



Massif Central - Trail riding through Cantal

AUVERGNE - ARDECHE

A **trail riding holiday in the Cantal** region of France amidst verdant peaks, rocky outcrops and the largest volcano in Europe. Your native guides, a father and son, lead you through this spectacular area that they know like the back of their hand and are eager to share with you. **Discover Cantal on horseback** as you ride wild mountain paths, ancient Roman roads and **gallop across open plateaus** and valley pastures all out in the fresh mountain air. Relax by swimming in stunning glacial lakes and in the evening enjoy traditional local Auvergne cuisine and hospitality in charming accommodation.

Trail Riding	 8 days / 6 days riding -	 From £0	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride along the most magnificent crests in the Cantal massive - Puy Violent, Roche Taillade, Puy Mary, Puy Griou, le col de Serre and le col de Cabre
- Experience the pure Estive air as you canter high up in the Saler plateaus and down in the Mandaille Valley
- Enjoy mountainous stages and scenery that will take you out of your normal riding environment
- Visit the village of Salers, regarded as one of the most beautiful villages in France and one of the most inviting in high Auvergne
- Sample Auvergne cuisine including truffles, Cantalian cheese and a traditional pork stew

Day 1 — 1 : UK - CHALINARGUES

Depending on your arrival time and method, you will either be met at Neussargues train station by one of the team or make your way directly to the horse farm for 17:00.

To reach Neussargues from Clermont Ferrand, there is a train 4 to 6 times a day (1h30).

After your welcome meeting with your guides, you will be introduced to the horses and be assigned a mount. The benefit of arriving at 16:00 means you will have a chance to get in the saddle on your first day and already start to get a feel for your horse. You will enjoy a hearty dinner at the farmhouse and spend your first night in a cottage on the property.

IMPORTANT - The guides are not English speakers. This trip is best suited for those looking for a fantastic horseback riding adventure and an opportunity to practice their French - no matter how rusty it may be!!

Day 2 — 2 : CHALINARGUES - PUY MARY - 5-6 hours riding

You ride out from Chalinargues. You first ride through the wilderness of the Pinatelle forest. Today's ride will be punctuated by different landscapes and environments: Pêcher Lake, beautiful summer pastures, valleys...

You stop for lunch at the Santoire valley and a well-deserved siesta by the river. In the afternoon, you ride across the Limon plateau and its pastures before reaching the Claux Valley.

You should reach your comfortable gîte in Puy Mary by 18.00, where you will enjoy another delicious traditional French dinner.

Day 3 — 3 : PUY MARY - SALERS - 5-6 hours riding

Head out on horseback towards the picturesque village of Salers, where you will ride over the slopes of Aulac which dominates the skyline over the Falgoux valley. Falgoux is one of the deepest valleys in the Cantal region surrounded by the majestic peaks Le Suc du Gros, le Puy de la Tourte, le Puy Mary, Roche Taillade and le Roc des Ombres.

In the afternoon, there will be a great opportunity for a good gallop along the summer pastures. Visible from across the plateau is the magnificent medieval village of Salers. On entering, you will ride its narrow alleys lined with ancient traditional houses and your procession on horseback will most likely draw something of a crowd.

Dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 4 — 4 : SALERS - MANDAILLES - 5-6 hours riding

Today you ride to Mandaille, spending the morning in St Paul's forest to reach the Récusset corrie where lunch awaits.

Riding through the heart of these craggy crests in the Cantal massive will give you absolutely stunning views across the region. Next you will complete an, at times challenging, descent on horseback down through the resplendent green Mandaille Valley, a descent ridden to the sound of the herds of Saler cows' bells.

Day 5 — 5 : MANDAILLES - POLMINHAC - 5-6 hours riding

Another fantastic ride through valleys and mountainous passes: Jordanne valley, Aisses pass, Cère valley... You ride across the Coyan plateau where you will have a late picnic lunch.

Heading to the village of Polminhac you have a chance to ride through the beautiful gardens of the Pesteils chateau.

Day 6 — 6 : POLMINHAC - PRAT DE BOUC - - 5-6 hours riding

You will continue your ride to the Plomb du Cantal. You will cross many summer pastures before your lunch.

Make sure to get some rest before the afternoon that will see you tackle the ascent to the Plomb du Cantal through an ancient Via Romana. It will be all worth it, however, and you will be rewarded by the splendid views over the region.

Day 7 — 7 : PRAT DE BOUC - CHALINARGUES - 5-6 hours riding

Your last day's ride will start off through the beautiful Albepierre forest, the picturesque village of Bredons before heading to Murat - and lunch!

After your afternoon ride, you should reach the stables at around 17.00 where you will be able to relax in the sauna and jacuzzi.

Enjoy one last dinner with your group before going to sleep with your head full of incredible memories.

Day 8 — 8 : CHALINARGUES - UK

After breakfast and saying your farewells to the horses and the team, you will either be driven to the train station or you can head off in your hire car when you're ready.

DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- International transportation is not included.

- Groups are made up of 5 to 10 (max.) riders

- Transfers are included from Neussargues SNCF train station.

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 French-speaking horse guide

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

INLAND TRANSPORT

Support vehicle and driver

Transfers from the Neussargues SNCF train station

ACCOMMODATION

7 nights in a gite or hotel

MEALS

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

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

TRANSPORT

International transportation

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

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

The stable is made up of around 50 horses; Arabs, Barb-Arabs, Anglo Arabs, Selles français, and not forgetting the famous Prairie mixes (the majority of the which are descended from a Pinto stallion selected several times for the Auvergne TREC team to compete in the French championship).

