



EQUIBERIA

2006 WORKING HOLIDAYS - STUDENT PROGRAMME

The Programme

The programme is designed for committed, experienced riders and horse people, who would relish the opportunity to join our exclusive horse riding holidays company as a back up guide and groom.

Requirements

You have to be an experienced and excellent rider. Our weight limit for students is 80kgs and minimum age of 24. You are expected to be generally fit, as well as riding fit, as days can be long. A minimum of 8 years continued riding is required and we would expect you to be currently riding every day in preparation for your stay with us; your riding ability will be tested before you are allowed to accompany any ride. We will prevent you from riding as back up if we do not feel that your abilities are sufficient, though obviously we are very reluctant to be in this position.

Our groups are multinational, mainly English and French speaking.

Driving licence is required.

Spanish is not required although some knowledge of Spanish will be very useful.

Duties

Our horse rides cater for groups of 4 to 10 reasonably experienced riders. For our guests it is a very special holiday and we work very hard to ensure that it exceeds their expectations. Our hospitality and our horses, are the main reasons why we have a lot of repeat guests coming back.

You will be dealing with clients regularly so it is important to us that you are well spoken and presented. An open, friendly nature and a natural affinity for people will help to make your stay and theirs more memorable.

We schedule rides every two weeks. Your duties will involve mainly two different routines: (a) during the rides and (b) in between rides

(a) During the rides. You will be a back up guide and help as a groom and as a catering person with the support vehicle.

As a back-up guide, you will be assisting Emilio or María Elena, both owners and guides, in ensuring the safety of the group at all times. This means helping to keep an eye on everybody in the group, for example, assisting when a rider needs help or checking that canters go smoothly and that no riders have problems in handling their horses.

As a groom, you will help with the feeding, grooming, saddling and unsaddling and the usual care of the horses.

As a catering person you will accompany the ride in the support vehicle, helping with the luggage, setting the tables for the picnic lunches and overall helping with the meals and aperitifs, which are exquisite and up to high quality. You may occasionally have to drive the support vehicle so, as said above, driving license is required.

(b) In between rides. You will help with the feeding of the horses at home and the daily duties around horses. Most of the horses are always in the fields, and are fed in the fields. Some of the foals/fillies could be in the stables. During this week you will help clean all the tack and shower the horses before the following ride.

The well being of our horses is of the greatest importance to us. We ensure they are maintained to the highest standards of veterinary care, grooming and stable duties. With 30 horses of all ages, sizes and temperaments it is usually more than enough to keep us busy. They are all lovely horses and with very good stable manners. You will love them .

Duration

There are two positions available at any time, which can be taken for ideally a minimum of 3 months. We recommend a longer stay to fully appreciate the experience.

Accommodation will be in an apartment in the village with individual rooms and a communal bathroom. During the rides all meals and drinks (during the meals) are included. During the rides you will stay in the same hotels where the guests stay, which are very comfortable and often luxurious (there could be some exceptions if rooms were not available).

In between, you will live in your own apartment and cater for yourself - the apartment has cooking facilities, fridge, washing machine (fully equipped). Shopping in the village is simple: just one supermarket, a butchers, a weekly market - very rural life!

In a 3-month stay, you will share the back up of five week-rides with another student and then ride a little in between rides, depending on the training and work, and always with Emilio's guidance.

At the beginning of the season, the whole month of March and April are spent exercising the horses for the rides. So over those months there is more daily riding involved. The rides start at the beginning of April.

In the weeks in between rides you will have 2 free days.

Options

In addition to the practical horse experience you will learn about the rural life in Spain, about this very little known part of Spain - out of the tourist sites, and learn or improve your Spanish (nobody can speak any English in the village).

During the weeks in between rides you will have two days off, so you will be able to visit around - Avila, Salamanca, Segovia, Madrid. Public transport from/to Navarredonda de Gredos is not very frequent. From Avila, train and bus communications are excellent.

This is a beautiful part of the world, in the mountains, with a lovely pristine river where to swim in the summer (there is a public swimming pool in the village too). An ideal area for walks in the pinewoods, in the mountains. In the summer the village is livelier with some local tourism and quite a few times in the summer there are "fiestas" with open-air bands playing in the main square of the village.

The team: we are María Elena and Emilio, owners and guides, a married couple; we plan to have two students at any time during the season, sharing the apartment and alternating the duties; and then a local man helps with the horses left at home when we are gone for the week rides.

