



SPAIN: DISCOVERY TRAIL YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

To discover Catalonia for the first time is a great experience, to discover Catalonia on Andalusian horseback is the ultimate experience"

Andalusian horses will adeptly guide you on this discovery trail deep into the heart of Catalonia where the riding is as varied as the ever changing landscapes of the region, with plenty of opportunities to canter and gallop across the plains and meadows, through river valleys and along winding forest tracks.

Catalonia offers a unique sensation of stepping back in time with its breathtaking landscapes, medieval villages of Besalu, Crespia, Tortella and St. Ferriol with their Romanesque monasteries, fortified walls and stone cobbled roads, banishing vehicles in favour of horses.

Catalonian cuisine and wines from the Empordà region are sampled and savoured throughout the trail with a diverse range of dishes and tapas and picnics making this a truly gourmet experience.

The Discovery trail will also take you to Girona (by car), Northern Catalonia's largest city and capital of the region steeped in history and culture.

The climax of this week is a two-day trail which ventures alongside the river Fluvià (hugely influential in Catalonia) through the beautiful scenery of the Garrotxa into the Alt Empordà region where we enjoy varied flora and fauna and explore some delightful villages.

The Discovery Trail was designed as the ultimate introduction to Catalonia and is a recent addition to the portfolio of Catalonia trails. After years of discovering this region, we can truly say that the Catalonia Discovery Trail offers a week of intense highlights.

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL AT THE FARM

Pick up at Barcelona or Gerona airport and transfer to the farm for the dinner and the night.

The camp base is a 11th century Farmhouse perched high up on a ridge overlooking the Pyrenees.

Here you will meet the family, the guide and the team.

At dinner we will go over the week's program, you will be told about the special characteristics of our Andalusian trail horses. After dinner you will be given an introduction to the weeks programme with an opportunity for a one-to-one conversation designed to find every rider their perfect horse.

Finally you will discover how to play the 'Champagne rules' under which anyone found guilty of holding up the ride at any point is obliged to buy a bottle of local cava for the group that evening, making for lively dinners!

DAY 2 – SANT FERRIOL, THE NAME OF THE ROSE

Today the pace is varied.

You will enjoy the canters and the pretty mountain tracks.

Today's destination is a beautiful monastery. This is from the 16th century, a jewel of Romanesque architecture built by Cistercian monks, that conjures up scenes and the spirit of the book " the Name of the Rose". From here we have panoramic views over the Empordà region out to the Mediterranean coast. After a delicious picnic lunch, we will have a pleasant ride along the ridge and back to our homely and comfortable hotel.

DAY 3 – TO THE SADERNES GORGES

We ride through the picturesque villages of Argelaguer and Tortellà with its magnificent church dominating the village square. Now the



landscape is large open stretches and we can enjoy some more long canters and gallops to Sadernas. This is the entrance to a rocky gorge, that leads high up into the Pyrenees, the beginning of one of the most famous smuggling routes between Spain and France, an area famous for its bandit stories.

Amidst this dramatic mountain scenery there is an immense Romanesque bridge over a large river pool. This is perfect for a refreshing swim before the picnic lunch.

DAY 4 – THE SANTA MAGDALENA RIDGE – GIRONA – TAPAS AND WINE

Today we will ride along the ridge of the Santa Magdalena chapel with its medieval watch tower overlooking the Llierca valley. We ride through some very interesting forests with excellent views where it is not unusual to disturb a resting eagle and to be able to watch it soar gracefully beneath us in the valley.

Then we arrive at our camp base for a late Spanish lunch, a delicious paella.

After lunch we will drive you to visit Girona. The capital of the region, this little city has wonderful shady streets, beautiful architecture, the widest cathedral in Europe and great shopping.

Or you can take it easy and relax by the pool.

Tonight you are going to discover the typical Spanish tapas. But what will tapas be without some good wines? So we will make sure that you can taste some of the most special local wines with this delicious food. Guaranteed a memorable night!

DAY 5 & 6 – THE TWO DAY TRAIL RIDE: FOLLOW THE RIVER FLUVIA TO MEDIEVAL BESALU

Day 5: This is a circular ride that covers over 60 kms in two days. During the morning we ride through the valley of La Miana and we pass the spectacular church of Sant Frutós. We are leaving the mountains for now. When we get to the river Fluvià, one of Catalonia's biggest rivers, we continue along the south bank soon stopping for a delicious picnic.

We continue through rolling hills and pine forests where it is very likely we will meet herds of sheep or wild boar. At dusk we arrive at our destination,

the charming village of Vilert, where we leave the horses to graze and rest. We will be driven back to our farm for a welcome meal with our popular house wine.

Day 6: Today we ride through walnut groves to the lovely village of Crespià. We follow the north bank of the Fluvià where we can enjoy the spectacular fluvial scenery with lots of different bird species. We cover many kilometers in a short time through sunflower fields, open meadows and forest.

We stop in Besalú where we have a delicious picnic lunch by the river. Besalú, the ancient regional capital, is a jewel of Romanesque architecture set between two rivers. The squares, stone cut pillars and cool shady arched passageways are a wonder to behold. Not to mention the stained glass of its churches. You have some time to wander around and absorb the unique atmosphere of this ancient medieval village with its spectacular bridge and Romanesque architecture.

In the afternoon we ride through scented oak forests above beautiful ravines that so characterise this mountainous region known as the Garrotxa. The views are superb with the Pyrenees in the distance to the north and the Mediterranean coast to the south.

After some long canters we see our base, a welcome sight as we arrive in the late afternoon.

A glass or two of cava on the terrace overlooking the mountains followed by a delicious meal is a perfect end to a marvelous journey.

DAY 7 – COGULERES – THE HIDDEN VALLEY

Our destination is Coguleres, a mountain valley that reaches almost up to the heights of Sant Julià del Mont at 1000m.

We ride quietly down through a forest alongside a mountain stream, to the flood plains by the little village of Sant Jaume de Llierca where we have coffee or a sherry in the local bar. Here we pass some majestic farm houses built by the nobility in the 12th century.

Today you will really appreciate the strength, agility and stamina of your horse in this varied terrain. They climb like mountain goats and fly across the the flood plains like gazelles. For



lunch we climb up to the ridge of Sant Julià. Here we eat a delicious picnic in a meadow beneath a shady tree, before riding home to our camp base.

DAY 8 – A GOODBYE BREAKFAST

After breakfast, transfer for Barcelona/Gerona Airport.