



# GAP AFRICA PROJECTS



Equine trails and outreach field trip





## Equine Trail Overview

Gap Africa Projects presents a 12-day field trip showcasing applied equine outreach management and trails in Southern Africa.

The Equine trails and outreach programme in Southern Africa is an experience designed to give students a sense of African adventure and community with a horsey twist!

It is split over three different locations so students will get to see three very different landscapes; mountains, the African bush and community living.

The first part of the programme is based in Lesotho, a small country enclaved within South Africa; here students will go on a horse trail through the country, staying in rural local villages along the way. Students will then go to The Coastal Horse Care Unit, a charity based in Kwa-Zulu Natal, where students will gain hands on experience handling and treating community owned horses. The final section of the trip is based on Somkhanda Game Reserve where students will get to experience the big 5 and the African bush.



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Equine Trails & Outreach – Field Trip



Location:



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## Lesotho Horse Trail Experience

The horse trail begins in the Southern Drakensberg, there is a warm, friendly, peaceful and tranquil retreat right from the start. The Southern Drakensberg is a UNESCO World Heritage Site for 'exceptional natural beauty'. It attracts countless visitors from South Africa and beyond who travel to see the jagged mountains and magnificent rock art sites, changing colours, breath-taking sunsets, clean air and crystal clear night skies.



### Trail Itinerary

#### Day 1:

On arrival at the 1,300 hectares farm students will spend a night on the rolling foothills of the farm. The world famous Sani Pass and Bushmans Nek are a short drive away (border options into Lesotho); the entrance to the National Park itself is only 30 minutes door to door.

This trek will encompass some of the best riding you could ever hope to experience, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned veteran. Breath-taking scenery and unparalleled access to the Southern Drakensberg in both South Africa and Lesotho. You will have home-cooked and filling meals; candlelight and atmosphere! All necessary equipment for safety and enjoyment will be provided including the provision of waterproofs.



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## Equine Trails & Outreach – Field Trip



### Day 2:

07h30 - Cooked breakfast with cereals, yoghurt and fruit

08h00 - 08h30 - Loading up of saddlebags and tack. Final checks for passports, equipment, helmets

08h30 - Departure from farm to Bushmans Nek pass border post.  
Roughly 45mins

09h30 - 10h00 - Passport stamps and last minute checks. Saddling up and tacking carried out by trek leaders. Introduction to your steeds

10h00 - Kick-off, departure from border post into the National Park and Bushmans Nek mountain pass, sandwich lunch provided at half-way point. Our first day's ride to where we sleep for the night takes

approximately 6 hours, depending on riders' experience. Spectacular, remote and mountainous terrain, panoramic views of the Southern Drakensberg. Magnificent riding and first exposure to untouched wilds of Lesotho

16h00 17h00 - Arrival at Ha Thamatu Lodge. Unpacking, tea, coffee and biscuits. Chance to wander through the village

19h00 - 19h30 - Hearty, warming evening meal and drinks, cooked by trek leaders



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## Equine Trails & Outreach – Field Trip



### Day 3:

07h00 - 07h30 - Cooked breakfast, with tea and coffee. More leisurely start, packing and preparation for the second riding day

08h30 - After breakfast, the second day's ride is easier but still up to 4 to 5 hours in duration. Chance to explore the rivers, see Bushman rock art and venture out on horseback into the spectacular canyons of the Lesotho high plateau. Excellent conditions for riding, large open plains, free-roaming across parts of Lesotho no tourist gets the chance to see

19h00 - 20h00 - Evening meal, another hearty homecooked dish. Another opportunity to enjoy the crystal clear dark starry nights of the Lesotho plateau and remember it's the southern hemisphere - it is a different sky!

### Day 4:

06h30 - Breakfast, packing and preparation for departure - it is important that we get an early start as we have to be back at the border before it closes at 16h00. After breakfast we return via different route, stopping at a spectacular waterfall with a chance to swim, and if you are brave enough, jump in from the 20 meter high cliffs. Water-and bravado-level dependent

15h00 - 16h00 - Arrival at Bushmans Nek border post for return to South Africa and collection of horses, tack, equipment and luggage by the ground team on the South African side.

17h00 - Arrival at base and the swiss lodge. A welcoming hot shower, and a chance to relax before the evening dinner

19h30 - Evening meal; debrief, stories, bragging rights, celebratory drinks, stretching and picture sharing.



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## Days 5 - 7 - Coastal Horse Care Unit & Outreach

The Coastal Horse Care unit is based on the beautiful east coast of South Africa near to the city of Durban. With a clinic and stables out in the countryside the Coastal Horse Care unit is a multifunctional site, where horses are rehabilitated, cared for and rehomed. There is also an educational centre, where there are accommodation facilities, a lecture hall and tutorial rooms. The Coastal Horse Care Unit have a mission statement; to protect horses from abuse and alleviate their suffering by rehabilitating, campaigning and educating. A world where horses are used but not abused.

