



Equus Journeys

HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

+44 (0) 1905 388977

info@equus-journeys.com

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West Cuba Trail

CUBA

On this trail-riding holiday in Cuba, 'the Pearl of the Caribbean', ride the western provinces along sandy beaches, through fertile valleys and vast tobacco fields. Experience **Cuba on Criollo horses** riding past intriguing mogotes, Pan de Guajabon and crossing the meeting point between Sierra del Rosario and Sierra de los Organos. On this **riding holiday**, meet local Guajiro, experience evenings alive with Cuban and Creole music and food and explore Havana.

Trail Riding	 9 days/ 6 days riding	 From £2,384	
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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Ride with an owner/guide who is entertaining and has great local knowledge. This trail is accompanied by a bilingual professional equestrian guide with 20 years experience in Cuba.
- Ride through the Viñales Valley National Park, listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO and home to the unique dome-shaped mogotes
- Spend 1 ½ days in Havana, one of the most exciting cities in the Caribbean
- See the intriguing mixture of colonial and Spanish architecture that is typical throughout Cuba
- Enjoy evenings spent dancing to the rhythm of salsa and Creole music
- Immerse yourself in the hospitality and the friendliness of the Cubans
- The long transfers are done in comfortable mini-buses.

Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - HAVANA - No riding

You will arrive into Havana, the capital city of Cuba, from where you will take a taxi to your hotel near the Malecon seafront (taxi fare not included, payable locally). You will have a chance to relax a little before you meet your guide and the other riders in your group.

You will have dinner in a local Paladar (family restaurant) and spend the night in Havana - Hotel Nacional or similar, at the Malecon of Havana.

Day 2 — 2 : HAVANA – GUANABACOA – VIÑALES - 3 hours riding

After breakfast, transfer (20m) to the agro-ecological Finca Vista Hermosa in Guanabacoa, dedicated to raising sheep, goats, horses and poultry farming. After a welcome cocktail, a 3-hour ride through this Finca. Lunch in the Finca and transfer to Viñales (2:15 drive). Dinner and accommodation at the Hotel Los Jazmines** or similar depending on availability.

Day 3 — 3 : VINALES - 5 hours riding

After breakfast, you ride for about 5 hours crossing the Viñales, Palmarito and the Silencio Valleys through the National Park of Valle de Viñales declared a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. Dinner and accommodation at the Hotel Los Jazmines** or similar. Optional night out at Casa de la Trova to see a musical show.

Day 4 — 4 : VIÑALES – PINAR DEL RÍO - 5 hours riding

After breakfast, transfer to the horses for a 5-hour ride through the National Park of Viñales, crossing the Viñales, Palmarito and the Silencio Valleys. We will climb up along a bridle path to El Mirador del Valle, where we can drink a guarapo, a refreshing sugar cane juice, while we enjoy a magnificent panoramic view over tobacco plantations and the spectacular 'Mogotes', conspicuous karst mountains rising like islands from the bottom of the valley. During our ride we will stop in some of the rural communities where another guajiro will give us an explanation of the process of cigar-making. Lunch at the outside terrace of a nice restaurant. Transfer to Pinar del Río (45m). Dinner and accommodation at the Hotel Vueltabajo***.

Day 5 — 5 : PINAR DEL RIO - LA GUABINA - HAVANA - 5 hours riding

After breakfast, transfer to Finca La Guabina, 12 Km away from Pinar del Río. A 5 hours ride to discover the beautiful landscape of the Finca La Guabina with the royal palm trees, rice fields and tropical fruit plantations, like guava and pineapple. Lunch in the Finca. Option to enjoy an exhibition of the wonderful Appaloosa and Pinto horses of the farm. Transfer to Havana (2h). Dinner at a famous restaurant in El Vedado district. Tonight, we enjoy the unforgettable and famous Parisien Cabaret, with lots of music, dance, atmosphere and colors. Accommodation at Hotel Nacional***** or similar.

