



# RIDE WORLD WIDE

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### AFRICAN EXPLORER SAFARI 2026

#### 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. They 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, with two slightly different itineraries. Safaris starting on a Friday include 4 nights in South Africa and 3 in Botswana, whilst those starting on a Tuesday include 3 nights South Africa and 4 in Botswana. For availability please contact us at 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 110 or so kept at the main Horizon base in South Africa and for the second part, from the 70 or so kept at the Horizon Mashatu stable in Botswana. They are a mix of local South African breeds and cross breeds and include South African Boerperds, TB and Arab crosses, some Appaloosa and Friesian 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 by a horse manager with 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, a specifically designed South African trail saddle, quite similar to a western but lighter and without the big pommel. These are comfortable for horse and rider over long hours. Saddle-bags are provided where necessary.



## RIDING

Safaris include about 4 to 5 hours in the saddle on each riding day, usually covering 20-30 kms a day, with a shorter trial ride on the first day, a shorter ride when you transfer from South Africa to Botswana and a short 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 time of year but riding often starts at daybreak when it is cool and (particularly for the Botswana section) game is most active. Generally you'll 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 walk or another ride. 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 will be given a short riding assessment on the first day and all are required to wear a hard hat - you should take your own to ensure a good fit.

## WEIGHT LIMIT

85kgs (about 13 ½ stone) although some 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 who can control a horse at all paces and take a light seat (out of the saddle) at a canter. 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 safaris 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 (we have alternative options for those with children under 12yrs).

## TERRAIN

Safaris cover a variety of terrain. Camp Davidson, where most nights in South Africa are spent, is hidden away on private ranch land 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 grass 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 for an exhilarating canter through water and to swim with your horse. One night of the South Africa section is spent on the neighbouring Bellevue Reserve, where large open grassy plains are often dotted with game. On Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana where the last 3 or 4 nights are spent, the terrain includes the vast, often dry, Limpopo riverbed, steep riverbanks, thick woodland and sand plains dotted with scrub, rocky hills ('kopjes') and spectacular sandstone formations for which the Tuli is known.



## 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 twenty years or so has been returned to and reserved for game. Although elements of the farming history remain and the emphasis of this first few days is not particularly on game - it's more of an all-round riding and African bush experience - you should see a fair bit of game during this time. There are warthog, baboon, vervet monkeys and antelope such as kudu, waterbuck and impala in the bush around Camp Davidson. A good-sized herd of zebra often grazes close to the main Horizon lodge and you may see wildebeest and giraffe which are present (in small numbers, not big herds) in the fenced reserve you ride through close by. A pod of hippo also occasionally takes up residence in the local dam. One night of the South African section is spent on the neighbouring private Bellevue Reserve which is home to much more wildlife. There is a good chance of seeing a wide variety of antelope here - wildebeest, giraffe, eland, blesbuck (often a big herd), red hartebeest, sable - as well as ostrich and often buffalo in the southern part of the reserve. With the Waterberg area boasting a very diverse range of vegetation, these few days are also lovely for varied birdlife - 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 generally 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, eland - the largest of the antelope - giraffe, lion and the huge kori bustard. Plains game includes zebra, giraffe, wildebeest, impala, kudu and nyala, there are lion, 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 have a good game experience here year-round. Bird life is prolific with about 300 species visiting or breeding in the area, including spectacular birds of prey.

## ACCOMMODATION

The first 2 or 3 nights of every safari will be at Horizon's Camp Davidson, an intimate camp sleeping up to 8 guests in 4 large, walk-in East African style safari tents, each set in a secluded spot, raised on teak decking. Tents have proper beds made up with sheets and duvets, a decking veranda with chairs and an attached bathroom, with traditional 'bucket & pulley' shower, basin and flush loo. The camp also has a spacious and comfortable dining tent with a long table for meals, sofas and chairs, a small plunge pool on decking for hot days and a 'braai' area for outside dining. The 3rd or 4th safari night will be at one of the Bellevue lodges (Savannah or Seringa) where comfortable accommodation is either in individual thatched "rondavels", or rooms in the main house, all with private bathroom. The main houses have a sitting room, dining room and terrace overlooking a swimming pool. The last 3 or 4 nights of each safari will be on Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana. Friday start safaris include 2 nights at Two Mashatus Camp and one night at Tree Camp - both 'fixed' camps. Accommodation at Two Mashatus is in large walk-in East African style tents and at Tree Camp your sleeping area 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 attached bathroom, with long drop compostable loo, basin and hot running shower. The camp also has two separate sitting and dining areas, built in local style with palm thatched roofs, and a small plunge pool (wonderful for a dip after riding on hot days). Tree Camp, a magical place to stay sleeping on a platform in the trees, has a shared shower / bathroom block. On Tuesday start safaris 2 nights are at Tree Camp and 2 nights are in a 'fly' camp' set up within a traditional leadwood framed enclosure or 'boma', the 'Kgotla', sleeping in especially designed cozy camping pods set around the camp-fire. The fly camp has shared open air showers (traditional hot 'bucket and pulley' style), flush 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 is based on two sharing and if you are booking alone you may be asked to share with another guest (of the same sex). If you are not prepared to share a single supplement is 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 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 riding is normally early morning and / or late afternoon when it is cooler, with time to relax in the shade during the hottest part of the day. 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. Days are usually pleasantly warm (mid to high 20s C) and leaves change colour. It begins to cool down, particularly at night, in May. June to September is winter, the dry season. Daytime temperatures are in the low 20s C and it is usually still bright and warm with cloudless skies but when the sun goes in temperatures drop, sometimes to just above zero at night.

## WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when your booking is confirmed.

## ITINERARY

The following is an example of the itinerary planned for safaris starting on a Friday ('African Explorer 1'). Please see separate itinerary for Tuesday start safaris ('African Explorer 2'). Please note that itineraries are always *only* examples and day-by-day arrangements are flexible. They 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 (NB you MUST arrive **before** 09.30 to use included transfers) where you will be met and transferred by vehicle (usually departing the airport at 11.00) to Horizon's Camp Davidson (about a 3 hour drive), arriving in time for a late lunch. Settle into tents and after a cup of tea and safety briefing, meet the horses. Once matched with your horse (there may be a short informal riding 'assessment' to ensure you are of the required standard), set off on a relaxed first ride for a first view of the area. As you cross the grassy plains close to the main lodge you may see your first game - ostrich, impala, zebra, kudu, eland, giraffe, warthog and jackal are often seen here. Stop for sundowner drinks at a look-out point at sunset, then ride back to Camp Davidson for hot showers, drinks around the campfire and a delicious dinner in camp. (L,D)



**Day 2 (Saturday)** - Tea or coffee brought to your tent and meet for breakfast in the main dining tent. This morning's ride heads away from the camp through bush and on rocky paths before following wider sandy tracks close to Horizon lodge where the pace can be quite fast with lovely opportunities to canter. Dark red pedigree cattle have been bred for many years on the farm where Horizon is based and you often see them on this route, the last part of which takes you splashing through water along the edge of the dam adjacent to the lodge. Ride back to camp for lunch. In the afternoon ride out again passing some dams where you may see hippo and returning across an area of open grassland where there are often zebra and antelope grazing as the sun sets – always magical. Dinner and night Camp Davidson. (B,L,D)

**Day 3 (Sunday)** - Breakfast before a ride west of camp, perhaps passing a brown hyena den and the upper part of the Horizon dam before crossing a wide grassy valley. At one point the route enters thick woodland, home to shy kudu, bushbuck and vervet monkeys. Once out of the woods, the horses can stretch their legs along open sandy tracks, finally swinging back to the north, through mixed bush and rock formations. Two highlights of this ride are the jumping lanes (great fun – but you can always go around!) and the chance to swim your horse bareback in the dam next to the main lodge. Once dried off and back in the saddle, make your way back up to Camp Davidson, following a mountain path through boulders and outcrops. Lunch in camp and a siesta. In the late afternoon, after tea, a sundowner ride across some open plains where zebra often graze – they have become acclimatised to the horses and you can often ride very close, almost becoming one of the herd. Return to Camp Davidson for hot showers, dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

## ITINERARY cont.

**Day 4 (Monday)** - Breakfast and ride out early from Camp Davidson, heading to one of the Bellevue lodges on a neighbouring private game reserve. The first part of the route you'll know by now but soon you enter a new area, first some thick bush and then grassland with sweeping views to the south and west. There is often a good variety of plains game here – sometimes herds of over 300 blesbuck and 80 eland as well as red hartebeest, tsessebe, zebra, wildebeest, impala, giraffe, and perhaps sable, roan or waterbuck. The final stretch to Savannah Lodge is along a wooded stream where you may spot kudu or bushbuck browsing. Lunch at the lodge and relax by the pool enjoying the view. In the late afternoon a ride to the southern part of the reserve in search of buffalo and to enjoy a spectacular sun set. Dinner and night Bellevue lodge (B,L,D)



