



India : Kutch Safari

9 days / 8 nights / 7 riding

Best Airport : Bhuj, Gujrat, Domestic Airport

Weight limit: 90kg



Ride through the heart of the Kutch. Saddle up on the legendary Marwari horses and journey across Gujarat's iconic Kutch regions where endless salt deserts shimmer in the sun, and Banni grasslands, vibrant villages hum with tradition, and golden seas beaches meet the Arabian Sea.

Over 7 unforgettable days, you'll gallop through surreal white landscapes, wander ancient forts, celebrate with folk music and dance. Share stories with skilled local artisans and by night, rest in charming mud houses or under a sky glittering with stars.

Join this trail for a perfect blend of adventure, culture, and conservation. This holiday promises excitement, discovery, and a chance to preserve Gujarat's rich heritage.

The riding

Throughout the trip, you will have the chance to ride through unique terrains such as the white salt desert, Banni grasslands, and coastal beaches, all while enjoying stunning scenery and abundant wildlife.

The rides often include stops at cultural and historic landmarks, such as ancient temples, forts, and artisan villages, providing a rich cultural context to the adventure. You will also visit bird sanctuaries and watch plentiful bird species, making it ideal for nature lovers.

Level of riding & fitness

This horse riding safaris is specially designed to offer a rewarding and enjoyable experience for medium and experienced equestrians. Whether you're a rider with solid intermediate skills or a seasoned equestrian.

From exhilarating gallops across open plains to leisurely rides through picturesque villages and lush landscapes, every aspect of the safari is tailored to maximize your enjoyment while respecting your riding expertise.

Maximum weight 90kg

Group size & guide

For over a decade, your hosts have been orchestrating thrilling horseback safaris, crafted and led by a passionate team of expert guides and dedicated professionals. All the guides are equestrian enthusiasts with extensive knowledge of the region's landscapes, culture, and wildlife. They are committed to ensuring your safety, comfort, and enjoyment at every step of your adventure.

Supported by a team of skilled grooms and a proud tradition of horse breeding, their passionate team carefully selects and trains each horse to match the skill level of each rider, creating a seamless and enriching experience.

At the heart of your host's family is a longstanding heritage rooted in the artistry of horse breeding and a genuine desire to share their passion for horses and adventure. They look forward to welcoming you into their family and helping you create unforgettable memories on your horseback safari through Kutch.

Generally, participants must be at least 12 years old. Younger riders may be accommodated on special family safaris or private rides. Please inquire for details.

Minimum 8 - Maximum 18

The horses

The Marwari horse is a majestic and rare breed known for its striking appearance and noble presence. Typically standing around 14 to 15 hands high (about 140 to 150 cm), these horses are slightly smaller than many other breeds, but they make up for it with their grace and agility. Renowned for their distinctive inward-curving ears and elegant silhouette, Marwaris exude a regal and timeless beauty.

Known for their calm and loyal temperament, Marwari horses are gentle yet spirited, making them ideal companions for experienced riders. They are highly adaptable to rugged terrains and are prized for their endurance, agility, and bravery. With a rich history deeply rooted in Rajasthan's royal traditions, these horses symbolise strength, nobility, and resilience—truly one of the most captivating breeds in the world.

Tack & riding equipment

Your hosts use high-quality Indian cavalry-style or endurance saddles, custom-made for long distance riding, with saddle bags and comfortable padding for both horse and rider. Bridles and tack are regularly checked and maintained.

Dining & accommodation

You'll enjoy overnight stays in a variety of unique accommodations that perfectly blend adventure, comfort, and cultural immersion.

You'll relax in comfortable, well-equipped camps or stay in majestic Heritage Castles, offering a regal experience amidst stunning historical surroundings. These accommodations provide a perfect setting to recharge after a day of exploration, combining rustic charm with modern amenities.

The Kutch region of India boasts a vibrant and diverse culinary tradition that reflects its rich cultural heritage and unique geographic landscape. Traditional meals in Kutch are characterized by the use of local ingredients, bold spices, and age-old cooking techniques that have been passed down through generations.