### The centre focuses on several aspects of equine welfare including:

Equine rescue and rehabilitation centre incorporating a donkey sanctuary

Addressing equine welfare from a neutral stance, incorporating all disciplines i.e. Horse Racing, Polo, Show-jumping, etc.

Creating an environment of transparency with a visitor and educational centre

An on-site and in-field educational programme for the education and upliftment of people involved with horses, incorporating rural and working horses

To promote the partnership between horses and humans

Promoting education to achieve horse welfare solutions

Dynamic approach; different situations need different approaches, and CHCU will adapt to circumstances.

Overnight Day 5 at CHCU

Overnight Days 6 & 7 on Outreach

During the outreach students will stay local to where the outreach is being organised which may be 2-3 hours from the main base, however it will be in the direction of the final stage of the trip – Somkhanda Game Reserve



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## South African Jockey Club

We hope to visit the South African Jockey Club on the way to CHCU if time permits.

The South African Jockey Academy is the only institution in South Africa that offers an academic and practical apprentice programme to qualify as a professional jockey.

Well known and highly acclaimed worldwide, this jockey academy is situated in Summerveld. Established in 1958 the South African Jockey Academy has grown from strength to strength in producing leading jockeys, many of whom have gone on to receive top honours internationally. The South African Jockey Academy has satellite campuses in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. There is also an academy based in Gauteng that is funded and administered by The Racing Trust.

Apprentices begin their initial training at the Academy and are fed through to the other three training centres once they are competent at riding in races. Many international racing clubs and jurisdictions look to SAJA for training of their apprentices because the quality of training is rated as one of the best in the world.



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## Days 8 – 11 Somkhanda Game Reserve

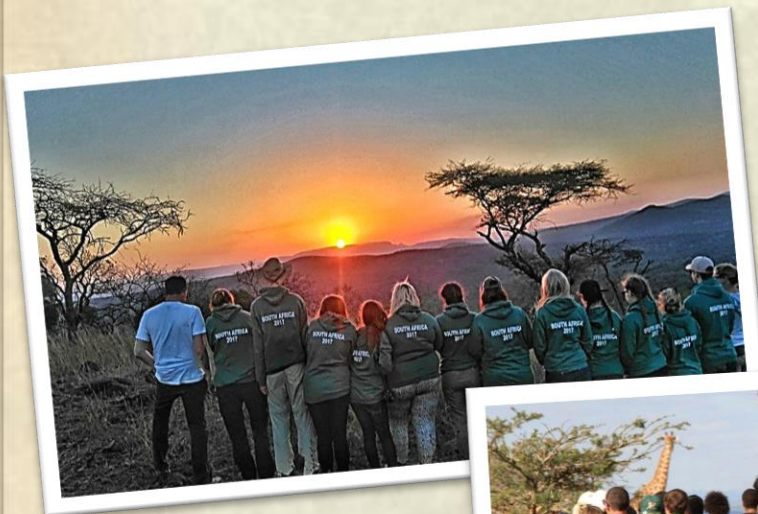
Transfer from Outreach to Somkhanda Game Reserve.

Field trips to the reserve have been running since 1999. The academic team at Somkhanda are able to offer a bespoke course to each institution dependent on their own personal objectives and learning needs.

The students will be taught and work alongside the field guides and conservation team at Somkhanda Game reserve.

A full 9 hour day will be planned; depending on what the days tasks are the students are likely to be involved in some of the following activities:

- Leopard camera trap surveys
- Small mammal research
- Wild dog tracking
- Rhino monitoring
- Predator tracking (Lion)
- Elephant monitoring and observation
- Game counts
- Fence and road maintenance.
- Water management for game
- Community cattle dipping
- Alien plant control
- Fire management
- Game capture



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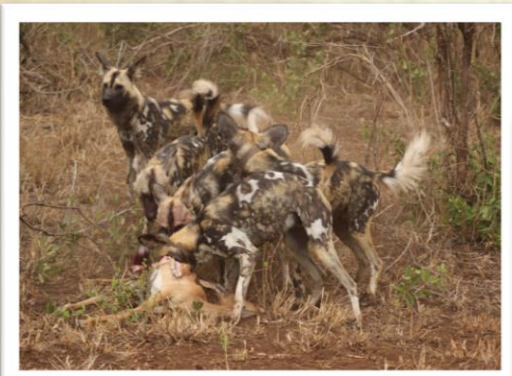


## Equine Trails & Outreach – Field Trip

There are a number of specific conservation projects students are able to get involved in with on the ground; here are a few examples:

### Wild dog Tracking:

One of the highlights of visiting Somkhanda Game Reserve, is the chance to see these magnificent endangered animals. Wild dogs are the most endangered carnivore in Africa requiring a vast area of land to sustain one pack. Somkhanda is surrounded on three sides by tribal communities whose livelihood are dependant on cattle and goat farming. Prior to the introduction of Wild dog to Somkhanda an agreement was made with the community that the reserve would monitor and track the pack of dogs twice daily. There is a permanent team dedicated to this but you will be able to join in with their work; watch the dog hunt and play!



