



African Explorer Safari

SOUTH AFRICA / BOTSWANA

A **horseback safari** combining 4 days riding in the Waterberg of South Africa with 3 days riding in the Mashatu reserve of Botswana. A wonderful introduction to Africa, staying in comfortable camps and experiencing two different ecosystems in one holiday. The **African Explorer** is perfect for confident riders looking for a first safari and the opportunity to explore two countries in one amazing riding trip.

Horseback Safari	 10 days / 7 riding	 From £2,424	
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Mashatu in Botswana is known for its herds of elephants



Horizon is home to a pod of hippos, in South Africa



An exciting riding holiday for experienced riders

ITINERARY

Highlights

- A horseback safari which offers riding in two different countries and environments - the Waterberg in South Africa and the Tuli block in eastern Botswana
- South Africa offers the ideal introduction to Africa with plenty of plains game to view - zebra, giraffe, antelope, hippo
- Botswana offers a vast, unfenced wilderness and the chance to ride with big game such as elephant, lion and leopard
- Exceptional horses selected for their temperament and rideability. Small groups of 8 riders maximum!
- High standard of camping with proper beds and en-suite showers and toilets. Camp Davidson in South Africa has recently been built (2013) and both camps have new pools.

Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - JOHANNESBURG

International flight overnight to Johannesburg - Flights are not included but we can assist with this on request. You should arrive in the morning of Day 2 (see "dates and prices" for transfer times)


Day 2 — 2 : JOHANNESBURG - CAMP DAVIDSON - 3 hours riding

Camp Davidson

On arrival at Johannesburg International Airport, you will be met by your driver and transferred to Camp Davidson on the Horizon ranch (c. 3 hour drive). Please make sure that you arrive in Johannesburg early enough to meet the transfer vehicle (see dates and prices)

You will arrive at Camp Davidson in time for lunch and to meet your guide and the team. In the afternoon you will be matched with a horse suited to your ability and experience before heading off on your first ride through the Matlapeng reserve. You will stop for sundowners at the Red Lake, where you are likely to encounter a pod of resident hippo, before climbing the ridge back to Camp Davidson.

Day 3 — 3 : MATLAPENG RESERVE - 5 hours riding

 Camp Davidson

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, before trekking upstream to an adjoining reserve. The lake itself is rich in birdlife, including the impressive Fish Eagles, dainty Dabchicks, elegant Jacanas and a variety of geese. Later, riding through the open savannah, wildebeest and zebra can be encountered. The riding is varied, from canters along sandy tracks to winding through rocky outcrops and densely wooded areas. The ride then crosses the reserve and returns to Camp Davidson in time for lunch. You can then relax by the pool, before a shorter afternoon ride.

In the evening there is the option of a night sky safari with a local astronomer, Dr Calcott, who will guide you through the amazing constellations (subject to weather conditions and availability). Additional cost R300 pp, Min. 4 pax.

Dinner and night at Camp Davidson.


Day 4 — 4 : BELLEVUE PLAINS - 4-5 hours riding

 Savannah Plains Lodge

Pack up and leave Camp Davidson after breakfast - your bags will go ahead whilst you make your way to Bellevue Plains Lodge on horseback.

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 5 — 5 : MATLAPENG RESERVE - 3-4 hours riding

 Camp Davidson

A morning ride in search of buffalo before returning to the lodge for lunch and a chance to relax and enjoy this fabulous setting before riding back to Horizon. The ride climb back up to Camp Davidson is particularly intriguing, as it follows a mountain pass cut through boulders and outcrops. Night at Camp Davidson, really for an early morning departure tomorrow.