One of the highlights of Kutch cuisine is the emphasis on hearty, flavor-packed vegetarian dishes, often featuring millet, wheat, and rice. Local specialties include dishes like *Dabeli* (spicy mashed potatoes served with bread), *Kutchi Dabeli* (a spicy snack with peanut, pomegranate, and spices), and *Kadak Lassi* (a thick, salty yogurt drink).

Seafood and meat dishes are also popular, especially in coastal areas, with recipes often featuring fresh fish, chicken, or mutton, cooked with aromatic spices and herbs. Traditional gravies, curries, and grilled meats are commonly served, often accompanied by *Chappatis*, *Bhat* (rice), or *Khichdi* (a rice and lentil dish).

In addition to local flavors, the region's cuisine has integrated some continental influences, offering a diverse menu that includes flavorful salads, sandwiches, and baked goods, catering to a variety of tastes.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrival at Bhuj Airport, where you will be welcomed. Then, drive to check in at a hotel to freshen up and enjoy breakfast. Afterward, proceed for a local sightseeing tour of Bhuj.

Return to the hotel, check out, and drive to the White Desert. On the way, visit a 10th-century Sun Temple (Kotay) and Nirona, an artisan village known for Rogan art, copper ball manufacturing, and leather handicrafts.

Later, drive to a mud house homestay, where you will stay overnight with locals.

Day 2

Wake up early for tea and coffee, then enjoy a short drive to witness the sunrise at the White Desert and experience a short camel ride. Return to the homestay for breakfast and get ready for horseback riding.

Ride across the flat salt pan to Nara, stopping en route for lunch at a designated point. After lunch, visit a local village to experience the culture.

Next, drive a short distance to Luna village, known for its crater hole (now a lake). Then, proceed to Hajipir, where your horses will be waiting. Ride on horseback to the camp site, arriving for an overnight stay here.

Day 3

After breakfast, ride on horseback to Lakhpat Fort, an ancient fortress. On the way, visit 2nd-century CE Bodh Caves, temples, and a cave in Guneri village, constructed by a single priest around 100 years ago. Keep an eye out for wildlife such as wild boar, deer, and antelope.

Pass through the historic war site of Jara, where a battle took place in 1762 between Kutch and the King of Sindh.

Ride on horseback to the lunch point, then visit the aforementioned places. The horses will be loaded onto a truck, and you will continue by bus to Lakhpat Fort, enjoying views of the mangrove jungle along the way.

Overnight stay inside the fort walls at the camp.

Day 4

After breakfast, take a short ride around the fort and explore inside. The fort's 7-kilometer wall is still inhabited, and you will visit ancient temples and a 500-year-old Gurdwara.

Drive to visit the ancient temples of Narayansarovar and Koteshwar. Afterwards, head to the lunch point and enjoy a meal on an island.

Next, drive to Chhari Dhandh Bird Sanctuary, where you will meet your horses. Ride on horseback to the forest guesthouse, where the camp is set up.

Overnight stay here among flamingos, Siberian cranes, and many other bird species.

Day 5

Wake up early for tea and coffee, then ride on horseback to the watchtower, where numerous bird species can be observed. Have breakfast there.

Afterward, ride on horseback to an ancient Hindu monastery, known for its cows and peacocks. Visit the monastery, then proceed to Kutch Fossil Park and the homestay.

Enjoy stargazing with a knowledgeable guide using a large telescope.

Day 6

After breakfast, ride on horseback to Devpur Castle, passing through a forest where, if lucky, you may spot leopards.

From here, the flat salt pans and Banni grasslands end, giving way to lush green farmland, where you will see mangoes, palms, dates, wheat, and the beautiful mustard seed flowers.

Arrive at a small 130-year-old castle, where you will be welcomed traditionally for an overnight stay.

