



TRIP ITINERARY

SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE RHYTHM OF AFRICA

TYPE: XC

A TRULY UNFORGETTABLE PRIVATE AFRICAN SAFARI BY MOUNTAIN BIKE – 9 NIGHTS, 10 DAYS

TRIP DETAILS

Experience wilderness Africa with local guides. Group limited to 6 participants. See lion, giraffe, leopard, zebra, elephant, rhinos, buffalo, hippo...and much more. A trip of a lifetime!

2008 DATES

Wednesday, March 5 to Saturday, March 14, 2008
Wednesday, April 2 to Saturday, April 11, 2008
Wednesday, May 7 to Saturday, May 16, 2008
Wednesday, June 4 to Saturday, June 13, 2008
Wednesday, July 2 to Saturday, July 11, 2008
Wednesday, August 6 to Saturday, August 15, 2008
Wednesday, September 3 to Saturday, September 12, 2008
Wednesday, October 1 to Saturday, October 10, 2008
Wednesday, November 5 to Saturday, November 14, 2008

LAND COST

\$2395 Canadian

2009 DATES

Wednesday, March 4 – Friday, March 13, 2009
Wednesday, Apr 1 – Friday, Apr 10, 2009
Wednesday, May 6 – Friday, May 15, 2009
Wednesday, June 3 – Friday, June 12, 2009
Wednesday, July 1 – Friday, July 10, 2009
Wednesday, August 5 – Friday, August 15, 2009
Wednesday, September 2 – Friday, September 11, 2009
Wednesday, October 7 – Friday, October 16, 2009
Wednesday, November 4 – Friday, November 13, 2009

2009 LAND COST

\$2625 Canadian

JOINING IN

Johannesburg, South Africa

*This trip is unique for Big Mountain: while in Botswana Game reserve the riding is not very technical; the climbs and descents are minimal to nil, whereas on the first 4 days we are in mountains where the riding is more challenging physically but still not very technical. For safety purposes we ride in a loose single file most of the time.

A little story...

We saw two vultures circling about 50 meters off a small hill in the distance. Our guides observed that a kill must have recently occurred. Minutes later dozens of vultures

appeared, as if from nowhere. "This usually means that the predators are no longer there and the vultures are about to drop in for leftovers, a good time to check it out," they said. As we got closer they began whispering and using hand gestures. We crested a hill and there they were hanging around a dead Impala, an antelope-like animal. The vultures were fighting, picking away at the carcass. As we got closer they started to fly away, their 3-meter wingspan and long neck was impressive. The flock circled a few times above us then disappeared. As we approached we inspected the various animal tracks and the guides deduced that the animal had died from natural causes as no predator tracks were to be seen. Soon thereafter the sun began to dip close to the horizon and it was time to ride back to camp. I followed Johan, a local 24 year-old Botswanan who was built like Lance Armstrong and had a warm and gracious personality. He was pulling away from me with a gun swung over his back as a strong and hot evening wind was blowing across the Savannah. We were racing the setting sun as nighttime is when most of the predators came out: lions, hyenas etc. At night they became real predators. I knew however that most animals would steer well clear of humans as they would smell us long before we'd see them. Still, I was working extra hard to stay with Johan.

ITINERARY

The following is a general outline for The Rhythm of Africa trip.

DAY 1, WEDNESDAY – MEET IN JOHANNESBURG, TRANSFER TO MISTY MOUNTAIN.

This morning you will be met by your guides at your Johannesburg hotel. Today we transfer 5 hours to the Misty Mountain Lodge on the Long Tom Pass. Upon arrival we'll set up our bikes, do a short orientation ride and perhaps visit the local brewery.

DAY 2, THURSDAY – THE TRAVERSE

After a hearty breakfast we ride out towards the Mount Anderson reserve. Starting at 2200 meters we 'keep to the peaks' with sweeping views of the Sabie valley to the south. We end with a rush as we drop towards the spectacular Golden Cottage, our home for the next 3 days.

The Golden cottage is a remote luxury ranch style homestead, catering for a max of 6 guests in 3 double en-suite rooms. Trust us you'll love it. Monica, ably assisted by Lemos and Margeret will ensure every meal is an experience.

DAY 3, FRIDAY – ALPINE HEIGHTS

We're on holiday, so no wake up calls here. After a light breakfast we climb to above 2000 meter. We emerge on highland plains and cruise down easy winding paths, herding eland and zebra as we go, eventually dropping into the Spekboom river valley. We break for a swim and then head back to the cottage for a late lunch. There will be time to have a siesta before we depart for sundowners on a high ridge.

DAY 4, SATURDAY – BUSHMAN'S TRAIL

After breakfast we ride the Bushman's trail - short steep climbs, winding single track along an escarpment with sweeping views of the valley below, through late 1800s gold prospecting scars, flowing descents with technical and steep sections, past San rock art and over stream bridges. We may encounter wildlife including zebra, black wildebeest,

baboons and eland. We'll lunch somewhere on the trail and be back at the cottage in the afternoon for down time.

DAY 5, SUNDAY – PILGRIMS REST

We wake to a hearty breakfast and set for perhaps the biggest day's ride of the trip. Over Olifant's Nek we descend the course of the upper Blyde River mostly on forestry dirt roads, through unparalleled vistas, as it tumbles down to the 1800's Gold mining town of Pilgrims Rest. We lunch in a local tavern and have the afternoon to explore the historical village. We spend the night in the Pilgrims Rest Royal Hotel.

