

African Explorer

Weight limit: 95kg
Nearest airport: Johannesburg
8 days / 7 nights / 6 full days of riding



The African Explorer takes you to two countries in one trip and covers a range of different topography and terrain, combined with excellent and wide ranging game viewing. The South African bushveld is soft going for the horses, with wonderful sandy tracks to canter along and beautiful blue dams to swim with your horse. In Botswana there is an ancient landscape of rock formations, and open plains dotted with giant Baobab trees and riverine bush. This place feels very wild and will definitely get your adrenaline flowing!

The Riding

This week-long trail is the perfect way to ease you into riding with dangerous game. The first few days in South Africa will get you accustomed to the tack and terrain before you head off to Botswana to ride amongst elephants, hyenas and possibly a big cat or two! For those that want to, you can swim with your horse and jump some natural obstacles.

Guide & Group sizes

The guides have many years of experience in leading safaris and they have grown up in the area. They know the bush like the back of their hand and are qualified by the Botswanan

Qualifications Authority.

Maximum number of riders in a group is 10. Groups over 8 are split into two groups for rides, unless one ride is specifically requested by a private group.

Horses & Tack

The horses have been carefully chosen for their temperament, courage, endurance and responsiveness. They are tough and used to coping with extreme conditions. They are of various breeds including Boerperd, Shire cross Thoroughbreds, Appaloosas and South African Warmbloods, ranging from 14.3h to 17h.

The saddles used are South African McClellans. They are designed for the cavalry and ideal for long hours of riding. Small saddlebags are provided.



Level of Riding and Fitness

As you'll be riding amongst wild game, this holiday is for experienced, confident and calm riders with a sense of adventure. The guests should ride regularly and be comfortable at rising trot, light seat canter and gallop, as well as be able to control a horse independently at all paces and jump small natural obstacles. You should be able to mount and dismount unaided. Good riding fitness is expected as you'll be spending 4-7 hours in the saddle each day.

Before each safari, every rider will take a short riding test to ensure they are competent enough for the safari and fall into the above guideline. The decision of the manager conducting the test is final. Hard hats are mandatory and the weight limit is 95kg.

Accommodation & Dining

Camp Davidson was modelled on the old 'outspan' camps of E.A. Davidson (great grandfather to one of the founding partners of Horizon Horseback) when he was selling goods across the area from his wagon in the early 1900s. Horizon has captured the early camp atmosphere in Camp Davidson. Beautiful decked canvas tents are nestled amongst the sandstone ridges overlooking grassy game filled valleys. Each luxury tent has an en-suite bathroom. The camp is completely run on solar energy and has a small swimming pool.

Two Mashatus Camp is nestled in the shade of two large Mashatu trees, and the heart of the camp has two traditionally built Lala palm rondavels for dining and lounge areas. Guest accommodation is in large A frame walk-in tents set on teak platforms, each with en-suite bathrooms. Each tent is private and positioned in the shade of a tree in the bush, not far from the main area. Each tent has a small deck area in front where guests can relax privately during the afternoons. Two Mashatus also has a small swimming pool under a Mashatu tree for guests to enjoy.

Tree Camp is a very unique camp; any childhood dream of sleeping up in the arms of a tree will be completely fulfilled here! Nestled in the bough of a giant Mashatu tree and two ancient Leadwood trees, this Seligna deck, 4 metres off the ground, will be your retreat for the night. Two guests each share an airy and cool sleeping pod. Along a short walkway, shared showers and toilets are under the Leadwood trees. The spacious dining and lounge area flow from the sleeping pods and overlook the Majale River. This truly extraordinary camp is one that will be remembered and spoken about for years to come.

Itinerary

Day 1

Meet at OR Tambo at 11.15 and transfer to Camp Davidson in time for a late Lunch. In the afternoon you will be introduced to your safari horse. We will ensure that you are matched to a horse that suits your ability and experience before heading off on your ride. This first introductory ride is a relaxed affair, giving riders the opportunity to settle into their new surroundings. Crossing the plains, enjoy your first close encounter with wildlife on horseback. A stunning lookout spot for sundowner drinks is a welcome moment to take in your first taste of Africa after a long journey. A three course supper is served at Camp Davidson that evening.

Day 2

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, followed by a visit to one of the Horizon dams for a swim with the horses before getting back to camp in time for lunch. Guests can then relax by the pool, before a shorter afternoon ride.

Day 3

Today you will head south to the Game Conservancy which is home to the Bellevue Lodges. The ride traverses a wide wetland, home to reedbuck and grass owls, before entering dense woodland dotted with wild fig trees and large fruited bushwillows. Here it crosses the watershed and descends 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 all on view, as are groups of elegant sable, swift red hartebeest and 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.



Day 4

A morning ride in search of buffalo before returning to the lodge for lunch. There will be a chance to relax and enjoy this fabulous setting before riding back to the Horizon lodge, where you say goodbye to your horse before heading up to camp for a last night at Camp Davidson.

