



The Benasque Valley trail

SPAIN

Pristine mountain lakes, untouched alpine meadows and the stunning scenery of the Spanish Pyrenees all await on this **centre-based riding holiday**. The Benasque Valley is one of the most beautiful valleys of this remote mountain range, surrounded by many of the most well-known **peaks of the Pyrenees** including the mighty Aneto, standing at 3404 m. Based out of a comfortable hotel, this equestrian holiday is a fantastic option for **intermediate to advanced riders** looking for a scenic riding adventure, without sacrificing levels of comfort.

Centre based holidays	8 days (6 days riding)	From £1,778	
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Experience the untouched meadows of the Pyrenees



Enjoy the pristine mountain views of the Pyrenees



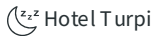
Ride along the Spanish Pyrenees on an adventurous holiday

ITINERARY

Highlights

- Explore a truly gorgeous part of the Spanish Pyrenees on horseback, with landscapes reminiscent of the Rocky Mountains!
- Stay in a comfortable rural hotel, without having to unpack and repack every day.
- Discover beautiful medieval villages such as Ansils, Cerler or Sahún and learn about their history and architecture.
- Over 100 miles (160 km) of unspoiled adventure to reconnect with nature and the great outdoors.

Day 1 — 1: ARRIVAL TO BARCELONA - ANCILES



Fly to Barcelona in Spain. Transfer or self-drive to Anciles (approx. 3hrs) where you will meet your guide and the rest of your fellow companions. Settle in your hotel for the night, ready for your first day in the saddle tomorrow.

Please note that flights are not included but can be booked for you upon request. Transfers are also not included but can also be arranged for an extra cost – see dates and prices.


Day 2 — 2: ANCILES – CERLES - ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding



Today is your first day on horseback in the Benasque Valley. You will be transferred to the stables in Anciles where you will meet the horses and get ready for the ride. Your morning horseback adventures take you through a forest of ash trees, birches, oaks, red pines, wild cherry trees... before you reach the village of Cerler. Standing at 1540m, this is the highest village in the Pyrenees. In the afternoon the scenery changes slightly and black pines and fir trees replace deciduous trees. In this high mountain environment you could meet the rare wood grouse and endangered species such as the

bearded vulture. You arrive at an alpine meadow at 2000m with beautiful sweeping views before being transferred by car to your hotel. Your horses stay there for the night.

Day 3 — 3 : ANCILES – EL SOLANO – ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding

 Hotel Turpi

“El Solano” (“sunny area”) in the southern part of the valley is your destination today. You head up a ski slope until you can see the southern side of the Aneto (3404m), the highest peak in the Pyrenees, and the Maladeta massif. Carefully lead your horses down a scree path – the landscape is truly spectacular, and you will see how glaciers chiselled and eroded the mountains over the years, creating the Benasque valley millions of years ago! From there you change direction and the massif of Turbón is now ahead. Before you end your ride today, you will cross a Roman bridge and the first villages of the Solano: Liri and Ramastué, two small towns with Roman churches.


Day 4 — 4 : ANCILES – CERLES - ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding

 Hotel Turpi

Ready for another day on horseback in the Pyrenees! Today you will discover different villages and the unique architecture of the Benasque valley, riding along traditional tracks linking the villages.


You cross the Esera river and then have a chance to witness the best Romanic hermitage of the valley - Virgen de la Gracia. This Lombard-style building, whose construction originated in Lombardy, Italy, was built in the 12th century and rose up to shelter the pilgrims on the Camino to Santiago de Compostela. This is an area with a rich history.

Day 5 — 5 : ANCILES – BARBARISA LAKE - ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding

 Hotel Turpi

El Collado de Sahún is a mountain pass standing at 2025m. It connects two valleys of the Pyrenees, Benasque and Plan. In the midst of a great alpine meadow you can enjoy the silence, breath the fresh mountain air and take in the incredible landscapes all around. A great surprise awaits: two magnificent waterfalls into Barbarisa lake where you can rest and cool off. You then follow a long narrow path that leads to Sahún, which is known for its traditional passage of fire torches "Las Fallas" (celebrating the summer solstice as a pre-Christian festivity). At the end of the day you cross the Esera river again to reach Anciles.

Day 6 — 6 : ANCILES – BENASQUE - ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding

 Hotel Turpi

Today's ride is to the village of Benasque which gives the valley its name. After a few miles you will find remains from the civil war. Within the Benasque valley there are several other valleys created by glaciers 40 million years ago. One of them is the Estos valley. Within this valley, farmers drive their cattle from the high meadows, to their winter or summer pastures (a process called the transhumance). The cattle graze freely in large areas of meadows and forests bathed by the river Estos. The peak of El Perdiguero, one of the most beautiful and unknown in the Pyrenees (3222m) makes for a stunning background as you follow horseback trails through the Estos valley.

Day 7 — 7 : ANCILES – MALADETA - ANCILES - 5-6 hours riding

 Hotel Turpi

Your final day in the saddle. You ride to the bottom of the valley under the massif of the Maladeta, the highest range of the Pyrenees with the spectacular summit of Aneto always in sight. You then follow the trail to Portillon de Benasque at 2444m and the gateway to France. This is one of the most iconic places in the valley, renowned for its beauty and history - for many years and under extreme conditions, the inhabitants of the Benasque valley used the portillon to trade with the French village of Luchon. Continue your trail ride through the heart of the Natural Park of Postes Maladeta. Transfer back to your hotel for one last night with your fellow riders.