Day 6 — 6 : MASHATU RESERVE - 4-5 hours riding

 Tree Camp Mashatu

Wake up early and depart the camp by 9:00 am arriving at Mashatu by 1:00 in time for lunch and a chance to change before the afternoon ride to Tree Camp,

Enjoy an introductory ride to check you are suited to your horse and comfortable enough in the saddle to ride in a big game area, before embarking on your first ride out to our Tree Camp. This will be your first opportunity to experience the beauty of the Mashatu Game Reserve and view the wildlife on horseback. Mashatu Game Reserve is home to the largest herd of wild free-roaming elephants on private land in Africa, and, although not a guarantee, it is almost assured that there will be great viewing of these incredible creatures.

Day 7 — 7 : MASHATU RESERVE - 6-7 hours riding

 Two Mashatu Camp

Sunrise, the dawn chorus and tea or coffee which is brought to your tent, sounds the start of your first day. After breakfast, it's time to mount and depart from the dense woodland that hugs the Limpopo River and head towards the rocky hills that delineate the edges of the great river valley. As the ride traverses the heartland of Mashatu, you will encounter plentiful game: plains game, many giraffe and herds of elephants. You will arrive back at Two Mashatus Camp in time for lunch and a cooling afternoon rest in the shady camp or lazing by the pool. That afternoon the group has the choice of an afternoon ride or a game drive to the south western side of the reserve (if available). This is an area not reached on horseback during the African Explorer safari. This opportunity, while provided at an extra cost, should not be missed as the near guaranteed sightings of lion and leopard, and sometimes of cheetah, are legendary. The guides are very knowledgeable about the structure and whereabouts of the various prides and individuals, and failure to find them is very rare indeed. The highlight of the the drive is a sundowner in the ancient landscape of rock formations or the Mmamagwa hills, which vast vistas into the setting sun.

Day 8 — 8 : MASHATU RESERVE - 6-7 hours riding

Ride out following the movements of wildlife in the area. The tempo of the rides is always varied and depending on the terrain, there are opportunities to enjoy the spirit and fitness of the horses. The afternoon brings a chance to again choose between another ride or a bush walk in the northern area of Mashatu Game Reserve and enjoy the rich birdlife, spot crocodile in the pools and learn about the magnificent trees lining the banks. If available there is also the possibility of a game drive with Mashatu with a good chance of seeing the big cats (additional charge starting from \$65 pp) then back to Two Mashatus for your last night in Africa.

Day 9 — 9 : MASHATU RESERVE - JOHANNESBURG - 2 hours riding

The last ride in the Limpopo Valley is a great opportunity to take one last picture of elephants and enjoy a long and winding canter through the scattered Mustard bush with your guides. Once back at the stables, there will be time for a quick shower and brunch at the reception area before saying farewell to your horse and the team.

Flight back to Johannesburg - please book a late evening flight (see dates and prices). Occasionally this may be replaced by a road transfer.

Day 10 — 10 : ARRIVE HOME

Arrival back home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
28/11/2024	07/12/2024	£2,862	Full
05/12/2024	14/12/2024	£2,424	Full
12/12/2024	21/12/2024	£2,424	Full
19/12/2024	28/12/2024	£2,424	Full
26/12/2024	04/01/2025	£2,424	Full
02/01/2025	11/01/2025	£2,513	Full
09/01/2025	18/01/2025	£2,513	Full
16/01/2025	25/01/2025	£2,513	Full
23/01/2025	01/02/2025	£2,513	Full
30/01/2025	08/02/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
06/02/2025	15/02/2025	£3,206	Full
13/02/2025	22/02/2025	£3,206	Full
20/02/2025	01/03/2025	£3,206	Full
27/02/2025	08/03/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
06/03/2025	15/03/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
13/03/2025	22/03/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
20/03/2025	29/03/2025	£3,206	Full
27/03/2025	05/04/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
03/04/2025	12/04/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
10/04/2025	19/04/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
17/04/2025	26/04/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure

24/04/2025	03/05/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
01/05/2025	10/05/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
08/05/2025	17/05/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
15/05/2025	24/05/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
22/05/2025	31/05/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
29/05/2025	07/06/2025	£3,206	Full
05/06/2025	14/06/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
12/06/2025	21/06/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
19/06/2025	28/06/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
26/06/2025	05/07/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
03/07/2025	12/07/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
10/07/2025	19/07/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
17/07/2025	26/07/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
24/07/2025	02/08/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
31/07/2025	09/08/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
07/08/2025	16/08/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
14/08/2025	23/08/2025	£3,206	Full
21/08/2025	30/08/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
28/08/2025	06/09/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
04/09/2025	13/09/2025	£3,206	Full
11/09/2025	20/09/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
18/09/2025	27/09/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
25/09/2025	04/10/2025	£3,206	Full
02/10/2025	11/10/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
09/10/2025	18/10/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
16/10/2025	25/10/2025	£3,206	Full
23/10/2025	01/11/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
30/10/2025	08/11/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
06/11/2025	15/11/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
13/11/2025	22/11/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
20/11/2025	29/11/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
27/11/2025	06/12/2025	£3,206	Guaranteed departure
04/12/2025	13/12/2025	£2,513	Guaranteed departure
11/12/2025	20/12/2025	£2,513	Guaranteed departure
18/12/2025	27/12/2025	£2,513	Guaranteed departure

Price details

- Prices do not include international flights to Johannesburg but we can assist with this on request. Please make sure that you arrive before 9:30 a.m. on day 2 to meet the transfer vehicle, and depart after 20:00 on the final day of safari (Friday, day 9). Flight times outside of these guidelines may require a private transfer at an extra cost. Please try to arrive as early as possible as immigration queues at JNB airport can be long, and if you are delayed, you may have to pay for a private transfer.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.

- The usual group size is a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riders.

- Group transfers are an additional cost:

> In 2024: £520/\$625/€590 (road transfers from Johannesburg to Camp Davidson; Camp Davidson to Limpopo and light aircraft transfer from Limpopo to Johannesburg). Please note that for very small groups, the light aircraft transfer can exceptionally be replaced by a road transfer.

> In 2025: £560/\$720/€660

Please note: if for any reason, for example lack of guests or weather warnings, we are unable to fly on the last day there will be a shared road transfer provided instead and you will be refunded £115 for 2023 and £100 for 2024 either on site or upon your return home.

- All Mashatu visitors are subject to a conservation levy of \$20 per person per night payable on site. This is \$60 per person for the African Explorer as only 3 nights are spent in Botswana.

- The African Explorer does not include a game drive but also includes the option of the Game Drive with Mashatu at \$87 pp subject to availability.

- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a tent with another rider of the same sex. To guarantee your own tent there is a single supplement of 50%.

On certain weeks a single tent is available on a first-come, first-served basis at no extra cost. Please contact us for details.

- For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 85 kilos, 187 lbs, 13.3 st. If you weigh more than this, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

- Younger riders aged 12+ yo can be accommodated on this ride on request and provided they match the riding requirements.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

2 English-speaking horse guides

LOGISTIC

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle

A full horse stable team

Lodge team

ACCOMMODATION

Camping in 2 man tents with beds, comfortable mattresses and sheets provided

MEALS

Full board from lunch on D2 to brunch on D9

Snacks and beverages (including wine and alcoholic beverages)

Price doesn't include

TRANSPORT

Transfer from the airport (return) and transfers from Horizon to Limpopo. See 'Price Details' for more information
International flights

EXTRA

Tips to local team.

EXTRAS

Conservation fees (see "dates and prices")
Additional game drives in central Mashatu (see dates and prices)

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers at a different arrival and departure time to those stipulated in 'Price Details'

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

Good selection of horses (60 in South Africa, 35 in Botswana) : Thoroughbreds, Arabs, Boerperds, Welsh ponies and various crossbreeds. They are forward going, well schooled and acclimatised to the game.

