RIDE WORLD WIDE

South Africa 2012

Horizon Horseback Adventures - Saddlebag Safaris

Ride Information Sheet

Horizon Horseback Adventures is based on Triple B Ranch in the Waterberg in South Africa's northern Limpopo province (formerly the Northern Transvaal). The Horizon team have been organising riding holidays from their main base for over 10 years and in addition to this, they now also offer exciting 4 and 8 night 'Saddlebag Safaris' exploring some of the Waterberg's wonderful private game reserves and further afield, the Tuli Block in south eastern Botswana. The 4 night Dinaka Safaris explores the 20,000 acre private Dinaka Reserve one of the first reserves to re-introduce game into the Waterberg region in 1976 and now offering some of the area's best game viewing. The Combined Big 5 Safaris are run in conjunction with Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris on Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana's Tuli block. It combines 4 days riding in South Africa with 4 days riding in southern Botswana and is a wonderful way to see the two different areas. The safaris are run for small groups and are very personalized - they are a great choice for anyone wishing to see and ride with game in Southern Africa.

Dates Safaris are run from set dates throughout the year, with safaris available pretty much year round. Please see the set dates listed overleaf and contact us to check availability.

The Horses The horses used on these safaris are mainly local South African breeds and cross breeds. For the Dinaka Safaris and for the first half of the Combined Big 5 Safaris, horses based at the Dinaka Reserve are used which have all been carefully selected from the pool of over 75 horses at the main Horizon base. They are generally between 14.1hh and 16.3hh and include a mixture of breeds such as South African Boerperd crosses, part Thoroughbreds and Arab crosses. On the second half of the Combined Big 5 Safaris horses belonging to Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris are used. LVHS have over 35 horses of between 14.3hh and 17hh. They are also mainly native South African breeds and crossbreeds and include Boerperds, South African Warmbloods and Shire / TB crosses. All the horses used for the safaris are tough, sensible, sure-footed and ideally suited to the going and local terrain. They are also well-schooled, responsive and fun to ride. Many of those originating from Horizon have been backed and schooled by Shane Dowinton who runs the riding at Horizon and is an expert horseman (in the 'horse whisperer' mould!). He has been using gentle training methods on young and problem horses for over 15 years and his skill and technique when handling young horses is superb. All the Limpopo horses are carefully schooled to a high standard by Louise Carelsen who runs the safaris here with her husband Cor. Louise trained at the French National Riding School at Saumur and is qualified to BHSII level. At Dinaka Maclellan style saddles (which are quite similar to westerns) are used, with some English or Australian stock saddles available for those who prefer. In Botswana most of the saddles are English with some Maclellans and Australian stock saddles available for those who prefer. Saddle-bags are provided where necessary. The rider weight limit on the safaris is 90kgs (14stone 2lbs). Grooms look after the horses at night and prepare them each day, grooming tacking up etc.

The Guides Carmen Cowley, who has been with Horizon for over 7 years, has now moved over to Dinaka to run the safaris here. Carmen has worked extensively with horses, including at a stud yard, a breaking yard for race horses and as an instructor. In addition to her extensive experience with horses, Carmen has also been involved in environmental education and has a deep knowledge of the bush. She is assisted by Deon Goosen, experienced horseman and former game ranger and hunter with an inexhaustible fund of stories of bush life. In the Limpopo Valley the rides are lead by Cor Carelsen and 'West' Mmanoko. Cor is native of South Africa and a dedicated conservationist and guide, he started guiding riding safaris in South Africa but has now been at LVHS for over 3 years. 'West' is from Botswana and started work as a groom in 2003. He has a passion for horses and conservation and began leading rides himself last year. He and his horse are a regular sight on the plains of Mashatu and he has been an inspiration to all his co-workers.

