



RIDE WORLD WIDE COLOMBIA

RANCHO SAMAN - RISARALDA & QUINDIO 2025

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides have been developed by Marc Noonan who first visited Colombia in 2014 on an 11 month riding expedition through Colombia, Peru & Ecuador. Marc fell in love with the beauty of the country and the warmth and hospitality of the Colombian people and has made his home at Rancho Saman. Having spent some time guiding rides in the UK, Marc's experiences, enthusiasm and love of horses add that extra detail to make each ride special. Routes explore the coffee plantations and dense jungle of Risaralda & Quindio provinces, following narrow tracks through forest with steep climbs to hidden waterfalls; there will be chances to canter through banana plantations, and along high ridges. The area is rich in every form of life - birds, butterflies, fruits of every shape & colour, verdant forests and of course people. This ride is all about local colour and culture, you may along cobbled streets for a drink or ice cream in the town square, watch farm workers harvesting coffee and bananas, and sample the local rum in local posadas. The result is a wonderfully exciting Colombian adventure!



DATES

6 and 8 night itineraries are run from set dates listed further below. Shorter 3 day rides are also possible (please enquire for dates & rates). Rides are usually limited to a maximum of 6 participants. Stays at Rancho Saman are also possible on request and rides can be arranged year round. Please contact us to discuss dates, your plans and availability.

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HORSES

The horses used are mostly the local Colombian criollo, Appaloosa & Appaloosa crosses, Paso Fino and Percheron crosses, bred for farm work and transport in the mountains. There are about 10 horses, between 14.2hh and 15.2hh, generally strong, calm, sure-footed and very well suited to the terrain. Horses are groomed and tacked up for you - but you are welcome to help. All horses have been re-trained to respond to both English & Western aids but usually go best when ridden with a loose, relaxed contact with the mouth.

TACK

Saddles are locally made and especially designed for the trail, similar to western in style with high front and back but usually without the pommel. They are made by hand at the local tack shop (there is usually a chance to visit this), and are very comfortable, with some padding built in (a version of seat saver is available but most find the saddles comfortable enough). All the horses are ridden in snaffle bits. Saddle-bags are provided for carrying what you need during the day, with vehicles transporting luggage and other equipment between accommodation.



RIDING

On most days there will be around 5 to 8 hours in the saddle. As well as your English speaking guide (Marc) you will also have a local guide (Carlos) riding with you who is extremely knowledgeable about Colombian history, geography, flora & fauna. Most of the riding is on dirt tracks but there is quite a lot of tarmac work through villages etc as well. Your back-up driver (also a horseman), will be on hand to help look after the horses when you reach your destination each evening. A medical kit for both horses and riders will be carried along with a mobile 'phone for emergencies.

WEIGHT LIMIT

90kg (14st 2lbs) - please check with us if you are close to this.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

To participate in the ride you must be a reasonably competent rider who is used to riding in open country and over varied terrain. As a minimum to join the ride, you should be comfortable, well balanced and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and canter and able to control a well-schooled horse at all paces. You will be asked to sign a declaration stating that you can 1) safely mount and dismount unaided; 2) control a well schooled horses that is alarmed or spooked; 3) walk, trot and canter; 4) walk unaided and lead a horse across rocky, step or slippery ground. Hours on some days will be quite long and you are bound to enjoy the ride much more if you are reasonably riding fit. If you are not used to riding for several hours a day, we recommend concentrated practice before you go to get used to the hours in the saddle.

PACE & TERRAIN

The riding pace varies from day to day according to the terrain, altitude and also the ability of the group, but rides are suited to those who are confident cantering and overall you can expect a moderate pace. There will be some chances for long canters on dirt tracks, but also some steep climbs, riding on narrow paths through thick forest and on cobbled or tarmac streets into and out of towns & villages. In some places you may need to get off to lead your horse over steep, rough or rocky ground, or down slippery tracks. The routes go through a variety of landscapes, from the verdant coffee plantations and surrounding jungle, to colourful villages perched on high ridges. There are wonderful views of endless mountains clad with rich vegetation - don't expect big empty grasslands.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation overall is quite simple, but it is varied in style and character with nights spent at comfortable guesthouses, farmhouses, glamping resorts and country hotels - all hand picked by your team. 6 and 8 night itineraries include 1 or 2 nights at the beautiful base, Rancho Saman, which is set in 12 acres of sub tropical farmland, close to the city of Cartago. The ranch is 150 years old, built in colonial style, surrounded by gardens and swimming pool. There are 5 guest rooms, some with en-suite bathrooms, some with shared bathrooms, all stylishly furnished. On other nights in most cases rooms have their own bathrooms, though occasionally bathrooms are shared. Most bathrooms have showers rather than bathtubs and the plumbing can be unusual. Single rooms are usually possible on request depending on the group mix.



