

Shine Valley Pack Trip, Canada

Itinerary

Day One WHITEHORSE - SHINE VALLEY

You will be met at the airport in Whitehorse and transferred to the Shine Valley Ranch. The journey to Shine Valley Ranch is about 30 minutes from Whitehorse.

Overnight in log cabins heated by a wood burning stove.



Please note that the following itinerary is subject to change due to local conditions at the time of your ride, but always with your best interests in mind.

Day Two SHINE VALLEY

After a relaxing breakfast you have a briefing from your guide, Pierre, and meet the horses. A short introductory ride to get to know your horse takes you off into the surrounding countryside. On returning to base you have a trip into Whitehorse for lunch (to your own account). There is the chance to pick up last minute provisions for the trip and then back at the ranch enjoy dinner around the campfire.

Overnight once again in the log cabins.



Day Three SHINE VALLEY - BONNYVILLE LAKE

After a good night's sleep, the morning is a hive of activity. Horses and people alike enjoy a hearty breakfast. The final preparations and packing is completed (hopefully only a stray spoon or bottle of wine is left behind) before departure into the wilderness.



This first day's ride takes about five hours to Bonnyville Lake where you will set up camp. After taking care of the horses, firewood is gathered to cook dinner. If you enjoy fly fishing, there are plenty of fish in the lake.



Day Four BONNYVILLE LAKE - IBEX MOUNTAIN

After breakfast and packing up camp you head towards Ibex Lake and enter the foothills of the mountainous region of the Yukon, where snow still lingers on the high peaks. Which pass you take depends on the weather, either on the lake shores surrounded by pine forest or the 1,800m high Marmot pass where there is the opportunity to encounter dall sheep.

Today you cover around 40kms (c. six hours in the saddle) before reaching Ibex Lake and setting up camp.



Day Five IBEX MOUNTAIN - MUD LAKE - ROSE CREEK

The morning ride takes you above the tree line towards Mud Lake, an ancient lake moulded by the glaciers. Finding some good grazing for the horses you stop for lunch and a nap on the shores of Mud Lake. Back on the trail you make your way to Rose Creek for your overnight stop.

After a long day in the saddle (six to seven hours) enjoy the evening around the camp fire.



Day Six ROSE CREEK - ROSE LAKE

The landscape changes today as the trail takes you through the alpine meadows along an old path overlooking a glacial valley. To the south east rise the mighty coastal mountains. The land is pocketed with lakes created by beaver dams.



After lunch you descend to Rose Lake, arriving into camp after about five hours in the saddle.

The evening is spent around camp, perhaps fishing in the magnificent lake or taking a swim.



Day Seven ROSE LAKE (rest day)

Today is a rest day, and awaiting the arrival of the airplane carrying supplies (and the spoon and bottle of wine that were left behind at the ranch!). Fishing, hiking and swimming if it is warm enough. A good opportunity to admire the rich diversity of flora and birdlife: eagles, ducks, geese, trumpeter swans and many other migratory birds.



Day Eight ROSE LAKE - BIG BEN

Refreshed and ready to continue, camp is dismantled. Today's five to six hour ride takes you up again through the forest to the meadows. After lunch, time is allowed for a siesta while the horses graze nearby. Leaving the alpine country, you follow the Watson river into the deep forest.



Overnight and dinner is at a trapper cabin overlooking the coastal mountains and a small lake. Pierre will describe the Yukon's trapping tradition.



Day Nine BIG BEN - WATSON RIVER

After a good rest and breakfast, you head off to the old Watson Trail that takes you mainly through the open forests. You ride for c.20kms (about four hours in the saddle today) to your campsite in an open forest along the Watson River. After dinner, roast marshmallows over the campfire as the sun sets for the night.



Day Ten WATSON RIVER - ALLIGATOR LAKE

Today you have about six hours in the saddle. There is a long ascent to the alpine meadows for a panoramic view towards the Alaskan glaciers. You might have to lead the horses by foot for a maximum of about an hour. You cross a large plateau and then descend to the glacial valley and the sandy banks of Alligator Lake, where you set up camp for the night.



In times past, the First Nations people used to meet in this place for the last hunt of the season, and it became known as 'All Together Lake'. When the first maps were drafted, the name was mis-translated as Alligator Lake. Some also say that it is named for its shape rather than its inhabitants!



Day Eleven ALLIGATOR LAKE – UPPER FISH LAKE

Another long day today (about eight hours riding), as the land opens up into generous open spaces. You follow the trail for 40kms to a high plateau and a nice camp from which to watch the sunset.

You ride past beaver dams and small rivers until you get to a high point where you see the mountains around and, at the end of the day, an upper view on Fish Lake.

For the final time, firewood is gathered and tents pitched for your last evening in the wilderness around the campfire.



Day Twelve UPPER FISH LAKE - SHINE VALLEY

After camp is taken down and packed away, you leave the far end of Fish Lake and head homeward on trails through the alpine tundra and forest along the banks of the lake (about three hours in the saddle). The sight of the lake from a different angle is an incredible sight; your journey has brought you full circle.



Back at Shine Valley, you say goodbye to your trusty steeds and drive to Whitehorse for a nice hot shower and dinner (own account). Dinner is a real treat at the best restaurant in town. Be prepared for the vast choice of cocktails and mouth-watering menu (credit cards are accepted!). Return to the cabins at Shine Valley for the night.

Day Thirteen WHITEHORSE

After breakfast there may be the chance to take a scenic light aircraft flight from Whitehorse (payable locally c. C\$155 per person), following the route you have ridden.

For those on an early flight home, there is the option to take a scenic flight the evening before.

Later transfer to the airport for your afternoon flight.

For more information contact in the saddle. Tel: 01299 272 997, Email: rides@inthesaddle.com, Internet: www.inthesaddle.com