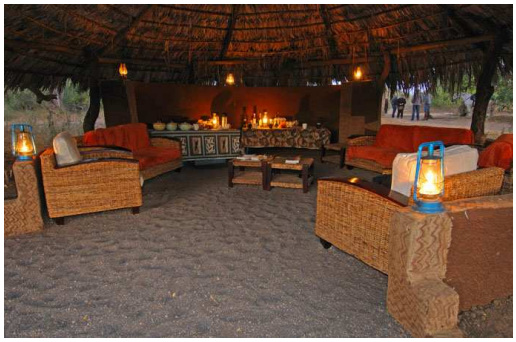
Riding These safaris are aimed at those who wish to focus on riding with game. They include riding on 5 or 9 days respectively, usually with 4 to 5 hours in the saddle on each riding day, except for a shorter trial ride on the first day and a shorter morning ride on the last day. They are usually run for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riders. You will be asked to wear a hard hat when you ride - these are not supplied so you should take your own (this ensures a good fit).

Pace The going on the reserves in which the safaris take place is generally good for horses. There are some rocky areas and areas where the vegetation is thick in which the riding is necessarily slow, but there are also plenty of open, sandy plains and wide, soft tracks that are perfect for long exhilarating canters. Although the overall pace of each safari will be governed by the ability and preferences of the group as a whole and can depend on the weather and movement of game, the riding is often at a good, energetic and varied pace.

Riding Experience Safaris are aimed at riders of an intermediate standard and above, with the Combined Big 5 Safari, which includes riding in an area of varied terrain where there are elephant and lion, only suitable for confident intermediate to experienced riders who are secure, well balanced and in control on a well-schooled horse at all paces from walk to fast canter. Safaris include 4 to 5 hours riding a day on most days and as the pace can be energetic (where good going allows) participants also need to be riding fit - we recommend regular riding in the months beforehand to ensure you can cope with the hours in the saddle.

Terrain One of the great joys of riding in this area of Southern Africa is the variety of terrain. The Dinaka Reserve is situated at the base of the Waterberg escarpment and, although it boasts mountainous views, the area is mainly one of fertile plains which provide a wonderful game habitat and also good going for horses. There is thick bush in places, with diverse vegetation, but this then opens out to allow long canters across wide, grassy plains. Mashatu Game Reserve in the Tuli Block is another diverse area with dry river beds, sandy plains dotted with scrub, rocky hills, steep river banks and thick woodland. Riding here is both through riverine terrain, either along the banks of the mighty Limpopo River or in the river bed itself, and through true African 'mopane' bushveld, including the famous sandstone formations of the Tuli and there are often opportunities for long canters, zigzagging through scrub on the sandy plains.

Game The 20,000 acre private Dinaka Reserve was one of the first to re-introduce game into the Waterberg region in 1976 and it offers some excellent game viewing. It is home to white rhino, hippo, buffalo, giraffe, leopard, ostrich, two species of zebra and over 20 species of antelope, including eland, sable, steenbok and springbok. The Reserve is situated at the base of the Waterberg hills and its fertile plains are an ideal habitat for herds of game that are larger than would normally occur in South Africa's bushveld areas. As a result, it is quite possible to see herds of a few hundred antelope, together with 8 or 9 rhino, all in the same small area and in some situations one could photograph rhino, kudu, blesbok, impala and springbok all in the same frame - a magical game experience! Botswana's Tuli Block provides a wonderful habitat for elephant and is also known for its population of eland, the largest of the antelope and the other African 'Giants' - giraffe, lion and the huge kori bustard. There are also many different species of plains game in this area including impala, wildebeest, zebra, kudu and nyala, predators such as hyena, leopard and cheetah and also monkeys, baboons, warthogs and crocodiles. Generally game viewing in the Tuli is best between June and October, the drier months when there is no grass cover. Bird life is prolific with about 300 species visiting or breeding in the area and spectacular birds of prey are often seen hunting over the open plains.



