



RIDE WORLD WIDE

The Okavango Delta 2012

Horse Safari Information Sheet (African Horseback Safaris)

We offer two different horse safaris in the Okavango Delta. This information sheet relates to the safaris run by African Horseback Safaris from Macatoo Camp. Please see separate information sheet for details of our other trips.



Dates These safaris can be arranged for up to 10 nights pretty much year round (the camp sometimes closes in February) with a minimum stay of 7 nights recommended between March and October and 5 nights as other times to ensure you experience the very best of the Delta. Safari dates are flexible - to check dates and availability please contact us at Ride World Wide.

The Horses The horses are between 14hh and 17hh and include Boerperd crosses, Namibian Hanoverians, Arabs and Thoroughbred and Arab crosses. There are over 30 at the camp and all are well mannered, responsive and forward going to ride making long hours in the saddle a real pleasure. Grooms are on hand at all times to look after the horses at the base camp and accompany you if you spend nights out at fly camp.

Riding There is usually between 4 and 6 hours riding each day, broken up with refreshment stops, although the amount of riding may vary if game movements or local weather conditions require. Rides are generally limited to a maximum of 7 guests - when there are more than this booked into camp, guests are split into two groups to ride (although those booking as one group may all ride together if they prefer). Each ride is accompanied by a qualified guide and a back-up / support rider and there is also often an additional 'look out' who rides with the group to spot game. Saddles are good quality English or 'Maclellans' which are similar to a western style saddle and comfortable for long hours. Saddle bags can be provided if required and some 'seat savers' for extra comfort are also supplied. There is a weight limit of 95kgs (15 stone) - please contact us if you are close to this to ensure suitable horses are available. Heavier experienced riders may be taken by arrangement - again please contact us to discuss.

Pace The safaris are at a medium and well varied pace. Morning rides will usually include lots of long and exhilarating trots and canters across open floodplain or through the shallow flood-water. Evening rides, when the light is excellent for photography and game viewing, are at a slower, more relaxed pace, generally a walk and trot.

Riding Experience To participate in a safari you must be a reasonably competent rider as you will be riding in an open 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 and over varied terrain. You should also be relaxed and secure in the saddle so you are able to stay on your horse if it reacts suddenly, or if it needs to move quickly out of trouble. Children who are strong, competent riders and over 12 years old are sometimes accepted but this is entirely at the operators' discretion. To ensure sufficient riding ability, a pony club C certificate might be required. Anyone over 60 needs to be riding fit. You will enjoy your safari much more if you are fairly riding fit and if you do not ride regularly at home, we strongly recommend you accustom yourself to the time you will spend in the saddle with regular training before you go.



Terrain The terrain in the Delta varies from flat and open grassy floodplain to thickly wooded palm islands and forests of mopane trees. Depending on the time of year and the water level, the floodplain (which looks rather like the 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, and splashing across the floodplain is one of the tremendously exhilarating highlights of riding in the Delta. There are also deep lagoons and channels to cross, again, depending on the level of the flood. The flood water usually arrives between late March and May each year and subsides in August and when it is at its peak (in recent years May, June, July) you may find your horse wading through shoulder high water in order to move from island to island. The going around the edge of the islands is normally good and firm however so, even when the water is high, there are plenty of opportunities to trot and canter.

Game The game in the Delta is plentiful and it remains there year round. Also, as you ride in a private concession area, you will have a wonderful, private game viewing experience uninterrupted by other game viewing vehicles. You can usually expect to see good sized herds of zebra and wildebeest, many species of antelope such as impala, reedbuck, lechwe and tsessebe, giraffe, buffalo, elephant and also crocodiles, monkeys, baboons and warhogs when riding. If lucky you may also see sitatunga, hyena, lion, leopard, cheetah and wild dog. The Delta is famous for birds..... fish eagles, cranes, storks, vultures, kingfishers, ostrich, jacanas, bee eaters and many more. John Sobey, who is the head guide at Macatoo has been leading rides here for almost 10 years. He is relaxed, good fun and very approachable and both he and his team of local guides and the staff at camp will take great care with every aspect of your holiday and will be delighted to share their knowledge of the area and its game with you, making your safari a real pleasure.



