T: 1-800-985-4852
E: info@realgap.com
P: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960

South Africa Horse Riding and Conservation Experience

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: South Africa Horse Riding and Conservation Experience **Trip Code:** SAHC **Duration:** From 2 weeks

Trip Highlights

- Experience life in true African Wilderness
- Horse riding through stunning scenery on guided game trails
- Assist in vital conservation efforts on the reserve
- Get a behind-the-scenes experience of life on a African reserve
- Enjoy hours of amazing rides on the reserve – no two rides are the same

Overview

This is the ultimate programme for horse enthusiasts, who love working in the great outdoors surrounded by stunning scenery. As a volunteer on this fantastic programme you'll be responsible for your own set of horses on a beautiful private reserve in South Africa's KwaZulu Natal region near the rolling foothills of Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site!

As well as enjoying amazing rides out onto the reserve, spotting fascinating wildlife including Wildebeest, Eland, Zebra, various Antelope species, Buffalo, Rhino and Ostrich to name but a few; you'll also be involved in the day to day care of the horses assigned to you with responsibilities including halter training young horses, dipping, assisting with hoof trimming and assisting with trail rides with lodge guests.

You'll also have the chance to get involved in the reserve's very own community development initiative, assist with vital and continued conservation efforts on the reserve and have the opportunity to shadow game rangers and get involved in some of their daily duties. This programme offers horse enthusiasts the opportunity to follow their passion and experience life on a beautiful private game reserve in South Africa's famous KwaZulu Natal midlands.

Destination Info

Diverse, exhilarating, spectacular, varied – student travel in South Africa is something big to write home about. Never far from the news, it's a vast, modern, multicultural country, full of contradictions and full of interest. It offers so many opportunities for student travel that it's difficult to summarise.

SA offers everything from lush subtropics to deserts, savannah, scrubland and bush to stunning coastlines. You'll love the wildlife reserves, including the world-renowned Kruger National Park.

South Africa has accomplished so much in the years since apartheid was dismantled – it's unique in the world.

Itinerary

During your time in South Africa you'll be based on a beautiful private game reserve in the KwaZulu Natal region near the rolling foothills of Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site. The reserve is currently home to 20 horses of varying stages of development and age; with the main breed being Appaloosa with a few cross-breeds to add to the dynamics. The horses enjoy the freedom of large paddocks and open plains as well as indigenous grasses and planted pastures. Additionally, the horses are also released onto the 3200 hectare reserve to graze during the day, encouraging exercise and movement on a daily basis. As a result, these horses are hardy, have easy going natures and are a joy to be around. The horses on the reserve are primarily used for trail riding offered to guests at the reserve, as well as patrolling the boundaries with the onsite rangers; both of which you will have the chance to be involved in as a volunteer on this fantastic programme.

As a volunteer on this programme, you need to have a real passion for horses as well as being a fit and energetic individual with good working ethics and perhaps most importantly of all you'll need a very good sense of humour! In return for your hard work as a volunteer, you will be rewarded through working with and riding the horses whilst building your experience in some of the most beautiful surroundings in South Africa.

If you have a passion for horses and love being in the great outdoors surrounded by breathtaking scenery then this is the perfect programme for you!

You'll have the opportunity to be responsible for your own set of horses on the reserve, giving you a great sense of achievement and satisfaction at the end of your stay!

As well as being out and about on the reserve with the horses, there are a few hands-on activities that you will be expected to participate in and be responsible for. These include daily grooming of all the horses and taking care of their general well-being including dipping, tick greasing, ear care, sheath cleaning, assisting with hoof trimming, feeding during the winter months (June to September), halter training youngsters, breaking in and schooling and lunging young horses and riding horses (English style), keeping trail horses fit, assisting with trail rides offered to guests, maintenance and cleaning of tack, cleaning tack/feed room, and paddock maintenance. It's not all work though, in addition to the day to day activities you'll also have the chance to enjoy hours of fun rides on the reserve taking in the breathtaking scenery!

A truly unforgettable experience awaits when riding out on the reserve, with no two rides being the same, it is always an amazing experience…from navigating a river crossing, to spotting White Rhino, herds of Wildebeest, Zebra, Mongoose, African Wildcat and various antelope species… and perhaps even the endangered little oribi in the long grasses!

