooked English breakfast, a two or three course lunch and a three-course dinner served at a table set with white linen, silver and crystal. Sarah is a qualified chef and worked as food editor for Vogue Entertaining and Travel, an Australian Conde Nast Magazine, before travelling to Africa. She trained and taught many cooks and camp managers in Botswana and takes pride in offering well chosen, varied and delicious menus that incorporate fresh, local produce including excellent seafood. Food on the Adventure Safaris is much simpler with breakfast usually cereal or toast, a simple lunch such as homemade soup with homemade bread, pasta or panini and a two-course dinner, perhaps steak or a fish dish such as bouillabaisse and pudding such as fruit salad or pears in red wine. Wine, beer and a selection of soft drinks are included with meals on Adventure Safaris; on True Safaris there is a wider choice of drinks with a variety of good South African wines, beer and spirits all included.

Safety There will be an introductory talk on the routine in the camp and safety when riding when you first arrive. Rides are limited to a maximum of 6 guests and are accompanied by a guide and back-up rider. Richard (your guide) carries a mobile phone, as does Sarah and there is another mobile in camp. A first aid kit is also carried on rides and there is another medical kit in camp (the nearest hospital is about an hour's drive in Richards Bay or Empangeni and there are helicopters on standby in Richards Bay if necessary).

Weather St Lucia has a tropical climate. Summer is October to April when midday temperatures range from 20 and 38 degrees C. At this time of year you will ride when it is cool in the early morning or late afternoon, with a traditional African siesta in the middle of the day, which is often hot. This is the rainy season and it is humid, with heavy cloud build up followed by showers or short sharp afternoon thunderstorms. It begins to cool down, particularly at night, in May. June to September is winter, the dry season and although it is usually warm with cloudless skies and daytime temperatures from 10 to 25 degrees C, early mornings are often cool and it can drop to 4 or 5 degrees C at night.

What to bring We will send you suggestions of what to bring when you make your booking.

Itineraries The following is an example itinerary for a 5 night True Safari although please note that it is only an example and day-by-day arrangements vary and may be altered by your guides at their absolute discretion if the weather, movement or game or other local conditions require.

Example Itinerary - True Safari

Day 1 Arrive Richards Bay (about 11.30 ideally), met and driven about an hour to camp set up in the Greater St Lucia Wetlands Park. Lunch and settle in before meeting the horses and a first evening ride to try them and see the area. Return to camp as the sun sets for drinks, hot showers, dinner and the night (L,D).

Day 2 An early breakfast and set off to explore the Park while the game is most active. Return to camp for lunch and a siesta. The afternoon ride is often at a faster pace, perhaps with chance to try the horses at an exhilarating canter along the shores of Lake St Lucia, before returning to camp for dinner and the night (B,L,D)

Day 3 Breakfast and perhaps ride up onto the grass covered dunes where herds of buffalo graze in secluded valleys. From the tops there are wonderful views out to the Indian Ocean and you might catch a glimpse of a humpback whale in the far distance. Ride back to camp for lunch and in the afternoon explore an area in the south of the park where there are a number of pools amongst the open grassland hosting hippo and many different water birds (B,L,D).



Day 4 Breakfast and set off on a long morning ride, heading north along the edge of the marshes towards Lake Bhangazi. You may see zebra and wildebeest on the way, as well a number of different antelope. Crocodile are often seen sunning themselves on shores of Lake Bhangazi as well as some of the many hippo that wallow in the shallow water. A bush lunch on the shores of the lake before loading the horses onto the truck that will drive them back to camp. An afternoon siesta in camp and after tea, ride out again to track wild dog. Dinner and night in camp (B,L,D).

Day 5 Breakfast and load up the horses, driving about 20 minutes to Cape Vidal. From here ride north along the beautiful white sand beach towards Mozambique. You may be lucky enough to see dolphins playing in the waves and the tracks of turtles that have come ashore during the night to lay their eggs. Some wonderful long canters before riding back to Cape Vidal for a swim in the sea. Drive back to camp for a leisurely lunch and siesta. In the late afternoon, ride to the mouth of a small stream on Lake St Lucia, a favoured nesting place for crocodiles and waterbirds. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Breakfast and a final morning ride before transfer at about 12 noon to Richards Bay for your onward journey.

