

# Kalahari Dry, Botswana

## Itinerary

We recommend spending a couple of nights at the Royal Tree Lodge in Maun before the ride - this is where the horses live and so you will get the chance to ride a couple of horses before they are transferred to the pans.

### Day One

Arrive by air from Maun. Settle into Camp Kalahari, nestled amongst the acacias and Mokolwane palms of Brown Hyaena Island, on the edge of the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, adjacent to the Makgadikgadi-Nxai Pans National Park. Camp Kalahari is a simple, yet comfortable camp with a traditionally built thatch library, living/dining area and a swimming pool for those hot Kalahari days.

During the Kalahari Green safari it isn't possible to ride across the pans themselves as the water makes the ground sticky and boggy, you should be able to ride at the edge of the pans surface, but there are plenty of opportunities for long canters across the grasslands. This is a great time to potentially see the zebra herds migrating through.

During the Kalahari Dry safari there are less zebra and wildebeest but as the pans dry out there are fantastic opportunities for fast riding across the vast expanses of salt crust. When at Xau Xai Fly Camp you may also get the opportunity for a moonlit ride across the Pans themselves, sleeping out underneath the stars (depending on the full moon calendar).

Please note that the itinerary may change depending on the weather at the time and other local conditions, but always with your best interests at heart. The following is a possible itinerary for your ride within the Kalahari and Makgadikgadi Salt Pans.

Head off after tea in the beautiful afternoon light, for an introductory ride; primarily to match horse and rider and for your first experience of the beauty of this magical area. Return to camp for sun-downers followed by dinner, before the lions of the Kalahari commence their nightly prowling.



### Day Two

Up with the dawn, a light breakfast is followed by a long morning ride through the "land of a thousand islands". Stranded on the ancient lakebed, these sand dunes covered in palm trees are one of the most beautiful and fascinating areas of the Botswana wilderness.

At the height of the migration season, the islands and grasslands are awash with zebra, wildebeest, hartebeest, ostrich and predators! The white encrusted pans between the islands provides excellent going for the horses, but if there has been a lot of rain then many of these areas will be full of water attracting several migratory birds.



Return to the camp for lunch and rest through the heat of the day in the welcome shade of the camel thorn trees or cool off in the camp swimming pool.

In the late afternoon enjoy a game drive and with the aid of a spot light look for nocturnal desert inhabitants such as brown hyaena, armadillo, bat eared foxes, aardwolves, porcupine, honey badgers and perhaps even a black maned Kalahari Lion. Arrive back at Camp Kalahari in time for dinner.

### Day Three

Today is a long ride eastwards to Xau Xai Fly Camp, so an early start is imperative. Be sure to pack a few essentials for the next two days of adventure.

The journey takes you away from the edge of the Pans and through the mopane and acacia woodlands, interspersed with short grasslands allowing for lovely long, relaxed canter.

You will pass where the famous Chapman's Baobab once grew. It was acknowledged to be one of the largest trees in Africa, measuring 27 metres around its girth, and was the campsite of early explorers like Livingstone and Selous when they pioneered the area. Unfortunately some of this grand old tree fell down at the end of 2015, but the fallen remains can still be seen.



Whilst the area is rich in birds of prey, bustards, korhaans and numerous other unusual dry woodland bird species; there is also a chance that you will sight kudu and the odd elephant bull.

By lunchtime you reach the famous Greens Baobab proudly positioned alongside the well-travelled Missionary Road, traversed by David Livingstone on his journeys northwards. Break for lunch at the adjacent Gutsa Pan under a stand of palm trees where you may find Stone Age artefacts and the hunting blinds used over millennium by the Bushmen.

Siesta through the midday heat and after tea, continue the journey on to Xau Xai Fly Camp.



Camp will be made up of comfortable dome tents, a central mess tent, long drop loos and bucket showers. Enjoy a long cool drink as you watch the sunset followed by dinner out under the magnificent Kalahari sky.

#### Day Four

Wake up to a steaming hot cup of coffee and a light breakfast before heading off on your horses in search of the Kalahari's meerkats. With your horses tethered you will proceed on foot in to the midst of the group. Due to an ongoing habituation programme by Uncharted Africa Safari co. it's possible to get up close and personal with these captivating creatures.

Remember, they are not tame – just used to your non-threatening presence. On chilly mornings, you might well find a meerkat snuggling up to you for warmth. Or, in the absence of a termite mound or tree, using your head as a lookout post. By spending quality time with these social, superbly adapted animals, you will be able to see how they interact with each other and their environment.

You also get the chance to see the desert through the eyes of a meerkat – which, despite the fact that it's only a foot off the ground, is a pretty spectacular vantage point, and definitely one of the most special and memorable game experiences you will encounter in Botswana



As the day warms up, leave the meerkats to continue foraging. Mount up and follow the well-worn game trails that lead to the resident herds of zebra and large congregations of ostriches attracted to the area by permanent freshwater in hidden waterholes.



Return to Xau Xai for lunch, a refreshing shower and a siesta in the shade of the mess tent.

In the late afternoon maybe take a walk to a nearby permanent waterhole to look for many of the Kalahari's special bird species or maybe, as the sun sets, go for a gentle evening ride to the edge of the pans and watch the hundreds of sand grouse fly in for a drink. Return to camp, if you're lucky by moonlight for another beautiful evening under a Kalahari sky with a delicious dinner around the campfire.



### **Day Five**

Wake for a light breakfast before mounting up and heading homewards at a fast pace, sometimes riding along the edge of the Pans and at other times heading into the woodlands and open grasslands where the zebra and wildebeest graze.

Arrive at Camp Kalahari in time for a refreshing drink and lunch.

Later there may be the chance to go on a vehicle game drive or bush walk before your final Camp Kalahari lamp lit dinner.

### **Day Six**

The horses are loaded early and trucked to their home base in Maun. A non-riding day commences with an early morning walk with Zu/'hoasi Bushmen trackers.

Uncharted Africa has pioneered and passionately supported cultural tourism in Botswana since the company's inception. They have been working closely

with the Zu/'hoasi people of the Western Kalahari for many years and are privileged to have a small group of these extraordinary men to guide guests on a morning's walking safari.

Offering a window into the past, they'll show you how they have survived in this harshest of environments, using their vast and ancient knowledge of plants, animal behaviour and survival skills.



After brunch it is time for you bid farewell to Camp Kalahari in preparation for your onward journey. You arrive into Maun in time to connect with a flight back to Johannesburg or to continue your holiday in South Africa.