

Erling Strom Trail

Weight limit: 105kg
Nearest airport: Calgary
4 days / 3 nights / 4 days riding



On this trip you will follow the Erling Strom Trail, a path forged through the dense Banff forests by renowned explorer Erling Strom in the early 1900s.

Amidst dense fragrant pines and snow-crested mountains that pierce the sky, you'll get to experience the wild side of Banff that not many visitors get to see. Remote and without any internet or cell service, the backcountry lodges where you will be staying offer a chance to find peaceful quiet and reconnect with friends and loved ones over a crackling campfire.

With a backcountry expert to guide you, this horseback experience is a chance to learn about the history of early exploration in the region. With four days to wander and discover Canada's oldest national park, you'll have plenty of time to relax into the slow pace and peaceful quiet of life on the trail.

The Riding

You'll be riding along a historic pack trail that winds through the craggy Sundance Range, venturing to places most visitors to Banff National Park never get to see. You'll pass by the shimmering waters of the Bow River and then ride up Allenby Pass, where jagged rock formations line the route. The terrain can be steep and rocky in places, and on occasion riders may need to dismount and lead their horse for short periods.

No previous experience is necessary for this ride, guides are happy to teach beginners the basics that they will need for the trip. The riding is all done at a walk and the horses are well trained and used to the trails. A good level of general fitness however is required and riders should have an adventurous nature and be happy and fit enough to spend between 4-6 hours a day in the saddle. Children aged 9 and over are welcome on the trail if accompanied by an adult.



Guides & Group sizes

All the guides on this trail are friendly, warm and experienced. They know how to work with both new and experienced riders. The maximum number of riders in a group is 6.

Horses and Tack

There are around 300 horses and mules available for riding and as pack horses. There is a large variety of sizes, breeds and temperaments within the herd, something suitable for any level of rider. Guides at this destination are highly skilled at matching horses and riders, and at the end of the trip you'll have a new four legged best friend. The horses are steady, responsive and can be counted on to cross any terrain, from forest paths to boulder-strewn creeks.

The tack used is mostly Western and all riders are provided with saddle bags to transport daily essentials while on the trail.

Accommodation & Dining



You will be staying in two different lodges while on the trail. Your first and last night will be spent at Sundance Lodge. Just 10 miles from Banff, this secluded, warm and cosy lodge is at the edge of the mountain range. Complete with solar power and a wood-burning stove for a crackling evening fire. Hot showers and electricity are available here, although neither of the lodges has internet or Wi-Fi. There is a porch where you can sit and watch for wildlife and a

sitting room with a fireplace perfect for relaxing in the evening. The shared bathroom facilities are inside and there are 10 rooms available.

The middle night of the trip will be spent at Halfway Lodge set at the base of the Allenby Pass. It was built in the 1920s for riders on their way to Mount Assiniboine. This is a more basic lodge than Sundance. Propane lanterns and candles provide the lighting while a wood-burner provides the heat. There is a cosy kitchen, dining and sitting room inside, and two shared outhouses (outdoor basic toilet facilities) and an outdoor shower on site. There are 4 bedrooms that have space for up to 4 people each.

At both lodges meals are cooked on-site by professional chefs, breakfast and dinner are eaten at the lodge while lunch is packed into the saddle bags and enjoyed while out on the trail. A traditional cowboy barbecue is served on your first day, usually an Alberta steak paired with home-made baked beans, baked potatoes and other sides. Dinners at the lodges could be braised beef short ribs (vegetarian alternative available) matched with a side of fluffy mashed potatoes and cheesecake for dessert. Camps and lodges are licensed and offer a small selection of wine and beer.

Itinerary

Day 1

Your journey begins at 9:30am at the stables, there's plenty of free parking and you can park your vehicle here during the trip. You'll be given your slickers and saddle bags and introduced to the horse that has been specifically picked just for you. Things happen on "Western Time" here so you may not leave right on the dot and you'll have time to get to know your horse and ask any questions.

Saddled up and ready to ride, you'll hit the trail for the ten mile journey to Sundance Lodge. On this backcountry adventure, you'll travel along a route that the early explorers of the Canadian Rockies blazed nearly a century ago. You will follow the trail alongside the rushing glacier-fed waters of the Bow River, Healy Creek and Brewster Creek. Along the way you'll stop for a simple, hearty cowboy-style hot lunch on the banks of the river.

