

# African Paradise, Mozambique

## Itinerary

### Day One

Transfer from Vilanculos Airport to your lodge.

You will be based at a guest lodge on the outskirts of Vilanculos.

After settling into your room, you have an opportunity to meet the horses and staff at the stables. After trying out your horse in the arena you head out for your first beach ride. This will be a slow, relaxing ride giving you a chance to become familiar with the horses and tack.

Early evening drinks will be served at the lodge followed by a fresh seafood dinner under the stars.



The following itinerary is designed so you experience the variety of riding and beauty of Vilanculos. However, the weather, tide times and the riding experience of the group may influence the content and running order of the days but you will be informed of this. There is one free day in the itinerary on which you can enjoy some of the other activities available in the area or simply relax and do nothing.

Please note that Mozambique is still a third world country and therefore things do not always run as they do in other Southern African countries. For example taxis can sometimes be an open back pick-up truck. You need to be prepared to be flexible and go with an open mind.

Please note that depending on the size of your group, you may, at times, be joined by other riders who are staying in the area.

The itinerary for your stay in Mozambique is flexible, but during your stay there will be a combination of different rides such as the ones detailed below.

(Approx. 2 hours riding)

### The Great Lake ride and Canoe Trip

After breakfast head over to the horses to mount up and set off on an inland ride on trails skirting African villages and vast natural fresh water lakes. The birdlife is normally fantastic and there is a good chance of seeing eagles, herons, harriers, rollers, pelicans and kingfishers.

There will be opportunities to canter along bush paths through African farmlands, past rural schools and the ruins of old Portuguese homesteads. The old farm roads allow for a fast pace as you continue inland towards the Govuro River.



A picnic lunch will be served on the grassy riverbank. The horses will be led home permitting you to enjoy a guided canoe trip along the river. Paddle along the picture-perfect Govuro River, through the lush river vegetation, looking out for native fish and listening to the magical calls of birdlife.

Dinner this evening will be a Mozambican barbecue.

(Approx 3 hours riding)

### Casa Rex breakfast ride and market tour

This morning you set off on an early morning ride that follows the beach northwards passing through the outskirts of town into a wide open bay, home to a myriad of colourful dhows. The ride continues through the bay with canters along the beach as you watch local fisherman make their way home. The ride ends with a delicious buffet breakfast at Casa Rex – Vilanculos' most exclusive resort.



After breakfast, you meet your local guide who will accompany you through the bustling and vibrant city market. The colourful displays and cacophony of noise will give you an insight into the lives of the local people.

Later make your way back to the lodge where you can siesta through the midday heat or relax at the pool. Alternatively you can enjoy a free day scuba diving, kiteboarding or deep sea fishing (all at an additional cost).

Lunch and dinner will be provided at the lodge.

(Approx 1.5 hours riding)

### **Benguerra Island ride**

With an early start from town a motorized dhow will whisk you through the Bazaruto National Park to Benguerra Island. A tasty packed breakfast is served on board while you take in the sea views and look for dolphins, turtles and rays.

You ride on Benguerra Island on horses which are based here. The island consists of massive sand dunes, freshwater lakes and white sandy beaches which make for a breath-taking ride. The varied eco system offers exceptional birding and large flocks of flamingo are often seen.



The ride continues with canters along sandy tracks onto a long beach past waving fisherman. Just before reaching the stables, there is the opportunity if you wish to swim with your horse.

After your ride a mouth-watering seafood lunch will be prepared for you by the boat captain and served on board as you island hop by sail to Margaruque.

Mask, fins and snorkels are provided and you are encouraged to enjoy some of the world's finest drift snorkelling along a vertical rock drop off. For those not keen on the water, you can relax or take a long walk on the beach.

At the end of a magical day return to Vilanculos, as the sun sets over the ocean, to enjoy dinner at a lovely restaurant.

(Approx 3 hours riding, depending on the tides)

### **Fishing village ride**

You can have a late morning with a relaxing breakfast and perhaps a morning swim before your ride begins at 11.30 am. You ride across a beach and up a red bank to the "Fingerprint of God"; a magnificent viewpoint overlooking the archipelago.

You continue through coconut plantations along the beach to Managlise Fishing Village.



Lunch is spent in a simple thatch shelter. You are likely to start off with a refreshing coconut drink and are then shown how to eat fresh crab and taste Matapa, a traditional Mozambique dish made from cassava leaves, nuts and coconut milk.

In the evening you will be driven into town and have dinner at one of the many restaurants.

(Approx 2 hours riding)

### **Beach and Bush ride**

A hearty breakfast will be served at your restaurant. Today's ride is a favourite with many as the route will take you along the old coastal main road running parallel to the beach before meandering up and wading across a small river estuary.

As you pass through small rural villages, young children will come to wave at the horses. As the local

population thins out there are opportunities for long safe canters through coastal bush. After a couple of hours in the saddle, a bush track through woodlands leads you down on to the beach with amazing views over the bay.



The long, deserted, safe, sandy beaches offer more opportunities for canters on the way back to the stables.

After a long day in the saddle, there is a chance for sundowners and a fine dinner at a local restaurant.

(Approx 3 to 4 hours riding)

#### **Red Dune ride, North beach**

After breakfast you will be driven over to the stables where you mount up and set off on an exhilarating ride through the outskirts of town and along deserted sand beaches to the Red Dunes on North Beach. There are plenty of opportunities for controlled canters on the wide open beaches before you climb up the giant red coastal dunes.

The panoramic views of the white sandbars and turquoise seas below are spectacular and one of the special highlights of this holiday.



Lunch will be served at a beachside restaurant overflowing with seafood specialties. After lunch you can stop off at a local arts and crafts centre that supports the local community and there will be plenty of time to explore and get some souvenirs for friends and family back home.

Relax by the pool in the late afternoon or take a stroll on the beach before you enjoy your final dinner.

(Approx 3 to 4 hours riding)

#### **Farewell ride and swim**

After a relaxed breakfast enjoy a short morning farewell ride up the coastline. The views over the bay and long stretches of unspoiled beach will be a memory you never forget.

Finish off your holiday with a wonderful swim in the sea with your horse.



You will be mesmerized by the grace, power and movement of the horses as they swim.

Please note that if the tide is out on your final morning, you will do the swim on another day.

Now there is time for just one more lunch before you bid farewell to Vilanculos.