



African Explorer Safari

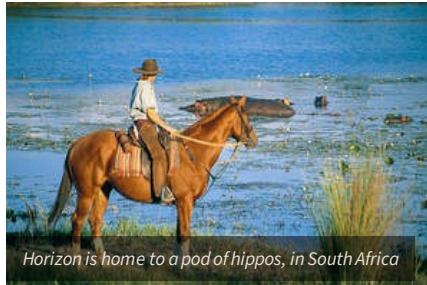
SOUTH AFRICA / BOTSWANA

A **horseback safari** combining 4 days riding in the Waterberg of South Africa with 3 days riding in the Mashatu reserve of Botswana. A wonderful introduction to Africa, staying in comfortable camps and experiencing two different ecosystems in one holiday. The **African Explorer** is perfect for confident riders looking for a first safari and the opportunity to explore two countries in one amazing riding trip.

Horseback Safari	10 days / 7 riding	From £2,714	
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Mashatu in Botswana is known for its herds of elephants



Horizon is home to a pod of hippos, in South Africa



An exciting riding holiday for experienced riders

ITINERARY

Highlights

- A horseback safari which offers riding in two different countries and environments - the Waterberg in South Africa and the Tuli block in eastern Botswana
- South Africa offers the ideal introduction to Africa with plenty of plains game to view - zebra, giraffe, antelope, hippo
- Botswana offers a vast, unfenced wilderness and the chance to ride with big game such as elephant, lion and leopard
- Exceptional horses selected for their temperament and ridability. Small groups of 8 riders maximum!
- High standard of camping with proper beds and en-suite showers and toilets, and a variety of camps including one comfortable lodge.

Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - JOHANNESBURG

International flight overnight to Johannesburg - Flights are not included but we can assist with this on request. You should arrive in the morning of Day 2 (see "dates and prices" for transfer times)

Day 2 — 2 : JOHANNESBURG - CAMP DAVIDSON - 3 hours riding

Camp Davidson

On arrival at Johannesburg International Airport, you will be met by your driver and transferred to Camp Davidson on the Horizon ranch (c. 3 hour drive). Please make sure that you arrive in Johannesburg early enough to meet the transfer vehicle (see dates and prices)

You will arrive at Camp Davidson in time for lunch and to meet your guide and the team. In the afternoon you will be matched with a horse suited to your ability and experience before heading off on your first ride through the Matlapeng reserve. You will stop for sundowners at the Red Lake, where you are likely to encounter a pod of resident hippo, before climbing the ridge back to Camp Davidson.

Day 3 — 3 : MATLAPENG RESERVE - 5 hours riding



Today's ride sets off from the high country overlooking a beautiful wilderness area to the east, and heads south, winding along the banks of Sunset Lake with its resident pod of hippos and the odd sly crocodile, before trekking upstream to an adjoining reserve. The lake itself is rich in birdlife, including the impressive Fish Eagles, dainty Dabchicks, elegant Jacanas and a variety of geese. Later, riding through the open savannah, wildebeest and zebra can be encountered. The riding is varied, from canters along sandy tracks to winding through rocky outcrops and densely wooded areas. The ride then crosses the reserve and returns to Camp Davidson in time for lunch. You can then relax by the pool, before a shorter afternoon ride.

In the evening there is the option of a night sky safari with a local astronomer, Dr Calcott, who will guide you through the amazing constellations (subject to weather conditions and availability). Additional cost R300 pp, Min. 4 pax.

Dinner and night at Camp Davidson.

Day 4 — 4 : CAMP DAVIDSON - 4-5 hours riding



Setting off in a westerly direction, this ride tracks past a brown hyena den, skirts past the upper reaches of the Horizon dam before crossing a wide grassy valley. At one point the ride enters into dense woodland, home to shy species such as kudu, bushbuck and Vervet monkeys. Emerging from the woods, the horses have a chance to stretch their legs along open sandy tracks. Finally the ride swings back to the north, through mixed bushveld and fascinating rock formations. Two highlights of this ride are the jumping lanes and the chance for riders to swim their horses bareback in the Horizon dam next to the main lodge. For many guests, this is an exhilarating and unforgettable experience. Once dried off and back in the saddle, the ride climbs back up to Camp Davidson is particularly intriguing, as it follows a mountain pass cut through boulders and outcrops. After lunch, enjoy a sundowner ride across the plains on the reserve.