Accommodation The Dinaka Safaris use comfortable lodge accommodation (Dinaka Lodge) to which riders return each night. On the Combined Big 5 Safaris, riders spend the first 4 nights at Dinaka Lodge and the second 4 nights either in private camps set up in the Mashatu Reserve, or at the fixed Two Mashatus Camp. Dinaka Lodge is a lovely stone and thatch lodge, set high on a ridge with spectacular views over the plains and over a picturesque lake where game often comes to drink. It has 4 comfortable twin / double bedrooms (three large 'luxury' bedrooms and one smaller 'standard' bedroom) each with en suite bath / shower room and also a sitting / dining room, plunge pool and lovely veranda. On the second half of the Combined Big 5 Safari when you ride on the Mashatu Reserve, accommodation is in wilderness camps. During summer months (November to March) accommodation is at a semi-permanent base camp on Mashatu, Two Mashatus Camp, which is at the confluence of the Limpopo and Majale Rivers. In winter months (April to October) the first night on these safaris is at Two Mashatus Camp and you then ride to a selection of temporary 'fly camps' set up in different areas. Accommodation at all camps is in large walk-in 'A' frame tents furnished with comfortable beds, made up with sheets and duvets. Fly camps have a hot 'bucket and pulley' shower shared between guests and a 'long drop' loo for each tent and also tables and chairs for meals. At Two Mashatus Camp, all tents have their own long drop loo and also a private shower behind the tent. This camp also has a dining area built in local style with a palm thatch roof and set on raised teak. Fly camps are set up ahead of your arrival by staff who also attend to the chores whilst there, cooking meals, heating water for showers and so on. Accommodation on safari is based on two sharing a tent or room and a single supplement will be charged if you are not prepared to share 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 these safaris with three delicious home cooked meals a day, all produced from fresh local ingredients. Barbecues or "braiis" - a great South African tradition - are a favourite and vegetarians can be well catered for - although please let us know of any special dietary requirements in advance. Wine is served with meals and coffee, tea, a selection of soft drinks and house wine are all included.

Weather This part of Southern Africa is a good place for riding year round. In summer, November to February, daytime temperatures can reach 35 degrees C or more however you will normally ride early in the mornings and / or in the late afternoons when it is pleasant and cool, with the hottest part of the day spent relaxing by a swimming pool or plunge pool. Summer is the rainy season with thunderstorms or showers possible between November and February, but rain is generally in short sharp bursts and it is often hot in between so rain rarely interferes with riding programmes. Autumn is March to April, when it is usually pleasantly warm (mid 20's C) and very pretty as leaves change colour. It begins to cool down, particularly at night, in May. June to September is winter, the dry season. It is usually still warm (shirtsleeves weather) during the day, but it can get cold when the sun goes in, with temperatures sometimes dropping to just above zero at night.

What to bring We will send you a list suggesting what to bring when you make your booking.

Itineraries The following are examples of the itineraries planned for these safaris although please note that they are only examples and day by day arrangements may be varied by your guides in their discretion if the weather, movement of game or other local conditions require.

Example itinerary - Combined 8 night Big 5 Safari using mobile camps at LVHS
NB The 4 night Dinaka Safari will be as Day 1 to Day 5

Day 1 Arrive Johannesburg airport and transfer to the Dinaka Reserve (about a 2 ½ hour drive) where accommodation is in a lovely stone and thatch safari lodge set high above a large hippo dam with a sweeping view of the surrounding plains. Lunch, time to settle in and relax, then meet the horses for an introductory ride and your first taste of the variety of game on Dinaka. Return to the lodge for sundowner drinks and a delicious three course evening meal. (L,D)

Day 2 The Dinaka plains hold a dense population of game for which this beautiful reserve is renowned. Today's ride takes you to the 'Small Serengeti' plains where sightings of rhino and many other species are common and the open plains are great for fast riding. You may well experience the magic of a canter alongside herds of antelope as they gallop and pronk across the open savannah! There are over 20 species of antelope on the reserve including springbok, wildebeest, blesbok, bontebok and impala and also other plains game such as giraffe and zebra. Return to the lodge for lunch and a siesta, then a late afternoon ride to a different area, perhaps searching for the impressive white rhino or a chance to try some of the small logs that make an inviting cross country course. Dinner and the night at Dinaka Lodge. (B,L,D)

