



## Riding Package: Magic of the Mexican Highlands

13 days / 12 nights – Ask for dates

Extended progressive ride combined with sightseeing for horse lovers who would also like to get to know the rich culture of Mexico during their once in a lifetime riding holiday. Rides suited to ability.

Get immersed in the feelings, colors, vibes and flavor of this incredible place.

**Day 1: Arrival** ...unless you arrive a day or two before the ride to get into the spirit of things

You'll be met at the airport and be driven directly to the ranch (*transp. included*). Get settled into your room, explore your beautiful surroundings and discover its many amenities. If time permits, the first afternoon ride takes you to our local village, San Agustin, with its quaint church from the 1700s. During this ride you will be able to familiarize yourself with the style of riding and the horses.

After this, relax in the hot tub overlooking the waterfalls with a margarita from the open, all-inclusive bar or go for a swim in the infinity pool. Enjoy your first 4-course dinner – a fusion of Mexican and international cuisine – served in the ranch's dining room and get to know the other guests a little more.



**Day 2: Cerro del Ahorcado & Tula – Atlantes Ruins, Western Apparel & Mexican Tack Shops**

Saddle up to ride through the village of Vista Hermosa (which means 'beautiful view'). From there, a steep climb takes you up the Cerro del Ahorcado (the "hanged man's hill") offering a 360° view of the surrounding region. A canter beneath the eucalyptus trees takes us down to a lake where the horses love to splash along the shore...

In the afternoon, a short drive takes you to the archaeological site of the Atlantes of Tula. On top of one of the pyramids you will find the great Atlantes, four huge and impressive warrior statues of black basalt. This is followed by a visit to the town center of Tula and some shops around it. Enjoy the vibrant colors and life of the main square before heading back for dinner.

**Day 3: Cerro de las Caballos – Ex Hacienda La Goleta**

Start the ride today crossing an old stone bridge 'El Puente del Muitle' (built in the late 17th century). The horses follow the beautiful green path towards the 'Cerro de los Caballos', the horses' mountain. The flat fields and quiet unpaved roads offer excellent gallops for confident riders, real thrilling riding.



On the way back encounter ancient churches, lakes and rivers. At the end take a stroll to the old hacienda (estate) of 'La Goleta'



which was built around 1690 by the Spaniards. The wrought iron windows were brought from Sweden, the tiles covering the front porch from Spain and you can still admire part of the original blue wall paintings.

#### Day 4: **San Miguel de Allende – Architecture, Arts & Shopping**

Recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, the town of San Miguel de Allende is our stop for today. Without a doubt, this place is incredible. Also called 'The Heart of Mexico', it will definitely put Mexico in your heart.

A great trip for shoppers and a real treasure for architecture lovers, this colonial cityboasts beautiful churches, small town squares, picturesque alleys and many hidden patios (Mexican courtyards). You can find coffee shops, antiques, handicrafts, jewelry, paintings and many other things while you wander around this enchanted town.

We will be spending the night in San Miguel, ensuring you fall under the magic spell this city casts on you. Enjoy our special Sunset Surprise.



#### Day 5: **San Miguel de Allende – La Aurora & Cactus Gardens**

Absorb the special atmosphere of San Miguel during breakfast in a lovely courtyard. Take time for a stroll through some other parts of town. Visit the old street market and/or La Aurora – an old factory turned into an exclusive arts and crafts gallery.



Before heading back to the Rancho, you will visit the famous cactus garden which was sanctified as a peace zone by the Dalai Lama. Enjoy the many different species of native plants and animals and an impressive final view of San Miguel.

#### Day 6: **San Miguel de las Piedras – Los Organos – Peregrinos Petrificados**

Today's ride takes you back in time to a more rugged landscape, like that of a western movie set, to the spiritual and magical 'Los Organos'. The trail, passing San Miguel de las Piedras, leads into the canyon where wild horses still roam. You'll visit the 'Peregrinos Petrificados' a natural rock formation, where it is said that "the Pilgrims, who found the place so stunning, turned into stone

because they did not want to finish their pilgrimage".