A number of the Arab horses take part in endurance races over 130 kilometres. They are all solid trekking horses having been tested out in the mountains.

They have been raised outside in a herd grazing out in the Auvergne pastures and the majority of the horses were born at the guides stud farm.

The horses are ridden consistently throughout the year and are in excellent physical condition. They are docile, easy to handle and sure footed.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

For this ride, you need to be perfectly at ease in the saddle and confident riding outdoors, for several hours at a time, at all paces and across uneven terrain.

There is a maximum rider weight of 90kg/ 14st /198 lbs.

PACE

The base pace of the ride is a walking pace because of the uneven ground. However, you will enjoy trots and gallops along the Estive plateaus.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be responsible for grooming, tacking and un-tacking your horse throughout the ride. The team will be in charge of feeding and watering the horses, however you are welcome to participate if you wish.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

The majority of this trip takes place in the lower mountainous regions and riders need to be in good physical condition. Previous experience of trail riding holidays is a plus but is not necessary. Riders who do not ride regularly would need to get back into the saddle before joining this ride.

Helmets are MANDATORY.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

You will be provided with comfortable Hugues PETEL tack as well as a rug with large pockets that replaces saddlebags.

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

The first (and optional last night) will be spent in a holiday cottage on the guide's farm, with access to a sauna and jacuzzi.

During the trail, you will stay in gites or hotels, in two to four-beds rooms ensuite, occasionally in a small dormitory. Make sure to pack your sleeping bag.

MEALS

Your picnics will be made in the mornings and are put together from locally grown produce. The picnics had in the mountains will be carried in the pockets in your horse's rug.

CLIMATE

Massiac and Saint-Flour, unlike the surrounding areas in the same department, receives a large amount of rainfall. These 2 regions are protected from the humid westerly winds by the imposing volcanoes and mountains that cover the central area of Cantal. This mountainous region is dominated by the Plomb du Cantal (1,855 m) and Puy Mary (1,783 m).

With regards to the temperature, this southwest region of the department, near to Senezergues, has a climate that is generally quite cold and sees a lot of snow in the winter.

In winter, temperatures vary between -3 and 10°C.

In spring, temperatures vary between 2 and 14°C.

In summer, temperatures vary between 10 and 27°C.

In autumn, temperatures vary between 10 and 20°C.

GUIDE AND LOCAL TEAM

Your guides, a father and son, the former ATE qualified and the latter BE qualified, have been crossing the mountains of Massif Central and the surrounding regions for the past 21 years. Discover in depth this beautiful part of France with the support of a well-run team and a welcoming family atmosphere.

TIPS

In France it is customary to tip - usually this is by rounding up the price when you are satisfied with the service in a restaurant. 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

The information provided is general and should be adapted to the season in which you are travelling, specifically concerning the necessity of Goretex waterproofs.

Head

- A riding helmet is strongly recommended and often compulsory. We recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) 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. No ponchos!!

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)
- A swimming costume may be useful for impromptu dips in the lake
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

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 warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Night

- Tracksuit or pyjamas to sleep in
- Sleeping bag level +5°/+2°
- Sleeping bag liner - for extra warmth

Our Recommendations

- 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, lip balm etc)
- 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!

Other useful items

- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it after use
- Swiss army knife or equivalent (in checking-in luggage!!)
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- A pair of binoculars

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

General information

- The airline allows only one bag to be checked-in per passenger. Make sure it weighs no more than 20kg; if it exceeds this weight, you will have to pay excess luggage fees at check-in
- Hand luggage is limited to 7kg (measuring 56 cm x 45 cm x 25 cm), it mustn't contain any sharp objects (knives, scissors, nail file or nail scissors, etc.) and the quantity of liquid allowed per passenger is limited to 100ml per container.

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.
- 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.

VISA & HEALTH

Formalities

UK citizens - other nationalities please contact us:

Visas

If you hold a British Citizen passport, you don't need a visa to enter France. The rules on travel will stay the same until 31 December 2020.

Visas from 1 January 2021

The rules for travelling or working in Europe will change from 1 January 2021:

- you will be able to travel to countries in the Schengen area for up to 90 days in any 180-day period without a visa as a tourist, to visit family or friends, to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events, or for short-term studies or training
- if you are travelling to France and other Schengen countries without a visa, make sure your whole visit is within the limit. Visits to Schengen countries within the previous 180 days before you travel would count towards the 90-day limit
- the 90-day limit for visa-free travel will begin on 1 January 2021. Any days you stay in France or other Schengen countries before 1 January 2021 will not count towards the 90-day limit.

At border control for France, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket
- show you have enough money for your stay, and
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing
- Your passport may be stamped on entry and exit.

Passport validity

The rules on travel will stay the same until 31 December 2020.

Your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you don't need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this.

Passport validity from 1 January 2021

From 1 January 2021, you must have at least 6 months left on an adult or child passport to travel to most countries in Europe (not including Ireland). If you renewed your current passport before the previous one expired, extra months may have been added to its expiry date. Any extra months on your passport over 10 years may not count towards the 6 months needed. Check your passport is valid for travel before you book your trip. You will need to renew your passport before travelling if you do not have enough time left on your passport.

For up-to-date information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/entry-requirements>

Insurance

It is a condition of your booking with Equus Journeys that you have travel insurance which covers you for the riding activities to be undertaken. Your travel insurance should cover you for medical expenses and repatriation. Your guides will require your travel insurance details before they allow you to ride and may refuse to let you ride if you cannot provide them. You should take your insurance documents with you.