

Horse Trail Experience



Overview

Location	Plettenberg Bay, South Africa.
Duration	From 2 weeks
Dates	February to November (Anyone wishing to be on the project over December MUST commence by mid-November to be fully trained for peak summer season demands)
Capacity	Max 4 volunteers at one time
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum age: 18.• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.• Special skills: Prior horse experience, even as an Intermediate rider, is important but what is of most importance is an evident passion for, and appreciation of, animals. You must be in good physical condition with an extremely active, hands-on approach to work in all allocated activities related to animal care, stable and trail maintenance as well as outside client liaison and guiding.
Documents required	Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance.
Day of arrival	Sunday.
Day of departure	Sunday.

Highlights

- Working closely on a daily basis with all aspects related to horse welfare and training, plus equipment maintenance, for active participation in the mountain outside activities.
- Assisting in the building of trust between the existing and new members (some of them rescued from abused circumstances) of the herd, and the mix of humans who will be working with or riding them.
- Learning about animal behaviour from experienced horse carers.
- Volunteering in the heart of the Garden Route.
- Choosing from amazing activities during your free time, such as Bloukrans Bungy (the world's highest commercial bridge bungee jump), zipline, wild life & reptile sanctuaries and a game reserve, wine estates, skydiving, whale watching, swimming with seals, adventure boating, kloofing, kayaking, etc.
- Getting personal support from the volunteer coordinator.
- Making new friends from all over the world.

Project information

This horseback mountain trail outside and stabling operation grew from a local abused horse rescue and outside operation that was compelled to cease operations following the arrival of COVID In our country In 2020. The current operators, already well established in the field of horse polo to international level, a popular feature of our region with numerous fields and over 500 horses in the area, took over the outside rescue horses and mountain trail operation and integrated it into their established set-up.

The stables, outside & polo horse estate (with a measure of general farming thrown in) is located on a 260 hectare estate set right up against the majestic Tsitsikamma Mountain foothills - and the views are exceptional.

The outrides of different duration on offer are through some magnificent mountain scenery including open pastures, pockets of indigenous mountain forest and burbling streams. Additionally, the rides now include a field picnic option and/or luncheon at a local vineyard plus an arena for show-jumping training and practice. There are further plans to expand on operations as general tourism levels pick up to eventually include longer distance day 'treks' with possible overnight stays in dedicated camps plus too draught-horse drawn carriage rides between local wine estates.

The operation's team of permanent staff and volunteers manage all day-to-day aspects related to its current herd of approximately 20 stabled horses. Some of these are well experienced trail outside mounts, others being newly acquired are still in-training so needing additional attentive care, handling and lunging etc. The horses are checked daily and receive needed physical therapy and care.

The horses are selected for their good composition and gentle temperaments, added to via ongoing attention and therapy. They are well loved and kept in tip-top condition. The farm runs daily tours of various duration throughout the year, these always being in line with the outrider's skill & confidence level and the related emphasis being on a safe and enjoyable ride. These tours provide a unique experience against the magnificent backdrop of the nearby Tsitsikamma Mountain foothills, a major attraction in the area. Out on trail, there are staging points where the horses get to graze and drink.

The farm's main aim is to:

- Provide a home for the trail horses, some with suspect treatment backgrounds, by providing for their well-being plus ongoing care and attention needed.
- Provide fun rides for guests from all over the world, which in turn funds the cost of care for the horses.
- Provide them with a life as part of a herd which makes them feel safe and happy.
- Provide holistic care for horses including needed physical therapy and psychological attention.
- Provide employment for local people in the stables.

Programme details

Members of the volunteer team will work alongside warm and welcoming members of the permanent team to be exposed to all aspects of equine care and forming bonds with the horses. You will also be trained to put the experience and safety of guests and their horses first, as well as assessed in your degree of confidence and competence in the saddle to undertake outrides initially in the company of experienced staff to then progress to accompanying guide-led client trails as an assistant, and in due course hopefully leading these. The guides are experienced and offer interesting facts and stories regarding local history, fauna and flora. Volunteers who share similar interest would be great additions to the team.

