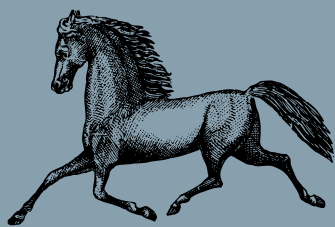


ACTIVE



RIDING TRIPS

SOUTH AFRICA/BOTSWANA  
Combined Itinerary





The African Explorer combines four nights in South Africa with three nights in Botswana. For advanced intermediate to experienced riders only. Set dates throughout the year. Great value for the week's safari.

The African Explorer is one of the most varied African safaris, as it goes to two countries in one trip and covers a lot of different topography and terrain, combined with excellent and wide ranging game viewing.

As the ride starts with the South African leg, riders are given a few days to refresh their riding skills before having to face the challenge of riding with elephants and lions.

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.



duration:  
8 DAYS



2-10  
MEMBERS



country  
BOTSWANA



airport  
JOHANNESBURG



accommodation  
LODGE/TENT



all meals  
INCLUDED



# Sample ITINERARY

We offer two versions of our African Explorer Ride. The classic version is a seven-night safari running from a Friday to a Friday every week of the year and includes four nights in South Africa: three nights at Camp Davidson and the fourth night at one of the Bellevue Lodges (Seringa or Savannah Lodge) and three nights in Botswana: with the first two nights at Two Mashatus and the last night at Tree Camp.

Our alternate itinerary (AE2) is a seven-night safari running once or twice a month from a Tuesday to a Tuesday that offers three nights in South Africa: the first two nights are at Camp Davidson and then to one of the Bellevue Lodges for the third night, followed by four nights in Botswana.

\*\*\*The following itinerary reflects the classic version.

## Day 1:

Guests are met at ORT airport and transferred to Horizon Horseback's Camp Davidson, your base for the next three days, in time for a late lunch.

That 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: ostrich, impala, zebra, kudu, eland, giraffe, warthog and jackal are all frequently seen in the open bushveld.

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, 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.

Guests 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.



We strongly recommend that guests should fly into Johannesburg the day before the start of their safari and overnight at an airport hotel to avoid any problems caused by flight delays and to rest up before the start of their adventure.

If guests cannot fly in the day before then we would ask that they book their flights to arrive as early as possible before 09h30.



# Sample ITINERARY

## Day 3:

Setting off in a westerly direction, this ride tracks past a brown hyena den, skirts past the upper reaches of the Horizon dam before crossing a wide grassy valley. At one point the ride enters into dense woodland, home to shy species such as kudu, bushbuck and Vervet monkeys. Emerging from the woods, the horses have a chance to stretch their legs along open sandy tracks. Finally the ride swings back to the north, through mixed bushveld and fascinating rock formations.

Two highlights of this ride are the jumping lanes and the chance for riders to swim their horses bareback in the Horizon dam next to the main lodge. For many guests, this is an exhilarating and unforgettable experience. Once dried off and back in the

saddle, the ride climb back up to Camp Davidson is particularly intriguing, as it follows a mountain pass cut through boulders and outcrops.

After lunch, enjoy a sundowner ride across the plains on the reserve. We are very fortunate to have a large herd zebra. Over the years, the herd has become quite habituated to the horses and it is now possible to ride really close and experience being part of the zebra herd. A wonderful way to watch the foals frolick.

## Day 4:

Having left Camp Davidson for the final time, this ride heads south to the Game Conservancy which is home to Savannah Lodge. 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.



# Sample ITINERARY

## Day 5:

We depart the lodge early and enjoy an exhilarating ride back to Horizon Lodge in time to change before departing for Botswana at 09:30 am.

We arrive in Botswana in time for a light lunch. Enjoy an introductory ride to check you are suited to your horse, before embarking on your first ride out to our Two Mashatus 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.

As evening falls at Two Mashatus Camp, relax in the cool of the thatched lounge and dining areas, before enjoying a three-course dinner.

## DAY 6:

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. This is an area not reached on horseback during the African Explorer safari. It is rich in game with a resident pride of lion. 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.



# Sample ITINERARY

## Day 7:

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.

## Day 8:

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.

Arriving back at the stables and reception mid-morning, there is plenty of time for a quick shower, before saying farewell to safari companions, new found friends and Horizon Horseback Mashatu.



Flights on departure day must be booked to depart after 20h00.



# Additional INFORMATION



**INCLUDED:**  
7 nights accommodation  
6 days of riding  
All meals  
Beverages with meals  
Horse and all tack  
All local taxes

**NOT INCLUDED:**  
Airfare  
Airport transfers  
Travel Insurance  
Gratuities for the team  
at each locale  
Airport Transfers  
\$30.00 per person Botswana  
Conservation Fee (paid locally)  
Extra Game Drive -  
\$65.00 USD per person



# Rider REVIEWS



**I** highly recommend any safari trip like this! I did a custom 10-day South Africa and Botswana safari and it was truly the trip of a lifetime. The facilities are just as lovely as the pictures.

I had a gorgeous rondavel bedroom with a big comfortable bed and my own bathroom. The food is plentiful (is it ever!) and so delicious and fresh. I'm a pretty confirmed carnivore so I enjoyed trying the game meats we had (eland is delicious) but they had plenty of filling options for non meat lovers.

The horses are well-behaved and energetic – there's rarely a need to thump them to keep up – and the guides quickly learn good horse and rider match ups. The cavalry saddles took this dressage rider some getting used to – hard seats and no flaps! Definitely bring tall boots that are comfortable for walking in or half-chaps and a seat saver if you know your parts are sensitive because you will be in the saddle for hours every day.

I went traveling alone but was fortunate to join a group of three ladies who were super fun, great riders, and often did trips together so we got lots of chances to gallop and “kick some dust”. We saw SO MANY animals it almost got boring! Regular sightings in South Africa were impala (who make the most ridiculous pig noises in mating season), springbok, kudu, wildebeest, eland, blesbok, steenbok, gemsbok, zebra, warthogs, duiker, ostriches and the resident giraffes. Lots of monkeys, baboons and birds of every color as well. In South Africa all of the land is pretty much fenced game preserves so the rides take you to multiple reserves.

We then traveled to Botswana where we had more of the same plus ELEPHANTS which are truly amazing and a bit scary but the guides are extremely careful and provide clear instruction on when to hold still and when to retreat. The guides were universally amazing and knowledgeable. If you've ever wanted to safari in Africa and are a good rider, I can't imagine a better way to do it! **Alix J.**

