



# Languedoc Roussillon - Pyrenees High Mountain Trail

## LANGUEDOC ROUSSILLON - CEVENNES

This **trail ride** takes you high onto the Aillou plateau deep in the Pyrenees. Ride past mountain lakes and along crystal clear streams through the wild landscapes of the high mountains, far from civilisation. The soft, green turf invites you to canter as you pass the remains of Cathare castles.

<b>Trail Riding</b>	 <b>8 days / 6 days riding</b>	 <b>From £1,248</b>	
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*Pick up the pace as you reach valleys and plateaus*



*Enjoy 360° views from the top!*



*The horses are local Meren mountain horses*

## ITINERARY

### Highlights

- Discover the Meren and Casillon horses
- Explore the small villages in the Pyrenees high altitude and the plateau of Aillou
- The chance of seeing wild chamois goats along the way, and vultures riding the thermals

### Day 1 — 1 : HOME - CAMURAC - No riding

You will fly into Toulouse airport where you will be collected and transferred to your gite. To arrive in time for the transfer, your flight needs to land before 14:00.

Once at the gite, there should be just enough time for you to meet the horses before having dinner with your guide and discussing the programme for the days to follow.

Alternatively, you can travel by train to Ax-les-Thermes from where you will be collected at 17:30.

### Day 2 — 2 : CAMURAC - BELVIS - 4-5 hours riding

Your day's ride will start out in a westerly direction, leaving Camurac behind and crossing the Boum plains. Passing Pas de l'Ours, you will be able to see the chateau of Montsegur as you climb up above the gorges of Frau.

From the peak of Langarail, you will stop for your picnic lunch and take in the magnificent views down the valley. You will ride down to the Sault plateau and canter across the lush green turf before reaching your gite for the night.

NB. Please note, this itinerary may run in reverse.

## Day 3 — 3 : BELVIS - D'OURTISSET - 4 hours riding

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There will be plenty of opportunities for canters in the morning as you cross the Sault plateau before riding down to the small valley of Rebenty. You will then climb up to the village of Rodome, from where you will set off into the high mountains, passing the summer grazing pastures at Mazubi where you may be able to see your guide's mares and foals enjoying the sunshine.

In the evening, your ride will come to an end just below the peak of Ourtisset (1,993m) where you will find your cabin in the middle of lush meadowlands. Relax and take in the stunning views from the cabin before turning in for a well-deserved night's sleep

## Day 4 — 4 : D'OURTISSET - PRADES - 5-6 hours riding

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The pace will be mixed and includes walking, trotting and cantering. There are some good opportunities for fast canters across the plateaus. You will also have to dismount and lead your horse downhill for some difficult sections in the mountains.

Leaving the cabin behind, you will take paths through the open pastures home to grazing flocks of sheep and towards the pass at Paillheres at 2,000m.

From Paillheres, you will follow a ridge offering splendid views of the Dent d'Orlu (2,222m) and the whole Ariegoise mountain chain. After summiting the crest of Pradel and having spent a magnificent day riding at altitude enjoying spectacular views, you will make your way down to your refuge in the small villages of Prades.

## Day 5 — 5 : CHIOULA - D'APPY - 4 hours riding

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After riding downhill from your cabin towards Marmare, you will then lead your horse through Caoussou Valley and make your way through several picturesque villages overhanging the hillside above the Ariège valley. The Romanesque churches in these high altitude villages are truly a remarkable sight.

Your ride will then continue following a path overlooking the Tabes massif and then in the evening you will arrive at gite at d'Appy.

## Day 6 — 6 : D'APPY - FOURCAT - MONTFERRIER - 6-7 hours riding

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The day's ride will start out on a steep path towards Mount Fourcat; you will discover and appreciate your horse's skills in dealing with this tricky terrain. You will climb, with relative speed, to the top of Mount Fourcat that stands at over 2,000m high. At the summit, the view is truly breathtaking and you will be able to see the central Pyrenees on one side and the valley on the other.

To make your way down from the peak, you will dismount and descend on foot to the 'Couloir' (corridor) where you will then mount up once more to ride towards your gite at Fremis, Montferrier. In the evening, from your gite, you will be able to enjoy stunning views of the chateau at Montsegur.

## Day 7 — 7 : MONTFERRIER - MONTSEGUR - CAMURAC - 6 hours riding

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Leaving Montferrier, you will ride through the valley at the foot of Montsegur chateau. This high citadel was the location that witnessed the end of the crusade against Cathares - with nearly 200 people burned at the stake during the conflict.

Riding down to the village of Montsegur and crossing through another pass, you will reach the hamlet of Pelail and the gorges of Frau. The gorge's limestone cliffs are a towering 400m above the valley floor and will line your path as you make your final climb back up to the Aillou plateau.

You will then enjoy some final exhilarating canters across the plateau before reaching Camurac and the end of your trail.

## Day 8 — 8 : CAMURAC - HOME - No riding

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After breakfast, depending on your travel plans, you will either be transferred to Ax-les-Thermes train station or to Toulouse airport for your flight home.

Your return flight needs to have a departure time after 15:00.

### DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE

RETURN

PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS

STATUS

27/07/2024	03/08/2024	£1,248	Guaranteed departure
24/08/2024	31/08/2024	£1,248	Open

## Price details

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- Flights or transportation to your destination (Toulouse) are not included, but can be booked on request - please contact us for rates.

- Rates are per person, and single accommodation is not possible as pack horses carry all of the equipment and tents

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 4 riders and a maximum of 12 international riders, plus guides.

- Transfers:

> If you choose to fly to Toulouse, a transfer is scheduled from the airport at 2:00 pm. Your flight home on the last day should depart after 3:00 pm to allow enough time for your transfer back to the airport. This is €85 return rate.

