RIDE WORLD WIDE
BOTSWANA, OKAVANGO DELTA 2027
AFRICAN HORSEBACK SAFARIS (MACATOO CAMP)

RIDE INFORMATION

We offer three different horse safari options in Botswana's Okavango Delta region. This information relates to safaris run by African Horseback Safaris from Macatoo Camp. Please see separate details of our other trips. The main joy of all the safaris is riding good horses in a superb wilderness area with a varied, changing landscape and wonderful variety of game. Macatoo's focus is on exciting, but not overly strenuous, safaris, with riding that ranges from heart-thumpingly exhilarating, to serenely peaceful, quietly watching game as it grazes in the evening light. There are also game drives and (water allowing) boat trips, plenty of time to relax and sociable al-fresco meals, all from an extremely comfortable, welcoming and convivial camp. A wonderful way to experience one of Africa's finest game viewing areas.



OVERVIEW OF THE DELTA

The Okavango Delta region covers close to 15,000 square kilometres. Roughly one third, the central and eastern side stretching to Chobe National Park, has been designated a protected area, the Moremi Game Reserve. The rest is sub-divided into huge unfenced private wildlife concessions, all very carefully monitored and managed with strict guest quotas to help protect and preserve the natural environment for wildlife. The terrain over the whole region varies from the permanent water of the Okavango River which joins the Delta to its northwest, papyrus swamps, reed beds and flat, open floodplain to thickly wooded date palm islands, riverine woodland and forests of mopane trees. Depending on the time of year, on rain that has fallen locally and in the River's main catchment area, the Angolan Highlands, 500 kms to the north, the floodplains (which look rather like a grassy fairway on a golf course when not flooded) may be covered with a layer of surface water ranging from a few inches to several feet deep in places. When rain in Angola flows into the Okavango River as it journeys south, the river gradually swells; then, as it meets the dry Kalahari basin, it divides like fingers on a hand into narrower waterways, spreading, saturating and flooding out over once-dry grassland to form marshy swamp and water meadow. Flood levels tend to be cyclical - a number of years of high water followed by a number of years of low. Usually the new water arrives in the main Delta region between late March and July each year, and subsides from August to October.

DATES

Safaris at Macatoo can be arranged for 3 to 10 (or more) nights year-round (although the camp sometimes closes in February). Dates are flexible - the minimum stay is 3 nights but we recommend 6 or 7 between March and October and 5 at other times to experience the best of the Delta. To check availability please contact us at Ride World Wide.

HORSES

There are about 50 horses at Macatoo, all between about 14hh and 17.2hh and including South African Boerperd crosses, Namibian Hanovarians, Arabs, TBs and Arab crosses. They are much loved, very well cared for, well mannered, responsive and forward going to ride, whilst also being sensible to handle, used to game and at home in the bush. Grooms look after the horses at camp and there is always an extra pair of hands to help when you ride out.







TACK

Tack is English style, with good quality GP leather and Wintec (which copes well in wet conditions) saddles and a few (limited) 'Maclellan' style saddles (similar to a western) available on request. Saddle bags are provided if required.

RIDING

You can ride for up to about 6 hours a day at Macatoo, split into rides of 3 to 4 hours in the early morning, broken up with refreshment stops, and a ride of about 1 ½ to 2 hours in the late afternoon, although saddle hours may vary with game movements, local weather and guest wishes. Rides are limited to a maximum of 8 guests and there are usually two riding groups at a time, with riders split according to ability and wishes. Each ride is lead by a qualified guide accompanied by a back-up / support rider, often with an additional ‘look out’ riding with the group to help spot game.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The weight limit is 95kgs (15 stone).

PACE

Riding is at a medium and well varied pace overall. Morning rides usually include lots of long, exhilarating trots and fast canters across open floodplain or through shallow flood-water. Evening rides, when the light is excellent for photography, are at a slow, relaxed pace, generally a walk and trot. When the flood is highest, you may find your horse wading or possibly swimming from island to island, but even at ‘high flood’ the going around the edge of the islands is normally good to firm so there are usually plenty of chance for long trots and canters.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

To ride from Macatoo you must be a reasonably competent rider as riding is in an open, unfenced area, where there is big (and potentially dangerous) game, including elephant and lion. Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition, you should be comfortable, confident and in control on a horse at all paces (including long trots and fast canters) and used to riding in open country, over varied terrain with a group of horses. **cont.**



RIDING EXPERINECE cont.

