

FAQs for Ranch Dudes

What is a Ranch Dude?

As a Ranch Dude you will be actively involved in the daily ranch life, horse training and education. At Koiimasis, horse trainers, ranch dudes and guides always work hand in hand. Everyone learns from everyone else and most of all from the horses.

The term "dude ranch" comes from the USA and means nothing else than guest farm. We used to use the common term "volunteer", but this often led to misunderstandings which we hope to clear up with the new name. The time as a ranch dude is, so to speak, a mixture of riding holidays and voluntary service. That's why the stay is much cheaper than a pure holiday. Your contribution goes 100% into the project - physically and monetarily. Ranch dudes are an important part of our work for and with the horses.

You get the chance to dive deep into the daily life of a Namibian ranch and experience things that are hidden from a normal tourist. As a ranch dude you spend 90% of your time in the saddle and if you want to take a break, that's ok too - everything can, nothing has to.

How long has the programme been running?

There have been regular Ranch Dudes at Koiimasis for over 10 years.

How many volunteers can help out?

Maximum 4

What does the Ranch Dude programme involve? What do I actually do there?

The main focus of your duties is working with the horses. You will help with training and schooling and do real ranch work - working from the back of the horse.

How much riding do I actually get to do?

80% of your work will be from the saddle - one day more, one day less. You will get to ride a lot of different horses and definitely learn a lot.

Do I have to do stable work?

Stable work is of course part of the job. The paddocks have to be cleared regularly, the tack cleaned, the watering troughs cleaned and the plants watered. However, the majority of your work will be directly with the horse.

Is there supervision?

You won't be left alone, if that's what you want to know. You work with Freda and Immanuel. There is always someone there who can help you with all your horse questions and always keeps an eye on how you treat the horses - also for your safety. Nevertheless, you will be allowed to work with your horses on your own responsibility, according to your riding abilities.

What are my daily tasks, what does my everyday life look like?

If you want to support us, we rely on your help. Of course you can ask us anything and we will help you as much as we can, but we also expect a certain amount of independence. For this reason, the programme is not suitable for beginners. You will be assigned your own horses and decide for yourself how much training the different animals need.

As a ranch dude you have fixed working hours:

In summer: 07:30 - 12:00 and 15:00 - 18:30

In winter: 08:00 - 12:30 and 14:30 - 18:00

Exceptions confirm the rule!

If we have riding guests, you are welcome to accompany us on every ride and help us look after our guests. However, the guests always have priority, as they only stay for a week and pay much more than you.

A "normal" day could look like this, for example:

- You walk or drive to the cowboy camp in the morning.
- When you arrive at the stable, all the horses are already happy about your arrival and you help with the feeding.
- Then you do some small daily chores, such as mucking out the paddocks.
- When the ponies have finished eating, you start with your first horse for the day. Usually you have several horses that you are responsible for during your time. You clean and saddle your horse and take him to the riding arena, the round pen, the big arena or on a ride.
- You have a long break at lunchtime
- For your break, you ride one of your horses to your accommodation, unsaddle it, put it in the paddock and check whether it has enough water.
- The lunch time is at your disposal, you can cook something to eat, sleep, read, lie in the sun...
- Then you ride back again
- Now you take care of the rest of your horses, move and train them.
- At the end of the day, you head back home and fall tired into your bed.

The next day you might have a cattle drive, where you drive a large herd of cattle to the nearest watering hole. Afterwards, you help sort out the cattle for sale and assist with branding, etc. Or maybe you go for a ride with some guests in the afternoon, or you stack hay bales, or you train a young horse in the composure course. In between you practise roping or take care of the maintenance of the tack... I could go on like this for hours. As you can see, no day is like the other.

What do I do at the weekend?

On Saturday you only work half a day, then you have the weekend free. You can visit the neighbouring farms or relax at the lodge pool. You can climb the mountains on the ranch or do something with the other dudes. On weekends there is often a braai (= barbecue) or you play cards...

Booking and arrival

How do I book?

- Just contact the ranch, the best first step is to send a WhatsApp to Freda: +49 (0) 1522 8683803
- When the dates are known, you will receive an offer as a PDF, which you sign and then send back as a photo via WhatsApp.

How far in advance do I have to book?

About 4 weeks (or less if it suits you) just ask.

When can I help?

All year round, just ask if there are still places available.

How long can I help out there?

- The minimum booking period is 4 weeks, otherwise you just don't get into the daily routine - and that's what a project like this is all about.
- The maximum duration is 90 days, due to the visa. However, longer stays can be arranged in individual cases.

How does the journey work?

Arrival: We will pick you up at the airport "Hosea Kutako" outside Windhoek. Please send us a picture in advance so that we can recognise you.

If your flight lands after 3pm, you may need to stay overnight in Windhoek, otherwise we will have to drive overnight.

We can recommend the following accommodation options:

www.chameleonbackpackers.com

If you want to stay a little cheaper and get in touch with other travellers quickly.

<http://www.de-vagebond.com>

If you prefer it a bit quieter and more private.

Departure: We will drive you back to Windhoek.

