



SIGNATURE SAFARI SET ITINERARY

OVERVIEW

- 8 days set itinerary
- Sunday to Sunday
- Intermediate riders only
- Stay at Signature Safari Lodge, Camp Davidson and Bellevue lodge
- One game drive to Big 5 Reserve
- Bush Breakfast
- Polocrosse and swimming with your horse
- Wine tasting evening

RIDING

The Signature Safari is an eight day fixed date horse safari in South Africa. Ride over 150 km through spectacular landscapes, with great sightings of a wide range of Africa's diverse wildlife species. You'll do some fun activities over the course of the safari as well, such as splashy canters, swimming with horses, playing polocrosse and jumping some bush logs. The distances covered, hours in the saddle and range of riding each day, make this safari suitable for intermediate and above riders. Each safari has a maximum of 8 guest.

There are typically two riding activities a day - a longer ride in the morning and either a shorter ride or fun riding activity in the afternoon. Over the course of the safari, riders will get to see all parts of the 15,000-acre reserve using carefully planned routes which take into account all the wildlife hotspots and interesting natural features. Given the diverse habitats - from wide open plains to savannah, rocky outcrops, wetlands and dense forest-like habitats - a broad spectrum of species are encountered on safari.

COMMON WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS

Giraffe, hippo, cape buffalo, eland, zebra, sable, roan, kudu, impala, waterbuck, red hartebeest, nyala, tsessebe, blue wildebeest, blesbuck, bushbuck, ostrich, baboon, vervet monkey, warthog and jackal. Occasionally seen are crocodile, brown hyena, serval, duiker, bush pig, steenbuck and reedbuck. These are all beautiful animals and a privilege to observe in their natural environment. Combined with the wide open spaces, variable topography and excellent going, this makes the Signature Safari an unforgettable riding experience.

ACCOMMODATION

The safari allows guests to enjoy a range of accommodation types: from the well-known Horizon Signature Safari Lodge alongside a gorgeous lake, surrounded by horses; 'glamping' (luxury camping) under canvas at Camp Davidson, high on an isolated ridge; and enjoying the 'safari chic' Bellevue Plains lodges (Savannah and Seringa) which look out over expansive plains filled with herds of wildlife.

DAY 1 - SUNDAY - SIGNATURE SAFARI LODGE

Guests will be personally met at Johannesburg International Airport (3 hours road transfer). After a light lunch in the gardens of the lodge and later a sumptuous tea, guests will be introduced to their horses. The first ride is a gentle introduction to the reserve and an excellent opportunity for first encounters with species such as zebra, giraffe and hippo. The riding ranges from purposeful walking to easy cantering along sandy tracks and culminates with sundowner drinks on the open plains.

Highlights: Meet your horse.

DAY 2 - MONDAY - SIGNATURE SAFARI LODGE

On this first full day on Horizon Game Reserve, guests start to truly appreciate the wide open spaces and natural beauty of the Waterberg. Riding with wildlife in their natural habitat is a magical experience, with chance encounters intermingled with the excitement of tracking a particular species. The animals are unperurbed by the horses and so you can ride really close to them and observe them going about their business. This is a great day for a splashy canter along the edge of the dam, especially in summer time. And also you can have your first swim with your horse to cool off. The afternoon ride typically ends with a sun downer at beautiful viewpoint with the riders walking back to the lodge at dusk in high spirits.

Highlights: Explore the reserve - splashy canter

DAY 3 - TUESDAY - BELLEVIEW LODGE

An early start is needed for the long ride from the Horizon Lodge 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 up 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 blesbok, 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 southern most 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.

Highlights: Longer ride to Bellevue Lodges and searching for buffalo

DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY- SIGNATURE SAFARI LODGE

Another long ride through game rich country returns riders to the heart of the operation, Horizon Lodge. The route taken is different from that on the outward leg, turning this part of the safari into an exciting journey passing through diverse landscapes and ecosystems. Game species typically prefer different habitats, with nyala and bushbuck for instance occupying dense forest-like sections of the reserve while blesbuck and hartebeest stick to the open plains, and waterbuck and reedbuck, unsurprisingly, are normally seen close to streams and other waterways. Riders arrive at a giant wild fig tree for a delicious bush breakfast prepared on an open fire. After this hearty meal the route back to the lodge passes through a dense forest area where some of the shyer species like to shelter. Swimming with your horse in front of our Horizon Lodge is the perfect end to this special morning ride. This afternoon we go on a game drive to a nearby reserve, where we can see the Big 5, including elephants, rhino, buffalo, leopard and lions.

Highlights: Bush breakfast, swimming with your horses, game drive to Big 5 reserve.

DAY 5 - THURSDAY - CAMP DAVIDSON

This morning we head towards Camp Davidson for an exciting night under canvas. The camp is perched high on a ridge overlooking a vast wilderness area to the east. Wildlife often encountered in the area include baboon, bushpig, kudu and klipspringer. Porcupines are frequent nocturnal visitors to the camp and leopard spoor outside the tents is not uncommon. Today's route to Camp Davidson covers the north-eastern areas of the reserve, tracking through untouched bush to the upper reaches of Sunset Lake. This lake is a favourite haunt of the hippo on the reserve and home to crocodile, otter, fish eagle and other waterfowl, such as the beautiful African jacana. Guests ride along the water's edge and must be constantly on the lookout for the hippo. These animals, while having a reputation for being some of the most dangerous in Africa, are not a threat during the day but will often honk and blow as they observe the riders go by. The route offers an opportunity for exciting splashy canters and extended canters, off-piste riding with very scenic views across the highlands of the Waterberg.

Highlights: Camp

DAY 6 - FRIDAY - SIGNATURE SAFARI LODGE

Ride through the neighbouring conservancy to search for sable. These magnificent antelope have striking markings and long sweeping horns. If conditions allow, we end the ride with another chance to enjoy a splashy canter along the edge of the Horizon Lodge dam. After the morning's exertions, guests can relax around the swimming pool and enjoy the beautiful unspoilt surroundings. The afternoon activity is polo-crosse, an amalgam between polo and lacrosse. The game is highly addictive and is sure to bring out competitive passions! Horses which are used to playing the game are used and no previous experience of playing polocrosse is required. What is guaranteed is a great deal of fun.

Highlights: Searching for sable polocrosse.

DAY 7 - SATURDAY - SIGNATURE SAFARI LODGE

This morning, we offer guests the chance to ride into another of our neighbour's conservancies, where Cape buffalo can be spotted. An early start is required for this longer morning ride. The thrill of cantering alongside wildebeest is a highlight. The land opens up to offer long, extended canters along broad tracks that skirt through pristine bush. In the afternoon, riders follow a route interspersed with optional cross country jumps on the way to sundowners in a stunning spot with views over the rolling hills. A slow ride back to the Lodge at dusk completes the day's adventure.

Tonight's dinner starts with a wine tasting, each wine is paired with a complimenting amuse-bouche. This is a brilliant introduction to South Africa's famous wines.

Highlights: MGB Ride and wine tasting evening.

DAY 8 - SUNDAY - DEPARTURE

Final ride and Transfer to Airport. By now riders are well versed in all aspects of the safari experience, and in consultation with their guides can suggest a favourite ride for their final experience. This is a last opportunity to ride amongst Africa's incredible antelope species through a beautiful environment on superb horses. Following lunch in the garden it is time to embark on the road transfer back to the airport in Johannesburg.

Highlights: Favourite ride for their final experience.