

SAMPLE ITINERARY - 10 Night Riding Safari

Day One: You will be met at Maun airport by a member of our team who will assist you with transferring onto the small plane (either a Cessna 206 or 208) that will fly you into camp. The flight takes around 30 minutes and offers a bird's eye view of the Okavango Delta – it is amazing how tiny the breeding herds of elephant look from the air. A safari vehicle will be waiting for you at the camp's airstrip for the 45-minute game drive – or an exciting boat ride (depending on the time of year) - into Macatoo Camp where staff will greet you with a welcome drink. After settling into your tent, you will be offered afternoon tea and homemade cake during a briefing from your guide before heading to the barn for a ride. The pace of the evening rides are deliberately slower giving you the time to enjoy the sunsets and make the most of the photo opportunities offered by the birdlife and game. After a hot shower and change, drinks and snacks are served in the comfortable mess tent ahead of a candle-lit dinner by the fire.



Day Two: Macatoo's cheerful "tent ladies" will provide a gentle wake-up call along with your choice of tea, coffee and rusks which are served to you in bed. A light breakfast is set up around the campfire ahead of the first long ride of the holiday. There is a wide selection of horses in our barn and Macatoo's experienced staff has the knack of putting together great horse and rider partnerships. Depending on the season, the morning ride may involve some galloping across dried flood plains, swimming through flood waters or pushing on through seas of tall grass to watch giraffe, zebra, antelope, elephant, buffalo - whatever is out there. A hearty lunch is served every day – you will need it after all those miles in the saddle – the chicken pie is a firm favourite and wine is always offered to encourage a little nap before tea and the evening ride. Sundowners are often enjoyed out in the bush before heading back to camp to freshen up. Dinner is always a great occasion at Macatoo, but there is no guarantee that it is always eaten in the same place.....



Day Three: After listening to the dawn chorus over tea, coffee and rusks in bed, you will have shaken off any first day riding nerves and be eager to get back on a horse. Heading off in a new direction, the landscape will be quite different to yesterday offering fresh game viewing possibilities and a varied pace of ride – guides are always hoping to see the rare semi-aquatic antelope, the red lechwe. After lunch, the camp pool is an ideal place to cool down, or stretch the muscles that are feeling the effects of the time in the saddle. The deck is a great place to soak up some sun, read and doze, but keep your binoculars and cameras handy as zebra, buck and elephant frequently pass in front of camp.



The swimming pool is also a popular watering hole for families of baboons, the babies on their mother's backs are particularly cute. After some lovely homemade cakes or scones, evening rides can be swapped for some sunset fishing from boats, or from the banks of pools where hippos wallow. Game drives, walks or boat rides – depending on the time of year – are also available for those wanting time away from the horses or for non-riding partners and guests.

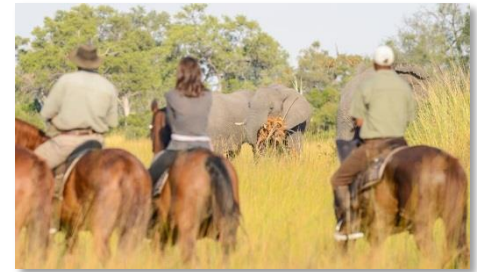


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Day Four: We ride through different country, making our way through clouds of bushman hair grass to plains dotted with fig trees. We might encounter giraffe or shy antelope while passing through mopane woodlands. Our pace increases as we break out onto the flood plains, often disturbing troops of baboons. Return to the camp for an afternoon spent at leisure, or the possibility of hiring a helicopter for an hour to gain access to remote and otherwise totally inaccessible parts of the delta with spectacular photographic results. Finish off the day with a night drive by spotlight, where the resident clan of hyena are often spotted. Bushbabies leap from branch to branch through the terminalia and acacia trees – only seen by the brights of their eyes. If lucky, the spotlight will pick up the glint of a leopard's sultry stare. If we find lion on the drive or know where they are – perhaps we might have seen them earlier from horseback (and avoided them!) – we can spend quite some time watching them from the safety and comfort of the vehicle, over snacks and drinks, as they wake up from their long afternoon rest, groom each other, and prepare for a night of hunting. It is always such a highlight of the holiday to see a big cat – we will have lots to talk about around the dinner table that night.



Day Five: This morning we ride deeper into the heart of the delta, to corners of the wilderness where vehicles simply cannot reach – horses can get much closer to the big game. We cross high palm islands which offer great sweeping views of the Delta plains – are those anthills or giraffes in the distance? Riders may have joined non-riding friends and family for a walk, drive or boat ride – but all guests will reunite for an unexpected champagne breakfast under a large baobab tree to swap 'survivor' stories from the morning. By now, you will have settled into the wonderful rhythm of camp where great adventure, creature comforts and downtime are combined to provide a break. After tea and a gentle sunset ride, you may find yourself at our fabulous tree house where you will have the option to spend the night out, sleeping high up in the tree canopy under the African night sky. From there, it is fascinating to watch and listen as the birds and animals prepare for night – by roosting, travelling or preparing to hunt. The barking of baboons and calling lions provide an unforgettable soundtrack to a night out under the stars. Your guides will stay too, providing great company and peace of mind – for many guests, this is a real highlight of a holiday to Macatoo.



