



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Best of Botswana

BOTSWANA

An incredible **riding safari** combining two of our most popular rides in Botswana. Spend 6 nights riding in **Mashatu Game Reserve** in eastern Botswana, famous for its large elephant herds, and then transfer to Macatoo Camp in the **Okavango Delta** for another four nights amongst the islands and lagoons. A legendary horseback journey in Botswana, ideal for those wanting to discover two very different ecosystems and see the Big Five.

Horseback Safari	 15 days - 12 days riding -	 From £0	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride in two very different areas for a complete discovery of Botswana
- Experience the lush lagoons of the delta in contrast with the dry landscape and Limpopo river in Mashatu
- Great game sightings at both camps - elephant, lion, leopard, giraffe etc
- Numerous opportunities for great canters at both camps
- Two unique stables with horses selected for their temperament and rideability
- Comfortable camps in both destinations
- The chance for walking or vehicle safaris to view species which are difficult to approach on horseback, such as lion or the nocturnal species
- Light aircraft flight across Botswana, with the chance to view game herds from the air

Day 1 — 1 : HOME - JOHANNESBURG

International flight overnight to Johannesburg. This flight is not included but we can book it for you on request.

If booking your own flight then you need to depart London at c. 19:00 so that you arrive in Johannesburg at c. 07:00 in time to meet the transfer vehicle for your light aircraft transfer to the Tuli Block.

Day 2 — 2 : JOHANNESBURG - TWO MASHATU CAMP - 2 hours riding

 Two Mashatu Camp

Arrival at Johannesburg airport. You will be transferred to the domestic airport and then will take your light aircraft transfer to Mashatu reserve in the south-eastern corner of Botswana.

PLEASE NOTE: the light aircraft transfer is guaranteed for groups of 6 riders. If there are less riders in your group, we will organise a road transfer (approx. 5 hr drive).

After a light lunch, it's time to head off to the stables to meet the team and your horse. You will embark on a short introductory ride to make sure that you and your horse are well suited.

After riding there is time for a refreshing drink at the stables, then you will be transferred to camp for a warm shower and a delicious dinner served under the stars.

NB. This is a sample itinerary and the actual route ridden and game spotted each day will vary dependent on the animal movements and daily conditions, but always with your best interests at heart. The days are usually split in two parts: a long morning ride to reach your camp for the night, then in the afternoon you will have the opportunity to go on game drives or walking safaris to approach the game, and especially the big cats.

Day 3 — 3 : TREE CAMP - 6-7 hours riding

 Tree Camp Mashatu

The day begins at sunrise with tea/coffee brought to your tent, followed by a light breakfast. Mount up and head off in a north westerly direction for Tree Camp. From horseback you should be able to enjoy the abundance of game and the magnificent scenery synonymous with the Land of the Giants.

After arriving at camp, lunch is the order of the day followed by a guided afternoon walk, examining the bush around you in detail. After dinner, it is time to go to bed and experience the “music” of the African bush as it gently serenades you to sleep.

Day 4 — 4 : KGOTLA - 6 hours riding

 Kgotla camp

An early wake up and a light breakfast is served around the log fire. Test the amazingly sure-footed Boerperds as you cross over basalt ridges following age-old elephant trails and enjoy long sustained canters to make up for the lost time traversing the ridges.

Arrive at Kgotla Camp for a late lunch. This is an old tribal court from a nearby community that was relocated to the banks of the Motloutse River on the western periphery of Mashatu. In the afternoon you have the option of visiting the local village before taking a sundowner looking out over the Motloutse River. Back at the Kgotla, dinner is around a large log fire after which the night is spent sleeping under the stars.

Day 5 — 5 : KGOTLA - 5 hours riding

 Kgotla camp

You spend another night at Kgotla Camp, so today's ride is spent exploring the sandstone formations including the famed Solomon's Wall. Ancient civilizations harbored their wealth among these hills where two mighty rivers, the Limpopo and the Motloutse, meet.

In the afternoon head to the archaeologically rich Mmamagwa hills where a 360 degree view of the reserve can be enjoyed as well as another beautiful African sunset.

Day 6 — 6 : TREE CAMP - 6-7 hours riding

 Tree Camp Mashatu

Another early rise and a good breakfast around the log fire will set the morning off to a good start. Today you wind your way through the mopane bush before reaching the more open plains.

On arrival at camp you will be welcomed by a well-deserved drink and a refreshing lunch. Tonight is your opportunity to explore Mashatu from a game drive vehicle and try to locate the elusive leopard, wild dog, cheetah and lion the area is well known for.

Day 7 — 7: MASHATU - 6 hours riding

 Two Mashatu Camp

This morning you set out exploring the banks of the Mojale and Matabole rivers. The wildlife viewing opportunities should live up to the rest of your safaris. It is also possible you will encounter logs knocked off by elephants, that make brilliant cross-country jumps for those who'd like to jump!

After lunch and a siesta, you set out on foot to look for the "Small Five".

Dinner and overnight at Two Mashatu.

Day 8 — 8 : MASHATU - 6 hours riding

Early morning ride spent exploring Limpopo valley and the Tuli block in the saddle - perhaps reaching the remnants of an old Boer fort. The wildlife around T wo Mashatu is exceptional with large herds of giraffe, zebra and antelope roaming free. The vast plains of Pitsani also offer ideal riding ground and you can expect long canters before lunch at T wo Mashatu.

In the afternoon, you can enjoy another ride or perhaps a walking safari on the banks of the Limpopo river - perhaps you'll spot crocodiles!

Day 9 — 9 : MASHATU - JOHANNESBURG - 2-4 hours riding

 SUNROCK Guest house

Today is your last morning in the Tuli block and begins with your final early breakfast. The morning is spent riding along the Limpopo River in the direction of the stables, where fond farewells are made to your steed.

After a hearty brunch and a quick shower you board the light aircraft flight back to Johannesburg. You'll arrive in Johannesburg between 16:00 and 18:00 before your transfer to your comfortable guesthouse for the night. Dinner to your own account.

Day 10 — 10: JOHANNESBURG - OKAVANGO DELTA

 Macatoo camp

Transfer to the airport after breakfast for your light aircraft transfer to the Okavango Delta.

Macatoo camp overlooks a seasonal flood plain lagoon and is a short game drive or (depending on the time of year) an exciting boat ride from the airstrip. After a quick look around camp and afternoon tea under the trees, there is time for a short evening ride where you can get to know your horse. You return to camp for a hot shower and candle-lit safari dinner.

Day 11 — 11 : OKAVANGO DELTA - 6 hours riding

 Macatoo camp

Today begins with an early ride from camp to stretch your legs and explore. Depending on the season this may involve some galloping, swimming through the flood waters or pushing-on through seas of tall grass following giraffe, zebra, antelope, elephant, buffalo...

Back to camp for an open air lunch with the guides. The evening ride is deliberately slower-paced and it's a good opportunity to ask questions and take photographs. A sun downer can be enjoyed out in the bush before riding back to camp to freshen up.

Day 12 — 12 : OKAVANGO DELTA - 6 hours riding

 Macatoo camp

Wake as normal with freshly-brewed coffee or tea. You can choose to ride out again or to join a guided walk, game drive or perhaps a spot of fishing for bream from the boat? The riders and non-riders meet up for a champagne breakfast under one of the large baobab trees.

After lunch take the opportunity to relax and either take a dip in the plunge pool, read a book or organise your photos. Homemade tea and cake is followed by the sunset ride, exploring the lower flood plains where elephant often gather at the pools. As dusk closes in, it is fascinating to watch them interact in the wild, and being on horseback brings you that much closer.

Head back to camp for a quick shower before another sumptuous dinner is served.

Day 13 — 13: OKAVANGO DELTA

 Macatoo camp

Your last full day of riding in this magical place takes you cantering through the shallow flood plains, admiring the deeper pools of lilies. Here, the buffalo can gather in large numbers (anything between a dozen and 2000 individuals) and you can try to creep up on them using the islands as cover. The evening offers a last quiet ride with memorable smells of wild sage and the warm African dust as the sun goes down. Your farewell dinner is sure to be a memorable one with another surprise location in store.

Day 14 — 14 : CAMP - MAUN - JOHANNESBURG - 2 hours riding

After waking up amongst the trees to the call of the African Fish Eagle, splash through water on the vast open plains, home to blue wildebeest and Burchell's zebra. The riding may be fast as you approach deep reedy areas full of bird life including open-billed storks, squacco herons, slaty egrets,

Egyptian geese and many more. Return to Macatoo along the myriad of waterways lined with large trees.

