



RIDE WORLD WIDE

HUNGARY

HOMOKI LODGE 2021

RIDE INFORMATION

Homoki Lodge is in Hungary's southern Puszta, between the Danube and Tisza Rivers and not far from the border with Serbia. An easy journey from Budapest, it is peacefully set amongst fields of wild tobacco and acacia, birch and pinewoods with open, sandy riding country stretching in all directions. Once a simple country farmhouse, careful renovation and the addition of luxury yurts have made Homoki a boutique lodge with a difference, a wonderful base from which to explore Hungary's southern great plains. Hungarians will proudly tell you that you can ride from one side of the country to the other without crossing a fence - whether or not that is true, miles of sandy going, dirt roads and hardly a man-made obstacle in view, make Homoki a first rate riding destination. There is also plenty on offer for non-riders, exploring the area by vehicle, on foot or on "fat wheel" mountain bikes (ideal for the sandy tracks), visiting villages, markets, vineyards or just taking 'time out' to bird watch, relax by the pool or for an expert massage. Comfortable and welcoming, Homoki is a great choice for riders and non-riders alike.



DATES

Homoki Lodge is open year round, with scheduled rides each day between 28th March and 24th October 2021. Stays are very flexible - we usually recommend 4 or 5 nights. The lodge sleeps up to 20 guests and can also be booked exclusively. Please contact us at Ride World Wide to discuss dates and availability and (as the charging system is a little complex) to confirm rates for your proposed stay.

HORSES

Homoki has a small stable of around 10 horses, all Hungarian Warmbloods (also known as Hungarian Sport horse), a breed originally developed at the Mezohegyes State Stud in Hungary through selective crossing of Gidrans, Kisberi, Akhal Teke, Nonius and Arabs. Most are between about 15hh and 16hh. They are fit, strong and a responsive and enjoyable ride. They are ridden unshod.

TACK

Tack is Hungarian style trail saddle - very comfortable and quite similar to the Maclellan saddles used on many other rides but with padded covers built in (no need for a seat saver!) There are water bottle holders attached to the saddles. Most horses are ridden in snaffle bits.



RIDING

The riding programs from Homoki are for intermediate to advanced riders. Rides out from the lodge are for 3 hours each morning, with afternoons free to relax by the pool or explore the area by foot, bicycle, or car. You are expected to ride English style, rising to the trot and adopting a forward seat for the canter. Horses are prepared for you and tacked up / untacked by grooms. Riding is in small groups, usually 2 to 4 guests.

WEIGHT LIMIT

85 kgs / 13st 5lbs although some heavier riders may be taken on request.



PACE

The riding pace is tailored a little to the group but is usually moderate to fast with good opportunities for long canters on the sandy tracks and across open meadows. There will of course always be some walking and trotting and if the ground is wet, boggy or very dry, if it is hot (July, August) or riding ability requires, the overall pace will be slower. However generally the flat, open going is good allowing an energetic riding pace. There is a little road work through local villages - though you are seldom on a tar road.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

Riding at Homoki is aimed at intermediate to experienced riders. You should be well balanced, comfortable and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse outside at all paces. You will be asked not to overtake your guide when riding, and to ride in line and in a certain order, although there are also opportunities to spread out and take your own line across open pasture (or wherever your guide indicates). You will also enjoy the riding much more if you are riding fit - if you do not ride regularly we recommend concentrated practice in the weeks and months before you go. Hard hats are strongly recommended (and can be hired locally if required).

TERRAIN

The great joy of riding in Hungary is the open environment where there are few barriers or fences. Although the southern Puszta, where Homoki is based, is no longer the unending open plain or wilderness it once was, you still see remnants of this. A flat, sandy area, it lies between the great Danube and Tisza Rivers, once a mixture of open pasture and swampy marshland. In the 1920s large drainage channels were dug, still a feature of the landscape, to create better farmland and nowadays the sandy soil is divided into small farms, broken up by plantations of acacia, poplar and pine, lakes, pasture, orchards of peaches and plums, vineyards and fields of peppers and other vegetables. The landscape is of subsistence farming, a way of life wiped out in many places in Europe and although flat, the scenery is quite varied with tracks radiating in all directions across farmland, forest, marshland and flower meadows.