> If you choose to come by train, a free transfer is scheduled from the train station in Ax-les-Thermes at 5:00 pm. On your way back, please choose a train departing after 11:00 am.

- Young riders aged 14+ are welcome on this ride if they are accompanied by their parents (provided they are good enough riders).

- Riders over 80 kg / 12.5 st / 176 lbs, please contact us before booking.

- Special diet supplement: €35/£30/\$45 per person for the duration of the trip.

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

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### SUPPORT TEAM

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1 English speaking horse guide

### LOGISTICS

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1 vehicle and driver

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

### INLAND TRANSPORTS

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Transfers to and from Ax-les-Thermes train station

### ACCOMMODATION

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Simple mountain huts

2-man tents

### MEALS

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Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the final day

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Beverages and personal extras

Supplementary charge to accommodate special diets - see above

### EXTRAS

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Tips to the local team

## **INSURANCE**

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

## **EQUESTRIAN INFO**

### **Horses**

The horses are local Meren mountain horses, bred for their ability to navigate the tough mountain terrain. They will take you safely through the region. They live out high up in summer pastures as a herd before being brought into work, which gives them their sure footedness and hardiness. The horses are ridden in English saddles.

### **Guide & local team**

The owner of the horses and trail riding company - Sylvain - is local to the area and is a certified guide for both climbing and horse riding. He is a geographer and specialist in ecotourism and will share his passion of mountains, horses and outdoor sports with you.

Whilst Sylvain normally guides this ride it may be possible that another member of his team guides and he works with the logistics team.

### **Minimum riding ability**

#### **MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY**

You need to be an experienced rider who is fit enough to ride across varied terrain for several hours.

Riders over 80 kg / 12.5 st / 176 lbs, please contact us before booking.

#### **PACE**

The pace will be mixed and includes walking, trotting and cantering. There are some good opportunities for fast canters across the plateaus. You will also have to dismount and lead your horse downhill for some difficult sections in the mountains.

#### **TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

You will be expected to groom, tack and untack your own horse, as well as assist with feeding and watering.

#### **TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE**

You need to be fit. This ride is at altitude and you need to be in good physical condition as some sections have to be walked on foot. You must be able to get on and off unassisted several times a day. There are some particularly technical bits, especially at the top of Mt Fourcat, and long hours in the saddle.

Previous experience of riding a mountainous trail of several days is required. Riders who do not ride regularly will need to get back into the saddle before joining this trail. This ride is better suited to adventurous riders with a good head for heights.

#### **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

Water bottle holders are provided along with saddle bags.

We recommend our riders to wear a helmet to the correct standard and you should bring your own to ensure a proper fit

## **TRAVEL INFO**

#### **COMFORT**

Overnight accommodation will either be camping or staying in gites or shepherds refuges. Please bring your own sleeping bag and mattress.

#### **MEALS**

Picnic lunches are cold and carried in saddle bags.

Evening meals are cooked by your hosts and guides.

There will be supplement to pay if you have any specific diet (vegetarian, gluten free, etc). Please see dates and prices.

## **CLIMATE**

The region can experience different weather patterns.

In the foothills of the Ariège valley towards Tarascon and Pays de Sault the weather is mediterranean, with hot and sunny weather likely.

In the Pyrenean valleys the weather is more volatile with the possibility of storms and high temperature differences between day and night.

Rain can be possible all year round, particularly on the northwest facing slopes and snow is common above 1,000m.

## **TIPS**

In France it is customary to tip - usually this is by rounding up the price when you are satisfied with the service in a restaurant. You may wish to leave a tip with the guide who can split it amongst all members of the team.

## **PACKING LIST**

Please keep in mind this is an altitude trail and the weather can be unpredictable - anything from hot sunshine to hail and even snow. Please be prepared and bring appropriate clothing and gear.

### Head

- Equus Journeys strongly recommend that you wear a riding helmet and that you take your own to ensure a correct fit.
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana for protecting your neck and face from the sun and dust

### Upper body

- Thermals in case of cold weather
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun, which can be fierce at altitude
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm polar fleece or equivalent (plus a spare in case one gets wet)
- Waterproof jacket - rain can be difficult to predict and it's better to be prepared. In the mountains the weather can change quickly

### Legs

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Waterproof over trousers
- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)
- Thermals (can also be used as nightwear)

### Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Lightweight shoes or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

### Nightwear

- Sleeping bag with a minimum comfort rating of minus 5 celsius - you may find minus 8 - minus 10 more comfortable.
- Sleeping bag liner adds an extra layer - either cotton, fleece or silk
- Self inflating mattress such as Thermarest for comfort
- Pyjamas or tracksuits or thermals for sleeping in

### Other useful items

- Towels (camping towels pack lighter and dry quicker)
- Swimsuit - for swimming/bathing in rivers
- Small backpack for accessing items required during the day (carried by support crew)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Headtorch or small torch for moving around at night - bring spare batteries and bulbs

- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Wet Wipes or equivalent (for when washing facilities aren't available)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

#### In your luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant unless they are less than 100ml and all bottles can fit in a small, clear, plastic ziplock bag.
- Swiss army knife or equivalent

#### In your hand luggage

- Any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Your riding hat

#### Medical kit

- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Re-hydration sachets
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

#### Our Recommendations

- Please don't take a hard sided suitcase. Your luggage should be soft sided with a capacity of 60-80 litres. We recommend taking a backpack or similar. The luggage limit on the ride is 15kg per person.
- 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, lipbalm etc)
- 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!
- Please take a copy of your insurance policy and passport with you

## 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](#) .