



# Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

+44 (0) 1905 388977




info@equus-journeys.com

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## New Mexico Guest Ranch

### UNITED STATES

Embark on an incredible human and equestrian adventure on **this ranch vacation in New Mexico**. Meet two real-life cowgirls, mother and daughter Mel and Justyn, who dedicate their lives to **rehabilitating rescue horses**, and share their little corner of the Wild West with guests from all over the world. Explore canyons and deserts on horseback and experience the Spanish and Native American culture of the region. This is an **unforgettable ranch stay** hosted by a passionate team of ladies, whose mission is to offer the resources, education and awareness needed to change the narrative of unwanted horses.

Ranches and Cattle Drives	 7 days (5 on horseback)	 From £2,461	
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### ITINERARY

## Highlights

- Stay on a charming ranch and a warm welcome from Mel and Justyn, two big-hearted cowgirls!
- Enjoy rides in the fabulous landscapes of the "Land of Enchantment" at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, between deserts, forests, and canyons.
- Experience gentle, natural horsemanship training methods. You ride rehabbed horses, all rescued from animal shelters
- Enjoy a day in Santa Fe, at a rodeo, or at a festival on certain dates, discovering the vibrant culture of the Southwest
- An immersive stay in a very small group (maximum 5 riders)
- The possibility to combine your riding stay with yoga classes adapted to horseback riding, to learn to better use your seat and body weight on horseback.

## Day 1 — ARRIVE IN ALBUQUERQUE - RANCH - 1 hour riding

 New Mexico guesthouse

Fly to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Flights are not included but can be booked for you on request. Please plan for a flight arriving before 11 AM – if not possible, we recommend arriving a day early spending the night in Albuquerque.

You will be welcomed at the airport by your hosts Mel and Justyn, and transferred to the ranch (about 40 minutes) on time for lunch. You will then have a briefing on instructions and safety, and a short introductory ride to get acquainted with your horse. Dinner and overnight stay at the guesthouse.

## Day 2 — NEW MEXICO RANCH - 4-5 hrs riding

 New Mexico guesthouse

Breakfast at the ranch, before loading the horses into the trailer for your first proper ride. You will also be introduced to the natural horsemanship used on the horses to establish a gentle and trusting relationship.

The itinerary below is given as an example but reflects the diversity of rides and activities offered. Each day a new itinerary will be suggested. There is no shortage of trails in the region! Between desert canyons, rivers, plateaus, you will follow in the footsteps of cowboys in places like the Golden Open Space trail, the Galisteo region, the banks of the Rio Grande, or the Cibola National Forest.

### Day 3 — NEW MEXICO RANCH - 4-5 hrs riding

 New Mexico guesthouse

This morning, depart for a new ride to discover the landscapes of New Mexico: pine forests, canyons, and stunning. Horses and guests are trailered out to a new location every day for a day of off-the-beaten-path riding. Depending on the season and temperatures, your hosts will choose the best itinerary. Dinner and overnight at the ranch.

### Day 4 — NEW MEXICO RANCH - 4-5 hrs riding

 New Mexico guesthouse

After breakfast, you depart for a ride around the ranch, following an old cattle drive trail. The landscapes are truly worthy of a Western movie, with desert rocks and trails lined with cacti and yuccas. They offer the possibility of trots and canters, particularly in dry riverbeds, depending on the terrain and the group's level. Picnic lunch and return to the ranch in the afternoon. After a short nap, you can choose to go on a hike in the surroundings or borrow bikes. Those who wish can rest at the ranch. Dinner and overnight at the ranch. One evening during the week, Mel and Justyn will offer a movie night to introduce you to a horsey film of their choice.

### Day 5 — NEW MEXICO RANCH - No riding today

 New Mexico guesthouse

Today, your hosts will show you around the region! Depending on the dates, they can take you to WNCR, Walking N Circles Ranch. This ranch rescues abandoned horses and is where your hosts Mel and Justyn volunteer. Their goal: to give horses a second chance! Morning of discovery and visit to the ranch. OR head to a small town further north, Madrid, a former mining town now a small artisan community. Lunch is not included (plan for about \$20) but organised at a local restaurant. In the afternoon, head to Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico, to visit this colorful and unique city. Return to your hosts in the evening. Dinner and overnight at the ranch.  
Note: Certain weeks are “special weeks” with a special rodeo, Powwow, etc. This day would be dedicated to this particular event.

