Equus Journeys
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Kara Creek ranch

UNITED STATES

Spend a week on an authentic **working ranch in the American state of Wyoming**, spending up to 8 hours a day **in the saddle**. Riding in the company of cowboys, you will learn how to move and sort cattle, and depending on the season you may have the chance to take part in a branding day or drive the cattle to their summer/winter pastures. This is a real working ranch holiday, where you will experience the practices of a modern **cattle ranch** and spend a week as a real **Wyoming cowboy**. This is the ideal **ranch vacation** for those who want to get a taste of the real ranching traditions of the USA and who are not afraid to get stuck in.

Ranches and Cattle Drives	**10 Days / 6 riding days**	**From £2,016**		Open to non-riders


Learn from experienced wranglers at Kara Creek


Riding adventures at Kara Creek Ranch, Wyoming


Roping calves ahead of a branding day on a ranch vacation

ITINERARY

Highlights

- Play an active role in the day-to-day tasks on a ranch riding over varied terrain of more than 12,000 hectares
- Ride alongside the cowboys, moving cattle, sorting and monitoring herds of more than 4000 animals
- Enjoy the freedom of riding in the vast open spaces between Wyoming and South Dakota.
- On your days off the ranch, visit the local sights (Deadwood, Sturgis, Devil's Tower, Mount Rushmore)
- Enjoy home-cooked meals every day - including delicious local steak!

Day 1 — 1 : ARRIVE IN RAPID CITY

Flight to Rapid City in South Dakota (not included).

We recommend you spend a night at a hotel in Rapid City. Make the most of the opportunity to rest up and get over your jetlag before the great week ahead of you at the ranch!

If you arrive at the end of the afternoon a shuttle from the airport to the hotel will be available, sometimes at an extra cost. If you arrive earlier in the day, you will be able to explore downtown Rapid City - known for its full-scale sculptures of the American presidents.

Please note that this night is not included in the price list. You are free to make your own plans or we can add this night to your quotation.

Dinner to your own account.

Day 2 — 2 : RAPID CITY - RANCH

Kara creek ranch

After a hearty breakfast, one of the wranglers will come to collect you at the hotel at around 10:00am and drive you to the ranch. The ranch is a 2 hour drive from Rapid city, 15 minutes from Sundance in the state of Wyoming. Once at the ranch, you will have lunch with the team and in the afternoon you will explore the ranch and meet the horses.

IMPORTANT: The following program is provided as an indication, it is by no means exhaustive but reflects all the activities in which you will be asked to participate. Your time at the ranch is dictated by the needs of livestock, as well as your expectations and your previous experience on horseback. Plans change quickly on a working ranch!

Please remember that Kara Creek is a working ranch, where all riding is done with a purpose. Those looking for a more relaxed environment with trail and pleasure rides should look into guest ranches - please contact us if you are not sure, we are always happy to help!

The springtime is a very busy time of the year. Depending on the week and the weather, you will start bringing in the cattle from the winter pastures. There will be a range of activities that will include branding, vaccinating, and castrating the young bulls. Everyone pretty much has a job depending on how well they can ride, and what they feel up to (helping with the castrations, for instance, is not something people usually volunteer to do!). The atmosphere is fantastic and everyone takes part, they might also bring in some neighbours for additional help. There will be less riding than during the Fall, but it's a great glimpse into what a real rancher's work is all about.

The team don’t brand in the Fall, but there might be days where they work the cows or bigger cattle - meaning get them in and run through a chute and give them shots. Most of the time, you would be out riding and gathering up cattle and either taking them to winter pasture or loading on big trucks to take to market. A typical day would be to get up, have breakfast at 8 and then head out for the day. Usually have lunch out on the trail and return to the ranch in the evenings for dinner and other activities. You will gather some of the cattle gradually - these would be the yearlings that are on about 10000 acres so you'll gather what you can find and put them in a holding pasture and then go back to gather more. It’s really hard to find all the cattle on 10000 acres in one day so you may go back to that location multiple times, but you do finish the job each day and get the cattle you get in the location they need to be and then go back to gather more as needed. It's a great time of the year if you'd like to ride a lot.

