

# Great getaways

If you want to go on a riding holiday, wise up on the options available so you can choose the perfect trip for you. Here are some ideas to consider...

**1** Decide what activities you want to do on your trip. Riding holidays can offer anything from beach or trail rides, safaris, ranch vacations or intensive training. Some combine a bit of everything. If you want to stay in the UK, you could consider taking your own horse with you.

**2** Be honest about your ability in the saddle and read up on how fast the pace will be and what type of horses you will be riding. There's nothing worse than arriving somewhere to be taken out of your comfort zone, or, on the other hand, to be only walking and trotting when you prefer to go a bit faster.

**3** Be prepared for the weather and riding conditions and pack accordingly. Consider high-factor sunscreen for hotter locations and long sleeves if you'll be riding off the beaten track. A light raincoat is a good plan wherever you go, but especially in the UK!

**4** Make sure you are already comfortable in the riding clothes you'll be wearing on holiday. If you are treating yourself to a new outfit for your trip, ride in the items several times beforehand so you know they fit well and are not going to rub during long days in the saddle.

**5** Book through a reputable holiday company. If in doubt, seek advice from people who have been to your preferred destination. You can ask on internet forums

or read some reviews first. Most of the well-known riding holiday companies have years of experience, which gives you peace of mind you are in safe hands.

**6** Stick to your budget and check exactly what's included in the price. Some holiday prices will not include flights, for example. Plus, you don't want to arrive only to find out you have to fork out for extra for activities you thought you had already paid for.

**7** Take out travel insurance and check with the holiday operator what you need cover for. They might be able to recommend a reputable insurance company you can use.

**8** If you're travelling with a non-horsey friend or other half, research activities they can take part in when you are riding. Many centres offer walking, cycling, rock climbing or day trips for those who don't wish to ride.

## Something for everyone

Equus Journeys offers worldwide holidays to suit all riding abilities, from horseback safaris in Africa and ranch stays in the USA, to training programmes in Europe and trail rides across the globe. Here are just a few of the options available:-

● **India: Pushkar Fair and Princes of Marwar** - Visit Pushkar Fair, where more than 200,000 animals, merchants and pilgrims congregate. The ride takes you from Jodhpur to Udaipur, travelling through the coloured Vishnoi village on Marwari horses. Accommodation is in ancient Maharajas' palaces, where you can immerse

yourself in rich Indian culture and traditions. From £2,570 (excluding flights) with departures late October to early November.

● **France: Trail riding along the Atlantic Shore** - Enjoy stunning views of the Atlantic coast, gallop along soft, sandy terrain and - weather permitting - take your horse for a swim. Relax in comfortable accommodation with a glass of wine and sample delicious traditional French cuisine. From £845 (excluding flights).

● **Morocco: Horses, Dunes and Nomads** - Ride through the Sahara Desert on Barb



horses and discover Morocco far from the beaten track, including Dades Valley and impressive views of the Atlas mountains. Head through beautiful mountain landscapes, wide open desert and sand dunes, sleeping in berber tents and riads. From £1,080 excluding flights.

Visit: [www.equus-journeys.com](http://www.equus-journeys.com) for full details of these trips.

**9** Holidays that require several hours in the saddle each day will require a decent level of fitness. Hitting the gym beforehand isn't a bad idea to build up your fitness gradually, but there's no better way of being prepared than spending plenty of time on horseback before you go.

**10** Ask the holiday centre as many questions as you can before you book. Find out what the horses are like, who will be training or guiding you on rides and what the accommodation is like. The more you know beforehand, the less you will have to worry about on arrival. ■

## Head out on a horsey adventure

Ranch Rider can take you anywhere, from riding across North America's wide, open prairies to a safari through the African savannah, as well as offering challenging adventures with

Argentina's gauchos. Whether you want to trail gently alongside stunning mountain ranges or sample real working ranch activities, the options are endless,

and the wide range of holidays available cater for beginner riders to experts.

Some of the non-horsey activities include bear and whale watching,

white-water rafting and speedboat excursions, making it an ideal holiday for a non-horsey other half or even the whole family. Visit: [www.ranchrider.com](http://www.ranchrider.com) for more information.



Why not take your own horse on holiday and enjoy a gallop along a beach