Accommodation The safaris operate from Macatoo tented camp which was specially built as the base in 1999. It is a small and intimate camp, sleeping a maximum of 14 guests (numbers are normally limited to a maximum of 12 guests in camp at any one time, but there are 7 twin / double tents so those wanting single tents can be accommodated) and is wonderfully situated on a palm island with magnificent views overlooking a large floodplain. Accommodation is very comfortable in spacious, walk-in twin bedded safari tents, each with attached shower room with hot shower and flush loo. The tents are well situated for privacy and each has its own lovely view, which can be enjoyed from chairs set outside on a veranda. Tents are furnished with proper beds with comfortable mattresses, cotton sheets and duvets, wardrobes with hanging space for clothes and bedside tables. They have generator powered electric lights. The camp has a spacious central dining tent with sofas to relax on and service is always excellent. You will be woken each morning with tea or coffee brought to your tent, laundry and so on will be done for you and the whole ethos is one where nothing is too much trouble - and everything is a pleasure. There is also a plunge pool in camp, a wonderful spot to cool off and for drinks after riding. On a safari of 7 nights or more (except between November and February when the weather and logistics mean fly camping is generally not an option), 2 nights will also usually be spent at a second camp, a temporary 'fly camp' set up in a different area of the Delta. Accommodation at fly camp is often in 'tree houses' on stretcher beds draped with mosquito nets and set up under the stars, though sometimes large walk-in dome tents are used. When at fly camp, hot bucket showers are prepared for you at night or after your ride and there are shared long drop loos. Accommodation on safari is based on two sharing a tent and a single supplement will be charged if you are not prepared to share a tent with another guest (of the same sex) if requested (if you are booking alone, you will only be asked to share if the numbers / mix of guests requires).



Meals You will be extremely well fed on safari with three substantial meals a day and snacks to keep you going when out riding. Delicious brunches are welcome after early morning rides, there are home baked cakes for tea, and dinner is three courses with wine, served at a beautifully laid table by candlelight in the dining tent or outside on a long table set out under the stars close to the campfire. There is always plenty of freshly baked bread, vegetables and salads and vegetarians are well catered for (although please let us know in advance). Drinks are kept well chilled and carefully chosen wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks are all included.

Safety You will be given an introductory talk on all aspects of the safari, including safety procedures when riding, on arrival. Each ride is lead by a licensed and qualified guide equipped with rifle, accompanied by a back-up rider with a shotgun, radio and first aid kit and also often a 'look out' who rides with you to spot game. There is a comprehensive medical kit in the camp and radio contact with Maun, as well as a satellite 'phone for emergencies.

Weather Summer months are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, with temperatures up to about 38 degrees Centigrade at midday. It can rain in October although the rainy season is usually December to February. The coolest months are May to August when midday temperatures reach about 28 degrees C. During these months, and in early September, it can be quite cold in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to about 4 or 5 degrees C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm.

What to bring We will send you a clothing list with suggestions of what to bring when you book.

Itinerary Safaris are very individualized and the actual structure of each day depends on the movement of game, the weather and guest preferences! The following is an example itinerary for a 7 night safari:

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Day 1 After a charter flight of about 30 minutes from Maun, a wonderful opportunity to see the entire Delta and game from the air, your charter plane lands amongst the floodplains on the airstrip closest to camp. You will be met by an open topped 4X4 game drive vehicle, then driven (or taken by boat) to base camp, fording rivers and crossing plains watching game as you go. The drive to Macatoo Camp, which overlooks a seasonal lagoon, usually takes about an hour depending upon stops and the game you see along the way. An introductory talk over lunch or tea in camp and time for a rest before meeting the horses and, time permitting, a late afternoon ride to get to know them and the surrounding area. Dinner and night in camp. (L,D)