In addition to the day to day care and equine based activities that you'll be involved in, you'll also get hands-on experience of what life is like on a game reserve in Africa. Each volunteer will have the opportunity to get involved in the following:

- Shadow qualified Game Rangers on the reserve and become actively involved in their daily duties (eg- walk with the gun-dogs and learn how they are trained, have a close-up encounter with a white rhino, learn how to look out for poachers and snares)
- Have a fly-fishing lesson with a qualified fishing guide
- Get involved in the on-site community development programme which focuses on early childhood learning
- Learn and assist with the continuing conservation efforts to help protect the reserve for many years to come
- Assist with game capture

Your working hours will vary from day to day depending on the needs of the horses and other activities that may be taking place on the reserve. As a general rule, a working day will normally start at 7am; the time you finish will be when everything is done!

The horses are kept in paddocks close to your accommodation and take turns in being turned out into the Reserve to graze.

As horses need care and attention every day, you will be expected to work over some weekends. The in-country team will draw up a roster each week to let you know when you are volunteering and details when your days off will be; this will be rotated each week.

To enchance your experience and make sure you can see more of the surrounding area, your hosts will take you on two very different excursions during your stay. Included in your programme is a visit to Horse-Play, and to the Karkloof Canopy Tours.

You'll normally receive 2 days off each week (not necessarily weekends or 2 consecutive days), where there are no scheduled activities planned and you can chill out and relax or perhaps play a game of tennis, swim in the lake or have a braai (barbeque)

Being located in the heart of the KwaZulu Natal Midlands close to the famous Drakensberg Mountain range, you'll be surrounded by beautiful scenery and landscapes throughout your stay. Our fantastic in-country team have lots of knowledge on the local area and will be able to suggest some of the best places to visit and explore to make the most of your free time! They will also be able to give you information of a reputatable car hire company should you wish to go off site during these days. (If you decide to go off site during these days, this is at your own

risk and the in-country team cannot be held liable).

Accommodation

During your time in South Africa you will be staying in comfortable shared volunteer accommodation on the private reserve, with stunning views all around – from panoramic views of the beautiful reserve on one side of the veranda and views of the horse's paddock on the other side. It's a great place to head back to in the evenings… chill out and catch up with other volunteers, relax with a good book or have a traditional South African Braai (BBQ) in the evenings perhaps!

Each unit comprises 2 shared bedrooms with en-suites, open plan kitchen (perfect for cooking some delicious meals), scullery and a living/dining room.

Volunteer accommodation will be serviced once a week but you will be responsible for keeping the accommodation tidy and clean throughout your stay. There is also a washing machine available for you to do your laundry.

Programme Services and Facilities

Internet

Limited internet access is available at the main office for checking emails. Please note that internet on the reserve is via satellite link so connections are slow and bandwidth is not unlimited. Surfing the internet is not permitted - it is merely for checking emails and responding.

Telephone

The international dialling code for South Africa is +27. To place an outgoing, direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call the Real Gap UK Office dial +44 1892 701880.

Cell phone reception on the Reserve is limited. You will get reception at your accommodation and in some places on the Reserve.

Laundry

There is a washing machine at the volunteer accommodation which you can use to do laundry. It is possible to buy washng powder etc in the nearby town when you make town trips.

Electricity

South Africa uses 220/230V and a frequency of 50Hz. The plug sockets in South Africa take plugs with 3 circular pins: two circular pins and one larger circular grounding pin. If you have appliances with a small circular 2 pin plug

on you will be able to purchase an adapter to convert this to fit the socket. There is electricity at your accommodation which you can use to charge camera, phones etc. Please note that due to the remote nature of the reserve, power cuts can occasionally occur.

Meals

Your time in South Africa will predominantly be on a self catering basis. There is a great kitchen at your accommodation which you can use to prepare and cook your own meals, you may even like to try out a traditional South African Braai (BBQ)!

The in-country team will arrange a weekly trip to a nearby town for you to buy groceries etc. A budget of approximately R300-R400 (South African Rand) per person per week should be sufficient for groceries.

What's Included

- Accommodation in a self-catering apartment
- Arrival airport transfer from Durban's King Shaka Airport
- Daily Riding in a 3200 hectare private game reserve
- Horse Play Excursion (a fun workshop on natural horsemanship)
- Karkloof Canopy Tours Excursion and visit to bushman paintings (San Rock Art) if booked 3 week option
- Weekly transport to town for grocery shopping
- Reference letter on completion of project from in-country team
- Fly fishing lesson with a qualified fishing guide
- Involvement in conservation activities
- Visit to the Early Childhood Learning Centre (the reserves community development programme)
- Support and assistance from in-country team

What's Not Included

- Flights
- Travel insurance – please make sure you are covered for horse riding and related activities
- Visas
- Departure transfer
- Meals - this is a self catering apartment
- Items of a personal nature including spending money, optional excursions etc
- Laundry Services

Is This Trip For You?