Day 3 After an early breakfast mount up and set off to search for some of the reserve's more elusive mountain species - leopard, mountain zebra, mountain reedbuck, baboons, African rock python, rock dassies, klipspringers and cape vultures. This ride follows a valley that leads deep into the Waterberg escarpment, alongside a clear stream and past several picturesque dams, where the bush is dense and full of birdcalls. Stop for a picnic lunch at one of the dams, returning to the lodge in the early afternoon for a swim and siesta. In the afternoon a leisurely ride to one of the larger dams where some of the many hippo on the reserve live. Dinner and night at Dinaka Lodge. (B,L,D)

Day 4 After breakfast a ride to another area of the reserve, where there is a successful breeding programme for highly valued species, including white blesbuck, sable antelope and bontebok. The route you follow crosses a fertile plain - perfect for an exhilarating canter - and there is often a chance to canter alongside herds of game, sometimes with many different species galloping together across the plains. In the afternoon a game drive is a welcome break to horse and rider and a chance to see buffalo and some unusual red wildebeest. You might be accompanied by one of the guides who also monitors rhino on the reserve and if lucky will be able to get close to the hugely impressive white rhino on foot before the drive back to the lodge. Your final dinner at Dinaka, a delicious 'braii' (barbecue) whilst relaxing around the log fire and enjoying the African night sky. (B,L,D)

Day 5 An early breakfast before leaving Dinaka at around 7.30 for the transfer to the Botswana border and on to Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris (about 3 ½ to 4 hours drive). On arrival at the stables a leisurely lunch with Louise and Cor, your hosts and guides for the second part of the safari before meeting the horses and heading off on a relaxed introductory ride winding through the riverine forest and majestic Mashatu trees that line the banks of the Limpopo River. Return to the stables in the late afternoon and 10 minute transfer to Two Mashatus camp set up at the confluence of the Majale and Limpopo Rivers for sundowner drinks and dinner under the stars. Overnight at Two Mashatus Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Start the day at sunrise with tea, coffee and a light breakfast before the short drive (and a good chance for early morning game viewing!) to meet up with the horses again. Head out to explore the Limpopo Valley, riding to a natural marshland 'Nels Vlei' and to Mojale island, home to the Mojale pride of lion. You might also ride to Kanda Corner where giraffe are sometimes seen browsing on the Mopane bushes and to the aptly named Elephants' Valley. The morning ride is 4 to 5 hours which will take you to your next destination - Zeederberg Wilderness Camp. A well-deserved lunch awaits you upon arrival. After a relaxing afternoon you can join your guide for a bushwalk around the area, following in the footsteps of legends such as Cecil John Rhodes. On return to camp sundowners await you around the campfire and dinner is served. Enjoy the peace and quiet of the African bush, interrupted only by the occasional calls of lion, hyena and jackal. (B,L,D)

Day 7 Today's ride of about 4 to 5 hours takes you to Liana camp, descending from the Zeederberg Hills and on to the open Pitsani plains with the possibility of a fast canter with zebra, wildebeest or giraffe. This ride offers the opportunity of jumping some of the fallen logs pushed over by elephant. Lunch awaits you under another splendid Mashatu tree. A lunchtime siesta follows before heading out on a game drive with a Mashatu ranger, in the hope of seeing some of the big cats or African wild dogs. Dinner and the night in the camp which is set in an old river bed overhung by the twisted Liana vines after which it is named. (B,L,D)

Day 8 The dawn chorus will wake you to a light breakfast. Today's ride of about 4 to 5 hours will take you back to Two Mashatus camp, passing through the central game area where you will have a good opportunity to look for leopard in the Mashatu trees along the Majale river. Follow the course of the river and enjoy winding canters through the bush. This afternoon you have the choice of going to the local village on a game drive or enjoying a relaxing sundowner along the Limpopo. Another delicious dinner and the night at Two Mashatus. (B,L,D)