There will be time to pack and say goodbye before your transfer to the airstrip with a picnic lunch for your light aircraft flight back to Maun (included in the price).

Flights from Maun to Johannesburg and onwards to the UK are not included but we can book them for you on request.

Please note that this last morning on horseback is only possible if your flight times allow it. We are also happy to organise further extensions (Victoria Falls, Mozambique, South Africa...).

Day 15 — 15: JOHANNESBURG - HOME

Arrival home in the early morning.

DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- These prices do not include international flight tickets although we can book these for you on request - please ask.

- Rides are confirmed for a minimum of four riders (it is possible to confirm for two people on payment of a supplement for the light aircraft transfers). The group is 8 riders maximum.

- In Mashatu, there is a conservation levy of \$10 per person per night payable on site. This is \$60 per person here - payable in \$, £, € or rands (small change not accepted).

- The Best of Botswana ride can be scheduled at any time of year although in the event of rain (October/November), you will be based at Two Mashatu Camp in the Tuli block and will not be mobile - this will not affect your wildlife observation opportunities. Safaris between November and March will be priced on request.

- Single tent supplement: 50%. If you are happy to share with another rider of the same sex, this will not be invoiced.

- For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 90kg/ 14st 2lbs/198 lbs. If you weigh more than this and wish to ride, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

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

English-speaking horse guides and rangers

A team of grooms

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

A team of cooks

INLAND TRANSPORT

Internal flights: Johannesburg - Tuli, Tuli-Okavango, Okavango-Maun

Private open jeep for 8 people for your game drives and short land transfers

ACCOMMODATION

Canvas safari tent for 2 people with bedding
Double room in a guesthouse in Johannesburg

MEALS

Full board from lunch on day 2 to brunch on the last day of the ride
All the drinks including wines and cocktails

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

First aid kit

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Dinner in Johannesburg on day 9

TRANSPORT

International flights to Johannesburg and from Maun that we can book upon request

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team
Conservation fees in Mashatu, payable locally in \$, £, € or rands.

INSURANCE

Visas and personal purchase
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 tent supplement - Please see dates and prices above

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

In the Tuli block : there are 35 horses which have been carefully chosen from the various South African breeds which are well known for being of a tough nature, able to cope under extreme conditions, such as Boerperd, Shire x Thoroughbreds and warmbloods. The horses are all beautifully schooled, well-mannered, responsive and a pleasure to ride.

In the Okavango : the stable consists of various breeds such as Arabs, Kalahari-Arab, Boerperd, Hanovarien, Trakehners. All are sure footed and energetic.

The tack is English style at both camps.

Rider's weight limit: 95 kg, 15 stone, 210 lbs. Slightly heavier riders may be accommodated - please contact us.

Guide & local team

You will be accompanied by two riding guides - a lead guide and a back-up guide - one of which will carry a rifle and bull whip. The lead guides have been guiding for many years and are very knowledgeable and experienced.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider, capable and in control in 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 (although it is often possible to go around these). There are some steep ascents and descents of the Limpopo river banks. There are some sensible horses for those who prefer a quiet ride as well as some spirited horses for experienced riders.

Teenagers accompanied by adults are welcome from 16 years old, as long as they are competent riders.

For this ride, there is a maximum rider weight of 90kg/ 14st 2lbs/198 lbs. If you weigh more than this and wish to ride, please contact us and we will advise on a case-by-case basis.

PACE

There are long periods of walking whilst viewing game, interspersed with long steady canters and occasional gallops where the terrain allows. In the Tuli block you will have a long morning ride of c. 6-7 hours and an alternative activity is offered in the afternoons.

In the Okavango the morning rides can be fast and exhilarating. You usually ride out at dawn when the game is most active and there are plenty of opportunities for long canters on the dry islands or across the flood plains. When water levels are deep it may also be possible to swim the horses across some channels. The afternoon rides are shorter, c. 2 hours, and slower. You may walk and trot, but not canter. This is the time to take your camera and appreciate the sights and sounds of the bush - the afternoon light is beautiful.

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 long hours in the saddle (c. 6 hours between dawn and lunch) in the African sun. You will start around 06:30 and arrive around 13:00 at the camp. This includes a mid morning break. The terrain is varied to include steep ascents/descents of the Limpopo river bank and there may be holes or branches which you need to avoid.

