



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Castles of the Loire Valley

PARIS - THE LOIRE VALLEY

Explore the **Loire Valley on horseback** and discover some of the most impressive Renaissance castles of France, including Chambord, Chenonceau and Cheverny. Embark on a **trail ride** across the French countryside in a region that provides excellent riding grounds, mounted on quality horses. With knowledgeable guides, learn about the history of France from the 14th to the 16th Century and marvel at the beauty of the **Chateaux of the Loire Valley**.

Trail Riding	 8 days (6 on horseback)	 From £1,780	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- An excellent selection of horses, most of them born and trained at the farm. Some of them compete at TREC events at the high level.
- A very competent guide, several times medallist in the World TREC Championship.
- The opportunity to visit the Loire Valley Castles (Chambord, Chenonceau, Le Clos Lucé... - tickets not included) and learn about the history of France during the Renaissance period.
- Comfortable accommodation in hotels and guesthouses
- A shorter, centre-based 4-day ride is also available: please see "Short break in the Loire Valley"


Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - BLOIS CHAMBORD - HOTEL

 La clef des châteaux

Fly to Paris, then take a train to Blois-Chambord train station from Austerlitz station (c. 1h30). From the station you are taken to the hotel where you will meet the riding team and fellow riders for a briefing. Please note transportation to Blois is not included, and transfers from Blois can be arranged but at a supplement (see dates and prices). If you choose to drive yourself, you are expected at the hotel on time for your 7:00 pm briefing.

Dinner and night in a hotel.

Day 2 — 2 : CHATEAU DE CHAMBORD - 3.5-4.5 hours riding


 Hôtel du Château

Today is your first day with the horses across the Sologne, punctuated by beautiful lakes and forests. Lunch will be on the river Beuvron banks in Bracieux, close to a small XIVth century church. You then discover your first (but not last!) castle of the week: the magnificent Chambord! A hunting lodge

built by Francis I of France in the XVth century, Chambord boasts a very distinctive French renaissance architecture and is the largest chateau in the Loire Valley.

Free visit (1h30) of the chateau before you rejoin with the horses (ticket not included). The horses are loaded back in the trailers and you are driven back to your hotel.


Day 3 — 3 : CHATEAU DE BEAUREGARD - 3.5-4.5 hours riding

 Hôtel Relais des Landes

Another active ride today to smaller chateau of Beauregard (15th Century) where you stop for lunch. After a visit of the castle (not included), you ride to the village of Ouchamps.

Dinner and night in a 4 *** hotel in the small rural village of Ouchamps.


Day 4 — 4 : CHAUMONT SUR LOIRE - 3.5-4.5 hours riding

 Le Domaine des Thomeaux

Leaving Ouchamps to cross the river Beuvron in Candé, you reach the Loire river banks and the majestic castle of Chaumont sur Loire. Chaumont sur Loire was built on the ruins of an old fortress ordered by the count of Blois, to protect his castle from invasions. Lunch is followed by a visit to the castle and its famous gardens (1h30, ticket not included), where you can admire its beautiful (albeit small!) stables and its riding arena. In the afternoon you ride along the Loire banks to reach the village of Mosnes.

Dinner and night in a 3 *** hotel.

Day 5 — 5 : LE CLOS LUCE - CHENONCEAU - 3.5-4.5 hours riding

 Le Domaine des Thomeaux

Today you will be transfered by car (10 min) to the Clos Lucé. This gorgeous Renaissance mansion has been the last home of the well known Leonardo Da Vinci. It also houses the Da Vinci inventions museum (tickets not included). After the visit you will join the horses and ride towards the Montrichard forest where you will stop to have a picnic lunch. Continue to ride along the banks of the Cher until you reach the overnight location.

Day 6 — 6 : CHATEAU DE CHENONCEAU - 3.5-4.5 hours riding

 Hôtel Relais des Landes

The day starts with a visit to the chateau de Chenonceau and gardens (1 hour, ticket not included).The "châteaux de Dames", the most visited private monument in France, is a marvel of the Renaissance period. After lunch, you will ride between the Cher and the Loire Valleys towards Ouchamps. During this part of the trail there will be some opportunities to canter before you arrive at the hotel. Tonight's location includes a heated swimming pool that you can enjoy before dinner.

Day 7 — 7 : CHATEAU DE CHEVERNY - 3.5-4.5 hours riding

 La clef des châteaux

On your last day, you leave the Touraine country behind, riding back into Sologne. Discover Cheverny castle (ticket not included) - Marlinspike Hall, Captain Haddock's country house in the Adventure of Tintin, was modelled after the central section of the Chateau. You then head back home through game breeding parks where you might be fortunate enough to sight deer or wild boar... Arrival at the stable for 6:00 PM. Dinner and night at a guesthouse.

