



RIDE WORLD WIDE

SPAIN

GIRONA PYRENEES 2021

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides are based in North East Spain's province of Girona. The starting point is Mas Batllo in L'Abella, a small Catalan village in the Girona Pyrenees, not far from the French border, with beautiful views of mountains, high pastures and the forests of the volcanic "Garrotxa" region. The stables at Mas Batllo are owned and run by Xavier Pastoret who, as well as running these rides, has a riding stables near Barcelona and used to train Highball teams. Xavier guides the rides personally, he does not speak English himself but he is accompanied by an English speaking back up guide. The stables are around 2 hours drive from Barcelona, accessible by direct flight from several regional UK airports. The area is easy to get to and the rides offered, although not luxurious, take you into some dramatic mountain scenery. For long hours of riding in a wonderfully unspoilt area, this is an excellent holiday choice - but you need to be fit!



DATES

Several different itineraries are offered from set departure dates, or on request for groups, between April and November. Please see 2021 dates and itineraries at the end of this information sheet and call Ride World Wide to check availability.

HORSES

The horses used are well schooled crossbred Spanish, Hispano-Arabians, Arabians, and Anglo-Arabian. They have all been carefully chosen and most are between 14.2hh and 16hh and of a medium build. They are fit, good natured, forward going and responsive to ride and are well adapted to the sometimes rough mountain terrain. Horses are prepared for you each morning but some help is expected when untacking in the evening and at lunch breaks.

TACK

Saddles are mostly general purpose English style, with most horses ridden in snaffle bits but endurance saddles and Kimblewick bridles are used for some horses. Saddle bags are provided.

RIDING

The High Pyrenees, Pyrenees to Sea, and new Smugglers Trail follow progressive routes with nights spent in different village hotels. These are demanding but rewarding rides - they generally include 5 to 8 hours riding each day, with stops for lunch, and on the Pyrenees to Sea Ride perhaps a swim in the river to break up the day (if it is warm enough). The above rides are run for a minimum of 4 and the maximum group size is usually 10 guests, with a lead guide (Xavier) and a backup rider accompanying all trips. The Pyrenees Summer Rides are flexible centre based rides, exploring a different area each day, with slightly fewer hours in the saddle (4 to 7 hours each day) - these can be run for 2 or more riders.

WEIGHT LIMIT

90kgs (14st 2lbs)

PACE

The pace always depends on a number of factors, including the weather, ground conditions and group ability - so it can vary from week to week. As you are riding in the mountains there are less chances to move on than on the coastal plains, but there are still plenty of fun canters across the high meadows and along dirt tracks, the High Pyrenees Ride and Smugglers Trail are at a slower pace than the Pyrenees to Sea, which is a moderate over all.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

The rides are geared towards reasonably competent riders and to participate you must be well-balanced and secure in the saddle, comfortable and able to control a well-schooled horse outside at all paces from walk to fast canter. A good independent seat and balance are very important - sometimes the going can be tricky and rough (especially early in the year when routes can be overgrown or if wet weather means changes to routes normally used) - and riders are expected to be able to cope with a variety of different going and different types of terrain. Although the pace is not the fastest, the riding involved is quite technical and requires good control of your horse. All rides require a good level of both riding and physical fitness and you should be riding regularly - at least 2 hours a week in the few months before the trip is recommended - to ensure you can cope with the hours in the saddle. There are places on both rides where riders need to dismount and lead their horse - when the ground gets rough or steep and for a short time to warm up and cool horses down each day - so all riders need to be comfortable handling a horse from the ground, able to mount and dismount unaided and fit / agile enough to walk leading a horse on tricky / steep terrain for up to 30 minutes at a time. **Please note** that **everyone** is required to wear a hard hat when riding - there are some to borrow but we strongly recommend taking your own to ensure a good and secure fit.

TERRAIN

The area you ride through varies with each different itinerary and changes rapidly from day to day. The region boasts several protected nature reserves and even as you get towards the coast, is unspoilt - in places virtually untouched - retaining much of its natural beauty and wildlife. The riding is on a combination of mountain tracks, wide paths through wooded valleys, tracks through low scrub and heather and, in some places, you often cross open pasture with wonderful distant views, providing a chance to move on.

