



New Year on Faial Island

AZORES

This New Year, **explore Faial Island on horseback**, a remote and tranquil isle in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. On this lodge-based holiday, first **ride trails** through the island's lush green meadows before exploring the more lunar landscapes of the volcanic area around Capelinhos. This idyllic holiday ends with a wonderful **New Year's eve dinner** complete with Portuguese wine to welcome 2020!

Trail Riding	8 days / 5 riding days	From £1,420		Open to non-riders
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Discover this remote island in the saddle



Set out on a relaxing riding holiday



Stay in beautiful, modern accommodation

ITINERARY

Highlights

- Enjoy comfortable accommodation in picturesque surroundings
- A New Year's dinner party to give 2019 a proper send-off!
- Ride full Lusitano and Lusitanian /Portuguese crosses through beautiful and occasionally lunar countryside
- Enjoy varied landscapes with a combination of volcanoes and coast line trails

Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE- LISBON -HORTA - No Riding

Patio Lodge

You will be met at the Horta airport on Faial Island by a member of our team. We recommend you spend the night before in Lisbon and take the 8:00 am flight the following day. We can take care of you reservations in Lisbon upon request.

A 30 minute transfer from the airport will bring you to Cedros where you will be welcomed at the Patio lodge. After a quick lunch you will get to meet the horses and settle into your room.

This trip sets the Patio Lodge as its base, each day you will set out from the lodge in a different direction to fully explore Faial Island.

Day 2 — 2 : PATIO LODGE - WHALING HARBOURS - PATIO LODGE - 4 to 5 hours

Patio Lodge

Before your first day in the saddle, you will learn a lot about whales and their history on the island of Faial during the briefing. You will then get to know Explore the coastal areas of Faial Island in the saddle. Enjoy a trail on black sand beaches near Capelinhos The green, lush scenery of Faial Island in the Azores your horse and your equipment for the week. The ride start on gently rising meadow paths, and becomes more active with short trots and

canters. You reach a whale watching point. With a little luck and when the sea is calm, riders can see whales and dolphins. You then make your way back to the lodge along the steep coast, where lunch awaits. In the afternoon you set out on horseback again to reach two small whaling harbours. If the weather is good, you can even go for a swim! The horses stay overnight in a small hamlet, while riders are driven back to the lodge.

Day 3 — 3 : LIGHTHOUSE TRAIL AND VISIT OF HORTA - 3 hours

 Patio Lodge

Today you can learn about the impact of the 1998 earthquake on Faial. You set out early on today's morning trail, that begins along the coast through blue hydrangea hedges, to the island's former lighthouse, which was destroyed in the earthquake. The nearby village still has a crumbling church that testifies to the power of the earthquake. Saddlebag picnic for lunch, before you drive to the town of Horta. You will find enough time to discover this colourful and cosmopolitan port town. Maybe a gin and tonic in the famous Peter Café Sport Bar? Riders are transferred back to the lodge in the evening for dinner.

Day 4 — 4 : CALDEIRA OF FAIAL - 5-6 hours

 Patio Lodge

Another early start, as you ride today to one of the island's top highlights: Faial's crater, the Caldeira, standing at an altitude of 1,000m. A real challenge for riders and horses. It is likely that you will meet farmers on the way to their cows, and pass Heather trees looking like giant broccoli! You slowly ride your way up to the crater rim of Faial via switchback tracks - the crater is 400m deep and 2,500m wide and is a fairly impressive sight. Those who would like to extend their stay on Faial Island can descend into the depths of the crater with a nature park guide (please ask us for possible extensions and activities). After a saddlebag picnic lunch, you ride through the wild and remote landscape of the high mountains. The trail leads you over farm roads down to a small volcano which inner crater you can reach on foot through a small tunnel - a very special experience! After a full day in the saddle, you arrive at the Jungle Camp in the late afternoon, where the horses stay overnight while riders are taken back to the lodge.