Day 3 — 3 : RANCH

Kara creek ranch

After breakfast, the team will provide you with all the equipment necessary for your week's riding.

You will head to the stables with the cowboys were they will allocate your horse - if you are not familiar with western riding, don't worry! The wranglers will use this occasion to train you.

You will then set off to see the vast ranch on horseback. You will have a chance to get to know your mount, an experienced ranch horse, that will help you with your daily tasks on the ranch. You will also be introduced to the proper way to approach and interact with the cattle.
You will head back to the ranch late in the day and enjoy a drink at the saloon before a hearty dinner prepared by the team. Dinners are taken family-style in the main house.

Day 4 — 4 : RANCH

Kara creek ranch

The day's task might be a cattle drive. You will learn how to group the cattle and drive them smoothly in the right direction. Based on your abilities you will be asked to either herd them from the rear or to chivvy the reluctant and bring back in line those making a bid for freedom.

As Kara Creek is an eco ranch, in order to preserve the pastures the cattle have to be moved frequently from one pasture to another. Breeding is also done in the most natural way possible and neither antibiotics nor hormones are given to the herd. If you're interested in the approaches used in eco farming, don't hesitate to ask the ranch's cowboys - they will be happy to explain them to you in more detail.

You will head back to the ranch in the evening to enjoy another home-cooked meal.

Day 5 — 5 : RANCH

Kara creek ranch

After a hearty breakfast, today you might be driven from the ranch to herd a group Black Angus cattle that graze on one of the ranch's many grassy plains. The horses will be in the trailers while you will be riding in the pick ups to get to your destination.

Kara Creek's vast land crosses the Wyoming/ South Dakota border, this will allow you get a sense of the changing landscape from state to state.

Day 6 — 6 : RANCH

Kara creek ranch

After another hearty home-cooked breakfast, perhaps today you will ride to new a pasture. A favourite is the land located at the foot of the Devil's Tower, a 200 metre high monolith that pierces the sky and dominates the horizon.

Covering long distances, you will inspect the pasture to check and fix the broken fences. You will also take the opportunity to check if there are any ill or injured cows or calves, maybe you will be on the trail of an escapee or, often, having to return a neighbour's cow to their pasture!

During the spring months, births are plentiful and some nice surprises will be waiting for you in the fields. Throughout autumn, sorting the calves from the cows will be the order of the day.

Dinner will be had at the ranch together with all the team.

Day 7 — 7 : RANCH

Kara creek ranch

A day perhaps spent 'branding' or marking the cattle - if you are out in the spring this is an activity that you may do several times. Please note the team don't brand in the fall.

Everyone will have a role to play, depending on how capable they feel: vaccinating, putting on ear tags, wrestling calves, ect. The more difficult and dangerous tasks, such as roping, will be carried out by the more experienced members of staff.

After a long day, you will return to the ranch in the evening and have a dinner with all the staff.

Please note: branding is not everyone's cup of tea but this is a real ranch experience. If you are concerned it may be a bit much for you please contact us so we can tell you more about it.

Day 8 — 8 : RANCH

After breakfast, you will saddle your horse and head out to work. By now tasks, learned and repeated, will have become second nature. You might be moving the Black Angus herd from one pasture to another .You will alternate between walking at the back of the herd, pushing them forward, and then working the flank to keep them moving and prevent any reluctant cows from trying to break away.

On your return to the ranch, you may make a detour as the wranglers show you the best views over the ranch. For your final evening meal, you will enjoy a BBQ with the team and, with a little persuasion, Monte will tell you some of his cowboy stories!

Day 9 — 9 : RAPID CITY - DEPARTURE

After breakfast, you will be taken to the airport to catch your flight back home (plan a flight after 13.00)

If you wish, it is possible to extend your stay at the ranch or explore the beautiful landscapes of South Dakota; the Black hills, Devil's tower, Deadwood, Mount Rushmore... Ask us for more information!