Day 6 — 6 : HAVANA - 3 hours riding

After breakfast, transfer to the Equestrian Centre of Havana, training centre for Dutch show-jumping horses. About 3 hours ride to discover the beautiful Lenin Natural Park. Lunch in the Equestrian center and transfer to the hotel in Havana. Free afternoon to visit Havana. Accommodation at Hotel Nacional*****.

Day 7 — 7: HAVANA - 3h riding

After breakfast, you will be driven to a finca (ranch) near to the Playas del Este beaches (c. 30min). Here, you will ride down to the beach, make sure to bring your swimsuit as this will be a perfect occasion to take a dip in the Straits of Florida! You will enjoy a fresh lunch of fish or seafood before returning to the finca by a different route.

Transfer to Havana.

Farewell dinner with a great musical show. Accommodation at the Hotel Nacional or similar.

Day 8 — 8 : HAVANA - No riding

Your morning will be dedicated to sightseeing in Havana taking in the blend of modern and historic architecture and contradictory nature of this city. Lunch is not included, so you can choose your own local spot. You will be transferred to the airport for approx. 18.00 - if this time does not suit you, you can take a taxi (at your own cost).

DATES & PRICES

We are currently updating our dates and prices they will be online soon. If you want details of this holiday, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Price details

No departure for this destination. Please contact our travel advisers for more information.

- Flights to your destination (international/domestic) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, based on two riders sharing a twin or double room.

- Group size: usually a minimum of 5 to 12 international riders, plus guides.

- There is a single supplement of approx. €220/£195/\$220 if you are in a single room (and no sharer is found). Payable locally. If you would like to specifically request a single room then this will be simply invoiced upon booking.

- Transfers: the first transfer from the airport to Havana is not included and payable locally (taxi fare). Included in the price is a transfer to Havana airport on the final day leaving at 18:00. If you require an earlier/later transfer time, this is not included in the cost, please contact us for details.

- You must have taken out medical and travel insurance BEFORE arriving into Cuba (please bring a Spanish copy). To enter Cuba, British nationals must have a visa, known as a tourist card, which allows for a stay of 30 days and is valid for a single entry. The cost for a tourist card is approx. £26.

- The weight limit for this ride is 14 st/198 lb/90 kg, please contact us if you are an experienced rider exceeding this weight

IMPORTANT:

Prices are linked to the CUC rate of exchange and may be changed, up to 2 weeks before the ride departure, if there is a significant change in the rate
Please Note

The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.

The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English-speaking horse guide

1 or 2 local equestrian guide(s) during the trail

LOGISTICS

1 vehicle and driver

1 support vehicle

INLAND TRANSPORT

Fixed airport transfer on the final day at 18:00 - outside this time it is not included

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in rural fincas, refuges or hotel (double or twin rooms)

MEALS

Full board during the ride

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras

Meals in Havana not stated in the itinerary

TRANSPORTS

International flights bookable on request

Taxi fare from the airport to the hotel on day 1

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

Small group supplement - see above for the details

Park, museum and other site entry fees

Tourist card to enter Cuba

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement only possible in Havana

Horses

The horses are cross Appaloosas, Pinto Cubano and Criollos. They are all well behaved and in good condition, they are very well suited to the climate and the terrain. All are ridden in western tack.

Guide & local team

The trip is led from Havana by Rafael. He has been a professional equestrian guide for a long time and has his family roots strongly tying him to Cuba – he is knowledgeable and will show you the best of the country. Rafael speaks Spanish, French and English.

You will also be accompanied by a second Cuban equestrian guide.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You must be comfortable and balanced at all 3 paces - walk, rising trot and gallop - in open countryside and over varied terrain. You must be an intermediate to experienced level rider.

PACE

The main pace of the ride is a walk with trots and canters only when the terrain allows.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

The teams at the different fincas, ranches, along the route are responsible for the care and feeding of the horses. They will tack and untack your horses, but your help would always be appreciated!