Day 5

An early start today with departure from camp by 6 am with a picnic for the road. The aim is to have you through the border by 9am in order to arrive at Mashatu by 1pm in time for lunch and a chance to change before the afternoon ride to Tree Camp.

Day 6

A morning ride from Tree Camp exploring the center of the reserve and the game rich Pitsane river area, before arriving at Two Mashatus for lunch and a chance to relax by the pool. That afternoon there is the option of another ride or a game drive in the Kgotla area with sundowners on the Mmagwa hills.

Day 7

Today starts with a full morning ride from Two Mashatus camp. After lunch you will have the option of an afternoon ride, a bush walk or if available a game drive with Mashatu with a good chance of seeing the big cats (additional charge \$65 pp), then back to Two Mashatus for your last night in Africa.

Day 8

A good long morning ride from Two Mashatus ending back at the stables in time for lunch and a shower before flying out of Mashatu at 14.30.

Price Includes

- 6 full days of riding
- Shorter rides on arrival and departure days
- Shared accommodation
- All meals
- Drinks
- Game drives (excluding Mashatu Main Camp drive)
- Bush walks
- Sundowners
- Laundry
- All arrangements for duration of holiday
- Services of guides

Not included

- Conservation Levy of \$10pp per night
- Flights
- Airport transfers
- Tips



International flights

Do NOT book flights until you have received the 'Booking Confirmation Email' from saddletravel.com.

Please plan your flight to arrive at Johannesburg airport (South Africa) by 10:15am on Day 1 of your holiday.

Your departure flight on Day 8 of your holiday should be after 8pm.

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.

When packing please do bear in mind that a full laundry service is included in the price. They can normally turn laundry around within 24-48 hours. Fresh linen and towels are provided at each camp. We recommend wearing neutral colours during this safari as the best way to get close to the wildlife is to blend in with your surroundings. Different tones khaki, brown, grey and natural bush green are ideal. Don't bring any bright colours or white as the animals will be able to spot you from afar.

- Your own well-fitted hard hat – Hard hats are mandatory
- Comfortable riding clothes. Wear everything a couple of times before bringing it on safari.
- Short boots and half chaps, ride/walking boots are perfect. Long leather boots are also good but long rubber boots are not advised.
- Riding gloves
- Bumbag
- Light weight long sleeved shirts
- Warm layers
- Light weight coat
- Waterproof clothing (during wet season October – April)
- Casual clothes for evening
- Light weight shoes for evening
- Lip balm
- Sun cream factor 30 or higher
- Swimming costume
- Sun hat
- Camera + spare batteries
- A good head torch
- Power bank
- Books / eReader for when you are relaxing between rides
- Insect repellent & bite cream
- Personal medication

At camp

There is a Wi-Fi at the stables on the arrival and departure day of your trail. Phone signal coverage in the area where you are riding is very limited.

There are small solar chargers that can charge most mobile phones and other devices with a USB port at some of the camps. Please note that charging your gadgets may not be possible every night so bringing a power bank is a good idea.



Climate

May-September (winter, dry season)

Winters are generally mild and dry. Night-time and morning temperatures can be cool, dropping down to 5°C during the coldest times. During the day it's warm with temperatures reaching up to 25°C.

October-April (summer, wet season)

The weather during summer can be very hot with fairly low humidity. Temperatures are at 17°C during the night and can reach 30°C and above during the day. Showers in the afternoon are common, but it rarely rains all day. The main rainy months are from December to February when the temperatures are also the hottest and can reach 40°C during the hottest part of the day.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Although Botswana is a Malaria area, the Tuli Block is low risk (especially in the winter months May-October). Chemoprophylaxis (use of anti-malaria drugs) is optional for those that live there as the risk of adverse drug effects outweigh the advantage of the very small chance of acquiring malaria in the Tuli Block. However, it is important to take mosquito preventative measures. If you get flu-like symptoms on your return home do ask your health care provider to exclude the possibility of malaria and tick bite fever.

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



Travel documents

You must be in possession of a passport that is valid for at least six months after your return date and has at least 3 blank pages.

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

Note: You are travelling to Botswana via South Africa so please familiarize yourself with the entry requirements to South Africa. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-africa/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

Upon arrival there is a \$10 per person per night Conservation Levy payable locally in cash. Please bring the correct amount as there is sometimes a lack of change.

We suggest you don't change too much money as your holiday is fully inclusive. We suggest you bring dollars to avoid inflated exchange rates of the local currency. Other costs, like souvenir shopping and gratuities, can also be done in dollars.

Gratuities are at your discretion and can be paid in £, € or \$. Normally R75 – R150 per person per night is recommended (which is approx. £5 - £10ppn).

Riding declaration

"I am an experienced rider and able to mount & dismount unaided. I have a firm seat and I'm confident and in control at all paces over rough terrain (including rising trot, light seat canters and gallops) and have a good level of current riding fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others."

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms
saddletravel.com

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

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 booking process.

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