Due to the nature of this programme, there are a number of requirements for volunteers to participate:

- Maximum weight: 80kg / 12st 8lb
- Basic experience in working with horses
- Experience in basic schooling of riding horses

You may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. However, you will still have the full support of your in-country team and those at the project. If you are looking for a group volunteering experience we have plenty of options for you to consider.

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

Also, please be aware that the weather can change considerably from winter to summer and you should pack according to when you are travelling to ensure that you have the appropriate clothing. Please try to keep luggage to a minimum.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)

General

- Towel
- Sunglasses (high UV protection)
- Sun cream (high factor needed)
- Small torch (head torch is preferable)
- Diary and writing pens
- Camera with plenty of film/memory card space and batteries (there is electricity at your accommodation to charge batteries etc.
- Water bottle - at least 75cl
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Mobile phone - set for roaming
- Personal stereo
- Plug adaptor
- Binoculars for game viewing
- Alarm clock/watch
- Sewing kit and pocket knife for general use
- Travel Guide, such as Lonely Planet or Rough Guide
- The evenings can be quiet so bring books, cards, board games etc to play
- A laptop/ipod for checking emails/watching movies etc

Clothing

- Heeled riding boots or shoes
- Riding breeches, jodhpurs, jeans
- Full or half chaps
- Riding Helmet – this will be provided for you at the project but if you have your own you are welcome to bring this with you
- All weather jacket – incase of rain and or cold weather

- Sun hat / bandana
- Comfortable (closed) walking shoes or trainers
- Thick socks for walking etc
- Sandals
- Work Gloves/gardening gloves for conservation work - optional
- T-shirt/overcoat for cleaning that you don't mind getting dirty!
- Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)
- Khaki or neutral coloured clothing for when you are out on the reserve
- Long trousers
- Warm clothing for winter
- Swimwear
- Underwear
- Pyjamas/nightwear
- Sets of outdoor loose fitting cotton clothes with full arm and leg cover for cooler mornings and evenings
- Shorts and/or trousers for project work
- T-shirts for project work
- Casual clothes for the weekends

Medical Kit

- Hand sanitiser and wet wipes
- Personal First Aid Kit
- Personal medication e.g. anti malarial tablets/prescription drugs/inhalers
- Painkillers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Plasters
- Anti Malaral tablets (only necessary if you're travelling onwards to a malaria zone).
- Lip Balm with SPF
- Tweezers (not in hand luggage!)
- Scissors (not in hand luggage!)
- Sanitary products for women if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (ensure it contains DEET or equivalent)
- Ear Plugs - in case you share a room with a snorer!

And most important of all…

• A good attitude and sense of humour!

Minimum Age

Minimum age 18 years.

Minimum Numbers

There are no minimum numbers on the trip.

Please note: you may be the only volunteer at your chosen project at any one time. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact us

Flights

Your flight to South Africa should arrive at Durban airport (airport code: DUR) between 9:30am and 3:00pm on your programme start date. Your return flight or onward travel should be arranged to depart between 10:30am and 4:00pm on your programme end date.

Please note that transfers are only available during the dates and times stated, this is due to the transfer time of 2-3 hours from the airport in Durban to the reserve.

To book your flights, please contact your sales advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you’re planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it’s our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you’re traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you’re already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

The currency in South Africa is the Rand (R), which is divided into 100 cents. Coins come in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10 and 50 cents, and 1, 2 and 5 Rand. Notes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 Rand.

US Dollars, Pound Sterling or Euros are the best currencies to bring to change locally. Major credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard are accepted in most towns, cities and petrol stations and ATMs can be found across the country. ATMs in cities are the most likely to give cash advances to cards on the on the Cirrus network.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant $7.70
Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) $1.85
Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) $1.04
Water (0.33 litre bottle) $1.13

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information offered below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

For stays of 90 days or less nationals of the European Union, the USA, Australia and New Zealand can obtain a free entry permit on arrival. All other nationalities should consult their nearest South African Embassy or High Commission for details on entry requirements.

Cultural Considerations

Smoking and Drinking

Smoking and drinking is tolerated in South Africa, although smoking has been banned in public areas such as cinemas, bars and airports. You will find that you will be able to get imported beer cheaply in most establishments and there are many tasty local beers too. South Africa is also famous for wines, so you shouldn't miss out on the opportunity to try some local varieties.

However, please respect other volunteers. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact on your volunteer work during the week. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated on the project.