Day Six: After waking up in the treetops, you are whizzed back to camp by vehicle to change before riding off into new terrain. By now, you will be very 'riding fit' and eager to pick up the pace even more. You will canter through clouds of bushman hair grass, onto vast plains dotted with fig trees. You will pass giraffe along the way or shy antelope who disappear into the depths of the mopane woodlands. By the time you reach the expansive flood plains, you will be riding quite fast – you will know your horse well by now and both of you relish a quicker pace and the sense of exhilaration. On the way back to camp, we will ride through deep reedy areas full of bird life including open-billed storks, squacco herons, slaty egrets, egyptian geese and many more before a hearty lunch with the option of a night drive, mokoro or boating trip for all. Don't suffer "choice panic" – there is plenty of time left to experience all the activities that Macatoo has to offer. As ever, dinner by the fire will be special. We are not anticipating anyone will want to be in bed too late after the previous night's tree house sleepover!



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Day Seven: Don't forget your pocket cameras today, but store it carefully because things could get rather wet! We will explore the shallow and deeper flood plains; they look so pretty, scattered with flowering lilies. The reflection of the trees – and your horse – will provide great images to capture. Many of our horses love to eat the lilies as they wade – sometimes swim – through the water. Here, the Cape buffalo can gather in large numbers (anything between a dozen and 2000 at a time). We have to creep up on them using the islands as cover. You will be keen to review your pictures after lunch, but don't forget to re-charge your cameras in the mess tent! The evening offers a quiet ride with the by-now familiar smell of wild sage and the warm African dust as the sun goes down, transforming the skyline into a cocktail of oranges and reds. Dinner will be a memorable one with another surprise location in store.....!



Day Eight: If you haven't yet tried fishing, perhaps today is the day to rest your legs and experience the Delta without worrying about your horse. Most of our favourite fishing spots come with a guaranteed hippo sighting (and sounding!) – ask Bernie to do his impersonation of one, even the hippos get confused! It is a bit distracting if one thrusts himself out of the water, wide-mouthed, but make sure you have your camera handy to capture the moment. Many of our spots are on routes that are regularly used by family herds of elephants, if you hear a distant splash, jump into the vehicle and enjoy the spectacle from the safety of your seat. A cool box will always be provided so you can have a drink while you wait for 'rush hour' to pass. The birdlife around you will be very busy, particularly towards sunset. Be careful not to take too long to reel in your bream, the kingfishers are very quick, but the African fish eagles are bigger – both will wait for you to do the hard work before they move in to steal your fish prize! We will probably head back to camp in the dark, leaving you just enough time to shower and change before dinner and an evening of fun.



Day Nine: Today we enjoy a fast ride from island to island, tracking game and running with them on open plains – you won't even think twice about galloping by now! – to a bush brunch in a surprise location. The sound of popping corks and Macatoo's cheering staff will be the first you'll know of them waiting in the bushes to surprise you. Don't worry, your horse won't even blink. An afternoon snooze, read or bird watching from a hammock beckons – the time is ticking by fast by now, and you will be keen to take in as much of the bush as your senses will allow. The afternoon ride will give you a chance to take some pictures – the light will be sublime. If we are lucky, the team will join us somewhere special and bring the cool box so we can watch the sun go down over a drink or two. Could such a perfect day be topped off better than with a fireside dinner under the stars, candles and silly games before falling asleep to the sound of the frogs?



Day Ten: You will be familiar enough with our range of horses to request your favourite from the barn and Mod and his team will do their very best to grant your wish for your final long morning ride. By now, you will have seen most of Africa's Big Five and riding alongside moving giraffe, antelope and zebras will have become a thrilling, almost daily activity. Make the most of the last bush breakfast, or lunch out in the bush and savour the sights and sounds around you. A last afternoon by the pool sees many



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guests desperately trying to even up their 'farmer's tans' – brown arms and face, pale bodies and legs! You may feel torn over how to spend your final sunset outing – an evening game drive with a spotlight is often fun, picking up a local clan of hyena, or lions out on the hunt. Above your head Bushbabies leap from branch to branch through the terminalia and acacia trees – only seen by the brights of their eyes. The last meal will be special for many reasons – rivalry over Macatoo's silly party games may well come to head with a final competition to settle who is the real champion of the holiday.... at Jenga!

Day Eleven: The dawn call of the African Fish Eagle has, by now, become as familiar as the morning alarm at home. The delivery of tea or coffee in bed heralds the start of your last morning in camp and you will be anxious to make the most of your final ride. We stay quite close to home, splashing through water on the vast open plains, home to blue wildebeest and Burchell's zebra. The riding pace will be deliberately quite fast as we cram as much fun as possible into the final hours – be prepared to get wet as we approach deep reedy areas full of bird life including open-billed storks, squacco herons, slaty egrets and egyptian geese. You will return to Macatoo along the myriad of waterways lined with large trees, before arriving back at the barn where you say a sad farewell to your horse. There will be just enough time to shower, change and pack before the game drive to the airstrip, carrying a picnic lunch to tide you over until your return to the real world. Don't worry, you can always come back – so many of our guests do!

Macatoo Camp

We are sure you will never forget the true sense of freedom which you will experience on your horse with us in the Okavango Delta in Africa.



Please note this Horseback Safari is exciting but not strenuous. This itinerary only serves as a guide; all scenarios are dependent on the season and levels of the Okavango flood. During cooler months one longer ride may replace the normal morning and evening rides. African Horseback Safaris reserves the right to alter the itinerary in any way and leaves this to the discretion of the guides. Local weather conditions may also affect game movements.

Also note that depending on individual itineraries some guest might miss their ride on the day of departure or arrival specifically when flying to/from Kasane.