Day 2 Woken just before dawn with tea and coffee brought to your tent. A light breakfast before riding out at dawn, heading west from island to island through the sea of grass. The ride will follow fresh game tracks and explore the open plains where you may see big herds of wildebeest and zebra, before stopping for a rest and a snack. Ride back to camp by a different route crossing seasonally flooded plains. Lunch and a relaxing afternoon in camp before an evening ride until sunset, one of the best times for game viewing. The evening ride is deliberately slower-paced and it's a good opportunity to ask questions and take photographs. Leopard sightings are not infrequent, the bird-life is some of the best in the world and towards sunset there is often elephant or hippo interaction. A sundowner may be enjoyed out in the bush before riding back to camp to freshen up. Drinks around the fire and a well earned dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 3 Leave camp early, riding out at dawn & following fresh game tracks, perhaps heading towards year round lagoons which are home to the rare semi-aquatic antelope, the red lechwe, and a haven for other animal & bird life. Breakfast is laid out for you under a large baobab tree, then you ride back to camp for a rest & perhaps a relaxing dip in the plunge pool during the hottest part of the day. After a rest in camp, a late afternoon ride, perhaps to exploring the lower flood plains where elephant often gather at a pool. Return to base as the sun sets for hot showers, drinks around the fire and dinner. (B,L,D)

Day 4 Different country again today as you ride through a sea of bushman grass, Camelthorn and Mopane woods that are ideal cover for giraffe or kudu and impala, the shier browsing antelope. The route home opens out again onto floodplain that is perfect for a long, exhilarating canter where you often disturb troops of baboons. Arrive back at camp for a dip in the plunge pool and a late lunch, then the afternoon to relax. An evening game drive with a spot light to look out for leopard, hyena, bushbabies, spring hare and other nocturnal game, before dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)



Day 5 The morning ride takes you deeper into the heart of the delta, along some of the high palm islands which offer great sweeping views of the delta plains. In the afternoon a slower ride takes you into a new area, where the country changes and there is often a noticeable difference in game species. The 'fly' camp is a magical tree house where you have the option to spend the night out, sleeping high up in the tree tops under the stars. To be out in the wilderness so freely in the Okavango bush like this is wonderful and something that few people experience. Fires & gas lamps at night keep the animals away & the rota for those who wish to take part in the night watch, is discussed over a delicious dinner under the stars (B,L,D)

Day 6 Wake up amongst the trees to the call of the African Fish Eagle and after breakfast set off, splashing through water on the vast open plains, home to blue wildebeeste and Burchell's zebra. The riding may be fast as you approach deep reedy areas full of bird life including open-billed storks, squacco herons, slaty egrets, egyptian geese and many more. The morning ride takes you back to Macatoo along the myriad of waterways lined with large trees. A hearty lunch and later in the afternoon there will be the option of a night drive, mokoro or boating trip. Dinner and night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Your last full day's riding in this magical place takes you cantering through the shallow flood plains, admiring the deeper pools of lilies. Here the Cape buffalo can gather in large numbers (anything between a dozen and 2000 individuals) and you may have to creep up on them using the islands as cover. The evening offers a last quiet ride with memorable smells of wild sage and the warm African dust as the sun goes down. A farewell dinner, which may be made memorable by a surprise location. (B,L,D)

Day 8 A final early morning ride at dawn, with perhaps an exhilarating gallop with the game before returning to camp for brunch. Farewell to the horses and then transfer to the airstrip where you meet the charter plane that will fly you back to Maun for your onward journey (B).



**** SAFARI PRICES 2012 **** - Safari rates are charged per night and depend on the season. For 2012 there are three seasons - Standard, Mid and Peak:

The Standard Season is 1st January to 31st March & 1st November to 31st December (incl):

Rate: £385 per person per night

The Mid Season is 1st April to 30th June & 16th to 31st October (incl)

Rate: £435 per person per night

The Peak Season is 1st July to 15th October (incl):

Rate: £485 person per night

Group discounts are available on request (usually for 6 or more)

Please note You need to add the cost of air charters (see below) to all rates.

