



# Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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## Riders of Abyssinia

### ETHIOPIA

Explore **Ethiopia on horseback**! This ride will take you across the Bale mountains and national park, the ancestral land of the semi-nomadic Oromo people. With long hours in the saddle, this is a demanding **riding expedition** for aspiring explorers and experienced riders. You will ride local horses at an altitude between 2500-4000m, discovering the incredibly varied Ethiopian flora and fauna - including rare endemic species such as the Abyssinian wolf. Meeting Oromo shepherds is an extraordinary cultural experience, because horseback travel is also about discovering other **equestrian traditions**.

Exploration Rides	 14 days (8 on horseback)	 From £2,560	
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### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Meet Oromo riders and discover their ancient equestrian traditions.
- Explore unspoilt landscapes and discover endemic species
- Ride local ponies, in the traditional Oromo style (the riding style is a little bit different from our English riding style)
- After a day sightseeing in Addis Ababa, reconnect with nature and leave the city buzz behind, riding off the beaten path.

## Day 1 — EUROPE - ADDIS ABABA

Fly from Europe to Addis Ababa, arrival in Addis Ababa the following morning.

Flights to Addis are not included but we are happy to help with this upon request.

## Day 2 — ADDIS ABABA

You will arrive in Addis Ababa in the morning and will be met by a representative from our local team and be transferred to Debre Damo Hotel (or similar) for check-in. After lunch there will be a half-day of sight seeing including the National Museum where you can see different archaeological findings including "Lucy", the 3.5 million year-old skeleton. You will be driven to a panoramic viewpoint of the city from Entoto Mountain (3200m) before visiting "Mercato", one of the largest open-air markets in Africa. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

## Day 3 — ADDIS - SHASHEMENE - DODOLA

This morning you will take a 6 hour drive through the Ethiopian Great Rift valley, stopping en route at Lake Langano for lunch. You will then proceed to Dodola. Overnight in Bale Mountain Motel.

## Day 4 — DODOLA - CHANGITI - ANGAFU - 5H30 riding

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From Dodola you will be transferred by vehicle 30km to the Changiti forest edge. You are now at 2400m altitude (7,500 ft). Here you will find your horses waiting. As you ride in the forest, you are surrounded by exotic bird sounds and colobus monkeys jumping from tree to tree. On your trail you come across Tarura Plain - ideal for those who want to enjoy a gallop. The Ethiopian horses are not used to the same signals as European horses, however it is not difficult to control them. En-route you stop at Wahoro hut. After a brief break the route takes the group to Angafu Via Tulu tute at 3,750m altitude (11300ft) from where you are rewarded with an astounding view. In the afternoon, take a short walk along the ridge to Delume. Overnight at the Angafu Eco-hut.

The day unfolds at between 3000 and 3400 metres, where a forest dominated by huge African Junipers and spectacular Abyssinian Hagenias unfurl in full bloom in November. This is the domain of warthogs and baboons, mountain nyalas, and a multitude of birds.

## Day 5 — ANGAFU - MOLOLICHU - 5-6 hours riding

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After an early breakfast, get ready for a 5-6 hours in the saddle. You will travel through dense primeval jungle. What may surprise you the most is that familiar species known to be shrubs in Europe grow to towering trees here. Leave the forest at around 3400m, onto the great afro-alpine humid meadows, its undulating territory spiked with wild hyacinth, and everywhere you will see giant Lobelias looking oddly like palms. They grow around 3100 to 4300 metres, can reach 2 or 3 metres in height, and are as perfectly adapted to the intense solar radiation as they are to the great fluctuations in temperature. This sometimes lunar landscape reminds us of the tundra with its cushions of lichen and its lava flows.

A multitude of rodent species live here - a bonus for many kinds of predators. Amongst other you will find eagles, buzzards, falcons and Abyssinian wolves, the rarest canines in the world. About 600 survive here in the Bale plateau. November is the whelping season for Abyssinian wolves, as it is also for the nyalas. Night at the Mololicho refuge hut.

## Day 6 — MOLOLICHU - DURO - 6-7 hours riding

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The morning's ride takes around seven hours through mainly Erica vegetation. Carpets of yellow flowers make the riding extremely beautiful and there is a most impressive view at an altitude of 3350m. On your way to Duro you cross the Meribo river which flows all season long, and walk the final metres to Meribo as the trails are not suitable for horses. The beauty of the camp can be glimpsed through the window of the hut at all times. In the late afternoon walk along the ridge and discover the scenery more and more. After dinner make a camp fire, meet the villagers and enjoy their traditional coffee ceremony. Overnight Duro refuge.