Day 7

After breakfast, visit an ancient Yaksh temple, then proceed to Roha Fort. Have lunch, then ride on horseback to Tera Fort, an ancient village.

Overnight stay inside the fort walls in a camp.

Day 8

Before breakfast, ride on horseback through a heritage village, where you will see markets and water ponds. This village is famous for BandeJ work—observe how the locals craft this traditional textile.

Return to the fort, visit the fort, then drive to a Blackbuck Sanctuary to see black deer and the Great Indian Bustard.

Later, visit Ashapura Temple for lunch. Your horses will be waiting, and you'll ride along a long, pristine beach to Vijay Vilas Palace Heritage Hotel.

Check-in, enjoy dinner at a beachside restaurant, followed by a farewell party or celebration. Overnight at the heritage hotel.

Day 9

According to your flight schedule, depart for the airport with best wishes for a safe journey.

Flights & transfers

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please take into account a whole day of travel to reach this destination, the travel day is not included in the itinerary and the booking date indicated on the website day 1 of your stay.

Please plan your flights to/from Bhuj, Gujrat, Domestic Airport at any time on day 1 & day 9. Which has a great connection by Ahmedabad & Mumbai International Airports.

You can also be picked up from the nearest railway station: Bhuj Railway station, Gujrat. (Well connected by all India Railway Stations)

Included in the price

- Airport transfers
- Train station transfers
- All meals mentioned in the Itinerary
- All accommodation from day 1 to 9
- Transportation while on the trail
- Horses
- Guide

Excluded from the price

- Monuments & entry tickets
- Alcohol
- Flights
- Insurance

Packing list

- Riding Hat, Boots, Gloves, Jodhpurs (please no chunky-soled boots as they get stuck in our stirrups, standard boot styles should be fine)
- Wrap around sunglasses to ride in (check UV level)
- Snood or neck buff to pull up over your mouth and nose when riding in dusty conditions.

- Insulated personal drinking water bottle with flip straw - this will keep the mineral water cooler for longer and is more hygienic - Suggest 750ml
- Compeed Blister patches (large heel size)
- Power Banks - these MUST be carried with you in your on board cabin baggage.
- camera / headcams
- Phone Chargers and adapters see below
- European round 2 pin plug adapter
- 1 pack of Antibacterial wipes (for any public toilet seats etc)
- 1 pack of Wet Wipes (refreshing when it's hot and dusty)
- 1 Antibacterial hand gel
- Sunscreen
- Personal first aid kit
- Imodium
- Dioralyte
- Please keep and pack any medication in your hand luggage / day bag, and for any prescription medication please bring a copy of your prescription with you.
- wash/bathroom bag
- A headlight is great as it leaves your hands free.
- jumper / fleece / padded coat / scarf, wrap or pashmina for the nights as when the sun goes down it will feel cold.
- photocopy of passport and visa - keep somewhere different to the originals.
- cash / credit/debit card etc
- Check your hold baggage allowance as International and Internal allowances may be different if not using a through ticket (usually only 15kg on the internal / domestic flight and they will charge you extra if you are over)
- Alcohol - if you have a favorite tippie then please pack it in your hold luggage carefully as Gujarat is a dry state.
- Duty Free - Do NOT buy alcohol in duty free airside on arrival to India because you are now not allowed to take it through to the internal / domestic flight they will confiscate it.
- Vaccinations
- We recommend you check with your doctor or travel clinic as to what vaccinations you already have and what you are missing or may require. The usual are Tetanus, Typhoid, Polio, Diphtheria, Rabies etc.
- Malaria - Gujarat is in the low zone for Malaria - you can take tablets and/or just use deet spray/roll ons / wristbands, but talk to your travel clinic to judge whether its necessary and to get the correct tablets as they are different to say Africa or USA mosquitos.

