



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Botswana - Limpopo Valley 2009

Horse Safari Information Sheet

Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris operate in south eastern Botswana's Mashatu Game Reserve, part of the Tuli block which borders South Africa and the great Limpopo River. Known as the 'Land of Giants' for its large population of elephant and massive Baobab and Mashatu trees, the terrain of the Tuli block varies from thick thorn scrub and tall leadwood, Mashatu and fever trees lining the Limpopo, to vast semi-arid plains with striking rocky 'kopies' and sandstone outcrops that jut into the horizon. Safaris use a comfortable semi-permanent Two Mashatus Camp as a base and you have a choice of the adventurous 7 night Tuli Safari, which includes the first night at Two Mashatus, and others at simple, temporary camps set up across the reserve, or the more flexible Limpopo Safari which can be anything from 2 to 10 nights and is based at Two Mashatus throughout, and finally 7 night Lodge to Lodge Rides which use more luxury accommodation. Morning, afternoon and day rides on both explore the Mashatu wilderness with plenty of chances for long canters, zig-zagging through the scrub and along dry river beds, before stopping to watch elephant and giraffe browsing the tree line and zebra and wildebeest grazing the plains. Cecil Rhodes carved his name on one of Mashatu's large Baobab trees and as well as game, there are sites of historic interest to bring alive those pioneering days. Another option is an 8 night Combined Big 5 Safari run in conjunction with Horizon Horseback Adventures in South Africa. These safaris combine 4 days riding in South Africa with 4 days riding on Mashatu and are a wonderful way to see the two different areas – [please see our separate 'Saddlebag Safaris' information sheets for Combined Big 5 Safaris.](#) All safaris are run for small groups and are very personalized - they are a great choice for anyone wishing to see and ride with game in Southern Africa.



Dates Tuli Safaris are run for 7 nights from Sunday to Sunday between April and October. They run each week throughout the season except on dates when Combined Big 5 Safaris are operating. Two Mashatus Safaris are possible on request, with flexible dates, in November, February & March. Lodge to Lodge Rides are from set dates throughout the year. Combined Big 5 Safaris are run from set dates pretty much year round and combine 4 nights / 4 days riding with Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris with 4 nights / 4 days riding in South Africa's Waterberg range in the northern Limpopo Province. Tuli Safari and Lodge to Lodge dates are set out overleaf - please contact Ride World Wide to check availability and for dates for Combined Big 5 Safaris.

The Horses There are about 35 horses at the Limpopo Valley Horses Safaris base, mainly native South African breeds and crossbreeds that include Boerperds, South African Warmbloods and Shire / TB crosses. They are between about 14.3hh and 17hh and are tough, sure-footed and ideally suited to the Tuli's harsh environment and varying terrain. They are also sensible but responsive and forward going, making them a real pleasure to ride. The horses are all individually selected and carefully schooled to a high standard by Louise Carelson who runs the safaris with her husband Cor. Louise, who has dual British / American nationality, trained at the French National Riding School at Samur and is qualified to BHSII level. She has also competed on the affiliated Eventing circuit in the UK, has ridden as an exercise rider for top trainers at Newmarket and as an amateur point-to-point jockey in the UK. She schools the Limpopo horses in the classic English style although they are also easy to neck rein and are used to being ridden out with relaxed contact with the mouth. Grooms look after the horses at the Fort Jamesons base and travel with you on safari caring for them at wilderness camps. The saddles used are either McClellan style, a comfortable cross between an English and western saddle, or Australian Stock saddles both of which are very comfortable for long hours of riding over varied terrain. There are also some English saddles for those who prefer. Saddle-bags are provided where necessary. The rider weight limit is 95kgs (about 15 stone).