Day 9 A final morning ride in the direction of Nels Vlei and a good chance to see elephant as this is one of their favourite areas. After final canter, ride back to the stables where you say farewell to your horse with time for a hot shower and a quick lunch before heading off at about 12 noon for the border and the drive back to Johannesburg (about a 5 ½ hour drive) (B,L)

Example itinerary - Combined Big 5 Safari using static camp at LVHS
Days 1 to 5 - As above

Day 6 Start the day at sunrise with tea, coffee and a light breakfast before the short drive (and a good chance for early morning game viewing!) to meet up again with the horses. Head out to explore the Limpopo Valley, riding to a natural marshland 'Nels Vlei' and to Mojale island, home to the Mojale pride of lion. You might also ride to Kanda Corner where giraffe are sometimes seen browsing on the Mopane bushes and to the aptly names Elephants' Valley. After a morning ride of about 3 hours, you will head back to Two Mashatus Camp for lunch. A leisurely siesta in camp will be followed by an evening ride - perhaps trying a new horse or exploring a little further along the banks of the Limpopo - and then dinner and the night at Two Mashatus Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 7 In the summer months of November and March, the ride today will focus on the history of the area with interesting tales from the Anglo-Boer War. The route followed will depend on the game and you may end up on the Pitsani Plains enjoying a fast gallop perhaps if you are really lucky amongst herds of zebra, wildebeest or giraffe. Then in the late afternoon, a ride out or a game drive which is a wonderful chance to "hunt" for the beautiful and awesome cats that are so much a part of the Mashatu experience. Sundowners on a great kopje and at nightfall, a game drive using a spotlight to follow Africa's big cats on 'the hunt' (B,L,D)

Day 8 Wake to the dawn chorus and a delicious breakfast prepared over the fire. Another long day in the saddle, with a ride of 4 hours in the morning followed by a good break during the heat of the day and then another 2 hours in the afternoon. The route today passes through a range of vegetation types: riverine forests, savannah plains dotted with acacia trees, terminalia shrubland and areas abundant in shepherd trees. There is a good chance of seeing elephant, many different species of antelope and also many species of birds. Return to camp for lunch and in the afternoon the ride usually heads out towards a rocky outcrop close to Rock Camp where you might see waterbuck, rock dassies and black eagles and where there is often a chance to increase the pace. The route back to camp takes you along the dam wall for a fantastic view of Mashatu. Another delicious dinner cooked over the fire and a night cap around the fire (B,L,D)

Day 9 A final morning ride in the direction of Nels Vlei and a good chance to see elephant as this is one of their favourite areas. After final canter, ride back to the stables where you say farewell to your horse and have time for a hot shower and a quick lunch before heading off at about 12 noon for the border and the drive back to Johannesburg (about a 5 ½ hour drive) (B,L)

2012 DATES AND RATES

Combined Big 5 Safaris: Using Static Camp at LVHS:

6th to 14th February
10th to 18th February
28th February to 7th March
3rd to 11th March
14th to 22nd March
18th to 26th March
22nd to 30th March
26th October to 3rd November
5th to 13th November
9th to 17th November

Combined Big 5 Safaris: Using Mobile Camp at LVHS:

14th to 22nd April
18th to 26th April
15th to 23rd June
19th to 27th June
23rd June to 1st July
4th to 12th September
8th to 16th September
19th to 27th September
23rd September to 1st October
29th September to 7th October
10th to 18th October
14th to 22nd October

Set date safaris will be run for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riders. Additional dates can be arranged on request for groups and are also sometimes added throughout the season - please contact us to discuss.