You can find more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/india>

Weather

Kutch experiences a semi-arid climate, with distinct seasons that include a hot summer, a monsoon period, and a mild winter. Summer months (April to June) are extremely hot, with temperatures soaring, making outdoor activities challenging during the day. The monsoon season (July to September) brings significant rainfall, transforming the landscape, but also leading to potential travel disruptions. Winter (November to February) is pleasant and considered the best time to visit, with mild temperatures and minimal rainfall.

Throughout the year, temperatures in Kutch vary widely, from as low as 13°C (55.4°F) in winter nights to as high as 38°C (100.4°F) during summer days. Sunshine hours are abundant, ranging from 6 to 11 hours a day, peaking during the summer. Precipitation is minimal except during the monsoon season, when it can reach up to 197mm in July, making it the wettest month. The humidity levels also vary, peaking during the monsoon season and dropping considerably during the drier months.

Currency

Bring cash to exchange (for tips, drinks in hotels, laundry, shopping etc)

India is a closed currency, which means you cannot buy rupees before you travel.

You may exchange cash on arrival in India at the airport, this is a good time to check the best rates.

VISA is accepted at most shops and at hotels for paying for goods / services / bar bills etc.

Hotels will only exchange your currency from CASH to rupees. (ie Hotels are not ATMs - they cannot exchange card payment, but they will usually exchange CASH)

We recommend you inform your bank and credit card provider of your destination prior to travel if you intend to use your cards.

Cultural Awareness

Ladies, please cover your shoulders, especially in temples and the rural areas and be aware of low cut tops (wear a scarf if necessary). Please ask if you want to change into shorts at lunchtime during the ride as we may be near a farmers house or temple, where it would be frowned upon locally to show your legs.

In order to enhance your enjoyment of this trip, the order of events on the itinerary may be subject to change.

WiFi / Internet / Mobile Data

All hotels have free wifi (sometimes limited to the reception area) and network coverage is generally better in India, though there are some 'black holes' during the ride.

An excellent idea is to use a local eSIM via an App on your phone to access cheap Indian data - I use AIRALO (download via the App store on your phone and follow the instructions) - you can buy different categories of data, for example 5GB for 30 days is \$15. You turn off your existing Primary Mobile Data via Settings on your phone, and once registered turn on Airalo for the time you are in India and it uses the local data up to your allowance - easy to top up too.

Tipping

It is widely accepted that tipping is customary for most services in India, including hotel and restaurant staff, toilet attendants, and rickshaw or tuk-tuk drivers. However, the amounts tend to be quite modest, and guidance can be provided on appropriate tipping practices and when and where it is suitable.

In hotels, it is customary to tip the room boys 50 rupees per bag.

For rides, it is suggested to leave a tip at the end of each journey, ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 INR per guest (approximately £90, or about £10-£12 per day of the holiday). This tip is only given if the guests have enjoyed the experience and feel that the staff and groom deserve it.

It is recommended to give the tips collectively on the last riding day, preferably directly to Ajeet. This ensures that the staff members involved in various behind-the-scenes roles, such as preparing staff meals, are also included, recognizing their important contributions to the overall operation.

Equestrian Level Certification

"I am an experienced rider, confident, comfortable, and in control at all gaits on uneven and open terrains. I am capable of mounting and dismounting without assistance and I have good physical fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could compromise my safety or that of others."

Cancellation Policy

Payment and Cancellation Conditions

Your stay is confirmed upon receipt of a non-refundable deposit of 20%.

The total amount is due 56 days before the departure date.

If you cancel your reservation at least 56 days before the departure date, we are entitled to a full refund. After 56 days before departure:

- 42 days or more before departure: - 50%
- 30 days or more before departure: 30% discount
- Less than 30 days: 0%

Insurance

All Saddletravel.com clients are required to take out travel insurance to cover riding activities and trip cancellations. Proof of insurance will be requested during the booking process.



Contact details

+44 1497 888 228 WhatsApp
trails@saddletravel.com

saddletravel.com
The Coach House
Clyro Court
Clyro
Hereford
HR3 5LE
Wales

CN: 05411320

<https://saddletravel.com>