## Day 7 — DURO - AJENJE - 8 hours riding

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Today we head to Morba at 3750 m on a full day horse riding through alternating heathers and vast plains on a relatively unchanging route on a plateau. After some 5 hours on horseback along which you may, with some luck, see the fawn coloured Abyssinian wolves (harmless to people), you encounter the Berenda ridge falling abruptly from an altitude of 3600m. After 5 hours, take a break at the Habera waterfall before continuing to Moroba. Today is the longest day with 8 hrs of riding in total. Overnight Anjenje Refuge.

## Day 8 — AJENJE - MOROBAWA - 5H30 riding

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From now on you are riding inside the Bale Mountain National Park. Skirting spectacular lava flows you ride on through the last pass and the wide Morobawa Valley opens up. Spectacular camp views await!

## Day 9 — MOROBAWA - SODOTA - 5 hours riding

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You ride along the river valley, the vegetation is open and conducive to a few gallops. You will probably meet small groups of Oromo families going to the market or moving their cattle. Overnight camping at Sodota in a valley dotted with lobelias, an excellent site for observing the Abyssinian wolves.

## Day 10 — SODOTA - WASAMA - 6 hours riding

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Leave the Wasem river valley which is inhabited by colonies of baboons riding up into more canyons that are concertinaed into a giant amphitheatre and head onto basaltic plateaus to 4000 m. A long valley leads to the wild mountains, the highest land mass, where you camp at Wasama after a day in the saddle.

## Day 11 — WASAMA - SANETTI - 7 hours riding

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This morning the trail takes the group to Gebre Guracha. It is referred to in the local language as Black Lake. It is the home of many endemic bird species, particularly water birds such as Pelican White Collared Pigeon. Then you ride to the Saneti Plateau, also known as the island in the air. Prepare for a day in the cold - Saneti is at an altitude of 4000m and is often shrouded in fog with rare sparking blue-sky. On today's trail, you are likely to come across the red fox and warthog. You will pass through a forest of hagenias and African junipers, your path bordered by yellow flowers and bright red Kniphobias which cover the slopes of the hills. You are on the edge of the Bale mountains. At 4000m (12 000ft) the air is fresh and clear, with luck an unrestricted view towards all horizons. The most spectacular is the South: the Herenna escarpment, plunges for more than 2000m towards a vast

tropical forest extending all the way to Kenya. Overnight camping at Saneti.

## Day 12 — SANETTI - SHASHEMENE

4WD cars will take you down from the high altitudes, via Goba and Dinsho, the headquarters of the Bale National Park, then to Shashemene. Arrive late afternoon at Lake Langano for a good hotel and swim in the mineral waters.

## Day 13 — SHASHEMENE - ADDIS ADEBA

On the way back to Addis visit the Abjata and Shalla National Park to enjoy watching thousands of flamingos, pelicans and other water birds. Late afternoon there is time for shopping and sightseeing or free time to relax. Farewell dinner will be at the best traditional restaurant in town with coffee ceremony and cultural dancing, finally transfer to the airport for your flight back home.

## Day 14 — ADDIS

Arrive home

DATES & PRICES			
DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
23/11/2024	06/12/2024	£2,560	Open

## Price details

- International flights are not included, based on sharing a double/triple room or dormitory style accommodation during the trail.
  - The group is comprised of between 3 and 10 riders, plus guides.
  - Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of c. \$390/€350/£300 per person. Once the group has reached 3 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.
  - We can organise a la carte departures for groups of 5 riders minimum, between October 15 and March 30.
  - There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a room/tent with another guest of the same sex. To guarantee your own room/tent there is a single supplement of €290/£255/\$310.
- 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 Ethiopian, English speaking guide in charge of the horses and itinerary
- 1 guide local to the Bale Mountains
- 1 English-speaking tour leader

### LOGISTICS

- 1 horse per rider (you will swap for fresh horses three times during the trail)
- 4 horsemen + 8 pack horses (groups of 10 riders)
- 1 head of logistics (groups of 10 riders)
- 1 cook

### INLAND TRANSPORT

All inland transfers mentioned in the trip  
Airport transfers unless your dates differ from the other riders

## ACCOMMODATION

Camps: 3-men tent for two riders and foam mattresses  
Double or twin room in a 3\* (local standards) in Addis  
Mountain huts

## MEALS

As per itinerary, full board from breakfast on D3 to breakfast on day 13 (no meals in Addis)

## EXTRAS

National Park entry fees

## Price doesn't include

### MEALS

Beverages and personal extras  
Meals in Addis

### TRANSPORT

Visa fees  
International flights

### EXTRAS

Tips to the local team  
Small group supplement - see above for the details  
Photography fees

### 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

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

On this trip you will ride local Oromo horses. They are small but sturdy and very sure-footed and well looked after. Our local partner works with three different horse farms from local villages.

## Guide & local team

English speaking local team.

## Minimum riding ability

### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a capable rider who is used to riding outdoors and fit enough for some long hours in the saddle. You are riding in a very remote location across rugged terrain and there is no option to miss a day if you get tired.

You will have to adopt the traditional riding style: no bit, one rein, getting on the right side, etc. It will not take you long to adapt!

Rider weight limit: 85 kg / 187 lbs. Heavier riders please contact us.

### PACE

The ride is not fast because of the altitude and steep terrain. Some trots and canters when the terrain allows.

## TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

The team of horsemen will look after your horse for you.

## TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be fit and in good physical condition. You will be riding at altitude with some very rough terrain to cross, although the climb is gradual. There are some sections where you may need to dismount and lead your horse on foot. Please check with us if you have any medical conditions as you will be a long way from medical help.

You should be prepared for long hours in the saddle - the ride on Day 11 is a particularly demanding one.

Previous experience of riding a trail of several days is a definite advantage but is not required. Riders who do not ride regularly are requested to get riding fit prior to the start of their holiday.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

## EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Local tack.

The stirrups and stirrup leathers are small so if you have long legs or big feet it is a good idea to bring yours.

Helmets are not 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

In Addis: 3\*\*\*star hotel, in double or triple rooms with private bathrooms. The hotel is simple but clean and comfortable.

During the ride: A combination of mountain refuges (5 nights) and camping (the rest of the time). The maximum capacity in most refuges is 8 beds. If there isn't enough space for all riders, then one or two additional tents will be set up and riders will take turns sleeping there. Please bring your own sleeping bag.

Please note this is a rustic ride with basic conditions and minimal comfort. During the ride, there are only 3 nights where you can shower.

### MEALS

The meals are cooked for by your camp cook.

Breakfast: tea, coffee, omelettes or boiled eggs, bread, jam, fruit.

Lunch: light lunch of sandwiches or pasta/rice, vegetables, fruit.

Dinner: 3-course meal starting with a home soup, meat and vegetables, and fruit as a dessert.

Water is provided.

### CLIMATE

The weather in this part of the world can be humid and unpredictable. The mountains see rainfall about 8 months a year, October marking the start of the dry season. Please expect cold nights (sometimes below 0°C), but warm days (35°C - 40°C), sometimes windy. In November the daytime temperatures are much cooler, around 15°C.

### TIPS

Tipping is expected. We recommend around £35-45 per rider per person.

### PACKING LIST

You are riding at high altitude and the weather can be unpredictable. Please make sure to pack sensibly and bring enough warm clothing to get you through the ride!

Please note there is a packing weight limit of 20kgs.

## Head

- Helmets are not mandatory but recommended. We recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. There are many lightweight options available nowadays
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana
- Warm hat for cold nights when camping

## Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved)
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain at any time of year and the evenings can be particularly cold
- Swimming costume, may be useful.

## 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
- Thermals
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof over trousers

## Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend hiking boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps as an extra layer against inclement weather. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged and because the terrain is not suitable.
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for moving around the camp in the evenings
- Several pairs of warm, thick socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, cold or rain whilst riding. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful

## Nightwear

- Sleeping bag. You need at least a comfort factor down to minus 5-10°C.
- Sleeping bag liner - silk, cotton or fleece - adds an extra layer
- Mattresses are provided, you can bring a small inflatable or foam mattress for extra comfort.
- Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in

## Other useful items

- Solar powered battery charger.
- Towels - camping ones will both dry and pack more easily
- 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
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Swiss army knife
- Field glasses
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it with
- Small plastic bags for rubbish
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

## Medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing DEET
- 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

- Water purification tablets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel
- Micropur tablets to purify water

#### Miscellaneous

- The stirrups and stirrup leathers are small so if you have long legs or big feet it is a good idea to bring yours.
- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided with a capacity of 60-80 litres. We recommend taking a backpack or similar.
- 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 (passport, camera, sunscreen, lipbalm 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!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Please take your rubbish home with you. There are no recycling facilities in Kyrgyzstan, so take your used batteries, aerosols etc back home and dispose of them appropriately. Try to leave excess packaging material at home before travelling

## 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](#).