Your lunchtime picnic will be taken by a river where the water is mixed with a volcanic warm spring, inviting a nice swim while the horses are resting.

Homeward bound, you climb up the canyon and pass through the village of Carranza with its church dating from 1697. On to the Presa of La Goleta, where the soft flat lake shore offers you a final opportunity to canter or gallop, arriving at the ranch late afternoon.



## Day 7: **Xochitlan de las Flores – Ex Hacienda San Antonio**

Today's ride takes you along a picturesque canyon to the village of 'Xochitlan'. You will be amazed by the sure-footedness of your four-legged friends. Now and then you will enjoy some easy canters between the corn fields.

'Xochitlan de las Flores' got its name from the many flowers that grow here due to the temperate climate. Experience the leisurely lifestyle, visit the old church and have a little rest and some refreshment.



On the way to San Antonio, the lunch stop is in a local 'Fonda'. Heading back the countryside is once again like a western movie. Then you follow the 'Camino Real' an old Spanish road used by the royal carriages.

## Day 8: **Lake District & Local Market in San Juan Daxthi – La Copa**

Start your ride crossing the Rio Rosas and passing through the quaint little village of 'Los Colorados'. Heading along country lanes you pass through 'Heroes de Carranza' before entering the Lake District, which offers

incredible views and varied terrain for some delightful and diverse riding.

At the small town of 'San Juan Daxthi', enjoy a local, traditional lunch, before taking a stroll through the vibrant, little market. In the afternoon, the open fields heading back to the ranch are perfect for a canter and the occasional gallop too, if you like. Local cowboys (charros) and farmers use the myriad of trails to tend to their farm plots and small herds.

If you would prefer you may also take an optional excursion to Tepotzotlan instead.

## Day 9: **Tandeje, El Fresno & The Waterfalls**

This ride takes you to the old hacienda of Tandeje and to the waterfalls of Fresno with its breath-taking, ancient trees. The climb on your horse takes you up to the little sanctuary of the Virgin of Guadalupe from where you have a beautiful view into the canyon below.

This afternoon you have some time to relax at the pool or go for another ride if you prefer.



## Day 10: **Agua Escondida – San Francisco Soyaniquilpan**

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 and offer you many chances for long canters and gallops.

## Day 11: Teotihuacan – Archeological Site of the Pyramids of the Sun & the Moon

Today, you'll visit Teotihuacan – the place where the gods were born. The Aztecs believe that the gods created the universe here. This site will prove to be a fascinating and worthwhile experience! Many people today believe that Teotihuacán is a place of great spiritual energy, and it is quite common to witness people meditating at the top of the main pyramids.

Before lunch, you will visit a silver shop. As well as shopping you will learn about a special drink known as Pulque (distilled agave liquor) made in honor of the god of fertility. In the evening, enjoy another relaxing sunset at the Rancho followed by cocktails and dinner.



## Day 12: Forest & Cathedral of Canalejas

The journey today starts in the extinct volcanic terrain of the region and then the landscape changes, as the trails lead into the green forests of Canalejas. These mixed deciduous and coniferous woodlands have delightful tracks for cantering.

Lunch is taken in the town of Canalejas. Here the 'Barbacoa' 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 cathedral, set on the summit of 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.

## Final Day: Departure Day with Market in Jilotepec - *If time permits before departure*

Today is market day in the town of Jilotepec, approximately a 30-minute drive from the ranch. You will discover the biggest weekly market in the region with all types of livestock, colorful fruits and vegetables, fashionable sombreros, fine leather boots, tack for horse and rider and great mounds of chilies on offer.

Enjoy a hearty lunch and some riding or R&R before we bring you to the airport (*transp. incl.*) to catch your flight. You can of course extend your stay at the Rancho for a few days more of fun.



**Important:** Itinerary subject to change!

You may always change a cultural excursion for more time in the saddle or if you wish you may book optional excursions – ask for details.

***Hasta la Vista... See you soon at Rancho Las Cascadas!***