



## Epona - Special Rafael Soto week

### SPAIN

Improve your dressage skills with Olympic medallist and Spanish team trainer **Rafael Soto**. Train with the team at Epona on real schoolmasters before training under the supervision of this international champion. An excellent **dressage programme** for all of those riders looking to take their skills to the next level.

<b>Dressage stays</b>	<b>8 days/ 6 days riding</b>	<b>From £2,452</b>		Open to non-riders
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## ITINERARY

### Highlights

- Learn from one of the best dressage trainers in Europe and take your riding skills to the next level
- Practice on beautiful and well-behaved schoolmasters, most of them Andalusians
- Stay in a charming 4 star hotel in the nearby town of Carmona
- The riding centre is BHS approved so you can be assured of the quality of horses and tuition
- Visit the renowned Royal School of Equestrian Art in Jerez
- Accompanying non-riders are welcome - for golf lovers, there is one of the best courses in Europe only a 20 minutes drive from the Hacienda

### Day 1 — 1 : SEVILLE - CARMONA

Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

Arriving into Seville (flight not included). You will be met by your taxi driver and transferred to your hotel in Carmona, just 20 minutes away by car. The cost of this transfer is not included, and you may choose the option of a free transfer from the train station at 4:30 pm.

You will be shown to your room and depending on the your arrival time - and mood -, you may choose to take a dip in the outdoor swimming pool, lounge out on the patio or have a classic Spanish siesta!

Carmona is a remarkable city, renowned for its history visible from its varied styles of architecture influenced by the people who have lived and occupied the city throughout the ages.

In the evening, you will have your first taste of Sevillian and Andalusian cuisine, which has many delicious traditional dishes. You will have dinner with your host and over the course of the meal, Fernando will explain the itinerary for the rest of your week

You will spend the night at the Alcazar de la Reina hotel.

## Day 2 — 2 : DRESSAGE INSTRUCTION

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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

After breakfast, Fernando will be waiting to collect you from the hotel and drive you to the hacienda where your dressage training will begin.


Today, you will get 2 semi-private dressage lessons from Epona's highly skilled instructors, focusing on your weaknesses and any aspect of your riding you would like to improve. During your stay, you will also get two lessons on the lunge line to improve your seat and posture - the days for these lessons will be decided once you're there.

After your lesson, why not relax by the pool or in the lovely gardens! You are also more than welcome to watch the other riders in the arena.

In the afternoon, after the last lesson, you will be taken to Carmona for your dinner (to your own account) and night.

## Day 3 — 3 : JEREZ

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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

In the morning, at 9:00 a.m you will head out to visit the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art to see the famous Andalusian Stallions performing a show. Renowned throughout the world for their breath-taking exhibitions on 'How the Andalusian horses dance', these shows are a real delight as the horses perform intricate and demanding movements with effortless grace and control. Entry for the show is €28 - payable locally.

Later you will be taken back to Epona for a late lunch and some afternoon lessons.

Transfer back to Carmona for dinner.

## Day 4 — 4 : DRESSAGE INSTRUCTION

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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

Today, you get two semi-private dressage lessons. This is the opportunity to try out different horses and find the perfect match.

## Day 5 — 5 : DRESSAGE INSTRUCTION


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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

One semi-private lesson in the morning, followed by a traditional "Paella" for lunch. After a relaxing siesta, you will be taken to Seville for a visit to the tack shop, and then free time to explore the city or even take a carriage drive.

## Day 6 — 6 : DRESSAGE INSTRUCTION


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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

Today is your opportunity to show Rafael Soto what you have learned or practised during the first four days. You get two private dressage lessons with the Spanish team trainer (45 min each). You are also welcome to watch the other lessons as they take place.

## Day 7 — 7 : EPONA - SEVILLE

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 Alcazar de la Reina Hotel

You finish this great riding clinic with two more lessons with Rafael Soto. This is your chance to ask your last questions and clear any doubts you still may have. After the riding clinic is over, the riders will participate in a "diploma ceremony" accompanied by a glass of Cava with Rafael and the other instructors.

## Day 8 — 8 - CARMONA - SEVILLE

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After breakfast, you are taken to Seville for your flight home. Transfers from the hotel to the airport will start at 8:00 am and the last transfer will be at 11:00 am.

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
03/11/2024	10/11/2024	£2,452	Full
01/12/2024	08/12/2024	£2,452	Guaranteed departure

## Price details

PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE FLIGHTS and are for a stay of 8 days including 6 days riding, on the basis of an intensive dressage course with training from Rafael Soto, price per person in a standard double room, half-board, transfers included from the train station at set times

- Groups are made of 2-5 riders max. Lessons taught in English or Spanish. There are usually no more than two riders in a lesson, some are private lessons.

- Riders travelling alone have the option of paying a single room supplement - approx. £250/€300/\$305 in 2023 or €320/£280/\$340 in 2024. However, it is possible to share your room if you prefer. If you end up in a single room, the supplement is applicable.

- Pick-up transfers are available from Santa Justa train station at a set time (4:30 pm). For pick-ups at the airport, a taxi driver can be booked for meeting on arrival. The cost to the hotel in Carmona is €50-55

- Extra and to be paid locally:

1h group lesson: or €60 in 2023, €65 (2024)

1 hour semi-private group: €70 in 2023, €85 (2024)

45 min Individual courses: €85 in 2023, €90 (2024)

High school classes with Andalusian schoolmaster: €95 in 2023, €100 (2024)

Trail 1 hour: €50 in 2023, €55 (2024)

- Rate for non-riders: £820/€970/\$995 (2023) or €995/£865/\$1060 (2024)

Activities for non-riders:

- Guitar lessons (on request)

- Bike (on request)

- Land Rover tour of the Donana (on request)

- Transfer to the beach - €35 (if space available)

- Flamenco Show - €37 (if space available)

- Transfer to Jerez - €27 (if space available)

- Flamenco classes - €150

- Golf

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 teacher

### INLAND TRANSPORT

Pick up from the train station at 4.30 pm and return at the end of your stay

### ACCOMMODATION

Double room in hotel standard 4\*

### MEALS

Half board from breakfast day 2 to breakfast day 7

Dinner on day 1 is included in the price

## Price doesn't include

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### MEALS

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Half board basis. Dinners on day 2 to day 7 are not included  
Beverages and personal extras

### TRANSPORT

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Airport transfers  
International flights that we can book for you upon request

### EXTRAS

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Tips to the local team

### INSURANCE

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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

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### ACCOMMODATION

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Single room supplement

## EQUESTRIAN INFO

## Horses

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A stable of 40 horses of all levels. Most are Pure Bred Spanish horses, but you will also be able to find some Andalusians and Andalusian crosses. During this week, the instructor will pair riders with Pure Bred Spanish-Andalusian stallions and geldings. Just a few of the horses will be cross Andalusians. Instructors will match you to the horse that suits you best depending on your level, your approach and your temperament.

## Guide & local team

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Rafael Soto, Olympic medallist in dressage, needs no introduction. Now retired from the competition, he dedicates his time to teaching and training.

Fernando runs the courses at the centre and he will come to collect you in the mornings to drive you to the hacienda for your lessons.

Viviane and Catalina, his daughters, are accomplished dressage riders and will be your instructors throughout your stay. All Epona instructors are qualified by the British Horse Society, Association of British Riding Schools and the Spanish Equestrian Federation which means that they are trained to always have the horse and rider's safety at heart. Viviane studied at the renowned Andalusian school in Jerez. Both Viviane and Catalina speak English and Spanish.

They also train their dressage horses themselves and are happy to answer any of your questions during the daily training sessions!

## Minimum riding ability

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### MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

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A prior knowledge of dressage is ideal to get the most out of these lessons. Yet, if you are an intermediate rider your instructors will find you a horse to match your abilities. Equally important is the openness to learn new ways of doing things. The goal at Epona is that you see a huge improvement in your riding but also have fun. You must be competent at walk, trot and canter.

Rider weight limit: 80 kg. Riders over the limit please contact us.

### PACE

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The programme includes lessons in the morning and afternoon, plus some lunge sessions which are excellent for improving seat, balance and posture. You will hopefully get to experience passage, piaffe and flying changes.

### TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

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The grooms will tack and untack your horse. However, you are welcome to assist in untaking and washing off the horses.

## **TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE**

There are no requirements, but you must be in good physical condition and have a good basic knowledge of dressage to get the most out of the lessons.

## **EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT**

Helmets are obligatory and we strongly recommend bringing your own.

You will be provided with:

Dressage saddle

Simple and double bridles or bits

Blunt spurs

Dressage aids.

## **TRAVEL INFO**

### **COMFORT**

You will stay in a charming 4 star hotel in the heart of Carmona, in double or twin rooms. There are ensuite bathrooms and towels are provided. The hotel has a restaurant, a tapas bar and an Irish bar, as well as a swimming pool and patio areas. In the town of Carmona there are many restaurants to choose from - simple tapas to silver service - or you can choose to eat at the hotel or use their room service.

During the day, at the riding centres hacienda, there is a swimming pool (towels will be provided), a relaxing lounge and outdoor seating areas. You will have lunch in their dining room each day.

Please note: Epona has good Wi-fi service, however at the hotel the connection is limited.

### **MEALS**

Breakfast is continental and dinner is had all together, buffet style, at the hacienda. Apart from the first evening where you will enjoy a buffet dinner with your host Fernando, dinners are not included. You may choose to eat in the restaurant at the hotel or in local restaurants.

### **CLIMATE**

Situated in southern Spain, not far from the African continent, Seville enjoys a Mediterranean climate. Being set inland from the sea, in the vast Guadalquivir plain, this allows for relatively mild and clement weather all year long.

The average yearly temperature is around 19.2 °C.

Seville's summers can be long and scorching with average temperatures often over 25 °C from May to October; with a record high of 46.6 °C. The temperatures peak between June and September with the temperature routinely reaching/ or topping 30 °C.

### **TIPS**

It is customary to leave a tip in restaurants in Spain. Around 10% of the bill is the standard, although it is often include – so do check. Tipping both in restaurants and to the team at the hacienda rests at your discretion.

### **PACKING LIST**

In Spring, Autumn and especially in the summer months, it can get very hot, so to avoid feeling sweaty and sticky all the time, try to choose natural fabrics, especially cotton. Dress at Epona is very casual, even for the visits, jeans and T-shirts or a summery dress, are fine. For emergencies at the hotel there is a laundry service.

Head

- Helmets are mandatory in Spain and at Epona this is enforced. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamicell, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.

- Sunhat: cap for when not riding

- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding

## Upper Body

Weather can change so we recommend bringing tops you can wear in layers, T-shirts, sweatshirts and vests etc.

- Half or long-sleeved cotton shirts (to provide protection from the sun) or T-shirt in a quick-drying material
- A lightweight fleece or jumper
- A swimsuit
- If coming in winter, autumn or spring, a light shower jacket (the kind you can fold up into a little ball)

## Legs

- 2 pairs of jodhpurs or riding trousers
- 1 pair of casual trousers (tracksuit bottoms, leggings or jeans)
- Cotton or synthetic underwear (non-irritant)

## Hands and feet

- Short jodhpur boots and half chaps are the best option as they are much cooler and easier to transport, but if you are used to riding in your long boots and want to wear them it is fine.
- Lightweight shoes, sandals or trainers for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves - as you will be riding the horse on the bit requiring a good contact along with the warmer conditions, blisters can develop which will definitely spoil your enjoyment of the riding for the rest of the week.

## Other useful items

- Toiletries
- Small medical kit
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor (at least 30+)
- Insect repellent
- Any medication you regularly take
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc..

## General information

- The airline allows only one bag to be checked-in per passenger. Make sure it weighs no more than 20kg; if it exceeds this weight, you will have to pay excess luggage fees at check-in
- Hand luggage is limited to 7kg (measuring 56 cm x 45 cm x 25 cm), it 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.

## In your hold luggage

- Any liquids, such as shampoo, moisturiser, deodorant over 100ml and all bottles can be decanted into small, clear, plastic ziplock bags. We recommend biodegradable washing products where possible.
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- In your hand luggage carry any valuables, such as your camera, ipod, ipad etc.
- Travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes is highly recommended - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!

## 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](#) .