There is a good selection of responsive, well-schooled horses to suit different riders, but it is important to be balanced, relaxed and secure in the saddle and able to stay on if your horse reacts suddenly or needs to move quickly out of trouble. Children over 12 yrs old who are strong, competent riders may ride at Macatoo but this is entirely at the camp's discretion, on a case-by-case basis. To ensure sufficient riding ability, an instructor's or Pony Club certificate might be required. At any age you will enjoy your safari much more if you are riding fit. If you do not ride regularly at home, we strongly recommend regular practice before you go to accustom yourself to hours in the saddle.

TERRAIN

Macatoo is in the southwest Delta. The area, which has plenty of dry grassland outside the main flood period, usually receives a reliable annual flood and the terrain changes with the season. When floodwater is at its peak (in recent years May, June and July), you will ride across islands that are thickly wooded with mopane scrub and date palms or may find yourself riding around the island edges surrounded by seasonal water. At times your horse might have to wade shoulder high or even swim across water channels or lagoons. As water levels recede, broad expanses of shallow floodplain, then dry grassland open-up and the landscape is a patchwork of savannah grassland dotted with small permanent lagoons, waterholes and raised islands of date palms, mopane scrub and thicker woodland.



GAME

The Delta has huge numbers of game year-round and is a gloriously wild, unfenced and unspoiled environment for game viewing. A large population of elephant roam through the area, along with big herds (often many hundreds) of buffalo. Some species such as the characteristic water-adapted antelope, red lechwe and shy swamp-loving sitatunga are permanent residents of the wetland areas and other water lovers such as hippo and crocodile move around locally as water levels rise and fall. Unlike in East Africa, there is no single mass-herd migration. Giraffa, zebra, wildebeest and impala move in mid-sized herds, social or family groups to and from the Delta's drier Kalahari borders as water levels change whilst kudu, tsessebe, warthog and predators such as wild dog move widely across the whole region. During any safari from Macatoo you can usually expect to see a wide variety of game—elephant (often in large breeding herds), buffalo, zebra, wildebeest, giraffe, impala, kudu, reedbuck, tsessebe and (depending on water level) lechwe, as well as crocodiles, monkeys, baboons and warthogs. Predators such as hyena and lion are often seen and you may be lucky and see leopard, cheetah or wild dog. A small number of white rhino have been successfully reintroduced into the Delta over the last few years and although sightings are very rare, they are possible! The Delta is famous for its birdlife with over 400 recorded species - fish eagles, cranes, storks, vultures, kingfishers, ostrich, jacanas, bee eaters and many more. Generally it is considered one of the world's finest wildlife areas both because of the density and variety of game but also because it is such a pristine wildlife environment - although it is important to remember that animals are free to roam across a vast, unfenced area and there may be more of one species than another in a particular place at a particular time. Environmental factors such as long grass or high water also can (and do) effect game viewing - if predators take cover in long grass or animals hide in mopane scrub or amongst date palms on the islands, they can be hard to spot or follow safely. However with access to vehicles and boats as well as horses, guests at Macatoo usually have fantastic game viewing and as the area is private, it is uninterrupted by other visitors or vehicles. **cont. over**

NON RIDERS

Non-riders are very welcome at Macatoo with game drive vehicles and (subject to water levels) boats available as well as horses. Game drives are a wonderful opportunity to track and photograph 'big' game (and allow riders to get closer to cats, buffalo and elephant than a horse would be comfortable with). They also often provide the best chance of seeing predators on the move. The arrival of the floods, usually around May, brings with it the unique chance to explore lagoons and serene waterways by motorboat or mokoro canoe and to fish (from a boat or land) - always popular with both riding and non-riding guests. Casting from a beautiful fishing spot, between water lilies and wallowing hippo, the challenge is not only to get a fish to bite, but to land it before it is snatched from the line by a swooping fish eagle!

GUIDES & STAFF

John Sobey the English managing director of African Horseback Safaris has been based in Botswana for over 25 years. Now dividing his time between the camp, Maun and the UK, he runs a dedicated and loyal team of staff, several of whom – including lead guides Bongwe, Thabo, Chief and Bernie - have been at Macatoo for many years. Rides are lead by an experienced, licensed local guide with 3 lead guides usually in camp at any time. There is also always a dedicated camp manager on site to ensure everything runs smoothly - Katie Hodges has been excellent in this role for several years - and the Maun office is organised with extreme efficiency by Riana Fourie. The overall emphasis is on efficient, friendly service and this runs through the whole team.