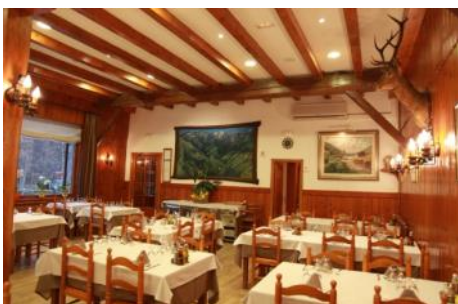
ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation varies throughout the week and you stay in small hotels, apartments, guesthouses and / or comfortable cabins. The first night is spent in very simple rooms at L'Abella, next to the stables. Other nights are spent in guesthouses and hostels which are also simple but often with plenty of local character. Where possible local hotels are also used, usually a local 2* to 3* standard (some with swimming pools). For the Pyrenees Summer Ride all nights are spent at a comfortable ski chalet style hotel in the town of Setcases (or you can upgrade to 3* hotel in Camprodon). Rooms in all hotels have their own bathroom with shower and loo - though if you book a single room you may be asked to share a bathroom with another single person on one night. Prices are based on two sharing but single rooms can be arranged on request for an extra charge.



MEALS

Breakfast, lunch (generally a picnic) and dinner are included each day. Local wine (red) is included with lunch and dinner - other drinks are at your own expense. Breakfast is usually Spanish style - bread, butter and jam with cheese, ham and / or eggs available on some days. Lunch is usually a picnic out riding, a simple lunch of bread, ham and cheese etc, carried in saddle bags (on some days the backup vehicle may meet you). Lunch on two days of the Pyrenees Summer Ride will be at small family restaurants. Dinner is generally three courses with local specialities often on offer. There is plenty of seafood, particularly on the ride to the coast and also game such as wild boar.



WEATHER

Average daytime temperatures in the area in March and November are usually 12 to 15 degrees C. In April, May, June and October daytime temperatures are generally between 15 and 23 degrees C. In summer months, July, August and September, daytime temperatures are generally between 24 and 30 degrees C - although obviously there are variations each year! At night, even in winter, the temperature rarely drops below 5 degrees C, with summer nights around 18 to 20 degrees C. Rain can fall throughout the year.



WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARIES

Below are day by day detailed itineraries for the High Pyrenees and Pyrenees to Sea Rides. Please enquire for the Smugglers Trail and Pyrenees Summer Ride itineraries. Please note that itineraries are only examples of what is planned and the day-by-day arrangements and routes may be varied if the weather or other local conditions require.

High Pyrenees Ride - This ride follows a progressive route, with 6 days riding of 4 to 6 hours each day, reaching peaks of up to 2300m. The route crosses valleys and mountain passes with exceptional views of the Pyrenean scenery. Alpine meadows, deep ravines and rocky reliefs - this is spectacular landscape and a joy to ride through.



Day 1 - You will be met at Barcelona airport at a set time (usually 18.00) and driven with the group to L'Abella in the Pyrenees, a typical small Catalan village surrounded by mountains. An introduction to the weeks program then dinner in a local restaurant and overnight in simple apartments at L'Abella. (D)

Day 2 - Breakfast in the stables clubhouse, then at around 9.00am start from L'Abella. Today is a slow day of approximately 6 hours as you begin the climb to the 3 peaks, Puig Billici, Puig Cerverí and Black Stone. You soon leave the track and cross wild flower meadows on the rolling mountain side, where eagles, vultures, herds of wild goats and deer may be seen. After a picnic lunch, you descend to the Queralbs, crossing several rivers and the Vall de Nuria. Dinner and night at Hotel Roquetes (or similar). (B,L,D)



ITINERARIES cont.

Day 3 - After an early breakfast set off riding through the spectacular landscape of high mountains, with peaks of 2600m and 2800m. After lunch climb to the Pic de l'Infern with beautiful views of the lakes of Carança and the valley of Coma de Vaca. The next stop is Nou Creus peak, at an altitude of 2800m, the highest peak on the ride. Descend via the valley of Toses to reach La Molina ski resort. The night is spent at the Solineu Hotel (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 4 - Breakfast and set off riding across spectacular valleys with the outstanding views of the Cadí Moixerò Peaks like Pedraforca, and crossing mountain villages still charming as the first day. The Concret train and Museum and La Pobla del L'Illet village will lead us after crossing Llobregat River to the "Sanctuary de la Mare de Déu de Falgàs". Dinner and the night at a rural guesthouse in Falgàs. (B,L,D)