Day 5 — 5 : BELLEVUE LODGE - 3-4 hours riding



An early start is needed for the long ride from Camp Davidson to either Savannah Lodge in the far southwest of the reserve, or Seringa Lodge in the southeast. The first part of the route covers country that riders will now be somewhat familiar with, but soon enters new terrain. In places the bush is thick but after a while the scenery opens to grasslands with sweeping views to the south and west. Riding through this landscape gives riders a sense of the vastness of the African plains. The area boasts a very high concentration of game with herds of over 300 blesbuck, or 80 eland, often sighted. Other species which are home to the plains include red hartebeest, tsessebe and ostrich. There are plentiful zebra, wildebeest, impala and giraffe, and smaller groups of sable, roan and waterbuck. The final stretch to Savannah Lodge is along a wooded stream where kudu and bushbuck are likely to be seen. After a relaxing time around the pool and within the sophisticated lodges, it is time to ride to the southernmost areas of the reserve in search of Cape buffalo. These are members of Africa's famous "big five" and deserve their formidable reputation. Riders therefore need to be alert and responsive to the guides' instructions. This area is known for its spectacular sunsets as the sun sets over the distant headlands of the Waterberg escarpment. A fitting end to an eventful and memorable day in the African wilderness.

Day 6 — 6 : MASHATU RESERVE - 4-5 hours riding



Wake up early and depart the camp by 9:00 am arriving at Mashatu by 1:00 in time for lunch and a chance to change before the riding assessment and afternoon ride.

Enjoy an introductory ride to check you are suited to your horse and comfortable enough in the saddle to ride in a big game area, before embarking on your first ride out to Two Mashatu Camp. This will be your first opportunity to experience the beauty of the Mashatu Game Reserve and view the wildlife on horseback. Mashatu Game Reserve is home to the largest herd of wild free-roaming elephants on private land in Africa, and, although not a guarantee, it is almost assured that there will be great viewing of these incredible creatures.

Day 7 — 7 : MASHATU RESERVE - 4-5 hours riding



The riding explores the game rich area along the Majala and Pitsani Rivers. In the north there are open plains. Overall the riding is relaxed, with the guides responding to the herds whilst keeping their eyes peeled for the big cats. In the afternoon there is the option of a bush walk or a shorter ride, maybe to the banks of the Limpopo River where elephants are often seen crossing.

Day 8 — 8 : MASHATU RESERVE - 4-5 hours riding



On this day the journey turns northeast and follows a series of river trails on the way back to the centre of the reserve. Life in this arid environment is always concentrated near water, and the ride promises sightings of elephant, zebra, giraffe and wildebeest. The route crosses the watershed and then winds along ancient paths adjacent to a stream flowing north towards the Majali River. At these elevated heights, the sweeping views to the north reveal the true wilderness character of Mashatu Game Reserve. The remainder of the day's riding is a mixture of elephant trail trekking and canters across relatively open mopane veld. The final stretch is along the Majali River itself, past rocky pools, cliff faces and ribbons of green grass. Encounters with baboon, kudu, klipspringers and crocodile are likely. Tree Camp is finally reached after 4-5 hours of riding. That afternoon guests leave their horses to a well-earned rest and will go either on a guided bush walk or, if the group chooses, a game drive with Mashatu Main Camp guides. This opportunity, while provided at an extra cost, should not be missed as the near guaranteed sightings of lion and leopard, and sometimes of cheetah, are legendary. The guides are very knowledgeable about the structure and whereabouts of the various prides and individuals, and failure to find them is very rare indeed.

Day 9 — 9 : MASHATU RESERVE - JOHANNESBURG - 2 hours riding

The last ride in the Limpopo Valley is a great opportunity to take one last picture of elephants and enjoy a long and winding canter through the scattered Mustard bush with your guides. Once back at the stables, there will be time for a quick shower and brunch at the reception area before saying farewell to your horse and the team.

Flight back to Johannesburg - please book a late evening flight (see dates and prices). Occasionally this may be replaced by a road transfer.