Please note: If your return flight departs before 6pm, we recommend that you plan an extra night in Windhoek at the end of your stay, otherwise we cannot guarantee that you will arrive on time.

Do I need a visa?

Officially YES: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/sid_DE807B35D6332E38D39B111FFA9B2EDD/DE/Laenderinformationen/00-SiHi/Nodes/NamibiaSicherheit_node.html

But: If you say at the airport that you are on holiday in the country, at Ranch Koiimasis, in the Karas region near Helmeringhausen, you will get a normal tourist visa. Do not mention that you are in the country as a volunteer, otherwise you will need a work visa, which takes a long time and is expensive.

Our tip: If you are thinking about extending your visa in advance, ask at the airport if they will stamp the 90-day visa directly into your passport. Otherwise, you will only be issued a visa limited to your arrival and departure dates (e.g. 28 days).

How much will my stay cost?

- 4 weeks minimum: 350€ per week
- From 5-8 weeks: 330€ per week
- From week 9-12: 310 per week

Transport costs 150€ per person (return journey together). Please pay this in cash on the spot. You book and pay for the flight yourself.

How does the payment work?

1. We offer you different options to pay your invoice:
50% deposit, 2 weeks after receiving the invoice. Unless otherwise agreed.
2. Transfer in Namibia Dollar NAD, according to daily exchange rate.
3. Please note that many banks cannot send Namibian dollars. In this case please transfer in South African Rand ZAR, this currency is equivalent to NAD.
4. If your bank does not charge a good exchange rate or charges too much, you are welcome to transfer via Xoom.
5. To save on transfer fees, you can of course send it all at once.
6. The remaining 50% either as a bank transfer, or cash on the spot in NAD, ZAR or Euro.
7. Please note that there is no IBAN in Namibia. The data on your invoice is sufficient.
8. We ask you to pay the transport costs in cash on the spot.

Why should I pay to work?

Take it from a former volunteer and passionate rider: this is not work! It is the best experience of your life and worth every penny. Since the majority of your tasks consist of riding, it's not work for us horse people - is it?

Country and people

Who are my contacts?

Wulff Izko: is the boss of the ranch, in his late 50s and a passionate farmer. He studied engineering, was born in Germany and grew up on his father's farm (very close to Koiimasis). Almost 30 years ago, he bought the Koiimasis farm to realise his dream: to create a unity with the people, the horses and the rustic, relaxed cowboy feeling that resonates everywhere here.

Anke Izko: the boss's wife, 54 years old and mother of two grown-up children. Anke is a farmer with a lot of heart and always has an open ear for all volunteers.

Freda: is 35 years old, comes from Germany and was also a volunteer at Koiimasis for the first time in 2017. Since January 2020 she is responsible for ranch dudes and guest rides.

Immanuel: is 26 years old and comes from Namibia. He is mainly responsible for young horse training. Immanuel only speaks English.

Are there only four people on the ranch?

No, of course not. There are also the farm workers who live on the ranch. But you will have almost nothing to do with them.

The lodge is run by Roland, a German expatriate. If you drop by at the weekend, he will be happy to provide you with the latest news from Germany.

Where is the ranch located?

Koiimasis is situated about 650 km from Windhoek, in the Karas Region, in the middle of the Tiras Mountains, on the edge of the Namib Desert. You'll find us on Google earth.

How far away is the nearest town?

Helmeringhausen is about 65km away, there is a small shop for the necessities.

Lüderitz is about 270km away, the small town is a popular travel destination. If there are several dudes on the farm at the same time, excursions can be organised.

What languages are spoken?

German, English and Afrikaans

What do I need to know about Namibia?

Informing yourself about the country you are travelling to is of course always a good thing. Here are some links with great information about Namibia:

<https://www.namibia-info.net>

<https://namibia.de>

<http://www.zeit.de/wissen/geschichte/2010-03/namibia-unabhaengigkeit>

<http://www.merian.de/afrika/namibia/artikel/elf-voelker-elf-antworten>

<http://www.namibia-facts.de/geografie/>

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Laenderinformationen/00-SiHi/NamibiaSicherheit.html>

If you're getting scared now because of all the safety instructions, let me tell you that you don't have to worry. The farm is very far from the nearest town and is its own little cosmos. You will mainly have to deal with the farmers and every now and then you will meet tourists (mainly from Germany) who are on holiday in the lodge or at the campsite.

What you should really watch out for are scorpions, snakes and the nasty thorns of the trees and bushes. But if you are a bit careful and take care of yourself, you have nothing to fear here either.

Accommodation and meals

Where do I live?

You live in the so-called castle. The castle is about 2 km from the cowboy camp and one kilometre from the farmhouse. When you are there for the first time you will get a different relation to distances - believe me.

In the castle there is a large bedroom with three beds and two smaller rooms, each with two beds. Two bathrooms with shower and a kitchen with fridge, freezer, oven and cooker.

Outside you have the possibility to wash your clothes (by hand!) and hang them up. There is also a small gazebo where you can enjoy your meal or watch the Dassies jumping around. You might also see the eagle pair that has its nest nearby. Or you might get a surprise visit from the ponies.