### Community Cattle Dipping:

As a free service to the community the reserve, with the backing of the state veterinary department, undertakes community cattle dipping to eradicate ticks. The programme takes place every week throughout summer and every second week throughout winter. The aim is to control tick population and reduce the incidence of tick-borne diseases. This improves the health of the animals which increases milk production and decreasing calf-interval. A great opportunity to experience traditional Zulu life.

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## Equine Trails & Outreach – Field Trip

### Black Rhino Project:

Black rhino populations are under threat throughout Africa with the total number having plummeted from approximately 65000 to 2400. In recent years successful conservation efforts have resulted in numbers rising again to a current population of approximately 3000. South Africa is home to the largest number of black rhino and certain key populations have reached their optimum biological carrying capacity. Overpopulation can negatively impact on population growth so breeding populations have to be carefully established and controlled in a suitable habitat this includes restoring the ideal habitat for the black rhino by eradicating the plant species of *Chromolaena odorata*. There are also patrols looking for signs of poaching and tracking the rhino. Rhino tracking is essential to provide the information that has to be recorded daily so the reserve can keep an eye on their movement patterns, their physical condition, their associations with other animals and other rhino; there is a permanent team dedicated to this on the reserve.



### Leopard Monitoring:

Due to the importance of cattle to the economy of the rural community outside Somkhanda and the reserves commitment to fostering good relations with the tribe, there is ongoing monitoring of the leopard on the reserve. The setting of camera traps allows for the identification of individual leopards as well as recording their movements.



### Day 12 Somkhanda Game Reserve

After breakfast transfer to Durban airport for flight home.

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## Itinerary

**Day 1** - Arrival in South Africa and transfer to Drakensburg Mountains - overnight at trail base

**Day 2** - Lesotho horse trail begins – overnight in Lesotho

**Day 3** – Lesotho horse trail continues – overnight in Lesotho

**Day 4** - Ride back to border, cross into South Africa- overnight trail base

**Day 5** - Transfer to Coastal Horse Care unit, via a visit to South Africa National Jockey Club (time permitting) - overnight

**Day 6** - CHCU outreach - overnight at outreach location

**Day 7** - CHCU outreach - overnight at outreach location

**Day 8** - Transfer to Somkhanda Game Reserve overnight at the reserve

**Day 9** - Somkhanda Game Reserve overnight at the reserve

**Day 10** - Somkhanda Game Reserve overnight at the reserve

**Day 11** - Somkhanda Game Reserve overnight at the reserve

**Day 12** - Depart after breakfast to Durban airport for flight home



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## Your Accommodation

There is various accommodation provided over the 12 day course.

### Lesotho Horse Trail:

During the horse trail the first and last night is spent at the trail base in a swiss style wooden mountain lodge, with dormitory bedrooms and shared bathroom facilities.

The nights on the trail whilst in Lesotho will be spent staying in rural villages which offer basic clean facilities for washing and cooking.

### Coastal Horse Care Unit and Outreach:

Students will stay within the education centre at the Coastal Horse Care Unit base. This is a large dormitory with shared bathroom facilities.

During the outreach the team will stay at local 'B&B' style accommodation close to the community where the outreach is taking place.

### Somkhanda Game Reserve:

In keeping with the safari adventure theme, groups are accommodated on the reserve in comfortable safari tents with communal hot and cold showers and regular flushing toilets. All meals are provided in a communal dining room. If students opt to sleep out there are basic camps around the reserve that can be used for sleep outs; Sleep out under the stars and learn how to make a fire and cook on it! There is also a lodge available for students and lecturers at an additional cost.



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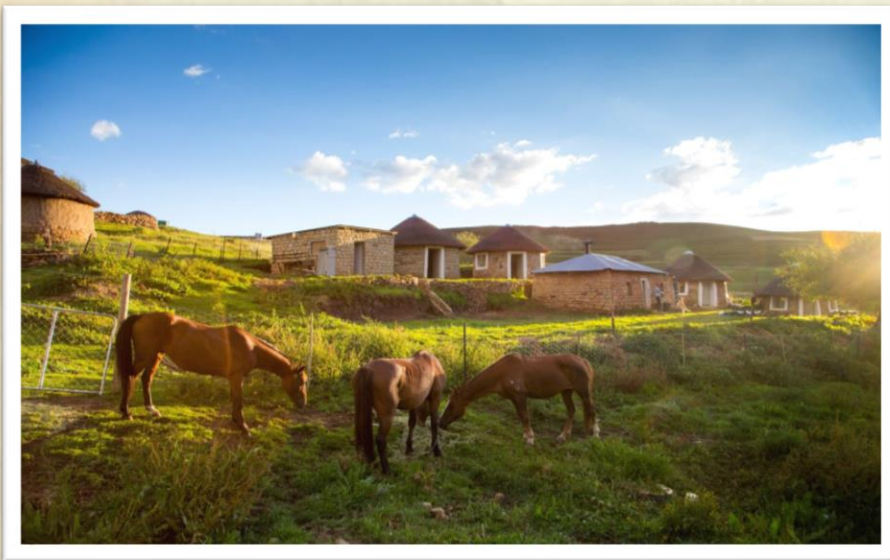


### What is included in the price?

- Pre-Departure Support and Documentation
- Financial Protection through the ATOL Scheme
- Return flights from UK to South Africa
- Transfers from/to the airport in host country
- Accommodation for the duration of trip
- 3 meals a day (no lunch on travel days)
- All transport whilst on project
- All project activities
- In country support

### What is not included?

- Travel insurance
- Any activities undertaken that are not part of the programme



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## Gap Africa Projects

Gap Africa Projects is an ATOL Bonded travel company that specialises in academic trips and volunteering opportunities. Operating since 2010 we have organised hundreds of field trips for schools, colleges and universities.

We offer a full support system to teachers and lecturers that want to organise a school trip, whether students are travelling with lecturers or without.

### Why teachers & lecturers travel with us

We take all of the hassle out of organising a field trip. Our level of support includes:

- Introductory presentation - we will come to your school or college and present your field trip to your students and gauge interest
- If you choose to proceed with booking your field trip we organise all paperwork and process all payments so you don't have to collect or chase any payments from students
- Telephone and email support at all times - whenever your student has a question or a worry we are on hand to answer it
- Pre departure information evening - we will host an evening for students to attend, with their parents, 6-8 weeks before their departure this gives students a chance to ask any questions and for parents to receive further information about the trip and to confirm the students departures and arrivals from UK, and what to expect!
- Airport meet and greet - we will see you off at the airport making sure you have all the documents you need to fly and will then meet you at the other end. If there is an international to domestic transfer we will meet you at the international arrivals and ensure you make it to domestic departures without a problem
- 24/7 In country support. We are always at the end of the telephone to respond to any queries that may arise once on the programme if needed.



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## Managing the Group Experience

This part is largely managed by us, we don't want your time being taken up by managing a group expedition, that's what we are here for. We manage every student as an individual client, they make deposit, instalment (if requested) and balance payments directly to us. We also have a reporting function for all the students within the group, so we can keep track on the group as a whole. We will send you this report every month.

Each student will individually receive:

Confirmation documents

ATOL certificate

Opportunity to attend a question and answer session

Opportunity to invite their parent/parents/guardians to an evening question and answer session

Online access to the group area of our website, containing:

Itineraries

Kit lists

Country information

General information

## ATOL Financial Security and Health & Safety

We are a fully bonded ATOL operator, this means we can organise all elements of the trip and provide full financial protection and peace of mind for everyone involved by using our ATOL Licence.

The prices are inclusive of flights, transfers, accommodation, housekeeping/laundry, all meals and of course all the project itinerary activities. We can also arrange some fantastic extra mural activities for the students over the weekends which help add an extra element of adventure to the trip.

All the relevant insurances are in place from ourselves and the reserve where we operate the group expedition. We also have individual risk assessments for all parts of the experience and if requested can put together a combined risk assessment to encompass any additional activities such as weekend excursions that may be added on as part of the trip.



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Individual travel insurance is not included in the cost, should the college not have an overseas policy in place for the students then we can assist to put this in place whether through a group policy or individual policies through our preferred insurer Endsleigh.

In terms of the journey we would ask that the group arrange their own transport to London Heathrow on the day of departure, here a member of the Gap Africa team will meet the group and assist with check-in and any other requirements the group may have.

Upon arrival in South Africa, if the group have an onward domestic flight, the team will be met at Johannesburg airport by a member of the GAP team who will assist with the transfer to the domestic terminal and provide any other assistance as required. If there is no onward domestic flight then our preferred transfer company will meet the group at arrivals and transfer them to the project.

I have attached all relevant documents to this email pertaining to insurance and risk assessments for the trip. Any further information required can be obtained on request.

### References

To date, we have run many successful group experiences to South Africa and we are always proud to present you with some references or testimonials from previous trip leaders. They will give you an excellent unbiased opinion of our service and the project.

Please visit our Group Leader Feedback Page for more information:

<http://gapafricaprojects.com/discovery-hub/reviews/shamwari-conservation-experience-a-school-leaders-perspective/>



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