Dates - The preferred start day for safaris is a Friday - however this is flexible so do call to discuss dates. Minimum stay is usually 5 nights / 6 days (shorter safaris of 3 or 4 nights sometimes possible on request), but we recommend a minimum of **7 nights** to get the most from your safari. Safaris of 7 nights or more usually include a night or two in a second 'fly' camp in a new area although due to weather and logistics, fly camping is not usually possible between November and February (5 night safaris are an option during this time, which you can combine with 2 nights in another camp in the Delta). The maximum stay is usually 10 or 11 nights.

Air charters - The meeting point for the safaris is Maun in Botswana but the above rates **EXCLUDE** transfers between Maun and the camp. You will need to budget extra for these. Transfers to the airstrip closest to camp are by private air charter and take about 30 minutes. This is followed by an hour's game drive (or depending on water level boat trip) to camp. Charter rates for 2012 are £180 per person each way (£360 return) Maun / Macatoo

It is also possible to fly by charter between the camp and Kasane on the Botswana side of the Botswana / Zimbabwe border (about 1 ½ hours charter flight) and this works well if you plan to visit Victoria Falls before or after your safari. The charter rate Macatoo / Kasane is £260 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. **Cont. over**



****Example inclusive safari rates for 2012****

A 7 night safari in Peak season, including charter transfers Maun / Macatoo at current rates, is £3755 per person;

A 7 night safari in Mid season, including charter transfers Maun / Macatoo, is £3405 per person;

A 7 night safari in the Standard season, including charter transfers Maun / Macatoo, is £3055 per person;

Single accommodation - The rates quoted above assume twin accommodation. If you are booking alone and are NOT prepared to share a twin bedded tent with another guest of the same sex then there is one **single tent set aside for single travellers**. This is booked on a first come, first serve basis and if it is not available then a single supplement will be charged. The single supplement is £190 per night in the Standard season; £215 per night in the Mid season and £240 per night in the Peak season (NB these supplements are **not** compulsory for single bookings - they are only charged if you are not prepared to share if requested and if you wish to guarantee a single tent.) **Please also note** that charter rates are based on at least two people travelling together and there may be a 50% supplement on charter fares for solo travellers - please check when you book.

The above rates **INCLUDE** all riding and other activities such as bird walks and night drives, accommodation in twin bedded safari tents with private shower and loo, all meals, drinks (including alcohol except premium wines and champagne), Concession fees, government taxes and also laundry and ironing service in the main camp.

They **EXCLUDE** international flights to Maun and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, champagne, personal items such as shopping, satellite telephone calls etc and any tips you wish to leave the staff.



International Flights to Maun - Maun is the meeting place for the safaris. The best way to travel there from London is generally via Johannesburg in South Africa - there are no direct flights from London to Maun. You can also fly to Maun via Windhoek in Namibia, via Harare in Zimbabwe and via Gaborone in Botswana, but Johannesburg is usually the most convenient connection point with the best connections.

You should plan to take an overnight flight from London to Johannesburg (British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all fly direct London to Johannesburg every day, leaving London at about 20.00 / 21.00 and arriving JHB at about 07.00). Once in Johannesburg, you need to change planes and take an Air Botswana flight to Maun. Air Botswana flights are daily with one (occasionally two) morning departures from Johannesburg to Maun; the flight takes around 1 hr 40 mins. Due to connection times, to avoid an overnight stay in Johannesburg, British Airways or South African are usually the best international carriers to use. On the return, the daily Air Botswana flight from Maun to Johannesburg will connect with overnight return flights to London. **Please call us if you would like more flight information, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or if you would like us to book flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213**

General visa and 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.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Botswana but Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A are recommended and you will also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(Updated 09/09/11)

