

Welcome to horse riding in Tokai. We hope that you will enjoy our beautiful trails and the fabulous sounds of the fish eagles calling as much as we do and have jotted down a few notes to help you select your route.

Firstly a few house rules to keep you safe while out in Tokai Park, horse riding in Tokai requires a valid level three activity permit. Please bring yours along with you so that you can show the rangers should you be asked to do so. A day pass is available for R97 (priced in November 2021) at the entrance to the picnic site should you not have an activity permit so please bring along your debit/credit card to pay for that should you need it. Please be aware that SANParks no longer accepts cash. Horse riders enjoy a friendly relationship with the SANParks team in Tokai so please do greet them when you bump into them.

Access to Tokai Park is restricted to sunlight hours only with the official hours being as follows:

October to April: 07:00 – 18:00

May to September: 08:00 – 17:00

It is recommended that first time visitors arrange to meet a horse rider who is familiar with the area to show you around. Whenever practically possible, please ride in small groups rather than on your own so that you have got company should something go wrong. It is a requirement that riding helmets are worn while riding on SANParks' land.

While it is possible to enjoy a trot or canter in various areas of Tokai Park, no galloping is permitted as this is a shared space that is enjoyed by various recreational users as well as providing a habitat for wildlife. Keep an eye out for tortoises, mongoose, snakes, lizards, various birds and of course baboons. Please be courteous and respectful to all other users and enjoy your ride.

Picnic Site:

Horse riders are permitted to use the picnic site transit route that connects Upper Tokai and Middle Tokai while enabling us to circumvent riding on the roads. This is a great privilege and access to the gate leading to Middle Tokai from the picnic site is restricted to horse riders who have a valid activity permit and are members of the TDRA. This is to comply with the access restrictions that are in place in respect of the Chrysalis Academy land.

The rules for use of the transit route are included on the map of the route and it is absolutely essential that no deviation from the route be made as this area is not intended to be a horse riding area. This is a picnic and braai area that is enjoyed by families and we need to ensure that the area remains true to its intended purpose.

Snakes are often encountered sunning themselves along the perimeter transit route so please be sensible and keep an eye on the ground. If you encounter families wanting to touch your horses please be polite and friendly. There is no obligation to allow anybody to touch your horse so please put safety first in your decision as to whether it is possible to permit such. Kids especially enjoy touching the horses when possible as this is a treat for many and adds to their enjoyment of the area.

This area is cleaned of all horse manure on a weekly basis to help manage flies but should your horse manure in the entrance area it is requested that you please go back after your ride and clean it immediately. To reiterate, this is a picnic area and must be maintained as such. It is also recommended that horse riders avoid the area on very busy days such as Heritage day as it can become noisy and crowded with congestion at the main gate.

Lower Tokai Park

This is a beautiful area in which you can enjoy the indigenous fynbos while riding around the nearly 4km perimeter sand track. Horses are not permitted on the orange clay track which is reserved for walkers and cyclists.

This is a particularly high use section of Tokai Park in which dogs are permitted to be off leash if under voice control. It is therefore recommended that horse riders not use this area at peak times if horses are afraid of dogs please. It is also asked that horses not use this area for two days after ingesting an Ivermectin-based dewormer as this may be harmful to

certain breeds of dog in particular. This area is best suited to a gentle stroll interspersed with trots and controlled canters where visibility is good and no dogs or children are close by.

On a hot day it is particularly lovely to ride on the wide sand tracks that run through the remaining pine plantation. These tracks may have roots that are near to the surface but provide wonderful going in most places.

It is also possible to grab a cup of hot chocolate or coffee on a cold weekend morning from the secret café that can be found at the far side of Lower Tokai Park.

For those more adventurous riders, it is possible to cross from Lower Tokai Park to the Keysers River greenbelts so that you can explore that area as well.

Middle Tokai

This area is unique in that no dogs or cyclists are permitted in the area so horse riders can enjoy tracks that are very similar in respect of the going to those found in Lower Tokai Park without the associated high user numbers. This area is lovely for younger or even spooky horses whose riders would prefer to avoid busy areas. It also offers a lovely area to enjoy a canter with the very gentle gradient of the tracks sloping upwards toward the mountain. There is also the option of enjoying the various cross country jumps that have been built on the grass area below the Chrysalis Academy field. These are of varying heights so that there is something for all levels of rider and horse to enjoy.

Access to this area is provided via Lower Tokai Park with a zebra crossing known as the Lion's gate crossing. There is then a gate with a path around it straight ahead of you or an opening so that you can follow the road to your right to head towards the stone Church.

This area can also be accessed via the picnic site gate or Drifter's gate however as Chrysalis Academy is an access controlled area, access via these gates requires that you have both a valid activity permit and are a member of TDRA registered on the Gatekeeper system.

Although dogs are not permitted in this area, baboons are so please do keep an eye out for these residents of the Tokai Park. They tend to leave the horses alone however some horses may be weary of them if they haven't encountered baboons before.

There may also be various sporting events taking place on the Chrysalis Academy field so keep an eye out for soccer balls or people zip lining from the container tower!

Another option is to use the zebra crossing known as the Southern Orpen Road crossing which will take you into a small section of Middle Tokai that runs behind Forest Glade and then connects you to Upper Tokai by crossing Upper Tokai Road and entering Upper Tokai via the square gate. This is a particularly unique area as the fynbos in this area is incredibly endangered so please do not venture off the sand tracks as we need to preserve the beauty of this area for generations to come. If you are very lucky you might spot the resident owl on a nest when passing through.

Again the orange clay path is for cyclists and walkers as cyclists are permitted through this section of Middle Tokai. There are dogs in the gardens at Forest Glade so don't be surprised if there is barking on the other side of the hedge. The going in this area is incredibly deep so it is generally suited to walking only.

Upper Tokai

This area is best suited to horses either with shoes or hoof boots unless your horse has really good feet as the tracks tend to be very hard higher up in the area and can be quite stony in parts. This area is most suited to walking and the odd trot due to the going but provides a wonderful space for hill work and the views are breathtaking.

The ground along the Zwaanswyk fenceline tends to be softer than elsewhere with some sections even lending themselves to a canter. In this area the permitted tracks are typically jeep tracks so they are wide and offer good visibility. You can cross through the gorge at two points both of which include a small river crossing in summer and a fast

flowing wider river crossing in winter. The noise of the water is really lovely in winter but can be overwhelming for some horses at first.

Please do not ride through the arboretum, this is a jeep track but access is not currently permitted unfortunately.

Should you elect to ride up the main jeep track, please keep an eye out for cyclists as this track is a shared track. Higher up you are highly likely to encounter cyclists enjoying single tracks on the Uitsig side of the main track, please do not cross the single tracks or attempt to ride them on your horses for the safety of all users.

No cyclists are permitted on the Zwaanswyk side of the main jeep track unless you go all the way up to levels four and five so you are able to enjoy the beautiful jeep tracks and contours there which are shared only with hikers. Hikers tend to be concentrated on the Elephant's Eye hiking trail which heads up from the arboretum and crosses the various contours so please keep an eye out for people especially in that area.

No dogs are permitted in this area however you are very likely to bump into one or more of the resident baboon troops. The baboons tend to ignore the horses and we encourage you to enjoy their entertaining antics while calmly walking past the troops. The babies in particular are nervous of the horses and we don't want to startle them so it is important to walk when passing the baboons please.