

ReitSafari HorseTrails - Desert, Dunes and Diamonds Trail

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▶ Introduction

Desert, Dunes and Diamonds Trail

Old pioneer and ox wagon route across Restricted Diamond Area. A Trail with a great historical background! Diamond Area 1, locally called “The Sperrgebiet” or “Forbidden Area”, lies in the south western corner of Namibia. This area of 26000km² has been well protected for about a hundred years by tight security enforced by Diamond Acts and thus remained inaccessible for humans and thus virtual wilderness.

Join us on the new special trail across this area offering incredible scenery and historical background as we travel along the old route of the ox wagons where a huge amount of evidence still remains. Fantastic riding over untouched lands! A real privilege!

Details:

Windhoek - Windhoek: 10 days, 9 nights. 7 days riding, 2 days transfers, 1 day sightseeing: Kolmannskuppe (ghost town), sunset drive to Wild Horses

Conditions:

As with our other trails you have to be physically fit as well as fit to ride; you should have a good sense of humour and extensive riding experience. You will spend six to eight hours in the saddle every day; all paces.

▶ Itinerary

Day 1: Meet 8h00 at the Tourist Info kiosk in Windhoek where airport busses and taxis stop (Windhoek central, opposite Kalahari Sands Hotel). Drive about 8 hours from Windhoek over central highland to outskirts of the Namib and through awesome scenery of the southern desert with a picnic along the way. Meet hosts, horses and crew and enjoy a most beautiful sunset at Klein Aus Vista on the edge of the southern Namib Desert.

Day 2: Start riding from Klein-Aus Vista past World War I ramparts and on pass the remnants of an old car full of bullet holes from the diamond police attempting to stop two thieves - it is said that their ghosts come back in full moon nights searching for the stolen diamonds they hid in the valley! We then head to a secluded fountain (only flowing after very good rains) called Leopardenschlucht (Leopards Valley).

Day 3: Leopardenschlucht to Letterkuppe. Follow the old transport route across foothills with a variety of succulent plants, one of the biodiversity “hotspots” of the Succulent Karoo Biome. Leaving these foothills the first spectacular views of the Sperrgebiet are encountered; and in an area of several “island mountains” is our first camp on the edge of the Sperrgebiet (Diamond Area).



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Day 4: Letterkuppe to Tsaukaib. Our pace will generally increase over wide open plains and unlimited space of the Sperrgebiet. While finding old horse shoes and bits and pieces of an old kettle or pot along the way we unexpectedly go over the rise - to see a breathtaking view and a historic camp where people have camped and even temporarily lived over a hundred years ago. You will also see some of the brown hyenas spores dotted around camp, and maybe be lucky enough to even see one passing by in the moonlight ! A stunning camp to explore.

Day 5: Tsaukaib to Kaukausib. From Tsaukaib we ride south to a place called Ukama where remnants of wells for watering oxen on the killing trek across the desert are sandblasted through time, and if you dig, you could actually find a drop of water. After lunch we venture further across some ridges and into the Kaukausib riverbed where we should find one of the only fountains in the Sperrgebiet that flows throughout the year - Kaukausib meaning "hide away" in the Bushman language.

Day 6: Kaukausib to Grillental - From here on we approach the coast with its unpredictable weather, riding through undulating terrain past interesting rocky outcrops. In the afternoon we decent on to Grillental, an old Diamond Police Station and some deserted buildings from an era gone by, now only residence for some Barn owls.

Day 7: Grillental to Rotkuppe. Rise in the morning to a dense fog that the coast has blown in around the desolate buildings. With the true experience of life one hundred years ago we ride across fascinating badlands in a northerly direction to the last camp before civilization. Lunch and night camp at dry pans which form a perfect setting for extraordinary photos. Our last night camping under the magnificent stars.

Day 8: Rotkop to Lüderitz. The last ride, hopefully not in a sandstorm, since we cross the famous "wind band" where the dunes walk several meters each year. Just imagine riding in deep dune sand to meet the truck for watering the horses near the last outpost on the historic route of a century ago, then over diamond dumps, abandoned shovels and buckets in the desert, just to come around a hill with a surprising view on the ocean while wild antelope and flamingo present a rare impression of natural beauty - then gallop onto the beach, while your mind is overwhelmed with an abundance of emotions! We have lunch on the beach, then load the horses to return to Aus, while we find our guesthouse in town and enjoy a goodbye dinner after an appreciated shower!



Day 9: After breakfast we visit the ghost town Kolmanskuppe with its fascinating, but deserted wealth buried under dune sand. After lunch drive back the easy way to Klein-Aus Vista. We enjoy the cosy lodge again after an unforgettable sunset drive to the Wild Horses of the Namib Desert.

Day 10: Depart after an early breakfast; transfer back to Windhoek. Alternatively fly from Lüderitz airport to Windhoek or Cape Town. Be sure that you take special memories and maybe dream of another ride in the awesome desert of Namibia.

Take note: This Trail is subject to special permission and requires police clearances, copies of passports! Should we for reasons beyond our control not be granted access to the Restricted Diamond Area we offer an alternate route for the same rates and dates! Routes can be changed due to unpredictable weather and other unforeseen conditions!

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► Trail Dates and Costs

Trail Dates for 2010:

29.05.2010 - 06.06.2010

Costs: **€ 2,750.00 (includes 15% Value Added Tax)**

Included: Transfer from Windhoek to Klein-Aus Vista, full board at lodges/guesthouses and good ReitSafari fare while camping on the trail, excursion to the Wild Horses and Kolmannskuppe, picnics, transfer back to Windhoek.

Excluded: Bottled and canned drinks on the trail and at lodges and homesteads; souvenirs; tips for local guides and crew; flights, if applicable, from Lüderitzbucht; airport transfers.

► 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.

► 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.

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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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