



RIDE WORLD WIDE

SPAIN

KUKUTANA, ANDALUCIA 2023-2024

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides are based from a traditional 'Cortijo', or Andalusian country house, to the southwest of Seville and within the boundaries of the Donana National Park. Available to private groups and occasionally for individuals to join on set dates, Kukutana is all about the warmth and conviviality of spending quality time with friends whilst seeing everything this lovely area of Spain has to offer. It provides a wonderful base from which to explore the Donana, a National Park since 1969 and declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1980, under the personal guidance of a family who have known and loved it for more than a generation. Each stay at Kukutana is tailor-made. Those wishing to focus on riding will be able to explore the surrounding area on full and half day guided rides but there are also options for outings by horse (or mule) and carriage (a feature of traditional Sevillian life), for guided walks, cycling, sightseeing by 4x4, to visit the coast, Sanlucar, sherry producers, for authentic flamenco and to try a hot air balloon ride, making the Cortijo a wonderful base for mixed groups. For riders, as you canter along the wide, pine-lined avenues of the Donana, perfect going underfoot, the sun glinting through the trees and tapas and lunch waiting ahead, it's not hard to be swept up in the magic of this part of Spain, the kingdom of the Andalusian horse! The meeting place for guests is Seville, the capital of both Andalusia and the province of Seville. Situated on the plain of the Guadalquivir River it is one of Spain's most beautiful cities and to the Sevillianos, not just a place, but a way of life. Sevilla is bright, beautiful and with all it offers by way of architecture, tradition and music, a city that must be seen and experienced in the flesh.



DATES

Kukutana is open for guests from 16th September to 15th June each year. It is closed for July and August when it is usually very hot. The minimum stay is 3 nights; for riders, we suggest 4 nights to allow you to enjoy all that is on offer and also have time to relax. It is possible to book on an "open house" basis, where there may be other guest staying, doing a different program (riding is not the only activity offered), or you may also book the house privately for a group of friends or family. Either way, dates are flexible but on request. Please contact us to discuss plans, dates and availability.

HORSES

There are usually 8 to 10 riding horses stabled at Kukutana (along with 2 mules and some young and breeding mares). The horses used are a mixture of French Saddle Breds and Arab, Spanish and warmblood crosses of between about 15.2hh and 16.2hh. They are responsive, forward going but sensible to ride.

TACK

Tack is either good quality English or traditional Spanish style, with both English and Spanish saddles available. Some horses are ridden in English snaffle bridles whilst some are used to traditional Spanish bits. Small saddle pouches for water bottles and a few personal belongings, are provided.



RIDING

To ride at Kukutana you must be comfortable, well-balanced and in control at all paces on a sensitive, responsive horse and confident riding outside with a group. Typically the horses are of a fairly spirited temperament, although they are calm and well-mannered to ride. They go best with gentle use of the hand and a relaxed rein. The riding pace is moderate overall, with chances for some lovely canters on wide sandy tracks and possibly on the beach (depending on conditions). There are no children's ponies and although families are very welcome and activities organised for children, the minimum riding age is generally about 14+ yrs. Riding groups are usually a maximum of 6 guests, riding with a guide(s) and helpers. A back up vehicle meets riders at drinks stops and lunch, and there are helpers on hand to prepare the horses and look after them when you stop.

WEIGHT LIMIT

90 kgs (14st 2lbs) maximum in riding clothes. If you are close to this, please let us know in advance so we can check a suitable horse is available.

PACE

The riding pace is moderate overall. The going is mostly flat and sandy so there are plenty of opportunities for lovely canters as a group although typically, the riding is at an active, energetic walk, enjoying the scenery and chatting to friends, with the occasional canter, rather than at speed over long distances.



RIDING EXPERIENCE

Riding at Kukutana is aimed at reasonably experienced riders and to participate you are expected to be a reasonably competent, confident rider, who is comfortable and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at all paces. Although you don't need to be an expert, you should be comfortable and at ease on an energetic horse, at a varied pace when riding with a group. Spanish trained horses collect easily but you should be sensitive and used to riding with gentle hands.