You will arrive at Sundance Lodge late afternoon, where your lodge host will greet you.

Sundance is the ideal place for those who want to marvel at the beauty of the Banff backcountry, while still being swaddled in comfort.

Settle into your room and freshen up from your day on the trail, then gather around the table for a gourmet meal prepared by your talented host.

Day 2

The adventure continues as you journey 9 miles southward to Halfway Lodge. The rugged peaks of the Sundance Range loom over the eastern horizon as you follow the winding historic Erling Strom Trail. You'll be following in the footsteps that the early explorers of the Canadian Rockies took nearly a century ago. You'll stop along the way for a picnic in the fresh air of an open mountain meadow.



Tonight you will stay at Halfway Lodge, located at the midway point between Banff and Assiniboine Mountain where weary riders have been stopping to rest since the 1920s. As you approach you'll notice the trees start to thin out and the mountains peeking up above the treeline all around you. It is tucked into a postcard-perfect setting, with a striking cauldron of mountains all around it.

Day 3

Today you'll leave your peaceful haven at Halfway Lodge and take the meandering trail along Brewster Creek back to Sundance Lodge, approximately 9 miles. You'll spend another night here, relaxing in pure backcountry comfort.

After you wake up in comfort and enjoy a hearty breakfast at Halfway Lodge, you'll hit the trail. Your guide will lead you through the backcountry on a scenic and exciting trail, criss-crossing the valley in the historic footsteps of the early pioneers and stopping for lunch along the way. You'll arrive back at Sundance Lodge again, a luxurious retreat you will have fallen deeply in love with. Pamper yourself after your ride with a warm shower and a glass of wine, then enjoy another delicious meal prepared by your talented host.

Day 4

It's your last morning at Sundance Lodge, which by now will feel like home due to the warm hospitality of your host. Wake up wrapped in your warm down duvet one last time, gather around for a delicious breakfast and wave goodbye as you begin the journey back to Banff.

Breathe the crisp, pine scented air as you depart for one more day on the trail with your fellow riders – whom you have no doubt become good friends with by now. Your guide will lead you through the backcountry along winding river trails and through the thick pine forests, with the jagged peaks of the Rockies always standing proudly on the horizon. You'll stop along the banks of Healy Creek for a lunch of fresh sandwiches, baked goods and fruit.

You'll take the gentle 9 mile ride from Sundance back to Warner Stables, arriving at around 4:30pm. You may be leaving the backcountry, but the memories you have made will stay with you for a long time.



Price includes

- 4 full days of riding
- Trail riding horse, tack and saddlebags
- 3 nights shared accommodation
- All meals
- Luggage transfer
- Services of guide

Not included

- Flights
- Alcoholic drinks
- Tips

International flights & Airport transfers

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

The closest airport is Calgary around a 90 minute drive from Banff.

What to bring

All supplies are carried by hard working mules, so pack your gear in soft-sided, cloth or nylon bags. No hard edges, frames or wheels. Your luggage is restricted to a total maximum weight of 30lbs. If you do not have a water-resistant bag, it is a good idea to line the inside with plastic bags in the event of rain.

- 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)
- Riding gloves
- Warm coat
- Warm clothing for layering. Essential to ward off chilly nights or a windy day
- A heavy sweater (wool is a great insulator) or fleece jacket
- Warm fleece / jumper for the cooler nights
- Waterproof jacket and trousers. Please DO NOT bring rain ponchos, they flap in the wind and can scare the horses. There is a limited supply of full-length waterproof slickers (traditional cowboy rain coat) available based on a first come first served basis.
- Hiking shoes and small backpack if you want to join the optional hike on the non-riding day
- Lightweight shoes for evening
- Thermal gear to sleep in
- Sun cream
- Sunglasses & sunhat
- A small torch
- Portable charging devices (there is no electricity at the lodges)
- Large, reusable water bottle

Climate

Mountain weather is unpredictable and you might even experience all four seasons in one day. The air is crisp in the mornings and often takes till mid afternoon to reach daily highs. Overnight temperatures at higher elevations often dip down below freezing. And it's not unheard of to get snow even in the summer. In Banff town from June-September expect highs of 22C and lows of around 7C. Higher elevations are cooler.