ACCOMMODATION

Macatoo tented camp was especially built as the safari base in 1999 and has been regularly upgraded and refurbished since, with the last major refurbishment completed in February 2025. It is an extremely comfortable (bordering luxurious!) safari base but still retains its intimate, authentic and unpretentious feel. The camp sleeps a maximum of 16 guests - normally limited to 12 at any one time, but with 8 twin / double tents so singles can be accommodated. Guests sleep in spacious, walk-in twin or double bedded safari tents, each with large adjoining shower room with wash basins, powerful hot shower and flush loo. The tents, which are well spaced for privacy, are raised on teak decking and each has its own private veranda, with chairs from which to enjoy the view across the floodplain. They also have proper beds with comfortable mattresses, plenty of pillows, cotton sheets and duvets, solar powered electric lights and fans, wardrobes with hanging space for clothes and bedside tables. There is a lovely honeymoon tent, complete with bath on larger private veranda, where couples can also have a special private dinner, and a 'family and friends suite', two tents linked by a walkway above ground for direct, easy access between parents and children. The camp has a spacious central reception tent with large sofas, armchairs and coffee tables, a fire-pit in front which is a lovely place to gather for drinks and safari stories, and a small plunge pool with sun deck and sun beds. Service is always excellent - from the moment you are woken with tea or coffee brought to your tent, to the laundry service and smiling tent ladies, the whole ethos is one where nothing is too much trouble, and everything is a pleasure. Rates assume twin shared accommodation. There is one tent which can be booked without a supplement by any single traveller staying at least 7 nights (available on a 'first come first served' basis) but otherwise a single supplement is charged if you are not prepared to share a tent with another guest (of the same sex) if requested (if you book alone, you will only be asked to share if numbers / mix of guests requires). The camp setting is remote, with limited mobile phone signal but WiFi in all guest tents.





MEALS

You will be extremely well fed at Macatoo with three delicious meals a day and snacks in between. Mornings start early with fresh coffee or tea brought to your tent, then a light breakfast of homemade toast, muesli or fruit around the fire setting you up for an early ride out at about 6.30am. There will be a snack break out riding and when you finish, a mouth-watering brunch / lunch late morning. In the evening, a three-course dinner, with carefully chosen South African wines, served by candlelight at a beautifully laid table under the stars or in the dining tent **cont.**

MEALS cont.

is always a treat. Meals include plenty of freshly baked bread, vegetables and salads and those with special diets are well catered for (although please let us know in advance). Drinks are kept chilled with a selection of wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks all included.

SAFETY

When you arrive at the camp, you will be given an introductory talk on the safari, including safety in camp and 'do's and don'ts' when riding. Each ride is lead by a licensed and qualified guide equipped with a rifle and accompanied by a back-up rider. A first aid kit is carried when riding and there is a comprehensive medical kit in the camp. Guides also carry hand-held radios to keep in contact with the camp / other guides and there is a satellite 'phone in camp for emergencies. Emergency medical evacuation cover is included in each safari (although your own personal medical and travel insurance is also compulsory).

WEATHER

Summer months in the Delta are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, when midday temperatures can get as high as 38 or even 40°C. The area experiences summer rain - the rainy season is usually December to February although there can be thunderstorms and rain showers in October and November. The coolest winter months, when it is also dry (no rain) are May to August with daytime temperatures usually in the mid 20s C. During these months, and in early September, it can be cold in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to about 4 or 5°C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm. Confusing to many guests, the dry winter months are when the Delta has its seasonal flood - caused when rain that has fallen a few months before in the Angolan Highlands, flows down the Okavango River causing the river to flood out over the Delta region.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send a list of what to bring when you book.