TERRAIN

The riding country you will explore is flat, mostly floodplain, with going underfoot predominantly sand and perfect for horses. Much of the time you ride on wide sandy tracks that criss-cross the Donana's pine forest, holm oak woodland and eucalyptus groves, with some stretches alongside or through orange and almond orchards and in private "dehesas" (oak woods and grass pasture). You also ride on the sand streets of El Rocio, past marshland, through sand dunes, on the long beach of Matalascañas and on an occasional stretch of tar or gravel road.

ACCOMMODATION



The Cortijo was built in 1919 and has recently been renovated to ensure it is comfortable for guests but retains its authentic and traditional feel. It sleeps up to 12 guests in 6 twin /double bedrooms (each with en-suite bathroom) and the house has its own bull ring, cobbled stable yard, gardens and swimming pool. Bedrooms are all different; some have a view over the garden; some over the courtyard and stables. They are spacious and stylishly decorated using a mix of restored antiques and dark wood furniture that is in keeping with the relaxed and traditional ambiance – beds with iron or polished wood or four poster frames, dressing tables, standalone wash-basins. Most have a bathroom with bath and shower, some have shower only. Towels, soaps, shampoo etc are all provided. There is a dining room off the central hall, with a long dining table where dinner is usually eaten, a drawing room with comfortable armchairs, sofas and fireplace and outside, a large terrace with chairs and tables, shady trees in the garden and a swimming pool.



MEALS

A stay at Kukutana is all about relaxation and enjoying precious time together - and delicious meals are an important part. Breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as tapas and snacks in between, are included, with meals served in the dining room, on the terrace or at a table set up in the countryside when you are out riding. Menus, designed by Lourdes and prepared by long time chef Isabel, use locally grown and seasonal produce, and include local specialities as well as family favourites. Breakfast is generally simple in Spanish style - bread, yoghurt, cereal and fruit, with eggs and bacon if you wish and freshly squeezed orange juice, tea or coffee; lunch might be a gazpacho soup with a selection of salads, bread and cheeses and a typical dinner might be a soup to start, roast Iberian pork from Huelva followed by a chocolate torte served with fresh locally grown berries. All drinks (soft drinks, beer, spirits, good local wines and tea and coffee) are included. Mealtimes are generally a little later than in England - breakfast around 8.30am, lunch at around 2 pm and dinner served at about 8.30pm. Vegetarians and those with particular diets can be catered for with advance notice - please tell us of any special diet requests when you book.

WEATHER

The climate in this part of Spain is nearly tropical and spring, autumn and winter months are best for riding. In March average day-time temperatures are generally in the low 20sC; in April expect mid-20s C, rising to the high 20s C in May. Rain is possible but average monthly rainfall in spring is only 30-50mm and there are many dry, sunny days. In June, Kukutana's pool, shady garden and access to the coast where there is often a cooling breeze, make it a lovely retreat and September is also glorious, with expected day time temperatures in the low 30sC and rain unlikely. Temperatures gradually fall through October and November, and these are when you are most likely to have rain showers. In December and January temperatures are still very mild, with maximum daytime highs about 15 or 16 C and night-time lows at night down to around 6 or 8 C.

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book.

ITINERARY

Below is an example 3 night itinerary - although please note this is *only* an example and day-by-day arrangements will always vary. Routes planned may also be changed in your guide's discretion according to weather, local conditions and also group wishes.

Day 1 - Collected from the airport (or your hotel) in Seville and driven about 50kms south to Kukutana, a lovely privately owned 'Cortijo' inside the Donana National Park. Kukutana is family owned and has recently been renovated and restored for guests. Settle in and meet your hosts Ana and the Llorente family over lunch. In the afternoon, meet the horses and a first ride out to try them, passing orange and almond orchards and perhaps heading to the 'Dehesa de la Juncosilla', in the northern Donana where 800 hectares of grassland, pine forest and dense shrub provide perfect refuge for deer, wild boar and even lynx. Ride back to Kukutana for evening drinks, a welcome dinner and the night (L,D)



Day 2 - Breakfast at about 08.30 before setting off on a full day ride, perhaps to the famous village of El Rocio which is about 20 kms from the Hacienda and is Andalusia's magical 'cowboy town' with its sand streets, hitching posts and imposing white church, Ermita de la Virgen del Rocío, built to honour the Virgin Mary. On the way the route follows some of the impressive sand avenues of the Donana, wide tracks through pine, cork oak and eucalyptus forest, that are perfect for horses. Stop for a break, meeting the back-up team for refreshments close to the Palacio del Rey, a royal hunting lodge built for Alfonso XIII, before riding on along the wide 'Reya Real', where many tracks join and in May each year, hundreds of mounted pilgrims congregate for the final part of their annual pilgrimage to the church of the Virgin Mary. After about 3 ½ hours riding, reach El Rocio, Spain's International village of the horse where most houses have a courtyard and stables behind, many have traditional wooden hitching rails to the front, and all the streets are sand.

