

# SOUTH AFRICA - MOOLMANSHOEK

## ITINERARY

Moolmanshoek is a drive of approximately four hours from Johannesburg International Airport. Bloemfontein airport is around two and a half hours' drive.

We can arrange airport transfers for you. These are payable locally in cash and the cost is shared between all those travelling.

Arriving at the lodge in the early afternoon should allow time for an introductory ride. On your last day there is usually time for a final ride in the morning and transfers normally depart after lunch. You may need to vacate your room after breakfast so it can be made ready for arriving guests.

The itinerary is flexible to suit those staying. It takes into account the weather as well as the location of the wildlife. On some days you will set out on morning and afternoon rides, returning to the lodge for lunch; on other days you stay out all day with a picnic lunch out on the trail. In total you normally ride for around five to six hours each day and it's usually possible to swap a ride with a game drive.



Local conditions can sometimes cause variation in the riding routes and distances covered, but any changes are made with your best interests in mind.

The following is a description of possible rides you might do. The order of the riding routes may change.

Game Viewing Ride (half day)

Set off from the stables and make your way onto the open plains.

During the summer months, these grasslands are bursting with life. Young animals are born and are soon on their feet, following alongside their mothers. Out on the savannah there are often big herds of wildebeest to be seen. This is also a great place for some long rolling canters.

You might spot herds of impala, oryx and zebra. Perhaps you will catch sight of a warthog family hiding in the grasslands.

Moolmanshoek is also home to big herds of eland, with their characteristic spiral horns. Eland are the world's largest antelope; they live and graze in the mountains and are an impressive sight.



### Old Wagon Ride (half day)

From the lodge, head towards the distinctive 'Sphinx Outcrop' and follow the old wagon trail, with beautiful views along the way. Continue the climb towards the far boundary of the reserve, following the Versierskerf Mountain. Stop for a break far up in the mountains, where there is a short optional hike to the Seven Pools.



Setting off again on horseback, begin your descent down the mountain by a different route and cross the plains back towards home.



### Sundowner Ride (half day)

Your destination this afternoon is the wide-open plains beneath the towering peaks of the Witteberg Mountains. You might spot some ostrich out on the grasslands or see some sable with their incredible curved horns.



There are plenty of canters to be had on the open ground. As you make your way to a vantage point, sundowners will be set up ready for your arrival. Watch the sun setting as you sip a refreshing drink and recount the day's adventures.



### Bushman Paintings (full day)

After an early breakfast on the veranda you set off on a full day ride. Skirting the ridges behind the lodge, arrive at the first bushman paintings site. The paintings here are estimated to be over 400 years old.





Continue riding over the mountains, with fabulous views that stretch into Lesotho. Descend into the valley and visit another bushman painting site, with a sacred entrance tunnel into the mountains beyond. In the valley are large herds of hartebeest, wildebeest, impala and sable - there are also giraffe to be found here too.



A picnic lunch will be served underneath the willow trees, with the horses grazing nearby.

After lunch, continue the ride and return to the lodge by a different route.



## Holkrans Ride (full day & optional overnight camp)

After an early breakfast on the veranda, set off on a full day ride to Holkrans. This is a scenic ride through the donga forest and up into the mountains, with great views into Lesotho. As you climb, there is the chance for some exciting canters up the steep hilly trails. As you reach the summit 'Sekonjela's Hat' - the second highest peak in the Witteberg Mountains - there are incredible views back towards Moolmanshoek. The young horses are raised in these mountains and you might spot them during this trail.



The ride continues to the Shower Pools, where, in the summer months, there is the chance for a refreshing dip. A picnic lunch is set out nearby on the sandstone rocks.

After lunch, follow narrow trails on horseback and pass by the rare mountain bamboo. Continue riding until you reach Holkrans, a large cave chamber where a unique water break has created a rocky overhang.



This cave offers the opportunity for an overnight camping experience - dine around an open fire and sleep out on stretcher beds, with the horses resting nearby.



Next morning, wake to the smell of coffee brewing and gather around the fire for breakfast cooked over the coals. Then ride back down the mountainside, passing the Sugarbush Protea trees. There are far-reaching views of the reserve to enjoy along the way. The sure-footed horses carefully pick their way down the mountain slopes, amongst sage wood, red hairy heath, ouhout and various fynbos species.





Please note: This optional overnight camping trip will only take place if the weather is suitable. For example, in the winter months of May to the end of September it is usually too cold to camp in the mountains. If the weather is unsuitable or you choose not to camp, you will return to the lodge to overnight.

### Rosendal Ride (full day)

Today's riding route is an adventurous one, accessing the mountain passes above Langesnek Farm.



There are long canters, with the chance for some faster riding along sandy tracks. Stop for lunch at the hamlet of Rosendal.





On the return journey you might experience endurance paced canters along a 12km stretch of sandy tracks. All around are wonderful views up and over the dividing mountains.

### Pyramid Mountain Trail (half day)

Climb the Pyramid Mountain from the rear, coming out between the two pyramids themselves.



You might think that on the mountain paths there is no game to speak of, but you will often see antelope grazing on the steep slopes as you ride by.

Head over the side of the second pyramid and out onto the plains, returning to the lodge by a different route.



Moolmanshoek farmhouse was built in 1930. Here you will find the dining rooms and restaurant; it is also the home of the owners Willie and Miemie Nel. On warm mornings, breakfast will be served on the veranda (stoep).

Existing farm buildings were converted into the lodge and guest bedrooms in the 1990's. There are six Luxury Rooms with double beds and six Classic Rooms – three twins and three doubles.



Moolmanshoek Farmhouse



One of the Classic Rooms



One of the Luxury Rooms