



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Ranch riding holiday in Alberta

CANADA

Head out on a **horseback riding adventure** and stay at a ranch in the heart of Canadian wilderness – far off the beaten track! You will stay on a rustic, **fully off-grid ranch**, surrounded by hundreds of trails that wind through mountains, forests, waterfalls, and wildlife — the perfect opportunity to truly reconnect with nature. This is a great **horseback holiday for adventurous riders** of all levels who would like to enjoy stunning scenery, without the rigours of a pack trip, in some of Canada's most beautiful landscapes!

Ranches and Cattle Drives	 8 days (6 days riding)	 From £1,908	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- A ranch located 2.5 hours from Calgary, near Banff National Park, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies,
- The opportunity to take part in a “wagon ride” ,
- Suitable for all riding levels, and families with children from 8 years old.

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVE IN CALGARY - RANCH - No riding

Arrive in Calgary, Alberta. Flights are not included but can be booked upon request, please contact us.

Please make sure that your flight arrives around noon or earlier. If this isn't possible, we recommend arriving a day early and spending the night in Calgary – this also helps with jetlag! In the summer, Calgary is home to the “Stampede”, a large rodeo event, that you may be interested in.

Airport transfers are included. Depending on timings, there may be a pit stop at Irvine's, the largest western store in Canada (20 mins north of Calgary), for a spot of shopping. Drive west to the ranch (2–2.5 hours). After passing Sundre and leaving the main road, keep an eye out for wild horses, elk, bighorn sheep, moose, and bears!

Dinner at the ranch's small restaurant.

Day 2 — 2: RANCH - BIGHORN FALLS & EAGLE LAKE - 5-6 hours riding

After breakfast, you will meet the horses and wranglers. The morning starts with a short ride (1–2 hours) to Bighorn Falls with mountain views – a great warm-up and assessment ride.

Return to the ranch for lunch.

A longer ride awaits in the afternoon (4–5 hours), past the crystal-clear Eagle Lake and on to James Falls, another waterfall.

Dinner at the ranch. Evening campfire – possibly with roasted marshmallows, s'mores, hot chocolate/tea (please note that this is not possible at certain

times of year to avoid wildfires).

Alternatively, a full-day ride to the Outpost (via Ya Ha Tinda lands) may be offered, depending on the weather and riding level of the group. The Outpost lies by the Red Deer River at the base of Warden Rock, bordering Banff National Park.

A few times a year, there is a possibility to join a "Wagon trek": Step away from the modern world and embark on a timeless journey through nature's most breathtaking landscapes following a covered wagon with saddle horses, staying in tents for 2 nights. Open to all riders.

Please note rides described in this itinerary are just a few examples of dozens of possibilities, and your own itinerary may look a little different!

Day 3 — 3: RANCH - HIDDEN FALLS - 8 hours riding

Today might be a full-day ride to Hidden Falls – you will carry your picnic lunch with you in your saddlebags. Ride through Ya Ha Tinda, cross the Red Deer River, and ascend to Hidden Falls – a beautiful picnic spot. Return to the ranch after lunch.
Dinner at the restaurant.

Day 4 — 4: RANCH - WOLF CREEK FALLS - 8 hours riding

Another long day in the saddle, with a full-day ride and saddlebag picnic to Wolf Creek Falls. Cross the Red Deer River, ride around Barrier Mountain to the valley leading to the falls. Return following the river and crossing several streams.

Day 5 — 5: RANCH - WILDHORSE FLATS - 4 hours riding

Ride the Skyline Trail above the ranch and enjoy a picnic with panoramic views of the Rockies and Warden Rock. Return to the ranch, before you trailer the horses out to Wildhorse Flats (20 mins). Ride along the river and through the valley, followed by a photo session with the iconic wings of Wildhorse Flats. Return to the ranch in time for dinner.

Day 6 — 6: RANCH - SLIDES - 7 hours riding

Full-day ride to the Slides — a series of small waterfalls forming natural pools -- perfect for a dip during lunch!

Day 7 — 7: RANCH & RAFTING - 2 hours riding

At 11 am, ride to the rafting launch point (1 hour) – today's adventure is a 1-hour raft down the Red Deer River. Return to ranch between 2 and 3 pm – the afternoon is free to relax before an early dinner. Evening sunset ride along the river (1 hour), bareback option available — a magical way to end your trip!

Day 8 — 8: RANCH - CALGARY

Transfer to the airport – you will arrive around noon. Important: please book a flight that departs after 2:30 pm. You may have an overnight flight and arrive home the following day.