### Day 6 — NEW MEXICO RANCH - 4-5 hrs riding

 New Mexico guesthouse

This morning, depart for a new day of horseback riding through the Sandia Desert, which offers impressive desert landscapes. In the spring, when the yuccas begin to bloom, it's a magnificent sight! You pass from valley to valley to end in a more rugged setting: you are at the very beginning of the immense Rocky Mountain range. Return to the ranch for an evening of relaxation and stargazing after a convivial meal where you share your emotions of the week. Last night at the ranch.

### Day 7 — DEPARTURE FROM ALBUQUERQUE

Breakfast at the ranch. Depending on your flight times\*, last moments with your hosts and their wonderful horses, then transfer to Albuquerque airport and return flight to Europe.  
\*Please book a return flight that departs after 11 AM.

DATES & PRICES			
DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
14/08/2025	20/08/2025	£2,461	Guaranteed departure
07/09/2025	13/09/2025	£2,492	Guaranteed departure
06/10/2025	12/10/2025	£2,791	Full
20/10/2025	26/10/2025	£2,461	Full

## Price details

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- Flights or transportation to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Prices are based on a 6-night stay sharing a twin room.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 1 riders and a maximum of 5 international riders, plus guides.
- Gratuity is included in the rate.
- A \$45 per person supplement will be charged for departures during the following events to cover entry fees: Pow Wow, Madrid Blues Festival, Santa Fe Rodeo, Ranch Rodeo, New Mexico State Fair & Rodeo, and a \$350 fee for the Balloon Fiesta (already included in the prices).

Special dates for 2025:

April 22: Gathering of Nations Pow Wow

May 4: Trail Riding Retreat

May 15: Madrid Blues Fest

June 18: Rodeo de Santa Fe

July 1: Independence Day and Rodeo

July 16: Ranch Rodeo

August 14: Indian Market

September 7: State Fair and Rodeo

October 6: Balloon Fiesta

October 20: Fall Colors

- Transfers are included - please plan for a flight arriving before 11 am on the first day, and departing after 9 am on the last day.
- There is no single supplement on this ride and you must be willing to share. Single rooms are allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis (bathrooms are shared). The downstairs rooms can be booked by a solo traveller with the understanding that they may have a room mate (of the same biological gender) for the week. This room is discounted at 5% if sharing with another solo traveller.
- Rider weight limit: 90 kilos, 14st1lbs. Slightly heavier riders please contact us.
- Yoga Classes: Subject to availability and with an additional fee, you can take yoga classes:  
45-minute class: \$25  
75-minute class: \$45  
(Yoga classes are not available during the Balloon Festival)
- Vegan Meals: Vegan meal options are available for an additional fee - please consult us. (Approximately \$25)

- Tour Day Lunch: On the day of the tourist visit, lunch will be outside the ranch at an additional cost (budget approximately \$25).

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

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 English-speaking horse guide

### LOGISTICS

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1 horse per rider

### INLAND TRANSPORT

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Airport transfers at set times

## ACCOMMODATION

Double or twin room - guesthouse (6 nights)

## MEALS

Full board from dinner on arrival to breakfast on departure

Coffee, tea, lemonade, wine at dinner

## EXTRAS

Gratuity and taxes

## Price doesn't include

### MEALS

Lunch on non-riding day outside the ranch

Supplementary charge for vegan diet

Extra beverages and personal extras

### TRANSPORT

International flights

### EXTRAS

Visas (ESTA fee) and personal purchases

### 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

### EXTRAS

Trip extensions or additional activities

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

The ranch has about fifteen horses. Some horses you will meet at the ranch were rescued by WNCR (the Walking N Circles Ranch) from abandonment or from owners unable to care for them, then followed a rehabilitation and training program with Mel and Justyn: to name a few, you will meet Rain, Cash, Dandy, Indy, Goober... They were adopted and trained using natural ethological methods. Now given a second chance, they are excellent trail horses and fun to ride! They are ridden Western and/or English but are ridden with loose reins. They are local American breeds, typically working horses (Quarter Horse, Paint, or Mustang).

