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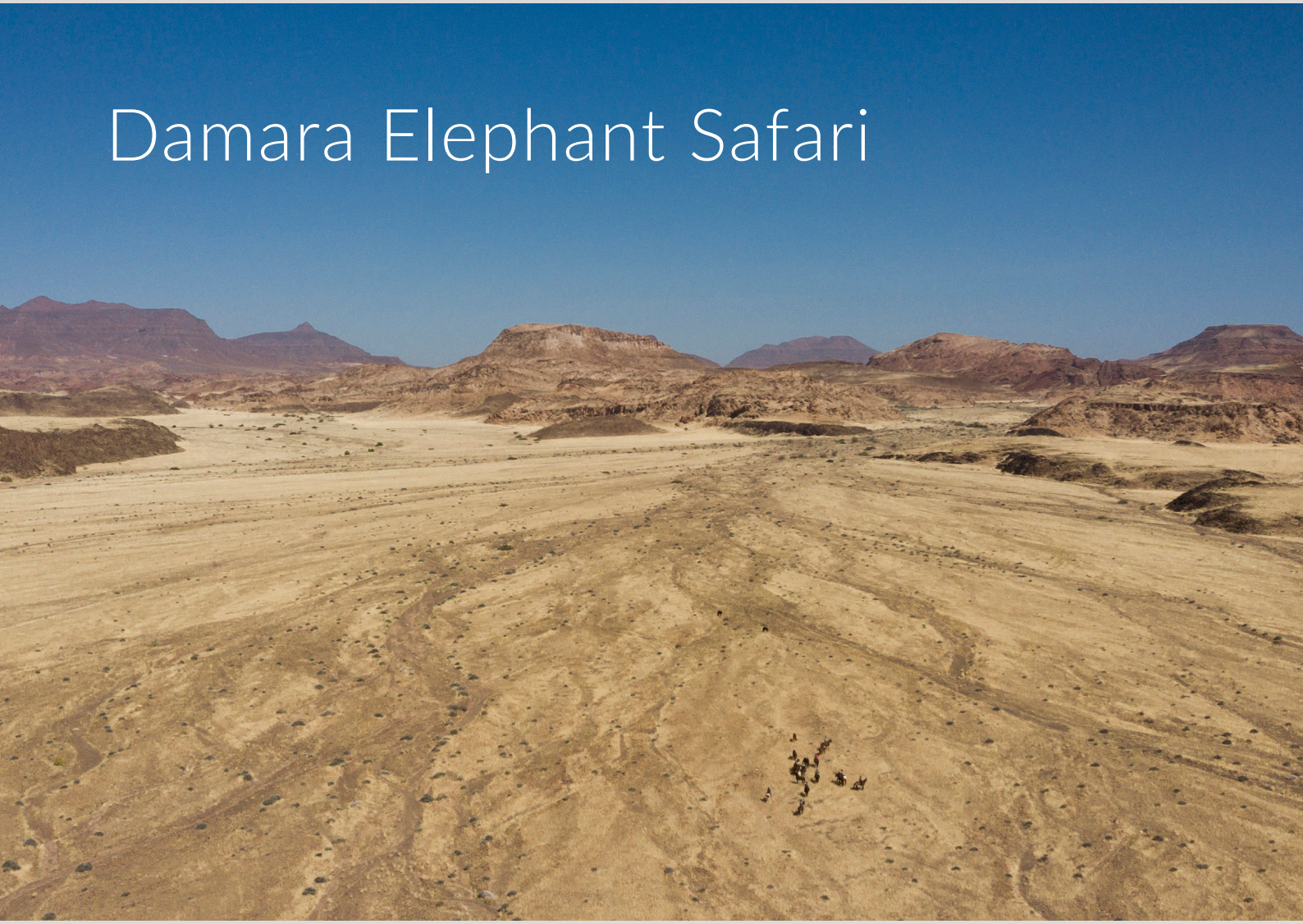
Damara Elephant Safari



Damaraland is a spectacular part of Namibia, almost inaccessible, with amazing colours, vast open spaces, ancient craters and remnants from prehistoric times, not to mention the infamous Skeleton Coast.

OVERVIEW

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Damaraland is a spectacular part of Namibia, almost inaccessible, with amazing colours, vast open spaces, ancient craters and remnants from prehistoric times, not to mention the infamous Skeleton Coast. You may also encounter some wildlife, all of which combine into a tremendous adventure.

This ride is a completely mobile safari from Twyfelfontein in Damaraland to Henties Bay on the Skeleton Coast of Namibia. It traverses a very remote area, parts of which are only accessible by 4x4 vehicles. All the equipment is brought along on two back up vehicles so the camp is fairly simple, yet still welcoming and comfortable at the end of a long riding day.

This trip is mainly an endurance style ride – experiencing the landscape which changes from day to day and the challenge of crossing a remote inhospitable area on horseback. There is more wildlife to be seen at the start of the ride, especially during the first three days, thereafter the area becomes dry and harsh and cannot sustain large numbers of animals. The rhino, elephant and lion move great distances in Damaraland and they are not always present in the area where you ride, thus it's more a lovely surprise to encounter these animals rather than a certainty that you will.

Camp life has a leisurely pace, days begin at sunrise with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee. After a hearty breakfast you start riding around 8am for four to five hours, stop for lunch and a siesta and then another couple of hours riding in the afternoons.