DATES & PRICES			
DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
31/05/2026	07/06/2026	£1,908	Open
07/06/2026	14/06/2026	£1,908	Guaranteed departure
12/07/2026	19/07/2026	£1,908	Open
26/07/2026	02/08/2026	£1,908	Open
09/08/2026	16/08/2026	£1,908	Open
23/08/2026	30/08/2026	£1,908	Open
30/08/2026	06/09/2026	£1,908	Open
06/09/2026	13/09/2026	£1,908	Open

13/09/2026

20/09/2026

£1,908

Open

Price details

- Flights to your destination are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.
- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double cabin.
- Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 international riders and a maximum of 12 international riders, plus guides.
- Transfers are included to and from Calgary airport or a local airport hotel. Make sure to arrive around noon or earlier on the first day, and to depart after 2:30 pm on the last day.
- There is no single supplement if you are willing to share a twin cabin with another guest of the same sex. To guarantee your own cabin there is a single supplement of €500 / £430 / \$570.
- Accompanied minors are welcome from 8 yo, upon request, provided they are mature enough to handle the long hours in the saddle.
- Rider weight limit: 95kg / 210 lbs / 15 st. Heavier riders may be accepted with advance notice but you must match the riding requirements and be able to mount and dismount unassisted.
- A few times a year, it may be possible to join a "Wagon trek": Step away from the modern world and embark on a timeless journey through nature's most breathtaking landscapes following by a covered wagon with saddle horses, staying in tents for 2 nights. There is a supplement of approximately £135/€155/\$190 per person.
- On certain dates, it is possible to attend a local rodeo. Transportation to the rodeo is included but entry fees are to your own account. Note the Calgary Stampede takes place every year in July.
May 31st - June 7th - Rocky Mountain House Rodeo or Water Valley Rodeo
June 7th - 14th - Innisfail Rodeo
June 21st - 28th - Ponoka Stampede
July 12th - 19th - Around the Stampede. Not included but you can choose to spend a night there before or after your trip to see it.
August 9th - 16th - Chuckwagon races, Rocky Mountain House
September 6th - 13th - Olds Rodeo
- Riders flying into Canada are required to sign up for an electronic travel authorization. The ETA is a document that allows you to travel in Canada by plane and to travel freely inside the country. It is an entry requirement for visa-exempt foreign nationals travelling to or transiting through Canada by air: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/visit-canada/eta.html>. This is not included and is yours to organise.
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

STAFF AND GUIDES

English-speaking guides and wranglers

LOGISTICS

1 horse/rider

DOMESTIC TRANSPORTATION

Return transfers from/to Calgary airport at set times

ACCOMMODATION

Twin or double cabins, basic and off-grid, with shared bathrooms

MEALS

Full board accommodation from dinner on arrival to breakfast on departure

EXTRA

Saddlebags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Alcohol is not included (payable locally by cash or card in CAD).

Personal extras

TRANSPORTS

Transfers outside normal hours

International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

INSURANCE

Visa or electronic travel authorization (ETA)

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

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The ranch is home to almost 50 horses of various breeds — Standardbreds, Appaloosas, Paint Horses, Quarter Horses, Fjords, draft and crossbreeds. They live outside year-round and have a lovely life. There are horses suitable for all levels of rider, from novice to experienced, and there are smaller horses for children.

Guide & local team

Janice, a lifelong horse enthusiast and experienced guide, hosts you at Diamond J Ranch near Banff National Park. Her bilingual team (French/English) has been guiding in Alberta for over 20 years.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

This holiday is open to novices to experienced riders. You should be comfortable around a horse, and can build your skills from there at the ranch.

Riders will be split into beginner (walk only) and experienced (all gaits) groups.

Maximum rider weight limit: 95kg / 210 lbs / 15 st.

PACE

Riders are divided into two groups: a beginner group riding at a walk, and an experienced group riding at all paces *, provided that each group has at least two riders.

* Experienced group: please note this isn't what we call a fast ride. Although there will be trots and canters when the terrain allows, they will be steady canters as opposed to flat out gallops!

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

The ranch typically prepares and tacks/untacks the horses for guests. However, if you'd like to learn or simply enjoy taking care of your horse, you are welcome to help.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You need to be riding fit, with good levels of endurance. The terrain can be uneven at times. There may be times during the ride when you will need to dismount and walk.

Please note that there is no cell reception at the ranch.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Western-style saddles are used. Saddle bags are provided so you can carry water bottles, snacks, etc. with you.