Riding Safaris normally include between 4 and 7 hours riding each day, although there is a shorter trial ride on the first day and a shorter ride in the morning of the last day. Riding often starts early in the morning, at day-break, when it is cool and the game is best and finishes in time for a late lunch at the next night's camp, having stopped for refreshments along the way. Safaris are run for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8 riding guests and are lead by a qualified guide, either Cor Carelson who manages Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris with his wife Louise, or 'West' Mmanoko. Cor is South African and as well as guiding professionally, has a diploma in Nature Conservation, has worked for a charity in South America dedicated to preserving the Andean Cloud Forest and also as estate manager for a racehorse stud in England! He is an easy going, enthusiastic and very approachable guide who is also fun to ride with. 'West' is from Botswana and started work as a groom about 4 years ago. He has a passion for horses and conservation and began leading rides himself last year. He and his horse, 'Sahara' are a regular sight on the plains of Mashatu and he has been an inspiration to all his co-workers. As well as a guide, riding groups are generally accompanied by an experienced local groom or back up rider trained by Louise and Cor.

Pace The going in the Tuli Block includes dry and sandy river-beds, rough and rocky hills, steep river banks, open sandy plains dotted with scrub and thick woodland. On safari the riding pace will depend on the terrain but generally safaris are at an energetic and varied pace with opportunities for long canters, zig-zagging through the scrub or across open plains.

Riding Experience To participate in a safari you must be a reasonably competent rider as you are riding in an open area where there is big game including elephant and lion. Although you don't have to be an expert over jumps or in competition (there are opportunities to jump small logs etc if you wish), you should be comfortable and in control on a horse at all paces (including long fast trots and canters) when riding with a group and should be used to riding in open country over varied, sometimes tricky terrain. You should also be relaxed and secure in the saddle so you are able to stay on your horse if it reacts suddenly, or needs to move quickly out of trouble. You will always enjoy your safari much more if you are also fairly riding fit and if you do not ride regularly, we recommend you accustom yourself to the time you will spend in the saddle with regular training before you go. The minimum age for safaris is 16 years, although occasionally younger children, who are strong, confident and competent riders, will be accepted if part of a private group booking a safari exclusively.

Terrain The terrain in the Tuli includes dry, open sandy plains that are dotted with acacia trees and jutting granite outcrops, forests of mopani trees and groves of fever and Mashatu trees that line the banks of the Limpopo River. In the winter months, April / May to September / October, the river-bed is often dry and the whole of the region is semi-desert. In summer, after seasonal rains, it can be wet and very green with the Limpopo running strongly and pronounced vegetation types - riverine forest, Acacia woodland, open grassy plains and true savannah - creating a very different environment.

Game The Tuli Block provides a wonderful habitat for elephant and is also known for its population of eland, the argest of the antelope, and the other African 'Giants' - giraffe, lion and the huge kori bustard. There are also many different species of plains game in the area including impala, wildebeest, zebra, kudu and nyala, predators such as hyena, leopard and cheetah and also monkeys, baboons, warthogs and crocodiles. Generally game viewing is best between June and October, the drier months when there is no grass cover. Bird life is prolific with about 300 species visiting or breeding in the area and spectacular birds of prey are often seen hunting over the open plains. During the safari there are sometimes chances for guided bush walks or for game drives after riding, the latter an ideal opportunity to see predators such as cats close up. There is also usually plenty of time to relax in the late afternoon and for bird watching from camp.



Accommodation The Two Mashatus Camp is a comfortable, semi-permanent base camp at the confluence of the Limpopo and Majale Rivers - the first night on the Tuli Safaris and four nights on the Lodge to Lodge Ride is spent here, and this is also the base on Two Mashatus Safaris and for Combined Big 5 Safaris run in February, March and November. The camp is a short distance (15 mins drive) from the Fort Jameson homestead where the horses are based. At Two Mashatus Camp, all tents have their own long drop loo and also a private shower behind the tent. The camp also has a dining area built in local style with a palm thatch roof. Other nights on Tuli Safaris are spent at a selection of wilderness camps, set up at carefully selected locations across the Mashatu Reserve. In winter months (April to October) the first night of any safari is at Two Mashatus Camp and you then ride to a selection of temporary 'fly camps' set up in different areas. Accommodation at all fly camps (except when staying at Kgotla Camp, which is set up in an old leadwood 'boma', a traditional African enclosure that was originally the tribal court for a local community which has since relocated to western Mashatu) is in large walk-in A frame tents. Tents are furnished with comfortable beds made up with sheets and duvets. At Kgotla you sleep out under the stars on stretcher beds draped with mosquito nets and set up around the camp-fire. Fly camps have a hot 'bucket and pulley' shower shared between guests and shared 'long drop' loos, also tables and chairs for meals. The fly camps are set up ahead of your arrival by staff who also attend to the chores whilst there, cooking meals, heating water for showers and so on.



