

A ride across the Namib Desert with Alice Gully



Travelling in September 2021

Prepared by: Alice Gully on: 01 October 2020

Telephone: 0131 297 6229

Overview

Crossing the oldest desert in the world on horseback is a journey of a lifetime. Central Namibia offers spectacularly fascinating contrasts: from Khomas Hochland Mountains and escarpment to the Kuiseb Canyon, Tinkas, Tumas and Welwitschia plains, Moon Valley, seasonal Swakop River, coastal dunes and the Atlantic Ocean.

This ride is not for the faint hearted, it is one of the toughest and fastest rides in the world and tremendously rewarding. It brings horse and rider together in patience and respect for one another.

Please note the itinerary below is a sample to give you an idea of what to expect. Routes may change to give you the very best safari experience based on weather conditions and location of wildlife.

- The maximum size of the group will be a total of 12 riders (not including guides)
- Expect to ride for 50 - 60kms a day at all paces and sometimes over rough terrain
- Dramatic desert landscape and breathtaking canyons
- Only for fit and experienced riders
- Rustic fly camping (in swagbags) and sleeping under the stars

Riding in Namibia is a real bucket list experience and I look forward to sharing this ride with you. This riding safari is very different to others you can take in Africa, with less focus on wildlife but instead appreciating the vast landscapes, deep canyons and ancient deserts. Camping out under the stars every night is a real treat and just adds to the overall experience. It's incredibly exhilarating too and one of the fastest rides Africa has to offer.

Summary of Arrangements

Date	Activity
Saturday, 25 September	Fly London Heathrow to Windhoek - overnight flight
	Alice Gully
Sunday, 26 September	Namib Desert Ride - Day 1 - River Crossing Lodge - 1 night
Monday, 27 September	Namib Desert Ride - Days 2 to 4 To the desert - 3 nights
Thursday, 30 September	Namib Desert Ride - Days 5 to 6 The Canyons - 2 nights
Saturday, 02 October	Namib Desert Ride - Days 7 to 9 Namib Plains to the Swakop River - 3 nights
Tuesday, 05 October	Namib Desert Ride - Day 10 Swakopmund - 1 night
Wednesday, 06 October	Namib Desert Ride - Day 11 Departure
	Fly Windhoek to London Heathrow - 1 night

Saturday, 25 September 2021

Fly London Heathrow to Windhoek - overnight flight

We gather at London Heathrow this evening where we check in for the overnight flight to Windhoek.

We recommend booking an overnight flight with British Airways via Johannesburg. These flights will be available 11 months in advance. The cost of these International flights are not included.

Alice Gully

I will meet you at the airport and be with you for the rest of the safari.

My love of Africa started before I had even stepped foot on the continent with an inspiring university lecturer while studying Zoology, who described various flora and fauna that I just had to go and see for

myself.

I left university and set off to Zambia and spent a few happy years working on Lake Kariba and then a riding safari outside Hwange in Zimbabwe. For the last 23 years I have ridden all over sub-Saharan Africa indulging in some of the most exciting safaris there are. Namibia offers the chance to ride on a safari that is so different to all the rest.

Alice has been there and done that and is the perfect safari host, she will make sure you are well prepared before the trip, share her packing tips for a comfortable safari, assist through immigration and visa queues, ensure you are suited to the right horse and make sure the tonic is cold enough at the end of a long day, and always with a big smile and sense of humour.



Sunday, 26 September 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Day 1 - River Crossing Lodge - 1 night



Today (at a time to be confirmed), we arrive into Windhoek Airport (Hosea Kutako). We make our way through immigration, collect bags and proceed through to the arrivals hall where we are met and then driven to River Crossing Lodge. Here we meet a Namibia Horse Safari company representative who will brief us about the ride.

Accommodation - One chalet

Includes - Breakfast

Only 3km from Windhoek, River Crossing Lodge is situated in a 6,500 hectare game reserve, so although close to the city you get the feeling of being tucked away from it all in the bushveld.

