

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERING IN AFRICA



VOLUNTEERING

Horse Volunteer offers exciting voluntary work in Africa with horses at an equine rescue centre in Mozambique

Mozambique Horse Safaris offers you our Volunteer Programme which is aimed at gap year students and adult volunteers, who are looking to develop their riding skills, discover the culture of Mozambique and make a difference in Africa helping our horses.

The Volunteer Programme is based on the coast in Vilanculos and offers students the chance to acquire a wealth of information about equine management, riding skills and life in Africa. In addition to working with horses you will be able to volunteer out at the local orphanages in Vilankulo where you will experience poverty and the problems that are faced by the people of Mozambique.

Our volunteers become part of the family and deep bonds form between horses and volunteers. Coming to Mozambique is a truly life changing experience.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The minimum time period we accept volunteers for is for two weeks. The reason for this is that it can take a little while to adjust to life here and if you left any earlier neither you nor the project would benefit very much from the experience. We have found with our previous volunteers that the longer they stay the more they enjoy it and they are certainly of more benefit to the project. A longer stay allows a better relationship to build up between the horses and the volunteers and gives the volunteer the opportunity to start to see the positive changes that results from their trip both in themselves and from the work that they have done.

All volunteers' experiences will vary dependant on both their previous experience and the needs of the project at the time of their trip. All trips will start with a one week induction to help you adapt quickly to Vilanculos and our project. This will include lessons in local culture, basic history, language and equine care. You will also be familiarized with the current situation of the project and given instruction on health and safety. Your riding ability and overall equine knowledge will be assessed and you will meet the horses and be shown around the project.

At the beginning of the second week each volunteer will be assessed and given tasks and responsibilities to suit their experience. Riding and teaching lessons will be assigned to those who have previous experience while those with less experience will receive lessons to help them reach a better standard of horsemanship. All volunteers are free to put forward ideas that they feel will benefit the project and that their previous experience will allow them to carry out. We are very flexible, we believe that everyone has something to offer and, with this being such a new project, are open to new ideas.

From this point on each trip will vary but we can promise that we will do whatever we can to make your trip as beneficial and enjoyable as possible. All volunteers will be involved in the daily care of the horses and others may wish to deal mainly with the day to day running of the riding school and out ride program. Those with other useful experience may use their individual skills to aid the project in other ways dependant on the agreement of Pat and Mandy. All volunteers will get a great deal of riding experience and will get to spend a great deal of time with some beautiful horses in a wonderful location.

At the end of your trip you will receive a certificate listing all the skills that we feel you have either learnt or utilized. This can be used as a reference when applying for jobs or for university and we will always confirm its veracity when approached by prospective employers or educational bodies.

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITY

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Horse Volunteer responsibilities and duties when working abroad at Horse Volunteer Africa

The role of a horse volunteer at Mozambique Horse Safari is to assist with the care, welfare and preparation of our horses and ponies. We want this to be a great experience for all those involved and it is important that when volunteers come here, they are doing so to do a job. It is important to remember why you have come to volunteer and it is important to us that you work with the horses and keep focused. Below is a brief explanation of what we expect from you, the volunteer.

RESPONSIBILITY

We expect all volunteers to act in a responsible manner at all times and to listen to the instructions of senior volunteers and staff. When dealing with large animals it is important that everyone involved remains alert to the dangers and keeps within the guidelines laid down during induction. We also expect the volunteers to operate with a reasonable degree of initiative and common sense at all times.

PUNCTUALITY

When dealing with the welfare of animals there are certain tasks that must be done at certain times. When it is your turn, be ready to leave for feeding at 6:00 am. Failure to do this not only holds up staff and other volunteers but has a knock on effect throughout the day.

INTEREST

We do not demand any specific level of experience from our volunteers but they must have a love of horses. We do expect that those with little or no relevant experience make an effort to learn the lessons that we are teaching them to the best of their ability. Those with experience are also expected to work to the best of their ability and assist those around.

CONSIDERATION

All volunteers are expected to treat everyone and everything they come into contact with consideration and respect. Obviously this applies to staff, each other and the horses but also the local community. Please remember that for entire duration of your trip you are an envoy for our project.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

We are well aware that everyone likes to have a good time and will happily join in with out volunteers for an enjoyable drink after work is over for the day. On the other hand we will not accept regular drunkenness and operate a zero tolerance policy on drug use. Hangovers are not encouraged while you are working and it can be dangerous if you are not fully alert working with horses. Keep hectic partying to your days off.

PAPER WORK

All volunteers are responsible for their own travel costs, travel insurance (which is compulsory and must cover medical emergency and evacuation), Visas and any necessary inoculations. We also require that you sign an indemnity form which must be received with your booking.

TEAM SPIRIT

This program is a small family run operation and can only work with co-operation between all those involved. We are a team and we expect volunteers to be a part of that for both their benefit and ours. On a final note this is Africa, and for everyone to get the most from this project a good sense of humour is vital!

Please Note: These requirements are in place to ensure the safety and comfort of everyone involved. In the unlikely event that a volunteer decides to flout these requirements they will be given a warning. After three warnings they will be asked to leave the project. Mozambique Horse Safari reserves the right to terminate any volunteer's trip who they believe is seriously detrimental to the project.

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DAILY VOLUNTEER ITINERARY

5.00 am:

Wake up get dressed and enjoy a early morning coffee. Prepare whatever you need for feeding and health checks.

5.30 am:

Albert, our driver, will arrive and load up with feed, halters and medicines. You arrive at the paddocks in the cool of the early morning. Catch the horses and tether them to their feeding poles. Prepare feeds, and feed each horse its ration with nose buckets. While they eat, a visual check is conducted on every horse to check for cuts, grazes, ticks and general condition. Any problems are then addressed with the help of our grooms and senior volunteers. All horses hooves are then picked and inspected, again any issues are then dealt with. Each animal is then sprayed for ticks and released. This is then repeated in the second paddock. One or two volunteers may go, during this time, to the dam with Albert to collect water to fill all the troughs.

8.00 am:

Return to the house and eat breakfast. This is likely to be tea, coffee, toast, jam, scrambled or fried eggs, cheese, bacon and juice.

9.00 am:

Volunteers will then carry out their allotted tasks. This may include teaching in the riding school, lesson preparation, tack repairs and maintenance, treatment for any problems discovered that morning.

12.30 am:

Lunch is served. This may be spaghetti bolognese, stir fry, chicken casserole etc. All served with bread and butter, juice and salad.

1.00 pm:

After lunch you will get free time for relaxation. You can go to town, have a sleep or generally relax from the midday sun.

3.00 pm:

Volunteers will now prepare and start teaching riding lessons or taking beach rides. Those with limited riding experience may be requested to join the riding lessons. Other volunteers may work with horses who needing extra exercise or training.

6.00 pm:

Return to the house, unload and put away all tack and equipment.

6.30 pm:

Dinner is served, again a main meal with all the trimmings.

7.00 pm:

Free time. Relax on the veranda, listen to the crickets and tree frogs, chat about the days events, enjoy a cold beer and, for the most enthusiastic, prepare for the following day.

Please Note: All days here are different, as we have to rise to meet each new challenge as they come, but this is an itinerary of the kind of day you can expect to enjoy with us at Mozambique Horse Safari. Please be aware that, because we are a real project dealing with the day to day running of a herd of nearly seventy horses, we have to maintain flexibility. This can depend on the number of volunteers at the time, the needs of the horses, number of outriders or lessons booked. You have two days off a week to pursue a social life and have fun.

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COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Your time will be split between caring for the horses and assisting with the local children in Vilankulo. We encourage volunteers to teach local children English and our volunteers can also interact with other volunteers on the African Impact Project and spend time helping the Vilankulo orphans.

ACTIVITIES

SCUBA DIVING & SNORKELING

The waters around the Bazaruto Archipelago are one of the largest marine conservation areas in the Indian Ocean. The archipelago's coral reefs and clear waters offer some of the best diving in the world, dive sites are uncrowded and marine life is varied and abundant. With sites at a depth of 12 to 30m and visibility up to 40m you will discover protected reefs teeming with dolphin, hump back whales, whale sharks, sharks, manta and spotted eagle rays, green and turtles. The endangered dugong, of which only a very small number still exist, swim in the shallow crystal clear waters that are also home to abundant starfish, soft and hard corals, anemones, seahorses and a dazzling array of beautiful tropical fish.

DHOW TRIPS

Experience the wonder of a traditional sailing dhow gliding through the Bazaruto Archipelago. The islands of Benguerra, Bazaruto, Magaruque and Santa Carolina are complete with azure waters, sandy beaches, palm trees and pristine coral reefs. The islands consist of huge 100m sand dunes, freshwater lakes, mangrove swamps and sandy beaches. You are likely to spot whales, dolphins, turtles and the only viable dugong population remaining in this part of the world. So bring your camera, and capture the freedom of unspoilt beach's, solitude, and stunning scenery on a traditional sailing dhow, locally built by hand in the age old method and comfortably furnished is the idyllic way to watch the sun setting over the sea.

PORTUGUESE LESSONS

Volunteering in a foreign country gives you the perfect chance to get to learn a new language. We can arrange intensive one-to-one Portuguese language courses in Vilankulo. The Portuguese language training courses are highly personalized and designed to improve your Portuguese communication and language skills. The benefits of learning Portuguese are huge and you will be able to build rapport and strengthen relationships with local Mozambicans.

FISHING

Vilanculos is renowned for its excellent game fishing.

KITEBOARDING

During the windy season you can kiteboard and windsurf in Vilanculos; the conditions are perfect due to the shallow water and flat waves.

ACCOMMODATION

You will be based with the horses in the beautiful coastal town of Vilankulo on the South Beach at Blue Water Beach Resort Vilanculos and at Benguerra Lodge on Benguerra Island. Accommodation is a rondavel with bed, mosquito net, ablution shower blocks and the resort has a swimming pool, restaurant & bar. For more information please view the pictures at Blue Waters Beach Resort

RATES

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The minimum time period we accept volunteers for is two weeks. The reason for this is that it can take a little while to adjust to life here and if you left any earlier neither you nor the project would benefit very much from the experience.

TWO WEEKS: US \$ 1 000.00

EXTRA WEEK AFTER: US \$ 400.00

What's included: Accommodation, three excellent meals per day, airport transfers, laundry service, all use of the horses and equipment, trail rides and beach rides.

What's not included: Flights, personal travel insurance, visas, any personal spending money, any extra excursions or activities.

As well as the cost of the program, volunteers are asked to bring and donate a few things for the horses which are very hard to obtain in Mozambique. These can include cotton wool for doctoring, fly wipes, stirrups, wound spray, eye salve, light- weight riding helmets or reins

WHAT TO BRING

This kit list has been compiled with the help of previous volunteers based on their experience.

Clothing:

Shirts and shorts - please bear in mind the climate.

Trousers or jodhpurs that are comfortable to ride in.

Swimming costume

Long-sleeved t-shirts to avoid sunburn and mosquitoes

Thick socks

Hat & sun protection

Horse Riding Hat

Medical:

All prescription medicines for the duration of your trip

Mosquito repellent 30% deet minimum, it is available here but more expensive than the UK

Anti malarias for the duration of your trip

High factor sun cream. Enough for the duration as its hard to come by here

Footwear:

Boots suitable for riding and working in

Sandals / Flip flops / Crocs

Finance:

At least one Visa or MasterCard ATM card.

A valid 3 month visa for Mozambique see www.mozambiquehc.co.uk

Miscellaneous:

Mosquito net

Two pin travel adapter

CONTACT PAST VOLUNTEERS

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You can contact some of the volunteers below on Facebook who have spent some time volunteering with us and ask them to share their thoughts and experiences with you. Please also join our Facebook group Mozambique Horse Safari where you can find more information about what we do.

MOZAMBIQUE HORSE SAFARI

Mozambique Horse Safari specializes in custom-made horseback riding holiday safaris and daytime trail rides along the Vilanculos coast and on Benguerra Island in the Bazaruto Archipelago. The coastal area is renowned for its long stretches of untouched white sand beaches and magnificent cliff top views overlooking the ever-changing turquoise blue colours of the Bazaruto Archipelago.

We have a wide selection of over thirty well trained horses and offer horseback riding lessons and horse camps for children. The spirit of fun and adventure runs deep at Mozambique Horse Safari so saddle up and enjoy a truly unique African vacation. For more information please view the photographs in our Picture Gallery

OUR STORY

The Rescue of Zimbabwe's horses

In 2000 Robert Mugabe began to systematically invade commercial farms in Zimbabwe forcing families to flee and leave their much-loved animals behind. Our neighbours in Chinhoyi were nearly killed and quickly made the decision to depart for New Zealand leaving their horses behind with us. With the continuing trouble and increasing violence we moved horses and staff across the country leasing farms where we could. As the land invasions intensified we would have to move on, sometimes packing up in less than a few hours. As more and more farmers abandoned their horses, we took them in. This was the beginning of our incredible adventures and rescue of Zimbabwe's horses.

After several more evictions we ran out of grazing for the horses and made a decision to move them to Mozambique. We developed an agricultural project in Chimoio and found the horse's a safe haven but unfortunately the business collapsed and our investors quickly withdrew from Mozambique leaving us penniless with over a hundred horses to look after. Pat realizing the horses needed to earn their keep loaded them into an old truck and drove to the seaside resort of Vilanculos and started Mozambique Horse Safari. The horses adapted to their new life very quickly and we are working hard to ensure that they have a future. Sadly depleted there are only 70 horses left; disease is rife in Mozambique as there has been no veterinary control for over 35 years. Ringworm is endemic in the Mozambican population and continues to rapidly spread through our horses.

The horses have survived and are now prospering due to the determination of my husband who has never wavered and kept the project going through this rather extraordinary time. We need continuing funds and donations for veterinary supplies, animal feed, saddles, bridles, leather halters and lead ropes for the horses. In return for any support they will offer advertising space on their website and an allocated amount of free rides for the members of your club or organization.

Hopefully we will be able to continue to look after them and face the challenges ahead, all the time looking forward to a brighter future in Mozambique.

THE HORSES

The care and well being of our horses takes top precedence ensuring that they are responsive, alert, tough and fit. The horses at Mozambique Horse Safari are our greatest and most treasured assets and we take extremely good care of them. Breeds include a combination of Thoroughbreds, Arabs and the South African Boerperds. They are schooled to a very high level and react easily and lightly to the aids.

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We have over 80 horses in Mozambique to choose from, each horse will be handpicked to suit your individual need. We use a combination of English saddles, South African McClellan's and a selection of Australian stock saddles for those who prefer. We train our horses in both English and Western riding styles.

SPONSORSHIP

Mozambique Horse Safari is currently looking for donations of old saddles, bridles, leather halters and lead ropes for our horses. It is very difficult to come by any type of veterinary supplies in Mozambique and we are in constant need of fly masks, wound spray, wound oil and eye salves. In return for any second hand tack or sponsorship of veterinary supplies we will offer you free advertising space on our website and an allocated amount of free rides for the members of your club or organization.

HORSE RIDING SCHOOL

Learn the art of horsemanship at our Riding School. Mandy Retzlaff with the help of the BHS volunteers oversees our Equestrian School of excellence which offers dynamic courses, providing riding lessons, horse training and clinics.

We place a strong emphasis on creating a safe and fun environment for all students. Children and adults, from beginners to experienced riders, are welcome. We have school horses for lessons, or you can use your own. For more information please view the images on our Picture Gallery

RIDING VILANCULOS

Vilanculos is world renowned for its superb variety of white sand beaches, alluring golden sunsets and tall palm trees. The beach stretches for tens of kilometres allowing riders plenty of opportunities for exhilarating canters and long trots. The views from the cliffs overlooking the Bazaruto Archipelago are extraordinary and will be a memory you will never forget.

So bring your camera, and capture the freedom of unspoilt beach's, solitude, and stunning scenery by horseback. The MHS team will ensure that you have the time of your life. For more information please view the photographs in our Picture Gallery

RIDING IN BENGUERRA ISLAND

Benguerra is the second largest island in the Bazaruto Archipelago, which broke away from the mainland thousands of years ago. The island is approximately 55 square kilometers and lies 14 km offshore. It is famous for its unspoiled white beaches and remarkable dive sites.

Benguerra Island comprises forest, savannah, freshwater lakes and a wetland eco-system that sustains a diverse population of fauna and flora. Fresh water crocodiles and flocks of flamingos can be found in the three lakes. The island, which is home to approximately 140 bird species, was declared a National Park in 1971.

So bring your camera and capture the freedom of an unspoilt island with deserted beaches of pure white sand, sparkling turquoise seas swaying palms and sunny days. The MHS team will ensure that you have the time of your life. For more information please view the images on our Picture Gallery

ENRIQUE'S FISHING VILLAGE RIDE

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This wonderful ride takes us through coconut plantations, cantering over pristine beaches to Enrique's Fishing Village. Enrique the local chief entertains us in true local Mozambican style and sets up a table for us with traditional food. We start off with a refreshing coconut drink and are shown how to eat fresh crab and we taste Matapa a traditional Mozambique dish made from cassava leaves, nuts and coconut milk.

After lunch we continue our ride through the rural village waving at small children and villagers and head onto the "Fingerprint of god"; a magnificent viewpoint overlooking the Bazaruto Archipelago. A wonderful Mozambican ride experiencing traditional African culture

MOZAMBIQUE

Situated on the east coast of Southern Africa, Mozambique has a vibrant mix of African, Portuguese and Arab cultures. Its coastline stretches for nearly 3 000 km and the country covers an area of approximately 800 000 sq km.

Mozambique is a country of spectacular beauty consisting of wide coastal plains that rise into mountains and plateaus. For riding enthusiasts in particular the country is irresistible. You can ride more or less anywhere with few restrictions. Most of the trails follow natural paths created over hundreds of years by the local wildlife. As such, a trip to this enchanting country is a unique experience for adventurous visitors

Come and explore the magic and beauty of Mozambique, the land of a thousand smiles!

GETTING TO VILANKULO

Vilanculos is 700 km north of Maputo. The road between Maputo and Vilanculos is accessible by two wheel drive and an affordable luxury bus operates between Johannesburg, Maputo and Vilankulo twice a week. There are also daily direct flights from Johannesburg, Maputo and from the Kruger Park International Airport with Pelican Air.

All volunteers will be met at either Vilankulo Airport or at the bus drop off point.

BANKING & CURRENCY

The currency is the Metical (plural Meticaais). The South African rand and US dollar and most credit cards are accepted.

There are 3 banks: Barclays & BCI near the town's entrance & BIM Millennium on the main tar road, near the sea. They are open between 8h00 - 15h00 on weekdays. Barclays Bank is also open Saturdays 9h00 - 12h00. Credit Cards: All banks have ATMs for VISA cards - but not always MasterCard.

HEALTH & MALARIA

No vaccinations are required for Mozambique. You should bring along the following personal medication: insect and mosquito repellent suntan and block out creams. Imodium, malaria tablets and antihistamine creams. It is a good idea to drink bottled water.

The Bazaruto Archipelago is a malaria area. It is advisable to wear protective clothing such as long sleeve tops and long trousers in the evening, use mosquito repellent. Please consult your doctor or pharmacist about a suitable malaria prophylactic.

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PARTYING & SHOPPING Vilankulo is a great place to party. Please note that Mozambique has a zero tolerance policy regarding recreational drugs (including cannabis). Avoid putting yourself in vulnerable situations – party with friends and if in doubt, arrange a lift home. It is generally safe to walk around Vilankulo, although better to walk in groups, especially at night.

Visiting the markets can be an interesting experience. Bargaining is the norm with curio and casual sellers, although prices of basic goods & fresh produce are usually standard. Shopping is regarded as a social event, so be patient - and enjoy the barter. But keep your wits about you. Petty theft can be a problem, - be aware of those around you and keep valuables out of sight. 'Street-kids' are sometimes involved so do not encourage dependency by giving them money or gifts. It is however customary to give a coin to the old and disabled

VISA REQUIREMENTS

All visitors require visas, which can be obtained from the various consulates or on arrival in Mozambique. You will be liable for passenger tax, immigration tax and airport tax.

WEATHER

Being within the tropics Mozambique seldom gets cold, but on some evenings during the winter months of June and July a light jacket or pullover will be necessary. The summer months of November through to February can be extremely hot and this is also the rainy season, though storms seldom last long. Winters are sunny and dry and cool off substantially in the evening. The best time to visit Mozambique is April – October.