

Gourmet Coast Trail, Catalonia, Spain

Spanish horses, gourmet food and wellness treats: experience Catalonia with all your senses! Do you enjoy the spicy taste of goat's cheese or paella with fresh seafood and vegetables? Dive into the variety of Catalonia's culinary world. Whether typical tapas, regional fish or meat, homemade olive oil or a selection of fruits - let yourself be enchanted by our gourmet cook David and his exceptional cuisine! Enjoy the different regional wines with your meal - you will surely love Garnacha and Carinena!

Allow yourself some relief after adventurous days with beach rides. Let your muscles relax with a relieving massage. Horse riding, wellness treats and gourmet cuisine at its best.

You ride across the very easternmost part of Spain, crossing green hilly landscapes, through medieval towns and onto the beaches of the Mediterranean.

Highlights of the trail include:

- * Typical Catalan breakfast, daily gourmet menus with local specialties
- * Delicious wines of the region
- * A beach ride
- * Breathtaking landscapes
- * Wellness Treats (Massage, Spa) – payable locally
- * Accommodation in historical guesthouse



Day 1

The Gourmet Coast Trail is a 7 night trail ride with 6 days riding. On this unique trail ride a gourmet cook (usually David) provides superb lunches and evening meals. And at the end of some days, you may relax with a relieving massage or in a hot tub. (NB: this itinerary would not really suit vegetarians or those with seafood allergies as only one main course is prepared at dinner. It is most suited to those who want to experiment and try new dishes).

You should be at least an intermediate rider fit enough for between 3 to 5 hours in the saddle each day. It is important that you wear boots which provide support for your ankle and which have a non-slip sole.

Please note that between June and September (inclusive) we do not ride close to the ocean's edge due to the number of people on the beach. Instead we may ride in the sand dunes and paths beside the beach in sight of the water.

The following is the proposed itinerary but please note that changes are possible due to weather and local conditions. On occasions the itinerary may run in reverse.

You are met and transferred to Mas Roca. This transfer will take c. 2 hours.

Our friend Bogi welcomes you to his home, an old mill from the 16th century which will enchant you with its unique character. (Please note that the usual accommodation is at Bogi's, but occasionally another guesthouse of a similar standard is used.) Meet your guide and your gourmet cook David, who during the week ahead will inspire you with the traditional cuisine of the Empordá region.

Delicious dishes of lamb, goat or beef are part of David's repertoire, as well as sole, gilthead and prawn. You will get to know and enjoy tapas and paellas. The tasty olive oil of the region will be part of your daily dishes, as well as homemade cheese specialties.

Day 2

You are transferred to the horse ranch Mas Alba to meet your horse for the week. Your first riding day leads you away from Mas Alba, through forests of pine and oak. In a hidden valley you pass a small creek. Sunbeams break through the deep green of a tropical forest. Shrubs of bamboo line the path and lianas and climbers surround the trees above. You are in Catalonia but it feels like Costa Rica.

At the flood plains of the river Fluvia, your chef David awaits with a glass of sparkling Catalan Cava for you to enjoy while admiring the delightfully set table full of delicacies. Ingredients such as fresh bread, Manchego, homemade goat's cheese and fruits such as figs, peaches and cherries make this a perfect lunch.

In the afternoon you continue on to ride to Bogi's place (or alternative guesthouse), where you spend a second night. The garden with its South American feel is a beautiful spot to relax! And, of course, another Gourmet dinner created by David is waiting for you.



Day 3

In the morning you ride alongside the river Fluvia that winds through the countryside and follow it towards the Gulf of Roses where the river flows into the Ocean. David awaits you with a delicious picnic set out under old cork trees. What a great place to enjoy local delicacies! With renewed energy you mount your horses once again. Amid paddy fields you reach your accommodation for the night: Usually you will overnight at Catalonia's oldest P.R.E. (Pura Rasa Espanola) Andalusian horse stud. Please note that the accommodation is basic at the stud and that bathrooms may be shared and not en-suite.