Day 10 — 10 : HOME

Arrival home.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
01/05/2027	10/05/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
08/05/2027	17/05/2027	£2,132	Full
15/05/2027	24/05/2027	£2,132	Full

22/05/2027	31/05/2027	£2,132	Full
29/05/2027	07/06/2027	£2,132	Full
05/06/2027	14/06/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
12/06/2027	21/06/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
19/06/2027	28/06/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
04/09/2027	13/09/2027	£2,132	Full
11/09/2027	20/09/2027	£2,132	Full
18/09/2027	27/09/2027	£2,132	Full
25/09/2027	04/10/2027	£2,132	Full
02/10/2027	11/10/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
09/10/2027	18/10/2027	£2,132	Full
16/10/2027	25/10/2027	£2,132	Full
23/10/2027	01/11/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
06/05/2028	15/05/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
13/05/2028	22/05/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
20/05/2028	29/05/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
27/05/2028	05/06/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
03/06/2028	12/06/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
10/06/2028	19/06/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
17/06/2028	26/06/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
02/09/2028	11/09/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
09/09/2028	18/09/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
16/09/2028	25/09/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
23/09/2028	02/10/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
30/09/2028	09/10/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
07/10/2028	16/10/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
14/10/2028	23/10/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure
21/10/2028	30/10/2028	£2,287	Guaranteed departure

Price details

- International flights are not included. The above prices are calculated on a double room basis for a 7 night stay. However, stay length is flexible and you can arrive any day you like. The minimum stay is 3 nights but you can extend it. You will receive a special discount if you choose to stay for 2 weeks. Please contact us for more information!

- The above cost does not include your first night's stay in a hotel in Rapid city. We suggest this as it will give you an opportunity to get over your jetlag so you can fully appreciate your first day on the ranch. However, to avoid the hotel fee in Rapid city, it is possible to arrive a day later and go directly to the ranch - you must arrive before 8:00 pm at the very latest to be able to go directly to the ranch.

- Return transfers from Rapid city to the ranch are not included and have to be paid for locally. Return transfer costs $75 each way ($150 total per person) in 2026.

- Tips are compulsory in the USA. The local team expects to get around 15% of the cost of your stay.

- The ranch can host between 5 to 20-25 international riders at any one time.

- Non-riders are welcome and benefit from a special 50% discount. Please note that the activities on the ranch as a non-rider are limited.

- Mature teenagers (16+) who are accompanied by an adult and can ride well can join this experience - please contact us.

- There is a 15% discount for groups of 5 or more riders. Please ask us for more information.

- For riders staying 2 weeks or more, there is a 20% discount on the second week.

- Our dates are set for the spring and autumn seasons, that are very busy for cattle work. It is possible to stay at Kara Creek during the summer, however there is little cattle work that time of the year and full-day rides are not possible. This is good for families or groups with non-riders who may want a more relaxed riding schedule. Please contact us.

- An electronic travel authorisation (ESTA) is required to enter the USA. It is your responsibility to organise this. Please visit https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/ and contact us if you need help.
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 ranch team

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with western saddle and bridle per rider

ACCOMMODATION

7 nights on the ranch - priced based on a shared room

MEALS

Full board from lunch on day 2 to breakfast on day 9

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Western equipment

EXTRAS

Activities on the ranch
Laundry facilities which are at your disposal

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras
If booking your hotel night in Rapid City with us, then dinner on day 1 is not included in the price. You are free to organise it as you wish

TRANSPORT

International flights that we can book for you upon request
Return transfers by car from Rapid city to the ranch - see dates and prices
Visa fee (ESTA) - this must be arranged in advance

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team are compulsory in the USA and represent around 15-20% of the cost of your stay - payable locally

INSURANCE

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

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel accommodation in Rapid City

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The ranch has more than forty Quarter and Paint horses. They are trained throughout the year by the wranglers and are experienced ranch horses that are used to working with livestock. They spend the year turned out in the pastures living as a herd.

Horses on a working ranch are working horses and as such may not be looked after the way we do in the UK and Europe. However, they are healthy, happy, and love their job.

