



RIDE WORLD WIDE

Mexico 2012

Ride Information Sheet

These rides take place in the Valle de Bravo, about three hours drive west of Mexico City. Rides begin from a 'finca' (farm) in the old colonial town of Valle de Bravo. Founded in 1539 on what was once an Aztec sacrificial site, the town is picturesquely situated on the edge of a lake and is surrounded by forested hills. It is a popular weekend retreat for the local people of Mexico City, yet it still retains a traditional flavour and charm. Cobble streets wind between houses with decorative red tiled roofs, balconies and bougainvillea clad walls, the main square in front of the church is lined with flame trees that flower in November and a band plays at the bandstand each Sunday afternoon. The rides are run by Jose and Lucia Schraivesande and explore the hills around the town, circumnavigating the lake and including visits to various local points of interest. Jose has been involved with horses for most of his life and guides all the rides himself (often accompanied by Lucia). Both he and Lucia speak excellent fluent English and are welcoming, experienced hosts. One of the highlights each week is a visit to a forest sanctuary for the Monarch Butterfly where hundreds of thousands of brightly coloured butterflies that have migrated from further north, spend the winter (November to March) sheltering in the trees. They are an amazing sight, first hidden in the trees and then, as they open their wings, turning the trees into a mass of fluttering bright orange and black petals.

Dates 7 night trips are run from set dates between late October and May, with other dates sometimes possible for private groups on request. Please see the departure dates at the end of this information sheet and contact Ride World Wide to check availability.



Riding The Valle de Bravo Classic Ride includes riding on 7 days with about 5 to 7 hours in the saddle on 5 days, broken up with rest stops and a break for lunch, and a shorter rides on days 1 and 7. The Valle de Bravo Relaxed Rides are more easy-going. They include riding on 6 days, generally 3 hours riding out each morning with the afternoon free. The 'Classic' ride follows a progressive route, starting from Finca Enyhe where the horses are based and circumnavigating the lake of Valle de Bravo. The horses stay out along the route each night whilst riders are returned by vehicle to the Finca after riding, generally a 20 to 30 minute drive, with a boat trip across the lake one day. The 'Relaxed' ride is based at the Finca throughout and daily rides explore different routes from the base each morning. The Cooking Fiesta Ride is as the Relaxed Ride but with afternoons dedicated to cooking lessons. The set date rides usually have a maximum of 12 riding guests. Tack is either English or Mexican style according to guests' preference and saddle-bags are provided. There is a weight limit of 100 kgs (about 15 stone 8lbs) on the rides (although occasionally heavier experienced riders may be taken by arrangement).

The Horses The horses are mainly crosses of the local Spanish Criollo breed, with some Trakehners, some Thoroughbred crosses and some Quarterhorses. The majority are around 15.2hh although some of the Trakehners and Thoroughbred crosses are up to about 17hh. Most of the horses are used to being ridden English style as well as in the local Mexican style (which is similar to Western riding - neck reining etc) and are also used to both English and Mexican (western style) tack. They are all forward going and responsive to ride, sensible to handle and agile and sure-footed over rocky or uneven ground. They are generally ridden with a lighter contact with the mouth than most English horses.

Pace With Valle de Bravo at about 6,000 feet above sea level, some of the terrain as you climb the hills or ride through the forest, is rocky and uneven and as a result, most of the riding is on tracks and the pace is generally fairly slow to moderate. However the horses walk out freely and well, there are some good energetic trots and usually a chance for one or two good long canters each day on open pasture or along the wider tracks in the forest.

Riding ability The rides are aimed at intermediate to reasonably experienced riders. To take part you should be comfortable, secure and in control on a horse when riding in open country at a walk, trot and fast canter. You should also have an independent and balanced seat since many of the tracks followed during the week are narrow and quite steep and the horses often have to negotiate rocky or uneven ground. In addition, although the rides are not at a particularly fast pace, some experience over low jumps helps when crossing the rough terrain or negotiating small ditches and low logs that sometimes lie across the paths. You also need to be fairly fit - both riding fit and fit enough to walk uphill for short periods, as you may be asked to dismount and to lead your horse up steep or difficult paths. If you do not ride regularly at home we recommend you do so in the months before you go to accustom yourself to the hours in the saddle.