MEALS

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included each day. An emphasis is made to try the regional cuisine though for some meals there will be a break from traditional to more "international" for a "vegetable hit". Breakfasts are usually fresh fruit, yoghurt & granola - with perhaps eggs ("huevos al gusto con arepas y queso" - eggs how you like them with maize tortillas and cheese) - and of course coffee! Lunches are either picnics, usually sandwiches with fruit and snacks for pudding; or it could be a traditional meal wrapped in a banana leaf. **cont. over**

MEALS cont.

At evening meals you will have a chance to taste typical Colombian dishes such as “Bandeja Paisa” (rice, beans, pork and plantain served with arepas, fried egg and powdered beef) and “Sancocho” (chicken stew with yuca, plantain, sweetcorn, potato and avocado). Frijoles (beans) and local chorizo are often on the menu. On less traditional evenings a stir fry, salad or vegetable pasta may be served. Vegetarians can be catered for - please tell us in advance of any dietary restrictions so that any special arrangements can be made. Bottled water and soft drinks are provided with lunch & dinner, and wine & beer are included with dinner - aguardiente, the local hooch, may be offered to the brave!



WEATHER & ALTITUDE

Colombia is a tropical country and temperatures are pretty similar year round. These rides take place in mid-altitude areas where coffee and bananas flourish. Altitudes here are between about 1400m and 2000m and daytime temperatures may be in the mid to high 20's C, dropping to around 10 C at night, sometimes less at higher altitudes. April and November are usually Colombia's wettest months on average but rain is possible at anytime.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.



ITINERARIES

The following are summaries of the ride itineraries - and further below is the day by day itinerary for the Jewel of Risaralda. Please enquire for day by day itineraries of the **Eje Cafetero, Mountains & Waterfalls** and Hummingbird Rides. Please note that itineraries are always flexible and the below are only examples of what is planned. Routes and daily arrangements depend on weather and local conditions and may be varied by your guides in their absolute discretion.

Jewel of Risaralda (9 days, 8 nights with 6 days riding)

This 9 day adventure shows you the very best of the department of Risaralda in the heart of the coffee triangle of Colombia. You will ride from Marsella, the “green capital of Colombia”, to the thermal springs of Santa Rosa. Traversing the Colombian Andes, an area rich in wildlife, you'll pass coffee farms, witness breath taking views, enjoy nights around camp fires and soak in the therapeutic waters of the thermal pools. The 100 mile trail takes you through challenging terrain to the most unspoilt and untrodden parts. Tracks along ridges high up in the mountains provide plenty of chances to move on - this itinerary is suitable for those who have a sense of adventure!

Eje Cafetero Ride (9 days, 8 nights with 6 days riding)

Traverse the “Eje Cafetero” - the Colombian coffee axis, also known as the Coffee triangle. This ride crosses the 3 famous coffee growing departments of Risaralda, Caldas and Quindio, escaping to the most unspoilt parts of this region. Ride along ridgetops with 360 degree views, canter through Andean cloud forests, cross rivers, swim in waterfalls and experience the warm welcome of Colombian hospitality.

Mountains & Waterfalls (7 days, 6 nights with 5 days riding)

This route begins in the area of Santa Rosa, Risaralda province, and from here you head straight into the hills and towards the department of Quindio, riding through a Unesco World Heritage site. This area is renowned for its abundant wildlife, home to howler monkeys, wild orchids and hummingbirds. The trail finishing up in the picturesque town of Salento. Covering 80 miles of extremely varied terrain, passing alongside mountains, waterfalls, crossing rivers and traversing lush ravines. Suitable for those who are adventurous and confident cantering!



Example Itinerary - Jewel of Risaralda Ride

[Own arrangements to arrive Bogota and for the night in this fascinating city (we can suggest / book flights & hotels)].

Day 1 - Own arrangements for an internal flight from Bogota to Pereira the heart of Colombia's coffee region [there are about 10 flights a day, eg AV0121 departing Bogota 14.59 and arriving 16.00]. You will be met on arrival and driven about 40 minutes to Rancho Zaman. Time to relax by the pool and explore the grounds before meeting the horses. You can learn how to tack up western style and, if you wish, there may be time to try your horse in the arena. In the evening there will be an explanation about the terrain you will cover over the following days and a BBQ dinner by the pool. Night at Rancho Saman. (L,D)



Day 2 - A relaxed breakfast and depart Rancho Saman by minibus, heading to the hills of Risaralda. This drive will give you a chance to view the terrain you'll be riding over during the next 6 days. Arrive at an eco lodge near the town of Marsella. After lunch, you'll join the horses and set out on an afternoon sunset ride to the picturesque town of Marsella - your first taste of riding in Colombia! Dinner and the night at the lodge. (B,L,D)

ITINERARY cont.