Is there internet?

There is no wifi in your accommodation, but we have mobile data reception. Remember to buy a Namibian mobile phone card in Windhoek with enough money on it. More information in your travel documents.

What about money?

The Namibian dollar is the currency of Namibia. One euro is about 13 dollars. As you start in Windhoek, you can use a credit card to withdraw money, as there is no possibility to do so on the farm. However, some credit cards take a while to work in Namibia (from experience).

What about food?

Dudes are self-catering. On the ranch you will be provided with meat, eggs and tap water, everything else you have to buy yourself, as we don't know what kind of food you prefer.

As a rule, we do our shopping in Windhoek before we drive to the ranch. There are also a lot of German products here. If you find it difficult to estimate what you need for your time, don't worry, there is always shopping in between and you will get enough supplies. The tap water on the farm is of very good quality, you can just drink it from the tap. In your accommodation you will cook for yourself and take care of all the other household chores.

If we have a cook on site, you have the possibility to eat with us at the saloon for 280 NAD/day. You will be charged at the end of your stay.

What if I get sick?

Travel health insurance is a booking requirement - you can't do without it. However, such insurance is relatively inexpensive. A stay abroad of up to 6 weeks is already covered by many health insurances - just ask your insurance company.

For minor aches and pains, there are enough medicines at the ranch. Otherwise, the nearest doctor is in Lüderitz. For the really bad cases, the ranch has an airstrip.

Packing list

Here is a small, but certainly not complete, packing list:

- Clothing: practical, robust, easy-care clothing, sturdy shoes. Don't forget warm clothes, because in the winter months (May-October) it can get quite cold in the evenings.
- Swimwear for a Sunday at the pool
- Riding clothes: breeches or jeans, boots or shoes suitable for riding. Sneakers are not(!) suitable for riding. Riding hat and/or cowboy hat, fanny pack for mobile phone etc.
- Riding helmet!!!
- If necessary, shoes that you can ride and walk well in.
- Spurs only if you know how to use them (!)
- Travel health insurance that pays in case of Corona infection!!!
- Vaccinations: Tetanus
- Headgear: Cap or other, because the sun is merciless!
- Shower kit, cosmetics, toiletries, lip balm, etc.
- First-aid kit (at your discretion)
- Sun cream!
- Mosquito spray
- Adapter for South African sockets, if necessary multiple plugs
- Torch
- A good pair of sunglasses that stay on your nose when riding!
- You can leave the hairdryer at home, as well as similar things that use too much electricity.
- Pocket money, approx. 2000 NAD
- USB stick to share the photos at the end
- Sleeping Bag

What riding skills are needed?

You should have good riding skills, the programme is definitely NOT FOR BEGINNERS! Of course, you don't have to be a horse trainer or successful tournament rider to be able to use this programme. Riding style is not the deciding factor either. On the ranch we ride in western style, but actually it's all about good horsemanship - isn't it? Experienced riders help with the training of young horses. But if you don't feel up to it yet, there are plenty of trained horses that need training.

Can I accompany the riding safaris?

Yes, you can accompany the riding safaris. Of course, you will actively help and support Freda in looking after the guests. If a guest has problems with his horse, you may have to change horses or give up your ride. The guests only have one week at Koiimasis and pay about 4 times what you pay. You get the chance to experience real life on a ranch in Namibia, look behind the scenes and be a very important part of the team!

Covid19 Info

What if I can't make my trip due to Corona?

If you are unable to travel due to Covid19 because you or a family member is infected, or you are unable to enter the country due to a travel warning, closed borders or cancelled flights, we will give you the option of a free rebooking at a time of your choice. For up-to-date entry information, please keep yourself informed via the website of the German Foreign Office or the Namibian Embassy.

How safe is it for me in Namibia with regard to Corona?

Of course, there is no general answer to this question. The greatest risk is on arrival and in the capital, although legal restrictions are observed everywhere there (masks are compulsory, etc.). On the farm, the risk is very low because we are very far away from any city. As long as you keep the prescribed distance to our guests and refrain from shaking hands, there should be no problems.

Please make sure that your travel health insurance also covers treatment for a Corona infection.

Entry at Covid times

The following entry requirements apply until 15 April 2022*: Fully vaccinated travellers may enter with proof of vaccination. Non-vaccinated travellers must present a negative PCR test not older than 72 hours issued by a laboratory certified in the country of departure upon entry. As of 15.01.2022, only test results generated via the Trusted Travel Platform or verified via the Global Haven System will be accepted for entry into Namibia.

Tourists must present a health form, which can be found on the internet portal of the Namibian Tourist Board (<https://www.namibia-tourism.com/aktuelles/>). Proof of travel health insurance covering treatment costs in case of COVID-19 illness must also be presented. Please always print out everything DOUBLE in ENGLISH! In case of a transfer flight, please inform yourself about the entry regulations of the respective country.

Departure at Corona times

As travel regulations change almost constantly, please plan a night in Windhoek at the end, in case a Corona test is necessary. Currently (as of 09/21), vaccinated and recovered persons may enter Germany without a test.

Kontakt

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