Meals You will be well fed on these safaris with three freshly cooked meals a day. When riding on Mashatu, the day normally starts with a light breakfast of porridge and / or toast or muffins and fruit, with tea or coffee to drink. Then there is often a break out riding for a snack - perhaps a sandwich and piece of fruit - and when you return after riding or when you reach your new camp, there is a substantial lunch, usually buffet style with a varied menu of quiches, pies, salads, bread and cold meats followed by fruit or a cooked pudding. Dinner is two or often three courses, perhaps roast beef with trimmings or a traditional 'braai' (barbecue) served around the log fire at fly camps or at a long table set up under the stars when staying at Two Mashatus Camp. Menus are carefully chosen and varied and there is always plenty of freshly baked bread, vegetables and salads. Vegetarians can be well catered for with prior notice. Wine, beer, tea, coffee and a selection of soft drinks are included.



Safety You will be given an introductory talk on all aspects of the safari on arrival. Each ride is led by a qualified guide who carries a rifle when riding at Mashatu and also a radio and first aid kit and is accompanied by a back up rider or local groom. There is also a comprehensive medical kit at the base and when riding there is radio contact with the offices at Mashatu for emergencies. A mobile phone is also generally carried although coverage can be limited.

Weather Summer months in this part of southern Africa are September to April and it is generally hottest from October to February, with temperatures up to about 38 degrees Centigrade at midday. It can rain in October although the rainy season is usually November / December to February. The coolest months are May to August (winter) when midday temperatures reach about 28 degrees C and the area is dry and desert-like. During these months and in early September, it can be quite cold in the early mornings and evenings (dropping to about 4 or 5 degrees C), but even at the coldest times of year, days are normally sunny and warm.

What to bring We will send you a clothing list with suggestions of what to bring when you book.

Itinerary The daily itinerary on safari may vary depending on the movement of game and the weather but the following is an example of the itinerary planned for the 7 night Tuli Safari and for a 5 night Two Mashatus Safari (NB these are only examples of what is planned and may be varied in your guide's discretion if the weather, movement of game, group ability or other conditions require) Please enquire for the Lodge to Lodge itinerary:

Tuli Safari example itinerary:

Day 1 (Met at Johannesburg airport and transfer of about 5½ hours to Botswana border). Arrive at the Pont Drift Border Post or Limpopo Valley airfield. You will be met by a representative of Limpopo Valley Horse Safaris who will drive you to Two Mashatus Camp after customs and immigration formalities have been cleared (about 30 mins drive). Shown to your tents and settle in before tea and a chance to meet other guests and Cor and Louise your hosts and guides. After tea, a short drive to the stables where the horses are based for a first evening ride along the banks of the Limpopo River to try them. Return to Two Mashatus for sundowner drinks and dinner under the stars. Night at Two Mashatus. (D)

Day 2 Start the day at sunrise with tea, coffee and a light breakfast before the short drive (and a good chance for early morning game viewing!) to meet up again with the horses. Then, setting off at about 6.30 am, ride in a north-westerly direction heading towards Jwala Camp set up on the banks of the Jwala River. You will spend about 6 or 7 hours in the saddle today, with a stop en-route for refreshments and to stretch your legs and plenty of time to watch and enjoy the game and changing scenery you see along the way. A late lunch when you arrive in the new camp and time to relax in the afternoon. Dinner prepared for you over an open fire and the night in camp. (B,L,D)

Day 3 An early wake up call heralds a new day and meet for tea or coffee and a light breakfast around the log fire. Mount up and set off riding, crossing basalt ridges and following ancient elephant trails with some long canters making up for time and slower going crossing the ridges. A ride of 4 hours or so, then a 'Bush Lunch' followed by a further 2 hours riding in the afternoon to reach the night's camp, Kgotla, an old tribal count from a local community that was relocated to the banks of the Mocloutse River on the western periphery of Mashatu. The open-air traditional African enclosure is made of leadwood logs set around an old Mashatu tree and after sundowners overlooking the Mocloutse River as it meanders across the landscape, dinner will be served around the large central log fire. The night under the stars listening to the cacophony of sound that is the African bush orchestra at night! (B,L,D)

