

HORSEBACK RIDING TOUR IN URUGUAY

Horse Back Riding Adventure in Uruguay

8 DAYS / 7 NIGHTS

We start our tour in the wonderful city of Montevideo. The next day we continue our ride in the amazing coastal province of 'Rocha' - protected area and declared world biosphere reserve - when we arrive at a hotel built in the same style as the nearby 17th century fort, right on the border with Brazil. We ride along isolated beaches, over shifting sand dunes, through palm groves and shady woodlands and on along the shores of the wetlands. The variety of birds - hummingbirds, flamingos, kingfishers, flycatchers, rheas (similar to ostriches) - that we see in these habitats is incredible. The pace will be many times quite fast (lots of canters) - the grassy pastures and firm beaches allow this on strong and well-trained criollo and criollo cross horses.

While staying at charming seaside inns and working 'estancias' (ranches) where ride with and help the gauchos with cattle drives, you will be able to feel connected with the traditions of this unexplored country. On this ride you'll skirt the most diverse landscapes, surprising wines, excellent food and experience the hidden treasures found on paths less travelled.

FROM
**GET CUSTOM
PRICING**
per person

THIS TOUR INCLUDES:

- 9 Days/8 Nights
- All breakfasts
- Other meals as mentioned
- All transfers
- English-speaking guides

HIGHLIGHTS

- Seaside Inns
- Gaucho estancias
- Horseback riding
- Wines & excellent cuisine

ITINERARY



Day 1

MONTEVIDEO, TANGO & CANDOMBLE

Today is set aside to relax and explore the seaside city of Montevideo. Guests are met at the Carrasco International Airport and driven along the wonderful coastline called "Rambla" to your downtown hotel. We will immerse ourselves in Uruguayan culture in Montevideo, the most important city as well as the capital. Welcome luxurious barbecue at the Mercado del Puerto and free time to rest or explore the downtown streets and experience the typical Rio de la Plata music, the Tango or Candombe with the rhythms and coloured costumes. Montevideo is a very quite and safe city that combines museums, street markets, nice restaurants and very friendly people. You will stay in a nice centrally located 3 to 4 star hotel. (dinner is not included today).



Day 2

18TH CENTURY FORTÍN DE SAN MIGUEL

After breakfast we will be driven to the Brazilian border and into Rocha, arguably the most beautiful province in Uruguay with its pristine beaches, emerald shores and network of lagoons. We will visit Chuy, a very curious town straddling the border where guests can step into Brazil and hear the locals speak a strange language made of a mix of Spanish and Portuguese. As we arrive at the hotel built in the same stone as the nearby Portuguese fortress we can admire the views out across an enormous stretch of fresh water -one of the largest fresh water reserves of South America, the "Merlin Lagoon". We are right on the Brazilian border. After lunch we will meet gauchos and our horses to ride around the rolling hills of San Miguel enjoying a wonderful panoramic view of the area from the top of the boulder covered "Cerro Picudo". The view across the flat lowlands and the huge lagoon provides a very different landscape to the following day rides. We can smell the sea and on clear days view the coast. This area is home to a wide variety of birds and we will see many different native trees and bushes. We will also have the chance to see the Cimarron cattle, the first cattle, introduced from Spain in the 17th century and depending on what the gauchos are doing, they may need a hand to work these tame animals. We will stay at the " Fortín de San Miguel", guests can enjoy the gardens, swimming pool and the relaxed atmosphere.



Day 3

BARRA DE CHUY BEACH, BRAZILIAN BORDER & A RIDE ALONG A PRISTINE BEACH

In the morning we will have a nice 3-4 hours ride along the Brazilian border, sometimes riding in Uruguay and others in Brazil ! After a special picnic lunch at a working estancia, riders may have a pleasant "siesta" discovering that gauchos saddles are so comfortable to ride as wells as to sleep! Then we will have a fast-pace ride along the wonderful, isolated ocean beach of "Barra Chuy". Visitors seldom reach this beach so we can enjoy a long, exhilarating canter with no signs of habitation as we ride across the pure white sands alongside the Atlantic ocean. We arrive 22km (12 miles) further south at "La Coronilla" and stay at small beachside hotel.



