



Wild Horses Trail

Weight limit: 90 kilos

Nearest airport: Porto

8 days / 7 nights / 6 days riding

Discover Portugal's wild side on this trail through the Peneda Geres national park where you can spot eagles, deer and even wolves. Look out for one of the last species of wild horses in Europe: the Garranos, who roam these remote mountains in herds. This northernmost area of Portugal is peppered with hidden valleys, hilltop villages and prehistoric rock art, while tangled woods envelop ancient castles and forts.



The Riding

You'll ride through ancient forests, crossing desert-like plateaus on top of mountains, and passing rivers, waterfalls, lakes and huge boulders in amazing formations. There are many uphill climbs leading to wonderful views and the scenery is dominated by granite rocky mountains, dense oak forests, narrow valleys, rivers and groves of birch. There are plenty of canter opportunities and it is also possible to gallop for some sections of the ride, although this depends on the level of the group.

Level of riding and fitness

This trail is suitable for strong intermediate and experienced riders only. Riders must be able to mount and dismount from the ground unaided. All participants must be competent, confident and in control at all paces over rough terrain and on a forward going horse. Good level of **current** riding fitness is required as you'll be spending 5-6 hours in the saddle each day. You should be comfortable in all paces including gallop and you should also be happy to complete river crossings on horseback.

Guides & Groups sizes

Carlos and Luis are the friendly guides that accompany this trail. Both are Portuguese natives with a deep knowledge of the region and speak English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Group size 2-6

Horses & Tack

The horses are mainly Hispano-Arab cross breeds and Lusitano horses. There are also some Arab and thoroughbred crosses. All the horses are ideally suited to the trail and terrain and are known as being brave and calm. There are strong, lively and fast horses for the more experienced rider.

English saddles are used and most of the time the horses are ridden with long reins, leading to a relaxed and comfortable horse during the trail.



Accommodation and Dining

Your first accommodation is in a large traditional manor house, built in the 18th century and just outside the charming village of Arcos de Valdevez, built on the banks of the river Vez. There are seven bedrooms equipped with private bathrooms, TV and radio. The accommodation also has an outdoor swimming pool for relaxing after rides. The second accommodation on the trail is also a traditional manor house, all rooms have private bathrooms and there is a swimming pool and barbecue area. Towels are provided.

Breakfast is served at your accommodation each morning. This is typical Portuguese fare and includes tea, coffee, pastries, yogurt and fruit. Lunch is sometimes a picnic on the trail or eaten at a local tavern or restaurant. Evening meals are mainly eaten in local restaurants. Typical dinners include a starter, one or two courses and a dessert. Tea, coffee and mineral water are included and local wine is provided with dinner.

Allergies and special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice.



Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive at Porto Airport and transfer by car to Arcos de Valdevez (around a one hour drive). Check in to your accommodation and then take a tour of the stables and meet the horses. Horses and riders will be paired up before enjoying a Portuguese dinner with your hosts and fellow riders.

Day 2

The day starts early and breakfast is served at 8am, before saddling up and leaving the stables by 10am. The trail begins above the medieval town of Arcos de Valdevez, and continues towards the Peneda Geres National Park, a mountainous region where wild horses still roam freely. Lunch will be served at a local mountain tavern, before continuing along the trail. As well as being an area of natural beauty the park has compelling remains of human occupation: an ancient Roman road winds through the region, marked with 2,000-year-old milestones. The horses will be left in a field within the park and you will transfer back to your accommodation. Dinner is at a typical Portuguese Restaurant in Arcos de Valdevez town.

Day 3

Breakfast is served at 8am, followed by a transfer to the horses. Once horses are prepared, depart into the woods of the national park, going uphill to plains of old pasture fields; home of the wild horses and much of the wildlife of the National Park. You'll pass through mountain villages, climbing to an altitude of 1000 metres. Lunch is a picnic served by a mountain lake before descending to the village of Ferreiros, where you'll leave the horses and transfer back to your accommodation. Dinner in a local Portuguese restaurant.

