



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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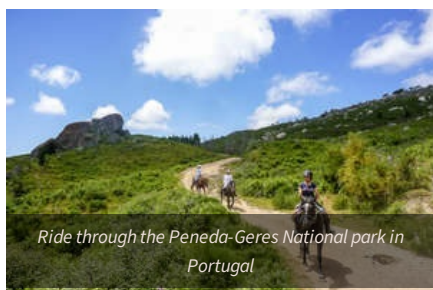
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Wild North Portugal Trail

PORTUGAL

A beautiful **trail ride** through the wild mountain landscape of northern Portugal, crossing open pastures, heathland and forest. Ride through the Peneda-Geres National park, and discover wild herds of Garrano horses and local wildlife, such as deer and wild boar. A great riding holiday for those seeking peace and relaxation in sunny Portugal

Centre based holidays	 8 days / 6 days riding	 From £1,378		Open to non-riders
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Explore on horseback the remote and wild mountainous landscape of northern Portugal, near the border with Spain
- The chance to encounter herds of wild horses
- Enjoy typical Portuguese meals, including local wines
- With a little luck, spot wildlife such as deer, wild boar, fox, or rarely, wolves
- Discover Portuguese heritage and ancient mountain villages

Day 1 — 1: EUROPE - PORTO - ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - No riding

 Valdevez Inn

Fly from the Europe to Porto. You should aim to arrive before 4pm if possible to allow time to settle in before dinner. It is also possible to arrive into the Spanish airport of Vigo if you prefer.

On arrival at Porto you will be met and transferred c. 1 hour to the equestrian centre in Arcos de Valdevez. You will be shown around the stables and the horses and will have time to freshen up before dinner in a local restaurant with your guide and the group.

Day 2 — 2: ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - PENEDA-GERES NATIONAL PARK - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

After breakfast at 8am, head to the stables and saddle up for your adventure, aiming to depart at 10am.

You start by riding through the medieval town of Arcos de Valdevez towards the national park of Peneda-Geres. Wild horses live on these mountain pastures and you will likely spot some during your week. You pass through traditional stone mountain villages and on trails through gorse and broom,

which are bright with yellow flowers during the spring.

After a picnic lunch, continue riding along sandy trails past the pre-historical remains of ancient civilisations until reaching the Information centre for the national park. Here the horses will stay overnight in forestry nursery fields whilst you are transferred back to the quinta to overnight. Dinner is taken at the Quinta, and you can expect a typical Portuguese meal.

Day 3 — 3: PENEDA-GERES NATIONAL PARK - FERREIROS - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

After breakfast at 8am you are transferred back to the horses to saddle up. Ride uphill through the woods of the national park and out onto the open plains. As well as the wild horses, the park is also home to deer, wild boar and wolves.

Today's trails are at an altitude of c. 1,000m and offer spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. After a picnic lunch beside a mountain lake, you drop downhill on an ancient track known as the "Trail of the Deceased" - so called because mountain village inhabitants used this trail to access cemeteries in the valleys.

On arrival at the village of Ferreiros you leave the horses at a farmhouse and transfer back to the quinta for the night and dinner.

Day 4 — 4: FERREIROS - ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

Transfer back to the horses and at 10am start riding along the typical valley countryside of farm pastures and oak forests. Follow the shore of the Vez river, and reach Arcos de Valdevez where you will have lunch at a tavern.

If water levels are low enough you will cross the river on horseback; if water levels are high then you will make a short detour to a bridge. Ride through the town of Arcos de Valdevez, clattering along 17th century roads and admiring the historical architecture before arriving at the quinta and equestrian centre. Dinner in town and overnight at the quinta.

Day 5 — 5: ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - CORNO DE BICO - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

Set out from the equestrian centre in the opposite direction and into the woods of Corno de Bico - a protected landscape. The forest trails are full of wildlife - foxes, deer, mountain cows, wild horses, wild boar and wolves. Lunch is taken in a local tavern in the heart of a small village with only 6 houses and 16 inhabitants!

After lunch continue riding uphill to a lookout where on a clear day you can see the Atlantic ocean. Today you are mostly riding through ancient forest and the trails are ideal for canters.

Following the trail that leads to the village of Bico, you will leave the horses overnight and head back to the quinta for dinner.

Day 6 — 6: PAREDES DE COURA - CORNO BICO - PAREDES DE COURA - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

After breakfast, you will head to Bico to reunite with the horses. You will explore the protected Natural Reserve at Corno de Bico. There are a variety of trails that will offer a full day of discovery. This memorable experience will include searching for the herds of wild horses. Within the park you will be able to sense the untouched beauty of nature, free from human footprint. You will carry your lunch in your saddlebags, and stop at the charming village of Grijo. You will then trail back to Bico to allow the horses to rest in the field one more night, whilst you head back to the Quinta.

Day 7 — 7: CORNO DE BICO - ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - 5 hours riding

 Valdevez Inn

Today, you will ride through the old forestry trail, exploring the beauty that is preserved and cared for. You will ride past the wild horses' shelters, which are comprised of groups of 50 to 60 trees planted in the woods. The trees are planted in a way that protect the wildlife in harsh winters and hot summers. You will most likely meet the wild horses grazing on their pasture grounds and then stop at the edge of the forest, by the water, for your picnic lunch. They call this place "The Enchanted Forest of Miranda", and for good reason! After lunch, your journey continues as you start descending towards the Quinta for a relaxed late afternoon, where you will have the chance to enjoy the pool. Dinner at Portuguese restaurant.