Day 5 - A relaxing day of about 5 hours today with less climbs and descents and more chances for some good canter. You ride across the Catlleràs Mountain Range to reach Palomera's neck, then over the Pinyana range to the village of Gombren. The night is spent near Gombren at La Canal guesthouse (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 6 - Today's ride explores the great Ribes valley and the Ripoll mountains. This is an impressive landscape with rivers and pine forests. Here you will begin to really appreciate the strength, sure footedness and stamina of the horses as they power their way up the peaks. Crossing open meadows you should keep an eye out for deer which are often seen in this area. In the evening you reach the village of El Baell where the night is spent at the Hotel Terra Alta (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 7 - Breakfast and set off on your last day of riding, finishing the loop to end back at L'Abella. The route takes you over the Serra Cavallera mountains and with views of la Llagona lakes, the plain of Gorgs and the Camrpodón Valley. Arrive at the stables and say goodbye to your horses before transfer by car to the town of Setcases on the Ter River. Dinner and night at the Hotel La Cabanya (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 8 - Breakfast and transfer at 9.00am with the group to Barcelona airport for your flight home. (B)



ITINERARIES cont.

The Pyrenees to Sea Ride - This ride follows a progressive route from the Pyrenees to the coast, with 5 days riding and 6 to 8 hours per day. Starting amongst the mountain landscapes and forests of the Girona Pyrenees the route heads to the Mediterranean coast, passing through an area with a mild climate where there are vineyards and olive groves - and of course you will have a chance to sample their produce and the gastronomical variety of Catalunya!

Day 1 - You will be met at Barcelona airport and driven with the group to L'Abella on the Pyrenees, a typical and small Catalan village in the middle of the mountains. An introduction to the weeks program then dinner in a local restaurant and overnight in simple apartments at L'Abella. (D)



Day 2 - After breakfast in the stables clubhouse, you will meet the horses and at around 9am set off riding from L'Abella towards the Pyrenees and to the Salarsa valley. Descend to the Romanesque church of Sant Valenti de Salarsa, then continue to Pont Bolassell, a quiet picturesque place where you stop for a picnic. After lunch you follow a narrow path through dense forest to reach the Coll de Salomó, the highest point of the day (850 m). Ride another 6 or 7 kilometres to Sant Andreu de Bestacrá, and then descend through ancient forest of old holm oaks that grow from between the rocks. Continue descending to Beget. Overnight in a rural guest house. (B,L,D)

Day 3 - Breakfast and set off - this is probably the longest and most demanding day. The morning ride takes you through the scented oak forests of Alta Garrotxa towards Vall d'Hortmoier, passing some river gorges where a quick dip may be possible (if it is warm or you are feeling brave!) Cross the Llerca River and climb to the Talaxà peak, a picturesque spot where you might stop to enjoy a view of yesterday's route. From here descend to Vall de Sadernes, leading the horses for about 1km. You arrive at the Sant Aniol River where there may be time for a swim, weather permitting. Another climb of about half an hour takes you to the Coll de Bassegoda at around 1,200 meters. Stop here for a picnic (carried in your saddlebags) and then continue along the ridge for a while before descending through dense holm-oak woods, then crossing the Muga River to reach Albanyà. The night is spent at Bassegoda campsite, in comfortable twin cabins, each with its own bathroom, with linen and towels provided. Dinner at the restaurant and night in the Bassegoda cabins. (B,L,D)

Day 4 - After breakfast you leave Albanyà and ride along the Muga River. There may be a chance to stop at Boadella Lake for a refreshing swim with the horses (weather permitting). Stop for a picnic lunch, usually brought by the backup vehicle, then continue across the GR2, with its typical landscape of Alt Empordan, full of vineyards and olive groves as well as the vegetation of Albera Natural Park. Here you may see the most typical Mediterranean metamorphous rocks made of schist and clay shale. In the evening arrive at your hotel, near the medieval village of Peralada, famous for its "cava" (sparkling wine) which you will have a chance to taste before exploring the village. You could even try your luck at the local casino! Night at Cal Rajoler (or similar), Peralada (B,L,D)

Day 5 - Today you leave the mountains and ride through the Albera and the coastal area of Costa Brava towards the sea, meeting the backup vehicle for a barbeque lunch. In the late afternoon, arrive at the town of Llanca, your destination for the night. Within the town, there is a wealth of artistic and historical heritage, which includes a Romanesque tower, the Watercolour Museum, the Hermitage, the church of St Vincent, the Abbot's Palace... to name a few as well as several beaches for you to explore. Dinner and the night at Hotel Beri (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 6 - Breakfast at the hotel then ride out of Llanca to a small bay. A chance for a swim and lunch at a local restaurant before spending the afternoon on the beach. In the late afternoon ride into Albera Natural Park and back to Llanca. Dinner and a second night in at Hotel Beri in Llanca. (B,L,D)

ITINERARIES cont.