DAY 6, MONDAY – TRANSFER TO MASHATU WILDERNESS, BOTSWANA

We depart early for the 7hr drive to Pont Drift border post from Misty Mountain Lodge where we meet the Botswana team. After sandwiches and packing the Land Cruisers we ride from the border to our 1st wilderness camp.

The wilderness camps are set up prior to our arrival and contain basic amenities to offer comfort without distracting from the wilderness experience. Meals prepared on open fires, hot water bucket showers, camp cots and cold beers all add up to an exhilarating night out. Because we prefer to sleep under the stars, we request participants to participate in an hours night watch - itself an unforgettable experience. Tents are provided dependant on the weather.

DAY 7-8, TUESDAY + WEDNESDAY – MASHATU WILDERNESS, BOTSWANA

We awake at sunrise to a breakfast of yogurt, cereals, toast and fruit. We ride a variation of paths and trails to reach the next camp by lunch time. We relax during the midday hours and then enjoy a sundowner from a vantage point in the afternoon.

The riding at Mashatu is very relaxed, although we ride for approximately 4 to 5 hrs a day, with many stops en-route. We often encounter wildlife including elephants, giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, impala, kudu, eland and others and occasionally see lions and leopards. The group is guided by 2 armed guides and we ride to certain safety protocols. A back-up vehicle is in radio contact with the group at all times.

DAY 9, THURSDAY – MASHATU TENT CAMP, BOTSWANA

After a breakfast and home brewed coffee, we ride out to the sandstone ridges of the Limpopo valley, through stellar moonscapes and gardens of Eden. We'll arrive at our Tented camp where we'll enjoy an afternoon of R'n'R and a final epic sunset.

DAY 10, FRIDAY – TRANSFER TO JOHANNESBURG

We wake up at leisure, have breakfast and pack bikes. We'll return to Pont Drift border post for the road transfer back to OR Tambo International Airport for return flights or to your hotel.

DETAILS

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

\$75 (only available on 2 nights)

FULL SUSPENSION BIKE RENTAL

\$300

GROUP SIZE: 4 MIN, 6 MAX (UNLESS A PRIVATE GROUP)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Expert local guides
- Luxury camping and deluxe hotels.
- All meals, local drinks, wines and spirits
- All transportation starting from your Jo'Burg hotel on Day 1
- Park entry fees
- Detailed pre-departure information
- Big Mountain t-shirt

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED?

- Airport pick-up and drop off from your hotel
- International airfare
- Personal travel and medical insurance
- Tipping to leaders and local staff
- Airport taxes and excess baggage charges (if any)
- Your bike and related equipment needed to ride

Optional pre-trip additions that we can book for you (2008 pricing):

- Airport transfer (provided by hotel): \$40 per person
- 4-star Johannesburg hotel: \$110 per person double occ, \$220 for single.
- Day Tour of Johannesburg and Soweto showcasing history and a visit to the apartheid museum: \$150 per person (including lunch)

Optional post-trip additions that we can book for you (2008 pricing):

- Kruger National Park's luxury Umlani bush camp: \$375 double occ., \$475 for single. All inclusive, 10% off if 3 nights or more. See website: <http://www.umlani.com/>
- 4 days in Cape Town: domestic flight from Jo'Burg to Cape Town, 3 nights accommodation (wineries, Table Mountain, Cape of Good Hope w/ penguins, etc). Price TBD.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

The **technical ability** required for The Rhythm of Africa is a Level I-II and above on our ability guide. In other words, a strong beginner, intermediate (or above) mountain biker will be fine. See website for more detail. For **fitness level**, participants must be in good condition and able to ride 3-5 hours per day and be able to exercise in heat. Please contact us for more information.

BIKE AND EQUIPMENT

We can provide a performance full-suspension mountain bike for rent for \$300 Canadian.

LODGING

During The Rhythm of Africa, we'll be staying in a variety of levels of camping and a few hotels too. The most "rustic" being with a staff of 5 to set up cots, cook all meals, clean dishes, set up outdoor shower, put cold drinks in the cooler, etc etc. It is not a camping experience that North Americans are used to! We also stay in dreamy luxury camps where tents have electricity and pools wait nearby and a staff of many to ensure that your stay is perfect.

CLIMATE

Expect days to range from 20-35 Celsius depending if we are in the highlands or lowlands and nights to cool down to 10-15 Celsius depending. We can also expect rain and spectacular thunder storms at times. We recommend bringing a variety of clothing – for cooler high mountain weather to hot days.

THE NEXT STEP

Call us toll free at 1-866-894-0220, or email at info@ridebig.com to confirm that there is space on this trip. Then, fill out our secure online registration form on our website. Make sure that you have read and understand our Terms and Conditions and Waiver. Upon booking, we will send you detailed pre-departure information to make sure that you are well prepared for the adventure ahead.

WHY BIG MOUNTAIN IS YOUR CHOICE

Big Mountain Bike Adventures is the pioneer for performance XC, all-mountain, DH and freeride mountain biking adventures. We know that to find the very best trails, you have to ride with locals. All of our trips are designed in part by local riders and often guided with local riders and professional Big Mountain guides. We aim to provide safe, quality trips and the best customer service to our participants.

REFERENCES

We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travellers.

QUESTIONS

Feel free to call us at 1.866.894.0220 or email info@ridebig.com if you have any questions. We are here to help!

CONTACT US

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