Combined Big 5 Safaris - 8 nights £2360 per person (or £2680 per person including standard vehicle transfers Johannesburg / Dinaka / Limpopo Valley / Johannesburg)
Single supplement - £716

The rate **INCLUDES** all riding, 4 nights twin accommodation at Dinaka Lodge, 4 nights twin accommodation in Two Mashatus Camp / or at Two Mashatus and wilderness camps at Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris, meals (from lunch Day 1 to lunch Day 9), drinks (soft drinks, beer and house wine).

It **EXCLUDES** international flights to Johannesburg and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), supplements for a single room, transfer from / to Johannesburg, any extra night's accommodation before or after the safari, any visa fees and any tips you wish to leave staff.

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2012 Rates & dates cont

Big 5 car Transfers from Johannesburg - We can arrange car transfers Johannesburg to Dinaka / Dinaka to Limpopo Valley and Limpopo Valley to Johannesburg on request. There are transfers from Johannesburg International airport to Dinaka to coincide with the start of the set date safaris departing Johannesburg International at 10am. There is a return transfer departing Limpopo Valley at 11.00am at the end of the safari, arriving Johannesburg airport at about 5.00-5.30pm. The seat rate for these transfers is £320 per person return. Please note that transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book.

The Dinaka Safari (4 nights):

26th to 30th January
16th to 20th February
22nd to 26th February
9th to 13th March
14th to 18th September
5th to 9th October
31st October to 4th November
16th to 20th November

Dinaka Safari 4 nights - £1080 per person (or £1210 per person including standard vehicle transfers from / to Johannesburg on the first / last day); single supplement £216 per person

The rate **INCLUDES** all riding, 4 nights twin accommodation, meals (from lunch Day 1 to lunch Day 5), and a selection of drinks (excludes premium wines and champagne).
It **EXCLUDES** international flights to Johannesburg and taxes, transfers between Johannesburg and the Dinaka Reserve on Days 1 and 5, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), supplements for a single room, any extra night's accommodation before or after the safari, premium drinks, any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Dinaka Car Transfers from Johannesburg - We can arrange car transfers from Johannesburg to Dinaka on request and there are regular transfers from Johannesburg International airport to Dinaka on the arrival day of the set date safaris, departing Johannesburg International at 10am. There is a regular return transfer departing Dinaka at 1pm the departure day. The seat rate for these transfers is £130 per person return. We can also arrange transfers at other times / on other days - the supplement is usually £100 per car each way (extra £200 return) in a Polo type car seating 1 to 3 passengers. Please note that transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book.

Single rooms - Standard safari rates are based on two people sharing a twin room / tent and if you are travelling alone and are not prepared to share a room with another guest of the same sex if asked (e.g. if the safari is fully booked and / or numbers or the mix of guests requires) to guarantee a single room, a supplement is charged. Please note that supplements are not compulsory for single bookings but are charged if you are not prepared to share a room if necessary. There are limited single rooms available.

Private Dinaka and Big 5 Safaris can be run for groups on request. Rates will depend on the number of riders in the group.

TRAVEL / FLIGHT INFORMATION

The nearest international airport to Horizon / Dinaka is Johannesburg and meeting is 10.00 at Johannesburg airport on the morning of Day 1. British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all have one or two direct daily flights from London to Johannesburg, normally departing London in the evening (around 20.00) and arriving Johannesburg early the next morning (around 08.00).
You can also fly via Europe (eg with Air France, KLM, Al Italia) although we strongly recommend a direct flight to minimize the risk of delays etc. Airfares vary depending on the airline you choose and the season, but expect to pay around £650 to £900 per person for a London / Johannesburg economy return. We would be very happy to advise further on and to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213). Please ask if you would like a quote.

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 South Africa and / or Botswana for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.
Health No inoculations are legally required for entry to South Africa or Botswana from Europe but inoculations against Tetanus and Hepatitis A are recommended and also against Typhoid, Cholera and Yellow Fever in some circumstances. The Waterberg is a Malaria free area but if you are planning to do a Combined Big 5 Safari which includes a visit to Botswana, you will also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets. You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(Updated 04/12/11)