The core aim of this programme is to first and foremost assist in the all-round functioning of the stables and care of the outride horse herd. Any riding of horses will be at the discretion of the project and if time permits. You, working alongside the permanent staff, will be expected to undertake the following duties on a routine basis:

- Primary care activities pertaining to mature young horses – their stabling, feeding, cleaning and grooming.
- Maintenance, cleaning, repair and storage of all tack, equipment and premises.
- The physical inspection and maintenance of the field trails plus paddock fencing, as well as the stabling and office infrastructure.
- Assist preparations for trail out-rides.
- Assisting with trail ride bookings and frontline administration as and when required.
- Participation in trail activities while mastering key facts and information regarding local history, fauna and flora.
- Concluding the day's event by providing relevant feedback and assisting with the operations wind-down processes.

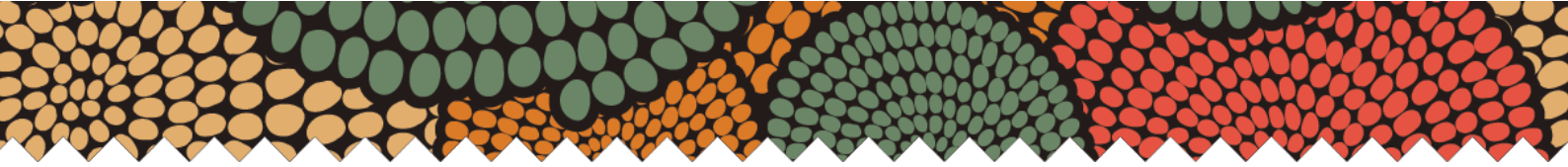
While operational throughout the year, the field trails are impacted by the usual cycles of general tourism to the region, with the peak period from October over year-end spring/summer through to Easter. The mid-year holidays mark the lower peak season but welcome a rise in activity levels.

Your role

You will work from Monday to Friday (8:00- 17:00). You will generally work five days per week and have the option of weekends off but may, due to personal interest, discuss the options of working over busier weekends and public holidays on a roster system with the other staff. You will get a full orientation and introduction on the day after your arrival.

The highly varied work schedule will be based around the following:

- 08:00 - 17:00: every morning commences with assisting in the feeding and checking of horses, and then getting them from the stables to paddocks. Depending on routine activities and demand, you will help to gear up for scheduled outrides (and participating in these when required); attending to



tack, premises, paddocks and trail maintenance; initially observing and possibly participating in any specialised treatment, therapy or attention needed by and given to the herd - physiotherapy, veterinarian or farrier visits; grooming; lunging and training of individual horses.

- between 12:00 & 14:00: lunch break
- Every afternoon concludes with returning the horses to their specific stalls within the stables and their evening feeding.

** Depending on the activities planned you could be asked to arrive at the project earlier than 08:00 some mornings, and also participate in busier weekend outrides or horse-drawn carriage tours. Time off will be given during the week

Your roles and responsibilities:

- Participating in all general activities on the horse outside operation including the hands-on 'behind-the-scenes' routines not generally seen by clients in their limited time at the venue.
- Assisting tour guides as and when required.
- Learning about the operation, safety and information on the area to be able to competently participate as an assistant on outrides, and with further exposure and evaluation to lead such activities.
- Trail maintenance.
- Horse feeding, cleaning, de-ticking, grooming.
- Checking of horses before and after their rides.
- Trail assistance.
- Paddock cleaning.
- Assisting with children's rides.

You must not automatically expect to do selected tasks only (i.e. be riding for the majority of the time). You will do any and everything that all regular staff do, including, for example, horse-manure 'pick-up patrol'. This is important as it demonstrates that the volunteer is viewed as a fully-fledged member of the team and thus contributes to the team effort and spirit.

Aside from this, there is a practical reason for collecting the horse-droppings; not only is the fly presence reduced but the droppings are a source of valuable nutrition for down-the-line composting for use in vegetable and flower gardens.

Even in poor weather conditions, the herd needs to be attended to so unless specific arrangements are discussed and made in advance, you will be expected to participate in the routine activities.

Weekends:

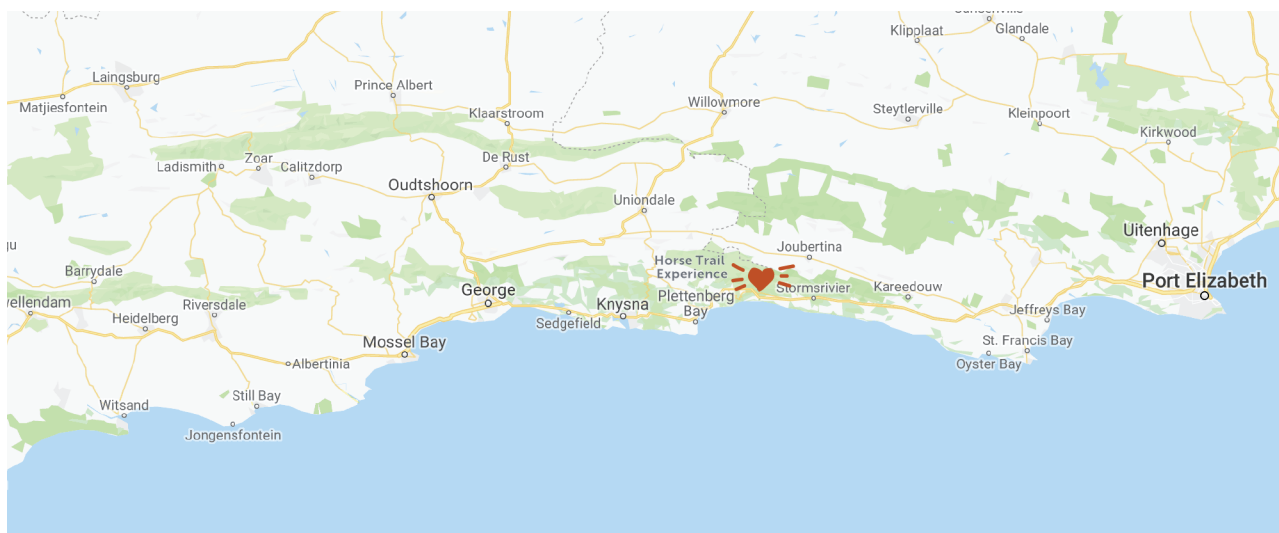
- Friday evenings: Traditionally, a braai (BBQ) takes place on Fridays with the meal served around 20:00. The outdoor hot tub is often fired up for this evening. You are also free to make arrangements to head into Plettenberg Bay if you wish to enjoy the nightlife there.
- Saturdays: Generally, this is a free day so open to individual choice. You are welcome to sleep late, do laundry, prepare your own cooked breakfast and make plans to visit Plettenberg Bay (please note shops, but not supermarkets, close at 13:00 on Saturday and Sunday). Enjoy some of the many local attractions – whether going to the beach, hiking or doing more adrenalin-filled activities.
- Sundays: Enjoy your free time. Please note that most shops are closed.

Any public holidays, whether falling on weekdays or weekends, will follow the Saturday/Sunday routine.

PLEASE NOTE: At no time will mistreating of horses or any animals be accepted at this project and riding is at the discretion of the project supervisors.

It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer, the time of the year and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.

Project location



This project is situated in an eco-sensitive location about 20 km east of Plettenberg Bay.

Getting to and from the project

You need to arrive at George Airport where you will be collected by a dedicated transfer service provided on both your arrival and departure.

Please schedule your arrival and departure for a Sunday between 08:00 and 17:00.

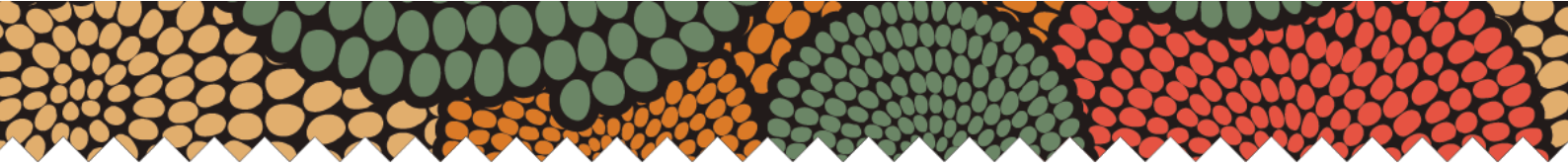
Should Sunday not be possible, please approach us and we will sort it out together.

Accommodation

You will stay in an established general accommodation venue based in The Crag, a rural suburb of the greater Plettenberg Bay/Bitou Region. The accommodation is set in a 5-hectare small-holding amidst indigenous forest and open grazing pastures and about 25 minutes from the main town of Plettenberg Bay. You are accommodated in fully equipped, shared two-bed rooms, with bedding & towel provided, so will, when required, be sharing with another volunteer of the same gender. There are numerous bathrooms across the property's facilities for communal access and use.

Volunteers have full use of our well-equipped guest kitchen plus the two verandah areas - with large fireplaces - of the main homestead building. It is here that guests and hosts gather for social interaction and where evening meals are served for all to enjoy.

Kindly note that the main homestead is the accommodation base of the family of one of our team members and due to COVID and privacy considerations, is not open to anyone beyond the verandah area. On the grounds is a large group entertainment area complete with an under-cover combination plunge-pool/hot tub (the latter only fired up on request for special occasions), a bar facility (the bar itself is a prop from a



period movie filmed in our area) plus an outdoor braai (BBQ) area. We have a tradition of declaring Friday's "Braaiday" so have regular local residents visiting for sundowners and a braai to mark the end of the week with our team and guests. The property also provides a golf practice putting green and a proper boule/petanque track where guests soon get to know their co-guests.

Free Wi-Fi is available at the main homestead and entertainment areas only. Bedding is changed weekly and you are free to use the washing machine when you wish to launder your clothing, the cost of this being to your own account.

The Craggs has two general dealers where daily consumable purchases are made but these are not within comfortable walking distance of the accommodation. Should you require transport to Plettenberg Bay for special shopping purchases, or to other venues for leisure and pleasure activities, please talk with the permanently resident accommodation team who will assist with transport arrangements, which will be at an individual cost.

Meals

Three daily meals are provided. You will make your own breakfast and lunch (continental breakfast; lunch consists of sandwiches which you prepare yourself). For dinner, you will be provided with a hot meal usually taken with all residents at the facility. All meals are eaten in the verandah area or the outside entertainment area when required.

Both vegetarian & vegan options, as well as any special dietary requirements, are available.

Free time

The project is situated in an area where the country's best activities are offered. You are well placed to participate in a variety of fun activities that can be done over weekends and during your free time in nearby areas like The Craggs, Nature's Valley, Plettenberg Bay & Tsitsikamma, and then, should time permit, other areas of our beautiful Garden Route. Within an hour's drive of your accommodation base you can go bungee jumping, skydiving, whale watching, swimming with seals, adventure boating, kloofing, kayaking, horse-riding, zip-lining, rappelling/abseiling, visit nearby animal sanctuaries and a game-reserve, enjoy local wine estates, restaurants, farm stalls and café's, plus a long list of highly recommended hikes offering excellent forest, coastal and mountain views, and many more.

Local transport

Daily transport to and from the nearby farm is provided.

Transfers to town and/or any selected leisure/pleasure activity venues during your free time can be arranged – with the costs of these services being to your own expense.

What to bring

There are no special requirements in this regard, but we recommend bringing pocket money/credit and debit cards, personal toiletries plus a leisure/beach towels, any prescribed medication, sunscreen, mosquito repellents, travelling and practical working clothes, e.g. full length trousers – jeans or cargo pants, long shorts, t-shirts and secure closed shoes/boots for work, a warm and/or waterproof/windbreaking top or jacket, walking shoes, sandals/slops for after-hours wear, books/laptop, camera, and any items of a personal nature. All these items (and anything else you might need, such as a local SIM card) are readily available locally or in Plettenberg Bay.

Your commitment

Please be aware that in applying for a volunteer project, you are making a firm commitment to the project. Our projects depend on the volunteers. It is necessary that you take this commitment seriously.

Some projects will appoint specific responsibilities to you; others are less structured and require the volunteers to use their initiative. If you prefer the one type over the other, please ask us for the most appropriate project for your preference.

Your daily presence is required and working hours are to be followed strictly. Not fulfilling your obligation can result in your dismissal from the project.

Cell phone use during working hours

We kindly ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during work hours as this will distract you from doing the work at hand. This is for the safety of the volunteers who work with animals.

Volunteers who would like to take photographs of their projects are free to communicate this directly to their project supervisors for guidance and instruction.

What to wear

You are asked to wear sensible clothing and to be culturally sensitive to the communities you are working with. You are expected to wear modest clothing, which includes jeans, leggings, long shorts, and long skirts. Closed shoes are advisable, especially when working outdoors. Underwear is not to be seen under any circumstances.

Not acceptable are low cut tops, short shorts/shirts, bikinis and swimwear, belly tops, shirts/t-shirts with no sleeves for male volunteers as well as flip flops or no shoes.

Please also do not wear any camouflage patterned clothing.

Insurance

Travel insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out full personal insurance cover. This should include protection against theft and against loss of fees, should the whole or part of a programme or activity or accommodation not be attended.

Medical insurance

You are required to take out medical insurance before travelling.

You must ensure that you are covered from the day of departure in your home country to the day of arrival back in your home country. The minimum coverage must be US\$ 100.000 and, as part of the enrolment process, you will need to email us a copy of your insurance policy documentation.

Health

No vaccinations are required except for travellers going to the north-eastern areas of South Africa, where anti-malaria precautions are recommended. Clients should consult their doctor for recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:

Africa: Angola, Burundi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.

South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, or allergies since your body needs to adjust to the change in food, water and pollen count during your first few days in South Africa.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in South Africa.

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. We recommend that you make contact with your local vaccination services. The vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine and polio vaccine. In addition, we recommend Hepatitis A, typhoid and rabies. You can get hepatitis B through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, so this vaccine is recommended if you might get a tattoo or piercing.

Please contact us at Good Hope Volunteers should you have any questions about this

Safety

While all safety precautions are followed, you are still working with animals and must be aware at all times and follow the safety guidelines.

What's included / not included

Included:

- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (George Airport)
- Accommodation (shared rooms, breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Daily transport to and from the project
- Good Hope Volunteers welcome pack
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support, including a 24-hour emergency number
- Wi-Fi

Not included:

- Any other transport
- Laundry
- Excursions
- Meals and refreshments on outings
- Any items of personal nature
- Personal toiletries and towels

Visa

You can volunteer in South Africa on a visitor's visa for up to 90 days.

Nationals from certain countries (e.g. Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, France, the Netherlands, Spain) will receive their visa when entering South Africa. Other nationals need to apply for a visitor's visa at a South African Embassy in their home country before travelling.

If you come to South Africa on a visitor's visa, you can extend once by another 90 days.

Longer stays are only possible at projects that are registered NGO's. This project however is not a NGO.

For the latest information contact the South African Embassy or Good Hope Volunteers.