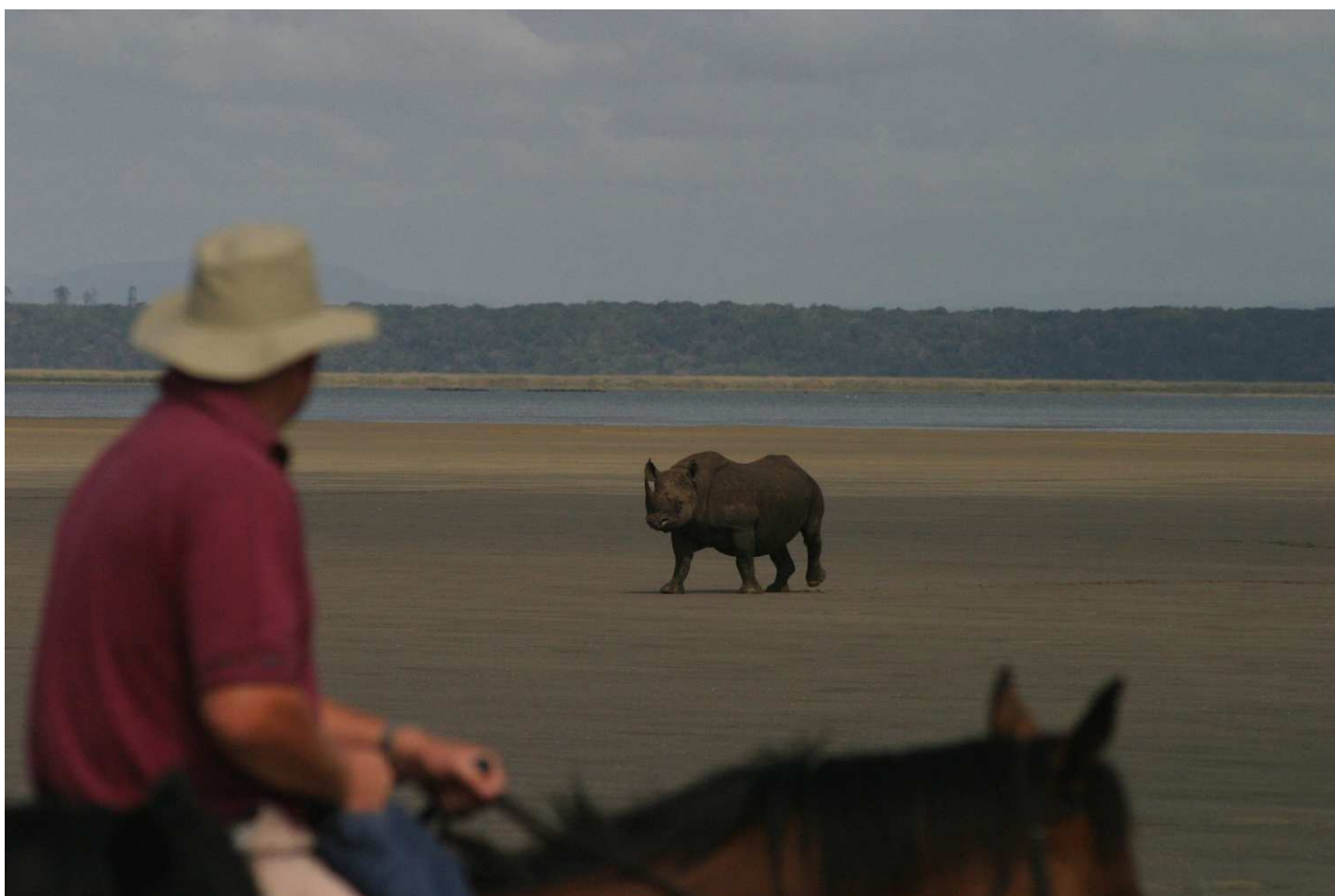
2011 RATES:-**True Safaris - £280 per person per night; (single supplement £56 per night)****Adventure Safaris - £180 per person per night; (single supplement £36 per night)**

These rates **INCLUDE** all riding, guiding and equipment, twin bedded safari tent accommodation (single only if supplement paid or if otherwise available), Park fees, all meals and drinks (limited selection on Adventure Safaris). Rates for the True Safari also include toiletries such as soap, shampoo, mosquito repellent etc and laundry service in camp.

Rates **EXCLUDE** international flights to Johannesburg and taxes, onward connections to Richards Bay and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, optional extra activities such as night drives, whale or turtle watching trips and any tips you may wish to leave staff. Rates also **EXCLUDE** transfers between Richards Bay and Bhangazi (these can be organised at an extra cost, £45 each way).

Single tents - The above safari rates are based on two people sharing a tent. If you are travelling alone and are not prepared to share with another guest of the same sex if asked (e.g. if the camp is fully booked and / or the numbers or mix of guests requires) to guarantee a single room / tent, the single supplement is charged. Please note that this is not compulsory for single bookings, but it will normally be charged if you are **NOT** prepared to share if necessary. Single tents will be provided for single travellers as far as possible but the number of available singles is limited on each safari (allocated on a "first come, first served" basis).

Travel / flight information - The nearest international airport to Bhangazi is Johannesburg. British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all 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). You can also fly via Europe (eg with Air France, KLM, Al Italia) although we strongly recommend a direct flight to minimize the risk of delays. Airfares vary depending on the airline you choose and the season, but expect to pay around £550 to £800 per person for a London / Johannesburg economy return. **cont. over**



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Travel / flight information cont From Johannesburg you need to connect with a flight to Richards Bay in South Africa and we can arrange a vehicle transfer from here to Bhangazi. Transfers take about an hour and cost £45 each way. South African Airlines have daily flights from Johannesburg to Richards Bay, usually adding about £110 to £120 (return) to the international airfare. For an economy return flight London to Richards Bay, via Johannesburg you should therefore budget about £660 to £900 (varies with the season and availability). Alternatively you may like to hire a car and drive yourself from Johannesburg to Bhangazi. This takes about 7 hours. Durban is approximately 3 hours drive from Bhangazi.

We would be very happy to advise further on and book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213). Please contact us for details and a quote. Please note that transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book.

General visa and 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 for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No inoculations are legally required for entry to South Africa from Europe but inoculations against Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A are recommended. The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park where the ride takes place is malaria free BUT the province of Kwa Zulu Natal is considered low risk for Malaria and your GP will usually recommend that you take malaria tablets. This is also important if you are travelling around in South Africa. You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice

(Draft 26/11/10)

