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trail riding worldwide

Blue Coast Trail

Weight limit: 85kg / 13.3 stone (including riding gear)

Nearest airport: Dalaman

8 days / 7 nights / 6 days riding



This trail takes you through Turkey's Mediterranean southern coast where you'll ride on beaches, forests and across rivers on endurance-trained Arabs. As well as thrilling, fast-paced riding there are boat trips across stunning lagoons, a visit to a turtle sanctuary and opportunities for swimming every day.

The Riding

Based on the southern coast of Turkey, this trail offers varied riding landscapes including beach riding, the paradise Gocek Islands, forests with many species of tree, dust tracks (ideal for cantering), steep paths, networks of canals, the lake reeds of Koyceyiz, the historical site of Kaunos, river crossings and the famous Dalyan lagoon.

You'll be riding at a reasonably fast-pace and riders must be confident, competent and fit to ride long hours and to hike on mountain paths. There are many canters through forests as well as some mountainous stretches where you will need to hike and lead your horse.

Level of Riding and Fitness

This trail is suitable for confident intermediate to experienced riders. Although the pace is mostly walk, there are many trots and canters each day and riders must be in good physical condition. You should be fit to ride long hours and to enjoy fast canters on a forward-going horse. You will also need to be comfortable spending short periods of time hiking on steep mountain paths and leading your horse.



Guides & Group sizes

You will be guided by French-born Nicolas who has lived and organised horse riding tours in Turkey for over 15 years. He is very knowledgeable about the local history and culture as well as being passionate about his horses and always having their well-being at heart.

Group size for this trail is between 4-8 riders.

Horses & Tack

You'll be matched with one of the well-trained Arabs and Arab-crosses at this stable. They are responsive, well-balanced, fit and trained with natural horsemanship methods, which makes them a real pleasure to ride and handle. They live out in a herd all year round in big pastures.

The horses are ridden in snaffle or pelham bits. The saddles are either McClellan saddles or handmade by our partners in Turkey to fit their horses perfectly. Both saddles are ideally suited for trail riding and long hours in the saddle. Two saddlebags are fitted for each horse to carry daily items such as water bottles, sun cream and camera.

The weight limit is strictly 85kg, including riding gear. All participants will be weighed upon arrival. If you are between 80kg and 85kg, please enquire before booking as there are only a small number of horses who can take the weight.



Accommodation & Dining

During the holiday you'll spend 4 nights camping and 3 nights in guesthouse accommodation. The campsites used are dotted along the coast or in the forest and include a large dining tent for meals. Riders will then sleep in double tipi-style tents with single camping mattresses. Campsites are equipped with toilets, a shower tent and a gas stove

although lots of the evening meals will be cooked over the campfire. This is a participatory trail where guests help with packing and unpacking their luggage from the support vehicle and help with the horses, tacking up and untacking.

The 3 nights in guesthouses include accommodation in double or twin rooms. Single rooms are subject to availability and a single supplement. Most of the guesthouses used are run by families and are located in pretty towns and villages. Guesthouses are equipped with Wifi and offer a laundry service if required. Your luggage will be transported between overnight stops by the logistics vehicle.

Dinner and breakfast are served at the guesthouses or campsite. You can expect Turkish cuisine for dinner consisting of a starter, one or two courses and a dessert when staying in a guesthouse. When camping, the dinners are cooked on the open fire, and served with various salads. Tea, coffee and mineral water are included. Local wine, other alcoholic drinks, beer and soft drinks are available for an additional cost. Lunch is either served in a restaurant or is a picnic lunch out on trail. Allergies and special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival

Arrival at Dalaman airport. You'll be met at the airport by your hosts and transferred to your hotel. Dinner with your guide and the other riders on the trail.

Day 2

After breakfast you'll be transferred to the beginning of the trail. You'll be able to get familiar with your horse, your equipment and the ride's gaits (fast walk, endurance canter and trot for a few sections.) The trail begins meandering through a wood, before cantering across the orange orchards and the olive trees. Cross the Dogusbelen river with its pebbles and gravel bed before stopping for lunch. In the afternoon continue through a coniferous forest with garrigue bushes and enjoy some long mountain canter trails overlooking Köycegiz lake. Evening is spent camping at a picturesque spot on the trail and dinner is cooked on the campfire.

