

ESWATINI - CHUBEKA TRAILS - MLILWANE & KAMSHOLO

ITINERARY

Day 1

If not self-driving, then most international riders transfer from Johannesburg to Eswatini by shuttle bus from Johannesburg. This is a scheduled service which costs in the region of GBP 40 each way and must be prebooked to guarantee space. The ride operator can book this on your behalf and the cost is added to your invoice.

Your flight should arrive at Johannesburg airport at the latest by 07:30. This is so you will be in time to get the scheduled shuttle bus which departs from the airport at 09:00. The bus service will not wait for you if your flight is delayed. There is a later shuttle bus departing at 11:00, but this would mean that you would miss the afternoon ride and additional transfer costs may apply.

To save any worries over delayed flights you may wish to consider arriving into Johannesburg the day before and overnighting at an airport hotel.

Return flights should depart Johannesburg after 20:00. The shuttle bus is expected to arrive back to Johannesburg airport by 16:00 but, since it is a four hour journey and includes a border crossing, delays are possible, hence we recommend your flight departs after 20:00.

Overnight Mlilwane Rest Camp. On arrival settle into your room and enjoy an introductory sundowner ride before dinner.

At Mlilwane Rest Camp you stay in one of the four Lontweni Rondavels.



Typical interior of a Lontweni Rondavel

Each rondavel has a double bed and single bed and en suite bathroom.



Lontweni Rondavel

There is a veranda and private seating area..

Day 2

Over the next four days you explore the wonders of Mlilwane from horseback. The following is an example itinerary; the final itinerary will depend on the weather and the riding ability of the group.

Today the plan is for you to ride over the Mlilwane Reserve on a three hour ride in the morning and another two hour ride in the afternoon. This is an opportunity to get to know your horse and also to learn more about Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary, eSwatini's pioneer conservation area.

As you ride past the dams and over the grasslands, mountains and forests of Mlilwane, the animals you are likely to see include: zebra, warthog, crocodile, blue wildebeest, kudu, nyala, impala, blesbuck, reedbuck and different species of mongoose. The reserve is also home to a rich and varied birdlife.



Overnight Mlilwane Rest Camp.

Day 3

Today you may do the Rock of Execution ride. This is a wonderful 3 to 4 hour trail summing Nyonyane Mountain which gives impressive views of the Ezulwini, Mantenga and Malkerns Valleys below. The trail crosses the Central Plains, following game paths and cut trails to the saddle, where the horses are contained in a small paddock. Riders then hike the last stretch to the summit to enjoy a snack lunch with the ultimate 360 degree views.

It is here where Nyonyane Mountain earned its infamous name "Rock of Execution", being the site from which unfortunate criminals were nudged at spear-point from the peak to the rocks below. "Nyonyane" means "little bird". Being a small mountain adjacent to fertile plains, Nyonyane Mountain has an intriguing history and is of cultural significance to several tribes.

The pace is mixed with canters where the going is good, slower on the hilly sections and if you encounter wildlife.



Overnight Mlilwane Rest Camp.

Day 4

The four hour morning ride today may include a bush brunch or a visit to the local craft centre (you may wish to bring some cash and/or your credit card so that you can go curio shopping at the craft shops).



Afternoon is at leisure at Mlilwane with a shorter sundowner ride or drive in the evening.

Overnight Mlilwane Rest Camp.

Day 5

This morning's three hour ride explores the eastern slopes of Nyonyane, climbing up to Mantenga View Point and on to just below Execution Rock, revealing its monumental beauty.

The trail varies from winding up through granite boulders above the old tin mines to climbing the aloe- topped foothills and dropping down to the Usushwana River, returning home along the forested roads. This ride offers fun canters and slow climbs.

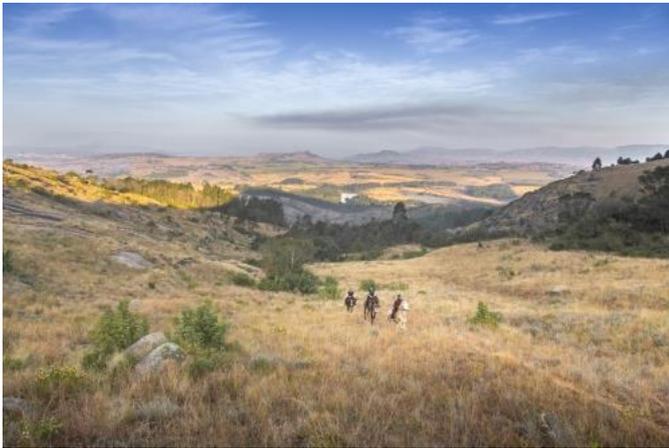
Have lunch in the restaurant at Mlilwane and later have a short evening ride.



Overnight Mlilwane Rest Camp.

Day 6

This morning you have a two hour ride following wildlife trails through the hills and forests around Mlilwane.



The journey east to KaMsholo takes about two hours by vehicle.

On arrival there will be a short sundowner ride to introduce you to the new horses.

Overnight Tinsle Camp. Tinsle Camp lies near the foot of the Lubombo Mountains and comprises a number of comfortable air-conditioned ensuite chalets.

This is in the heart of the lowveld bush, abundant with freely roaming giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, nyala, impala and ostrich.

On occasions riders may stay at the nearby Nguni Ranch House.



Chalet at Tinsale



Inside one of the chalets at Tinsale

Day 7

An early start to set off to find the beautiful Nguni cattle. This herd is a breeding show herd with some of the oldest and purest genes in Africa,



You begin riding through the bush, with lovely trots and canters and possible giraffe and wildlife sightings while tracking the Nguni.

Once the Nguni are located, the guides explain a few different colour and pattern combinations and the traditional importance of the Nguni.



Nguni cattle

Then with a blow on the traditional Luveve horn you begin to herd the cattle to their Sibaya (kraal) for their daily checks. The ride varies in length and pace but usually lasts 3 hrs. The cattle are gentle and used to humans and horses but there have been moments where a few youngsters try to break the muster, and riders need to manoeuvre them back to the herd.

You return to camp for lunch. In the afternoon you have a more gentle ride, finding and spending time with the giraffe, ostrich, kudu and other plains game.

Overnight Tinsele Camp.