Equus Journeys
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

+44 (0) 1905 388977 info@equus-journeys.com

Last updated 07/11/2026

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 and waterfalls: 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 £2,132**	





ITINERARY

Highlights

• A ranch located 2.5 hours from Calgary, near Banff National Park, in the heart of the Canadian Rockies,
• Stunning views in every direction!
• Suitable for most riding levels, and families with children from 8 years old.

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

Alberta Ranch

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

Alberta Ranch

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.

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! Weather conditions, river crossings etc are all changeable and you should be prepared for a different itinerary than advertised.

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

Alberta Ranch

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

Alberta Ranch

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

Alberta Ranch

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

Alberta Ranch

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

Alberta Ranch

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
30/05/2027	06/06/2027	£2,132	Open
06/06/2027	13/06/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure

18/07/2027	25/07/2027	£2,132	Open
29/08/2027	05/09/2027	£2,132	Guaranteed departure
05/09/2027	12/09/2027	£2,132	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. (The ranch can cater for up to 16 guests, but in this case, riders will be split into 2 groups).

- Transfers are included to and from Calgary airport. If you decide to book an extra night at a hotel, you will need to make your way back to the airport for the transfer. (You can check with your hotel if they offer a free airport shuttle). Please 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 €470 / £400 / $525.

- Accompanied minors are welcome from 8 yo, upon request, provided they are mature enough to handle the long hours in the saddle.

- On certain dates, it may possible to attend a local rodeo (optional). Transportation to the rodeo is included but entry fees are to your own account. Should you choose to attend the rodeo, there may be an additional supplement of €150 / £125 / $170 per person for a night in a hotel.
Rodeo dates and times TBC. Please also note that the Calgary Stampede takes place every year in July.

- Non-riders are welcome at the ranch and benefit from a 50% discount. Extra activities for non-riders are as follows (please contact your travel advisor for more information):

Rafting - with the rest of the group, included in the price, available when water levels permit.
Hiking - non-guided, but maps and bear spray are provided.
Fishing - additional fee of CAD$50 for the licence, payable locally. Fishing is non-guided but fishing gear is available to borrow. Guided fishing trips can also be arranged for an additional fee.
Cycling (e-bikes) - additional fee TBC, payable locally. Guests should be 145cm or taller and physically fit, as the e-bikes are heavier than traditional bikes and the terrain can be rocky.
Paddle Boarding - included in the price. Unsuitable for small children as paddle boards are packed into large backpacks and carried to the lake (about an hour's walk away).
Other "end-of-day" activities with the rest of the group: line dancing, roping lessons, sauna nights, camp fire (when no fire bans in place) and s'mores nights.

- 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 60 horses of various breeds — Standardbreds, Appaloosas, Paint Horses, Quarter Horses, Fjords, draft and crossbreeds. They live outside year-round in a social environment. Some horses are rescue horses or still in training, and would be ridden at the back of the ride by volunteers coming to the ranch for a season.

Guide & local team

Janice, a lifelong horse enthusiast and experienced guide, hosts you at Diamond J Ranch near Banff National Park. She works with a friendly team of wranglers.

Volunteers are also present at the ranch and help train horses and with general yard duties.

The environment is very social and mixed, with the team sharing mealtimes. Staff are allowed to use facilities like the sauna which are not exclusively reserved to guests.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

This holiday is open to intermediate and experienced riders who are confident and used to riding outdoors over rugged and uneven terrain.

Maximum 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.

PACE

The overall pace of this holiday is quite relaxed and mostly at a walk due to the terrain, which is demanding. More experienced riders may have the chance to go faster, providing everyone in the group is comfortable and the terrain is suitable.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Guests typically look after their horse for the week. The ranch can help prepare and tack/untack the horses for guests.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

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

You should be prepared for an adventurous trip, packing suitable riding clothes as well as layers, and be prepared for very changeable weather.

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. There are no helmets available at the ranch so please remember to bring yours.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

You will stay at the ranch for the duration of your stay, in small cabins with double beds, or in rooms with bunk beds. Please don't expect fancy accommodation, this is not a luxury ranch -- accommodation is very rustic!
The ranch is intentionally designed as a remote, authentic off-grid wilderness destination rather than a conventional resort with full utility services.

Cabins
There are six cabins in total, including one family cabin. Please note that toilets (dry toilets) are shared and not attached to the cabins. There is one shared bathroom with a hot shower. All cabins are heated with wood stoves that you will be shown how to light yourself (there is no AC). A lantern is provided in the rooms. Most have double beds and are therefore most often offered to couples or solo travellers.

"Motel" rooms
There are also five rooms in the ranch "motel", with bunk beds, flushing toilets and en-suite showers. Each room can accommodate two guests. These rooms are usually offered to friends sharing. The rooms are heated by convection heaters. Lighting is provided by solar/USB rechargeable lanterns.

Electricity is supplied by generators and solar panels (in good weather conditions). The restaurant is lit with oil lamps.
You can charge items in the main building during the day but you can't charge your phone in your room. We highly recommend bringing a power bank for charging your devices.
There is no cell service at the ranch, but limited Wi-Fi is available.

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.
Bottled water is provided. Tap water can be used for brushing your teeth, but guests should avoid drinking the tap water, which isn't tested.

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)
- Portable power bank (no electricity in cabins)

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 .