It is a treat to see the beautiful horses of the stud and the guesthouse is perfect for relaxing after a day's riding. In this wonderful atmosphere you are spoiled with delicious paella with seafood and fresh vegetables.



Day 4

In the summer months and busy holiday times, you will need to be up early to ride onto the beach by 6am (in spring/autumn it doesn't need to be so early). Soon everyone is awake as the water splashes, the sand leaps and you gallop into the sunrise. The horses play with the waves and you try not to get too wet.

Please note that the speed on the beach depends on the rivers, weather, sea, sand and waves and the pace is always with the best interests of the group in mind. It isn't always possible to canter or gallop along the water's edge.



After this great experience you enjoy a gourmet picnic in the garden of the P.R.E Andalusian horse stud. You have a great view of the gorgeous brown Andalusian horses, grazing on the luscious green grass.

After lunch, those who want to can enjoy some relaxation with a massage from our professional masseuse Cerrie Reina who is a qualified therapist for Tien Chen. Tien Chen Shiatsu is a Chinese art and has been practised there for thousands of years. Its physical effects include relaxing muscles, stimulating circulation and releasing toxins and tensions. A treatment can also be helpful in alleviating conditions such as migraines and stress. On a more subtle level,

the treatment allows the patient to become deeply relaxed with a feeling of calmness and well being. Give it a try - (payable locally).

Later you will be shown around at the stud and get to know the history of the P.R.E. Andalusian horse. There is plenty of time to look around and relax. You spend another evening at the noble stud and discuss the memories of the day while being served another wonderful gourmet dinner! What flavour experience is waiting for you today? Will David conjure up something with Boletus and Chanterelle, or create a dish with wild boar or deer? Let yourself be surprised!

Day 5

The terrain is flat this morning giving opportunities for some faster riding as you journey to Castelló with its impressive cathedral. From there you ride onto the marshes of Aiguamolls which is a refuge and hatchery to many birds. Crossing grazing land, you can pick up the pace again as you ride past fields of vines and sunflowers on your way to Perelada.

Arrive at this evening's accommodation where you spend the night! Have a picnic and later if time permits visit the glorious castle and its Bodega. Learn about Cava and have a cava tasting. Salud!

Your body needs a little more 'wellness'? If you like we can arrange a Spa and Wellness treatment at the golf hotel in Perelada. Their specialities are treatments with wine, whether a body peel, a massage or a beauty treatment: wine can be used in several ways to refresh your body. If you like more "classical" treatments, there are many offers to choose from! After another eventful day, David is waiting for you with a terrific meal sweetened by tasty almonds, hazelnuts and walnuts of the region - what a great way to end a perfect day!



Day 6

The flood plains of the River Llobregat are not only home to a variety of flowers. Mushrooms like

Chanterelle, Boletus and Borel also grow here very well. Your picnic break today includes visiting a bodega. During the wine tasting you get to know the grapes of the region and learn a little more about how their delicious taste ripens/develops.

After this tasty and interesting break you mount your horse again. Pass intricate stone terraces and age-old olive trees. This is where the regional olive oil comes from, which plays an important role in the Catalan cuisine. You arrive at the lovely village Gariguella, where you overnight. Perhaps a massage is in order today (payable locally). For dinner David creates another great menu. This time - of course - with the special olive oil and honey from the village!



Day 7

Age-old olive trees and vineyards influence the landscape in the morning as you ride closer to the coastal mountains of Rodas. The light in this wild and fascinating landscape is impressive. Admire the proud formations of the Pyrenees' summits and the deep blue colour of the Mediterranean Sea. Your Andalusian horses climb the mountains brilliantly.

In the afternoon you get to a picturesque bay of the "Wild Coast" where David is waiting for you with a mouth-watering picnic on the beach. In the evening return to your accommodation. For your last dinner David has come up with a very special menu that you won't forget in a hurry! Enjoy the delicious food and celebrate, with local cava and vino tinto, the end of the gourmet trail.



Day 8

After breakfast, transfer to Barcelona or Girona.