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South Africa Horse Riding and Conservation

Adventure Relaxation Culture

Trip Name: South Africa Horse Riding and Conservation **Trip Code:** SAHS **Duration:**

Trip Highlights

- Care for horses and take a ride through the South African bush!
- Become an expert in equine care and African ecology
- Spot the Big 5 in the surrounding game reserves and gain an insight into traditional African life!
- Opportunity to visit Kruger National Park in your free time!
- Sleep out under the stars in African bush!

Overview

Learn everything there is to know about African wildlife spending your days caring for and riding horses on the reserve! You'll take part in well-structured and extremely informative Equine and Conservation courses playing a significant role ensuring these majestic creatures get the care they need.

Not just a chance to become an expert on African wildlife and conservation, you'll also see the best of South Africa's amazing landscape.

Destination Info

You will be based on a private game farm situated at the foot of the Northern Drakensberg Mountains to the west of the renowned Kruger National Park. The project is situated 12km from the town of Hoedspruit, set within an extremely peaceful area in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The camp is set in a riverine area where you will awaken each morning to the different sights and sounds of the bush, beautiful sunrises and wildlife all around you!

Itinerary

South Africa Horse Riding and Conservation

This programme is a fantastic cocktail of life in the African bush, conservation work and learning about local ecology. Horse enthusiasts will be able to increase their knowledge and put it to immediate practical use! Your time will be divided between caring for the horses and learning more about the wonderful world of conservation:

Equine Care and Activities

Riding in the African Bush is an unforgettable experience; from quietly walking through the bush on the lookout for game and birds, to exciting trots and canters. A large proportion of your time will be spent mastering equine theory and assisting with the care and welfare of the horses. Riding lessons and exercises are given on a regular basis.

Whether you're a beginner or a riding expert you will be matched to a horse suitable to for your riding level and confidence, then it's time to join the team and help to care for the horses.

The equestrian programme consists of:

- Levels of classification and evolution
- Stable yard routine and maintenance
- Body language
- Grooming and Hoof care
- Confirmation and physiology
- Breeds and markings
- Tack and equipment
- Equine nutrition
- Basic veterinary skills and dentition

- Riding skills – all students (beginners and advanced) start off in the lunge ring doing exercises, posture, balancing and communication with the horses

- Introduction to show jumping, gymkhana games and creative exercises in the arena

- Out rides on the farm

The rest of your time will be spent on lectures, working in the bush and on projects within the reserve. The project will teach you everything about the African bush itself and how to stay safe. You will spend time as a group working through the Conservation Course manuals and then putting your knowledge into practice.

The Conservation Course includes topics on ecosystems and animal behaviour, wildlife identification, tracks and signs, anti-soil erosion control, sleep-outs in the bush, walks and game drives, weapon handling and fence patrolling.

Your remaining time will be spent on various cultural activities including local arts and crafts, African tribal customs and language, drumming sessions, excursions and outings.

You can also take part in optional activities available within the local area, some of these include:

- Micro light flights over local Big 5 game reserves
- Game drives on the adjacent private Big 5 reserves

- Two-day trip including a sleep out, game drive and bush walk on a private Big 5 reserve
- Two-day trip including a sleep out at a hide in the Kruger National Park
- Boat cruises on the Blyde River dam
- Day trips to Kruger National Park
- Reptile park tour
- Daytrip to view the Panorama route
- River rafting and tubing on the Blyde River (summer months only)
- Abseiling and caving
- Water sports (boat rides/skiing/tubing) and swimming at Klaserie dam (summer months only)
- Game capturing (when available)
- Lunches and suppers at the local restaurants and pubs

Accommodation

You will be staying in a rustic thatched roof bush lodge sharing with a maximum of 4 volunteers per room. The chalets have showers and western style toilets in open-air structures with running water – hot water is supplied by fire “geysers”. The communal chill out area is a thatched lounge/kitchen/bar and dining area. Here you can prepare your lunches and relax. When it’s really warm cool off in the quaint plunge pool. For those of you keen on game viewing, there is a hide overlooking a waterhole close to the camp where you can sit and watch the animals in your free time for the ultimate tranquillity.

Meals

All your meals are provided. Breakfast is normally continental style and you will be given food to make your own lunch. In the evenings you will take turns, with the staff and other volunteers, to cook a big group dinner: anything from traditional African cuisine to lasagne!

What's Included

- Airport transfer to and from Hoedspruit Airport
- Orientation on arrival
- All accommodation during your stay
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner each day
- Full support and assistance throughout your time in South Africa
- 24 hour support number and contact for emergencies

What's Not Included

- All flights
- Personal travel insurance for the duration of your placement, which should include cover for repatriation
- Visas
- Optional excursions

Minimum Age

Minimum 17 years with parental consent, maximum decided on potential participants health.

FAQs

1. **Do I need to be able to ride a horse?**
   The programme will tailor to all levels of riding and will match your riding ability to a suitable horse so you don't need to have previous riding experience.

2. **Is it safe to ride around a private game farm?**
   Yes, safety is paramount to us, we would not run the risk of sending anyone on an unsafe programme. The surrounding game reserves have the Africa 'Big 5', but there are no permanent large predators on the farm, so safety is not an issue.

3. **Do you need to bring your own riding equipment?**
   You will be supplied with all the equipment you need so you don't need to bring any of your own unless you would like to. However,we recommend brining your own riding hat because they are not generally worn in South Africa so will not be supplied to you.

4. **What is your top tip for this trip?**
   The top tip is to take a head torch with you. You will find this one of the most invaulable items you bring!

5. **What spending money would you recommend I take?**
   There is so much to do in your freetime we recommend that you take around £80 per week plus some extra for bigger activities that you will probably want to expereince! See the free time section to take a look at activities.

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

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.

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