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trail riding worldwide

The Dartmoor Cattle Drive

Weight limit: 95kg

Nearest airport: Exeter

8 days / 7 nights / 5 days riding

Move hundreds of Scottish Highland cattle over the vast Dartmoor landscape on well-trained Quarter horses with accommodation in a traditional Dartmoor inn or hotel. A rare chance for confident riders to join the UK's only cattle drive.



The Riding

The terrain involves crossing streams, shallow rivers, undulating ground and up and down steep inclines and would not be suitable for novice or inexperienced riders. Cattle respond well to being moved by horses, the cattle are not threatened and have a natural respect for the horses. The horse walks at much the same speed as the cattle and often anticipates the cattle's movements. The riders work as a team with most flanking at the sides of the herd

with just a couple at the rear, and one or two at the head. Each rider will have a position and a job to do, depending on their ability.

Each spring, the young calves go out with their mothers to learn their grazing areas, where the water is and where to return home to. On Dartmoor the herds grazing area is called their 'lear' and each owner's herd of cattle will have its own 'lear'. Depending on the time of year, the activities on each of the Cattle Drives will change:

The Cattle Driving Year:

May: Spring cattle turn-out

The cows and autumn-born calves are moved from their winter quarters up onto the moor for the summer, a distance of about 8km.

June: Bulling cow muster

Some spring calving cows need to be brought down to the farm to run with the bull for the summer.

July: Calf weaning muster

The cows and calves need to be brought back to the farm for weaning

August: Late summer turn-out

The cows that have been running with the bull for the summer are driven back to Dartmoor

September: Cow & calf muster

The freshly calved cows need to come down to better grazing near the farm as winter approaches.

Level of Riding and Fitness

The Cattle Drive is for intermediate riders onwards. You should be confident riding at a walk, trot and canter in open countryside and with loose cattle. Riders should be relaxed in the saddle and ride with soft hands. Riders do need to be reasonably fit as there is between 4-6 hours in the saddle each riding day. Hard hats and boots with a heel are compulsory at this destination.

Age range is 18 to 65, experienced 14 – 17 year olds are accepted if accompanied by a riding parent/guardian. Upper age limit is discretionary depending on rider fitness and experience. The maximum weight is 15 Stone (95kg).

Guides & Group sizes

Your guides, Phil and Mandy, are experienced local horse-people with a herd of around fifteen horses to offer guests. This destination specialises in a personal, laid back experience and is the only cattle drive on horseback taking place in the UK.

Maximum number of riders in a group is 8.



Horses & Tack

There is a selection of fantastic Quarter Horses at this ranch. Known for their calm attitude and appetite for work, all are western trained, very sure footed, a pleasure to ride and cross the terrain with ease. Heights range from 14:3 to 16:2hh. Your hosts for this ride often start and back their own horses to suit the type of work, all must be sensible with good manners. In total there are 15 horses.

The tack is all Western and you'll also be provided with saddle bags for carrying daily essentials.

Accommodation & Dining

Accommodation is provided at a local hotel. Depending on availability these range from a beautifully traditional 16th century Devonshire pub with rooms to a welcoming bolthole perched on the banks of the West Dart River, with beautiful countryside in every direction. Rooms are twin or double with en suite (single rooms available for a supplement). All rooms include towels and Wifi.

Breakfasts are usually buffet style offering a choice of a more continental breakfast such as pastries, cereal, yogurt, fruit or a traditional full English; bacon, eggs, beans toast etc. Lunch

is a picnic eaten at a picturesque spot on the trail that includes sandwiches, crisps, fruit and a biscuit. Dinner is not included but can be provided by the accommodation you stay at (usually modern British cuisine such as fish and chips, burgers, pies) or at other local eateries which your host will be happy to recommend to you. Vegetarian or other dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Dartmoor in the afternoon or evening and check in to your accommodation. Your hosts will meet you at your accommodation at around 8pm for a briefing on the coming week.

Day 2

You'll be collected from your accommodation after breakfast (around 10am) and transferred to the stables where you'll be paired with one of the horses. Today you'll head out on a trail ride of approx. 4 hours, to ensure everyone is matched well to their horse. Lunch is a picnic at a picturesque spot on the trail and is carried in the saddle bags. After riding you'll be returned to your accommodation in time for dinner.

Day 3-6

You'll be collected each morning at 10am and will be riding for between 4-5 hours each day. The cattle work varies depending on the time of year, you may be taking cattle from the farm to their summer grazing, or bringing them in for weaning or calving. After riding you'll be able to refuel with tea and cakes and have a chat about the days' adventures. You'll be returned to your accommodation at round 5pm. Your evening meal is not included, but your accommodation has its own restaurant for evening meals.

Day 7

Departure day. Enjoy a last breakfast at your accommodation before saying goodbye to your hosts.

Price includes

- 5 full days of riding
- Trail riding horse, tack and saddlebags
- Twin/double room
- Breakfasts
- Lunches

- Tea, coffee and mineral water
- Daily transfers from accommodation to the farm

Not included

- Flights
- Transfers
- Evening meals
- Drinks



Flights & Airport transfers

The closest airport is Exeter. Return transfers from Exeter Airport, train or bus station from £80 per booking.

Please plan to arrive at Exeter after 2pm on the first day of your holiday.
Depart after 9am on the last day of your holiday.

What to bring

Please use the packing list as a guideline, bearing in mind the time of year you are riding.

We strongly recommend warm riding wear and good riding waterproofs. This is the UK so all seasons are possible in any one day!

- Riding hat (there is a limited supply of hats so we recommend bringing your own)

- Boots with heels are mandatory
- Comfortable warm riding wear
- Chaps full or half (optional)
- Waterproof coat
- Lip balm and suncream
- Sunglasses
- Casual evening wear
- Camera

Climate

Dartmoor has a temperate climate which is generally wetter and milder than locations at similar height in the rest of England. January and February are the coldest months with mean minimum temperatures around 1 °C (34 °F). July and August are the warmest months. The weather is very changeable so we recommend being prepared for hot days, sudden heavy rain as well as cold winds and basking sunshine at any time of year. This ride involves travelling from 800 ft up to 2000 ft, where the temperature is cooler so we recommend dressing in layers.

Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.

Country specific information can also be found at National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to the UK for non-UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>

Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & Tipping

The local currency in the UK is the British Pound. We recommend bringing enough money for evening meals and drinks out. Almost all establishments will accept cards.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion.

Riding declaration

"I am an experienced rider and able to mount & dismount unaided. I have a firm seat and I'm confident and in control at all paces over rough terrain (including rising trot, light seat canters and gallops) and have a good level of current riding fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others."

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms [saddletravel.com](https://www.saddletravel.com)

Holidays are confirmed with 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50% 30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

Book with confidence – Covid Guarantee:

If a ride operator is closed or you are unable to travel – due to lockdown:

1/ The deposit is reissued as a rebooking voucher to rebook anytime.

2/ Any balance payment will be refunded to you in full within 1 week of departure date.

Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.





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