ACCOMMODATION

Homoki has several different accommodation options. The main lodge building is a traditional Hungarian farmhouse, with thick adobe walls. There are two double rooms and one twin room within the lodge itself, all decorated in a simple, typical farmhouse style. There are also 7 yurts which won the "Pure Life Award 2016 for mindful design". Designed by Oliver your host (an architect by training) and with all the facilities of a boutique hotel, each yurt is constructed on its own small hill - inside they are open and light, with a glass dome through which to see the stars at night. Each room or yurt is a little different and prices vary accordingly. All have their own private bathroom with bath or shower (or both). The yurts also have under floor heating, air conditioning, television, minibar and tea/coffee making equipment. The luxury yurts, which are the most spacious, also have extras such as king sized beds made up with damask linen. Please note that all yurts have double beds, not twins, so are not ideal for twin share, though some have a sofa bed as well as the double bed. The common areas of the Lodge include an outdoor swimming pool (open May to September), sauna and massage room and several outside hideaways and shady terraces for relaxation. There is a main restaurant and reception area with books, board games, free Wifi, a bar, dining tables and a comfortable seating area.



MEALS

Breakfast is included and will be a choice of tea or coffee, hot chocolate, fresh fruit juice, rolls and bread, pastry, butter, cheese, ham or sausage, hard boiled eggs, home-made jam, honey, vegetables and fruits, muesli or Cereals. Lunch & dinner can be taken in Homoki's restaurant, with innovative cuisine from their award winning chef. The kitchen's philosophy is to use regional, seasonal, fresh ingredients, their mission to introduce guests to quality gastronomy and culinary delights! The cuisine is Hun-Hungarian style, with traces of Asia in the use of spices such as paprika (for which this area is famous throughout Hungary), saffron and ginger. Lunch menus are from 18 Euros for 2 courses; 24 Euros for 3 courses with often soup to start, then something light, followed by something sweet.

In the evening a 3 course dinner is included. Much of the produce is grown or reared at Homoki, whilst neighbouring farms produce the rest, and menus vary from day to day and season to season. Vegetarians can be catered for with prior notice but please tell us in advance of any dietary restrictions so that special arrangements can be made.

There is a varied bar with hand crafted Hungarian beers, local "palinka" spirits and some excellent local wines. Hungary has always been best known for the sweet wines of Tokaj and the "Bull's Blood" of Eger, now known as Bikavér. But there is much more to Hungary's vibrant, exciting wine culture - rare and unusual grape varieties, or more common varieties recreated with Hungarian flair. Homoki has a well thought wine list and you will receive a recommendation of the best wine and food pairing each evening. House wines are from 8 Euros a bottle, hand crafted beers from 3.5 Euros. (NB Homoki does not stock/support multinational brands such as coca cola).



NON-RIDING ACTIVITIES

A variety of activities are always on offer making Homoki ideal for mixed groups or those who want to ride just some of the time. Optional activities include vehicle tours visiting local villages, vineyards, markets or other places of interest, guided walks, mountain biking (using 'fat wheel' bikes), carriage rides, boating on the Tisza river or archery practice. The lodge has an outdoor swimming pool - open May to September - games such as badminton, boule and skittles are available, there is small 'spa' (massage room and outdoor sauna) for treatments, and yoga classes are held in the garden during warmer months. Activities are at an extra charge - please ask for details.

WEATHER

The Hungarian climate has historically changed dramatically from winter to summer, with winter temperatures often several degrees below freezing with 2 to 3 feet of snow on the ground, and mid-summer temperatures up to 40 degrees C. However in the past few years, at least in the southern Puszta, this difference seems to have diminished, with milder winters and cooler summers now common. Spring, when daytime temperatures average 5 to 20 C, is a lovely time when wild flowers are out in the meadows and you may well see some of the area's wildlife. Summer, with average temperatures 10-30 C can be hot but with the sunshine come crops, lush meadows, locally grown fruit and vegetables. Autumn is harvest time, temperatures average 5 to 15 C and the woodlands turn to pools of red and gold. Winters are usually dry but cold with average temperature 0 to 10 C and snow often falling around Christmastime. For best riding conditions May, June, September and October are recommended. In mid-summer and winter months, riding is often restricted to 3 hours a day due to weather and daylight hours. Average daytime temperatures between March and November are roughly as follows: March 2 -10°C; April 8-15°C; May 10-22°C; June 15-25°C; July 17-28°C; August 17-28°C; September 10-25°C; October 5-18°C; November 2-7°C. Rain is possible at any time of year, with recorded rainfall spread fairly evenly through the 12 months, so you need to be prepared for this.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

An example itinerary is set out below but **please note** that this is **only** an example and day by day arrangements are flexible. Suggestions will be made each day and these can be discussed with your guides at the lodge. Plans may be altered at your guide's discretion if he or she considers it beneficial, advisable or if local conditions require.