Day 7 - Breakfast and transfer at 9.00am with the group to Barcelona airport for your flight home. (B)



DATES & RATES 2021

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

High Season (June to October) = *

High Pyrenees (7 nights): Standard - 1635 Euros; High - 1820 Euros

Single supplement - 240 Euros

11th to 18th April

2nd to 9th May

23rd to 30th May

6th to 13th June*

12th to 19th September*

19th to 26th September*

17th to 24th October*

Pyrenees to Sea (6 nights): Standard - 1525 Euros; High - 1710 Euros

Single supplement - 240 Euros

18th to 24th April

9th to 15th May

30th May to 5th June*

26th September to 2nd October*

3rd to 9th October*

24th to 30th October*

31st October to 6th November*

Smugglers Trail (6 nights): Standard - 1475 Euros; High - 1660 Euros

Single supplement - 220 Euros

25th April to 1st May

16th to 22nd May

5th to 11th September*

Pyrenees - One Base Summer Rides (4 nights): Standard 1025 Euros; Upgrade 1325 Euros

Single supplement - Standard 120 Euros; Upgrade 160 Euros

4th to 8th August

11th to 15th August

18th to 22nd August

25th to 29th August

Other dates on request for groups of 4 or more

Rates quoted above **include** all riding and guiding, **twin** bedded accommodation and return transfers by bus from / to Barcelona airport with the group at set times. Rates include all meals and local wine with lunch and dinner.

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DATES & RATES cont.

All rates **exclude** international flights to Barcelona, extra drinks, personal medical / travel insurance (compulsory), transfers outside set times, any visa fees, personal items / additional activities etc and any tips you may wish to leave.

Single supplements - Please note that rates quoted above assume shared **twin** accommodation. If you are travelling alone and would like to guarantee a single room the single supplement is payable (there are a limited number of single rooms available, particularly on the first night at L'Abella). If you are travelling alone and are happy to share with another guest of the same sex, the supplement is not charged.



FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

You need to fly to Barcelona for these rides. Rates quoted above include transfers from / to Barcelona at fixed times on the first and last day.

Transfers take approximately 2 hours from Barcelona. The set meeting time at Barcelona airport is 18.00 Terminal 1 on Day 1 of the ride (NB allow about ½ hour to get from Terminal 2 to Terminal 1). Please ensure your flight arrival time into Barcelona by 16.30 to accommodate any delays.

The return transfers leave at 09.00 so return flights should depart **after 13.00** on the final day.

If you prefer a transfer that is tailored to your own arrival / departure times, taxis from Barcelona or Girona can be organised. A private taxi from Barcelona to L'Abella, one way taking up to 4 passengers is approx 250 Euros. Please contact us for an exact cost.

British Airways, Iberia, Easy Jet and several other airlines have direct flights to Barcelona from a number of different UK airports. Flight costs vary from as little as £50 to around £250 per person economy return (seasonal and depends on the airline). We can book British Airways flights for you if you wish - please call if you need any advice on flights, for a quote or help booking (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213).



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AREA

Girona province is an area of great contrasts, from the high peaks of the Pyrenees to the rugged coastline of the Costa Brava and there is plenty to explore.

Girona, perched on a hillside and the provincial capital, is a compact, elegant city with a long history. There is much to see including the magnificent Gothic cathedral, the beautifully preserved Banys Arabs (Arab baths) build in the 12th century and an outstanding example of Moorish and Romanesque design, and the Jewish quarter, a town within a town, 'lost' following the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. A leisurely walk along the medieval walls which encircle the old city provides wonderful views of the city and surrounding countryside.

Barcelona, 60 miles south east of Girona, is the capital of Catalunya region and well worth a visit. The city has a long artistic heritage and is famous for its varied architectural styles, especially Gothic and the modernist art nouveau style exemplified by Antonio Gaudi. Unmistakable Gaudi facades, the Gaudi Park, statues and mosaic covered buildings are dotted throughout the city which also has many excellent restaurants, some great shopping and seafront promenades which are perfect for a relaxing stroll as to watch the world go by.

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 you do not need a visa for visits to Spain whatever the length of stay, although for visits of over 90 days residence permits are required. NOTE - visa requirements can change without notice and it is your responsibility to check up to date requirements with the Spanish Consulate.

Health No vaccinations are legally required by EEC residents to enter Spain. If you have a particular condition requiring special medical treatment, you should carry a letter from your own doctor translated into Spanish describing your condition and the medicine / treatment required in case of emergencies.

(DRAFT 23/09/2020)