The Gredos

The Sierra of Gredos is one of the most characteristic regions of the Iberian Peninsula situated between the provinces of Avila, Caceres and Salamanca, and crossed by the Duero and Tajo rivers.

The Sierra de Gredos mountain range lies in central Spain within easy reach of Southwest of Madrid, and much of it has a Regional Park status. This majestic stretch of mountains lying across the centre of Spain like a titanic rampart reaches its highest point at the Pico Almanzor (2,592m/7,776 ft).

The landscapes are full of light and colour. Gredos has a very diverse display of flora and fauna through the Tormes, Corneja, Alberche and Tietar river valleys. The absence of population in the region of Gredos has contributed in keeping the nature of Gredos intact until the present. The villages were settled in the valleys and they still hold their uniqueness in their architecture and traditions.

We are about 2 hours Southwest of Madrid, one-hour drive from Ávila.

Our rides take place in the provinces of Toledo and Ávila, in the heart of Castilla.

Getting there

Flights to Madrid and then a train to Avila. Very easy connections.

2006 Dates

Ideally periods such as

March - May

June - August

September - mid November

Stays can overlap.

Sample Itinerary

March - May

Weeks 1 - 4

These introductory weeks are spent exercising the horses and getting to know horses, learning about work dynamics, people, village, and way around.

We have a long weekend programmed at the end of March with a small group of guests, which will be your introduction as a back-up guide.

Weeks 5 – end

Our first ride in April 2-9, so this would be the first week ride to join as a back up guide and groom.

Over a 3-month period 2 students will back up 5 week-rides, alternating the duties as back-up guide and the escort duties for the ride.

Over the March-May period students will be staying at one location first (south of the Gredos mountains), where we start the season, and at the Northern location by the end of May.

So you will get to do 3 completely different week-rides!!

Please see our website for full information about the rides and some photos of our dear horses.

www.equiberia.com

Prices

What you will receive (3 month period)

- ◆ **Riding:**
Back-up guide in 5 week rides, for full days or half days alternating the riding/escort duties with the other student. Beautiful rides in a very diverse landscape, real travel on horseback.
At the beginning of the season, March and April, riding nearly everyday, exercising the horses for the rides.
- ◆ **Accommodation:**
Weeks in between the rides, accommodation in an apartment we rent in the village, with a private bedroom sharing a bathroom. Fully equipped apartment, with a fridge, washing machine, etc.
During the rides, accommodation in the same hotels where the guests stay, up to very high standards, very comfortable and often luxurious, sharing the room with the other student.
- ◆ All the meals and drinks during the rides (including alcoholic drinks during the meals)
- ◆ Practical experience working with horses in a well-established and experienced riding holiday company
- ◆ Two free days per week in the weeks in between the rides
- ◆ Transfers from/to Avila at the beginning/end of the programme

Excluded are the meals and other daily costs during the weeks in between the rides; the local trips and independent excursions, flights, insurance, visas, telephone calls.

Please bear in mind that life in rural Spain is very affordable. We usually have two week-rides each month, so you will only have to cater yourselves for the other two weeks. For the weeks in between rides, for food and basic expenses you could do with a very limited amount of money.

Costs:

3 months - 12 Weeks:

2100Euros / 1450 GBP

(As a reference the price of our week holidays is 1500Euros / 1000GBP and above)
The amount we charge barely covers the cost of your accommodation during the rides.

For the weeks in between the rides we estimate a basic budget of 100-120Euros per week (just for food and basics).

Contact us

If you are interested in joining us, please email María Elena at equiberia@equiberia.es and we will send you the application form.

Conditions and Cancellation Policies:

- Medical and accident travel insurance is required. If from the EU, the European Health Insurance card is very convenient (previously E-111 Form) .
- It is required that you sign an indemnity form on arrival, you cannot be permitted to ride before signing.
- You will be briefed and trained for your duties during your programme.
- We require a 50% deposit on the day you decide to join this program (non refundable).
- The balance is due 21 days prior arrival.
- Cancellations: The deposit is non-refundable. However, if you have a serious reason for a cancellation we might consider postponing your stay. If you drop out completely the whole amount will be held 21 days prior arrival.
- Payment means. You can transfer the money into a Spanish account in Euros, GBP or US Dollars.

For inquiries and application forms please contact María Elena at equiberia@equiberia.es



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