Day 4

SANTA TERESA NATIONAL PARK, DOLPHINS & SHIPWRECKS

Today we will ride south, alternating beaches with coastal hills, sand dunes, pine forests into the immense Santa Teresa National Park. The center piece of the park is a fort started in 1762 by the Portuguese to defend the edge of their territories then completed by the Spaniards who took it by assault just a year later. This was just the start of a succession of conquering, loosing and reconquering the fort; it was not until 1825 that the newly forming Uruguay finally captured and held the fort. The fort is surrounded by 3000 hectares of forest containing over 2 million trees the majority from other parts of the world and, after a picnic lunch we will enjoy riding along the forest trails, down to the beach. We pass a shipwreck buried in the sand, one of many along this treacherous coast. Indeed, Polonio, where we ride later is named after a Spanish galleon that went down just off the point. Luckily Beagle with Charles Darwin aboard did not succumb to this fate and Darwin spent quite some time in Uruguay collecting species and most likely starting to formulate his theories of evolution. Most days there is the wonderful sight of dolphins feeding in the bay. After a traditional picnic close to the fortress or on the beach depending on the weather , we can choose between been driven or canter back along the water's edge to the hotel for barbecued fresh fish, Uruguayan wine and a pleasant overnight listening to the waves.



Day 5

CABO POLONIO / SHIFTING SANDS & SEA LIONS

The day starts with a drive to the ocean coast. We will meet our horses and ride to the hidden Briosco Lagoon and along the beach of Valizas. After enjoying a picnic lunch, we will ride into the desert! This area has been declared a natural animal reserve and a Biosphere Natural Reserve by UNESCO. We will ride to Cabo Polonio, a charming fishing village which can only be reached by horse or SUV trucks.

The fascinating part of the area is the huge area of shifting sand dunes, as we ride through it is possible to imagine that we are right in the middle of the Sahara. Dinner and accommodation at Posada La Perla.



Day 6

WETLANDS, LAGOON & OMBU FOREST

After breakfast, we will visit the light house, the seals and sea lions that populate the small islands and make up one of the largest populations of seals in the world; very occasionally we spot a migrating whale. Riders can swim in one of the most beautiful beaches of the country. We will then begin our ride towards the wetlands of Rocha. We will ride along the Castillos Lagoon and across an amazing untouched landscape of Palm groves and Ombu Forest. We will enjoy a picnic lunch on the way before reaching the lovely & charming Estancia Guardia del Monte, a traditional working estancia. Accommodation and dinner at Guardia del Monte.



Day 7

CATTLE AND SHEEP WORK WITH THE GAUCHOS ON THE ESTANCIA

Morning ride along the estancia's fields. We will have the chance to work alongside the gauchos and their trusty dogs as they tend to the cattle and sheep on this working ranch. The work varies depending on the time of the year, but the gauchos always welcome a bit of help checking and moving the stock or putting animals in the corrals. Sometimes a lame animal has to be caught and tended to. The wonderful, friendly gauchos with their berets and their knives tucked into their colorful belts all seem to have been born on a horse and it is a delight to be riding with them.

We will enjoy lunch at the neighbour estancia Barra Grande where we will enjoy lunch. We will then ride back to Guardia del Monte. Dinner and accommodation.



Day 8

THE SMALL TOWNS OF CASTILLOS

The day starts with a lovely breakfast of homemade bread, jams and cakes, admiring the views of the countryside. We will start our ride towards the small town of Castillos where we will visit a local "gaucho store". Traditional bridles, typical riding "bombachas" (riding trousers), gaucho hats and colorful ponchos will be available to admire and buy! We will then enjoy a picnic lunch and say goodbye to our horses before heading back to Montevideo.