



Champagne Trail

Weight limit: 90 kilos

Nearest airport: Paris

8 days / 7 nights / 6 days riding



For lovers of horses and wine, visit the region of Champagne where you can canter across scenic vineyards, through rural French villages and sip champagne in Epernay after a day's riding. This trail is a fascinating exploration of French wine production, excellent riding terrain and historical sites.

The Riding

The pace on this trail is varied to suit the terrain with long periods of walk and plenty of opportunities to canter and gallop. The scenery encompasses rolling hills, green, sun-drenched vineyards, woods and forests. Riders must be comfortable in all paces and happy to do some fast riding in open spaces on an obedient and responsive horse. Riders need to be in good physical condition, you will be in the saddle for between 4-6 hours per day.

Guides & Group sizes

As well as being experienced horsemen and women, your guides on this trail have a thorough knowledge of local history. All guides are multilingual French/English and the group size is between 5-10.

Horses and Tack

The horses are pure or cross-bred Arabian or Thoroughbreds and warmbloods varying in height from 15.2hh to 17hh. The horses are exceptionally well-schooled and good-mannered at this destination and many of them have been bred and trained by your hosts themselves. The tack used is specialist trail riding saddles and you will be provided with saddlebags, a rain poncho, and a water bottle. Horses are ridden in Myler bits which help to facilitate effective communication between horse and rider and a relaxed and happy horse. Helmets are not mandatory but are strongly recommended.

Accommodation & Dining

Accommodation is in twin or double rooms at small, charming hotels or B&Bs, nestled into the rural surroundings. Single rooms are available for a supplement. You'll stay in a different location each night of the trail, and your luggage will be transferred between stops. Most of the rooms will have an en suite bathroom although this cannot be guaranteed. The luggage is transported in the support vehicle and transferred to each accommodation so you only need to carry daily essentials in your saddle bags.



Continental breakfasts are served at your hotel each morning typically consisting of a hot drink (tea, coffee, hot chocolate), juice, breakfast pastries (croissant, pain au chocolat, pain aux raisins), bread, butter and jam, and sometimes yogurt. Lunches are traditional french pique-niques, expect fresh baguettes, sumptuous cheeses, salads and tasty charcuterie, along with a bottle of something local. Dinner will be typical French fare comprising several courses of regional specialities. Please note that wine is not included with dinners.

Itinerary

Day 1

Meet with your hosts and fellow riders at the TGV train station in Reims at 6.30pm, dinner and overnight in Reims.

Day 2

Today is a gentle introduction to the horses with a morning ride starting at 10am. Once you've been matched with a suitable horse you'll head out into the countryside glimpsing your first views over the famous vineyards. Cool off on the route which takes you through the forest of Sermiers before returning to your guesthouse for lunch. In the afternoon, visit the city of Reims

with its spectacular cathedral, Notre-Dame de Reims before dinner and overnight back at the guesthouse.



Day 3

After breakfast head out on the trail and enjoy some relaxed canters that will lead you through the woods to the heart of the Verzy forest, 'Les Faux de Verzy', where you can enjoy a typical french picnic. In the afternoon, ride south to Trepail, a typical wine village of the Champagne region, where the white Chardonnay grape is very much at home. Dinner and overnight in the village of Bouzy.

Day 4

After breakfast you will ride through vineyards to the village of Mutigny, taking in the far reaching views over the Marne Valley, the Côte des Noirs and the Côte des Blancs.

Your picnic lunch today is in the village of Hautvillers, birthplace of the Champagne wines. You will head down through the vineyards, crossing the Marne River at the village of Cumières, enjoying some nice canters along the river. Dinner and overnight in the town of Epernay.

Day 5

Today you'll travel through both forests and vineyards on horseback before arriving at the 'Blanc de Blancs' vineyards and enjoying a wine-tasting there. There is no riding in the afternoon but a chance to visit Epernay on foot. The town lies at the region's epicentre and every famous Champagne brand has a headquarters there, most of them located on the famous Champagne Avenue where 110km of wine cellars lie underground. Dinner and overnight in Epernay.

Day 6

This morning you will saddle up again and head for the Mountain of Avize and its chalk cliffs, arriving in the Darcy valley where you have a beautiful view of the village Monthelon and a picnic lunch. After lunch, cross the Marne River before continuing through the gentle rolling hills of the vineyards. Dinner and overnight in the village of La Neuville aux Larris with champagne-tasting.

Day 7

After breakfast, head out on your last day of riding across the sloping vineyards. Your final picnic lunch will be at the Natural Regional Parc House of the Reims Mountains, located in Pourcy, before riding through the forest to finish the trail. Dinner and overnight in the village of La Neuville aux Larris.

Day 8

After breakfast your hosts will drop you off at Reims TGV station for your journey home.

International flights & Airport transfers

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

Please arrange to arrive at the TGV train station in Reims in time for the group transfer at 18.30 on Day 1. Train station transfers cost €20 return per person and are payable on arrival in cash.



What to bring

- Riding hat
- Jodhpurs or other comfortable trousers
- Riding boots
- T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Warm layers - At times the evening temperature drops significantly
- Casual clothes & shoes for evening
- Raincoat
- Insect repellent

- Sun cream
- Camera
- A copy of your passport

Climate

Spring and autumn are mild and summers pleasantly hot. Rainfall is generally low but showers can occur at any time of year.

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 France for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/france/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 France is the Euro. We recommend bringing enough local currency for any additional drinks you may want to purchase such as wine with dinner.

Tipping is common when eating and drinking in France. Tipping your guide is at your discretion, gratuities are greatly appreciated.

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 (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 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/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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