**Day 5 (Tuesday)** - An early start, riding back by a different route to the Horizon base. Here you say goodbye to the horses and set off on the vehicle transfer to Horizon Mashatu (about 5 to 6 hours, plus border control time). After a couple of hours cross the Limpopo River, which forms the border between Botswana and South Africa, then continue through Botswana to the Mashatu Reserve and stables. Lunch when you arrive, a chance for a quick shower and to change, before meeting the horses. An introductory afternoon ride to Two Mashatus Camp, arriving in the late afternoon. Settle in and 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. The day to explore, setting off early and riding for about 4 hours along the Majali and Pitsani Rivers, perhaps to some open plains to the north or wherever the game takes you. Rides are always varied with wonderful chances to enjoy the fitness and enthusiasm of the horses as you weave through scattered scrub perhaps alongside wildebeest and zebra, or scramble up and down the riverbank. Return to camp for a late lunch and rest. After tea a choice of a guided bush walk or a short evening ride. 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 long morning ride of 4 to 5 hours heads northeast towards the centre of the reserve, exploring a mixture of narrow winding elephant trails and open mopane scrub before finally arriving at Tree Camp for a late lunch. A siesta after lunch and in the late afternoon a guided bush walk, or if you wish a game drive with guides from Mashatu's Main Camp, an additional charge (approx. USD 88 per person) but usually a super opportunity to see lion and perhaps leopard and cheetah. 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 elephant before its time to say farewell to your horse. A shower and lunch before meeting the vehicle that will take you to the Mashatu airstrip for a private charter flight back to Johannesburg Lanseria airport (about 1½ hours flight), departing approximately 13.30 and arriving Lanseria at about 15.15. You will then be driven about 45 minutes to Johannesburg ORT International Airport to arrive about 16.30. Onward flights should **not depart before** 20.00. (B, L)



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

**Safaris starting Fridays ('African Explorer 1'):-**

**4 nights South Africa & 3 nights Botswana** (3 nights Camp Davidson, 1 night Bellevue Lodges, 2 nights Two Mashatus Camp & 1 night Tree Camp)

**Low Season (2-29 January & 4 December- 1 January 2027) - £3,279 per person\***

(Single supplement - £1,357)

**High Season (30 January - 3 December) - £4,027 per person\***

(Single supplement - £1,731)

**\*Transfers** Rates above **include £565 per person** for group road transfers Johannesburg / Horizon / Mashatu and group charter flight Mashatu / Johannesburg on the last day. A reduction of £128 per person (assuming 2 people sharing) may be available if you take a road transfer back to Johannesburg instead of charter flight on the last day. You can also fly from Horizon to Botswana on Day 4 / 5 at a supplement of £310 per person (must be booked and paid on site (minimum 4 people) but let us know in advance if interested).

**Safaris starting Tuesdays ('African Explorer 2'):-**

**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 January – 3 February & 3-31 December) - £3,870 per person\*\***

(Single supplement - £1,498)

**High Season (4 February - 3 December) - £4,721 per person\*\***

(Single supplement - £1,923)

**\*\* Transfers** Rates above include £875 per person group road transfer Johannesburg / Horizon, then group air charter Horizon to Mashatu on Day 4 and back to Johannesburg on the last day. A reduction of £438 per person may be available if you take road transfers throughout (minimum 2 sharing required to book this).

Rates **INCLUDE** all riding, 7 nights twin share accommodation, meals (lunch Day 1 to lunch Day 8), drinks (soft drinks, local beer, local spirits and house wines), transfers as indicated Johannesburg International airport / Horizon / Mashatu / Johannesburg International airport.

Rates **EXCLUDE** International flights to Johannesburg and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), USD\$20 per person per night compulsory Conservancy fee at Mashatu (payable locally), supplements for single occupancy or additional air transfers, Mashatu game drive, 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 assume two people sharing twin accommodation and if you are travelling alone and are not prepared to share with another same sex guest 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** the supplement is **NOT** compulsory for single bookings but is charged if you are not prepared to share if necessary. There are limited singles available.

## FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The nearest international airport to Camp Davidson / Horizon is Johannesburg ORT. 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 final day, the air charter leaves Mashatu airstrip at around 13.30 to arrive Johannesburg Lanseria airport at about 15.15 and you arrive back at Johannesburg International ORT about 16.30. **International 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 at additional cost. NOTE all 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. British Airways normally have a departure from London in the evening at around 19.30, arriving Johannesburg early the next morning at around 07.30, with return flights at similar times. They often have a second flight which arrives, and Virgin flight departures from London often arrive, after 09.30 which is **too late** for the standard transfer; - take care which flights 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 £800 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, staying less than 90 days, you do not need to arrange a visa in advance. NOTE 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, Hepatitis A and Typhoid are usually recommended for most travellers. Some may be advised to have a vaccine against Cholera, Hepatitis B, TB or Rabies. There is no Yellow Fever risk but there may be a Yellow Fever certificate requirement if coming from a tropical country. There is very low malaria risk in the Waterberg and southern part of Botswana so anti-Malaria tablets not general advised if just travelling here. You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 11/12/2025)