ITINERARY

Safaris are very individualised, inspired by the movement of game, weather and guest wishes. The following is an example itinerary for a 7 night stay:

Day 1 You will be met at Maun airport by a representative of African Horseback Safaris and shown to the charter flight that will fly you about 25 minutes (sometimes a little longer if collecting other passengers en-route) over the Delta - a wonderful opportunity to see the entire area and game from the air – to the airstrip closest to Macatoo camp. Met here by open topped 4x4 game drive vehicle and driven around 45 minutes, to Macatoo, fording rivers, crossing plains and watching game as you go. Arrive at camp to a warm welcome, shown to your tent and time to settle in before a short introductory talk over tea. Then, time allowing, a short walk to the barn to meet the horses and a late afternoon ride to try them and for a first view of the area. Dinner and night in camp. (D)





Day 2 Woken with tea and coffee brought to your tent, then a quick breakfast of homemade toast, fruit or muesli before an early ride out to explore. Routes always vary but today you might head west from camp, riding out across open floodplain where there may be wildebeest, zebra, impala and other small antelope or, if the water is high, wade to an island to watch buffalo or elephant wallowing in the shallows - your safari is inspired by whatever is out there. There'll be a chance to try your horse at all paces and after an exhilarating morning, ride back to camp for a delicious open-air lunch with your guides. After lunch a few peaceful hours to relax in camp, before meeting for a cup of tea and homemade cake at about 4pm and riding out again until sunset, one of the best times for game viewing. The evening ride is deliberately slow and a good opportunity to ask questions and take photographs, whilst keeping eyes peeled for signs of leopard and stopping to watch elephant or hippo at the water's edge. Ride back to camp to freshen up before drinks around the fire and a well-earned dinner…not always in the same place! (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 3 After morning tea, coffee and a light breakfast, ride out early again, perhaps heading towards year-round lagoons to watch a herd of red lechwe, a rare semi-aquatic antelope, splashing through the water. Non-riders might head out on a game drive before all meeting up for lunch in the bush, where camp staff will have set up a table in the shade. After lunch, back to camp by a different route and a dip in the plunge pool. A siesta beckons during the hottest part of the day, then a late afternoon ride or game drive exploring the lower floodplains where elephant often gather at a deep pool. Return to base at sun set for hot showers, drinks around the fire and dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 4 Different country today as you ride through a sea of bushman grass to plains dotted with fig trees, Camelthorn and Mopane woods that are ideal cover for giraffe, kudu and the shyer browsing antelope. The route home opens out again - wide floodplains are perfect for a long, exciting canter, often disturbing troops of baboons as you pass. Lunch at camp and a relaxing afternoon on your veranda with a book or by the plunge pool. A mid-afternoon cup of tea before an evening ride or meet for a game drive, taking a spotlight to look out for leopard, hyena, bushbabies and other nocturnal game as the sun sets. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 5 A long morning ride heading deeper into the Delta, along some of the high palm islands which offer great sweeping views of the plains. The afternoon to relax in camp and at about 4.30pm mount up and ride out through changing country where there is a noticeable difference in game, perhaps ending with sundowners at Macatoo's magical tree house platform. Return to camp by vehicle for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)





Day 6 Hopefully by now you will have seen lots of wildlife and enjoyed the unbeatable thrill of riding alongside giraffe, antelope and zebra. Make the most of lunch out in the bush, savouring the space, sights and sounds around you. Later in the afternoon, another ride or if the water is high, the option of a peaceful mokoro trip to explore the waterways or try fishing for Okavango bream from the boat. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Your last full day in camp with a morning ride that might see you cantering across shallow flood plain, where, depending on the season, Cape buffalo gather in large numbers (anything between a dozen and two thousand individuals) - you may have to creep up on them using the islands as cover. In the evening, a last quiet ride enjoying the memorable scent of wild sage and the warm African dust as the sun goes down. A farewell dinner, perhaps extra-memorable by its surprise location… (B,L,D)

Day 8 If time, a last early morning ride for your final fill of memorable Delta views and exhilarating canters. Return to camp in time to freshen up before your transfer to the airstrip to meet the charter plane that will fly you back to Maun for your onward journey. (B)







DATES & RATES 2027

Rates are per person per night and depend on the season.
For 2027 there are three seasons - Standard, Mid and Peak. Rates quoted **INCLUDE** twin accommodation, all riding, game drives and boat trips offered, Land Board concession fees, taxes, all meals and house drinks but **EXCLUDE** air charters between Maun and the camp (see below):
Standard Season - January, February, March & December:
Rate: £685 per person per night sharing
Mid Season - April, May, 1st to 14th June & 15th October to 30th November:
Rate: £905 per person per night sharing
Peak Season - 15th to 30th June, July, August, September & 1st to 14th October:
Rate: £1085 per person per night sharing