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 Canada for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/canada/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 Canada is the Canadian Dollar. We recommend bringing enough local currency for any additional drinks you may want to purchase while at the lodges.

Tipping your guide is at your discretion and gratuities are greatly appreciated - a suggested amount is \$50 per day to be shared between staff.

Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms

saddletravel.com

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

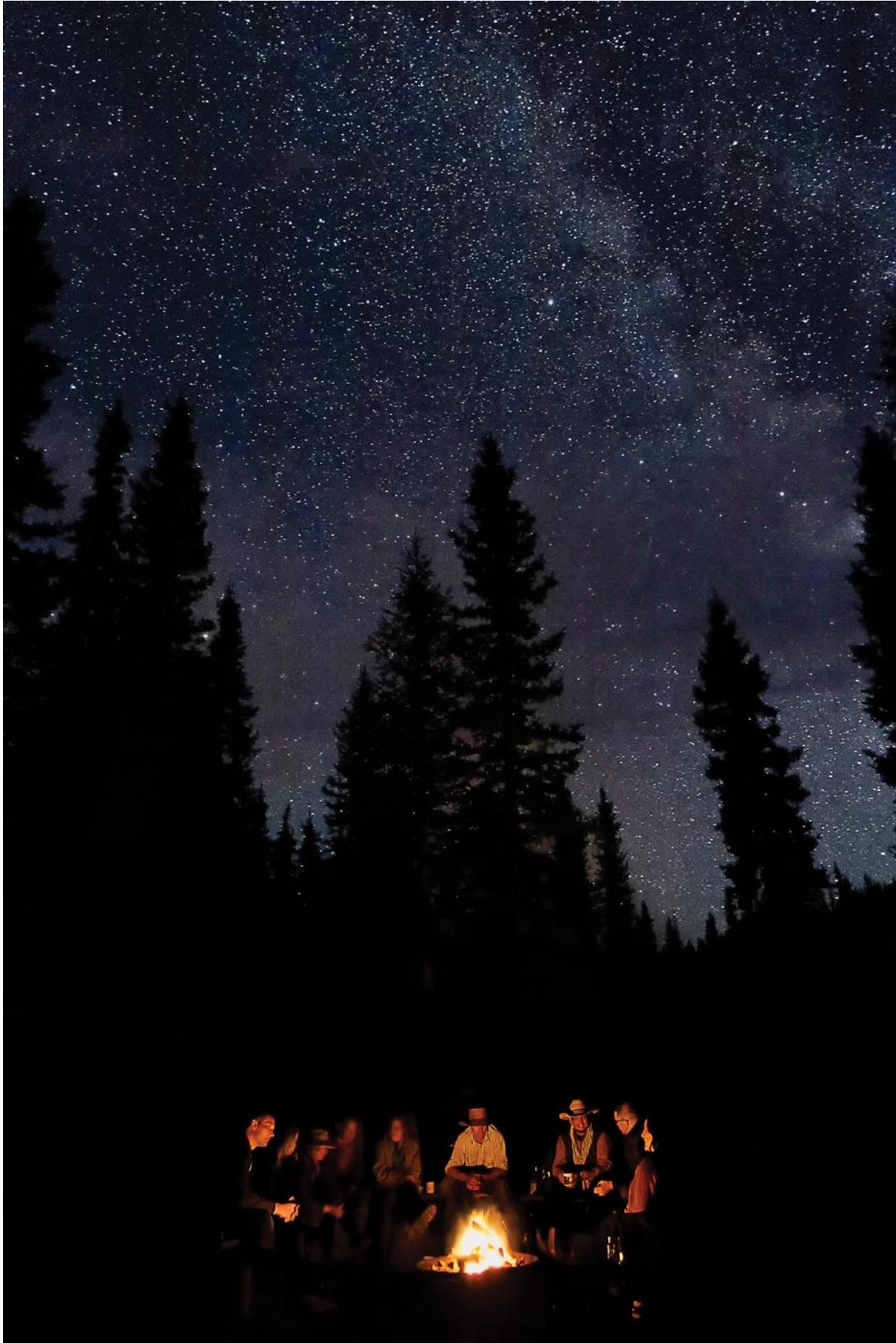
42 days or more before booking date - 50%

30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

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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