Wearing a helmet is recommended. The ranch can lend helmets, but for hygiene and safety reasons, we suggest bringing your own.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

Accommodation is at the ranch, in rustic cabins — there are six in total, including one family cabin. Please note that bathrooms and toilets (dry toilet) are shared.

Electricity is supplied by generators and solar panels. The restaurant is lit with oil lamps.

Cabins are heated with wood stoves.

There is no cell service at the ranch, but limited Wi-Fi is available.

If booking a Wagon Trek add-on: you will stay in basic teepees. Sleeping bags provided unless you want to bring your own.

MEALS

Breakfast and hot dinners are served in the ranch restaurant.

- Breakfast is continental

- Lunches are sandwiches or wraps, taken as picnics during full-day rides.

- Dinner is at the ranch and usually western: burgers, lasagna, steaks, schnitzel, salads, potatoes...

Alcoholic beverages are available for purchase on site.

Vegetarian or vegan meals are available — please specify at the time of booking. Any food allergies must also be indicated when booking.

CLIMATE

Calgary experiences long winters and short, hot summers. The climate is very influenced by the elevation of the city and the proximity of the Rocky Mountains.

Summer evenings can be quite cold; the average minimum in summer is 8 ° C and frost can occur in any month of the year.

Most of the precipitation falls from May to August; June sees the heaviest rains on average.

Autumn is the driest period. The averages for this period are around 20 ° C. Night temperatures; however, frequently drop below 0 ° C.

TIPS

In Canada, it is customary to leave a tip - primarily in restaurants and other service-based establishments. Expect to leave around 10-15% of the bill.

At the ranch: Depending on how much you enjoyed the service and their help, tips can range between 5% and 10% of your total bill. It's really up to you!

PACKING LIST

Please make sure to pack according to your dates - the following is a guide which is not particularly season-specific.

Head

- Helmet - strongly recommended. Equus Journeys recommends that you bring your own in order to ensure a proper fit

- Sunhat, for when you're not riding

- Wollen hat in case it gets cold at night

- Sunglasses, with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

- Buff or bandana

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts to provide protection from the sun
- T-shirts
- Thermal clothes
- Fleece, jumper or jacket - the evenings can be cold (at least two)
- Waterproof gear: good quality rain coat and waterproof trousers - the rains can be difficult to foresee and it's better to be prepared
- Casual clothes for the evening

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
- Waterproof over trousers. Please don't bring ponchos, as some of the horses may not be used to them
- Warm leggings
- Casual clothes for the evening
- Swimsuit for bathing in the river or/and in the lake, or just in case there is somewhere for a dip!

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short hiking boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps to protect against thorns. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged, and because they can be slippery when navigating certain sections on foot.
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Sandals, flip-flops or trainers - something comfortable for the evenings
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding and the evenings can be cold. It gets windy and cold in the mountains as well.

Nightwear

- Pyjamas

Other useful items

- A good swiss army knife (please make sure to pack it in your checked luggage)
- Towels - camping ones will dry and pack more easily
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items (passport, camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc) whilst riding
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around the ranch at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

Toiletry bag and personal items: please refrain from packing too many perfumed creams or soap as they do attract wildlife. Ideal is biodegradable soap, a small microfibre towel, toothpaste and brush, and deodorant.

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

Our Recommendations

- Backpacks should not be worn whilst riding. Saddlebags are provided and we recommend a small bumbag 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

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The team on this holiday is deeply committed to preserving the stunning landscapes they operate in and ensuring their practices align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Here's how they do it:

☑ Affordable and Clean Energy

The on-site restaurant runs on solar power, while a gravity-fed water system minimizes dependence on fossil fuels. Lanterns replace electric lighting to keep energy consumption low and create a cozy, rustic atmosphere.

♻️ Responsible Consumption and Production

They promote low-impact tourism that honors the natural environment. They aim to source food and materials locally where possible, reduce waste, and encourage visitors to follow sustainable practices such as pack-in, pack-out.

☑ Climate Action

Being fully off-grid allows the ranch to keep its carbon footprint minimal. Staff also take pride in educating guests about conservation and the value of low-impact adventure tourism.

☑ Life on Land

Horseback rides and rafting trips are designed to protect the ecosystems near Ya Ha Tinda and Banff. The team advocates for wildlife conservation and ethical recreation, and may collaborate with local groups to support forest and waterway protection.

☑ Decent Work and Economic Growth

This riding holiday contributes to the local economy by providing sustainable jobs in tourism, hospitality, and guiding. Their eco-conscious approach attracts responsible travelers who care about where and how they adventure.

What you can do....

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](#).