Day 8 — 8 : DEPARTURE

Departure after breakfast and transfer to the airport for those who require it. Please remember that transfers to Barcelona or Toulouse are around 3hrs in duration, so please book a flight departing in the early afternoon at the earliest.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
14/07/2024	21/07/2024	£1,778	Guaranteed departure
28/07/2024	04/08/2024	£1,778	Open
01/09/2024	08/09/2024	£1,778	Guaranteed departure
22/09/2024	29/09/2024	£1,778	Open
06/10/2024	13/10/2024	£1,778	Open

Price details

- Flights or transportation to your destination (Barcelona or Toulouse) 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 during the ride.

- Groups are composed of a minimum of 2 riders and a maximum of 8 international riders, plus guides (except in 28th of July min. 4 riders).

- Please note: the departure on the 28th of July will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €600/£520/\$670 per person. Once the group has reached 4 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

- If you sign up to the ride as a solo rider and there are no other riders likely to share your room, you will be charged a single room supplement of approx. €180/£170/\$195. You will then be reimbursed if a sharer is found for you at a later date.

- Transfers are not included. The cost starts from €220 per person based on a minimum of 2 riders (pick up from Barcelona airport 16:00, drop off around 14:00) - payable locally with cash or card. Alternatively an option is to rent a car and make your own way to the Benasque Valley.

- Rider weight limit: 95 kg / 210 lbs / 15 st

- Accompanied minors are welcome from 12 yo, provided they match the riding requirements.

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

LOGISTIC

1 horse equipped with saddle and bridle

1 vehicle and driver to drive you back to the hotel in evening

ACCOMMODATION

Double or twin room in a hotel (standard 2**)

MEALS

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

Price doesn't include

MEALS

Beverages and personal extra

TRANSPORT

International flights

EXTRA

Tips to the local team

EXTRAS

Small group supplement - see above for the details

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 - see dates and prices

TRANSPORT

Airport transfers - see dates and prices

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

Your guide Alvar owns a stable of around 17 horses, used for riding lessons in the low season. Most of them are Spanish (Andalusians) or Spanish crosses (15-16hh). They are kept out all year-round and are very well-used to the area's mountainous environment.

Rider weight limit: 95kg / 210 lbs / 15 st

Guide & local team

Your guides are Àlvar and Raúl. They are friendly guides with an open personality and have been operating rides in the Benasque valley for the past 6 years. They know the local area and its history extremely well.

Raúl describes himself as "in love with the equestrian world and the natural environment" - finding his ideal profession in the world of horseback travel. He has also designed and enjoyed trails all over Spain including Barcelona and Alt Camp, Menorca, the Sierra de Guara, Camino de Santiago...

Àlvar worked as a geographer before become a certified trail guide, and loves to share his passion for horses and nature. He has also trained racehorses in Ireland and guided in Iceland, before founding the stables in the Benasque Valley.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider, capable of riding at all paces in the outdoors, over steep and technical paths. Previous trail riding experience is recommended.

Rider weight limit: 95kg / 210 lbs / 15 st

PACE

The main pace is the walk, with trots and canters possible when the terrain allows it. Some of the riding is across varied terrain so you need to be secure in the saddle. There are some technical paths and steep hills where you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot (please make sure to wear appropriate footwear). The horses are sure-footed, make sure to trust their judgement!

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

The horses will be tacked and untacked for you each day.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should have experience riding outdoors on trails and be confident riding in open spaces. You need to be fit enough for this trail and cope with up to 6 hours in the saddle. On some occasions you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot over steep hills and rocky terrain so you must be in good physical condition.

After each ride, the horses will stay put for the night whilst the riders will be transferred back to the hotel (max distance 27 km). You will rejoin with the horses in the morning and pick up the trail where you left off.

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English tack (endurance-style).

Saddlebags are provided.

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. Some helmets available on location.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

This is a centre-based riding holiday, meaning that you will be based at the same hotel throughout the ride. Hotel Turpi is a lovely rural hotel (standard 2*) set in a remote location, at the bottom of the valley overlooking a mountain stream. The rooms are simple but clean and comfortable.

Due to the remote location of the hotel, there is no mobile reception, but the Wi-Fi will allow you to make phone calls, if necessary.

MEALS

Meals are hearty and inspired by Mediterranean or mountain tradition cooking, with delicious locally sourced meats.

Breakfast at the hotel.

Your picnic will be carried in your saddlebag.

CLIMATE

In the mountains the summers can be hot, up to 25°C during the day. However the nights will be much cooler. You must be prepared for dramatic weather variations as the mountain storms can roll in quickly in the summer.

TIPS

Tips are not mandatory but very welcome if you are pleased with the service provided.

PACKING LIST

Head

- A riding helmet is mandatory and we recommend that you take your own to ensure a correct fit. Helmet makers (GPA, HKM, LAS Helmets, Lamiceil, Troxel, Equithème) now offer horse-riding helmets that are ventilated, strong, light and comfortable.

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

Upper body

- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or extra warmth

- T-shirts

- Lightweight fleece or jumper

- Rain jacket - the rains can be hard to predict and it can be cold when it rains in the mountains.

Lower body

- Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs - we recommend riding in them at home before taking them on holiday to ensure they don't rub

- Casual clothes for the evenings (jeans or walking trousers)

- Non-irritant cotton or synthetic underwear

Hands and Feet

- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend half-chaps with sturdy riding boots (or even hiking boots as you may need to walk over steep trails)

- Lightweight shoes for the evenings
- Several pairs of warm socks
- Gloves - your hands are particularly exposed to the sun, wind or rain whilst riding

Night

- Pyjamas

Other useful items

- Water bottle (1.5 litres or 2 equivalent)
- Toiletries
- Ear plugs (may be useful)
- Camera and high capacity memory card. Spare battery

Medical kit

Make sure any allergies (to medication or otherwise) and 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!
- Keep a copy of your passport and insurance details 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](#) .