The lodge comprises 20 chalets, a lounge, a dining area and a pool. From the prime position of the wooden deck you are able to relax and look out over Windhoek.

Activities available from River Crossing Lodge include game drives, horse riding, guided or self-guided walks, mountain biking and a wellness centre. The 19 different species of game in the surrounding area include giraffe, wildebeest, sable, and roan. Leopard and cheetah are also spotted from time to time.



Monday, 27 September 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Days 2 to 4 To the desert - 3 nights



After an early breakfast this morning we head off by car, into the desert, an exciting journey of approximately four and a half hours, with a dramatic drop off the escarpment.

Arriving into camp, we meet the horses and the team before lunch is served. In the afternoon there is the chance of a visit to the Sossusvlei dunes, before returning to camp to be greeted by a traditional Namibian meal cooked over an open fire.

Day 3, our first riding day starts amid the encircling Naukluft (narrow gorge) mountains, a short introductory ride to get acquainted with your horse and the terrain.

Day 4, the ride takes us to the foothills and grassy plains on the edge of the Namib dune sea.



Thursday, 30 September 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Days 5 to 6 The Canyons - 2 nights



While Namibia's westward-flowing rivers rarely flow, they all run through deep valleys etched at a time when Namibia was wetter and sea levels lower.

We cross two river canyons on our way to the Namib plains: the Gaub and the much larger Kuiseb which forms a dramatic end to the 400 km long Namib Sand Sea. Following the tracks of mountain zebra which crisscross the steep sides of the canyon, a technical descent requires some walking/scrambling into and out of the canyon. The high, narrow walls of the canyon preserve an almost year round supply of precious water for the wildlife to enjoy.



Saturday, 02 October 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Days 7 to 9 Namib Plains to the Swakop River - 3 nights



The next few days offer fast paced riding on the wide grassy plains on the Namib. Dry watercourses, distinguishable by the long lines of acacia trees marking their courses, are a much favoured resting place of giraffe, springbok and oryx. As the plains become more arid, strange shapes form and disappear in mirages and dinosaur-like plants, the gnarled *Welwitschia Mirabilis*, tell of a land of great antiquity and of tremendous solitude.

The Swakop River basin has eroded a truly ancient geology (600 million years old), exposing a bizarre moon like landscape. Curious black ridges of dolerite intrusions form whalebacks on the hills surrounding the river basin.



Tuesday, 05 October 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Day 10 Swakopmund - 1 night



Today is our last day of riding, we ride down to the Swakop River to the coastal dunes and then, at last, the Atlantic Ocean. Our first view of a town in days. The last stretch of riding is along the soft white beach sand of Swakopmund. Tonight's accommodation is a comfortable guesthouse while the horses enjoy their well-deserved rest in a large sandy paddock with a wonderful view of the sea. After sundowners, we enjoy our last memorable meal together, reminiscing over an adventure unlikely to be forgotten.



Wednesday, 06 October 2021

Namib Desert Ride - Day 11 Departure

This morning, after an early breakfast, we drive back to Windhoek (the drive takes about five hours) arriving in time for departing on flights from Windhoek International Airport.

Fly Windhoek to London Heathrow - 1 night

Meet the overnight flight back to London Heathrow, where we will say our goodbyes and make our way home.

We recommend the overnight flight with British Airways via Johannesburg, these will be released 11 months to departure.

Pricing Details

The itinerary includes:

Accommodation as stated

Meals as stated

Drinks (except in guest houses/lodges and restaurants)

Riding and other activities as stated

Road transfers as stated

A visit to the World Heritage site of the Namib Sand Sea at Sossusvlei

Please note: your itinerary has been quoted on a "willing to share" basis on your riding safari. You will only be required to share accommodation, with a same sex guest, if the ride is fully booked over your dates. Please let us know if you would like us to provide a single supplement.

The itinerary excludes:

International and regional flights

Visas for British Citizens; Namibia - issued free of charge on arrival

Vaccinations:- You are visiting areas with malaria; please seek advice.

Drinks and refreshments at all lodges, restaurants and petrol stations en-route.

Travel insurance

Tips and gratuities

Other personal spending

Extra horse charge for riders 85kgs and over (in riding gear) - please let us know if this applies

Single Supplement (if unwilling to share accommodation at guest houses and on the safari)

Aardvark Holiday Prices

Unlike many other companies, we forward buy the foreign currency needed to pay for a booking at the time a trip is confirmed. We will not therefore surcharge you because of exchange rate fluctuations after receipt of your deposit.

Please check in online for your international and regional flights 24 hours before your return.

The below price is only valid for the following seven days

Total price for your travel arrangements: £4,740

Why Choose Aardvark Safaris?

Honest independent advice from knowledgeable and experienced Africa experts.

We've all lived and worked in Africa and tailor make high quality holidays in areas we know and love. We use camps and lodges we've tried and tested, and understand the importance of working with some of Africa's best guides and hosts. We listen to your wishes and use our experience to tailor a safari that suits you perfectly. We will provide hassle free arrangements including full itinerary planning, providing the most effective routings and avoiding unnecessary (and costly) stopovers. We are completely impartial in our advice (no-one at Aardvark works on commission).

Holidays with 100% financial protection.

Our licencing with ATOL and insuring of non-flight holidays protect you should either we, or our suppliers, cease trading. Please remember that if you do decide to book direct with companies in Africa, or through a non-bonded company here in the UK, your money is at risk.

Avoid the pitfalls of booking direct with an African operator.

Booking direct you have zero financial protection. Can you pay with a credit card? If so what are the hidden charges? If you cannot pay by credit card then you will have to arrange a money transfer at your expense. When you get there what happens if nobody is there to meet you? If you have any complaints with the quality of your holiday how do you try and arrange compensation, you have very limited rights. Our registration number is 3800138 and our status can be checked at Companies House.

You pay no more booking through Aardvark than if you arranged the holiday yourselves.

Typically there are no additional costs to you for having the benefit of our advice. Our suppliers pay us a commission for each booking which is how we make our profit. In some instances we are able to plan trips more cheaply than you would yourselves. If you think that we are charging you more for accommodation or services than you can find direct, we are happy to look at the difference and see if we can remedy the situation. If you would like a breakdown of the quote, we will happily provide this.

We can't guarantee to be competitive with flight prices as sales and special offers released on airline websites sometimes undercut the rates we are given direct by the airlines. If you can find cheaper flights than us you are welcome to book these independently of our travel arrangements.

Once a trip is confirmed we will not charge you for any currency fluctuations.

The price of your holiday stays the same even if there are currency movements before you travel. We buy in our currency when you pay your deposit covering you against fluctuations.

There if you need us - 24 hours 7 days a week emergency phone cover.

We provide a full emergency back up service, both from ourselves and through local representatives on the ground, in case you have any difficulties whilst you are away.

Service doesn't stop when you leave the UK, you get great service in Africa too.

We've worked with the majority of our suppliers for years and by visiting regularly we know we're still working with the best. By speaking to clients after they've travelled we feed back their thanks and occasionally niggles too which helps to keep standards high.

Committed to looking after the environment.

Our holidays allow you to enjoy wildlife, local communities and remote areas of Africa, and conservation is important to us. We work hard to ensure that the benefits tourism can bring to an area are not offset by negative impacts. We have supported the Koiyaki Guide School in the Masai Mara since its inception, giving local people the chance to take a part in the future of their area.

Recommendations are at the heart of our business and we are able to supply you with a reference.

Over 70% of our clients come to us through recommendation and many of our clients are on their second or third trip with us. Although we started in 1999, and have grown in the intervening years, we still act in the style of a small company and have retained our personal touch with the owners still involved on a day to day basis. See the many online reviews to see what clients say about us or let us know if you would like to speak to a past client.