Day 3 - Breakfast and your horse will be tacked up for you - feel free to help if you wish - then set off riding, winding your way through the “cordillera central” the highest of the three branches of the Colombian Andes. Your route takes you past coffee, plantain and cattle farms and you stop for a picnic lunch, carried in your saddle bags. In the afternoon ride on to your accommodation, a traditional coffee farm with over 200 years of production. Dinner and night at the farm. (B,L,D)



Day 4 - A stunning day's ride, open trails with spectacular views. You take the "manzanillo" trail that leads you to the welcoming town of Santa Rosa. This route follows a ridge top with unbelievable 360 degree views, also it passes through a protected area sometimes inhabited by howler monkeys and sloths, along with countless species of birdlife and butterflies. The day finishes at boutique hotel on the outskirts of Santa Rosa. (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast and set off again. A long morning ride takes you to a lovely guest ranch a short distance from the natural hot springs of Santa Rosa. After lunch the afternoon is free to soak in the therapeutic waters. In the evening there will be drinks around the camp fire under a spectacular Andean star studded sky. Dinner & night. (B,L,D)



Day 6 - After the horses have been tacked up you set off on a full day ride. The scenery is stunning, the route taking you past forests, waterfalls and rivers before ending the day at your luxurious accommodation, a coffee farm high up in the mountains with endless views to enjoy from the infinity pool. Dinner and the night. (B,L,D)

Day 7 - Breakfast and set off riding back to Marsella to complete the circuit. The route takes you through an area steeped in history, once home to the Quimbaya people where petroglyphs date back thousands of years. This area is also home to countless species of birdlife and giant butterflies. At the end of the day, after stabling the horses, perhaps head into the town of Marsella to soak in the vibrant atmosphere of this welcoming traditional town. Return to the Eco lodge for dinner and the night. (B,L,D)



Day 8 - Breakfast and then make your way back to Rancho Saman. There should be a chance to visit Nebraska, the local saddlery and coffee shop where all the ranches made to measure saddles are hand crafted. Back at the ranch a delicious dinner will be prepared and you can re-live days on the ride. Night Rancho Saman. (B,L,D)



Day 9 - After breakfast and transfer to Pereira airport for your onward travel. *[There are several flights each day to both Bogota and Cartagena - you can connect with onward Avianca flights to the UK, USA & Europe]* (B,L)



DATES & RATES 2025

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in USD. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the USD/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Prices are to increase in January 2025 but below rates apply to all confirmed bookings before then.

Jewel of Risaralda (8 nights)

7th to 15th June

23rd November to 1st December

13th to 21st July

24th December to 1st January 2025

USD 3320 per person (single supplement USD 240)

Eje Cafetero Ride (8 nights)

15th to 23rd February

23rd to 31st October

7th to 15th December

21st to 29th June

2nd to 10th November

USD 3420 per person (single supplement USD 240)

Mountains & Waterfalls (6 nights)

25th to 31st January

26th July to 1st August

25th to 31st May

10th to 16th August

USD 3300 per person (single supplement USD 180)

Rates INCLUDE accommodation, all riding, services of an English speaking bilingual guide, back up and riding equipment, meals (dinner day 1 to breakfast last day), wine or beer with dinner, mineral water, coffee & tea and all land transfers with the group at set times as indicated.

Rate EXCLUDES International flights / travel to Bogota / Pereira and taxes, any visa fees, extra drinks / bar bills, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have with cover to ride), any gratuities you wish to leave and personal items / extras at hotels such as shopping, telephone calls etc.

Single supplements Please also note that if you book alone, you will usually need to pay the supplement for a single room. However if you are prepared to share a twin room with another rider (of the same sex) please let us know and we will do our best to find a sharer. We cannot guarantee finding a sharer but if one is found the supplement will not be payable.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The meeting point is Pereira airport on Day 1. There are direct overnight flights from London to Bogota with Avianca, Colombian Airlines, departing London Heathrow around 22.00 and arriving Bogota early the following morning.

These can connect with an onward flight to Pereira - though we recommend a night or two in Bogota before (or after) the ride.

The internal flights from Bogota to Pereira are also with Aviana - there are several flights each day BUT **please liaise with us BEFORE booking** to double check timings so we can try to keep all riders on the same flights. Internal flights are normally cheaper if booked in conjunction with an International connection.

On the return, again Avianca have several flights each day from Pereira to Bogota (and also to Cartagena if you'd like some extra culture / beach time). A direct overnight flight, leaves Bogota at about 23.00 and arrives Heathrow around 14.00 the next day.

Other options for flights to Bogota are via Madrid with Iberia, via Mexico City with Aero Mexico, or via Paris with Air France.

Rates vary with the season and airline but expect to pay from around £750-£950 per person for an economy return. **Please call us if you would like further information on flights, for a quote or to book. We would be happy to book flights for you (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213).**

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking and you should always consult a health professional for more detailed & personalised advice).

Visas If you hold a full British or European Passport and are visiting Colombia for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No jabs are required as a condition of entry to Colombia from the UK and Europe but the TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends most travellers are vaccinated against Hepatitis A & Tetanus. For some travellers, vaccination against Typhoid & Yellow Fever may also be recommended, with a Yellow Fever vaccination certificate required if travelling from an area of Yellow Fever transmission. There is no Malaria where you ride - but you will be advised to take a course of anti-malarials and may need them if you plan to travel more in Colombia. **You should always consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.**

(DRAFT 09/09/2024)