Day 5 — 5 : FAJA BAY - 4 hours riding

 Patio Lodge

Faja-Bay is a hidden bay where the islanders have grown wine and fruit for 500 years. On the way there you pass small adegas, wine houses with their vineyards. Riding through dense jungle-like forest, you reach the black lava beach of Fajã Bay. A magical, romantic world of its own. Small lava stone houses, well-tended gardens and a wild sea await us. Our saddlebag picnic area is right by the sea. A wonderful canter takes us back to the jungle camp in the afternoon. Today, like every evening, there is a thematic dinner allowing guests to try the tasty cuisine of the Azores.

Day 6 — 6 : CAPELINHOS - 4-5 hours riding

 Patio Lodge

Today the trail takes you through a mystical jungle landscape. Enjoy fantastic canters with beautiful ocean views. Extensive vineyards, but also small adegas pave the way. Via narrow tracks close to the shore, you reach another top highlight of the Azores, the volcano of Capelinhos, that erupted in 1957. Desert-like solitude awaits. Hidden under the buried lighthouse is the modern interpretation center that reports on the volcanism of the Azores and the eruption of the volcano. We combine a saddlebag picnic with a visit to this attraction. Riding over parts of the volcano, we reach the Jungle Camp in the late afternoon. The transfer back to the lodge is already waiting there.

Day 7 — 7 : CANYON TRAIL - 4 to 5 hours

 Patio Lodge

Today is the last day of your trail riding holiday in the Azores. You cross the island from the dry south to the green north, enjoying magnificent views over terraced pastures down to the blue ocean. Some nice canters lead to the highest village on the island, Ribeira Funda. A typical Azorean picnic is waiting for the group directly above the 300m deep canyon. In the afternoon the route takes you along yam fields through a small, wild and romantic valley after 6 days of riding back to the Lodge. A big farewell dinner with wine tasting in the lodge end a lovely trail riding week.

Day 8 — 8 : HORTA-LISBON-UK - No Riding

After having an early breakfast at the island bakery with fresh bread, cheese and coffee, you will fly out to Lisbon. We recommend booking the earliest flight possible to Lisbon so you can catch your connecting flight back to the UK.

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.

- International flights are not included

- This ride is very flexible - please enquire about longer or shorter stays.

- For this special New Year ride to be confirmed there needs to be a minimum of 1 rider per group. The group maximum is usually 9 riders, plus your guide.

- Non-riders are welcome and benefit from a reduced rate. Please contact us for a personalised quotation to include additional activities.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider, you will be charged a single room supplement. In 2021/2022, the single supplement is €228/\$280/£200 for this ride.

- There is a rider weight limit of 95kgs/ 15stone/ 209 lbs - if you weigh more than 95kg and wish to ride, please contact us

- PLEASE NOTE: the wait for a transfer from Lisbon to Faial island can be lengthy outside of the summer season. Because of this, we may suggest an overnight stay in Lisbon to give you the opportunity to explore the city

- If you wish to extend your journey and explore Lisbon, contact us for accommodation tips in the heart of Lisbon

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

LOGISTICS

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle per rider

1 vehicle and driver

INLAND TRANSPORTS

Airport transfers

ACCOMMODATION

Double rooms in guest houses

MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on the final day (day 8)

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Saddle bags

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extras - outside of those served at meals

TRANSPORT

International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team

Park, museum and other tourist site fees

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.

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement. See above for more details

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

A herd of gentle and well-schooled pure Lusitanos or Lusitano-Cruzado Portuguese cross horses await you on Faial Island. They spend the year turned out on the prairies and are worked with daily. Their average height is 15.2hh and they can carry a maximum rider weight of 95kg/ 15stone/ 209 lbs.

Guide & local team

Victor and Anja stumbled across this beautiful little island years ago, and decided to make a life for themselves here. They bought an old Quinta, renovated it beautifully and soon added rooms to the structure. They are German and speak perfect English and Portuguese. Victor is occasionally seen leading the trails, while Anja looks after the horses and manages the facilities.