Day 8 — 8: ARCOS DE VALDEVEZ - PORTO - EUROPE - No riding

After breakfast you are transferred to Porto airport for your flight home. Flights are not included, but we can book them on request. Departure is at 10:00 am, aiming to be at the airport for 11:30 - 12:00 noon.
It is also possible to depart from the Spanish airport of Vigo if preferred, which is also c. 1 hour away by road.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
18/05/2024	25/05/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
01/06/2024	08/06/2024	£1,378	Open
15/06/2024	22/06/2024	£1,378	Open
29/06/2024	06/07/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
13/07/2024	20/07/2024	£1,378	Full
27/07/2024	03/08/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
31/08/2024	07/09/2024	£1,378	Open
14/09/2024	21/09/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
28/09/2024	05/10/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
12/10/2024	19/10/2024	£1,378	Full
26/10/2024	02/11/2024	£1,378	Guaranteed departure
09/11/2024	16/11/2024	£1,378	Open
23/11/2024	30/11/2024	£1,378	Open

Price details

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
 - Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room;
 - Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 international riders and a maximum of 8 riders.
 - Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 to 3 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €90/£80/\$100 per person in 2024. Once the group has reached 4 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it. On certain dates it may be possible to guarantee the ride with just one rider with the payment of a bigger supplement, please contact us.
 - There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a room with another guest of the same sex. To guarantee your own room there is a single supplement of €210/£185/\$225.
 - Porto Airport transfers €165 (approx. £145/\$175) - each way, divided by the number of riders, and are payable locally on arrival. You should aim to arrive between 12 (noon) and 4pm. Flights should depart after 1pm.
 - Children from 15 years of age are accepted, provided they are accompanied by an adult
 - Non-riders are welcome and benefit from a 20% discount.
- Please Note
- The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.
- The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English-speaking horse guide

LOGISTIC

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle

MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8

EXTRA

Park fees

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extra

TRANSPORTS

Airport transfers to the riding center outward and return - see dates and prices

International flights

EXTRA

Tips to local team

Non-rider activities

EXTRAS

Small group supplement - see above for the details

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The horses are a mixed herd, comprising Lusitano crosses, Hispanic Arabs and local mountain horses. Many are "Cruzados" - a crossbreed of Arab or English Thoroughbred with the Spanish or Portugese Iberian horses. They are sure-footed, fit and used to the mountainous terrain. There are fast and lively horses available as well as more peaceful and calm mounts.

The tack is English style GP saddles with snaffle or short-shanked English bridles. The horses are used to being ridden on a loose rein whilst walking.

Guide & local team

Your guides are Carlos and Luis - one will ride with you and the other will drive the support vehicle. Both are Portugese, native from the region where you're riding and speak good English.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider in walk, trot and canter in the outdoors.

There is a rider weight limit of 110kgs/17.3 st/242 lbs.

PACE

You will walk on the stoney, narrow tracks and through villages but there are plenty of opportunities for good canters along the sandy tracks or through the forest.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You are expected to groom and tack your own horse but assistance is available if required.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be fit enough for a trail of a number of days in the mountains, but the altitude is only c. 1,000m so there are no special requirements.

Previous experience on a trail ride is preferred but is not essential.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English tack

Helmets are mandatory. We recommend all our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

You spend your nights at the quinta with en-suite bathrooms. There is a communal lounge area and a swimming pool.

MEALS

Breakfasts are buffet style to include toast, yoghurts, cheese, ham etc.

Lunches are usually taken in a local taverna (salads, meats, cheese etc) or carried in your saddle bags (sandwiches)

Dinners are taken in local restaurants where there is often a choice. One night you have dinner with a local Portuguese family.

Vegetarians and special diets can be accommodated with advance notice.

CLIMATE

This area of Portugal is green and experiences more rain than the south, but generally the weather is good with long hours of sunlight. You will need to take a jacket and warm layers for the mountains, just in case. During the spring/autumn the evenings can be cool even when the days are warm and sunny.

Typical temperatures throughout the year are:

Winter: 12 - 15c

Spring: 20 - 25c

Summer: 30 - 35c

Autumn: 15 - 20c

TIPS

Tips are appreciated but not expected. You should give what you feel is appropriate and you feel comfortable with.

PACKING LIST

Head

- You will be expected to wear a riding helmet and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.

- Sunhat for when not riding

- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun and dust

Upper body

- Thermal long-sleeved tops are a lightweight way of providing extra warmth, particularly in spring/autumn

- Long sleeved shirts to provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared.

Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermal leggings

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps or long boots.
- Lightweight shoes for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Nightwear

- Pyjamas etc

Other useful items

- Swimsuit - there are pools on some nights
- Small backpack for accessing items required during the day (carried by support crew)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Swiss army knife or equivalent

In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant over 100 ml and all bottles can be decanted into small, clear, plastic Ziplock bags. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- In your hand luggage carry any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc. We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .