



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Brazil

Ride Information Sheet 2012

These rides take place in Coxilha Rica, a high plateau in the interior of the Southern state of Santa Catarina, a beautiful, diverse landscape and the heart of gaucho territory. The rides follow routes riding from fazenda (ranch) to fazenda and you are welcomed by friendly, music loving gauchos and their agile criollo horses. Rolling hills of open grassland and forested valleys stretch for miles and miles and the sense of vastness is inspiring. The hospitality of the region is exceptional and delicious barbecues and caipirinhas await you at every stop. UNESCO maintains that the gaucho way of life is the liveliest equestrian culture in the world. The Brazilian Gauchos live in the southern states of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul and most have roots in Europe due to the large numbers of immigrants, pioneers from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Holland and Belgium, who arrived there in the 18th & 19th centuries.

Dates The rides are run from set dates between October and May. Please see the dates set out at the end of this information sheet and contact us for availability. Set date rides will be confirmed when there are a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 riders. Private rides for groups can be run by arrangement on request from dates to suit between October and May, subject to availability. Please contact us to discuss dates, your plans and availability.



The Horses The horses used are mostly the local Criollo breed and there are about 35 horses at the base. They average around 15hh and are very well suited to the terrain, used to working cattle, and are a responsive and enjoyable ride. Tack is South American style with saddles similar to western, covered with a large sheepskin - very comfortable for long hours of riding. The horses are trained western style so are used to neck reining and a relaxed riding style, with a loose contact with the mouth. Saddlebags are provided for personal belongings and vehicles transport most equipment. There is a rider weight limit of 120 kgs (18 ½ stone) on these rides but please contact us to check suitable horses are available if your weight is over 90kg.

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Riding The rides include an average 6 hours riding a day, usually with a long break for lunch. The route progresses from 'fazenda' to 'fazenda' and there is a chance on one day at least to get involved with cattle work, helping the gauchos. The rides are lead by Paul Coudenys, of Belgian origin, who speaks fluent English (as well as French, Dutch, Spanish & Portuguese) and Roberio Bianchini whose family, of Italian origin, has farmed the region for generations. Riders are also accompanied Paul's gaucho companions Gian & Paulo, who are on hand to help with tacking up, untacking and so on. The horses are generally prepared / tacked up for you. Rides are run for a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 guests.

Pace The pace of the rides will vary during the trip according to the terrain and ability of the group, but overall it is moderate with lots of good chances to canter across open fields and rolling grassland.

Riding Experience To participate in these rides you must be a reasonably competent rider who is used to riding in open country and over varied terrain. As a minimum to join one of the set date rides, you should be comfortable, well balanced and secure in the saddle at a walk, trot and fast canter and able to control a well schooled horse at all paces. You will always enjoy your trip much more if you are reasonably riding fit and if you are not used to riding for several hours a day, we strongly recommend regular practice before you go to get used to the hours you will spend in the saddle.



Terrain The rides take place in rolling hills at an altitude of around 1000 meters (3300ft). This is excellent cattle country and the terrain is predominately large open fields, interspersed with some stands of woodland, including 'Araucaria' (monkey puzzle), a very different tree here and a truly wonderful sight in their native environment. There are rivers to cross and small lakes where you may swim the horses. Some valleys are thick with sub tropical forest and you follow paths through this beautiful lush vegetation.





Accommodation Accommodation is in authentic working 'fazendas' (ranches). These are often lovely colonial buildings of the 18th century, built of stone and wood with tile or corrugated iron rooves. The properties have wonderful charm but the standard of rooms does vary and on some nights accommodation is quite simple. Rooms are mostly twin / double but some of the fazendas have 4 beds to a room. There are usually 2 or 3 bathrooms which are shared between the group - these may be a short walk away, down a corridor or downstairs. On each night there will be a hot shower and a comfortable bed so there is not too much hardship. Single rooms cannot usually be guaranteed but will be allocated if at all possible. Beds at some of the fazendas are quite small so if you are tall you may prefer to put your mattress on the floor.



Meals Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included each day and a real effort is made with the food on the ride. Brazilian cooking is influenced by a mixture of European, Indian, African and Asian cuisine. The main dishes in Brazil are rice and beans (feijao) and sauces, with lots of meat or fish and salads. Each region has its own speciality and in the south the delicious grilled meat (churrasco) is a great favourite among gauchos and visitors alike. The meals prepared on the ride are mainly cooked on wood burning stoves, adding that special flavour, and you will eat delicious homemade dishes of the Santa Catarina district. Bottled soft drinks, local beer and wine are available for purchase. Beer is very cheap (about £1.50 a can) but wines are mostly imported from Chile or Argentina and so expensive (about £20-£25 a bottle). You are usually welcomed at fazendas with a jug of 'caipirinha'. 'Cachaça' a kind of rum, is also on the house.

Weather The climate in southern Brazil is sub-tropical, warm to hot and very pleasant for riding. May to September are the coolest driest months with temperatures rarely falling below 10 degrees C (50's F). February to April can be hot, with daytime temperatures up to and above 30 degrees C, though a little cooler in the evenings. In October and November the evenings and mornings are cooler but days can still be hot, up to 30 C. Rain storms are possible throughout the year and there can often be short sharp rainstorms.

What to bring We will send you a list of things we suggest you bring when you book.



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DATES Gaucho do Brazil Rides are scheduled for the following dates. We can also arrange rides for private groups on request. If you are thinking of booking, please call us for an update.

8th to 15th January
22nd to 29th January
5th to 12th February
4th to 11th March
18th to 25th March
1st to 8th April
8th to 15th April
22nd to 29th April
6th to 13th May

28th October to 4th November
11th to 18th November
25th November to 2nd December
9th to 16th December
16th to 23rd December

RATES

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are now quoted in Euros. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the Euro/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Rate: Euros 1590 per person (assumes a minimum of 5 riders)

This rate **INCLUDES** all riding, guiding and equipment, 7 nights twin accommodation, meals as indicated below and transfer by vehicle from / to the airport in Florianopolis on days 1 & 8.

The rate does **EXCLUDES** international flights to Brazil and taxes, personal medical / travel insurance (compulsory), personal expenditure such as your bar bill at hotels/ the estancias, laundry or telephone calls, transfers outside set times, local departure taxes, any visa fees or any tips you might wish to leave.

Single rooms - If you are travelling alone and would like a single room then we will do our best to book this for you. There is not usually a charge for this but single rooms cannot be guaranteed and will depend on group size / mix etc.



Example itinerary - Gaucho do Brasil Ride An example itinerary for the 7 night ride is set out below although please note that this is only an example. **On each date the ride is different**, using different Fazendas etc and riding a slightly different route. Day by day arrangements are also subject to change and may be altered if your guide considers this advisable or if local conditions require.

Day 1 You will be met on arrival at Florianopolis airport*. There will then be a transfer, departing at about 14.30, to Coxilha Rica and Fazenda da Chapada near the town of Lages. A welcome drink when you arrive at the fazenda and meet the gauchos and the horses who will be your companions for the trip. Time to settle into the comfortable double rooms before dinner. After a delicious dinner you can join your hosts for a drink at the bar of the fazenda. The gaúchos will doubtless bring out guitars and accordians, serenading you with the local music. (D)

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Day 2 After breakfast you saddle the horses early and leave around 08.00 in the direction of Fazenda Ferradura. You ride through beautiful rolling green countryside, dotted with Araucaria trees, and across pristine rivers. After a ride of 4 hours you arrive at the typical fazenda where lunch is waiting. After a good meal and a siesta you set off riding again towards Fazenda Rodeio Bonito through the beautiful landscape of Coxilha Rica. You may join the well-preserved colonial Tropeiro Route which for 250 years was the trade route along which cattle and mules were driven between Rio Grande do Sul and Argentina to Sao Paulo. The gauchos would spend months away from home, riding thousands of kilometers, driving their cattle to market. The route, a corridor made of stone, about 4 meters wide, was built by slaves and runs for hundreds of kilometres through Coxilha Rica and the State of Santa Catarina. Tropeiro means Trooper - the route of the troops. Dinner and the night at Fazenda Rodeio Bonito (B,L,D).



Day 3 After a hearty breakfast you mount your criollos and set off through a rugged Coxilha landscape towards Fazenda São João. The route is up and down, over rolling hills, with trots and canters, river crossings and through valleys with waterfalls. Stop for lunch at Fazenda Dona Vera. Caipirinhas will be waiting for you and there should be time for a siesta before you set off on the afternoon ride. Climbing to the top of a green mountain you have a fantastic panoramic view of the Coxilha which, since colonial times, has been a great cattle region. Most of fazendas (cattle ranches) consist of several thousand acres and the buildings are over 200 years old. Arrive at the beautiful colonial Fazenda São João in the evening. After a refreshing shower and a delicious dinner, a soft bed awaits you. (B,L,D)

Day 4 After breakfast you saddle the horses for a typical gaucha day. Those who wish can join the gauchos, perhaps helping to round-up cattle, driving the herd back to the corral where they may be vaccinated or dipped - basically getting involved in whatever work is going on. You may want to learn how to rope cattle, or let the gauchos teach you the tricks of the trade! Those who prefer not to participate in the activities can either watch or ride out to explore the farm. After an active day you can relax with a cool beer or a warming 'Cachaça' (local rum). Dinner and the night at Fazenda São João. (B,L,D)

Day 5 Breakfast and set off riding. Set off riding at about 08.00, heading for the high pampas of Coxilha Rica - the views are wonderful. The group of horses, the Gauchos, the landscape, the sense of freedom - all make for a wonderful ride. Stop for a barbecue lunch at Fazenda do Zago and in the afternoon ride on, another 3 hours, to Fazenda Lua Cheia (meaning 'full moon' and owned by a local vet). Dinner and the night at Fazenda Lua Cheia (B,L,D)



Day 6 Today you have a later start, with a leisurely breakfast before setting off. On the ride today you will no doubt pass other gauchos who are busy at work as you cross the cattle country. Their way of life has changed little in the last hundred years, with horses still the most important part of their everyday work. The ride today climbs and descends but with plenty of opportunities to canter on. Arrive back at Fazenda Rodeio Bonito where the back up team will be waiting with tea, cakes and caipirinhas. Dinner and overnight at the fazenda. (B,L,D)



Day 7 A relaxed morning, setting off at around 10.00am and riding for about 3 hours to Fazenda Ferradura. Lunch awaits you and then in the afternoon you might ride out again, exploring the high plateau where you may find the remains of indian settlements from 500 hundred years ago. In the evening there will be a delicious farewell dinner while the musical gauchos bring their guitars and accordion into the fazenda to serenade you with their best songs. A pleasant evening of music, rum and perhaps even dancing. Overnight at Fazenda Ferradura. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Breakfast and after saying goodbye to the horses and gauchos you set off driving for Florianopolis. Arrive Florianopolis at around midday for your retrun flight or onward journey. (B)



Flight and Travel information: The meeting point for these rides is in Florianopolis and arrival should be at about noon on the first day. At the end of the ride you are driven back to Florianopolis to arrive about noon again, so an early afternoon flight works best. Flights to Florianopolis from London are usually via São Paulo. British Airways fly every day to São Paulo. Tam (Brazilian Airlines) also fly from London direct to São Paulo. It is also possible fly with one of the US airlines via North America. Rates vary with the season and airline but expect to pay between £750 and £950 per person for an economy return. **Please call us if you would like further information on flights or for a flight inclusive quote (our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213).**

***NB** The airport at Lages is due to open sometime in 2012 and there will be flights from São Paulo to Lages. At this stage we will change the meeting point from Florianopolis to Lages to save the 3 hour road transfer.

General visa and health information (NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas If you hold a full British Passport and are visiting Brazil for a holiday only and staying less than 90 days you do not need to arrange a visa in advance.

Health No inoculations are legally required for Brazil if travelling from Europe but for travel in the Santa Catarina state Tetanus, Diphtheria and Hepatitis A are recommended. A Rabies vaccination may also be recommended. If you are travelling on in Brazil after the ride you might need additional inoculations - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

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