Day 8 — 8 : EQUESTRIAN FARM - PARIS - EUROPE

Departure after breakfast. You will be taken to the train station Blois-Chambord.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
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24/05/2024	31/05/2024	£1,780	Full
28/06/2024	05/07/2024	£1,780	Full
20/09/2024	27/09/2024	£1,780	Full
18/10/2024	25/10/2024	£1,780	Full

Price details

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates. There is no airport in Blois but you can fly to Paris and catch a train from the airport to Blois. Please contact us if you need assistance organising your transportation to Blois.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a double or twin room.

- Groups are made up of 2 to 9 international riders, plus guides.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share your room, you will be charged a single room supplement of approx. €330/\$350/£290. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date. Depending on availability, a single room is not always possible.

- Transfer to and from Blois-Chambord train station is possible and is prebooked for you but payable locally - this is a reliable taxi service (expect to pay around €40-50 each way)

- Entrance tickets to the Castles are not included. Count around €10-€20 per castle - bring cash as not every place will accept cards.

- Non riders are welcome on this ride. We will organise a bike rental with GPS while the group rides.

- There is the possibility to spend additional nights the day before or after the ride - please contact us. We have included accommodation on the last night but it is also possible to leave after 6:00 pm on day 7 - in which case we will deduce the cost of this night from your invoice.

- Young riders 12 yo + are welcome on the ride if they are accompanied by an adult.

- Please note that a shorter itinerary is also possible on certain dates (2days/1night, 3days/2nights or 4days/3nights), please contact us.

- There is a rider weight limit of 14.2 stone / 200 lbs / 90kg on this ride.

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

LOGISTICS

1 cook

1 support vehicle

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

ACCOMMODATION

Double room - guesthouse or hotels

MEALS

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

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

TRANSPORT

International flights and transportation to the meeting point

EXTRAS

Site entry fees

INSURANCE

Visas and personal purchase

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

TRANSPORT

Transfers from the train station

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

A small herd of horses used to living outside. They are calm and patient and compete at TREC events at a high level.

Guide & local team

Ken has been working with the equestrian farm for over 15 years. He knows the area extremely well and will be happy to share his knowledge with his guests. He is an excellent horseman and guide and has participated in several World TREC Championships, with gold medals in both the individual and team categories.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be at least an intermediate rider, capable of riding a sensible horse at all paces in the outdoors. There are more spirited horses available for experienced riders.

There is a rider weight limit of 14.2 stone / 200 lbs /90kgs.

PACE

The pace is varied to include trots and canters. Some of the canters can be long and across varied terrain so you need to be secure in the saddle.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to assist with grooming, tacking and un-tacking your horse.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should have experience riding outdoors on trails and be confident riding in open spaces. You need to be fit enough for some long canters.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Comfortable trail saddles.

The saddlepads have pockets to store small items.

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

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Nights will be in comfortable guesthouses and hotels, twin or double rooms. Most of the accommodation is of 3* standards but two nights are also spent in a 4* hotel.

Some of the hotels have a heated pool.

WiFi is available throughout the ride.

MEALS

Breakfast: bread, butter and jam, tea/coffee and juice.

Lunch: picnic lunches with quiches, salads, cured meats, cheese, dessert and coffee.

Dinner: dinners will be taken at the hotels.

Wine and alcohol is not included but can be purchased locally.

Special diets can be accommodated with advance notice.

CLIMATE

The Sologne region has a continental climate that can be wet and cold in the winter, with warm, dry summers. Expect temperatures up to 25°C in the summer.

TIPS

In France, it is customary to tip at coffees and restaurants - usually this is by rounding up the price and not mandatory. You may wish to leave a tip with the guide who can split it amongst all members of the team - this is not obligatory and is entirely at your discretion.

PACKING LIST

Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel...) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.
- 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, wind or rain
- Warm hat for cold evenings/days

Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or extra warmth
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket (made from Goretex or equivalent) and/ or (depending on the season) a waterproof vest that covers you thighs.

Legs

- 2 pairs of 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 (made from Goretex or equivalent), especially if you don't have a long waterproof coat
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged

- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Other useful items

- Swimsuit (some of the hotels have pools)
- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Small torch for moving around at night
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery

Medical kit

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Other recommendations:

- In your hand 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.
- 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.
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc). Saddle pads have pockets for small items too.
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- 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!

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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](#) .