Drugs

It is absolutely forbidden to bring drugs into South Africa. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs. If you get caught there is little chance that you will walk away without punishment. As in most countries, South Africa has very strict rules when it comes to the possession of drugs. All drugs, including 'soft' drugs like marijuana, are illegal. Please do NOT use any illegal substances whilst travelling - it is not worth the risk and is not acceptable at the project.

Greeting

Pleasantries are taken seriously and using 'hello' and 'goodbye' can go a long way to making friends and being

accepted. Please take the time to learn a few local words and show that you are keen to fit in. There is also a big emphasis on shaking hands. The Western way of doing this will be fine, but you are likely to pick up a few local variations!

On The whole, South Africans are easy-going people - any social errors are unlikely to cause offence, so please do not worry!

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

Tourists can be targeted by pickpockets and thieves. Please educate yourself about Africa and South Africa in particular, before you leave, so that you can be alert for all types of situations. General travel safety rules are below.

- Avoid travelling alone, especially at night
- Find out where the unsafe areas are and avoid them
- When travelling keep all-important documents and valuables in a safe place, like an inner hidden pocket or money belt
- Carry only as much cash as you think you will need for the day
- Don’t wear expensive jewellery or watches
- Be wary of people who seem too friendly too fast
- Keep cameras out of sight. Always keep bags and purses in your sight.
- Before swimming, ask how safe the area is

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing ‘traps’ in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Swimming

If visiting a beach in South Africa it is important that you take note of any information boards that are located on the beach before entering the water. Most beaches also operate a flag system to indicate whether it is safe to swim or not, it is essential that you take note of any advice given and heed any warnings that are in place as there can be the risk of rip tides, strong currents and Shark attack. If you are unsure whether it is safe to swim in the ocean,

speak to the lifeguards or your in-country coordinators.

Language Guide

There are 11 official languages in South Africa; Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, IsiNdebele, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. There are many other tribal, indigenous languages. However, English is spoken prevalently across the country. In Cape Town, the predominant language is Afrikaans. We suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

English - *Afrikaans*
Hello - *Hallo*
How are you? - *Hoe gaan dit?*
I'm fine - *Goed dankie*
Thank you (very much) - *Baie dankie*
Please - *Asseblief*
Yes / No - *Ja / Nee*
Goodbye - *Totsiens*

English - *Isi Xhosa*
Hello - *Molo*
How are you? - *Kunjani?*
I'm fine - *Ndiphilile*
Thank you (very much) - *Enkosi*
Please - *nceda*
Yes / No - *Ewe / hayi*
Goodbye - *Hamba kahle (go well)*

Food & Drink

Food in South Africa is delicious. You will be exposed to every different type of meat at every meal, ranging from impala and kudu to ostrich. All can be enjoyed in many different ways, but one of the best ways to taste these meats would be to sample it off a hot braai (barbecue). Be prepared to try something new! It you want to try some more traditional food then go for some Biltong (dried meat) and Boerewors (barbecue sausage).

If you are a vegetarian, do not worry. South Africa is abundant with delicious local vegetables, such as yams and sweet potatoes.

Drinking water from the tap is safe throughout the country, apart from in the more rural areas.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from South African's who use long weekends to get away from the big cities.

To view a list of the public holidays for South Africa, please see the link below:
http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/south-africa/

Weather

Seasons in South Africa are opposite to those in the northern hemisphere. The climate is varied across the country with warm showery summers and cold winters in the Gauteng Province (Highveld), scorching summers and a slightly less chilly outlook for winter in the Durban area (Lowveld) and the Western Cape hit hardest by winter rains. Karoo's desert-like climate means it's hot and ready to explore all year round but if you want to explore the rest of the country Spring (mid-September to November) and autumn (April and May) are ideal almost everywhere.

Time

South Africa is two hours ahead of GMT.

In Africa, time is not a priority like it is in much of the western world – there is a saying that Africa works to 'Africa Time', which basically means you must exercise a lot of patience! If a boat is due to leave at 12pm, don't be surprised if it still hasn't a couple of hours later… keep an open mind, and arrive 'expecting the unexpected'.

Electricity

In South Africa the electric system is 230 Volts and frequency 50 Hertz. If you bring a device that does not accept this Voltage you will need to use an adapter.

Outlets in South Africa generally accept 1 type of plug:

Three round pins arranged in a triangle

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith.
Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of reommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

Phone: 1-800-985-4852
Email: info@realgap.com
Post: Real Gap Experience, 8 Essex Center Drive, Peabody, MA 01960
Web: www.realgap.com