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South African Lodge Stay - South Africa

Weight limit: 95kg

Nearest airport: Johannesburg

8 days / 7 nights / 6 full days of riding



On the Signature Safari riders stay on Horizon's main property, set in a private game reserve alongside a beautiful lake with hippo and surrounding plains game. There is also a chance to sleep under canvas, traditional 'safari style', by incorporating some nights in Horizon's own tented camp, Camp Davidson. When based on the main property guests can ride safe in the knowledge that whilst they may see the beautiful likes of zebras and giraffes, there are none of the animals considered most dangerous (primarily elephants and big cats).

Horses & Tack

The horses have been carefully chosen for their temperament, courage, endurance and responsiveness. They are tough and used to coping with extreme conditions. They are of various breeds including Boerperd, Shire cross Thoroughbreds, Appaloosas and South African Warmbloods, ranging from 14.3h to 17h.

The saddles used are South African McClellans. They are designed for the cavalry and ideal for long hours of riding. Small saddlebags are provided.

Accommodation

The main lodge accommodation comprises several rooms and chalets, all of which are en-suite with either a shower, a bath or both. Guests also have access to a spacious living area, dining room, stoep (verandah) and swimming pool which overlooks the lake.

In addition to the main lodge, you can also spend some nights at a tented camp called 'Camp Davidson' where guests can stay for a more traditional 'under canvas' safari experience. The camp features luxurious canvas tents with decking and is completely run on solar energy. It also has its own small swimming pool.

Itinerary

Day 1

Riding: 1 - 2 hours

You will be collected from Johannesburg OR Tambo International airport and transferred c. 3 hours to the lodge, arriving in time for a late lunch. In the afternoon you will be able to join your first ride, which is a relaxed affair to give you the opportunity to settle into your surroundings. Crossing the plains, enjoy your first encounter with wildlife on horseback such as ostrich, impala, zebra, kudu, eland or giraffe.

A stunning lookout spot for sundowner drinks is a welcome moment to take in your first taste of Africa after a long journey, before returning to the lodge for a three course dinner.

Days 2 to 7

Riding: 4 - 6 hours

During a typical seven day holiday, guests have the chance to explore a wide area (21,000 acres) on horseback, venturing into different parts of the reserve and the conservancy. There are two riding activities per day - a longer morning ride (up to 3 - 4 hours) and a shorter afternoon ride (1 - 2 hours). Below we have detailed the different kinds of rides you can experience during your stay, depending on your riding ability and preferences.

Out Rides and Game Viewing

Observing the local wildlife and seeing the bush from horseback is simply the best way! The sandy tracks wind through areas of thicker bush as well as open plains and the going is easy for both riders and horses. The game here doesn't view horse and rider combinations as a threat so you are able to ride close to animals such as giraffe and zebra.

Conservancy Ride

During your stay there is usually the opportunity for a full day ride, heading west into the conservancy game reserve. This route allows for long canters and the chance to see some different animals including large herds of wildebeest, hartebeest, sable, eland and blesbok. Buffalo, ostrich, kudu, waterbuck and impala may also be encountered.

You eat lunch at the conservancy lodge and take a rest by the pool before making your way back to base, arriving in time for sundowners, although there is the option for an overnight out in the conservancy if you prefer (please enquire).

Polocrosse

This is open to novice riders as well as those more secure in the saddle - your hosts will teach you how to play and find that guests often get quite competitive after a few chukkas! The game combines polo and lacrosse and uses a soft ball and lacrosse-like sticks. Players are divided into teams of three (a scorer, centre and defence) and the game starts with a line-out where the umpire throws the ball into play. The aim of the game is to pick up and throw or steal the ball in order to shoot and score a goal, but tactics may even include riding opponents off the pitch. Here at Far and Ride we LOVE the game with all of us having tried it during our own visits to Horizon.

Swimming with your Horse

This is one of the most popular activities at Horizon, especially for those who have not done it before. After a morning ride and providing conditions allow, you have the chance to take your horse swimming in the dam by the lodge. The motion of horses swimming underneath you is a wonderful feeling and it's the perfect way to cool off after a morning in the saddle.

Western Games

A team of guides run a western games afternoon which is full of great exercises to test the skills of both children and adult riders. Activities may include pole-bending, barrel-racing, threading a sword through a stirrup, hunting a marshmallow, musical horses and more. Brings out the team spirit in guests and is a real hit with younger riders especially.

Cross Country Jumping

For those with prior jumping experience, there is the chance to try some cross country jumping on the small course on site. Jumping is for individuals or small groups and includes a warm-up and a few practice jumps, followed by jumping the course around the lake. English jumping saddles are used for this activity.

There are also a number of small jumps and jumping lanes which are suitable for less experienced riders and incorporated into the out rides.

Village Ride to the Local School

On the greater farm lies a small village called Lehlabile, comprising around 40 Sotho dwellings, a small primary school and creche. Many of the Horizon staff were born in the village and grew up there. This ride takes you through the village to the local school - you can see the traditionally painted houses, chat to villages and meet the children at the school. The children will often sing and dance for you and if you'd like to bring anything for them, they love donations of crayons, pencils, paper paint, play dough, secondhand books and toys

Day 8

Riding: 3 - 4 hours

On your final day there is usually time for one last ride on your favourite horse before a delicious lunch. You may have to check-out of your room if other guests are arriving but can relax in the communal spaces until your transfer arrives to whisk you back to Johannesburg airport