Day 1 - [Arrive Budapest and transfer around 2 hours, reaching the Southern Great Plain where tarmac roads are replaced by sandy tracks as you approach Homoki Lodge]. Check-in is from 2pm, you will be shown to your yurt to settle in. Perhaps time to explore the area on the lodge's fat-wheeled bikes before dinner at Homoki Dine restaurant. (D)

Day 2 - After breakfast meet the horses for your first ride. The route today may explore the southern Hungarian "Puzsta", the great plains. The area is criss-crossed with sandy tracks which are ideal to get used to your horse and for a good canter. During spring months the meadows are full of wild flowers such as uncountable Red Poppies, Bugac Orchids, Sea Aster, Autumn Lady's-tresses, Giant Hungarian Daisy, Hungarian Milkvetch, and Marsh Gladiolus. Ride through pine and acacia woods where you may see foxes, jackals and even wild boar. Your ride home might take you through shady poplar forests and those who wish can enjoy more fast canters on the plains. Lunch will be available at the lodge if you wish (extra charge, please book ahead). In the afternoon you have time to relax by the pool or other experiences can be booked at reception. Dinner and the night at Homoki. (B,D)

Day 3 - Every third and fourth Sunday of the month there are market day's in the nearby villages. Leaving Homoki after breakfast you set off riding towards the market place. On arrival your horse will be taken care by the staff while you have time to explore the market and dive into the lively bustle of the market traders. Livestock, antiques, fresh goods, clothes and everything one can imagine is haggled for. Ride back to the stables by a different route, with plenty of chances to canter along sandy tracks and enjoy the beautiful meadows. Dinner and night at Homoki. (B,D)



ITINERARY cont.

Day 4 - Breakfast then a maybe the morning ride will take you through forests, swamps and meadows to see a breeding reserve for fallow deer and wild boar. The route today is designed to give you a better idea of how flora and fauna change with the seasons. Between April and September there is good chance of seeing the beautiful bee-eaters which have arrived from Africa to nest. Finally, the horses can show what they're made of on a long gallop back towards the lodge. The afternoon to relax. Dinner and the night at Homoki Lodge. (B,D)

Day 5 - Breakfast and a last morning ride of 3 hours before check-out at 12 noon. Transfer or self drive back to Budapest. (B)



DATES & RATES 2021

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

Homoki Lodge is open year round. Standard rides are scheduled every day between 28th March and 24th October 2021; Guided rides are also available on request between November and February.

Rates depend on the type of room and time of year / availability.

Please contact us for an exact quote - but **for example**, prices for a 4 night stay, with 4 morning rides, based on 2 sharing start from:

In a Luxury Yurt - €688 per person; single supplement €428

Room in the main Lodge - €568 per person; single supplement €224

Rates quoted above include - 3 hours riding each morning with guide, accommodation, breakfast and dinner each day, ½ litre water during rides.

Rates do not include - International flights to Budapest and taxes, transfers from Budapest to Homoki, meals other than breakfast (and lunch on advanced programs), spa treatments and any extra activities you may wish to arrange at / from the lodge, personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any visa fees, your bar bill / ALL drinks (including bottled water), tips and other personal extras such as 'phone calls, laundry etc.

Single supplements - Rates quoted above assume twin shared accommodation and if you are travelling alone, the single supplement indicated will be payable. Note that yurts have double beds, not twins.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The meeting point for Homoki is usually Budapest airport (meeting in downtown Budapest is also possible). British Airways has several direct flights every day from London Heathrow to Budapest. Easy Jet flies from Gatwick, Wizz Air from Luton and other regional airports and Ryan Air flies from London Stansted and also other regional airports. Airfares vary depending on the airline and season but expect to pay around £140 to £220 for an Economy return.

Budapest is a beautiful city, split by the mighty Danube with the old castle and fort 'Buda' on one side, and the newer Austro-Hungarian city, 'Pest' on the other. It is well worth a visit so do consider an extra night or two here either before or after your stay at Homoki.

VIP transfers from / to Budapest airport can be arranged on request.

Transfers currently cost 90 Euros per car (taking 1 to 3 passengers) each way between Homoki and Budapest airport. There is an additional 20 Euros for transfers from / to downtown Budapest.

If you prefer to hire a car and drive to Homoki we can send directions - and for private jets there is a local airport at Szeged, the nearest town, about 30km from Homoki.

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking).

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

Health No inoculations are legally required for Hungary but Tetanus is recommended - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 19/03/2021)

