

# ReitSafari HorseTrails - Africa's Greatest Canyon Trail

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## ▶ **Introduction**

### **Africa's Greatest Canyon Trail**

This trail certainly meets the aspirations of the Central Namib Desert as well as the Damaraland-Skeleton Coast Trail. With a combination of dramatic canyon landscapes, spacious Desert plains and the mighty Orange River, this trail offers the opportunity to experience both inaccessible countryside and real wilderness areas as well as riding without limitations. The Fish River Canyon area is internationally recognized as one of Africa's most magnificent sites; it is also the second largest canyon in the world. Riding will commence in and along the upper Fish River canyons where you will experience part of the canyon not seen by many. After the endless Nama Karoo, the plains invite you for everlasting canters, only to be stopped by the Orange/Gariep River, which forms the southern border of Namibia. Distances covered daily will vary between 20 and 55 kilometres.

**Africa's Greatest Canyon Trail** crosses over three private parks: Fish River Canyon Park, Gondwana Park and Aussenkehr Park, altogether covering an area of about 220 000 ha. These Parks fall within the Nama Karoo Desert biome and are on the fringe of the transitional area between Nama Karoo and Succulent Karoo, the Orange River basin at Aussenkehr being the most arid part of the Nama Karoo biome. Aussenkehr Park is also home to a small Namib Feral Horse population, descended from the original wild horse population at Garub in the Namib Desert.

### **Details:**

Windhoek-Windhoek: 12 days, 11 nights, 81/2 days riding, a visit to the main view point at the famous Fish River Canyon, a drive along the Orange River and an afternoon/ sunset drive to the famous Wild Horses of the Namib Desert.

### **Conditions:**

Since this trail is similar to the Namib Desert Horse Trail, you should be physically fit as well as riding-fit, have a good sense of humor and sufficient riding experience. It entails six to eight hours riding per day, all paces.

## ▶ **Itinerary**

**Day 1:** You will be met by the River Crossing Lodge at Windhoek international airport and taken to the lodge located in a game reserve high overlooking Windhoek for lunch depending on your arrival time. In the afternoon we will commence on our journey south and after approx 3 hour drive arrive at the Kalahari Anib lodge where we overnight. In the evening- dinner with the group.

**Day 2:** After breakfast the group heads towards the Fish-River-Canyon area. Transfer of about 5 hours including a picnic along the way. Arrive early afternoon at Fish-River Mule Station meet your guides and local crew. Time for the first afternoon ride. Unpack your luggage into a smaller bag for the following 2 days to come. The terrain is inaccessible for larger trucks and we therefore take small bags only.

**Day3:** After relaxing breakfast. Riding over variable terrain, reaching the amazing plateau, and continue along the edge until we reach HorseShoeCamp. During lunch break we admire the stunning, breathtaking view! In the afternoon we ride along serpentines until we reach Koelkrans (the cooling rocks) with a huge waterhole surrounded by a very steep and narrow canyon. Enjoy a relaxing swim in the usually very dry area. We climb up to Horse shoe Camp for overnight.

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**Day 4:** From Horse Shoe Camp to Augurabis. The ride might follow a section of the Fish River where few people have set foot before. Who knows what is waiting for us! Whether we ride in the canyon or on zebra tracks around the top will depend on the water level in the river. The ride in the riverbed is difficult and demanding but then we make our way up on a steep tract to the Plato before we cross some plains to find the unexpected forest at Augurabis in the Gaap River. Augurabis is situated on Gondwana Park, a private park of about 120 000 ha dedicated to conservation and tourism. Stunning views, unbelievable space and awesome scenery! Tonight we stay at Canyon outpost camp.

**Day 5:** Augurabis to Mountain Camp. Ride through endless savannah into an area strewn with granite boulders and charismatic quiver trees, to arrive for lunch at Mountain Camp. The afternoon is free for leisure and relaxation and individual photographic excursions or sundowner walks. Enjoy the luxury of en-suite bathrooms, made-up proper beds and a very special evening at Mountain Camp.

**Day 6:** Mountain Camp to Kanebis We follow the road towards the Fish River Valley and then parallel to it to arrive upon wide-open plains. You will most probably spot quite some different game along the way and enjoy the evening stories around the open campfire.

**Day 7:** To Fourie se Gat (a hole dug by Mr. Fourie) We meet unlimited, ever changing scenery and camp at a cozy spot...and look forward to an unforgettable sunset over the Fish River Canyon "bad lands" to the west, the granite kopjes behind you and the sandy plains of the Gamkab basin ahead of you, with Norotshama peak on the southern horizon.

**Day 8:** Fourie se Gat to Gamkab Camp. In the morning we follow the road towards the Fish River Valley and then parallel to it to arrive upon wide-open plains. We meet unlimited, ever changing scenery and camp at a cozy spot next to the Gamkab River.

**Day 9:** From Gamkab Camp to Boulders camp. Riding over everlasting plains to a patch of isolated sand dunes on Aussenkehr Nature Park, then on again to a camp surrounded by stacked boulders, which could only have been the work of giants. Again, riding is not limited to a specific route, as we can roam freely in a vast environment.

**Day 10:** The last ride. Stunning contrasts again; ride from the wide-open plains into the very narrow Kings Throne canyon, onto a viewpoint surprisingly displaying the Orange/Gariep River with its vineyards in an otherwise barren landscape. Another happy canter and some strolling through the vineyards to finally untack at Norotshama River Resort, on the banks of the Orange River. Go for a swim in the pool (or river) and enjoy sundowners on the river and dinner at the lodge.