Terrain The town of Valle de Bravo is in the central part of the mountains that make up the 'Sierra Madre Occidental'. Around it are a number of different microclimates. The surrounding hills include peaks of up to 10,000 feet where there are mountain forests, primarily of fir. Further down, Montezuma pines and oaks are mixed together and lower still, vegetation is the 'caducifolia' jungle that is typical of Mexico's dry and hot areas. Generally the hillsides you ride across are forested with open meadows or farmland between the peaks. These meadows are often covered in wonderful flowers - both wild flowers and crops of sunflowers, gladioli and blue and gold paradise-bird flowers, all of which add great colour to the area. Most of the riding is along tracks through the forests and some of the paths are narrow and quite steep. There are also open valleys and some wide tracks across farmland and through less dense forest.



Accommodation Accommodation on the rides is very comfortable. Nights are all spent at Finca Enyhe which is on the edge of the town of Valle de Bravo and overlooks the town and lake. The Finca is Jose and Lucia's home and is a beautiful, colonial style house set around a bougainvillea and geranium covered courtyard which has a fountain in the middle. A wide terracotta tiled patio surrounds the courtyard, hammocks swing between the pillars and chairs are set out at intervals - the perfect spot for an evening drink. Bedrooms are all comfortable and individually characterful, with locally made furniture, high wooden ceilings and whitewashed walls. All have their own, large en-suite bathroom (with loo and shower) decorated with wonderful hand-painted Mexican tiles. There is also an outdoor heated swimming pool with Jacuzzi, a billiard table, satellite television, a selection of videos and a library which guests are welcome to use. The dining room and a balcony, where you can sit with a margarita and watch the sun go down, both have tremendous views and the house is surrounded by a garden with magnolias, avocado trees and many flowers that attract humming birds. A small gate leads to an orchard of citrus and other fruit trees and on to the stable yard, which again, is built in colonial style with wonderful proportions.

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Meals Food served during the ride includes both international and Mexican dishes with an emphasis on local Mexican dishes for dinner (toned down to suit non-Mexican palates but always delicious!). Breakfast is generally coffee or tea, bread or toast, fresh fruit, cereal and perhaps eggs served Mexican style 'huevos rancheros' or tamales with salsa, beans and tortillas. Lunches are picnics of local produce - ham, cheese and fruit - or sometimes cooked lunches are prepared over a fire along the route. Dinner is served about 7.30pm and is usually three courses, perhaps a local soup, followed by a typical dish with beef, pork chicken or fish all accompanied by fresh local vegetables and salads, and then locally grown fruit or a desert. Vegetarians and those with special dietary requirements can be catered for as long as advance warning is given. Bottled water, some wine and / or beer is provided with meals and there is a barman on hand at the Finca in the evenings (but only until 9.00!) who will offer you beers and tequilas and who will prepare a delicious margarita for you. The town of Valle de Bravo, which is a short walk from the Finca, has several bars and restaurants although most are low key and quiet, closing quite early.



The Weather The weather in Valle de Bravo is almost perfect for riding year round. Average daytime temperatures are around 15 degrees C (about 63° F), with the minimum about 3 degrees C (35° F) and the maximum 33 degrees C (about 88° F). It is often quite fresh early in the morning and can be a little cold, but as soon as the sun rises the temperature increases and it generally becomes warm. There is often a breeze to keep things cool making it a very comfortable riding temperature. Between November and May there can be a little rain in the afternoon but this is fairly uncommon and rarely intrusive. Nights are fresh and occasionally a fire will be lit to take the chill off the air.

What to Bring We will send you a clothing list with suggestions of what to bring when you book.

Example itineraries The following are examples of the itineraries planned for the 'Valle de Bravo Classic' ride and the 'Valle de Bravo Relaxed' ride but please note that they are only examples and the routes and daily itinerary may be varied by your guides at their discretion if the weather, other local conditions or circumstances require.

"Relaxed" rides are run alongside each "Classic" departure so if your friend / partner / spouse prefers a more relaxing option to you, or vice versa, there is the option of one booking the "Classic" program and the other booking the "Relaxed".

Please enquire for Cooking Fiesta itinerary.



Valle de Bravo 'Classic' Ride:

Arrive Mexico City - accommodation can be arranged at the Hotel Marriott Reforma in the centre of Mexico City, for those who wish.

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Day 1 Met in the lobby of the Hotel Marriott at 10.30 and set off on the drive to Valle de Bravo and to Finca Enyhe - the drive takes approximately 2 ½ hours depending on traffic. On arrival at the Finca you will be shown to your rooms and given a briefing and introduction to the horses and tack in the sand school, before a relaxing lunch in the garden. After lunch, a short (2 hour) afternoon ride out to 'Monte Alto' get to know your horse, returning to the Finca in the late afternoon. Enjoy the sunset with a margarita, made to an old family recipe before dinner. Depending on the group's interest, talks on Mexico, its horse and traditions, are arranged each evening after dinner. Night at Finca Enyhe. (L,D).

Day 2 Breakfast will be served at 7.30 am each day and you will set off to meet the horses at 8.30am. Today you set out riding from Finca Enyhe, accompanied by a pack mule who carries lunch and who will remain with you throughout the ride. First the route climbs into the forest and then you ride on through open farmland to El Hoyo, close to the Capilla Valley, where you stop for a picnic lunch. After lunch ride on for another hour to Los Saucos (about 9000 feet), where the horses stay for the night. Riders are driven by car back to Finca Enyhe and the rest of the afternoon is free with a chance for a swim, to walk into the town to do some shopping or for a drink at one of the local bars. Dinner and night at the Finca. (B,L,D).



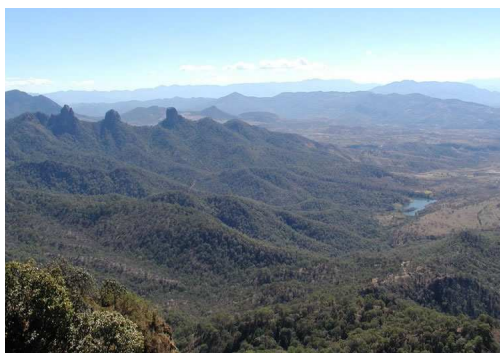
Day 3 Breakfast and drive back to meet the horses at Los Saucos. Set off riding up through the forest, following a track that is narrow, steep and quite slippery in places but with which the horses cope admirably. You will meet up with a professional guide from the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary who will take you on foot high into the forest to a small area where hundreds of thousands of butterflies return each year to hibernate between November and March. A handful of trees are literally covered with butterflies, looking almost like leaves until the sun warms them and they open their wings to show dazzling orange backs. After watching the butterflies, climb down to an open meadow surrounded by pine forest where there is a chance for some faster riding before lunch. A picnic lunch and afterwards ride on through evergreen meadows and valleys, past trout farms and farmland to Rancho Compania, where the horses overnight. Return by car to Finca Enyhe for dinner. Night at the Finca. (B,L,D).

Day 4 Breakfast and return by car to meet the horses and visit the ranch's private zoo. Today's ride takes you past a couple of beautiful lakes that form part of the ranch's landscape. Continuing upwards you reach the top of 'La Sierra de Juan Luis' for a breathtaking panoramic view of the valley, around 3000 feet below. Stop for picnic lunch at 'El Penon', a huge rock formation, before heading onwards for views behind and ahead to tomorrow's ride. You then ride on through a small agricultural valley to finish at the base of the mountain of 'Cerro Gordo'. The horses stay here for the night and riders return to Finca Enyhe by car. Dinner and night at the Finca. (B,L,D).

Day 5 After breakfast drive back to Cerro Gordo and set off on today's ride along the edge of the mountain chain. The vegetation becomes more subtropical as you progress, with broad-leaf oaks replacing the pines. The path narrows, climbing to the lunch spot at 'El Divisadero', a rocky outcrop with tremendous views of Zacazonapan, a small town 3000 ft below. From here the path descends steeply towards the lake and the village of Atezcapan, next to which is Rancho Calderones, where the horses stay for the night. A five minute truck ride from Rancho Calderones takes you to the edge of the lake where a boat will be waiting to take you back across the lake to Valle de Bravo town. **cont over**

Day 5 cont Dinner and overnight at the Finca. (B,L,D).

Day 6 Breakfast and drive down to the lake shore, returning by boat to Rancho Calderones to meet the horses. Mount up and set off following the shore of the lake to the dam wall. Cross beside the dam and then enter a vast open valley, home to farmers still using traditional methods. The country is quite different on this side of the lake - drier and warmer (known as "Tierra Caliente"), with less vegetation and scrub oaks replace the pines where the land is not cultivated. Finally finding some shade, the horses reach the woods and your lunch spot. Continue through forest after lunch, admiring the Spanish moss hanging from the trees. Later there is the possibility of a river crossing if the water is not too fast and high. The village of San Gabriel Ixtla is the final destination today and you will be driven back to the Finca from here by car. Dinner and the night at the Finca Enyhe. (B,L,D).



Day 7 Breakfast and a half-day ride through the traditional and colourful Mexican town of San Francisco Mihualtepec to the beautiful neighbouring ranch of Santa Rosa. Return for lunch at Finca Enyhe. The rest of the afternoon is free to visit the town or to relax by the pool. A farewell dinner will be arranged at a restaurant in town (own expense) or if you prefer, dinner at the Finca. Night at the Finca. (B,L,D).

Day 8 Breakfast at 7am and return transfer to Mexico City departing about 8am and arriving about 10-11am. (B).

Valle de Bravo 'Relaxed' Ride:

Arrive Mexico City - accommodation can be arranged at the Hotel Marriott Reforma in the centre of Mexico City, for those who wish.

Day 1 Met in the lobby of the Hotel Marriott at 10.30 and set off on the drive to Valle de Bravo and to Finca Enyhe - the drive takes approximately 2 ½ hours depending on traffic. On arrival at the Finca you will be shown to your rooms and given a briefing and introduction to the horses and tack in the sand school, before a relaxing lunch in the garden. The afternoon to relax. Enjoy the sunset with a margarita, made to an old family recipe before dinner. Dinner and night at Finca Enyhe. (L,D).

Day 2 Breakfast and meet the horses at about 9.30am. After a short briefing about plans for the week and allocation of horses in the arena, you will set off on a 2 hour ride. The route takes you through forest and farmland. Return to the Finca in the late morning and lunch at 1.30 pm. In the afternoon you are free to enjoy the gardens, to relax by the pool and jacuzzi. Possible afternoon activities (at an extra cost) include mountain biking, guided walks, kayaking & boat trips on the lake, parapenting and even hangliding! Golf is also possible at one of the three 18 hole golf courses close by. There is also the option of a 2 hour evening ride. Dinner and night at Finca Enyhe. (B,L,D)



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Day 3 The ride today takes you to one of the most prestigious and beautiful ranches in the area - 'Rancho Santa Rosa'. The ranch boasts numerous paddocks with many breeding horses and you may be lucky enough to see them schooling some of the showjumpers. Return to Finca Enyhe for lunch and in the afternoon (between November & March) there will be a visit by car to the Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary. Local horses are used for the last section from the road into the forest where butterflies in their millions can be seen clinging to the fir trees. Dinner and night at Finca Enyhe (B,L,D)

Day 4 Breakfast and head for the stables. By now everyone should be fit and confident on their horse and you set off for a three hour ride through pine forests and peaceful meadows. Return to Finca Enyhe for another delicious lunch. In the afternoon there will be the option of another 2 hour ride or you can explore the colonial town of Valle de Bravo or just relax by the pool with a margarita. Dinner and night at Finca Enyhe. (B,L,D)

Day 6 Breakfast and the ride today includes spectacular views of the lake and town of Valle de Bravo. Lunch on the terrace of the finca and perhaps a salsa dancing lesson, or a tandem flight on a hanglider, or just relax by the pool. (B,L,D)

Day 7 After breakfast the horses will be waiting your last morning ride. Return to the finca for lunch. In the afternoon you can relax by the pool or visit Valle de Bravo to shop for souvenirs. A farewell dinner will be arranged at a restaurant in town (own expense) or if you prefer, dinner at the Finca. Night at the Finca. (B,L,D)

Day 8 Breakfast at 7am and return transfer to Mexico City departing about 8am and arriving about 10-11.00am. (B).



Dates

Valle de Bravo 'Classic' Ride 2012

8th to 15th January
22nd to 29th January
5th to 12th February
19th to 26th February
18th to 25th March
8th to 15th April*
22nd to 29th April*
6th to 13th May*
20th to 27th May *

Valle de Bravo 'Relaxed' Ride 2012

Sunday to Sunday from 8th January to 24th June
& 14th October to 16th December
Low season 25th March to 24th June*

Valle de Bravo 'Classic' Ride 2012 cont

21st to 28th October
4th to 11th November
18th to 25th December
2nd to 9th December

Dates cont.**New Year Ride 2012-13**

28th December to 4th January 2013

Cooking Fiesta Ride 2012

1st to 7th April

29th October to 3rd November

27th May to 2nd June

Rates 2012

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

Valle de Bravo 'Classic' Ride - USD2390 per person

New Year Ride - USD2580 per person

Valle de Bravo 'Relaxed' Ride - USD2100 per person

Cooking Fiesta Ride - USD2250 per person

* Low season rates Classic Ride USD2150; Relaxed Ride USD1900.

Non Rider - USD 1500 per person (any date / program)

(Rates assume a minimum of 5 riders; rides may be run for smaller groups on request - please call for prices and to discuss dates).

The rates quoted above **INCLUDE** 7 nights twin accommodation, all riding, meals, beer or wine with dinner & 3 alcoholic drinks per day, and transfers between the meeting point in Mexico City and the Finca at set times with the group on the first and last days.

The rates **EXCLUDE** International flights to Mexico and taxes, personal travel / medical insurance (which you must have), your bar bill for extra drinks, transfers outside the set times, any visa fees, extras such as massages and laundry, additional activities on the Relaxed Ride, spa visits and any tips you might wish to leave staff (it is customary to tip in Mexico and your hosts will generally suggest a tip of about 10% of the ride cost, to be split between staff, although this is of course up to you).

Single supplement Rates are based on twin shared rooms at the hotel and at Finca Enyhe. If you are travelling alone a supplement of USD375 is charged to book a single room for the week - however if you are travelling alone but are prepared to share a room with another guest let us know. We cannot always guarantee to find a sharer, but if we do, there will be no supplement.



Non-Riders Non-riders are welcome to join on any date and various activities can be arranged such as walking, bird watching, paragliding, kayaking and sailing. These can be booked and paid for at the Finca.

Flights and Travel The meeting place for these rides is Mexico City and you should plan to arrive there the day before the start of the ride. Meeting is at 10.30 at the Hotel Marriott Reforma in Mexico City. On the return you will be driven back to the Hotel Marriott Reforma in Mexico City to arrive at about 10-11.00 - so return flights on the last day should depart after 14.00 to allow plenty of time for delay / to get to the airport.

There are many different options for flights from London to Mexico City, either direct (with British Airways) or via Amsterdam, New York or Madrid. Prices generally start from around £700 per person economy return although this varies with the season and availability. Please contact us if you would like a quote for a flight inclusive holiday, to book flights or for any further information on flights. Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213.

Extensions to your trip If you would like to spend extra days in the area before or after riding - for example if you would like to spend some time sightseeing in Mexico City before or after the ride - please let us know. This is often very worthwhile, both to avoid tiredness and for a chance to visit places of interest such as the wonderful Toltec pyramids at Teotihuacan, near Mexico City. If you wish we can help book additional nights accommodation at the hotel in Mexico City (and visits to the pyramids can be easily arranged from the hotel). We can also help arrange other extensions and longer mixed itineraries - Mexico has much to offer including some beautiful beaches, interesting archaeological sights and colonial towns and cities. We also have good contacts with a tour operator specialising in Mexico who would be delighted to suggest combined itineraries if you wish.

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 Mexico 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 Mexico if travelling from Europe but Polio and Tetanus are recommended. If you are travelling on in Mexico after the ride you might need additional inoculations or to take Malaria tablets - you should in any case consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(Updated 05/12/11)