- Discover ancient bushmen rock engravings at Twyfelfontein (World heritage site), home to the world famous lion man engraving
- Track Desert adapted elephant and rhino through the river beds of Damaraland
- Dramatic desert landscapes
- A chance to get involved with Save the Rhino project
- 20 – 50 km riding per day at all paces and over rough terrain
- Not suitable for inexperienced riders since encounters with elephant, Rhino and even Lion are possible
- Rustic fly camping and sleeping under the stars
- 11 day riding safari starting and finishing in Windhoek

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Please note *this is a sample itinerary only and locations/camps may change.*

Day 1 - Windhoek

You will be met on arrival at Windhoek International Airport and transferred to a local guesthouse. Here you meet up with your host and guide Andrew Gillies for a pre-ride briefing and dinner. Your overnight stay is on a half board basis to include an evening meal and breakfast. (*Drinks excluded here*).

Day 2 - Twyfelfontein

After an early breakfast you begin the seven hour road transfer to your first camp, near Twyfelfontein. Lunch will be provided en-route, travelling through some spectacular Namibian landscapes and stopping off at the world heritage site rock engravings at Twyfelfontein itself.

You arrive at camp in time to meet the horses and crew before settling down to supper. Your riding safari is on a full board basis to include all meals, local drinks and all riding activities.

Day 3 to 6 - The Rivers

This morning, with the rising sun at your back, you begin your westward journey on horseback to the distant Atlantic. In these ephemeral river systems, the cycles of rainfall dictate the seasonal movement of the wildlife (which is not concentrated), but possible to encounter Elephants, Rhino, Oryx, Springbok and other desert-adapted animals.

For the next four days, you ride through huge glacial valleys and impressive Tableland mountains, giving a snapshot of a land of great antiquity. Evenings are spent around the camp fire, enjoying an array of home cooked, delicious meals, and great company. Your riding safari is on a full board basis to include all meals, local drinks and all riding activities.

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Days 7 to 10 – The Great Plains

After breakfast this morning, leaving the river valleys behind, you now cross the vastness of the open plains with the striking massive of the Brandberg (burning mountain) from a dramatic backdrop. For the next four days you explore the endless great plains, allowing for some fast-paced riding as you approach the dramatic Messum Caldera, the eroded remains of a collapsed volcano.

Your last ride takes you to the ocean at last! The spectacularly formidable Skeleton Coast, apparently so called for the wrecked hulks of stranded ships which dot the coastline. Within this area you may experience some diverse weather conditions, from hot desert easterlies to cold south Atlantic westerlies - a place of extremes! Your riding safari is on a full board basis to include all meals, local drinks and all riding activities.

You spend the last night of your holiday in the small coastal town of Henties Bay in a private house enjoying spectacular views over the Atlantic Ocean. A farewell meal of freshly caught Atlantic fish, cooked to perfection over the coals awaits your arrival. (*Drinks excluded here*).

Day 11

This morning you will be transferred back to Windhoek International Airport, a drive of about five to six hours. You arrive in the early afternoon where you will then continue with your own onward travel arrangements.

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LODGES

All riders stay in guest farms/ lodges/ guesthouses on the first and last nights of the ride. These accommodations vary but are all comfortable, twin-bedded rooms, mostly with en-suite facilities.

CAMPING

Large dome-shaped tents (two participants sharing) with stretcher bed and bedroll consisting of an insulating mattress, down duvet and pillow (it all zips up for extra warmth), folding chairs and with hot showers. Many guests choose to take their camp bed and swag and sleep out under the canopy of the desert stars - a very special experience. Camp is normally pitched at sunset with meals prepared on the open fire, usually a 'braai' or 'potjie' (casserole) - typically Namibian and often a surprise. Most guests are happy to share accommodations - but you may request on booking single accommodation in the guests houses at the beginning or end of the trail subject to a supplementary charge. They will always try to supply a single tent if requested – but sometimes due to varying circumstances this may not always be possible.

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2021 TRAVEL DATES

June 23

August 20

2021 SCHEDULED DEPARTURE COSTS (GBP £)

Per person sharing a tent is £4,900
Single supplement £190

RIDING SAFARIS

**Please note that many riding safaris have a maximum weight limit of 84kgs, please let us know if you are close to this.*

LUGGAGE

Needs to be packed in soft-sided bags which are well-labelled. If over 15kgs, please ensure it's split over two bags.

THE ITINERARY INCLUDES

Airport transfers

Other transfers

Accommodation and meals as stated

Drinks while on the ride as stated

Shared activities as stated

National Park and concession fees

THE ITINERARY EXCLUDES

International and regional flights

Visas for British Citizens; Namibia is free of charge on arrival

Drinks at the guesthouse in Windhoek on arrival and at Henties Bay on your last night, restaurants, petrol station stops en-route

Laundry

Travel insurance

Tips and gratuities

Other personal spending

Single supplement (if not willing to share) - please ask us for the cost.

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Horse type
Varied

How many horses
+/- 50

Horse size
14.2 – 16.00

Max. number of riders
11 - 12 – depends on the ride.

Horse standard
Fast, sure footed, fit

Minimum age
None – riding experience important

Rider standard
Depends on the rider -
good intermediate to very experienced

Rider weight
85kg - charge for extra horse if over that

Hours in the saddle/day
Varies – but usually around five to six hours

Ride speed
Varies – but often fast

Itineraries/ Set departures
Yes

Tack type
Skirted endurance saddles

Non-riders
Can travel in back up trucks

What other activities are on offer
None during ride

Camp/Lodge
Trail ride – camping

Does it close at all
Season runs from March to October

Big 5
No. Desert elephant, rhino, giraffe, cheetah, jackal and antelope species in Damaraland

Climate
Mild - can get some hot days and does get cool/cold at night in the winter months

Terrain
Varied- rocky, open plains, sand dunes, beach

Luggage limit
20 kg – soft bags only