

Mediterranean Trail - New Year, Spain

Itinerary

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:

- * Festive supper on New Year's Eve
- * Start the New Year with a canter along the beach
- * Some faster riding through the lowlands of the River Ter
- * Riding through sand dunes and pine forests
- * Picnic on the highest point of the steep coast of the Costa Brava
- * Clatter through interesting old villages
- * Two days of riding along the beach (may not actually be in the water)

Day 1

The Mediterranean Trail is a 6 night circular trail ride with 5 days riding. You should be at least an intermediate rider fit enough for between 4 to 7 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.

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

You are collected and transferred to the horses' base at Mas Alba (on some rides you stay at Bordils, or other accommodation of equal standard). Mas Alba is a typical Catalan natural stone house dating from the 16th century. Since that time, this wonderful farm has been run by the same family. From here you overlook green meadows, forests and the horse pastures. The unique light transforms the surroundings into a picturesque painting. What a beautiful place to begin your holiday.

Sunday

Setting off from Mas Alba, you ride through oak and pine forests and head towards the south. Experience the silence, the enjoyable smell of the pines and the perfume of rosemary and thyme.



On the side of a 2000 year old Roman road you are welcomed by Joan with Cava, Vino tino and catalan specialities in the "open air restaurante Buffalo".

After lunch and fully rested you continue to ride along the banks of the river Ter. With opportunity for some nice canters you reach Peratallada, one of the most beautiful villages of the Costa Brava. The old town wall embraces the lovely natural stone houses. Mosaic paving stones on the narrow streets show marks of horse carriages from the old days.



This has been a long first day and you will be ready to relax in the comfortable accommodation and perhaps end the day with a stroll through the village.

New Year's Eve

At the start of the riding day you pass another "pearl" of the Catalan coast — Palau Sator. The ride then leads through rice fields to the medieval village of Pals with its stone houses and cobbled streets. The name Pals comes from the Latin word palus and means marsh land, as Pals was once surrounded by marshes and lakes.

You pass craftsmen and artists selling their goods and have lunch in a typical village restaurant (this is to your own account). Later ride through the sand dunes which are anchored by a Mediterranean pine forest - trotting and cantering on the soft sand to the bay of Pals. The rocks of the Islas Medes stick out of the water majestically.

Tonight you will celebrate New Year's Eve with a festive supper (€45 per person, payable locally), which will include vermouth and appetizers, a 3 course supper, followed by a New Year's cake. Plus of course, wine and Cava.

New Year's Day

Start the New Year off with a lovely canter along the beach, which should help clear any cobwebs away from your party head, following the celebrations last night. 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 gallop along the water's edge.

Then later in the morning you ride up the mountains of Montgri Massif and are rewarded at the top of the cliffs with a magnificent view overlooking the endless sea. Seabirds glide on the thermals and the lovely fragrance of rosemary, thyme and lavender are in the air as you sit down to have a delicious saddle-bag picnic.

Please note that this route may alter if it is too hot or too wet.

Later enjoy long canters as you cross the high plateau of the coastal mountains and continue through the silence of the continental sand dunes. In the bay of Roses you usually overnight in a hotel on the beach. Or alternatively your overnight stay will be in a beautiful 16th century mill.



If you stay at the renovated old Mill, please note that this has small apartments which may have a double bed on a balcony and two beds downstairs with one bathroom. This may be booked as two single rooms.

Wednesday



Today you follow the River Fluvia inland until you reach the little paradise of a friend, Bogi, who owns a house beautifully situated by the river. The garden, which has a South American atmosphere, gives both horse and rider a romantic setting to end their day. The horses enjoy the big meadow next to the house. Please note that on this night you normally stay at Bogi's, but sometimes we use another similar standard guesthouse.

Thursday

Sunlight breaks through the deep green of a tropical, jungle like area. Bamboo narrows the paths and the atmosphere reminds us of Costa Rica. The trail leads you along a river, then winds through forests, meadows and pretty villages of natural stone, then it's back to the horses' base at Mas Alba, (but you may overnight in another guesthouse nearby). Enjoy a cool drink and discuss the highlights of the week before having dinner together.



Friday

After breakfast, transfer to Barcelona or Girona.