Day 4 Tonight is also spent at Kgotla leaving a full day to explore the area nearby, dotted with wonderful sandstone outcrops and dramatic sandstone formations, including the famous Solmans Wall. Ancient civilisations harboured their wealth in between these hills where two mighty rivers, the Limpopo and the Mocloutse, meet. About 4 or 5 hours riding today, usually a long morning ride leaving time to explore on foot in the late afternoon. (B,L,D)



Day 5 An early start and after breakfast around the fire, set off riding towards a spot where the dry river bed is overhung with Liana or Baboon vines and where the next camp, Liana Camp, is set up. The route crosses large open plains where there are chances for exhilarating long canters, often alongside wildebeest and zebra. Today's ride is the longest ride of the safari, 7 or 8 hours and after a stop half way for lunch, ends at Liana where a well-deserved sundowner is waiting. Dinner and overnight Liana Camp (B,L,D)

Day 6 After breakfast prepared over an open fire, set off riding. The going is a little slower at first today exploring the banks of the Mojale and Matabole Rivers as you follow their courses north towards the Zeederberg site. The route takes you up and down river banks and through riverine forest, hopefully with many game sightings and fabulous photo' opportunities along the way. Arrive at camp in time for lunch, served under an old Mashatu Tree, where a century ago, transport riders had their midday break before finally reaching Fort Tuli. After 5 or 6 hours in the saddle, there will be time to relax in the afternoon and for a late afternoon walk, an opportunity to stretch your riding muscles and to see some of the smaller creatures and plants you might miss when riding. Return to camp for sundowners around the fire and a delicious dinner. Overnight Zeederberg Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 7 A quick breakfast before heading off to explore the new area. Today's ride gives you a good idea of the history of this pioneering area - the destruction of Bryce's Store in a battle on the banks of the Pitsane River was one of the major events of the Anglo Boer War and remnants of the store can still be found on Mashatu. There are also big herds of antelope in this area and some big open plains that are perfect for a really good gallop, if you are lucky alongside wildebeest and zebra! About 5 or 6 hours riding ends at the comfortable Two Mashatus Camp on the banks of the Limpopo. After lunch explore the river bank on foot or go on a game drive which might be a good chance to see big cats close up. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Breakfast and then a final ride along the banks of the Limpopo River, skirting the edge of Nel's vlei and heading back towards the stables. After a ride of about 2 hours, arrive at the stables where you say farewell to your horses before the vehicle transfer back to Two Mashatus for an early lunch. Pack up and prepare for departure to either Pont Drift Border Post or the Limpopo Valley Airfield. (Transfer back to Johannesburg airport) (B,L)

Two Mashatus Safari Example itinerary (5 night)

Day 1 Arrive at the Pont Drift Border Post (transfer from Johannesburg airport). You will be met by a representative of Limpopo Horse Safaris who will drive you to Two Mashatus Camp, the base for your stay, after customs and immigration formalities have been cleared. Shown to your tent and settle in before a buffet lunch and a chance to meet other guests and your guide. In the afternoon you will be taken to meet and try the horses before a first evening ride around 'Nels Vlei'. Return to the stables bar for a drink and then drive back to Two Mashatus Camp for dinner and the night. (L,D)

Days 2 to 4 Woken at sunrise and after tea or coffee and a snack breakfast you are driven to the stables and mount up for a morning ride. You might follow the zeederburg route, which takes you through areas of historical importance and to an old Boer war site with much of the going on large open plains, which are great for long canters, perhaps in the company of wildebeest and zebra. Return to Two Mashatus Camp for lunch and then time to relax during the early part of the afternoon, before tea. After tea ride out again for about three hours until sunset, returning to camp for dinner after which there may be an optional night game drive - a wonderful chance to see nocturnal game such as leopard and hyena (extra charge). Nights spent at Two Mashatus Camp. (B,L,D)