Diogo is native to the Island and has trained in Lisbon. He is a competent horseman and a great lead guide. He's always happy to take you around his island and tell you about its secrets. He speaks Portuguese and English.

Carla will be looking after your meals and make sure you get a taste of the traditional Azorean cuisine.

Several interns complete the team in the summer, helping out at the stables and as back up guides.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You should be able to ride in all paces and in all kinds of terrain. The terrain is quite mountainous due to the volcanic nature of the island and you should have a steady seat, but the ride is not overly technical.

There is a rider weight limit of 95kgs/ 15stone/ 209 lbs - if you weigh more than 95kg and wish to ride, please contact us

PACE

The riding is relaxed with all three paces (walk, trot, canter). Due to the mountainous nature of the terrain, most of the ride is at a walk but faster paces will be had whenever suitable.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Each rider grooms and tacks their own horse and helps the team to distribute water and food to the horses.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

A good level of fitness and endurance is required as you will spend several hours in the saddle each day.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

Prestige trail saddles, saddlebags and Australian raincoats.

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

We recommend waterproof trekking boots, wind and waterproof jacket and trousers and a small refillable water bottle.

With Azorean airline SATA riding equipment is free of charge up to 10 kg.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

You will stay in the comfortable Patio Lodge built on the property in 2016. Cosy and inviting to come back to after a day's riding, you will be able to enjoy the accommodation's terrace and garden. The rooms are double or twin. You can also request a single room at an extra charge. In 2020, the Lodge also added a lovely "Tiny House" to their offer, perfect for couples looking for a little more intimacy.

Please note the rooms have no fans or AC in keeping with their sustainable policy.

There is a small fitness centre with a pool.

There is also a cosy cottage perfect for families and groups of friends that can sleep up to 4 (at a supplementary cost). If all accommodation options at the lodge are fully booked at the time of your booking, you will be given the option to stay at a local guesthouse instead.

MEALS

Dinner is typically Azorean cuisine with water and wine included.

Lunchtime is either a picnic or a light lunch in a local bar (with selected drinks).

CLIMATE

The Azores have a maritime climate with mild temperatures ranging from 16°C (60°F) in winter to a comfortable 26°C (79°F) in summer. The sea is warmed by the Gulf Stream and sea temperature varies from 14°C to 22°C. On average there is about three to four hours of sunshine a day in winter and seven to eight in summer. Rainfall is distributed around the year, but is heavier and more frequent in winter. Characteristic for the Azores is the wide variety of weather conditions within a short period; a single day can be windy and calm, sunny and showery in any combination! A typical and true remark is that if you don't like the weather, you just have to wait 10 minutes!

TIPS

Tipping is not compulsory but will be very much appreciated if you enjoy the services provided by the team. Tipping is totally at your discretion but we recommend €50 (€30 for the trail guide and €20 for the lodge team)

PACKING LIST

Head

- Helmets are mandatory and you should bring your own. There are many lightweight options available nowadays
- Sunhat for when not riding
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

Upper body

- Thermals (long or short sleeved)
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain at any time of year and the evenings can be particularly cold. Australian raincoats can be rented at an additional fee directly to the lodge.

Legs

- 2 Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub
- Thermals
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Waterproof over trousers

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend short boots with half chaps but you may wish to take long chaps as an extra layer against inclement weather. We don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged
- Waterproof shoes/boots can be useful for abundant dew in the mornings or when it rains
- Trainers and/or hiking shoes for the other activities you may choose to do
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, cold or rain whilst riding. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful

Other useful items

- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Water bottle (2 litres or 2 x 1 litre)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

Medical kit

- Any medication you regularly take
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing DEET
- 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
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Miscellaneous

- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (passport, 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!
- You should also bring a copy of your passport/insurance in case you lose your documents. You can also save a copy into your mobile phone.

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](#) .