



SPAIN: CATALONIAN SUMMITS 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 – THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Having tacked up we set off down into the valley of the river Fluvià, Catalonia's largest river, and following a gushing stream we canter across the plains and into the spectacular gorge of Sant Aniol. This is the beginning of a historic smuggling trail between France and Spain. We stop for our picnic next to a big river pool, underneath an impressive Romanesque bridge. Excellent for a refreshing swim before lunch.

This spectacular scenery is the gateway to the region of the Alta Garrotxa, one of the regions most beautiful natural parks.

High up in the mountains surrounded by huge oaks, we stable the horses and return to our base for a delicious dinner and a well earned rest.



DAY 3 – BEGET

In the morning we leave the gorge with its sculptured rock formations and we ascend higher into the mountains. We ride through Talaxia, a typical mountain settlement with an impressive Romanesque church.

From here we have spectacular views of "La Costa Bona", our goal for this journey, Queen of the Pyrenean peaks that we can discern in the far distance.

After a walk down into the next valley we eat a delicious picnic next to a little river. This is an ideal spot to swim with your horse.

In the evening we arrive at Beget, a beautiful mountain village, nestled amidst the gentle mountain scenery. This village maintains all of its original charm, famous for its Romanesque church, original tower and its Black Madonna, a gem of Romanesque architecture.

Our hotel for the night is El Forn, it was the village bakery and now it is a well known restaurant in the region. Famous for the nouvelle cuisine of the local Catalan dishes and the local mountain wine is excellent.

DAY 4 – UP TO HIGHER PEAKS

Today after the best breakfast you have ever had we continue our journey riding through beech forests and meadows carpeted in wild flowers. The local farmhouses are huge constructions build by the local aristocracy and wealthy Barcelonian merchants in the 16th century. Again the Catalonians Romanesque architecture is ever present in the arches, doors, windows and churches of this region, making for wonderful photography opportunities.

Our destination is the village of Espinavell, another small smugglers village untouched by the passing of time, just 5 kms from the French border. We stay in a family run mountain hotel with the imposing presence of "La Costa Bona" in the background.

The speciality of this restaurant is its delicious jamon serrano and Ratafia, the home made local liquor.

DAY 5 – WHERE THE EAGLES FLY

Today we will be riding up into the highest mountains of our journey. After an early start we begin to climb a winding track alongside a river. Soon we leave the track as up here it is only rolling mountain meadows and wild flowers where we enjoy some very nice canters and gallops. The views are immense and breathtaking, the light is that of the Pyrenees. We pass herds of cows and horses grazing up here for the summer.

Here it is very common to see eagles, vultures and herds of wild goats and deer.

After days of riding in the countryside it is nice to arrive in Camprodon, a lively market town, favoured by the Catalan aristocracy in the past. A great opportunity to do some shopping and visit the local bars. The hotel is situated right in the centre and the restaurant is famous for its meat and fish dishes. The best paella you have ever eaten, a wonderful mixture of mountains and sea, meat and fish together.

DAY 6 – THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF OIX

The journey continues... we sadly leave Camprodon with its lovely squares and art nouveau buildings. Following a river we pass by the local textile factories, that have seen former days of glory, and up onto the ridges. Here we reach spectacular mountain plateaus, where the views are immense and the terrain is good for galloping. On a good day you can see vast tracts of coastline stretching out before us.

In the evening, we will arrive in the village of Oix, another charming mountain village with a magnificent castle, narrow winding streets and lovely cafes.

Here we will settle the horses for a well deserved rest after a long and rewarding day. We will go by car to the farm for another delicious diner.

DAY 7 – RETURN TO THE BASE

The peaks of the Alta Garrotxa are all around us. The air is poignant with the smell of wild herbs and Mediterranean fragrances. In the far distance we can make out our farm, our final destination of this journey.



Today the riding is lively. The strong Andalusian horses are still full of stamina. The gallops are long and steady as we ride out across the plains, dotted with small local villages, leaving the Pyrenees behind us.

Today we are happy to see the base, our base, again after 6 days of adventure and excellent riding and good company. Finally we will have a delicious farewell diner and toast our faithful

horses and new found friends and say "hasta la proxima.

DAY 8 – A GOODBYE BREAKFAST

After breakfast, transfer for Barcelona/Gerona Airport.