Day 4 Breakfast and a morning ride before transfer to the Ponto Drift border post for your onward journey / transfer to Johannesburg. (B)



2009 DATES

Tuli Safaris (7 nights)

5th to 12th April	24th to 31st May	16th to 23rd August
19th to 26th April	5th to 12th July	6th to 13th September
26th April to 3rd May	19th to 26th July	18th to 25th October
3rd to 10th May	2nd to 9th August	25th October to 1st November
17th to 24th May	9th to 16th August	

Lodge to Lodge Rides (7 nights) (please enquire for itinerary)

7th to 14th June	26th July to 2nd August
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Two Mashatus Safaris - dates on request, November, February & March

Combined Big 5 Safaris - Please see our 'Saddlebag Safaris information sheet'

2009 RATES

Tuli Safari - £1750 per person (single supplement £875 per person)

Two Mashatu Safaris - £225 per person per night (single supplement £110 per night)

Lodge to Lodge Ride - £1960 per person (single supplement £980 per person)

These rates **INCLUDE** all riding, guiding and equipment, twin accommodation, meals (from lunch day 1 to brunch on last day), laundry service and drinks (a selection of soft drinks, beer and house wine).

The rate **DOES NOT INCLUDE** transfers from Johannesburg to the safari meeting point (the Pont Drift Border Post between South Africa and Botswana or the Limpopo Valley Airfield) and you need to **ADD** the cost of this. At the time of printing the recommended way to transfer is overland and we can book vehicle transfers for you between Johannesburg International Airport and Mashatu (about a 5 ½ hour drive in all). The current cost is £200 per person return. See further details on transfers below.

All rates **EXCLUDE** international flights and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), transfers from / to Johannesburg, any extra night's accommodation before or after the safari, any visa fees and any tips you may wish to leave staff.

Single accommodation - Please also note that rates quoted above assume twin accommodation and if you are booking alone and are not prepared to share a room / tent with another guest of the same sex if the safari / camp is full, the single supplement will be charged. The supplement is NOT compulsory for single bookings but it will only be charged if you are not prepared to share and wish to guarantee a single tent / room.

Private Tuli Safaris and Big 5 Safaris can be run for groups on request. Rates will depend on the number of riders in the group.

International Flights / Travel - The meeting place for the safaris is either at the Ponds Drift Border Post between South Africa and Botswana or at the Limpopo Valley Airfield. The best way to travel from London is generally to fly to Johannesburg in South Africa and (at the time of printing) to then transfer overland from Johannesburg to Pont Drift (about 5 ½ hours drive - 315 miles). Vehicle transfers are arranged at set times at a rate of £200 per person (minimum 2 travelling - NB transfer rates are subject to change and should be confirmed when you book). The set transfer usually leaves Johannesburg at 08.00 on the first day. Transfers out side set times can be arranged at an extra charge but the Ponds Drift border closes at 16.00 so all transfers should leave Johannesburg before 10.00. It is sometimes also possible to fly - generally by private charter flight between Limpopo and Poklowane Airport (Pietersburg) in South Africa (about 50 minutes flight) and by scheduled SA Airlink flight between Poklowane and Johannesburg or if you prefer you can take a 2 hour overland transfer from Limpopo to Poklowane. At the time of printing air transfers are not available but if you are interested in this option please contact us for an update.

If you prefer to hire a car and drive yourself to Ponds Drift then you will be met at the border at about 13.00 and your car can be left there safely. You will then be driven on to Two Mashatus Camp (about 30 minutes). After the safari you will be driven back to Ponds Drift.

For flights to Johannesburg we recommend a direct overnight flight from London - British Airways, South African Airways and Virgin all fly direct from London to Johannesburg every day, usually departing between about 19.00 and 21.00 and arriving JHB between 07.00 and 09.00 the next day. **Please call us if you would like more flight information, a quote for a flight inclusive holiday or if you would like us to book flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213**

General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Botswana or South Africa for a holiday only and staying less than 30 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Botswana but Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A are recommended and you will also be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(updated 07/05/09)