## Guide & local team

The ranch is a family affair with mother/daughter team Mel and Justyn in charge. Their passion for horses has span from ranches to show rings, race tracks to trail rides. For many years Mel and Justyn traveled all over the world for riding vacations and worked with their local horse shelter rehabilitating rescue horses. It was in 2012 that they decided to combine their love of travel, trail riding, and rescue horses. They spent a month in Africa volunteering with Mozambique Horse Safari learning what it would take to start their dream business. Mel laid out their five year plan to Pat and Mandy Retzlaff and Mandy replied “Darling, why wait? Go home and just do it.” That is exactly what these ladies did. In 2013 they sold their house in town, moved to the country, and started their operation with only three rescue horses.

## Minimum riding ability

### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be an intermediate or experienced riders to join the trip. A good physical condition is also required.

There is a mounting block available at the trailer, but if you have to dismount on the trail for any reason (bathroom breaks included), riders do need to be able to mount on their own. We can often find an appropriate rock or log to assist.

Rider weight limit: 90 kilos / 14,1 st / 198 lbs. Slightly heavier riders may be accommodated on request.

## **PACE**

The pace is moderate, with trots and canters when the terrain allows.

The riding is in groups, often single-track or in pairs. The guides ask riders to give each other about a horse's head distance between themselves and the horse in front. They can split rides at times if a rider doesn't feel comfortable at a canter.

## **TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

Your help is needed to prepare, groom, and saddle your horse.

## **TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE**

Experience of a multi-day riding holiday is not required but is a plus.

There may be times when you will need to dismount and walk the horses for short distances.

The ranch is located at high altitudes and you ride in even higher altitude areas. If you have any altitude sensitivities, please look at medications before arrival.

This holiday is best suited to guests with an interest in horse welfare with the opportunity to learn from people with extensive experience in rehoming rescue horses.

## **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

Helmets are strongly recommended. For safety and hygiene reasons, bring your own equipment.

Western tack.

Chaps can be borrowed, depending on availability.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

Accommodation is in a comfortable guesthouse, tastefully decorated in a rustic Southwestern style. There 3 bedrooms and two bathrooms, kitchen, and common living room for relaxation, books, and games available.

In order to avoid charging a single supplement, we offer the private rooms on a first-book, first-served basis. The two upstairs rooms are private but do share a bathroom. The downstairs room has two full beds and an en-suite bathroom. We try to accommodate couples or traveling friends in the downstairs room. If you book the downstairs room for two people and one person in your party cancels, your reservation will be considered a solo traveler, and you may be sharing the room with another solo traveler.

Laundry is available and there is free Wi-Fi (intermittent during storms).

Towels and hairdryers are provided.

There is an above-ground pool in summer and hot tub year-round.

### **MEALS**

Standard continental breakfast.

Picnic lunches consisting of salads or soups during riding days.

Dinners are served at the table in the family dining room where you will taste typical New Mexican cuisine, rich in local ingredients and spicy. The guides have their own garden and grow their own vegetables.

Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free menus available.

### **CLIMATE**

The climate of New Mexico is generally arid, with the state receiving an average of only 380 mm of precipitation per year. These are concentrated from July to September due to the monsoon affecting the southwestern United States. In winter, frost is common at night, snow is possible.

During the summer months, we often go for rides early in the morning or late in the evening to avoid the heat of the day and take a nap after lunch. Our

autumn runs from September to November, bringing coolness to the air and the possibility of snow towards the end of October

## TIPS

Tipping is a common practice in the United States. In all restaurants (except some self-service snacks), it is customary to leave a tip of 10 to 12%. Some tourist establishments may add it automatically.

Tips at the ranch are included in the price.

## 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 in the winter (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 in the winter months

### 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
- 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

A stay at this ranch is both a sustainable trip and a step towards helping equines in this part of the world:

- By booking this ranch, you will make a direct and meaningful difference in the life of a deserving horse, as 10% of the proceeds from their fee will go directly to supporting the ranch's own rehabilitation centre.
- Should you wish to, ypi will have the opportunity to sponsor a rescue horse with a low-cost monthly donation.
- Rather than visiting a local rescue, you will have the opportunity to see the daily work, rehabilitation process, and progress with our horses. Some of these horses will be available for adoption as reliable and trusted trail companions.

Other sustainable tourism practices:

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](#) .