In South Africa you ride on - The usual weight limit is 95 kg although it may be possible to accept one or two heavier riders - please enquire.
Trail saddles which are comfortable for long hours in the saddle, whilst in Botswana you ride on traditional English GP saddles.

There is a maximum weight limit of 90 kgs / 15 stones. Heavier riders please contact us.

Guide & local team

You will be guided by two guides - a lead guide and a back up guide. In Botswana one guide will carry a rifle, but this isn't necessary in South Africa.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider, capable and in control at all paces. You must be able to rise to the trot and gallop in a forward seat. Due to the presence of dangerous game it is important that you can stay on your horse if you need to react quickly and gallop out of danger. You may also be required to jump small obstacles such as branches dislodged by elephants.

The riding in South Africa is very safe, as the Waterberg is home to non-dangerous game such as zebra and giraffe. In Botswana, you are riding in an area of dangerous game (Mashatu is famous for its elephants). It is therefore of utmost importance that you are a confident rider, and secure in the saddle. Please note that there will be a short assessment ride on your arrival at Two Mashatu Camp in Botswana. The guides in South Africa will be able to assess your riding skills and will advise on your suitability to ride in Botswana. Should they deem you not able to ride in Botswana you will be given the choice of going to Botswana as a non-rider or if space allows you can stay at the South African lodge for the three days and carry on with the safari riding.

For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 85 kilos, 187 lbs, 13.3 st. If you weigh more than this, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

PACE

—
Whilst game viewing you will be walking so as not to startle the animals, but there are plenty of opportunities for long trots and canters. In South Africa these are usually on long sandy tracks, but in Botswana it is likely that you will canter behind your guide on wiggly routes through the bush.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

—
A team of grooms will feed, care for and saddle your horses. You can help with untacking if you wish, but this is not expected.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

—
You need to be physically fit for the long hours in the saddle in the African sun. In Botswana you may be riding for up to 6 hours in the morning (with a short break mid morning).

Guests who do not ride regularly are requested to get fit prior to the ride. It is of particular importance to ensure you are comfortable and balanced when riding at speed across rough terrain and open spaces. If the guides feel that you are unsafe on horseback, then you will be offered non-riding activities in Botswana. The riding in South Africa is less strenuous.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

—
Water bottles are provided on all saddles. Some small saddle bags are available for carrying small items such as suncream.

Helmets are compulsory. You should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

—
South Africa :

- Camp Davidson has recently been built high in the bushveld above the Matlapeng valley. The camp commands a wonderful panoramic view of the central highlands of the Waterberg massif, whilst overlooking the picturesque Sunset Lake on the eastern boundary of Horizon's Triple B Ranch. Camp Davidson has the atmosphere of early settlers, with beautiful decked canvas tents nestled amongst the sandstone ridges overlooking grassy game-filled valleys. Each A-frame tent has proper beds and an en-suite flushing toilet and bucket shower. Meals are taken around the fire or on a beautiful deck overlooking the valley. There is a small refreshing pool.

- The Savannah Lodge is a beautiful, intimate lodge at the heart of a private reserve, a full-day ride away from Camp Davidson. No Wifi.

Botswana :

- Tree Camp: This tree house is located high in the branches of a Mashatu tree in the heart of the Mashatu game reserve.

There are several well-appointed safari tents with open sides (see pictures). Mosquito nets are available. Two functional bathrooms with running water are shared between all riders. No wifi, no electricity except for one charging point.

- Two Mashatus camp is situated close to the Limpopo river. Large walk-in tents are pitched on teak platforms with ensuite flush toilets and hot showers. Each tent is private and positioned in the shade of a tree with a small deck area on which to relax during the afternoons. Traditionally built Lala palm rondavels serve as dining area and lounge. There is a newly-built pool in this camp too for guests to enjoy after the ride.

Laundry service is offered once in the week in South Africa but not in Botswana, you will need to have enough clothing to last 3 days.

Note: Power cuts are frequent in South Africa and we recommend all guests bring a high lumen torch or head torch.

MEALS

—
Breakfast is usually taken very early (before dawn) and is therefore light, consisting of cereals, fruit and rusks with tea or coffee.

Lunch is also light and may be quiche and salad or a variety of salads with cold meats.

Afternoon tea with a selection of drinks and freshly baked cakes.

Dinner is three courses. Wine is served with the meals and a selection of drinks are available.

Vegetarians and special diets can be catered for with advance notice

CLIMATE

—
The seasons are the reverse of the UK, with winter (June - Sept) being dry with no rain and clear skies. Daytime temperatures are pleasant and the nights are cool.

Summer (Nov - March) is hot and there is the chance of dramatic thunderstorms.

It is generally hotter and drier in Botswana than in South Africa, and the altitude in the Waterberg makes the temperatures particularly pleasant, even in summer.

TIPS

We recommend tipping c. GBP 10-15 per day which can be split between all members of the team. You should tip the South African team separately to the Botswanan team. A separate guide will take you on a game drive and will appreciate a small tip. Tips can be paid in South African Rands, GBP or Euros.

If you wish to tip your guide in addition then you can do this separately.

PACKING LIST

Our Recommendations

Please note: in the case of a light aircraft transfer, remember that planes don't necessarily have a separate luggage compartment, and carry-on regulations may apply. The weight limit is 18 kg and 5 kg for your carry-on. Remember that safari camps provide shampoo and soap, as well as alcohol, so make sure to pack accordingly. Please remember soft bags only are accepted, hard-sided luggage will not be accepted on the plane. Luggage type and weight:

- Maximum luggage weight is 18 kg/35 lbs, 40 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm (Soft luggage/duffle with 1 flat side only, and no protruding wheels).
- Hand luggage is 5 kg/11 lbs (1 soft piece)
- You can also have your "ladies" handbag with you - but please limit the size and do not try to squash extra clothing/equipment inside them. The charter planes are much smaller than normal planes and thus have limited space.
- Power banks = only 1 per person and must be carried with you on your person and not be in any of your bags. This way any overheating Lithium ion batteries/powerbanks will be immediately identified and disposed of to avoid an inflight fire – this is a safety aspect.
- Riding helmets can be carried on the flight with you

Please limit the size of them and not try to squash extra clothing/equipment inside them. The charter planes are much smaller than normal planes and thus have limited space.

Should your luggage exceed these limitations, you will not be able to load it.

The planes don't necessarily have a separate luggage compartments, and carry-on regulations may apply. Remember that safari camps provide shampoo and soap, as well as alcohol, so make sure to pack accordingly.

Liquid Restrictions:

Perfume- 50ml

Eau de Toilette – (250 ml)

Non-flammable and Non-alcoholic liquids – 500ml per container. A combined total of no more than 2l in checked bags.

Pocket knives/Leatherman's and other sharp objects:

These need to be packed into passengers checked bags and will not be allowed in carry-on bags.

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and we recommend travelling light as your luggage may have to be moved between camps.
- Wherever possible you should wear neutral colours, such as beige, brown or natural bush colours for riding as bright colours, such as red, yellow or white can startle the wildlife and they will see you long before you've seen them
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

Head

- You will be required to wear a hard hat when riding and you should take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and thorns
- T-shirts
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold, particularly June - August
- Waterproof jacket - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared. Rain is more likely Oct-April
- Casual clothes for the evening

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Shorts for lazy lunchtimes
- Casual clothes for the evening

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps to protect against thorns. We don't

recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged.

- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers for moving around the lodge and camp
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

Nightwear

Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for plunge pools
- Binoculars for viewing game
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night. Note: Power cuts are frequent in South Africa and we recommend all guests bring a high lumen torch or head torch.

In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag. Some toiletries are provided by the camp so you can pack lighter.

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - must be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing deet
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Anti malarial tablets and Yellow Fever Certificate if required (check with your doctor)

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .