# Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Location</strong></th>
<th>Plettenberg Bay, South Africa.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>From 3 weeks.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dates</strong></td>
<td>All year round.</td>
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<td><strong>Requirements</strong></td>
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<td>• Minimum age: 18.</td>
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<td>• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.</td>
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<td>• Special skills: Prior horse experience is advantageous 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 of the farm.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Documents required</strong></td>
<td>Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day of arrival</strong></td>
<td>Sunday.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day of departure</strong></td>
<td>Sunday.</td>
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Highlights

- Working closely with horses and other farm animals including dogs, cats and cows.
- Assisting in rebuilding trust with rescued horses.
- 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), waterfall Zipline, elephant & snake sanctuaries, 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

Born out of a general passion for animals and horses in specifically, this horse trail operation was established in 2012 and has since grown to be the leading recreational horse-riding trail operator in the general Bitou area. The operation currently deploys 7 team members managing all aspects of the day-to-day activities of its herd of 30 horses. This project is based on a 60ha farm in the beautiful Crags area. One of the objectives at the project is to provide a safe haven and happy home to rescued horses. The project works closely with the horse rescue foundation and has a holistic approach to horse care. As these horses don’t trust humans when they come to the farm, they need to offer psychological support and rebuild human-horse trust. The horses also receive physical therapy and get checked daily.

The horses are selected for their good composition and gentle temperaments, encouraged through continuous therapy and attention. They are well loved and kept in tip-top condition. The farm runs daily tours every day of the year, from an hour indigenous forest tour to a full day tour to surrounding sanctuaries. These tours provide an experience in the Tsitsikamma area as well as diverse activities in The Crags on horseback or in the comfort of a horse drawn carriage. Rides include trails of magnificent views over mountains, forest and farmland, grassy fields, indigenous Fynbos, local vineyards and old woodcutters’ forest trails to attractions in the area. The focus is to ensure that the rides are suitable for all levels of experience – the emphasis being on a safe and enjoyable ride. 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 abandoned, injured and abused horses by rescuing them, providing for their well-being and providing them with the care and attention they need throughout their recovery process.
- Provide fun rides for guests from all over the world which fund the care of the horses.
- Provide rescued horses with a life as part of a herd which makes them feel safe and happy.
- Provide holistic care for horses including physical therapy and psychological attention.
- Provide employment for local people.

Programme details

The volunteer team is trained in all aspects of equine care and form bonds with the horses. They are also trained to put the experience and safety of guests and their horses first, and you'll find them warm and welcoming. 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 volunteer programme is to first and foremost assist in the all-round functioning of the farm and horse care. The riding of horses will be at the discretion of the project and if time permits. The individual volunteer, working alongside the permanent staff, will be expected to undertake the following duties on a routine basis:

- Primary care activities pertaining to mature horses and foals – 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 when required.
• Participation in trail activities while mastering key facts and stories 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 operation experiences the usual cycles of general tourism to the region with the period from October over year-end summer through to Easter plus the mid-year holidays marking the peak in activity levels.

The spectrum of horse-trail experiences for the novice and more advanced riders includes an hour meadow trail, two and/or three hour forest and farm trails, a half- or full-day exploration of the area, a half- or full-day wine estate trail plus a 3 hour forest and farm picnic trail. A popular addition to these options is the 10-seater horse drawn carriage visiting local boutique wine estates for tastings and light luncheons.

Your role
You will work from Monday to Friday (9:00 - 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 weekends and public holidays on a roster system with the other staff. You will get a full orientation and introduction on the Monday after your arrival.

A possible work schedule could be:

• 09:00 - 11:00: Assisting in feeding animals
• 11:00 - 12:00: Assisting in getting horses ready for their trail rides
• 12:00 - 13:00: Working in the organic garden
• 13:00 - 14:00: Lunch
• 14:00 - 15:00: Assisting in maintaining trails
• 15:00 - 16:00: Checking horses and paddocks
• 16:00 - 17:00: Assisting in horse therapy

Your roles and responsibilities:

• Participating in farm work such as milking the cows and feeding farm animals
• Assisting tour guides when and if needed
• Working in the organic garden
• 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
• Assisting in building trust with rescued horses

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 the compost required for the fledgling cash crop vegetable growing programme that not only provides fresh products to the employees from the nearby community but are also for sale to other parties, including guest lodges. You can also opt to participate in this developing aspect.
PLEASE NOTE: At no time will mistreating of horses 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 17 km east of Plettenberg Bay.

**Getting to and from the project**

You need to arrive at George Airport where you will be collected by the volunteer staff. Transport is provided on both your arrival and departure between 08:00 and 17:00.

**Accommodation**

You will stay in a backpackers based in The Crags, a rural suburb of greater Plettenberg Bay. The backpackers is on a 5-hectare smallholding amidst indigenous forest and open grazing pastures. You are accommodated in shared rooms and/or in under-cover luxury Safari bow-tents that come fully equipped with carpets, beds, linen, electric blankets, lights etc. You will, where required, be sharing with one or two other volunteers. There are numerous bathrooms for communal access and use. The main homestead is equipped with an office, TV lounge, two kitchens plus a large verandah with a residents’ bar, and two fire-hearths for those chilly nights. It is here that guests and hosts gather for social interaction and where evening meals are served for all to enjoy. Immediately adjacent is an outdoor braai (BBQ) area, while close by, is a combination plunge pool/hot-tub (the latter fired up on Fridays) plus a golf practice putting green and a proper boule/petanque track where guests soon get to know their co-guests. Bedding and towels are provided and your laundry will be done regularly on a wash-and-fold basis by the housekeeper. Free WiFi is available at the main homestead area only.

The backpackers is situated in a rural area, The Crags, about 25 minutes from the main town of Plettenberg Bay. The Crags 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, please talk to the backpacker staff who will assist with transfer arrangements which could be at an extra cost.

Meals
Three meals are provided daily. 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 on the verandah area or the outside entertainment area when required. A vegetarian option is available and it is also possible to cater for special dietary requirements.

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 areas like Plettenberg Bay, The Crags, Tsitsikamma, George, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn, etc. You can go bungee jumping, skydiving, whale watching, swimming with seals, adventure boating, kloofing, kayaking, horse-riding, shark-cage diving, tree-top canopy touring, or visit the waterfall Zipline, elephant and snake sanctuaries, wine estates, and many more.

To participate in these activities, just speak with the project coordinator or the staff at the backpackers and they will assist you with the necessary arrangements.

Local transport
Daily transport to and from the project is provided.
Transfers to town during your free time can be arranged but this will be at your own expense.

What to bring
We recommend bringing comfortable, practical clothes including rain gear, warm jacket and a beanie, wellington boots, safety shoes/boots, long comfortable pants, a hat for the sun, sunblock, riding gear if you have any, as well as a small, backpack so that you can keep important belongings with you. Anything else you might need is readily available at local supermarkets in South Africa.

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
Please note that the use of cell phones is prohibited on all of our projects during work hours. This includes taking photos and instant messaging. This is for the safety of the volunteers who work with animals. Volunteers need to make sure they are focused on the job at hand and should not be distracted by their social media accounts.
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.

Any volunteers found inappropriately dressed will be given a written warning and asked to leave the project if the written warning is ignored.

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:


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, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water 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.

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, laundry)
• Daily transport to and from the project
• Good Hope Volunteers welcome pack
• Regular site visits by our coordinator
• An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
• Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
• Local support, including a 24-hour emergency number
• WiFi

Not included:

• Any other transport
• Excursions
• Any items of personal nature

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.