Honeymoon tent supplement - £250 per couple per night
PLEASE NOTE that a **£10 per person per night Conservation donation** will be added to **ALL** safari bookings. This donation, which will be matched by AHBS, will be used for conservation and anti-poaching efforts in the Delta. If you wish to opt out of the donation, you can do so if you let us know BEFORE confirming your booking. Once confirmed the donation is not refundable.
Group Rates Group discounts are available (usually for 6 or more guests) **- please ask.**
Non-riders 10% discount on daily safari rates; 50% discount for non-riding children under 12.
A 5% discount on daily rates is offered to anyone re-booking a safari at Macatoo within 12 months of a previous visit (discount applies to the subsequent trip).

Dates Start dates and safari duration is flexible. Minimum stay is 3 nights; at least 5 and ideally 7 nights is recommended to get the most from your visit; maximum suggested stay is 10 nights.



Air charters Safari meeting point is Maun in Botswana. Rates above **EXCLUDE** transfers from Maun to the camp and you need to ADD the cost of these. Transfers are by air charter (flying time about 25 minutes, although stops may be added which increase this) to the airstrip closest to camp followed by a game drive (or depending on water level boat trip).

Charter rates (at tme of print) are £335 per person each way (£670 return) Maun / Macatoo
***NOTE** that for a stay of 7 nights or more we offer a 50% discount on air charters from Maun; for a stay of 10 nights, the air-charter between Maun and the camp is FREE of charge.*

You can also fly by charter between the camp and Kasane on the Botswana side of the Botswana / Zimbabwe border (about 1 ½ hours flight) a good option if you are visiting Victoria Falls.
Charter rate (at time of print) Macatoo / Kasane is £481 per person one-way.
Please note that ALL charter rates are subject to variation with increases in fuel costs and can change at short notice so please **confirm** when you book.

****Example inclusive safari rates for 2027****
7 night safari Peak season, including charters Maun / Macatoo, is **£8000** per person;
7 night safari Mid season, including charters Maun / Macatoo, is **£6740** per person;
7 night safari Standard season, including charters Maun / Macatoo, is **£5200** per person;
Rates above **INCLUDE** all riding and other safari activities such as game drives and mokoro trips with guiding and equipment (activities on a shared basis), accommodation in twin / double bedded safari tents, all meals, house drinks (including alcohol except premium wines and champagne), Concession fees, government taxes, laundry and ironing service and emergency Medivac cover.
They **EXCLUDE** international flights to Maun and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you *must* have), any visa fees, special activities such as game viewing by helicopter or plane, supplements for private guiding, champagnes and premium wines, personal items such as shopping, satellite telephone calls etc Conservation Donation (£10 per person per night) and any tips you wish to leave the staff.

DATES & RATES cont.

Single accommodation Rates above assume twin shared accommodation. If you are booking alone and are NOT prepared to share with another guest of the same sex there is **one single tent,** bookable on a 'first come, first served' basis for single travellers staying **at least** 7 nights. If this is not available and you are not prepared to share, a supplement is charged to guarantee a single tent. This is £342 per night Standard season; £452 per night Mid season and £542 per night Peak season (NB **not** compulsory for single bookings - only charged if you are not prepared to share if asked and wish to guarantee a single tent.) **Please also note** that charter rates are based on at least 2 people travelling together and there *may* be a 50% supplement on charter fares for solo travellers - please check when you book.

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

Maun is the safari meeting place. The best way to travel from London is generally via Johannesburg in South Africa - there are no direct flights London to Maun – although (depending on dates) there are also convenient flights via Addis Adaba with Ethiopian Airlines. You can also fly to Maun via Windhoek in Namibia, Harare in Zimbabwe and Gaborone in Botswana, but Johannesburg and Addis are usually the easiest connection points.

Travelling from London, if you fly via Johannesburg, 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 a South African Airlink or Air Botswana 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 with **the earlier BA flight recommended** on the outward journey. On the return, daily flights from Maun to Johannesburg will connect with overnight return flights to London. Ethiopian Airlines have flights from London to Maun via Addis several times a week and if dates suit these are usually a very good value option. **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 usually also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets - you should consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice. If you are flying via Ethiopia, a Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate is a technical requirement for entry to Botswana, although local guidance (as of April 2025) is that this is not required if you are just in transit through Addis airport from Europe and do not leave the airport.

(DRAFT 15/06/2026)

