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Riding Safari in Botswana

9 nights

Brief Itinerary



This horse safari operates in the southern area of the Okavango Delta, a vast inland delta, abundant with game and a maze of papyrus, floodplains and woodland, providing interesting riding country. On horseback you can venture further into the Delta and get closer to the wildlife than you could do by any other means. It is perhaps the closest you can get to nature. The owners, Barney and PJ Bestelink, ensure that each riding safari is tailored to the group.

All the safaris start from Kujwana Camp, which is a permanent camp with eight spacious raised tents fitted with comfortable wooden furniture, en suite showers and flushing loos. There are 5-, 7- and 10-day safaris, each of which also takes in at least one of the two bush camps, Moklowane Camp and Kiri Fly Camp. These camps are equally comfortable, though more rustic and located on smaller islands in the Delta. When moving between camps, all your belongings will be taken ahead in vehicles.

At Moklowane Camp, guests sleep in tree-houses two metres off the ground, giving you the unique experience of sleeping in the open but being perfectly safe. Ablutions are on ground level with bucket and pulley showers and flush loos behind each tree house. Kiri Fly Camp is temporary, moving according to water levels and available access, and here you sleep in large dome tents with thick bed rolls equipped with cotton sheets, duvets and towels, and each tent has a private bathroom area. Personal tent staff are on hand at all times.

Between 4-6 hours are spent in the saddle each day, with regular stops to give both horse and rider a break. Three large meals a day are provided and breaks are taken along the way with biscuits and fruit. Breakfast is often a picnic from your saddlebag, while for lunch fresh bread, salads and meats will be prepared for you and comes as a welcome break in the heat of the day. In the evening delicious three-course suppers are served by candlelight under the stars.

The 50 horses at Okavango Horse Safaris are carefully looked after by PJ and Barney, who know and school each one individually. With this knowledge, they are able to match horse and rider perfectly. The horses are all between 14-17 hands and a mixture of Thoroughbreds, Boerperds, Arab, Anglo Arab and Saddlebred. Tack is English-style and each saddle has a seat saver for comfort. Spare horses are taken on every trip.

The main emphasis is on riding, but there are also other activities which make a welcome rest from the saddle and some afternoons are kept free for this purpose. Activities include guided walks, game drives, night drives and mokoro canoe trips.

The Okavango Delta offers some of the best game viewing in Africa. Amongst the breathtaking scenery you can enjoy watching elephant, buffalo, giraffe, kudu, roan antelope, crocodile, leopard, lion, cheetah and wild dog among other wildlife. Game viewing is often at its best from horseback as the wildlife is habituated to the horses and sees no urgency to rush off, and it is one of the most natural ways to view game. You will find yourself taking in every sound and smell, something often missed when sitting in a vehicle.

For all of these horse safaris, however, you need to be a proficient rider and able to get yourself out of a potentially dangerous situation should it arise.

Below is a sample itinerary for a 7-day safari. This may change due to game movements and water levels but the general format is:

Day 1 Fly Johannesburg

Day 2 Fly Maun, fly Delta, introductory ride, Kujwana Camp

Day 3 Riding in Xudum area, Kujwana Camp

Day 4 Game ride, bird walk, Kujwana Camp

Day 5 Day ride from Kujwana to Moklowane, Moklowane Camp

Day 6 Game ride, mokoro experience, Moklowane Camp

Day 7 Dawn ride, game drive, Moklowane Camp

Day 8 Day ride from Moklowane to Kujwana, Kujwana Camp

Day 9 Fly Maun, fly home

Day 1

Today you will check in for your overnight flight to Maun via Johannesburg.

Day 2

This morning you will be met and flown from Maun into the Okavango Delta. On arrival in the Delta, you will be met at the airstrip by your guide and transferred to Kujwana Camp, the base camp for your horse safari, where you will stay for 3 nights.

You will be given an introductory ride and meet some of the horses. In the evening there will be a delicious 3-course supper before retiring to your comfortable en suite tented room. You will be staying at Kujwana Camp, which is situated on the Xudum River south west of Chief's Island in the Okavango Delta, and will explore the area over the next couple of days. Activities will include game rides and a bird walk.



Day 5

Today you will move from Kujwana to Moklowane Camp. This is approximately 30km ride, heading north-west, and the route moves through open floodplains and scattered islands towards the Matsebe river system. A picnic lunch is served on a shady island 2 hours' ride from Moklowane Camp, which you will reach at sunset. You will stay at Moklowane Camp for 3 nights.

Moklowane camp is North West of Kujwana on the Matsebe River, and is situated in the open flood plains which receive flood water 3 weeks earlier than Kujwana camp. The vegetation consists of smaller palm island and wide open spaces. This is one of the most magical riding experiences that you can have. I imagine yourself cantering alongside the elegant motion of a giraffe or mounted high above the long grass and reeds watching great herds of zebra, wildebeest and lechwe; the breathtaking excitement when your silent progress along game trails used only by the animals brings you upon a herd of buffalo or a family group of elephant. You will also enjoy a mokoro experience and a game drive during your stay at this camp.



Day 8

Today is a full day's ride from Moklowane to Kujwana, with a picnic lunch along away. You will ride the 40km for four hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. This ride moves through a variety of game areas fording the Xudum River at numerous hippo channels and you will arrive at Kujwana at sunset, where you will stay for your final night.



Day 9

There will be an early morning game ride out of Kujwana Camp if flight times permit. You will leave after breakfast, enjoying an hour's game drive en route to the airstrip to meet the scheduled flight to Maun. From here you will fly to Johannesburg for your overnight flight back to the UK.

The price includes:

All internal flights and transfers
All accommodation on a shared basis
All meals as indicated
Local beers, wines and soft drinks
All National Park fees
Activities as indicated with a qualified guide

The price does not include:

International flights
Local airport taxes
Staff tips
Travel insurance
Items of a personal nature
Visas
Imported luxury spirits or champagne

All quotes are subject to alteration due to availability at time of booking, currency fluctuations, fuel and rate increases and government action.