Day 10 — 10 : ARRIVE HOME

Arrival back home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
29/01/2026	07/02/2026	£3,462	Full
05/02/2026	14/02/2026	£3,462	Open
12/02/2026	21/02/2026	£3,462	Full
19/02/2026	28/02/2026	£3,462	Open
26/02/2026	07/03/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
05/03/2026	14/03/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
12/03/2026	21/03/2026	£3,462	Open
19/03/2026	28/03/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
26/03/2026	04/04/2026	£3,462	Full
02/04/2026	11/04/2026	£3,462	Open
09/04/2026	18/04/2026	£3,462	Full
16/04/2026	25/04/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
23/04/2026	02/05/2026	£3,462	Full
30/04/2026	09/05/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
07/05/2026	16/05/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
14/05/2026	23/05/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
21/05/2026	30/05/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
28/05/2026	06/06/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure

04/06/2026	13/06/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
11/06/2026	20/06/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
18/06/2026	27/06/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
25/06/2026	04/07/2026	£3,462	Last seats
02/07/2026	11/07/2026	£3,462	Full
09/07/2026	18/07/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
16/07/2026	25/07/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
23/07/2026	01/08/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
30/07/2026	08/08/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
06/08/2026	15/08/2026	£3,462	Full
13/08/2026	22/08/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
20/08/2026	29/08/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
27/08/2026	05/09/2026	£3,462	Full
03/09/2026	12/09/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
10/09/2026	19/09/2026	£3,462	Guaranteed departure
17/09/2026	26/09/2026	£3,462	Full
24/09/2026	03/10/2026	£3,462	Full
01/10/2026	10/10/2026	£3,462	Full
08/10/2026	17/10/2026	£3,462	Open
15/10/2026	24/10/2026	£3,462	Open
22/10/2026	31/10/2026	£3,462	Full
29/10/2026	07/11/2026	£3,462	Open
05/11/2026	14/11/2026	£3,462	Open
12/11/2026	21/11/2026	£3,462	Open
19/11/2026	28/11/2026	£3,462	Open
26/11/2026	05/12/2026	£3,462	Open
03/12/2026	12/12/2026	£2,714	Guaranteed departure
10/12/2026	19/12/2026	£2,714	Open
17/12/2026	26/12/2026	£2,714	Open
24/12/2026	02/01/2027	£2,714	Open
31/12/2026	09/01/2027	£2,714	Open

Price details

- Prices do not include international flights to Johannesburg but we can assist with this on request. Please make sure that you arrive before 9:30 am on day 2 to meet the transfer vehicle, and depart after 20:00 on the final day of safari (Friday, day 9). Flight times outside of these guidelines may require a private transfer at an extra cost. Please try to arrive as early as possible as immigration queues at JNB airport can be long, and if you are delayed, you may have to pay for a private transfer.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.

- The usual group size is a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riders.

- Group transfers are an additional cost:

> In 2025: £560/\$720/€660 (road transfers from Johannesburg to Camp Davidson; Camp Davidson to Limpopo and light aircraft transfer from Limpopo to Johannesburg). Please note that for very small groups, the light aircraft transfer can exceptionally be replaced by a road transfer.

> In 2026: £565/\$720/€660

Please note: if for any reason, for example lack of guests or weather warnings, we are unable to fly on the last day there will be a shared road transfer provided instead.

The road transfer between South Africa and Botswana can be replaced with a shorter light aircraft transfer (min 4 pax) for additional cost of £310 per person booked and paid on site. This must be notified to us in advance.

- All Mashatu visitors are subject to a conservation levy of \$20 per person per night payable on site. This is \$60 per person for the African Explorer as only 3 nights are spent in Botswana.

- The African Explorer does not include a game drive but also includes the option of the Game Drive with Mashatu at \$87 pp subject to availability.

- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a tent with another rider of the same sex. To guarantee your own tent there is a single supplement of 50%.

- For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 85 kilos, 187 lbs, 13.3 st. If you weigh more than this, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

- Younger rider aged 12+ yo can be accommodated on this ride on request and provided they match the riding requirements. Strictly no under 12s.

Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

—
2 English-speaking horse guides

LOGISTIC

—
1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle

A full horse stable team

Lodge team

ACCOMMODATION

—
Camping in 2 man tents with beds, comfortable mattresses and sheets provided

MEALS

—
Full board from lunch on D2 to brunch on D9

Snacks and beverages (including wine and alcoholic beverages)

Price doesn't include

TRANSPORT

—
Transfer from the airport (return) and transfers from Horizon to Limpopo. See 'Price Details' for more information
International flights

EXTRA

—
Tips to local team.

EXTRAS

Conservation fees (see "dates and prices")

Additional game drives in central Mashatu (see dates and prices)

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers at a different arrival and departure time to those stipulated in 'Price Details'

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

Good selection of horses (110 in South Africa, 70 in Botswana) : Thoroughbreds, Arabs, Boerperds, Welsh ponies and various crossbreeds. They are forward going, well schooled and acclimatised to the game.

Guide & local team

You will be guided by two guides - a lead guide and a back up guide. In Botswana one guide will carry a rifle, but this isn't necessary in South Africa.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider, capable and in control at all paces. You must be able to rise to the trot and gallop in a forward seat. Due to the presence of dangerous game it is important that you can stay on your horse if you need to react quickly and gallop out of danger. You may also be required to jump small obstacles such as branches dislodged by elephants.

The riding in South Africa is very safe, as the Waterberg is home to non-dangerous game such as zebra and giraffe. In Botswana, you are riding in an area of dangerous game (Mashatu is famous for its elephants). It is therefore of utmost importance that you are a confident rider, and secure in the saddle. Please note that there will be a short assessment ride on your arrival at Two Mashatu Camp in Botswana. The guides in South Africa will be able to assess your riding skills and will advise on your suitability to ride in Botswana. Should they deem you not able to ride in Botswana you will be given the choice of going to Botswana as a non-rider or if space allows you can stay at the South African lodge for the three days and carry on with the safari riding.

For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 85 kilos, 187 lbs, 13.3 st. If you weigh more than this, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

PACE

Whilst game viewing you will be walking so as not to startle the animals, but there are plenty of opportunities for long trots and canters. In South Africa these are usually on long sandy tracks, but in Botswana it is likely that you will canter behind your guide on wiggly routes through the bush.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

A team of grooms will feed, care for and saddle your horses. You can help with untacking if you wish, but this is not expected.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be physically fit for the long hours in the saddle in the African sun. In Botswana you may be riding for up to 5-5.30 hours in the morning (with a short break mid morning).

Guests who do not ride regularly are requested to get fit prior to the ride. It is of particular importance to ensure you are comfortable and balanced when riding at speed across rough terrain and open spaces. If the guides feel that you are unsafe on horseback, then you will be offered non-riding activities in Botswana. The riding in South Africa is less strenuous.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Water bottles are provided on all saddles. Some small saddle bags are available for carrying small items such as suncream.

McClellan trail riding saddles.

Helmets are compulsory. You should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

South Africa :

- Camp Davidson has recently been built high in the bushveld above the Matlapeng valley. The camp commands a wonderful panoramic view of the central highlands of the Waterberg massif, whilst overlooking the picturesque Sunset Lake on the eastern boundary of Horizon's Triple B Ranch. Camp Davidson has the atmosphere of early settlers, with beautiful decked canvas tents nestled amongst the sandstone ridges overlooking grassy game-filled valleys. Each A-frame tent has proper beds and an en-suite flushing toilet and bucket shower. Meals are taken around the fire or on a beautiful deck overlooking the valley. There is a small refreshing pool.

- The Savannah Lodge is a beautiful, intimate lodge at the heart of a private reserve, a full-day ride away from Camp Davidson. No Wifi.

Botswana :

- Tree Camp: This tree house is located high in the branches of a Mashatu tree in the heart of the Mashatu game reserve.

There are several well-appointed safari tents with open sides (see pictures). Mosquito nets are available. Two functional bathrooms with running water are shared between all riders. No wifi, no electricity except for one charging point.

- Two Mashatus camp is situated close to the Limpopo river. Large walk-in tents are pitched on teak platforms with ensuite flush toilets and hot showers. Each tent is private and positioned in the shade of a tree with a small deck area on which to relax during the afternoons. Traditionally built Lala palm rondavels serve as dining area and lounge. There is a newly-built pool in this camp too for guests to enjoy after the ride.

Laundry service is offered once in the week in South Africa but not in Botswana, you will need to have enough clothing to last 3 days.

Note: Power cuts are frequent in South Africa and we recommend all guests bring a high lumen torch or head torch.

MEALS

Breakfast is usually taken very early (before dawn) and is therefore light, consisting of cereals, fruit and rusks with tea or coffee.

Lunch is also light and may be quiche and salad or a variety of salads with cold meats.

Afternoon tea with a selection of drinks and freshly baked cakes.

Dinner is three courses. Wine is served with the meals and a selection of drinks are available.

Vegetarians and special diets can be catered for with advance notice

CLIMATE

The seasons are the reverse of the UK, with winter (June - Sept) being dry with no rain and clear skies. Daytime temperatures are pleasant and the nights are cool.

Summer (Nov - March) is hot and there is the chance of dramatic thunderstorms.

It is generally hotter and drier in Botswana than in South Africa, and the altitude in the Waterberg makes the temperatures particularly pleasant, even in summer.

TIPS

We recommend tipping c. GBP 10-15 per day which can be split between all members of the team. You should tip the South African team separately to the Botswanan team. A separate guide will take you on a game drive and will appreciate a small tip. Tips can be paid in South African Rands, GBP or Euros, in cash.

If you wish to tip your guide in addition then you can do this separately.

PACKING LIST

Our Recommendations

Please note: in the case of a light aircraft transfer, remember that planes don't necessarily have a separate luggage compartment, and carry-on regulations may apply. The weight limit is 18 kg and 5 kg for your carry-on. Remember that safari camps provide shampoo and soap, as well as alcohol, so make sure to pack accordingly. Please remember soft bags only are accepted, hard-sided luggage will not be accepted on the plane. Luggage type and weight:

- Maximum luggage weight is 18 kg/35 lbs, 40 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm (Soft luggage/duffle with 1 flat side only, and no protruding wheels).
- Hand luggage is 5 kg/11 lbs (1 soft piece)
- You can also have your "ladies" handbag with you - but please limit the size and do not try to squash extra clothing/equipment inside them. The charter planes are much smaller than normal planes and thus have limited space.
- Power banks = only 1 per person and must be carried with you on your person and not be in any of your bags. This way any overheating Lithium ion batteries/powerbanks will be immediately identified and disposed of to avoid an inflight fire – this is a safety aspect.
- Riding helmets can be carried on the flight with you

Please limit the size of them and not try to squash extra clothing/equipment inside them. The charter planes are much smaller than normal planes and thus have limited space.

Should your luggage exceed these limitations, you will not be able to load it.

The planes don't necessarily have a separate luggage compartments, and carry-on regulations may apply. Remember that safari camps provide shampoo and soap, as well as alcohol, so make sure to pack accordingly.

Liquid Restrictions:

Perfume- 50ml

Eau de Toilette – (250 ml)

Non-flammable and Non-alcoholic liquids – 500ml per container. A combined total of no more than 2l in checked bags.

Pocket knives/Leatherman's and other sharp objects:

These need to be packed into passengers checked bags and will not be allowed in carry-on bags.

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided and we recommend travelling light as your luggage may have to be moved between camps.
- Wherever possible you should wear neutral colours, such as beige, brown or natural bush colours for riding as bright colours, such as red, yellow or white can startle the wildlife and they will see you long before you've seen them
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

Head

- You will be required to wear a hard hat when riding and you should take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and thorns
- T-shirts
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold, particularly June - August
- Waterproof jacket - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared. Rain is more likely Oct-April
- Casual clothes for the evening

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Shorts for lazy lunchtimes
- Casual clothes for the evening

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps to protect against thorns. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged.
- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers for moving around the lodge and camp
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

Nightwear

Other useful items

- Swimsuit - for plunge pools
- Binoculars for viewing game
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around camp at night. Note: Power cuts are frequent in South Africa and we recommend all guests bring a high lumen torch or head torch.

In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag. Some toiletries are provided by the camp so you can pack lighter.

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - must be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing deet
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Anti malarial tablets and Yellow Fever Certificate if required (check with your doctor)

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- 1. Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
- 2. Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
- 3. Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
- 4. Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
- 5. Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
- 6. Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#).