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.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Water holders are provided on all of the saddles. A small front saddle bag is also provided which is appropriate for small items such as suncream. We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Tuli block:

- First night in Two Mashatus camp: this camp is situated close to the Limpopo river. Four large walk-in tents pitched on teak platforms with ensuite loo and hot shower. 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.

- Two nights in Kgotla camp: the Kgotla is an old tribal court from a nearby community that was relocated to the banks of the Motloutse River on the western periphery of Mashatu. The boma is an open-air traditional African enclosure made up of leadwood logs. Guests sleep on beds around a large log fire which blazes at the centre.

- Two nights in wilderness mobile camps: each campsite is set up in a specific location within the Mashatu Reserve. Accommodation is in A-frame tents on comfortable beds with sheets and cozy duvets. Facilities include a bucket shower and bush-WC. Meals are cooked for you over a camp fire. All camps feature comfortable beds with proper bedding and cotton sheets.

NB. At certain times of year it is not possible for the ride to be mobile and you will spend all five nights at Two Mashatus camp.

Okavango delta:

Macatoo camp features large, walk-in, twin bedded tents, each with their own en-suite shower and loo. The tents are built on wooden platforms and face out onto the lagoon, with a deck providing seating. Centrally there is a large furnished mess tent, dining area and a plunge pool. If the weather is kind then you may be able to spend a night on their purpose built Treehouse Platform on a nearby island.

Please note that phone coverage is limited in the Tuli Block, and inexistant at Macatoo. For safety reason, the team and guides are equipped with a satellite phone. WiFi is not available.

MEALS

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

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

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.

OKAVANGO DELTA: WHEN TO GO?

The Okavango Delta is a seasonal flood plain and so different times of the year offer different experiences - each magical in its own way. The water level in the Delta depend on the rainfall in Angola and the floods usually arrive around April/May and recede around September/October, but this varies every year and is difficult to predict. The following guide may prove useful when planning the best time for your holiday.

March/April : Daytime temperatures are warm/hot (25-35c) and will drop to 10-20c at night. There is a small chance of rain and the bush is green and lush. There will be waterholes left over from the rainy season but the flood may not have arrived yet. Because of the rain, lush grazing and plentiful waterholes the game is dispersed and not gathered in big herd but will look fat and healthy.

May : Daytime temperatures are falling (20-30c) and it is starting to feel cooler at night (5-10c). The floods normally arrive in May which brings high levels of bird life. The large herds of lechwe antelope and buffalo will start to move into the area, but game is still dispersed as there is plenty to eat and drink.

June-August : Daytime temperatures are still pleasant (20-25c) but night are cold (3-5c) and so the early morning and late evenings are chilly. The floods are at their highest and so there is plenty of wading from island to island and boat activities. Hippo and crocodile may move into the area as well as large buffalo and antelope herds.

September/October : Spring arrives and temperatures start to climb with daytime temperatures of 30-45c, dropping to 15-25c at night. The floods are starting to recede, the islands are dry as there has not been rain for months and so the game starts to concentrate around the water holes.

November - February : The rain can arrive anytime in November. Daytime temperatures are high before the rains (30-40c) but drop after each shower. It is unlikely to rain persistently, but usually for a few hours. Nights are still warm (15-20c). The bush turns green after the rains and the grass starts to grow again. Once the waterholes start to fill again the game will disperse. The antelope will give birth during this time of plenty.

TIPS

We recommend tipping USD 10-15 per day which can be split between all the staff. You should tip your guide separately and riders usually tip USD 10 per day per guide.

PACKING LIST

Specific Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided, particularly for the light air transfers. There is a strict 20kg limit including your hand luggage - your checked bag must be under 15 kg.
- 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 in the Tuli block and you should take your own to ensure a correct fit. We recommend wearing your hard hat at Macatoo as well.
- 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 and you may also appreciate a

waterproof jacket during June-Sept in the Delta for splashy canterers

- 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. Ideally you should bring two pairs of shoes and chaps, and we recommend light, non-waterproof fabric that will dry quickly. 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

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 torch for moving around camp at night - some mobiles have a torch option but this is not sufficient.
- Waterproof pouches if you want to bring your camera or phone with you whilst riding in the Okavango Delta

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 camps so you can pack lighter.

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](#).