Guide & local team

The ranch is supervised by an environmental protection agency. The ranch's pastures and land are managed in an ecological and holistic way. The wranglers and the rest of the team are either employed or volunteers.

The team is very friendly and they do their upmost to ensure you make the most of your time on the ranch. You may however have to ask questions as they might not volunteer to much information to start with!

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

A trip for intermediate and experienced riders. To get the most out of this trip, you should be at ease at all paces. You should be able to trot and canter outside in an independent seat with ease.

PACE

All 3 paces are used, although the majority of interaction with the cattle is done at a walk to keep them calm. Gently trotting, or 'jogging', is often used for covering long distances.

You will spend between 4-8 hours riding, depending on the ranch activities.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to groom, tack and untack your horse. A degree of independence is required, though the cowboys are always available to assist. You may also be asked to feed and water your horse after the day.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

Experience of Western riding and cattle work is not compulsory for this holiday. You can enjoy it without any previous experience. If you have never experienced working with cattle, it will take you 3-4 days to feel useful. That's completely normal! There is no "tuition" provided and you will learn on the go - but feel free to ask questions!

The itinerary is provided as an indication, it is by no means exhaustive but reflects all the activities in which you will be asked to participate. Your time at the ranch is dictated by the needs of livestock, as well as your expectations and your previous experience on horseback. Plans change quickly on a working ranch and you must be happy to 'go with the flow'.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Leather straps to fix your jacket to the back of the saddle
Some saddlebags are available.
We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard. There are no helmets at the ranch.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Accommodation is either in a private or shared cabin (2 bedrooms) or in a double room in the house. The rooms are basic - this is not a luxury ranch holiday and some room have shared bathrooms. Towels and bedding are provided but you will need to bring your own toiletries.

The main house is a communal space where you will have your meals each day. Here, you can also choose to relax in front of the fire, listen to music or play snooker. This is a home away from home and your help will be appreciated when it comes to putting away dishes and clean up after yourself. A washing machine and tumble dryer are available for you to use.

The saloon is a recent addition to the ranch and is a place where riders gather after their rides and in the evenings for a cold drink and a bit of music. Neighbours and legends from the rodeo circuit are known to stop by a few times a week!

WiFi available.

MEALS

Meals are taken family-style in the dining room at the lodge.

Breakfast: hearty breakfast with eggs, crispy bacon, toast, jam.
Lunch: simple lunches of salads, pasta, sandwiches.
Dinners: typical "cowboy style" with home-raised meat, potatoes, pasta and vegetables.

Drinks at Kara Creek saloon: Alcoholic drinks are not included, however the Kara Creek saloon has a license and serves alcohol. Guests can pay each night or start a tab for their account and they can pay prior to departure.

CLIMATE

Wyoming’s outstanding features are its majestic mountains and high plains. Weather and topography have more contrast than in most other states. Surface elevations range from the summit of Gannett Peak in the Wind River Mountains, at 13,804 feet, to the Belle Fourche River Valley in the state’s northeast corner, at 3,125 feet.
Wyoming is located deep within continental North America, far from the moderating influence the oceans. Wyoming, therefore, has some long winters, but also some pleasant summers. A typical Wyoming summer day will start out bright and sunny. Clouds will appear on the western horizon about noon and thunderheads will develop mid-afternoon. Scattered, isolated thundershowers will dot the landscape in late afternoon and early evening.
Autumn in Wyoming is a pure delight. Most places will start to see snow in mid-September, but winter weather won’t start to stick until late November. For most of the two months in between, the state enjoys a special season called Indian Summer, with warm days, cool nights and spectacular colors. It’s a delightful change-of-season experience.

TIPS

Tips are compulsory in USA. The local team expects to get 15% of the cost of your stay.

PACKING LIST

Head
- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and 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

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

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

Hands and Feet
- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend western boots or short 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.
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for 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
- Pyjamas

Other useful items
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding - there are no saddlebags.
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Swiss army knife (or equivalent)
- 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

Miscellaneous
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- 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 .