Day 3

After breakfast, you'll saddle your horse and begin to descend through the forest, where you can glimpse a beautiful view over the lake and villages. You'll reach the hot water springs of Sultaniye where you will stop for a traditional lunch. There's time to bathe in the springs and swim in the lake. In the afternoon a quick horse ride will offer incredible views over the Dalyan lagoon, probably one of the most remarkable views along the entire Turkish coast.

You'll camp by the seaside this evening with a fine sand beach and superb views across to Iztuzu beach.



Day 4

This morning's ride will be along the lagoon where you can canter on pine needle-covered trails. You'll arrive at the ancient site of Kaunos (paying entry : 6 €) where the horses will rest for the afternoon and you'll head to the charming town of Dalyan for a fish lunch. In the afternoon you can relax on a cruise through the beautiful reed channels of the lagoon. Dinner and overnight at a guesthouse in Dalyan.

Day 5

You'll travel by boat to the horses and they will be loaded onto a barge to cross the Dalyan river. Once safely across the river, you'll ride out of town through the orange orchards and along the bottom of a deep sandstone canyon, on an old mule path leading to a wooden plateau. Enjoy some long canter trails until you reach the beautiful village of Gokbel and the famous Iztuzu beach where you can stop for lunch and a dip in the sea. After lunch you can visit a turtle sanctuary before saddling up and riding through a labyrinth of oleanders, to tonight's campsite located in a big clearing.

Day 6

Today you'll be heading to the village of Sarigerme famed for its 5 km-long beach. You'll picnic on the beach, and swim if you like before continuing the trail in the afternoon. On this section you'll need to walk and lead your horse along a steep path through sweet smelling bay trees, mint and thyme. A breathtaking panorama rewards you at the top. Again a few canters through olive orchards and fields until you reach tonight's camp in a clearing.

Campfire and dinner overlooking the paradise islands of Gocek.

Day 7

Saddle up after breakfast and start with a fast ride on forest tracks overlooking the bay of Gocek. Ascend a steep path where you will need to walk with your horse for a few minutes. Spectacular views and long canters take you to Gocek port, famous for its numerous yachts. Dinner and overnight at a guesthouse in Köycegiz.

Day 8

After breakfast, depart for the airport two hours before your return flight.

Flights & Airport transfers

The closest airport is Dalaman Airport

There are direct flights from the UK to Dalaman with Jet2 or there are plenty of airlines that fly to Istanbul where you take a connecting flight.

Please plan your flight to arrive at Dalaman between 8am and 7pm on the first day of your holiday. Airport transfers are included in your holiday for flights arriving and departing between the set times. Airport transfers outside of these times are at additional cost.

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.

You should pack a couple of small, lighter bags rather than one large, heavy suitcase.

- Comfortable riding trousers / jodhpurs
- Your own well-fitted hard hat
- Riding boots/ walking boots with a good grip (riding boots with smooth sole are not recommended as they can be slippery when walking)
- Chaps
- Riding gloves
- Long sleeved shirts to protect against the sun and sand
- Warm fleece / jumper for the cooler nights
- Waterproof jacket
- Comfortable clothes for evening

- Lightweight shoes for evening
- Buff / bandana to protect you from the sun and sand
- Sun cream & lip balm
- Sunglasses & sunhat
- Swimwear
- Towel
- Sleeping bag
- Insect repellent
- Refillable water bottle
- Copy of passport & insurance details



Climate

Dalaman has a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and very hot summers. Spring and Autumn are considered the best time to visit for warm weather without the temperatures rising too high. The region has 320 days of sunshine per year, which makes it a great destination at any time of the year. Average temperatures are around 22°C, perfect for riding and swimming.

Rainfall is rare but not unheard of so we recommend bringing a light waterproof jacket with you just in case.

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 the National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

Travel documents

For entry requirements to Turkey for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/turkey/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

The local currency in Turkey is Turkish Lira. Your holiday is fully inclusive so we recommend not bringing too much local currency. We recommend just bringing enough cash to have a bit of pocket money for when stopping at cafes along the way and souvenirs.

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

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Holidays are confirmed with a 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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