**Day 11:** Maybe go for a short canoe trip down the river and leave late morning for Klein-Aus Vista. Driving along the Orange River to Rosh Pinah and then along the Sperrgebiet (Restricted Diamond area) to Aus. In the afternoon set off on a sundowner excursion to the Wild Horses of the Namib Desert with an experienced guide. Last night at Desert Horse Inn.

**Day 12:** Depart for Windhoek after an early breakfast, a seven-hour transfer. Alternatively an option is possible to fly to Windhoek or Cape Town from Rosh Pinah airport (on day 11 when passing through Rosh Pinah) or from Luderitz airport (one hour transfer from Klein-Aus Vista). You may also like the option of staying an extra night at Luderitz to see the diamond palaces of a bygone era and experience this quaint ghost town and the seafood that it offers. Fly back to Windhoek.

**Take note:** Routes can be changed due to unpredictable weather and other unforeseen conditions!

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## ► Trail Dates and Costs

Trail Dates for 2010:

**22.04.2010 - 03.05.2010**

**16.09.2010 - 27.09.2010**

Costs: **€ 3.550,00 (includes 15% Value Added Tax)**

**Included:** Transfers from Windhoek airport to River Crossing and onto Mule Station; full board and lodging at homesteads and lodges and good ReitSafari fare while camping on the trail; scenic drive to the main lookout point at the Fish River Canyon; transfer from Norotshama Lodge via Klein Aus Vista Lodge with an excursion to the Wild Horses and transfer back to Windhoek airport.

**Excluded:** Drinks at lodges and homesteads; souvenirs; tips for local guides and crew; flights, and transfers if applicable, from Rosh Pinah or Lüderitz. Extra nights at Luderitz.

## ► Terms and Conditions

### **Terms of Payment:**

We confirm your reservation after payment of 30% of the total price into our Reitsafari Acc.:

### **ReitSafari's banking details:**

ReitSafari Horse Trails  
Account No. 24099 0439  
Standard Bank Main Branch  
Branch Code 08237200  
SWIFT Code SBN MNA NX  
261 Independence Avenue  
Private bag 13177 Windhoek

...and receipt of your transfer slip as well as the completed booking form by fax or mail.

The balance is to be paid before the trail starts. In the case of a cancellation with your side we are not liable for refund of your deposit.

Changes of dates and routes are possible due to circumstances beyond our control.

**As we are not liable for any loss, damage or injury on your side, your travel insurance should include accident, health cover and emergency rescue.**

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## ► General Information

### **Horses and Saddles:**

"One of each breed", i.e. Arab, Haflinger, Trakehner, ranch horses, even cross-breeds of the famous wild horses of the Namib Desert; they are small to medium-sized (14.3 to 16 hands) sure-footed horses raised on rough terrain, some of them with experience in endurance riding, and every one of them a kind, reliable companion that deserves the very best treatment and care. We use comfortable equitation and Western-style saddles to properly fit the horse as well as the rider.

### **Terrain and Distance:**

Rocky hills and riverbeds, gravel plains – at times the going is tough and difficult. On average we cover 20-40 km a day, spending six to eight hours in the saddle. Pace depends on terrain and temperatures as well as on fitness and weight of riders. Walk, trot, canter and gallop. Because Namibia has such wide-open spaces it is possible to accommodate up to 15 riders on a trail plus 2 - 3 riding guides.

### **Camping:**

Large dome-shaped tents (two participants sharing) with camp beds and swags (canvas bedrolls) consisting of lambskin, duvet or quilt and pillow; folding chairs, hot showers. Luggage is transported on trucks; the riders ride across bush or desert as the crow flies and meet the back-up vehicles at campsites. Camp is pitched at sunset; meals are prepared on the open fire, usually a 'braai' or 'potjie' (casserole) - typically Namibian and often a surprise.

### **Equipment:**

Bring a warm sleeping bag as nights can be very cold (can be hired in advance if required), a set of warm clothes including a jacket or all-weather coat (for the occasional cold front,), a wide-brimmed hat, a woolly hat, a windcheater, a warm sweater, 2 neckerchiefs, long-sleeved shirts, sun lotion, 2 pairs sunglasses on strings, at least 3 changes of comfortable riding clothes (tried and trusted sportswear rather than brand-new fashionable jeans), short riding boots/trainers/chaps/mini-chaps according to preference, leisure wear, towel, water bottle, torch, gloves, moon bag, lip balm, talcum powder, a small overnight bag for everything you need for 2 days, sufficient batteries for cameras and spare memory card. We strongly recommend riding caps (riding without protective headgear is at your own risk).

### **Conditions:**

Fitness, good health, experience in horse riding and handling horses are essential. You need not be an accomplished dressage rider or show jumper, but you must feel totally at ease on the back of a cantering horse; and be prepared for the riding adventure of your life!

We have a weight limit of 85 kg - anyone heavier will need to pay a 30% surcharge for an extra horse as recommended by the World Horse Welfare (ILPH International League for Protection of Horses).

## ► Contact us

We also offer to handle or help with other travel arrangements around our country. Non-riding companions are welcome to join the trucks.

Please let us know, if you need some more details.

### **ReitSafari Horse Trails**

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