

Riding Package: Highland & Canyon Explorer*

8 days / 7 nights - Starts every second Saturday of the month

This is a popular progressive ride for the advanced or expert rider. Unlike trekking, this is real, open-range riding with many canters and gallops. Each day offers something new and gives you the opportunity to discover the real Mexico. Horses will be changed throughout the week so you can be sure to have a fresh horse at all times.

Saturday: Arrival

You'll be met at the airport and be driven directly to the ranch. Get settled into your room, explore this beautiful place and discover its many amenities. If time permits, the first afternoon ride takes you to our local village, San Agustin, with its ancient church from the 1700s. During this ride you will be able to familiarize yourself with your horse.

Afterwards relax in the hot tub overlooking the waterfalls with a margarita or go for a swim in our infinity pool. Enjoy your first four-course dinner - a fusion of Mexican and international cuisine – served in the ranch's dining room.



Sunday: Heroes de Carranza - La Copa - San Juan Daxthi - Santa Cruz

Leaving the ranch, the trail winds through farm land and you will see the rural life of Mexico, local farmers tending to their daily tasks and using traditional methods to work the land. You will notice an intricate network of irrigation canals used to water the crops until the rains come.



Then cross dry stony valleys up to the cliffs at 'la Copa' in Santiago Oxtoc. The waterfalls spring from the rocks and fall into a martini glass shaped rock formation. The sign on the wall says 'viva el 3 de Mayo 1842" or "cheers to the 3 of May 1842". This celebrates when the waterfall miraculously sprang from the wall, a phenomenon attributed to the Virgin of Guadalupe. She is venerated in a small shrine just before the waterfall.

Upon leaving the shrine, you will climb up to the top of the cliffs and onto the high plains. On clear days the views from this stark rocky plateau are spectacular. Make sure

you are well prepared with sun cream as at midday the light is very intense.

Lunch is taken in San Juan Daxthi. On Sundays there is a charming local fruit and vegetable market, on holidays the town hosts a small rodeo. A two-hour ride, with more opportunities to canter and gallop, bring you back to the ranch.

Monday: Cerro del Ahorcado - San Antonio - Xochitlan de las Flores



This ride takes you first to the 'Cerro del Ahorcado' (the hanged man's hill), and then into the steep valley of San Antonio. Both the views from the hill and scenery in the canyon are superb. Don't forget your camera!

Eventually the trail reaches the small restaurant in San Antonio where you'll take lunch. This restaurant is unique in offering the dubious delights of Mexican 'Telenovelas' (soap operas) on the TV and a collection of 'Santa Muerte' dead saint statuettes lovingly displayed in the corner.

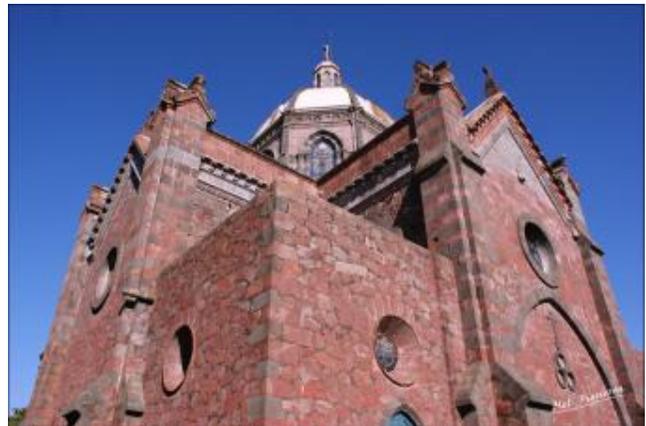
From here you ride to the village of 'Xochitlan de las Flores' the village of the flowers, after which, the trails follow the hill contours and lead us back to the plains and to the ranch.

Tuesday: San Miguel de la Victoria - Comunidad - Canalejas - Cathedral de Canalejas

The journey today starts in the extinct volcanic landscape of the region. After a little stop for a drink and a snack in San Miguel de la Victoria, the landscape changes as the trails lead into the green forests of Canalejas. These mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands have delightful tracks for cantering along.

Lunch is taken in the town of Canalejas. Here the barbecue restaurants offer tacos filled to the brim with succulent meat. Suitably tasty vegetarian options can also be arranged.

After lunch and a leg-stretching walk around the small town, the trail rises to the Cathedral of Canalejas. This church, set atop a hill, dominates the local view. It was built on the spot where an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe was found in a rock, which now forms part of the altar.



The ride from the cathedral meanders back through the small surrounding villages of Canalejas to the overnight stables for the horses. Here you are met by the ranch staff and driven back to the ranch for a well-earned swim and relaxing hot soak before dinner.

Wednesday: Canalejas - Lago de Huapango - Agua Escondida



The first part of the ride follows forest trails and crosses hill slope fields; but the real treat of the day is to be found in the wide, flat, well-irrigated lowlands of the lake of Huapango (aprox. 10.000 acres when full), famous for its fishing.

This day's riding takes you to a wide open landscape of low impact agriculture and common rangeland. A paradise for any rider, as there are endless trails to canter and gallop.

Enjoy a picnic on the shores of lake, relax, and prepare for the two hour ride through the small villages and woods to the 'Agua

Escondida', where the horses are left stabled overnight. Transportation brings you back to the ranch (aprox. 30 min) where another mouthwatering dinner awaits.

Thursday: Agua Escondida - San Francisco Soyaniquilpan - El Fresno - Atlantes de Tula

Today you are heading south out of the hilly country and woodland trails to San Francisco / Soyaniquilpan. The farm land here is flat, rich, well irrigated and fertile. Taking trails to the west of the 'Cerro de las Brujas' (the witch's mountain) the paths divide up the large fields.

In the village of El Fresno Village the horses can be rested at the local shop and then the trail continues down the cobbled streets past the ruins of the hacienda and into a canyon.



This delightful valley leads to a river lined with old cedar trees. Just before reaching the clearing and popular picnic site, the trail takes a small detour up to a small shrine to the Virgin of Guadalupe at the summit. The best waterfalls in the region are hidden just behind the cedar trees and well worth a visit.

After lunch, a short drive then takes you to the archaeological site of the Atlantes of Tula*, which is thought to be the most important Toltec site in Mexico. It gives a great insight into the rich history of this region. In

Tula there is a fine market as well as a couple of Western /charro outfitters, so guests wishing to buy hats, boots, belts, belt buckles, shirts, saddles and charro riding tack, can shop to their hearts desire.

Friday: San Miguel de Las Piedras - Los Organos - Vista Hermosa

Back into a more rugged landscape, you would think you were on a western movie set. Ride to 'Los Organos' a place forgotten in time. The trail, passing San Miguel de las Piedras leads into the canyon where wild horses roam. You'll visit the 'Peregrinos Petrificados' a natural rock formation, where it is said that "the Pilgrims turned into stone because they did not want to finish their pilgrimage". Your lunchtime picnic will be taken by the river. Goats and sheep graze nearby. Here the river is mixed with a volcanic warm spring so it is quite nice for a swim while the horses are resting.

Homeward bound you climb up out of the canyon. Once you reach the top, you are back on the trails near the village of 'Heroes de Caranza'. After a short drink break, ride back over the railway crossing and back over the open plains and small villages to the ranch. This ride offers the chance to canter / gallop home, sound in the knowledge that after such a long day out a soothing swim and a hot shower await.



Saturday: Departure Day

If you have time, enjoy a short morning ride before we bring you to the airport to catch your flight.

** Itinerary subject to change. Four riders (minimum) must be scheduled for this ride in order to proceed. Supplemental charges apply for this package. Please contact us for rate details.*