Day 4

After breakfast, transfer to Ferreiros where the horses are and prepare for today's trail. You'll ride through the valley, passing farming fields and forests of oak trees before reaching the shores of the river Vez. You'll follow the river all the back to Arcos, lunch is a picnic by the riverside, depending on the river level, you'll either cross the river on horseback or take a detour to cross at the nearest bridge. Arriving back in Arcos de Valdevez, you can ride through the old town on the 17th century roads admiring the architecture before reaching the stables and your accommodation.

Day 5

After breakfast, set out in the direction of the woods, a protected landscape of Corno de Bico, these trails are full of forest wildlife, you're likely to spot wild horses, mountain cows, foxes, wild boars, deers & even wolves if you're lucky. Lunch is in a local tavern in the heart of a small and beautiful village with only 6 houses and 16 inhabitants. Afterwards you'll continue riding uphill to a place where on a clear day the Atlantic coast is visible. Descending through the forest scenery, you'll pass through old villages before leaving the horses in the fields of an ancient manor house where you will also be staying overnight. Dinner is in the local town of Paredes de Coura, where you can taste the famous river Coura trout, before returning to the manor house to rest.

Day 6

For those riders that wish to take a break from riding, today can be spent exploring the local scenery on foot or just relaxing at the accommodation. Alternatively you can saddle up and head out on the trail in search of the wild horses that live here. Lunch is a picnic carried in the saddlebags and the route is mainly through lush, green forests. In the evening, head back to the manor house, where the owners will provide a traditional Portuguese homemade dinner, and will also join us during the meal.

Day 7

After breakfast head out on the last day of the trail. You'll be following the old forestry guards trail, a showcase of the stunning scenery in this area. Along the way you're likely to meet more of the wild horses and from their pasture grounds you'll head down the mountain, reaching the village of Grijó, where lunch is served. After lunch continue through the rural landscape passing the ancient ruins of a castle built on top of a granite stone settlement, in the 15th century this served as a watch-post for incoming invasions from Spain. Make the final descent downhill until you reach the stables and accommodation where the trail started.

Day 8

After breakfast, it's time to say goodbye to your hosts and the horses and transfer back to the airport.



Price includes

- Accommodation in twin or double rooms with private bathrooms
- Breakfasts
- Lunches
- Dinners
- Tea, coffee, water and soft drinks
- Wine with dinners
- 5-6 hours riding on 5 days
- Transfers during the trail
- Luggage transfer

Not included

- Airport transfers

- Tips
- Other alcoholic drinks

Flights & Airport transfers

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please plan your flights to/from as follows:

Your flight should arrive in Porto no later than 14:30 on the first day of your holiday.

Your return flight should depart after midday on the last day of your holiday.

Return airport transfers are €185 euros per group.

What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

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

- Riding hat
- Long trousers/jodhpurs
- Long-sleeved shirts
- Riding shoes/boots that you can walk in
- Casual wear for evenings
- Swimwear
- Waterproof jacket
- Sweater
- Sunglasses, suncream
- Toiletries
- Passport and a copy of your travel insurance



Climate

This trail is based in Northern Portugal so rain is not uncommon. A visit between April and June is the best time for spring flowers, July and August are normally the hottest months (highest temperatures in the mid 20°C) and very little rain. In September/October you will be able to enjoy the golden colours of autumn although you are more likely to encounter some rainy days. Most of the trail is in a highland area and so the temperatures can fluctuate considerably between day and night and throughout the seasons.

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 Portugal for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/portugal/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements. Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

Currency & Tipping

Although the ride is fully inclusive we recommend bringing some local currency for extra drinks or souvenirs. The ride itself is in a remote location so money should be changed before the start of the ride. The local currency is the Euro and tipping 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 canter 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

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 the 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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