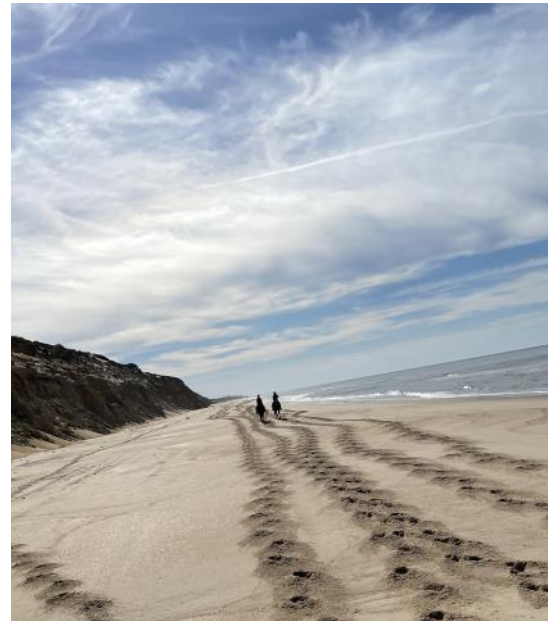


ITINERARY cont.

Cont - At the time of the pilgrimage the village hosts a thousand horses and many thousands of people who come to pray to the Virgin. Ride through El Rocio before stopping for lunch at a restaurant in a super position overlooking the marshland where you may see herons, egrets, jacanas and spoonbills. After lunch mount up again and ride back to 'El Pino de los Cien Duros' where you are met and driven (whilst horses are trucked) back to Kukutana in the afternoon. If anyone wishes (or any non-riders joining) can travel some or all of the route to or from El Rocio by mule and carriage. Dinner and night Kukutana (B,L,D)



Day 3 - After breakfast, set off by car to Matalascanas where you meet the horses and start along the pristine beach towards Mazagon. Plenty of chances for exhilarating canters along the way, before stopping for a picnic on the beach. Mount up in the afternoon and head inland, riding towards the forest village of Los Cabezudos. Here you meet the back-up team and will be driven back to Kukutana. Perhaps with time to swim, before drinks, dinner and the night. (B,L,D)



Day 4 - After breakfast, a last morning ride, perhaps taking the horses to Villamanrique de la Condesa and riding back to Kukutana in time for lunch or there might be the option of a morning carriage drive from the hacienda. After lunch, pack up and you will be driven (about an hour) to Seville (either airport or city) for onward travel. (B,L)

END

RATES 2023 -2024 (Valid to June 2024)

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.

“Open house” Rate: 1150 Euros per person per night

Private house rates - prices vary with number of guests booking.

1-4 guests: 1200 Euros per person per night

5-6 guests: 1070 Euros per person per night

7 - 8 guests: 1000 Euros per person per night

9 - 10 guests: 950 Euros per person per night

11-12 guests: 900 Euros per person per night.

Riding groups are generally limited to 6 guests.

Rates include all meals & house drinks, daily activity (either one long day or morning and afternoon activities) and transfers from / to Seville airport.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flights Seville is the nearest International airport and the meeting point. There are usually one or two flights a day to Seville from London - British Airways and Easy Jet have regular flights from Gatwick and there may be other ‘budget airline’ options from London or regional airports, depending on the season. The transfer from / to Seville takes about 1 hour each way. Fares from London to Seville vary but expect to pay from around £120 to £220 per person economy return. If you would like help booking flights or a fare quote please contact us - we can book British Airways scheduled flights for you. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213.

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is only 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. Please check up to date requirements with the Spanish consulate.

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

(DRAFT 09/01/24)

