



Paradise Beach Trail

Weight limit: 90kg

Nearest airport: Vilankulo

8 days / 7 nights / 8 days riding

Head to the tropical shores of Mozambique for arguably the world's best beach riding. Endless white sands, turquoise waters and remote archipelagos await. Renowned for its welcoming and friendly hosts and relaxed riding itinerary, you can swim with horses in the Indian Ocean, sail in a traditional dhow and even fit in some snorkelling. A completely unique destination with accommodation in beachside villas for intrepid travellers looking for a tropical paradise.



The Riding

The riding here is relaxed and flexible made up of a mixture of half day and full day rides, tailored to each rider's experience and preferences. Frequent long canters along the deserted beaches can be enjoyed by

experienced riders. Some days involve climbing steep sandy cliffs which offer wide viewpoints over the Indian Ocean and Bazaruto Archipelago. Some of the rides will take you inland to explore the numerous freshwater lakes, indigenous bush and African farmland before returning along the beach.

Level of riding and fitness

Riders of all levels can be accommodated here. More experienced riders will be able to explore further afield and ride at a faster pace. All of the riding is tailored to guests preferences. The minimum age is 6 years.

The horses are saddled, cleaned and cared for by the staff, you are not required to help with this unless you would like to.

Guides & Groups sizes

Your guides are Pat and Mandy Retzlaff who were forced across the border into Mozambique from Zimbabwe in the early 2000's with 104 horses rescued from farms and homesteads across the country. Pat was born in Arusha, Tanzania, he grew up on a farm in Zimbabwe and studied Animal Science at University of Natal, South Africa. He is passionate about horses and has a vast knowledge of the flora, fauna and history of the region. Pat provides the majority of the veterinary care required as well as all the farrier work alongside guiding. Mandy is a guide and also in charge of all of the day-to-day running of the team.

The group size is 2-8.



Horses & Tack

There are around 40 horses to choose from at this destination. The majority of them were rescued from Zimbabwean farms at the height of the political violence, and the rest have been taken on in Mozambique. Breeds include a combination of crosses with a strong mix of Arab and South African Boerperds. Many of the horses have an incredible story, you will meet Texas, a strong grey gelding who was about to be fed to lions, and Lady an orphan foal that has grown into the matriarch of the herd.

All the riding horses are well-schooled, have lovely calm temperaments and react easily and lightly to the aids. Their well-being always takes precedence and they are in excellent condition. For saddlery a combination of Wintecs GP's with interchangeable gullets, Australian stock and McClellan saddles are used. Bridles are uncomplicated with single reins, and for the most part single jointed & french link snaffle bits.



Accommodation and Dining

Your accommodation is Vila de Sonhos, a luxury beachfront home overlooking the turquoise sea of the Bazaruto Archipelago. There are four villas, all with spacious and comfortable bedrooms which open onto private balconies and have en-suite bathrooms. The villas have fully equipped kitchens with a

personal chef and a comfortable lounge and dining room. The pool is close by complete with lounge decks and barbequing facilities and a large garden is home to several ancient Baobab trees that play host to many wild birds and monkeys. At the bottom of the garden is private access to the beach below.

Mozambique has a rich culinary heritage, with a strong Portuguese influence. Local specialties revolve around fresh seafood, coconut curries and its world famous peri-peri chicken. In the morning, breakfast could be fresh seasonal fruits, cereal or oats, a choice of eggs, bacon or tomatoes with fresh Portuguese rolls or toast. For lunch & evening dinner expect meals prepared by a personal chef, or to eat out at top seafood restaurants or barbeque poolside.

Itinerary

Day 1

You will be met at Vilankulo Airport by either Pat or Mandy Retzlaff, your hosts and guides for the week. After a short transfer from the airport, you can settle into your accommodation for the week before meeting the horses at the stables. You will be offered a number of horses to try and once you feel comfortable, head out onto the beach for a slow and relaxing ride allowing you to become familiar with your horse. The ride showcases the diverse ecosystems in the archipelago; wide open beaches, incredible cliff top views, pristine dune bush and mangrove shoreline.

Day 2

Today you will ride inland on trails skirting African villages and vast, natural, freshwater lakes. The birdlife is fantastic and there is a good chance of seeing eagles, herons, harriers, rollers, pelicans and kingfishers. Canter along bush paths through African farmlands, rural schools and past the ruins of old Portuguese homesteads. The old farm roads allow for a fast pace as you continue across country. On the way home there is plenty of space for long canters on the beach.

Day 3

In the morning a motorized dhow (traditional boat) will whisk you through the Bazaruto National Park to the famous Benguerra Island. As you meander across the calm waters, look out for pods of dolphins. Meet the horses on the beach, saddle up and take in the vast Indian Ocean. As you move inland you pass through local villages, towards high golden sand dunes and freshwater lakes with flocks of flamingos. The ride continues at a relaxed pace along sandy tracks onto a long beach past waving fisherman. Just before reaching the stables, you can ride in the sea bareback. If the tide allows you will be able to spend some time snorkeling on Magaruque Island where a simple & delicious seafood lunch is served under a shady tree. Return to the mainland as the sun is setting for dinners and drinks.