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

No previous trail ride experience is necessary, but it is an advantage. You do need to be balanced in the saddle and physically fit. It is recommended that if you do not ride regularly, you should get back in the saddle before the trip to once more get used to riding long distances.

Visiting a new country offers the opportunity to meet other cultures with different mentalities, therefore it is important to accept these differences and respect the local way of life.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Western saddles

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

During the trail, you will sleep in small local fincas, homestays or rural hotels, mostly composed of comfortable wooden bungalows with double or 3-bed rooms and private bathrooms.

The accommodation at Mil Cumbres is more basic - it has two double rooms with a shared bathroom, plus a dormitory style room with 6 beds which has its own bathroom. Single rooms are not possible here.

In Havana you will stay in a small hotel, unpretentious but chosen for its excellent location. You will stay in double rooms with a private bathroom.

MEALS

The produce used for meals is, for the most part, organic, varied and healthy.

Vegetarian options are available.

Cubans eat at all hours and are not used to eating fruit during meals but rather throughout the day as snacks.

Make sure you don't drink water from any source of which you are not certain that the water is potable.

CLIMATE

Cuba has a subtropical climate. The tropics have two distinct seasons: the dry (autumn/winter) and the wet (spring/summer). The average temperature is between 20°C - 30°C.

The dry season lasts from around November to May with an average temperature of around 25°C. The temperature can drop to as low as 14°C and in a country that's not built to be cold you can feel it!

The rainy season kicks off in June and lasts until October/ November. Heavy but short rain storms are typical, alongside hot temperatures – with an average of 27-28 °C.

TIPS

Tipping is quite standard in Cuba - plan to tip around £45. Certain restaurants include a 10% service charge. Tipping rests at your own discretion.

PACKING LIST

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Head

- A riding helmet is compulsory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable. You also have the option of buying protective shells to go under your hats (Ranch & Rider, Lexington Safety Products) or western hat helmets (Troxel).
- Sunhat (indispensable)
- Sunglasses with high protection lenses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun, wind or rain

Upper body

- T-shirts in cotton and long-sleeved shirts (to protect against the sun) or t-shirts made from rapid-dry material
- 1 lightweight fleece or jumper
- 1 lightweight waterproof jacket made from Gore-Tex or a similar material that is waterproof and breathable

Legs

- 2 pairs of lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- 1 change of riding trousers or jeans
- A swimming costume and a towel
- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

Hands and Feet

- 1 pair of comfortable riding or walking boots. We recommend short boots with half-chaps specifically for riding. We don't recommend taking your favorite leather boots in case they get damaged
- 1 pair of lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun whilst riding

Other useful items

- Travel bag 60-80 liters (hold luggage)
- Travel bag 25-30 liters (cabin bag)
- Double saddlebags are available on request; Only in some places saddlebags are included
- Water bottles - 2 bottles x 0.5L
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs
- Toiletries
- Protein or cereal bars for the longer stretches of riding
- Toilet paper and a lighter to burn it after use
- Swiss army knife or equivalent (in checking-in luggage!!)
- Small plastic bags for your rubbish
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- A pair of binoculars

Medical kit

Cuba's pharmacies are woefully void of pharmaceuticals, both prescription and over the counter. There are dollar only "Tourist Pharmacies", but your best bet is to bring with you whatever you may even remotely THINK you may need.

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) are clearly stated in your medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Painkillers
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhea medication
- Vitamin C tablets
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Eye drops
- Hydrating/ soothing cream
- Plasters
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..
- 10cm wide bandage
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bum bag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lip balm etc)
- A soothing cream may be useful to treat areas irritated by long hours in the saddle
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals. Your insurance policy must be in Spanish.
- Hand luggage mustn't contain any sharp objects (knives, scissors, nail file or nail scissors, etc.) and the quantity of liquid allowed per passenger is limited to 100ml per container. Check with the airline for their imposed weight limits for hand/ hold luggage.
- If you wish to travel 'light' and wash your clothes throughout the ride, please bring with you laundry detergent that is biodegradable

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please [see this page](#) .