Day 4

Have a relaxing morning before a lunchtime ride to a local fishing village. The panoramic views look out over the Bazaruto Archipelago, you will see colourful dhows glide along the channels and fisherwoman hunting crab in shallow sands. Continue through winding coconut plantations along a beach path to the

Managlise Fishing Village. Once sat in a simple thatch shelter, newly harvested coconuts are cracked open as refreshment before a traditional lunch is served, fresh crab from the beach, grilled fish from the mornings catch and Matapa; a Mozambican dish made from cassava leaves, nuts and coconut milk. After your meal the local children come out to sing local songs and dance. Once goodbyes are completed the horses are saddled up and you start the return home. This ride is completely authentic, rich in cultural experience and brings much appreciated business to a locality well off the beaten track.

Day 5

Today's route will take you along the old coastal main road running parallel to the beach before meandering up and wading across a small river estuary. Along the route we will pass through small rural villages where young children will come to wave at the horses. As the local population thins out there are long safe canters through coastal bush. After several hours in the saddle you will follow a bush track through dense woodlands that leads down to the beach with amazing views over the bay. The long, deserted, safe, sandy beaches offer a chance to experience exhilarating canters on our way back to the stables. After a long day in the saddle, there is a chance for sundowners and a fine dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 6

After breakfast, you'll be driven to the stables to saddle up, and head down to the beach again. The ride takes you past Vilankulo town back onto the beach to reach the Red Dune. You'll ascend the dune on horseback to admire the spectacular views across the bay before moving back down, cantering across the beach for a fresh seafood lunch. After lunch, stop at a local arts and crafts centre that supports the community – there will be plenty of time to explore and get some souvenirs for. Relax by the pool in the late afternoon or take a stroll on the beach before dinner.

Day 7

Today's swimming ride and ocean walk is truly unique; mount your horse bareback on the beach before wading chest deep into the blue turquoise sea on an amazing ocean walk that takes you along the mangrove-fringed shoreline for approximately 30 minutes until reaching a safe swimming spot where you can swim with the horses. After lunch, you'll travel out to the Govuro River by vehicle where you will paddle/be paddled along a picture-perfect waterway. Look out for native fish and listen to the calls of the local birdlife. As evening falls ducks will return inland to roost and there is a good chance that you will see fireflies lighting up the evening sky.

Day 8

A morning farewell ride that follows the beach southwards passing through lines of mangroves and swaying palms. The ride allows for long canters up towards a magnificent viewpoint overlooking the Bazaruto Archipelago. A little further on through dune bush and then it's time to go home cantering along the beach



Price includes

- All horse riding as itinerary
- Accommodation in private room with ensuite (unless you request to share)
- Meals
- Local drinks (soft drinks, spirits, beers and house wines)
- Vehicle transfers
- Motorized dhow to & from Benguerra Island
- Return airport transfer
- Laundry
- A massage (if personnel available)
- National park fees
- Mozambique Government VAT

Not included

- Flights
- Personal travel insurance

- Travel visas
- Gratuities

Flights & Airport transfers

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please plan your flights to/from Vilankulo as follows:

Flights usually arrive in Vilankulo just after midday.
Return flights from Vilankulo depart in the early afternoon.

Return transfers are included from Vilankulo airport. To reach Vilankulo you will need to fly into Johannesburg, South Africa or Maputo, Mozambique and then take one of the daily direct flights to Vilankulo.

What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

Please use the packing list as a guideline, bearing in mind the time of year you are riding.

- Riding hat
- Long trousers/jodhpurs
- Long-sleeved shirts to avoid sunburn and mosquitos
- Riding shoes/boots that you can walk in
- Casual wear for evenings
- Swimwear
- Sandals/flip-flops
- Sweater
- Sunglasses, suncream, sunhat
- A light jacket
- Toiletries
- Anti-malarial medication if required
- Insect repellent (a repellent containing a high percentage of DEET is advised)
- Passport and a copy of your travel insurance
- Snorkelling equipment if desired
- Torch



Climate

This area of Mozambique enjoys warm weather, blue skies and sunny days year round. April to November is the cooler, dryer winter season with temperatures at times reaching over 30°C by day. It is shorts and t-shirt weather and what most people from around the world would call an amazing summer. In the evening and early morning you may need a jacket.

December to March is the hotter and wetter summer season. With Mozambique lying in the rain shadow of Madagascar it has a relatively low annual rainfall. When it does rain it is usually brief but vigorous after which the sun comes out again.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip. Mozambique is a Malaria area and Malaria precautions are essential. Avoid mosquito bites by covering up with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers especially after sunset, using insect repellents on exposed skin and, when necessary, sleeping under a mosquito net (provided in your accommodation). You should also check with your doctor or nurse about suitable antimalarial tablets.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Mozambique for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website:
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/mozambique/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements. Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & Tipping

The currency of Mozambique is the Metical and you may not enter or exit the country with more than 500 Meticais. This is an all inclusive holiday so you shouldn't need to bring much local currency just if you would like to buy souvenirs or extra drinks or activities. Credit cards are increasingly accepted although you should tell your bank before using your card in Mozambique.

Tipping is not expected but is very much appreciated. Tips can be given to one of your hosts Pat or Mandy for distributing. A rate of £10-£15 per person is reasonable.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms saddletravel.com

Holidays are confirmed with 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50%
30 days or more - 30%
less than 30 days - nil

Book with confidence – Covid Guarantee:

If the ride operator is closed or you are unable to travel due to lockdown:

1/ The deposit is reissued as a rebooking voucher to rebook anytime.

2/ Any balance payment will be refunded to you in full within 1 week of departure date.

Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.



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